



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature
English Language and Literature

**READING THE IRISH FAMILY FROM KRISTEVA'S
PERSPECTIVE: LOST PARENTS, ABJECT CHILDREN AND
MELANCHOLY IN EDNA O'BRIEN'S *THE COUNTRY GIRLS*,
PATRICK McCABE'S *BREAKFAST ON PLUTO* AND COLM
TÓIBÍN'S *THE BLACKWATER LIGHTSHIP***

Kübra KANGÜLEÇ COŞKUN

Ph. D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2017

READING THE IRISH FAMILY FROM KRISTEVA'S PERSPECTIVE: LOST
PARENTS, ABJECT CHILDREN AND MELANCHOLY IN EDNA O'BRIEN'S *THE
COUNTRY GIRLS*, PATRICK McCABE'S *BREAKFAST ON PLUTO* AND COLM
TÓIBÍN'S *THE BLACKWATER LIGHTSHIP*

Kübra Kangüleç Coşkun

Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature
English Language and Literature

Ph. D. Dissertation


Ankara, 2017

KABUL VE ONAY

Kübra Kangüleç Coşkun tarafından hazırlanan "Reading the Irish Family from Kristeva's Perspective: Lost Parents, Abject Children and Melancholy in Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls*, Patrick McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* and Colm Tóibín's *The Blackwater Lightship*" başlıklı bu çalışma, 6 Haziran 2017 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından doktora tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



Prof. Dr. N. Belgin ELBİR (Başkan)



Prof. Dr. Aytül ÖZÜM (Danışman)



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Alev KARADUMAN



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Sinan AKILLI



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Elif ÖZTABAK AVCI

Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

Prof. Dr. Sibel BOZBEYOĞLU

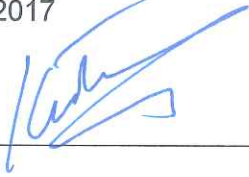
Enstitü Müdürü

BİLDİRİM

Hazırladığım tezin tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi taahhüt eder, tezimin kağıt ve elektronik kopyalarının Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü arşivlerinde aşağıda belirttiğim koşullarda saklanmasına izin verdiğimi onaylarım:

- Tezimin tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.
- Tezim sadece Hacettepe Üniversitesi yerleşkelerinden erişime açılabilir.
- Tezimin 3 yıl süreyle erişime açılmasını istemiyorum. Bu sürenin sonunda uzatma için başvuruda bulunmadığım takdirde, tezimin tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.

06.06.2017



Kübra Kangüleç Coşkun

YAYIMLAMA VE FİKRİ MÜLKİYET HAKLARI BEYANI

Enstitü tarafından onaylanan lisansüstü tezimin tamamını veya herhangi bir kısmını, basılı (kâğıt) ve elektronik formatta arşivleme ve aşağıda verilen koşullarla kullanıma açma iznini Hacettepe Üniversitesine verdiğimi bildiririm. Bu izinle Üniversiteye verilen kullanım hakları dışındaki tüm fikri mülkiyet haklarım bende kalacak, tezimin tamamının ya da bir bölümünün gelecekteki çalışmalarda (makale, kitap, lisans ve patent vb.) kullanım hakları bana ait olacaktır.

Tezin kendi orijinal çalışmam olduğunu, başkalarının haklarını ihlal etmediğimi ve tezimin tek yetkili sahibi olduğumu beyan ve taahhüt ederim. Tezimde yer alan telif hakkı bulunan ve sahiplerinden yazılı izin alınarak kullanılması zorunlu metinlerin yazılı izin alınarak kullandığımı ve istenildiğinde suretlerini Üniversiteye teslim etmeyi taahhüt ederim.

- Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılabilir ve bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınabilir.

(Bu seçenekle teziniz arama motorlarında indekslenebilecek, daha sonra tezinizin erişim statüsünün değiştirilmesini talep etseniz ve kütüphane bu talebinizi yerine getirse bile, teziniz arama motorlarının önbelleklerinde kalmaya devam edebilecektir)

- Tezimin 06.06.2020 tarihine kadar erişime açılmasını ve fotokopi alınmasını (İç Kapak, Özet, İçindekiler ve Kaynakça hariç) istemiyorum.

(Bu sürenin sonunda uzatma için başvuruda bulunmadığım takdirde, tezimin tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir, kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınabilir)

- Tezimintarihine kadar erişime açılmasını istemiyorum ancak kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisinin alınmasını onaylıyorum.

- Serbest Seçenek/Yazarın Seçimi

06 /06/2017


Kübra KANGÜLEÇ COŞKUN

ETİK BEYAN

Bu alıřmadaki bütn bilgi ve belgeleri akademik kurallar erevesinde elde ettiđimi, grsel, iřitsel ve yazılı tm bilgi ve sonuları bilimsel ahlak kurallarına uygun olarak sunduđumu, kullandığım verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadığım, yararlandığım kaynaklara bilimsel normlara uygun olarak atıfta bulunduđumu, tezimin kaynak gsterilen durumlar dıřında zgn olduđunu, Prof. Dr. Aytl ZM danıřmanlıđında tarafımdan retilildiđini ve Hacettepe niversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstits Tez Yazım Ynergesine gre yazıldıđını beyan ederim.



Kbra KANGLE COřKUN

To the memory of my beloved father

Adni Kangüleç,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my thanks to my adviser Prof. Dr. Aytül Özüm who continued to supervise my academic studies after my master's degree, offered critical insights into my thesis and conducted a meticulous review process. I was also fortunate enough to have two more experts in the field, Prof. Dr. Belgin Elbir and Assist. Prof. Dr. Alev Karaduman who made a significant contribution to the development of my thesis through their precious suggestions and comments.

I would also like to thank all the academic members of Hacettepe University English Language and Literature Department for their sincere support, valuable expertise and guidance during my undergraduate and graduate years. I want to extend my thanks to the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies where I participated in the Irish Seminar 2016 and had a chance to attend the lectures delivered by many respectable scholars of Irish studies.

Finally, I want to offer my deepest gratitude to my husband Onur Coşkun who always encouraged me while tolerating our lost times during my thesis-writing process. I am also indebted to my mother Neşe Kangüleç and my brother Barış Kangüleç for their love and emotional support during the hardest times of our life. And my sincere thanks go to Rahime Çokay Nebioğlu who helped me cling to hope whenever the night falls.

ÖZET

KANGÜLEÇ COŞKUN, Kübra. *İrlandalı Aileyi Kristeva Perspektifinden Okumak: Edna O'Brien'in Kasaba Kızları, Patrick McCabe'in Plüton'da Kahvaltı ve Colm Tóibín'in Denizfenerindeki Işık Romanlarında Kayıp Ana-Babalar, Abject Çocuklar ve Melankoli*, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2017.

Anne figürü, İrlanda kültüründe her zaman alegorik bir öneme sahiptir ve “İrlanda Ana” karakterini model alır. İrlanda topraklarındaki İngiliz sömürgesi, iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin cinsiyetçi bir söylem üzerine kurulmasına sebep olmuş, bu söylemde İngiltere’ye sömürgeci baba, İrlanda’ya ise sömürülen kadın rolleri biçilmiştir. İrlanda kadın/toprak mecazıyla tanımlanmış ve İrlanda milliyetçileri “İrlanda Ana” simgesini yaratarak, ona tarihsel ve ideolojik anlamlar yüklemişlerdir. Ataerkil milliyetçiliğin ürünü olan “İrlanda Ana” İrlanda’nın bağımsızlık mücadelesi için ilham kaynağı olmuştur, ancak çıkışı egemen sömürge söylemine dayalı bu anne figürü İrlandalılar için baskılayıcı bir imgeye dönüşerek, özgün İrlanda kimliği yaratılmasını engellemiştir.

Kimlik oluşumunun ana rahminde (semiyotik *kora*) başladığını savunan Julia Kristeva, annenin çocuğun psikoseksüel gelişiminde çok önemli olduğunu vurgular. Çocuk önce anneyi keşfetmeli sonra sembolik düzende kimliğini inşa etmek için onu reddetmelidir. Çocuğun bu inkârı annenin sembolik düzenden atıldığı anlamına gelmemelidir, tam tersine Kristeva metinlerinde çocuğun öznelliği için hem semiyotik hem de sembolik unsurları bünyesinde birleştirmesi gerektiğini söyler. Ancak, ondokuzuncu yüzyıl İrlanda milliyetçileri ataerkil söylemi kullanarak, “İrlanda Ana” için imkânsız bir bakire anne imgesi yaratmış, kadının iğrenç (abject) olarak niteledikleri bedenini ataerkil düzene dâhil etme yolunu bulmuşlardır. Bakire anne semiyotik rahmini İrlandalı çocuklarının keşfine açmadığı için onsekiz ve ondokuzuncu yüzyıllarda oluşturulan İrlanda milliyetçiliği de sömürgeci zihniyetin kullandığı cinsiyetçi söylemde sıkışıp kalmıştır.

İngiliz sömürgeci babanın baskısı ve sevgi dolu bir baba figürü eksikliği İrlanda öznelliğinin gelişimini engellemiştir. Ondokuzuncu yüzyıl itibarıyla, yitik ebeveyn ve abject çocuk motifleri İrlanda edebiyatında sıklıkla kullanılmaya başlanmış ve İrlandalıların özgün bir ulusal kimlik inşası için gerek duydukları işlevsel aile arayışlarını ortaya koymuştur. Edna O'Brien'in *Kasaba Kızları* (1960), Patrick McCabe'in *Plüton'da Kahvaltı* (1998) ve Colm Tóibín'in *Denizfenerindeki Işık* (1999) eserlerini inceleyen bu çalışma, sömürgeci söylemin İrlandalılar üzerindeki kısıtlayıcı etkisini, çocukların sömürge sonrası dönemdeki benlik arayışlarını ve annenin semiyotik dünyasını keşfedişlerini Kristeva'nın öznellik kuramıyla açıklamaya çalışır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Edna O'Brien, Patrick McCabe, Colm Tóibín, Julia Kristeva, abject, semiyotik *kora*, sömürge-sonrası İrlanda kimliği, öznellik, İrlanda Ana

ABSTRACT

KANGÜLEÇ COŞKUN, Kübra. *Reading the Irish Family from Kristeva's Perspective: Lost Parents, Abject Children and Melancholy in Edna O'Brien's The Country Girls, Patrick McCabe's Breakfast on Pluto and Colm Tóibín's The Blackwater Lightship*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, 2017.

Irish mother has always had an allegorical importance in Irish culture and is constructed over the Mother Ireland stereotype. Due to the colonial past of Ireland, Ireland is defined over a land/woman metaphor and the nationalists create the iconic Mother Ireland image, ascribing historical and ideological meanings to her. As a product of masculine nationalism, Mother Ireland becomes an inspiration for the Irish struggle for independence; yet, she also has a haunting influence on the Irish because of her roots in the colonial discourse, which prevents the formation of a unique Irish identity.

Julia Kristeva argues that the mother has a significant role in the child's psychosexual development since identity formation starts in the maternal *chora*. Accordingly, the infant must explore and then abject the mother to establish its "self" in the symbolic. The infant's act of abjection does not mean the exclusion of the (m)other from the symbolic, but means establishing a separate identity by merging the semiotic and the symbolic components in the self. However, the nineteenth-century Irish nationalists make use of patriarchal discourse and create an impossible virgin image for Mother Ireland to safely include her "abject" body into the symbolic.

In addition to Mother Ireland's haunting influence, the oppression of the colonising father and the absence of a loving father figure also constitute an obstacle against the formation of Irish subjectivities. As of the nineteenth century, absent parents and abject children have dominated Irish literature. Referring to Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls* (1960), Patrick McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998) and Colm Tóibín's *The Blackwater Lightship* (1999), all of which feature stories about dysfunctional families and abject children, this dissertation employs Kristeva's theory to reveal how literary works represent the restricting influence of the colonial discourse on ordinary Irish people as well as Irish children's gradual exploration of the maternal semiotic during their quest for a self after the colonial era.

Key Words

Edna O'Brien, Patrick McCabe, Colm Tóibín, Julia Kristeva, abject, semiotic *chora*, postcolonial Irish identity, subjectivity, Mother Ireland

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KABUL VE ONAY	i
BİLDİRİM	ii
YAYIMLAMA VE FİKRİ MÜLKİYET HAKLARI BEYANI	iii
ETİK BEYAN	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
ÖZET	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: READING THE IRISH MOTHER ARCHETYPE AND THE IRISH PROCESS OF SUBJECTIVITY UNDER THE LENS OF KRISTEVA	33
1.1. Psychoanalytical Approach to the Irish Identity Formation	33
1.2. Kristeva’s Perspective on the Virgin Mother: Worth Fighting For!	48
1.3. Abject Children Set Off to Explore the Irish Semiotic	64
CHAPTER TWO: EDNA O’BRIEN’S <i>THE COUNTRY GIRLS TRILOGY</i>: SUBJECTIVITY CRUSHED BY MOTHER IRELAND	73
CHAPTER THREE: PATRICK MCCABE’S <i>BREAKFAST ON PLUTO</i>: ABJECT BODIES’ STRUGGLE FOR A SELF	105

CHAPTER FOUR: COLM TÓIBÍN'S <i>THE BLACKWATER LIGHTSHIP</i>: ABJECT MOTHER REDISCOVERED TO CREATE THE SELF.....	130
CONCLUSION	155
WORKS CITED	163
APPX 1. Originality Reports	183
APPX 2. Ethics Board Waiver Form For Thesis Work	185

INTRODUCTION

She [Mother Ireland] was invoked, addressed, remembered, loved, regretted. And, most importantly, died for. She was a mother or a virgin. Her hair swept back or tied, like the prow of a ship. Her flesh was wood or ink or marble. And she had no speaking part.

- Eavan Boland, *Object Lessons*

In the colonial and the postcolonial arguments employed not only by the English but also by the Irish, Irishness and Irish identity have been represented through various female images including the *Shan van Vocht*, Cathleen ni Houlihan, Dark Rosaleen, the *spéirbhean* and Mother Ireland. Although the personifications are different in name, the common aspect of all is that they pose passive female images constructed as objects, rather than subjects in patriarchal discourse. The English colonial arguments use these passive women images to justify their colonisation of “feminine” Ireland associated with emotions, primitiveness and nature. Paradoxically, the eighteenth- and the nineteenth-century Irish nationalists, including the members of the Irish Literary Revival such as W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, construct their own argument on the same gendered discourse, but they estrange the aforesaid feminine figures from their feminine nature by modelling them on the cult of Virgin Mary or an idealised heavenly woman figure for whom heroic men sacrifice themselves. In other words, the nationalists construct an “acceptable” identity for Mother Ireland that was previously “abjected” by the English by taming the “wild” and “feminine” aspect of Ireland in line with patriarchal values. As a result, the passive mother/woman image embodying the Irish land under English occupation and her beauty degrading in the hands of the colonising forces have inspired the Irish literary world for centuries. The image makes its mark even on contemporary Irish literature that commonly tries to subvert the self-sacrificing mother stereotype against the brutal, irresponsible father based on the

colonising father portrayal. This dissertation aims to analyse the long-lasting effects of the colonial history on different generations and the reflections of the familial structure of Irish-English politics on the Irish cultural memory from a psychoanalytical perspective by referring to some representative works including Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls* (1960), Patrick McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998) and Colm Tóibín's *The Blackwater Lightship* (1999). Set against a different historical background, each novel tells the story of an individual's struggle against the colonial stereotypes and the Irish nationalists' gendered discourse on a microcosmic level. Due to the domineering imagery of the mother-child relationship that depicts Irish nationalists' affiliation with the land as represented in the novels, Bulgarian-French philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva's (1941- present) theory of subjectivity foregrounding the maternal role in a child's psychosexual development can be employed to read the development of Irish identity and its literary representations from a psychoanalytical perspective.

As detailed in her work *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984), Kristeva makes use of a linguistic background for psychoanalysis and considers identity as a process, rather than an end product. Her theory of the two modalities of language as the semiotic (associated with the maternal) and the symbolic (the paternal) which draws its background from Jacques Lacan (1901-81), and her theory of abjection to achieve a separate self as explored in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980) can be applied to the post-independence Irish identity formation process. While dysfunctional Irish families composed of either emotionally or physically absent parents can allegorically be linked to the country's identity crisis as a postcolonial land, the persistence of the colonial stereotypes – especially of Mother Ireland – and Irish children's search for parentage to achieve their own identities as reflected in the works of contemporary Irish literature prove the harsh effects of colonialism on the Irish collective consciousness. In regard to the matter, Declan Kiberd claims that “this generation of Irish men and Irish women fathered and mothered themselves, reinventing parents in much the same way as they were reinventing the Irish past” (Kiberd, *Inventing* 7). Namely, Kiberd intertwines the individual with the communal to argue that both individuals and the country suffer from the lack of strong ancestral identity. In Kristeva's theory of subjectivity, it is evident that the failure of parentage blocks the infant's entrance into the symbolic and its

formation of a separate self, because the infant's subjectivity starts in the maternal womb associated with the semiotic although it continues in the paternal symbolic after the infant's act of abjection. However, abjection occurs only through the help of the "imaginary father" that embodies the loving "Third Party" in child's development as discussed in *Tales of Love* (1983) by Kristeva.

Defining abjection as "one of those violent, dark revolts of being," Kristeva explains it as a way to repudiate the (m)other in the process of achieving a meaning in the symbolic and becoming a separate subject (*Powers* 1-5). Kristeva's theory of abjection and her association of the semiotic with the mother draw heavy criticism from some feminist critics including Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz on charges of her Freudian exclusion of the maternal from the site of culture that is associated with the paternal, her failure in terms of subverting the symbolic and her eventual adoption of the binary oppositions set by the symbolic (Butler, "Body" 104-11; Grosz, "Body" 86-93). However, some other critics like Kelly Oliver, Ewa Ziarek and John Lechte highlight Kristeva's inclusion of the mother into the process of subjectivity, her attempt to place the semiotic and the symbolic on an equal basis as well as her emphasis on the pre-discursive aspect of the maternal realm as a challenge against the limitations of structuralism (Oliver, "Julia" 94-114; Lechte, "Art" 24-41; Ziarek, "Limits" 91-105). Considering the latter group of critics' interpretation of Kristeva and the revolutionary potential of the semiotic affiliated with the womb, this dissertation focuses on the literary representations of parental figures by highlighting the importance of the mother during the formation of liberal identity. Besides, the Irish father figures in the novels are also studied in reference to Kristeva's notion of the imaginary father in their supportive role for subjectivity. In this context, Irish identity formation process is scrutinised by regarding the effects of failed parentage on Irish identity, with a special emphasis on the changing understanding of "abject" mother in parallel to the different historical backdrops of the novels studied in this dissertation.

Although the image of Mother Ireland looms large in Irish culture and literature, her estrangement from her corporeality – her maternal semiotics – because of her virgin image constructed by the Irish nationalist discourse stands as an obstacle against her

maternal role of presenting the semiotic *chora*¹ into the infant's service. Further, the nationalist discourse transforms the mother image into an idealised object of love, rather than accepting her as a speaking subject. Thus, the maternal realm and its function as an initiator of subjectivity remain absent in the Irish identity formation process, which creates "abject children" in addition to abject mothers. According to Kristeva's theory, the mother is to become an abject as a result of the infant's act of abjection; however, when there is no proper semiotic order to start subjectivity or no loving father figure to help the infant's entrance into the symbolic, the infant can also be an abject figure with its border status between the semiotic and the symbolic (Kristeva, *Tales*; Oliver, *Reading* 60-61). Under the English colonial rule embodying the restrictive father figure, Irish children are forced to accept the Irish mother standing for Mother Ireland as "abject" from the very beginning. In time, they sublime the lost maternal image in order to challenge the coloniser's discourse and attribute a mythical existence to Mother Ireland. However, since real mothers with semiotic essence and real fathers outside the brutal stereotypes are not cited in the colonial discourse, an identity crisis emerges by degrading Irish children into an abject status, which precludes the formation of a unique Irish identity.

Aware of the necessity for maternal womb to achieve Irish subjectivity, many anti-Revivalists and contemporary Irish writers ranging from James Joyce to Colm Tóibín attempt to liberate the Mother Ireland figure from her mythical existence that is promoted by the Revivalists and replace her with a new maternal figure that has subjectivity, because only through demolishing the iconic Mother Ireland, it becomes "possible to move beyond the constrictions of the cultural tradition and assert a subjectivity free of rigid discursive practices that were themselves an expression of British hegemony" (Stubbings 8). In this context, O'Brien, McCabe and Tóibín try to return to the womb to find out the "self" and to explore new Irish subjectivities that compose a plural and inclusive Irish identity reflecting the semiotic essence of the Irish nation. The protagonists' explorations of the mother figure in parallel to the sociohistorical backgrounds of the novels exemplify the Irish child's encounter with the semiotic *chora* to form a separate self, because the exploration of the semiotic appears

¹ Kristeva uses *chora* in parallel to Plato's discussion over the notion in his *Timaeus*, thus it is associated with the maternal womb. The notion is detailed in the following chapters.

as the only way to actualise Seamus Deane's wish for "new politics, unblemished by Irishness, but securely Irish" ("Heroic" 18). In other words, these novels suggest that identity-formation starting in the semiotic realm can be regarded as a must to fight the colonial stereotypes on which Irish identity was established during the colonial years. The colonial history of Ireland and a Kristevan reading on the Irish identity formation process should first be detailed so as to analyse the protagonists' search for a self under the shadow of parental figures changing in parallel to the settings of O'Brien's *The Country Girls*, McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* and Tóibín's *The Blackwater Lightship*.

1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF IRELAND

Ireland was subject to foreign invasions throughout its history. The exact date of Celtic existence on the land is speculative; some historians claim that the traces of Celtic civilisation date back to the third century BC while some others argue that the earliest Celtic wave arrived on the island in the sixth century BC (Hachey et al. 3; Byrne 25). Despite different views, it is evident that the Celts, iron-using and Celtic-speaking people from Europe, became the natives of the land and formed the basis of Gaelic Ireland that was romanticised during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries by Irish nationalists. Ireland "entered on a new phase of her history" with the arrival of the Celts and the Celtic culture dominated the land for more than a thousand years (Mitchell 24). In 432 AD, Christianity was introduced to Irish people by Saint Patrick; as a result, the process of conversion started on the land, incorporating pagan Celtic practices into Christianity (Hachey et al. 4). The Viking invasion started in the ninth century and could not be prevented, because there was not a unified kingdom in Ireland at those times. In the eleventh century, Brian Boru rose to the high kingship, forming the basis of a central kingdom. However, his early death at a battle against the Vikings brought Ireland back to instability and the Anglo-Norman invasion in the twelfth century finalised the attempts for the centralisation of political power in Ireland (De Paor 67-69; Hachey et al. 6-7; Ó Cuív 81). It is evident that the Anglo-Norman invasion changed the fate of the Irish land; becoming the last group of invaders, they ignited the centuries-long conflict between the English and the Irish.

During the twelfth century, there were two warrior lords who were fighting on the island; Dermot MacMurrough, the Irish King of Leinster, and Tiernan O'Rourke, the king of Breifne. MacMurrough asked for military support from the Anglo-Norman king Henry II who was concerned with the problems in the Continent at that time. The Earl of Pembroke helped MacMurrough and married his daughter, inheriting the kingdom of Leinster. To prevent the Earl of Pembroke's rise, Henry II launched an invasion of the Irish land and acquired a Papal sanction to occupy Ireland. In order to guarantee the English domination on the land, Henry II granted some of the Irish lands to English lords and signed the Treaty of Windsor with the High King Rory O'Connor in 1175. He left the territory outside the kingdom of Leinster, Waterford, Dungarvan and Dublin to the High King of Ireland on the condition that he would pay homage to the King of England (Johnson 17-19). However, the English barons started to occupy the Gaelic-Irish territories, violating the treaty and the Gaelic lords were forced to move to the western regions or the mountainous south and the east. These English attacks angered the Gaelic-Irish kings, causing conflicts between these groups (Martin 105; Hachey et al. 10). As a result of the Anglo-Norman expansion, the island was divided into three as "an area of direct English administration, radiating from Dublin, the feudal territories of the Anglo-Norman barons, and the 'Irish' Ireland, where there was virtually no English presence" (Johnson 21). F. X. Martin explains Ireland's "half-conquest" as the real tragedy behind the Norman invasion, since the kings of England were too much occupied by the problems in England and on the Continent that they neither controlled nor assisted their barons in Ireland (111). In other words, the apathy of the English kings caused arbitrary practices on the island which ended up in chaos; this situation started the Irish question that would continue throughout centuries.

English rule began to weaken in the thirteenth century, since independent Gaelic-Irish lords resisted the Anglo-Irish and halted their expansion (Lydon 121). Besides, the Anglo-Normans started to adopt the Irish way of life, assimilating the Irish culture. In an attempt to preserve Englishness of the settlers and to prevent Gaelicisation, the Statutes of Kilkenny that aimed to "protect" the English settlers from the Irish influence were introduced in the fourteenth century. Accordingly, the statutes banned wearing Irish dress, playing Irish games, English-Irish intermarriage as well as the acceptance of

Celtic Irishmen into the English religious orders (Hachey et al. 12). At the end of the fourteenth century, the Gaelic-Irish expanded their territory; therefore, the territory of English settlers –the English pale – around Dublin dwindled (Lydon 124). As the Gaelic-Irish were getting dominant on the island, the English throne that was engaged in the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) against the French could not focus on the problems of Ireland.

During the Wars of the Roses (1455-87), Ireland was used as a base for the Yorkists. When Henry VII from the House of Lancaster grasped the English throne, he set out to end the threat coming from Ireland by sending his capable soldier Sir Edward Poynings to the land. In 1494, in an attempt to protect the interests of the English throne, Poynings stipulated that the Irish Parliament could not be convened without royal permission. He remained loyal to the Tudors and ruled the country till his death in 1513 (Cosgrove 125-35; Hachey et al. 12-15). Ireland had previously been accused of supporting the Yorkists, and thus the Tudors also fended off a possible external threat aiming at their dynasty by taking Ireland under their control. Besides, the Tudor king Henry VIII's Protestant Reformation created a new enemy for the English, namely, the Catholics. Ireland, persisting in Catholicism, became the target of Henry VIII's rage. Domination and assimilation of the Irishmen were difficult because of the failure of the Protestant Reformation in Ireland (Howe 21). In this context, most of the Celtic people and the "Old English" (early English settlers in Ireland) who remained loyal to Catholicism were regarded as enemies while Irish Catholicism was considered "tantamount to treason" (Hachey et al. 15). In 1541, Henry VIII was reluctantly accepted as the King of Ireland by the Irish Parliament that was under political oppression (Adelman 2).

Meanwhile, the Tudors carried out a political and demographic project in Ireland by replacing the native Celts with new English planters (to compose the "New English") who were expected to be loyal to the English king (Johnson 31). Later, Queen Elizabeth's ambition for colonial expansion made Ireland the first colony of imperial England (Hayes-McCoy 139). During her reign, Ireland rose against the English forces for many times, however, all ended up with bloody massacres. One of these incidents

was the Desmonds Revolt in Munster (1579-83) supported by the papacy against the Queen's attempt of spreading Protestantism in Ireland. Nevertheless, the revolt was suppressed violently by Sir Walter Raleigh, portending many other bloody fights between the coloniser England and the colonised Ireland (Hachey et al. 18). During the Renaissance, the colonisation of Ireland was justified through the Western argument based on civilised/barbarian, male/female dichotomies. As openly emphasised in the "Afterword" of the 1995 edition of *Orientalism* by Edward Said, a colonised "other" embodying the opposite characteristics of the coloniser is consciously created by the coloniser to maintain domination over the colonised land (332). And it is in this context that Europeans attributing reason and civilisation to themselves aim to introduce civilisation into so-called primitive lands. Despite its geographical location, Ireland also occupies the same referential place in the debates of colonialism as they are the colonised "other" because of the English colonising discourse about Catholic Ireland. For example, the Renaissance poet Edmund Spenser, who lived in Ireland as an English coloniser for a long time, associates the Irish with the old barbaric nations in his 1596 tract entitled "A View of the Present State of Ireland." In this tract written in a dialogue form all Irish customs and life-style are discussed and the Irish are defined as primitive, violent, superstitious, disobedient, barbarous and uncivilised. Spenser draws a rather horrific and grotesque picture of the land with the following words:

Alsoe the Gaules used to drinke ther enmyes blood, and to paynte themselves therewith: soe alsoe they wright, that the ould Irish were wonte, and soe have I sene some of the Irish doe, but not theire enmyes but frendes bloode. As namely at the execution of a notable traytor at Lymbricke, called Murrogh Obrien, I saw an ould woman, which was his foster mother, tooke up his heade, whilst he was quartered, and sucked up all the blood running thereout, saying, that the earth was not worthy to drinke it, and therewith alsoe steeped her face and brest, and tare her heare, crying and shriking out most terribly. (114)

The extract portrays a vampiric image for the Irish who drink the blood of their friends, which can be considered a way of othering the Irish by the English. Such an image necessitates the "civilised" Englishmen to introduce civilisation into this "wild" land. Indeed, Spenser's approach to the Irishmen is not out of the blue, since Irish culture was always associated with the Orient as it is assumed that early settlers of Ireland came from Asia and the Middle East which were regarded as exotic lands populated by

barbarous warriors (Lennon, “Introduction” xv). The English texts dating back to the Reformation and the Renaissance periods emphasise the so-called barbaric nature of the Celts while justifying the English invasion on the island. Joseph Lennon claims that “many British works on Ireland increasingly focused on Ireland’s Scythian roots as a way to confirm the ‘barbaric’ natures of the Irish” (8). The analogy between the representations of the Orient and the Irish is extensively studied by scholars including Joep Leerssen and Joseph Lennon. In Lennon’s work *Irish Orientalism* (2008), it is argued that

[l]ong before it was treated as Celtic, Irish culture was linked to the “Orient.” Ireland’s ancient history and culture supposedly stemmed from Asian and Middle Eastern, or West Asian, cultures. . . . Such connections emerged from Ireland’s imagined place in Greek texts as a wild, remote borderland, existing well off the western coast of the great Eurasian continent, in the ocean that stretched around the sphere of the earth to the eastern end of the habitable world. Eventually, such representations gave birth to two antitheses of modern, enlightened Europe: the Celt and the Oriental. (“Introduction” xv)

As the extract suggests, Gaelic people and Eastern people have similar representations in European literature, and thus the direct relationship between the Celt and the Orient causes the use of the same discourse of colonisation for both lands. In this context, Stephen Howe’s argument that Celtic people became the first victims of the “mental division of the world between civilised and barbarians” is also appropriate (16). The division laid the foundations for the English colonial argument based on many other dichotomies as female/male, nature/culture, primitivism/civilisation, passive/active and emotion/reason. All these dichotomies are gender-based and link the feminine representation of Ireland to her colonial past, which paves the way for a possible societal psychoanalysis in terms of Irish mother-father-child relationship.

Ulster was the sole place that remained far from England’s influence on the island during the Elizabethan period and the English thought that they would seize the territory without fighting; however, the plan failed and the Nine Years War (1688-97) broke out, ending with the Battle of Kinsale (Hayes-McCoy 148-51). The English won the battle in spite of the Spanish support to the Irish, and the conquest of Ireland was completed through the fall of Ulster lords. Ireland’s status did not change and the plantation

process continued during the reign of James I (1603-25). Placing the Protestant Scottish settlers in Ulster, he changed the course of Irish history and formed the backbone of today's Northern Ireland population. As a result, the Ulster Scots "helped shape a distinctive Ulster regionalism different from the rest of Ireland" (Hachey et al. 19). Keeping their own culture and resisting any assimilation, new settlers differentiated themselves from the native Irish.

During the eleven years of tyranny under Oliver Cromwell in the seventeenth century, Ireland once again witnessed bloody scenes. Benefiting from the chaotic atmosphere in England stemming from Charles I's weakening power, the Catholic clergy organised many rebellions in different parts of Ireland in 1641, which started the Irish Confederate Wars (1641-53). The rebellion turned into a Protestant massacre by Catholic peasants; meanwhile, anti-Catholicism was at its peak in England as a result of the Gunpowder Plot devised by the Catholics in 1605; the Plot triggered Cromwell to take revenge on Catholics. His rage resulted in the Drogheda Massacre and later, paved the way for the Act of Settlement of 1652 under which the land of the Old Irish population was confiscated and the population was forced to migrate to Connacht (Hachey et al. 23-24). James II's succession to the throne became "a turn of fortune's wheel" for the Catholics, because James II, as a Catholic king, tried to restore the rights of the Catholics in Ireland (Canny 121). However, his succession to the throne deepened the conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants. At the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, James II was defeated by William of Orange who had been invited to England by the Protestants ("James II"). William of Orange's victory, which is still celebrated as "Orangemen's Day" by the Protestants in Northern Ireland, became disillusionment for the Catholics, triggering the Jacobite Risings between 1688 and 1746. After the suppression of major risings, cultural colonisation of the land started; Catholicism and Irish language were othered as Englishness was associated with "superiority" (Howe 31).

The victorious Protestants' fear of the Catholics led to "a century of persecution, barbarism, and tyranny upon the Catholic majority" (Hachey et al. 30). The new Penal Laws and the age of Protestant Ascendancy started, subsequent to the Protestant dominance in Ireland. These anti-Catholic laws including the exclusion of the Catholics

from the public offices, a ban on intermarriage and a restriction on Catholics' purchase of land were passed by the Irish Parliament that was composed of only Protestant members. As argued by Jim MacLaughlin, the main goal of these laws was to "create conditions that would allow the Protestant nation to flourish not only in mainland Britain, but more especially in the 'home country' of Ireland" (147). The Dublin Parliament in the eighteenth century was "a colonial-type parliament, subordinate to the government in London" (Wall 176). In the context of Britain's expansionist approach, the secondary status of the Catholic Irishmen to the Protestant English formed the basis of nineteenth-century Irish nationalism that developed around the sectarian conflict under Daniel O'Connell's leadership.

The American Independence War (1775-83) gave hope to the Irishmen of gaining independence from the English rule, because Ireland and the North American colonies were very similar to each other in terms of their political situation (McDowell 190). Amid the winds of freedom inspired by the French Revolution (1789-99), Theobald Wolfe Tone, a liberal Protestant, established the Society of the United Irishmen to struggle for liberation with his friends Napper Tandy and Thomas Russell. His aim was "[t]o unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter" (qtd. in Cairns and Richards 22). In other words, Tone highlighted a common "Irish identity" rather than identities evolving around religious sects, and emphasised the necessity to end the British domination on the land. After getting the support of the French troops, he organised the 1798 rebellion, during which there appeared a "short-lived alliance" between the Catholics, Presbyterians and secular republicans; however, it failed and ended up with the execution of many Irish rebels. In reply to the rebellion, the Act of Union came into effect in 1800 and a United Parliament in Westminster was established, ending the efficiency of the Irish Parliament. In the nineteenth century, the endeavour to repeal the union dominated the Irish political agenda as it became the major concern of Irish nationalists ("Wolfe"; Kiberd, *Inventing* 20; Ranelagh 92; Hachey et al. 53; Killeen 14).

After the Union, O'Connell started to endeavour for Catholic emancipation and founded the Catholic Association in 1823. Indeed, "O'Connell's entry on the public stage made the Irish question the leading emotional issue dividing British political forces and public opinion" (Whyte 206; Hachey et al. 58). O'Connell managed to unite many Catholic Irishmen under the roof of the Catholic Association and campaigned not only for emancipation but also for the "repeal of the union, justice and security for tenant farmers, the end of tithes, and a democratic electorate voting by secret ballot;" finally, the British government agreed on the emancipation in order to maintain peace in Britain and Ireland (Hachey et al. 62). Although the emancipation did not fulfill all the expectations of the Irish Catholics, it relieved some restrictions on them; for instance, the Catholic middle classes could get positions in the judiciary and civil service (Davis 23-43). In the 1840s, some members of O'Connell's repeal movement – Thomas Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy and John Blake Dillon – started to be called "Young Irelanders" and attempted to highlight nationality rather than religion. Davis rejected O'Connell's nationalism and "identified cultural activity as the true course of a more ecumenical nationhood" (Kiberd, *Inventing* 22). However, the outbreak of famine and Davis's early death at the age of thirty-one interrupted the Young Irelanders.

The Potato Famine (1845-50) left its mark on the nineteenth-century Irish history. There were some important reasons for the Famine. The population of the country was over eight million in 1841 and more than two-thirds of the Irish people would make a living by agriculture. Besides, the scale of British industry was growing and destroying the small Irish manufacturer. In such an atmosphere, potato was the only food of the impoverished Irish people (Green 220). The potato fungus arriving in Ireland over North America and Europe caused a famine known as the "Great Hunger." The famine ended up with over one million deaths, diseases and emigration. The Tory government of Sir Robert Peel tried to handle the crisis, buying and distributing Indian corn, and setting up a commission to search for the causes of the famine, which was against the principles of free trade. However, when the Tory government fell in 1846, the Whig government of Lord John Russell was stricter about the principles of free trade. The Tory government's reluctance to take action in Ireland caused a great failure of the potato crop (Killeen 39-40). Meanwhile, the prosperous status of Britain at that time

contrasted with the Irishmen dying of hunger or disease. Thus, Irish nationalists claimed that the British government made use of the plight and overlooked it “to solve the Irish question through population extermination” (Hachey et al. 66). Accusing the English of not taking action against the plight, the Catholic Irish reinforced their anti-English stance which later prompted the rise of nationalism in Ireland. The Young Irelanders attempted a rebellion in 1848, but the government suppressed the rebellion (92-102).

Ireland started to enhance its economic situation following the Famine, increasing the size of agricultural holdings and standards of rural living. Yet, social polarisation was deeper than ever as the minority was composed of the Protestants supporting the Union while the majority included the Catholics. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the north-east of Ireland was rapidly growing and Belfast, unlike the other regions of Ireland, loomed large as a centre for linen production, shipbuilding and engineering while receiving its share from the Industrial Revolution (Moody 228-29). However, as Ulster improved its economic and technological background, migration from country to town started, the sectarian enmities revived and inter-communal riots broke out in 1857, 1864, 1872 and 1886 (Killeen 55). In other words, Ulster which can be considered as the stronghold of the Protestants also became the place where the sectarian conflicts were most violent in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

After the interruption of the Famine years, Irish nationalism started to revive as James Stephens, the escapee member of the Young Irelanders, returned to his country from France and established a secret fraternal organisation called “the Irish Republican Brotherhood” (IRB) in 1858 with the goal of transforming Ireland into an independent democratic republic. Today, the IRB is regarded as the forerunner of “the Irish Republican Army” (IRA) (Tonge 2). Meanwhile, John O’Mahony, another escapee member of the Young Irelanders, founded the Fenian Brotherhood in America; later “Fenianism” came to represent Irish Republicanism in general. However, despite their nationalist stance, the Fenians could not receive Catholic bishops’ sanction on the grounds that the bishops disfavoured Republicanism and the Fenians with secular views (Hachey et al. 102-03).

The IRB and the Fenian Brotherhood worked together, since their common belief was that “Britain would never concede independence except to physical force” but the 1867 rising failed and almost all its leaders were sent to prison (Moody 231). The subsequent years were the time when some elements of modern Irish problem such as “the American connection, the use of terrorism, the need to hang the murderers of [English] policemen to maintain police morale, the consequent martyrdom of those so hanged, the extension of the struggle to England and the murder of innocents” occurred (Johnson 135). As a result of rising militant nationalism in Ireland, the British government focused on the Irish question by introducing some reforms in religious and economic issues. However, the last-minute attempts of the British government did not satisfy the Irish nationalists and in 1870, a Protestant barrister Isaac Butt launched the Home Rule Movement that would defend authority of the Irish Parliament to deal with domestic affairs while the Parliament in Westminster would continue to have authority on foreign affairs. Although Butt’s approach was against the Fenian argument of full independence, some of the Fenians supported Butt (Moody 234).

Butt carried out a negotiation process with the House of Commons about the Irish Home Rule; yet, his endeavour was futile. Only after Charles Stewart Parnell won a seat in the Parliament in 1875, the Irish nationalist movement adopted a new method (Moody 235; Johnson 139). Parnell, an Anglo-Irish Protestant, conducted secret meetings with the Fenian leaders to get their support, constituting the “new departure” which was “an alliance of revolutionary and constitutional nationalists on the two great issues of self-government and the land” (Moody 237). Besides, he became the president of the Land League established by Michael Davitt in 1879 in order to end the landlord system. However, the land war had already broken out across the country by 1880 and the abolition of the landlord system was the main target of the protestors. Despite Parnell’s efforts, violence dominated the country when attacks on landlords, murders and burnings started (Killeen 61; Hachey et al. 119).

After the land war, Parnell replaced the Land League by the National League and made his arguments more radical by campaigning for self-government and the Home Rule. The National League led by Parnell became victorious in the 1885 election, which

compelled the British Parliament to make a revolutionary attempt. In this context, William Ewart Gladstone prepared the first Home Rule Bill in 1886, yet it was rejected by the Conservative Party on the grounds that “the bill was infamous — destructive of the unity of the empire, a betrayal of the loyalist and Protestant element in Ireland, a surrender to those who had proved by their duplicity and their crimes that they were unfit for self-government” (Moody 242). The reasons for rejection as argued by the Conservatives revealed the sectarian enmity in Ireland in addition to the English colonial approach to the Irish who were stereotyped as emotional, unreasonable and barbaric — traits associated with the feminine by the colonial mindset.

Parnell’s political influence started to decline subsequent to the outbreak of the scandal that Parnell had an illegitimate affair with the wife of an Irish MP. His political downfall brought about splits from the party, paving the way for strengthening the Unionist Irish propaganda. Although the Conservative government of Lord Salisbury introduced some social and economic reforms to Ireland under the “killing home rule with kindness” project, the desire to establish a free Irish state as inspired by Parnell remained intact and “[n]o British concession, whether it be Liberal or Conservative, could deter that resolve” (Killeen 69; Hachey et al. 136). Parnell’s fall caused the emergence of two groups among the Irish nationalists as Parnellites and anti-Parnellites; many young men departed from the party politics to participate in non-political movements, one of which was the Irish Literary Revival (McCartney 245). The revival restored the Gaelic legacy of Ireland and promoted a romanticised portrayal of the Gaelic times, which can be considered an attempt to create a unifying Irish identity based on culture, rather than religion.

As cultural nationalism was rising in the nineteenth century, Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill founded the Gaelic League (*Conradh na Gaeilge*) in 1893 and tried to prove the cultural distinctness of Ireland by de-anglicising Ireland and reviving Irish as the spoken language of the country (McCartney 246-7). The Gaelic League’s argument highlighted that Ireland, with its common cultural background, was to be a nation-state. Later, the philosophy of the League inspired Arthur Griffith who founded *Sinn Féin* (“We Ourselves”) in 1905. For Griffith, “the fundamental issue was the character of the

Irish people, the recovery of their self-respect, and the building up of their capacity for self-reliance” (Nelson 183). Indeed, Griffith’s argument aimed to save Irish people from the destructive psychological effects of English colonialism that ripped off their self-esteem through the colonialist arguments claiming mental and physical superiority of the English over the Irish; in this context, the basic way to recover Irish self-esteem was to draw attention to the unique Irish language and culture.

In 1910, the Liberals were in power in Westminster and the Liberal leader H. H. Asquith was aware that he could form a government only by getting Irish politician John Redmond’s support. Therefore, the third Home Rule came onto the agenda in 1912, pleasing most of the Irish nationalists. The Home Rule Bill “offered Ireland a mild measure of self-government, establishing an Irish Parliament with a democratically elected Commons and an appointed Senate” by preserving some restrictions on Irish sovereignty, some of which were British control over the Royal Irish Constabulary for six years, British management of Irish revenues and prevention of the foreign policies devised by the Dublin Parliament (Hachey et al. 148). Since Asquith planned to pass the bill by curbing the power of the House of Lords, the bill caused a crisis not only in Ulster but also in the Parliament.

The Ulster Unionists under Sir Edward Carson’s leadership prepared for establishing a provisional government in Ulster, in case the Home Rule Bill passed. In other words, they wanted Ulster to be separated from the rest of Ireland and the region to act as a part of the British rule. Thus, the Unionists started to form the Ulster Volunteers to resist home rule by physical force; the Nationalists also convened the Irish volunteers to fight the Unionists and both groups started to bear arms, pushing Ireland into the edge of a civil war. In spite of Redmond’s challenge, Asquith made an amendment on the bill and offered that the four counties in Ulster would temporarily be excluded from the mandate of the Irish parliament. However, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 suspended the Parliament’s Home Rule decision and Asquith passed the Suspensory Act of 1914 that postponed the Government of Ireland Act till the end of the war (Killeen 78-83; Johnson 155-81; Hachey et al. 150-53). Irish nationalists decided not to wait for the end of the war; therefore, the future of Ireland was left to the hands of violent

guerrilla groups in the country. Meanwhile, the Irish Volunteers split up upon Redmond's demand for a military support for England in the war as "approximately 12,000 of the 180,000 Irish Volunteers refused to go along with Redmond's version of the war" and continued as "Irish Volunteers" (Hachey et al. 154).

In the twentieth century Ireland, nationalism and working class movement went hand-in-hand. In spite of the former land reforms, "Dublin had one of the most underfed, worst-housed, and badly paid populations in Europe" (McCartney 250). The plight in Ireland necessitated Jim Larkin and James Connolly to establish the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union in 1913. The workers participating in demonstrations clashed with the police. In the midst of rising violence, the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) which was composed of trained trade union members was established to protect the protestors from the police; the ICA also took part in the 1916 Rising, merging the working class movement with the nationalist one (McCartney 250-51; Moran 80). As the Great War continued in Europe and Britain was fighting the Germans in the war, Irish nationalists wanted to turn the crisis into an opportunity. Thus, the IRB and the ICA planned the 1916 Easter Rising in secrecy to establish an independent Irish Republic. The group members occupied important locations in Dublin, and Patrick Pearse read the proclamation of the republic; however, the Rising was brutally suppressed by the British army and many rebel leaders were executed. The execution of the rebels by the British induced nationalism among the Irish, fulfilling the main goal of the 1916 Rising (Killeen 86-88). The initial point for the Irish rebels was a "blood-sacrifice" that would "wash away the sinful corruption of parliamentary politics and Anglo-Saxon culture" (Hachey et al. 155). In other words, the rebels predicted that their self-sacrifice for Ireland would raise public awareness and ignite a war for liberation. Although the Rising was not *Sinn Féin's* initiative, the British government attributed it to *Sinn Féin*, boosting its fame unconsciously. The process ended up with *Sinn Féin's* development into a "mass political party that used the electoral arena with stunning success to advance the cause of Irish independence" (Nelson 184).

Eamon de Valera became the new leader of *Sinn Féin* in 1917. Winning three by-elections against the Nationalist Party, *Sinn Féin* became the sole representative of Irish

nationalism and refused to take place in the British Parliament. On January 21, 1919 *Sinn Féin* founded the Irish Parliament, *Dáil Éireann*; the event can be interpreted as the declaration of Irish independence from the British rule. In the meantime, the Irish Volunteers evolved into the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and adopted guerrilla tactics to fight against the British rule in Ireland (Killeen 90-91; McCartney 257- 58). IRA committed murders and grasped weapons; besides, they managed to shatter the authority of Britain's armed forces — the Royal Irish Constabulary — in Ireland. In return, the British government assigned ex-WWI veterans to fight against the IRA; they came to be called “Black and Tans.” Eventually, a bloody war broke out, passing into history as the Anglo-Irish war (1919-21). Black and Tans got infamous in the public eye as they tortured and killed the captured IRA members and set towns on fire. In December 1921, the British and the Irish managed to negotiate the Anglo-Irish treaty that declared Ireland a Free State while separating six counties of Ulster dominated by the Protestant population from the Irish Free State on the condition that the Free State would take an oath of allegiance to the British throne (Hachey et al. 161; Killeen 91-92). In this context, the Irish Free State would become a self-governing entity; however, Northern Ireland would remain dependent on the British crown.

Although the Irish struggle covering centuries started to yield results in the nineteenth century, the Anglo-Irish treaty caused some controversy in *Sinn Féin*; as a result, the party was divided into two groups as the pro-treaty group and the anti-treaty group who insisted on the title “Irish Republic” rather than “Irish Free State.” A civil war between two sides broke out and lasted until May 1923 (Lynch 272-73). The Irish Free State was officially founded in December 1922 through the pro-treaty group, bringing about a huge disappointment for the Irish nationalists. Their dream of a united Irish-speaking nation, worker's democracy, self-sufficient economy and being a republic had failed; instead, they had to accept the Commonwealth membership and Northern Ireland's independence from the Free State. Still, the *Cumann na nGaedheal* (“Society of the Gaels”) government under William T. Cosgrave's leadership ran counter to the Westminster in some topics; for example, the Free State joined the League of Nation in 1923, appointed Irish ambassadors to some countries and delivered an Irish passport to her citizens (Hachey et al. 185-87). As these acquisitions were not found effective by

the Irish republicans, De Valera founded a more conservative, centre-right *Fianna Fáil* (“The Republican Party”) in 1926.

Meanwhile, the IRA was threatening the Cosgrave government and Irish economy was very weak. In this context, *Fianna Fáil* carried out an efficient political propaganda by putting stress on economic self-sufficiency and the restrictive aspects of the Anglo-Irish treaty; as a result, the party that had entered the *Dáil* (the Irish Parliament) as the main opposition party in 1927 became the first party in the 1932 general elections by winning 72 of the parliamentary seats and providing De Valera with the presidential seat (Lynch 275-76; Hachey et al. 186-90). The 1937 constitution sketched by De Valera replaced the Constitution of the Irish Free State. The new text cited Ireland with her Irish name *Éire* and gave the Irish nation full sovereignty over its political, cultural and economic topics (“Constitution”). The 1937 Constitution was a turning point for the British-Irish politics as it cut off Ireland’s symbiotic relationship with England, the title “Republic” was not cited, though. Following the World War II, Ireland went for a general election in 1948 and the results pointed out a coalition among the parties. The inter-party government passed an act in 1949 to change the name of the Irish state; Ireland became “the Republic of Ireland,” fulfilling the dream of Irish nationalists.

2. RISE OF IRISH NATIONALISM: MOTHER IRELAND IS CALLING YOU!

During the centuries of English occupation in Ireland and assimilationist attempts, Irish people suffered from inequality, cultural erosion and loss of national identity. The country tried to exist under the severe British rule as her history became associated with poverty, famine, violence and struggle for independence, all of which are ingrained in Irish memory. Especially, following the Jacobite Risings of 1688-1746 when the “Irish language was suppressed, religious faith was subordinated and ‘Englishness’ identified with superiority,” Ireland underwent a process of cultural colonisation as well as an economic one (Howe 31). This long process of oppression paved the way for the Gaelic Revival in Ireland, triggering anti-colonial nationalism in the nineteenth century. Through the rise of nationalism, the gendered representation of the country used by the colonial discourse was revised and the myth of Mother Ireland was revived in an

attempt to redefine Irishness over masculine qualities. In this context, Irishness became associated with blood-sacrifice for the revival of Mother Ireland.

Seamus Deane points out two Celtic Revivals that emerged in different periods; the first one started in the late eighteenth century under the influence of European Romanticism while the second one was heralded by the Young Irelanders in the late nineteenth century; Deane marks land and language issues as the main concerns of the revivals (*Celtic* 13). These nationalist concerns about language and land reveal the cultural and political dimensions of English colonialism and support the anti-colonial motivations of the revivals. In colonised lands, desire to go back to the roots — in the Irish context, an interest in ancient Gaelic culture — is seen by the natives as a strategy of survival as a nation. At this juncture, the constructed nature of nations must be highlighted in reference to Michael Mays's argument that a nation is “the product of a distinctly modern cultural and political ideology”; that is, “nationalism” (“Cultural” 22).

Mays regards the concept of nation as a fictional construct and marks it as a tool to achieve stability in the world where all traditional social, political and economic systems are threatened (22). As of the Enlightenment, the political role of religion almost came to an end while secularism was introduced into the Western world. Therefore, modern ethnic communities in Europe needed a new ground based on mutual culture to form a state, which paved the way for the rise of cultural nationalism. Mays sketches the outline of nation-making process as follows:

Bred in the capricious interplay of cultural coalescence and local political circumstance, nationality was cobbled together from the scrap heap of lost languages, customs, myths, and traditions. And it was these remnants and fragments of a shared culture — bolstered by myths of origin and descent and of ethnic electedness, and often (literally) grounded in claims to and occupation of a sacred homeland — that formed the bases of quasi-historical ethnic identities distinguishing one “nation” from another. (*Nation* 5)

It can be argued that a common cultural background that distinguishes one national group from the other is a must to form a nation-state; in other words, people should feel a sense of belonging to a particular cultural milieu in order to come together and form a nation; this sense of belonging comes along with the “them and us” dichotomy, because

differences from other groups are also as important as similarities as put forth by some critics like Edward Said, Declan Kiberd and Luke Gibbons.¹ Moreover, sacredness of home and its occupation by foreign forces are also important motivations for the rise of nationalism. In the Irish context, the antiquarianism of late eighteenth century laid the necessary background for cultural nationalism that flourished under the leadership of the United Irishmen and the Young Ireland movements (Mays, “Cultural” 22). The Irish nationalists focused on Gaelic language and folklore that distinguished them from the English in an attempt to create a separate Irish nation. Therefore, sailing before the wind of European Romanticism, Irish intellectuals launched a nation-making process for their country and endeavoured to revive the “idealised” Gaelic past that was considered full of glory and free of sectarian enmities.

As the pioneer of Irish cultural nationalism, the Young Irelanders presented a kind of nostalgia for the country’s Gaelic past as they did not only lead a political but also a cultural movement. Young Irelanders were aware of the importance of native culture for the formation of an Irish nation and wanted to replace Catholic nationalism that equalled Catholicism with Irishness. In order to actualise their project of a more inclusive Irish identity, they revived “[t]he mythology of an ancient, noble Irish race, with a significant literary and historical tradition, more sensitive and spiritual than coarse Anglo-Saxons” and started to construct a mythical Celtic past for Ireland to bring different groups together (McCaffrey 13). However, Ireland had a unique experience different from other European countries under the influence of romantic nationalism. It was the first colony of England, so its cultural awakening and the Irish intellectuals’ attempts to revive the Gaelic language and culture can also be studied as a struggle against the coloniser, namely, as a part of the cultural decolonisation process. In this context, cultural nationalism concurs with anti-colonial nationalism in the Irish case.

In 1893, Douglas Hyde founded the Gaelic League (*Conradh na Gaeilge*) in Dublin by getting the support of Eoin MacNeill, Eugene O’Growney and Thomas O’Neill Russell. Hyde’s 1892 speech entitled “The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland” outlines the motivation of the League. In his speech, he draws attention to “the illogical position of

¹ See Said’s “Afterword” in the 1995 edition of *Orientalism*, Kiberd’s “Introduction” in *Inventing Ireland* and Gibbons’ *Transformations in Irish Culture*.

men who drop their own language to speak English, of men who translate their euphonious Irish names into English monosyllables, of men who read English books, and know nothing about Gaelic literature” (1). Accusing Irish people of becoming strangers to their own culture, Hyde points out their “mimicry” in Homi Bhabha’s term and wants them to go back to their roots, their language and customs that make the Irish “a separate nationality” (1). Throughout his speech, Hyde criticises Irish people’s endeavour to imitate the English and underlines that the English will never accept them as English in spite of their efforts, which makes going back to the essence indispensable. Most importantly, Hyde identifies the loss of the Gaelic language as the “greatest stroke of all” in the process of Anglicisation, and thus, introduces the main agenda of the Gaelic League (1).

The Gaelic League’s attempt to restore the Irish language and folklore is reminiscent of the decolonisation process discussed by the postcolonial theorist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o in his work *Decolonising the Mind* (1986). Thiong’o concentrates on the transmitting role of language and regards it as an ideological tool that is imbued with native culture, folklore, philosophy, history and literature. Therefore, it is the main component of a national identity and a tool to resist the imperial forces. When it is considered that language poses one of the main issues in postcolonial studies and is a battlefield where the coloniser clashes with the colonised for domination, the nineteenth-century Irish nationalists’ insistence on the use of Gaelic language becomes more meaningful; similar to the twentieth century postcolonial theorists, they regard language as the backbone of the national identity. It is evident that Irish nationalism inspired by European Romanticism evolved into an anti-colonial struggle in time and this anti-colonial struggle arose in different spheres of everyday life including political, social and literary ones.

By the time of the Gaelic Revival in the nineteenth century, only 14.5 % of Irish people could speak Irish (Ni Dhomhnaill 50); the number reveals the status of Gaelic language and shows that it was about to vanish. In this atmosphere, the Gaelic League did not only raise public awareness among the Irish, encouraging them to speak Irish and learn about Gaelic culture, but also inspired the Irish men of letters who gave birth to the Irish

Literary Renaissance, also known as the Irish Literary Revival. Samuel Ferguson, Standish O'Grady and Douglas Hyde's works can be considered the harbingers of the Literary Revival, since Ferguson's and O'Grady's interest in the Irish mythology and history, and Hyde's collections of folklore are the products of their cultural nationalist claims. Later, many important names including William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, Maud Gonne, John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey were inspired by their initiatives and started the Irish Literary Revival movement; however, while Hyde was insisting on the use of Irish language to preserve the ancient Celtic heritage, the writers of the literary revival gave importance to the Irish content rather than the Irish language (Marcus 219).

Under the leadership of Yeats and Lady Gregory, "idealization of rural people and recovery of pre-colonial literature and myth" came to dominate the literary agenda as Irish writers of the period were captured by nostalgia which "idealizes and romanticizes the past at the expense of the present and future" (Rickard, *Joyce's* 66). This romantic nostalgia stems from the fact that the literary revivalists regarded the Gaelic past as untouched by British imperialism and the sectarian conflicts that caused the degeneration of the Irish land and culture. Yeats, one of the pioneers of the Irish Literary Revival, carried this Irish nostalgia a step further, creating a mystical-spiritual outlook on the Gaelic past under the influence of William Blake (Raine 82-105). He re-imagined the past and adopted an anti-modernist approach as his early works became full of the lure of Druid lands and fairies. For Yeats, national literature can be created through imagination embellished with Celtic elements. In his 1893 poem "To Ireland in the Coming Times" he expresses his approach as he likens his rhymes to the works of significant nationalists like Thomas Davis, James Clarence Mangan and Samuel Ferguson, and argues that his imagination is a part of the Irish struggle for independence.

Yeats opposes the twentieth-century Western culture which consists of materialism, science, technology, racial denigration and democracy in his view. In this context, he considers Irishness and "Celticity" as reactionary to these modernist values (Rickard, "Studying" 94) and fosters "the desired fusion between Ascendancy values and a

nationalist culture based on the folk” (Deane, “Yeats” 140). He attributes the adjective “aristocratic” both to the “Ascendancy” representing political aristocracy and to the Catholic Irish peasants embodying spiritual aristocracy. Thus, he aims to eradicate the enmity between the Catholics and the Protestants by going back to the ancient Celtic past. It is clear that Yeats exemplifies not a physical struggle but a mental one against English colonialism that justifies itself through its “so-called” civilising mission in the “savage lands.” Yeats’s idealisation of rural Ireland and his rejection of modern developments complicate the status of a Yeatsian revivalist in the face of the developing Western world, since this revivalist anti-modern approach seems to confirm the colonisers’ discourse foregrounding the mission of civilisation; that is, the “civilised” Englishmen as the embodiment of reason must reform the “primitive” Irishmen driven by their emotions. For instance, Matthew Arnold explicitly reveals his Orientalist view on Gaelic culture in his work *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867). He builds his argument on a gendered discourse by associating Celtic culture with femininity, emotions, barbarism and chaos; and then, he puts the masculine Anglo-Saxon culture standing for order, power and reason in opposition to the Celts. Arnold believes that these two cultures become complementary to each other in this way. In Part IV, he records the “contradicting” natures of two cultures with the following words:

The Celt, undisciplinable, anarchical, and turbulent by nature, but out of affection and admiration giving himself body and soul to some leader, that is not a promising political temperament, it is just the opposite of the Anglo-Saxon temperament, disciplinable and steadily obedient within certain limits, but retaining an inalienable part of freedom and self-dependence; but it is a temperament for which one has a kind of sympathy notwithstanding. (109)

The extract points out the emotional and chaotic nature of the Celts that makes them unsuited to the task of ruling. For Arnold, the Celts’ emotional nature surely stems from their femininity as he states, “no doubt the sensibility of the Celtic nature, its nervous exaltation, have something feminine in them, and the Celt is thus peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy; he has an affinity to it; he is not far from its secret” (108). With these words, Arnold cannot go beyond the clichés and reveals English people’s general prejudices against the Irish during the time. Besides, Arnold also consolidates the nature/culture dichotomy accompanying the dichotomy of woman/man by connecting the feminine essence with “intimate feeling of nature” (108).

Therefore, his text consciously or unconsciously serves the “civilising mission” of the coloniser from the colonial point-of-view.

The Revivalists’ nostalgic attitude towards the Gaelic past is similar to the Renaissance scholars’ endeavour to go back to the essence of the man through the rediscovery of ancient Greek literature and philosophy. Similarly, the past represents the uncorrupted “noble” essence of the Irishmen for the Revivalists. Romanticising the “primitive” past as the golden age of Celticism, reviving the “feminine” Celtic land thanks to “masculine” Irish men’s self-sacrifice and associating the Irish peasant with spiritual aristocracy, Yeats and the early Irish Literary Revivalists aimed to strike back at the British Empire by using its own weapon. In other words, “whereas the English had called the Irish backward, superstitious and uncivilized, the Yeatsian revivalists created an idealized image which saw the land as pastoral, mystical and admirably primitive” (Kiberd, “Irish” 265). However, this approach causes the construction of Irishness over the representations created within the English colonial discourse, and it is far from creating a liberal Irish identity. Among these representations, the feminisation of the Irish land popularised by the Irish nationalists brings about much more controversy under the light of colonial and postcolonial studies.

Gendered approach to a nation is in the nature of nationalist movements, because “the national ego is intertwined with male and female ego” (Mayer 1). The gendered portrayals of nations as well as the reasons for these portrayals are deeply rooted in history and in the Irish context, the English portrayed the Irish nation by using feminine qualities. Since the very start of Irish history, Irish people have always visualised their land in the feminine form. In the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century, the nationalists created the *aisling* tradition in poetry in which the poet had a vision of the Irish nation/land embodied by a heavenly woman. Indeed, the *aisling* tradition draws its inspiration from the ancient myth of the sovereignty goddess, according to which the goddess grants sovereignty and fertility to a Celtic king under the roof of a sacred marriage (Quinn 181). The metaphorical woman character re-appears in the *aisling* poetry; however, she is either in the form of a beautiful maiden or of an old woman just to complain about Ireland’s politically-impaired situation under English colonialism. In

such a case, Ireland is represented as being in need of her brave sons' self-sacrifice to recover. Not surprisingly, the depiction of Mother Ireland in a state of mourning coincides with the start of foreign invasion in the land. For instance, the seventeenth century Irish poet Fear Flatha Ó Gnímh's poem that is entitled "The Flight of the Earls" and written upon the Ulster Plantation in the early 1600s deals with this degrading Mother Ireland image:

The same as the death of Fodla
 is the suppression of her right and her faith,
 the degradation of her free sons
 and her scholars, if lays or letters are true.

Fear of the foreign law does not permit me
 to tell her sore plight;
 this smooth land of royal Niall
 is being washed with innocent blood.
 In her is no love of feast-days, no,
 nor no recourse to the clergy:
 the mirth of her bardic companies is no more,
 the modesty of her maids is no more.

The poet associates the land with the image of Mother Ireland as can be seen in his reference to Irish goddess Fodla that is another name for the Celtic goddess Eriu. Ó Gnímh complains about the death of Gaelic Ireland under the reign of James I who brought many colonialists to the Ulster region during the early 1600s and confiscated the lands that once belonged to Gaelic landlords. The poem is an elegy for the suppressed Gaelic literature and culture under English colonialism, as can be inferred from the references to Gaelic scholars and bards that are silenced by the foreign invasion. Under the suppression of language and culture, Mother Ireland loses her beauty and youth as well as her national identity. She is reduced to an old barren woman.

It is evident that the colonial past of Ireland and the English exploitation of the land through the gender dichotomy urged the Irish to reconstruct the female image of Ireland dating back to the ancient times and to put her maternal role in the foreground. Inspired by the supernatural women of the *aisling* tradition, the early Literary Revivalists reimagined “Mother Ireland” in reference to the ancient Gaelic tradition. Eire, the Gaelic name of Ireland, comes from Eriu who marries the king of the land during his coronation and either stays young and beautiful or gets older according to the king’s success or failure; in other words, the future of the goddess is dependent on the king (Mac Cana 7-8). This female representation of Ireland and her change into an old lady under an inefficient or evil rule are being sampled in many Irish texts that originated in different periods stretching from the Medieval times to the present, which charges the woman figure with a political role from the very beginning of Irish history. Since Irish nationalist tradition accepts motherhood as a woman’s natural duty, it does not make a noteworthy separation between a woman and a mother, regarding every woman as a potential mother. Women’s reproductive power makes them a commodity of a nation in the eyes of masculine nationalism. They are not regarded as individuals but “members of specific national collectivities” and “cultural reproducers” (Davis 22-23). Thus, the feminine Ireland that is mostly referred to as “Mother Ireland” is a dominant cultural motif as well as a transmitter of national values in Irish society; in this case, it is not surprising that her depiction as an old woman seeking a hero to survive coincides with the spread of colonialism in the country. English politicians and men of letters abused Ireland’s female representation to develop their colonial discourse based on gender dichotomy, because colonialist mentality is set on the patriarchal worldview that places the white man in the centre of the system. This understanding makes colonialism and gender issue highly intertwined. As underlined by Nelson, “the process of identity formation seems to require the creation, and demonization, of a colonized Other whose vices serve to highlight the virtues of the colonizer” (17). In other words, empires must create enemies that embody their so-called opposite; and the man/woman dichotomy, one of the basics of the Western philosophy, lays the necessary background for the development of European justification for colonialism. Concordantly, an empire represents the male authority while the colonised land is seen as a woman as argued by Said in his work *Orientalism* (1978). Analysing the nineteenth-century Western writers’

works, Said claims that almost all the writers ranging from Ernest Renan to Gustave Flaubert have a mutual view on the East; that is “the separateness of the Orient, its eccentricity, its backwardness, its silent indifference, its feminine penetrability, its supine malleability” (206). Although Said concentrates on the Western perception of the East by making literary analyses on the colonial literature, his ideas about the essence of Western colonialism are applicable to the Irish case as underlined by many critics such as Seamus Deane and Declan Kiberd due to the country’s colonial past, its representation as a wife to the English husband and English arrogance in the face of the Irish.

It is clear that the gendered representations of the coloniser and the colonised evolve in reference to the Cartesian mind/body duality. Accordingly, man symbolises the mind whilst woman the body, and in the Western philosophy “the body is typically regarded as passive and reproductive but largely unproductive, an object over which struggles between its ‘inhabitant’ and others/exploiters may be possible. . . . Its inertia means that it is capable of being acted on, coerced, or constrained by external forces” (Grosz, *Volatile* 9); that is, the body incapable of being autonomous is in the service of the mind and as a battlefield, it is open to the invasions of the external world. The claim reveals the reason for patriarchal mentality that puts women under the authority of men. In this context, the feminine representation of Ireland as Mother Ireland contrasts the “male” England that is personified in the figure of John Bull. Created by John Arbuthnot, John Bull comes to stand for white Anglo-Saxon man’s fondness for reason and freedom. As a result, Ireland as a woman becomes associated with the body, emotional turmoil, barbarity and nature while England is identified with the mind, emotional stability, civilisation and culture. This gendered dichotomy between the two countries compels Ireland to be ruled by England from the English point-of-view, because the body is condemned to fall without the mind’s control.

Despite the English attempts to use the gendered image of Ireland for the colonial sake, the image took yet another twist as Irish nationalists sustained the country’s politicised femininity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, instead of refuting the feminine Ireland, the nationalists embraced her as their Mother Ireland and attributed a

political meaning to her symbolic degradation. As hyper-masculinisation arose in reply to the coloniser's humiliation, the nationalist politics "shaped by dichotomies of gender based on images of chaste and virtuous women who were to support and/or be protected by male warriors" (Banerjee 164). The degrading image of Mother Ireland in the hands of the English coloniser turned out to be an incentive for the highly "masculinised" struggle of the Irish nationalists, and the nationalist propaganda was established on Mother Ireland who could restore her youth only through the blood sacrifice of young Irish men.

This scenario was put into practice by the members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood Military Council that planned the Easter Rising in 1916. They believed that a rising for independence, even if suppressed by violence, would spread Irish nationalism among the public, encouraging them for militarist nationalism. Patrick Pearse, a fervent advocate of "blood-sacrifice" and the symbol of the Rising, was almost fascinated by the idea of self-sacrifice for his country and managed to realise his fantasy of self-sacrifice by being executed because of his participation in the Rising ("Blood"). From the prison, Pearse wrote to his mother that it was a sacrifice demanded by God as in the case of the crucifixion of Christ. Upon his execution by the English, Irish nationalists designed "post-execution posters on Dublin walls depicting Pearse in pieta position supported by Mother Erin" (Cairns and Richards 109). Pearse's poem "The Mother" reflects his idealisation of the mother figure who is proud of her sons' heroic self-sacrifice for the welfare of a greater mother; namely, Mother Ireland. In the poem, the mother directly addresses God, saying:

I do not grudge them: Lord, I do not grudge
 My two strong sons that I have seen go out
 To break their strength and die, they and a few,
 In bloody protest for a glorious thing, ... (Pearse, "Mother" 393)

There is no fixed definition of motherhood but it is a blank space that is filled with certain qualities in line with the codes of the related society. Thus, motherhood is a socially and ideologically constructed phenomenon, and in this particular poem Pearse

reconstructs not only Irish masculinity over militarist virtues (courage, strength, glory) but also the concept of Irish motherhood. The “glorious thing” that the mother refers to is the Easter Rising which is expected to lay the basis for Irish independence. From the mother’s perspective, the country’s independence takes precedence over her sons; at this juncture, Pearse draws a so-called “self-sacrificing” portrayal for her, since she is the mother that offers her children as a sacrifice to her country. However, the real victim is not the mother but the sons, because the mother gains a special status in patriarchal society by becoming a mother of a martyr, which differentiates her from other mothers. The rest of the poem continues as follows:

Lord, thou art hard on mothers
 We suffer in their coming and their going;
 And tho' I grudge them not, I weary, weary
 Of the long sorrow-And yet I have my joy:
 My sons were faithful, and they fought. (Pearse, “Mother” 393-94)

The mother utters her grief in the face of her sons’ death, but “joy” accompanies her mourning, since a martyr son fills her with pride, rather than depression. Through her martyr son, she achieves a privileged and respected political position in society and exceeds her role of motherhood in the individual level by becoming a socially prominent figure. She is the mother – the source of life – and can continue her existence in the world by bearing new generations even if her sons are dead. Actually, her politically-constructed role of motherhood requires her to raise new generations to fight and die for Mother Ireland who is the most sacred of all mothers; so, her act is within the limits of patriarchal society that tailors the role of self-sacrificing mother for her. In this regard, she fulfills her role by sacrificing her children for the land. Irish nationalists of the time idealised and even romanticised this literally “devouring” Mother Ireland image by associating her with the Virgin Mary as well as with the Medieval damsel-in-distress figure over whom the Medieval knights would prove their manhood.

Yeats, one of the most influential figures of the Literary Revival, promotes this maternal image of Ireland in his iconic play *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902) that was first staged at

the Abbey Theatre in 1902. The play features Ireland embodied in the old female body of Cathleen ni Houlihan who wants young Irish men to sacrifice themselves for her sake. In the play, Cathleen ni Houlihan visits a cottage in rural Ireland and “lures away” the young man named Michael who is about to marry. The old woman tells her sad story to the dwellers of the cottage and explains that many heroic men died for love of her, and goes on saying that “[i]f anyone would give me help he must give me himself, he must give me all” (*Cathleen* 1.210). When the masculine nationalist lens is cast aside, it becomes clear that rather than self-sacrificing, Cathleen is a devouring mother in need of her sons’ blood for her restoration. As a symbolic play, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* has an anti-colonial overtone; Ireland depicted in the form of an old woman is under the threat of colonial “male” powers. The old woman openly utters her hope to get back to her fields and to drive the strangers out of her house (1.218) and promises fame for her heroic devotees, singing that “[t]hey shall be remembered for ever, / They shall be alive for ever, / They shall be speaking for ever, / The people shall hear them forever” (1.267-72).

Mother Ireland’s emotional exploitation of Irishmen by referring to her old age as well as her lost beauty, her feminine melancholy and her status as a damsel-in-distress fostered the chivalric spirit of young Irish men, paving the way for the rise of a thoroughly “masculine” nationalism. Thus, in the hands of nineteenth-century “masculine” nationalism, she becomes a tool for the exposition of Irish masculinity as Irish motherhood is defined over the image of Cathleen ni Houlihan idealised by the male nationalists. Cairns and Richards claim that this idealisation becomes “a symbol of Irish purity opposed to English corruption,” which strengthens Mother Ireland’s political role while entrapping the mother image into a male sphere (78). From another perspective, Cathleen ni Houlihan can be taken as a femme-fatale figure; she has almost a siren-like effect on young men whom she drags into death by using her mystical appearance and so-called feminine vulnerability. Whatever her nature is, this iconic Cathleen ni Houlihan figure becomes an influential political symbol in the Irish nationalist tradition as verified by Pearse’s own words. In *The Spiritual Nation* (1916), Pearse writes that “[w]hen I was a child I believed that there was actually a woman called Erin, and had Mr. Yeats’ ‘Kathleen Ni Houlihan’ been then written and had I

seen it, I should have taken it not as an allegory, but as a representation of a thing that might happen any day in any house” (160). Pearse’s lines reveal the influence of Mother Ireland on the Irish everyday living; every Irish man suffering under English colonialism is ready to sacrifice himself for the welfare of this great mother. Thus, it is not surprising that Mother Ireland is granted a “sacred” status by the Irish nationalists and is to set a model for the definition of Irish womanhood while becoming a motivation for Irish men.

In conclusion, Irish nationalists seek a national identity during their nation-building process and the Mother Ireland image looms large during this search. Thus, the mother figure becomes a defining-factor on Irish identity in the same vein as it does on a child’s development. When the place of Mother Ireland in the nationalist discourse is considered, it becomes clear that the concept of motherhood is ideologically and culturally constructed by Irish nationalists. Since male population is in the foreground in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish nationalist movement, a highly masculine portrayal is drawn for the Irish nation and it comes to be defined over courage, knighthood and loyalty to the mother. At this juncture, it must be underlined that Irish nationalists attribute feminine qualities only to the land but not to the nation. Therefore, the feminine land becomes a tool for hyper-masculinisation of the nineteenth-century Irish nation. The myth of Mother Ireland in need of her masculine sons’ self-sacrifice to revive and her literary personification in the form of Cathleen ni Houlihan introduce the Irish mother myth to everyday life. Thus, “[t]he romanticization of Ireland, seductive and alluring as it is, inevitably goes hand in hand with the romanticization of Irish womanhood, of Irish nationhood, an ongoing cultural project to define both, which may merely serve to reinforce the gender dichotomy which continues to persist in Ireland’s cultural fabric” (Stevens and Brown 412).

CHAPTER I

READING THE IRISH MOTHER ARCHETYPE AND THE IRISH PROCESS OF SUBJECTIVITY UNDER THE LENS OF KRISTEVA

1.1 PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACH TO THE IRISH IDENTITY FORMATION

Mother Ireland image and her self-sacrificing children against the backdrop of English colonisation transform the Irish-English relations into a “family romance.”¹ In this context, the mother-child dyad as opposed to the colonising father opens Irish people’s relation with their country to a psychoanalytical reading. Although the personifications of Mother Ireland in the model of the Virgin Mary are various, including the Gaelic mythological characters like Cathleen ni Houlihan and the *seanbhean bhocht* (“the poor old woman”), the gendered representation of the land is rooted in history as discussed in the previous sections. In this respect, Mother Ireland embodied in different bodies goes beyond the sectarian conflicts and is embraced by Irish Catholic nationalists in addition to Protestant Anglo-Irish Revivalists. The common characteristic of all the Mother Ireland representations is that they feature a passive but haunting figure that blocks the development of Irish “subjectivity” in a psychological sense, causing a love-hate relationship with the land.

Julia Kristeva (1941-present) links an infant’s psychosexual development with its acquisition of linguistic skills and claims that language has two modalities: the pre-Oedipal semiotic associated with the maternal and the post-Oedipal symbolic coinciding with the paternal. Indeed, this Kristevan division of language can be based on the basic

¹ Joseph Chadwick’s definition in his essay “Family Romance as National Allegory in Yeats’s *Cathleen ni Houlihan* and *The Dreaming of the Bones*.”

dichotomy of *logos* (associated with man) and *pathos* (associated with woman)¹ rooted in the origins of the Western philosophy that forms the power relations between the sexes while producing other sexist discourses of the Western world including colonialism, racism, Eurocentrism and imperialism. Placing the man/the father/God in the centre, the Western thought system creates many “others,” starting with the (m)other. Due to all these intertwined ideologies stemming from the basic dichotomy of *logos* and *pathos*, Kristeva’s linguistic theories of subjectivity developing around the mother-child relationship can be used to understand the process of identity-formation in colonised lands. In an attempt to analyse the failure in Irish identity formation process and to explore the Irish psyche as reflected in literary works, this section of the dissertation is to use Kristeva’s theory of subjectivity that foregrounds the mother’s as well as the imaginary father’s function in identity formation, and make an allegorical reading of the Oedipal family drama in parallel to Irish history. In this way, it will introduce a new interpretation to the Irish identity-formation process interrupted by English colonialism.²

The mother-father-child relationship in the process of subjectivity can be taken as an allegory for the colonial strife between the Irish and the English over the possession of Mother Ireland representing the land in the eyes of the Irish, and this family drama can be read as the reason for Irish people’s failure in creating the “Irish” self during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Kristevan terminology, the sanctified representations of Mother Ireland/Irish mother used by the Irish nationalist discourse as part of an attack against English colonialism deprive the mother of her semiotic energy and prevent her from becoming a preparatory actor in the infant’s process of

¹ Plato and Aristotle mention *logos* and *pathos* distinction, at first. In his work *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains three modes of persuasion as *ethos* (appearance of the speaker), *pathos* (emotions) and *logos* (reasoned discourse, word). Later, *logos* comes to stand for different meanings in Christianity; the *logos* (the Word) is referred to in “the Genesis” and expresses God’s action during the creation as well as “God’s agent for judgement.” In relation to the discussions over the New Testament, “the concept of Jesus as *logos*” must also be remembered in reference to the interpretations of the Gospel of John (Edwards 103-05). As underlined by Frann Michel, French feminists like H el ene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Kristeva think that “order itself – coherence, unity, identity – is coded as masculine.” Therefore, “the feminine’s disruption or disordering of a repressive and oppressive order is potentially liberating” (“All” 171-72). In this context, the feminine is related to *pathos* that disrupts the masculine *logos* in parallel to the man/woman, the self/other dichotomy.

² Kristevan theory of subjectivity based on the semiotic and the symbolic components of language can also be applied to a linguistic study by concentrating on the usage of language in the works written by avant-garde Irish writers. However, this dissertation will make only a thematic study through a literal reading of the family relations in the chosen novels in parallel to the allegorical reading of the Irish history.

subjectivity. Besides, Irish people's failure in transition to the English symbolic¹ because of the unsolved Oedipus crisis enrages Irish men and causes the prevalence of Irish father/husband figures that are mostly drunken, ignorant or/and vulgar in their domestic spheres as portrayed in the nineteenth- and the twentieth-century Irish literature.² The impotency of Irish fathers can be explained in reference to a stronger father figure's – the English coloniser – oppression on Irish men. The failure in the parental function because of colonisation stands as another impediment against the development of a unique Irish identity, since the identity formation process of colonial subjects encompasses both individual and national levels. These two levels of self-construction are highly intertwined and must be analysed together.

When the Irish case is explored under the Kristevan lens, it is seen that the infant who is deprived of both the maternal womb and the loving father is stuck in the transitory phase of abjection situated between the semiotic and the symbolic, and it ends up being an abject³, itself. According to Kristeva, an abject must go back to the mother and use the semiotic energy of art to resurrect or else, s/he is condemned to die without being represented in the symbolic.⁴ The main reason for the abject status of the Irish is that the Irish nationalists tried to reconstruct Irishness through "mimicry"⁵ during the eighteenth

¹ In Kristeva's theory, the symbolic is the place for grammar, order and syntax. In this respect, it can be interpreted in the same way as Lacan's the Symbolic standing for the Law of the Father. Therefore, Kristeva's symbolic must be understood in parallel to the Lacanian notion of the Symbolic; from a metaphorical perspective, the symbolic is the place where bodily drives are oppressed and tried to be controlled by social codes.

² Drunken Patrick O'Shaughlin and brutal Kit Rackrent in Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800); ignorant Michael Flaherty in Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), alcoholic husband in Julia O'Faolain's *No Country for Young Men* (1980), the drunken father in McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* (1992) are only a few examples of drunken and abusive fathers/husbands of Irish literature.

³ In time, "abject" comes to cover everything that threaten the system, referring to all the margins, hybridity and chaos that fall outside the white man's centre.

⁴ Throughout the dissertation, the symbolic is regarded as a multi-levelled concept. Kristeva's understanding of the symbolic is related to the Lacanian Symbolic – with the capital 'S' – that represents the linguistic and social order while referring to the patriarchal structure dominating the human civilisation starting of the archaic times. However, with the proliferation of different civilisations based on the Law of the Father, it becomes possible to talk about varied symbolics, the centre is the father in each case, though. Thus, I will also differentiate different symbolics within the Lacanian symbolic, because each civilisation, nation, etc. tries to create its own symbolic by creating a new centre. The reason for Irish nationalists' failure in achieving the Irish "self" is that they try to exist in the Symbolic through mimicry of English "masculinity." In other words, rather than exploring the origins of their subjectivity in the semiotic realm symbolised by the feminine body of Mother Ireland, they attempt to create their own symbolic in the model of the English symbolic by accepting Mother Ireland as an "abject" mother. Even though Catholic nationalists endeavour to differentiate themselves from the Protestant English by highlighting their Catholicism, they still disregard the preparatory role of the maternal womb - that is, the semiotic - in the identity formation process. Instead, they crave for the symbolic of the Roman Church by disregarding the semiotic realm once again. In both cases, the Irish nationalists fail in achieving a liberal Irish identity, since the self is a product of both the semiotic and the symbolic as argued by Kristeva in her essay "'The Subject in Process."

⁵ In his essay "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse," Homi Bhabha defines colonial mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite"

and nineteenth centuries. They mimicked the Freudian father by disregarding the starting place of their subjectivity; that is, the maternal womb as explained in Kristeva's theory. Then, the entire nationalist project was built on controlling the maternal body and proving the masculinity of the Irish race as equal to the English father to be accepted into the symbolic. Therefore, the eighteenth- and the nineteenth-century nationalists reconstructed Mother Ireland in the image of a passive mother who needed her children's self-sacrifice for her own sake. In order to maintain her sacred position as a mother in the symbolic, this maternal image failed to liberate her children and sacrificed their subjectivity to the dominant patriarchal system defined by the colonial centre.

Kristeva builds her theory of infant's subjectivity by improving Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) and Jacques Lacan's (1901-1981) theories. However, different from them, she foregrounds the mother's preparatory role in the process of subjectivity, following the footsteps of another important psychoanalyst Melaine Klein (1882-1960). Aware of the fact that patriarchy is the dominant societal form in Europe, Kristeva "believes subjectivity is first and foremost founded upon the triadic Oedipal structure" (Gambaudo 43). The triadic Oedipal structure refers to the mother-father-child relationship as detailed by Freud in his influential psychoanalysis theory of "Oedipus complex" in which "[t]he beginnings of religion, morals, society and art converge" (*Totem* 156). In his work entitled *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Freud puts emphasis on the function of dreams to reveal the human being's unconscious feelings and thoughts that are oppressed by the superego, and introduces Sophocles's tragedy *Oedipus Rex* into the field of psychoanalysis for the first time. For Freud, legends and folk narratives have "universal validity" and shed light on the dark side of the human psyche; correspondingly, *Oedipus Rex* telling King Oedipus's murder of his father and marriage to his mother touches upon the universal themes of patricide and incest. Regarding the parents as the indispensable components of the development of infantile psychology, Freud argues that each infant fosters a desire for its opposite sex parent during the Oedipal phase of its sexual development and this incestuous desire brings

(85). Bhabha reveals the subversive nature of mimicry through a deconstructive analysis, however, it is an unintentional subversion, since the colonised want to copy the ways of the coloniser in order to achieve power, which points out the rivalry between the coloniser and the colonised.

about hatred against the other parent (“Female” 225). In his essay “The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex,” Freud claims that the psychosexual developments of boys and girls differ from each other (172). When the female child becomes aware that her mother lacks the phallus (father’s source of power), she gets angry with her mother and tries to cover her own lack by shifting her attention to the father, which Freud calls “penis envy” (“Dissolution” 178-79; “Female” 234-43). When she enters the post-Oedipal¹ phase as the super-ego emerges and societal codes are adopted, her incestuous love for the father is replaced by love for other men and the female child’s conflict is resolved. The male child’s psychosexual development progresses in another direction; he must oppress his desire as he becomes aware of the phallus of the father that the mother lacks. Afraid of being castrated by the father, the male recognises the incest taboo and gets over the Oedipus complex to step into the paternal world; in other words, to society. The recognition of the incest taboo also causes the male child to turn his back on the mother who is his first object of love (“Dissolution” 175-77).

Freud relates the dissolution of Oedipus complex to the foundation of civilisation, since it “guarantees the structural integrity of the nuclear family” (Castle 181). In the cases of both girls and boys, the repudiation of the maternal by the child supplies him/her with a proper place in society, starting his/her subjectivity. However, this act of repudiation excludes the maternal from the civilisation built by the father and strengthens Western philosophy’s association of women with nature. As can be seen, the mother figure that is defined over her lack of penis occupies a small place in Freudian theory; she appears as the first object of love that must be abandoned in time. Freud does not concentrate on the mother’s “individual” effect on the development of child by excluding her from the scene of psychoanalysis and restricting her existence to the role of an object in the pre-Oedipal phase. However, Klein, an object-relations psychoanalyst, draws attention to the importance of the mother-child relationship, as opposed to Freud. In her 1926 article “The Psychological Principles of Early Analysis,” Klein argues that Oedipus complex may emerge at an earlier phase of childhood; in such cases, the infant’s early deprivation of the maternal body may cause neurosis, affecting the process of

¹ On the basis of Freud’s arguments, the pre-Oedipal stage in psychoanalysis refers to the period before the emergence of the Oedipus complex when the child is in harmonious unity with the mother, the Oedipal stage is the time when the child suffers from the Oedipal crisis and the post-Oedipal covers the time when the crisis is solved through the formation of the super-ego and the child enters into society as a speaking subject.

subjectivity (128-30). Through her argument, Klein relates the beginning of subjectivity to the pre-Oedipal phase and highlights the importance of the maternal body as a determining factor in identity. Her discovery of the mother's function helps Kristeva's concentration on the mother figure in the process of subjectivity and paves the way for a more mother-oriented reading on the Irish identity formation process. However, since all psychoanalytical arguments are built over Freud's legacy, Freudian approach to the Irish case must first be mentioned briefly.

In his 1922 essay entitled "The Island of Ireland: A Psycho-Analytical Contribution to Political Psychology," British psychoanalyst Ernest Jones (1879-1958) makes a Freudian analysis on the Irish-English relations and supplies a model to read the Irish case as a family drama. In Jones's essay, Ireland is associated with the mother and likened to a heavenly shelter that would satisfy all the desires of the islanders. However, English colonialism on the island interrupts the harmonious union between the land and the islanders in the eyes of the Irish, taking over the separating role of the father in the infant's process of subjectivity. The harsh rule of the English on the island as of the sixteenth century and their oppression on Irish people open the historical background of the land to a Freudian reading, suggesting a possible association of the English rule with the Freudian father. In this context, the Irish land fulfilling the maternal role turns into a battlefield for the father-son conflict, and the son is forced to leave the "essence" of the mother land during his attempt to step into paternal society. Similar to the stage in the child's psychosexual development when s/he leaves the maternal womb at the cost of becoming a speaking subject, the Irish are urged to leave the maternal womb represented by the fantasised images of pre-colonial Ireland; and therefore, the lost mother image under English oppression haunts the Irish child, dragging him/her into melancholy. Melancholy shapes the discourse of the eighteenth- and nineteenth- century Irish nationalists and reignites their pre-Oedipal hatred against the (English) father who possesses the mother (the Irish land).¹ The Oedipus crisis cannot be resolved in the Irish

¹ Freud points out boys' and girls' different ways of leaving the mother in his writings (boys through castration fear and girls through penis envy) but the point is that Mother Ireland is lost both to Irish girls and boys, and the majority of Irish women who internalised the dominant nationalist ideology adopted the same discourse during their struggle against the English forces (the Oedipal crisis); in other words, the image of Mother Ireland remodelled in the body of the Virgin Mary or Cathleen ni Houlihan was accepted by Irish women as well, and shaped their understanding of Irish womanhood during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While a heroic self-sacrifice was the expectation

context, and pre-Oedipal hatred prevents Irish people from creating a liberating and liberal identity while trapping them into the Oedipal phase and blocking their subjectivity.

Lacan is another important name whose post-structural works influence the development of Kristeva's language-oriented psychoanalytic theories in the long run. He concentrates on the relation between language and the unconscious by making use of Ferdinand de Saussure's (1857-1913) linguistic theories to highlight the importance of language to analyse subjectivity. Criticising the new interest in the pre-Oedipal mother during the 1930s, Lacan claims that a return to Freud is necessary. However, he challenges Freud's argument that accepts the unconscious as the site of the instincts (Lacan, "Instance" 412-36). In his essay "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," he makes some revolutionary remarks; firstly, he points out the unconscious as the depository of linguistic structure and secondly, he argues that language "exists prior to each subject's entry into it" (413). Shattering the clear-cut opposition between the pre-Oedipal (pre-linguistic skills) and the post-Oedipal (linguistic skills) phases of the Freudian theory, these claims suggest that linguistic element of the post-Oedipal phase exists from the very beginning, since language outliving individuals is the product of centuries. In other words, the infant is exposed to the linguistic system starting from its birth; not only it constructs the language but also it is constructed by language. In this way, the pre-Oedipal phase is presented as a part of the symbolic realm of language, not outside of it. For Lacan, the subject comes into existence through language and Freud's theories have a linguistic dimension, thus "in investigating the unconscious the analyst is always both using and examining language – in effect, Freudian psychiatry is entirely a verbal science" (Barry 106). In other words, the subject's use of language, his/her use of allusions, symbols and metaphors are the analyst's tools for going into the depths of human psyche, proving the function of language in psychoanalysis.

In addition to his discovery of the linguistic structure embedded in the unconscious, Lacan's theory of the three-registers – the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real – and

from Irish men, Irish women were expected to follow the Mother Ireland model created by the symbolic. In both cases, the Mother Ireland image was unreachable and a product of fantasy.

his theory of the mirror stage in a child's psychical development lay the groundwork for Kristeva's theory of the semiotic and the symbolic. In Lacan, the Symbolic refers to culture evolving in parallel to language, thus it represents social order, societal rules and the law. In his essay "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," Lacan underlines the importance of language in subjectivity and asserts that "[m]an thus speaks, but it is because the symbol has made him man." Moreover, he claims that civilisation is founded upon the "primordial Law" that is "the Law . . . superimposes the kingdom of culture on that of a nature" (229). In other words, language moulds human beings into a "man" as it is only through linguistic abilities that human beings can learn societal rules, prohibitions and taboos to step into culture.

In opposition to the Symbolic, lies the Lacanian Real that is "beyond all our meaning-making systems" and "outside the world created by the ideologies society uses to explain existence." Thus, it is "the uninterpretable dimension of existence" (Tyson 32). The main problem in defining the Real is its resistance to symbolisation in the linguistic system, because the Real belongs to an "undifferentiated" time experienced by the infant (Lacan, "Aggressiveness" 91). In *Bodies That Matter* (1993), Judith Butler compares Lacan with Kristeva and claims that "the materiality of the signifier" in language is related to "the displaced repetition of the materiality of the lost maternal body," so "the referential impulse of language is to return to that lost originary presence, the maternal body" which, she argues, convergences to the Real "with the unthematizable maternal body in Lacanian discourse" (70). Although Lacan does not overtly associate the Real with the mother, it can be claimed that the search and the attempts for a meaning in the linguistic order point out a "desire" to go back to the lost roots and the sense of wholeness; Freud theorises it as the "oceanic feeling."¹ When the infant acquires linguistic skills, it loses the memory of its closeness to the Real. Still, the Real stays somewhere in the personal archive; it can be sensed occasionally but cannot be pronounced, thus it "terrifies" human beings, reminding that reality lies beyond the human "capacity to know" (Tyson 32). In other words, sensing the existence of the Real is traumatic in everyday life.

¹ In *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), Freud claims that oceanic feeling exists before the formation of the ego, during the child's unity with the mother through breastfeeding, because the infant has no sense of self at this stage.

The infant's undifferentiated time in the Real comes to an end through the mirror stage of the Imaginary realm that establishes a link between the infant and its environment, preceding the infant's entrance into the Symbolic. In his seminar "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," Lacan details the mirror stage covering the period between six and eighteen months. Accordingly, the infant recognises itself in the mirror as "unified" as opposed to its feeling of fragmentation that stems from its failure in controlling its body. Seeing its specular image, the infant realises that its body is not in fragments but in "wholeness" and "unity." This specular image of unity constitutes the "Ideal-I" that humankind seeks to fulfill throughout their lives and triggers narcissism in the infant; still, the infant senses the conflict between its specular image and its experience of imperfection because of its inability to coordinate the bodily functions; this is the conflict between the *Innenwelt* (the inner world) and the *Umwelt* (the environment). Lacan explains the psychological state of the infant experiencing the mirror stage as follows:

the mirror stage is a drama whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation — and, for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to what I will call an "orthopedic" form of its totality — and to the finally donned armor of an alienating identity that will mark his entire mental development with its rigid structure. Thus, the shattering of the *Innenwelt* to *Umwelt* circle gives rise to an inexhaustible squaring of the ego's audits. ("Mirror" 78)

The extract defines the formation of the ego, indeed. The infant feels insufficiency due to its failure in bodily coordination, and the failure makes it panic. In order to recover from this sense of fragmentation, it identifies itself with the specular image and creates the ideal "I." Therefore, the mirror stage is both destructive and healing; it is destructive, since the image of unity contradicts the infant's inability to control its body, causing frustration in the infant but it is also healing, since the infant develops the ideal "I" to ward off the danger of fragmentation by believing in its imaginary wholeness. At this juncture, it can be argued that the "I" is not real but fictional, and its main task is to prevent the infant's fall back into the state of fragmentation. However, through the creation of the fictional "I," the infant eternally loses its chance of reaching the truth embedded in the unconscious; namely, the Real. If the neo-natal phase is associated with the Lacanian Real, it becomes evident that the loss of blissful unity with the

mother is irreparable in the subject's life; since it is forgotten, it cannot be represented in the language system. Thus, it becomes a source of nostalgia, mourning and melancholy.

In *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984) Kristeva builds her concept of the semiotic *chora* on the legacy of these earlier debates and reads humankind's psychosexual development in parallel to his/her linguistic development. She highlights two dimensions of language as the semiotic and the symbolic that are in continual interaction with each other, generating the signifying process important for the formation of the subject. The major difference of Kristeva's theory from Lacan's is her inclusion of the corporeal into linguistics on the grounds that bodily drives do not fall outside language (Oliver, *Reading* 3). Borrowing the term *chora* from Plato's dialogue *Timaeus*¹, Kristeva resembles it to the maternal womb and defines its ambiguous nature as follows:

The *chora* is not yet a position that represents something for someone (i.e., it is not a sign); nor is it a *position* that represents someone for another position (i.e., it is not yet a signifier either); it is, however, generated in order to attain to this signifying position. Neither model nor copy, the *chora* precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm. (*Revolution* 26)

The quotation gives neither the status of a sign nor of a signifier to the *chora*; rather, it is situated prior to the linguistic order as being the first stage of an infant's development. Through its ambivalent and primordial existence, the *chora* preceding the linguistic sign is the place of an eternal signifying process where "the subject-in-process" is produced ("Subject"). Besides, Kristeva regards the semiotic *chora* as being ruled by the bodily drives, claiming that "[d]rives involve pre-Oedipal semiotic functions and energy discharges that connect and orient the body to the mother" (*Revolution* 27). The bodily drives are freely moving in the semiotic *chora*, bonding the infant to the maternal body without the fear of paternal censorship and supplying an

¹ In Plato's dialogue *Timaeus* discussing the origins of the universe, Timaeus lists "forms", "sensibles" and "the receptacle" as the classes of beings. The *chora* comprising the four elements even before the creation of the universe is a receptacle and exists from the very beginning. Plato explains it as "the receptacle, and in a manner the nurse, of all generation." This third category is "neither earth nor fire nor air nor water, but an invisible and formless being which receives all things, and in an incomprehensible manner partakes of the intelligible." In the text, Plato directly associates it with the mother. Besides, it is evident that the receptacle is more like a maternal womb with her ability to encompass things.

ecstatic unity with the (m)other. As stated by Kelly Oliver, an important Kristevan scholar, Kristeva's aim is to "reinscribe language within the body, arguing that the dynamics that operate the Symbolic are already working within the material of the body and the presymbolic imaginary" and the aforesaid body is the body of the mother represented by the *chora* (Reading 3). In addition to the free movement of drives, Kristeva also draws attention to the importance of the semiotic elements in the *chora*. Associating the semiotic *chora* with an infant's pre-Oedipal stage, Kristeva points out its "vocal or kinetic rhythm" which creates the basics of speech like gestures, rhythms, tones, melody, etc.

Kristeva argues that the corporeality of the infantile experience of the semiotic *chora* reveals itself through "the cry, the sounds, and the gestures of the baby" while it perpetuates in the adult discourse through "rhythm, prosody, word-games, the no-sense of sense, laughter" (qtd. in Turkle 82).¹ These semiotic elements in the communication system prove the status of the *chora* as the prime place preparing the infant for its entrance into the symbolic that corresponds to Lacan's the Law of the Father; therefore, the *chora* is also the place where subjectivity starts. The pre-Oedipal status of the Kristevan *chora* situated before the child's separation of the (m)other from its own self can be related to the Lacanian Real that belongs to an "undifferentiated" time period in an infant's life (Lacan, "Aggressiveness" 91). However, while Lacan's the Real is fixed in an unknowable time and "always *in its place*, resistant to any process of transfer or mediation," the drives and energy flows in Kristeva's semiotic *chora* always imprints the language (Margaroni, "Revolution" 13-4). In other words, Lacan's the Real cannot be represented in the language system, because it is lost in the unconscious and does not have a corresponding signifier in the Symbolic. Thus, it can exist only as meaningless and destabilising eruptions.² Meanwhile, Kristeva's semiotic *chora* is a component of

¹ The original text is "Sujet dans la langage [sic] et pratique politique" and can be found in Armando Verdiglione's work in French that is *Psychanalyse et Politique*. See page 62 of the French text for detailed information.

² Beckett's use of language is a good example for the intervention of the Real in everyday language. As can be seen in the last sentence of *The Unnamable* "If I gave up! If only I could give up! Before beginning, before beginning again! (What breathlessness! That's right, ejaculations! That helps you on, that puts off the fatal hour. No? The reverse? I don't know.) Start again, in this immensity, this obscurity: go through the motions of starting again - you who can't stir, you who never started. (You the who?) (Go through the motions? What motions? You can't stir)," the narrator's voice is constantly interrupted by the sense of the Real, which plants suspicion in the unity of the self, pointing out the other within the self as revealed through the use of brackets. This voice of the other belongs to the Real, it destabilises the subject through its interruption. Besides, the semiotic elements in language like the repetitions, the unusual intonations sensed through punctuation as well as the fragmentations are rooted in the Real.

language (on the grounds that the mother is a speaking subject and constructs her child's subjectivity linguistically) although it resembles Lacan's the Real in terms of its visible semiotic eruptions in the symbolic modality. Yet, different from Lacan, Kristeva does not accept the intrusion of the semiotic only as destructive but also as generative and artistic. The twentieth century avant-garde literature in addition to the rhythmic and melodious structure of poetry can be given as examples for the creative results of the semiotic intrusion (*Powers* 15-25).

While putting forth her theory of the semiotic and the symbolic, Kristeva's major aim is to explain the formation of the subject at the "intersection" of corporeality, linguistics and social relations. Thus, Plato's concept of *chora*

enables Kristeva to conceptualize this intersection both spatially (as the 'in-between' produced by the ambiguous relatedness of two always already socialized bodies: that is, the body of the not-yet-subject and that of its [m]other); and temporally (as the beginning before 'the Beginning,' the mobile origin 'before' the imposition of 'the Word'). Its function, then, is to displace the speaking subject, (re)tracing its emergence not only 'before' *logos* but also, in returning it to the maternal body, beyond the Phallus as the structuring principle of the symbolic order. (Margaroni, "Lost" 79)

As opposed to the historical tendency of the Western philosophy, Kristeva carries the start of the subjectivity process beyond the hierarchical and patriarchal sphere embodied in the concept of *logos*. Instead, she claims that the semiotic *chora* with its ambiguous and heterogeneous nature predates the *logos*. It is autonomous¹ and can stay beyond the touch of the symbolic standing for the language system characterised by syntax, grammatical rules and mathematical formulations; conversely, the language system is founded upon the legacy of the semiotic *chora* and can never cast it out. It can only urge the subject to regulate the semiotic energy, so that s/he can be accepted into the symbolic order. However, it cannot guarantee the complete expulsion of the semiotic energy from the symbolic. As feminist scholar Toril Moi emphasises in relation to Kristeva's theories, the semiotic energy continues to exist in the language system by forming "the heterogeneous, disruptive dimension of language" through the use of "contradictions, meaninglessness, disruption, silences and absences" (161). It is evident

¹ Kristeva openly claims that "there are nonverbal signifying systems that are constructed exclusively on the basis of the semiotic (music, for example)" (*Revolution* 24).

that the semiotic is an inevitable part of the meaning-creation process according to Kristeva, because meaning is the product not only of utterance but also of the semiotic components related to the body. In this context, the symbolic “encompasses everything to do with communicative discourse, especially utterances with propositional content which *say* something (*to* someone)”, but the semiotic is “the nondiscursive aspect of meaning and subjectivity” and carries out “the less visible role of tone, gesture, and rhythm” (Beardsworth 25). However, the semiotic is still a complementary part of the communication system. Therefore, subjectivity is the result of the interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic realms of language.

The link between the semiotic *chora* and the maternal body as underlined by Kristeva makes her psychoanalytical theories applicable to the Irish context due to the Irish land-maternal body trope coded in the Irish collective consciousness. Jones’s aforesaid essay “The Island of Ireland” starts by recording the different attitudes of Wales, Scotland and Ireland in the face of the English rule in an attempt to claim that Ireland’s geographical position as a separate island and the islander’s psychology are influential in pitting the Irish enmity against England, because the geographical status fosters some “complexes” in the Irish islanders:

The complexes to which the idea of an island home tends to become attached are those relating to the ideas of woman, virgin, mother and womb, all of which fuse in the central complex of the womb of a virgin mother. This means, of course, one’s own birth-place. In the secret recesses of his heart every male being cherishes the thought that his mother is a virgin, this representing the repudiation of the father which psycho-analysis has shown to be a normal constituent of the universal Oedipus-complex. (401)

Living in a patriarchal society, Jones mainly focuses on the maternal image of Ireland in the mind of the Irish men. According to this image constructed by the male fantasy, Ireland is not only a mother but also a virgin. In other words, her body stays intact and in unity¹ in spite of giving birth, which sanctifies her place in patriarchal society. Also, her intact body and her capacity of giving birth without male touch end the father’s claim on the mother’s body, and thus it liberates the child from paternal oppression and

¹ Heidegger defines *logos* as a place of wholeness and unity in the texts of *Gesamtausgabe* (see *Thinking the Poetic Measure of Justice* by Charles Bambach for a detailed discussion). Unity and intact body embodied by men is an important notion in the Western philosophy.

fear of incest. The image of the virgin mother in unity with her child as a construct of the pre-Oedipal Irish fantasy triggers the Irish to regard the English usurpation of the land as a violation of the maternal body, which starts the irresolvable Oedipus crisis of the Irish.

Jones's essay depicts a heavenly island image for Ireland that presents delicious food to her residents and fulfills all their demands. It is clear that in the Irish collective consciousness, the imagery of the Irish land personified by Mother Ireland is constructed similar to the mythological and literary representations of heavenly islands. That is, Ireland is an Edenic island offering satiation to her children in an isolated atmosphere. Jones makes an analogy between the heavenly island image and the foetus in the mother's womb, and states that "[t]he notion that such a life is possible is not so fantastic and pretentious as it may appear; we all actually experienced it at one period and we simply desire to return to this experience" (406). In other words, all human beings start their existence in the maternal womb and the traumatic experience of losing the secure maternal haven haunts their memory throughout their lives. Like in Freud's pre-Oedipal stage, Irish nationalists imagined Mother Ireland and her children in blissful unity during the pre-colonial past as *jouissance*¹ dominated their spirit while all the needs necessary for survival were met by the mother. Jones writes that this fantastic image of the island is the reflection of the "unconscious memories of the mother's womb and breast" (407). While these memories cause the glorification of the pre-Oedipal unity, the mother-child unity must be terminated for an individual identity.

According to her theory of abjection as detailed in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980), the infant's union with the (m)other should come to an end through the infant's expulsion of the (m)other to draw the boundary between the self and the other (5-7). Thus, abjection is the first condition for being a subject and it requires the intervention of a loving "imaginary father"² rather than a threatening Freudian father as discussed in *Tales of Love* (1983) by Kristeva. In the Irish historical context, the English

¹ In "God and Jouissance of the Woman" Lacan claims that women have "in relation to what the phallic function designates of *jouissance*, a supplementary *jouissance*" which is a bodily *jouissance* standing "beyond the phallus" (144-45). This *jouissance* belongs to the time of perfect unity of the mother and the infant, and can be experienced by both men and women.

² Kristeva builds her notion of the imaginary father on the legacy of Freud's "father in individual prehistory" with whom the child's primary identification occurs.

occupation standing for the paternal intervention, which can be considered as representing the linguistic system, brutally terminated the unity between the land and the Irish; namely, between Mother Ireland and her children. Moreover, this brutal father did not accept the Irish to his symbolic by labelling the Irish land and her children as abjects. The paternal intervention of the English urging the Irish to accept “the abject maternal body” was a violent one. In *Tales of Love*, Kristeva claims that a subject cannot come into existence without the continual interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic based on “love,” which requires the intervention of a loving father (26). Accordingly, the child passes into the symbolic only through an identification with the imaginary father. Oliver explains the imaginary father as “a screen for the mother’s love” and summarises this transition as “a move from the mother’s body to the mother’s desire through the mother’s love” (*Reading* 70). For Kristeva, the imaginary father carries both feminine and masculine characteristics as “a father-mother conglomerate” (*Tales* 40), because he is situated before the Lacanian mirror stage and the intervention of the Freudian father. In this respect, he belongs to the semiotic sphere which is already part of the symbolic as the semiotic is associated with the mother who is a speaking subject.

One of the problems related to the failure in creating the Irish self is the lack of the imaginary father, because in parallel to Kristeva’s argument, it is clear that no infant leaves the mother’s secure sphere without the intervention of a loving father. In this context, it can be claimed that English colonisers fulfilling the role of a strict Oedipal father interrupted the psychological development and identity-formation process of the Irish (who can be regarded as the colonising father’s children in the colonial discourse) and imposed the “abject image of Mother Ireland” on the children, rather than letting them “abject the maternal.” As a result, England’s usurpation of the Irish land nursed an unquenchable Oedipal grudge in Irish nationalists, triggering their aggressive fighting tactics and desire for patricide in a Freudian sense.¹ Without a chance for exploring their own “Irish” subjectivity through identification with the imaginary father, Irish people found themselves in the midst of a fierce battle against the English over their homeland. Since the mother figure becomes the infant’s first love object during its psychosexual

¹ The time period of this grudge starts with the colonisation of the land by the English in the 15th century, so the Oedipal family triangle is applicable to the society of the fifteenth century Ireland as well.

development, Mother Ireland turned into a contested territory between the two camps throughout Irish history. Rather than recognising the castration threat of the Oedipal father (it enables the entrance into the Law of the Father), Irish nationalists wanted to rival this Oedipal father represented by the English through re-modelling their “selves” in a highly masculine and militaristic image, mimicking the English. At this juncture, Mother Ireland that was defined as abject within the limits of the English discourse had to be reconstructed and idealised by the Irish who foregrounded her maternity rather than her femininity. As a result, the pre-colonial Mother Ireland dismissed as an abject figure by the coloniser was replaced by the new image of Mother Ireland reconstructed by the Irish who would mimic the patriarchal discourse of the English symbolic under the colonial oppression. Since then, the new mother remodelled on the Virgin Mary haunts the national memory as the “usurped” object of love, transforming into an image of fantasy in Irish culture.

1.2 KRISTEVA’S PERSPECTIVE ON THE VIRGIN MOTHER: WORTH FIGHTING FOR!

As explained in the previous section on Lacan’s theory, the Imaginary is the pre-linguistic phase when the child is free from the societal codes and values embedded in language, and it covers the Oedipus crisis preparing the background for the process of socialisation. In parallel to the acquisition of language skills, the child steps into the language system – namely, into the Symbolic realm and s/he passes into the Law of the Father, which marks the end of the mirror stage. The child is a speaking subject, then and the ideal “I” in the mirror is replaced by the social “I.” Transmitting the social codes and prohibitions to the subject, language creates a new reality for him/her. Meanwhile, the child’s ability to symbolise through his/her language skills brings about the loss of the mother as highlighted by Gregory Castle:

Symbolization means that a sign takes the place of the thing. To symbolize therefore is to give up the object. If the longing for re-fusion with the mother defines the Imaginary dimension of the psyche, the entry into the Symbolic order through the “Name-of-the-Father” installs the mother in the realm of the REAL – a domain of primal needs and the unattainable materiality of experience – where she becomes resistant to symbolization. (184)

In other words, after the child becomes subjected to the Law of the Father, s/he must leave his/her incestuous relationship with the mother to obey the societal rules. Therefore, the union with the mother stays in the primordial past as the mother turns into a lost object of love. For Lacan, what is pre-Oedipal is lost to the subject, because it is pushed back into the darkness of the unconscious; in this way, the mother/feminine is dismissed from the language system, namely, from the Lacanian Symbolic. Lacan argues that the loss of the mother initiates subjectivity (Gambaudo 113). Different from Lacan, Kristeva attempts to find out this lost/repressed maternal element instead of casting it aside, following Klein's footsteps. Associating the semiotic *chora* with the mother, Kristeva locates the maternal figure in the process of subjectivity and claims that the semiotic aspect of language cannot be suppressed, since the semiotic and the symbolic are interwoven in the signifying process of language. Kristeva points out "the necessary dialectic between the two modalities of the signifying process, which is constitutive of the subject," to underline that the subject is "*both semiotic and symbolic*, no signifying system he produces can be either 'exclusively' semiotic or 'exclusively' symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both" (*Revolution* 24). The traces of pre-Oedipal drives in language like gestures, silences and rhythm prove that the maternal cannot be completely omitted from the paternal linguistic realm, since it helps the construction of the subject in the linguistic system.

Kristeva's main challenge is against "the logocentric bias that has taken hold on Western thought and has infiltrated the area of psychoanalysis, compelling us to posit the 'Word' at the beginning" (Margaroni, "Lost" 80). Although the subject is the product of both the semiotic and the symbolic, the Western philosophy disregards the semiotic dimension of language and regards the Word (*logos*) as the beginning of subjectivity through associating it with the law of the father. In this context, the Freudian psychoanalysis concentrates on the Oedipal family structure while overlooking the function of the semiotic represented by the (m)other. Yet, this tendency is not surprising for the times Freud lived in, during which the traditional family structure headed by the prohibiting father would represent patriarchy in the microcosmic level. Kristeva endeavours to find out the anthropological reasons for the expulsion of the

maternal from the content of civilisation that is defined by patriarchy. Therefore, in her work *Powers of Horror* she explores the process of subjectivity in parallel to the ritual separation from the (m)other in ancient patriarchal societies. Different from her dominant linguistic approach to subjectivity in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, in this work, she refers to anthropological and archaeological studies on female corporeality to track down the cult of archaic mother and her expulsion from the symbolic realm through the act of “abjection.”

Kristeva’s notion of abjection can be considered humankind’s defence mechanism against the menace coming from the moment before the primal repression¹ to threaten both the imaginary boundary between the subject and the object, and the meaning created in the symbolic. Kristeva defines abjection as follows:

We may call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it—on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger. But also because abjection itself is a composite of judgment and affect, of condemnation and yearning, of signs and drives. Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be—maintaining that night in which the outline of the signified thing vanishes and where only the imponderable affect is carried out. (*Powers* 9-10)

Kristeva’s own definition of abjection draws attention to the ambiguous and threatening nature of the abject material that comes from the pre-Oedipal (or pre-objectal) time. Indeed, it is the time in the semiotic sphere when the infant is in the semiotic *chora* without having the sense of the self and the (m)other. Since Kristeva associates the semiotic sphere with the mother, abjection refers to the infant’s process of separation from the maternal body so as to create its own self. Herein, it is important to note that Kristeva means a corporeal separation from the (m)other; yet, it is not a clear-cut psychological separation since the semiotic is already embedded into our entity throughout our formation in the maternal womb. Kristeva traces the act of abjection back to the primitive societies and argues that through abjection, these societies “marked out a precise area of their culture in order to remove it from the threatening world of animals

¹ For Kristeva, primal repression occurs in a period before the emergence of the ego, its objects and representations as well as the conscious and the unconscious (*Powers* 10-11).

or animalism, which were imagined as representatives of sex and murder” (13). The quotation reveals the role of abjection in drawing boundaries between the self and the other; therefore, abjection can also be regarded as humankind’s first attempt to exclude animalism from his/her self.¹ In Freudian sense, the repression of the id is required for the sake of stability in human society; thus, it is the first boundary between nature and civilisation.

Kristeva detects the same act of abjection in the individual psychological development, claiming “[t]he abject confronts us . . . this time within our personal archaeology, with our earliest attempts to release the hold of maternal entity even before existing outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language” (13). In Kristevan theory, abjection takes place just after the infant’s expulsion from the *chora* and just before its entrance into Lacan’s narcissistic mirror stage which requires the infant’s awareness of itself as a separate entity in the mirror and its recognition of the symbolic in the specular image of the adult “other.” Like the mirror stage, abjection is also defined as “a precondition of narcissism” by Kristeva; it is the first condition of being accepted to the symbolic (13). However, as opposed to Freud and Lacan, Kristeva argues that the mother figure cannot be considered outside society (as discussed by Freud) or language (as discussed by Lacan). Firstly, the mother as a speaking person is an agent of the linguistic system and contributes to the development of the subject through her ordering functions. Kristeva states that the maternal body has a kind of regulating system² that precedes the symbolic law, because the mother organises the “oral and anal drives” of the infant and prepares it for the symbolic law (*Revolution* 27). Namely, the mother regulates the infant’s feeding and excretion functions, which can be considered the first step of becoming a socialised body. In this respect, the infant’s act of abjection must mean the termination of the symbiotic link between the infant and the maternal body, rather than the complete abjection of the mother figure/the feminine.

¹ Because of this division, feminist scholars criticise Kristeva, claiming that she supports the Freudian dichotomies of woman/man, nature/civilisation, etc. and defines woman only through the notion of maternity. Although her argument in *Powers of Horrors* can be discussed in this vein, her emphasis on the oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic and her attempt to include the maternal figure into the process of subjectivity reveal that she points out the necessary oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic elements of language to create a meaning in the symbolic realm.

² In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva argues that the *chora* associated with the maternal womb has a regulating function because “‘concrete operations’ precede the acquisition of language, and organize preverbal semiotic space according to logical categories, which are thereby shown to precede or transcend language” (27).

Secondly, even the physical abjection of the maternal “can never be fully obliterated but hovers at the border of the subject’s identity, threatening apparent unities and stabilities with disruption and possible dissolution” as underlined by Elizabeth Gross (“Body” 86). Since the infant’s subjectivity starts in the semiotic *chora* – namely, in the pre-Oedipal stage – the subject cannot put its experience of the *chora* into the words. Yet, the memory of its separation from the mother as well as its experience of the semiotic in the maternal sphere haunt the unconscious of the subject throughout its existence. Thus, even an adult’s language is always threatened by eruptions of semiotic energy. Gross explains Kristeva’s insistence on the haunting image of the abject as follows:

Her point is that it is impossible to exclude the threatening or anti-social elements with any finality. They recur and threaten the subject not only in those events Freud described as the ‘return of the repressed’ – that is, in psychological symptoms – they are also a necessary accompaniment of sublimated and socially validated activities, such as the production of art, literature, and knowledges, as well as socially unacceptable forms of sexual drives. Even in the most sacrosanct, purified, and socially sanctioned of activities, the unclean and the improper must be harnessed. The subject’s recognition of this impossibility provokes the sensation and attitude that she calls ‘abjection.’ (“Body” 86-7)

By way of explanation, Kristeva’s abject is inside the everyday life without necessarily being labelled as a “psychical symptom,” although it intimidates the subject and causes him/her to estrange him/herself from the abject material. Kristeva also claims that abjection appears not only during early childhood but whenever the subject recognises a threat shattering the border between the acceptable and the unacceptable, the pure and the impure, the self and the other. Accordingly, the act of abjection has two levels; in the first archaic level, the infant rejects the maternal body to constitute its separate body and identity while the second level of abjection occurs in the face of a possible threat that may drag the speaking subject into fragments (a pre-signification process). This level of abjection¹ helps ejaculating “the other” inside the self to stay clean and intact within the symbolic. Therefore, abjection appears as a reaction when the semiotic “other” reminds itself by overacting the “stable” self in the symbolic; the appearance of

¹ The act of abjection may become physically concrete with the feelings/acts of fear, loathing and vomiting at the sight of filth, a corpse or any other object that can pollute the body of the speaking subject. For example, food loathing (of the impure food defined by religions) is the archaic form of abjection. Food taken orally can transgress the boundary of the clean and proper body (Kristeva, *Powers* 11-13).

the abject destabilises and disrespects the borders. Under these circumstances, abjection turns into the speaking subject's strategy to maintain his/her imaginary borders that are drawn during the Lacanian mirror stage. However, as underlined by Gross, the confrontation with the abject "other" has both a generating and a destructive effect, and its double nature can be taken as something positive and inspiring for artistic articulations while it extends beyond the societal norms imposed by the symbolic. In this respect, Kristeva does not ascribe a completely negative meaning to the semiotic (m)other as done by Freud and Lacan; rather, the confrontation can be turned into something artistic pushing the limits of the symbolic realm.

Experience of the semiotic realm is a must for subjectivity as Kristeva's own words suggest: "Obviously, I am only like someone else; mimetic logic of the advent of the ego, objects, and signs. But when I seek (myself), lose (myself), or experience *jouissance* – then 'I' is heterogeneous" (*Powers* 10). Her statement reveals her support for heterogeneous identities over the homogeneous ones, which can be explained through her belief in heterogeneity – the union of the self with the (m)other – as the creator of individuality. When Lacan's argument associating *jouissance* with the woman's body is considered, it is evident that the maternal *chora* where all human beings experience *jouissance* makes the difference in the formation of the ego and causes "individuality" by preventing the formation of a "mimicking" ego. Thus, the movement between the semiotic and the symbolic produces the "self." In line with Kristeva's theory, it can be claimed that separation from the (m)other is a must to exist as a speaking subject in the symbolic, but it does not necessarily mean a violent suppression of the semiotic under the symbolic, because the subject becomes intertwined with the semiotic when s/he starts to emerge in the maternal womb and it is the semiotic that creates individuality.

All the discussions made by Freud, Lacan and Kristeva reveal that woman's maternal body urges patriarchal societies to exclude the feminine/the mother from the symbolic, proving that the mother figure with her prolificacy becomes an enigma persisting for centuries. As a part of patriarchal order, colonial discourse also uses the same enigmatic and grotesque image of femininity for its own benefit. When Irish history is scrutinised,

it is seen that the gendered representation of Ireland was a useful tool for the English colonial agenda that was mainly built on the dichotomies of male/female civilisation/savagery¹ and Protestant /Catholic. Especially, during the Victorian period, the English constructed their national identity over manliness that ascribed them a right to rule the others (Valente 8). Equating themselves with reason, civilisation and virility, the English associated the Irish with emotions, barbarity and femininity; in other words, throughout the years of colonisation, Irishness was defined around the lack of penis as in the case of the mother in the Freudian Oedipal triangle. In this context, an analogy between the relationships of father-child and of coloniser-colonised can also be established because of the sexist and hierarchical core of colonial mentality; thus, the colonial identity formation process can be read in reference to the Oedipal family drama as the maternal body (allegorically, the Irish land) turns into a battlefield for subjectivity (independence and Irish identity).

Claiming that identity is “a matter of negotiation and exchange,” Declan Kiberd records that “the English helped to invent Ireland” by considering it the feminine other to themselves (*Inventing* 1). That is, the Irish nationalist politicians and intellectuals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reconstructed the Irish identity over Mother Ireland’s “lack” of penis. Against the manliness of English identity, the nationalists adopted “exaggerated” masculinity, so that they could substitute the so-called lack to fight against the “masculine” English colonialism. In the end, they turned Irish nationalism into “muscular nationalism”² based on militarism and male heroism. Seamus Deane also emphasises the effect of the English on the Irish identity and states that “*mutatis mutandis*, a copy of that by which it felt itself to be oppressed” prevented Irish nationalism from evolving into a liberating movement (“Introduction” *Nationalism* 8). In other words, whenever Irish nationalists attempted to free themselves from the oppression of the English coloniser standing for the Oedipal father, they started to “mimic” the ways of the father in order to fight against him and to create an alternative to the English symbolic.³ Yet, this alternative symbolic they tried to create ended up as

¹ See the section “Rise of Irish Nationalism: Mother Ireland Is Calling You!” for detailed information.

² Sikata Banerjee coins the term in her work *Muscular Nationalism: Gender, Violence and Empire in India and Ireland, 1914-2004*.

³ Here, the symbolic realm refers to the culture and language of the coloniser while the repressed Gaelic culture can be considered as the semiotic realm in the colonial context.

a mediocre copy of the English symbolic that was dominated by the binary oppositions rooted in the dichotomy of man/woman.

Valente claims that the Irish were “caught in a dynamic of identification and rivalry with the English over the terms of ethnic (self-) definition, which were vital in turn to the struggle for national self-determination” (19). Use of the word “identification” that connotes positive emotional inclination towards the model person is not correct with regard to the fierce competition between the English and the Irish. In this context, it is better to call it Irish “mimicry” of English masculinity, which hints at continual rivalry as well. According to Freud’s “Oedipus Complex” detailed in the “Dream” lectures of *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, while a male child identifies himself with the father to step into society (the symbolic) during the dissolution of the Oedipus crisis, he does not challenge him but recognises his defeat in the face of the father’s castration threat and learns to replace his first object of love (the mother) with another woman. However, during the years of colonisation in Ireland, enmity between the coloniser English and the colonised Irish did not fade away, but ignited. The Oedipus complex could not be dissolved through the castration threat directed by the colonising Oedipal father, so the Irish were not accepted into the symbolic defined by the English. As a result, the Oedipus crisis of the Irish and their desire to reveal their unique Irish nature differentiating them from the English father caused a great dilemma. McDonald defines the Irish dilemma with the following words:

If the ‘effeminate’ Irish character— emotional and irrational – seemed to render it unfit for self-government in English eyes, these qualities could be recast as spiritual and idealistic, demonstrating Irish distinctiveness not just from Britain, but from a debased and materialistic modern world. At the same time, however, Irish ‘fitness for freedom’ demanded the normative manliness extolled in Britain. The Irish needed to show themselves to be strong, ordered, enterprising and pragmatic. So Irish nationalist ideology and by extension the literary Revival needed to embrace contradictory values, establishing themselves as both feminine enough to be a distinctly Celtic nation and manly enough for self-government. (73)

Therefore, the Irish followed in the footsteps of patriarchal civilisations to resolve this dilemma and treated the feminine and the maternal as the same to submerge the threatening feminine qualities within the notion of maternity and to create the cult of Irish motherhood. So as to restore Mother Ireland’s “abject” status in the perspective of

the English coloniser, the Irish revivalists and nationalists associated Mother Ireland with mythological and religious personalities, extolled her name and mystified her femininity, which granted a sacred status to Mother Ireland, differentiating her from ordinary women while sanctifying her feminine body through the cult of virginity, namely, “cleanliness.” The “sacred defined by the Word” surely deserves the respect of the symbolic; in this way, the Irish nation embodied by female figures acquires a justified place in the Irish nationalist discourse that is on the way to establish its own symbolic. However, the act of sublimation is dangerous as it banishes the semiotic nature of femininity by reducing it into the product of the symbolic.

In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva endeavours to understand the reasons for the historical expulsion of the maternal body from the site of civilisation; and to explain it, she makes an anthropological exploration on the notion of filth by concentrating on different societies like Indian and African, and concludes that the expulsion of filth is a precondition for the continuation of society. As opposed to tears or sperm, the menstrual blood that is unique to womankind is accepted as polluting the body since the ancient times. Thus, not surprisingly, woman’s body is always considered the source for defilement, representing the menace coming from the inside (71). Kristeva explains the differentiating power of the menstrual blood with the following words:

Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.) stand for the danger to identity that comes from without: the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death. Menstrual blood, on the contrary, stands for the danger issuing from within the identity (social or sexual); it threatens the relationship between the sexes within a social aggregate and, through internalization, the identity of each sex in the face of sexual difference. (71)

The extract highlights the speaking subject’s fear of losing his/her psychic, corporeal and social unity because of a threat coming from the outside. In the parts detailing the Lacanian theory, it is seen that the speaking subject achieves the “imaginary” unity during the narcissistic mirror stage by separating him/herself from the (m)other; and any threat (as embodied in the form of filth) coming from the outside will shatter not only his/her imaginary unity but also the meaning and order of his/her linguistic world (Lacan, “Mirror”). It can be argued that a subject regards this imaginary unity as necessary for his/her acceptable existence in society shaped by patriarchal rules, and

any object/event or image that reminds the subject of an indefinable memory belonging to the archaic maternal past is considered an attack against the unity of the subject. However, for Kristeva, the woman with her potential to cover the other (pregnancy) in her body is also a part of the symbolic, and menstruation blood is the reminder of her power to create. Thus, her heterogeneous body presents a threat against the symbolic from within, which gives way to “[f]ear of the archaic mother” or rather “fear of her generative power” (Kristeva, *Powers* 77). Marking the sexist approach to defilement and the biblical impurity, Kristeva draws attention to the biblical tactic of dealing with the notion of defilement; accordingly, *The Bible* claims that pure or impure can be determined only with respect to the Law, namely, the symbolic realm within which religions emerge. In this way, *The Bible* subjugates the maternal/the feminine to the Church and restricts her semiotic energy through the symbolic law as a part of its struggle against paganism and maternal cults (*Powers* 90-94).

The Church’s attempt to seize the maternal body by the help of the symbolic law can be read in parallel to the Irish Catholic Church’s influence on the Mother Ireland image which was isochronously reconstructed with the Irish identity during the fervent days of Irish nationalism. Since the English colonisers accused the Irish of femininity in an attempt to associate the colonised Irish with backwardness, wildness and emotions, Irish femininity represented an abject figure that threatened culture and civilisation under the monopoly of white Anglo-Saxon men. Therefore, in a counter attack against English colonialism, the Irish revivalists and Catholic nationalists of the nineteenth century reconstructed the Mother Ireland image by estranging her from her “impure” and “abject” feminine body defined by the male centre. While England attributed feminine qualities to Irish people in order to “humiliate” them on the basis of their colonial argument, the eighteenth- and the nineteenth-century Irish nationalists entrapped by the coloniser-colonised relationship tried to redeem their Irish identity as well as their “feminine” land by reconstructing both of them in line with the symbolic defined either by London or Rome.¹ They promoted the passive woman image in need of “masculine” Irish men to reconcile with the patriarchal discourse of English colonialism as well as of

¹ In parallel to the argument, James Joyce’s mouthpiece Stephen Dedalus criticises Irish nationalism and asserts “I am the servant of two masters, . . . an English and an Italian,” referring to the English coloniser and the Roman Catholic Church (*Ulysses* 20).

Roman Catholicism, both of which claimed themselves as an authority in the symbolic. Even the representation of Ireland in the Victorian caricatures was aligned with the conditions of the day as observed by L.P. Curtis:

Erin was a stately as well as sad and wise woman, usually drawn wearing flowing robes, embroidered with shamrocks. Her hair was long and dark, falling well down her back; her eyes were round and melancholy, set in a face of flawless symmetry. Occasionally she wore a garland of shamrocks and appeared with a harp and an Irish wolfhound in the foreground. Erin suggested all that was feminine, courageous and chaste about Irish womanhood, and she made an ideal Andromeda waiting to be rescued by a suitable Perseus. (75)

As evident in the depiction of Erin, the figure of Mother Ireland who had been associated with the “famous trio” of Celtic goddesses Fodla, Banba and Eriu or the mythological old hag figure (Hag of Beare) in the Medieval texts, posed as a melancholic damsel-in-distress, following the English invasion of the land (MacLeod 52-57; Monaghan 15-42). Yet, it is the nineteenth century Irish nationalism that trims the whole semiotic energy of Mother Ireland by remodelling her in the image of the Virgin Mary. Through the new image reconstructed in the symbolic, the nationalists of the century differentiated Mother Ireland from the coloniser’s biased representations that illustrated the Irish land as wild and chaotic.¹ The Irish emphasis on Erin’s sadness and chastity as well as her need for a male saviour stimulated masculinity, heroism and self-sacrifice among her Irish sons while setting an example of ideal femininity for her Irish daughters. In this way, the so-called feminine qualities of the Irish (their “barbaric” nature standing against “civilisation,” “sentimentality” against “reason” and “imagination” against “the real”) which constituted a reason for humiliation in the eyes of the English were taken under symbolic control. Yet, because of their choice of passive images of femininity as a model and their disregard of the female warrior characters of the Celtic mythology like Maeve and Grania, Irish nationalists of the day missed their opportunity to challenge the colonial definition of Irishness (Hywell 38).

The nationalist representation of the Irish land differentiates Mother Ireland from other mothers whose threatening “impure” bodies are to be abjected throughout the history of

¹ English writers like Spenser and Arnold, as previously discussed, associated Ireland with femininity, barbarism and primitiveness.

civilisation. Mother Ireland reimagined in the model of the Virgin Mary restricts the woman's role with motherhood at first hand; and then, it generates the cult of an asexual maternal body away from the male touch, because virginity keeps Mother Ireland's body intact and pure while eradicating any possibility for feminine *jouissance*. C. L. Innes argues that the nineteenth century Catholic ideology in Ireland evolved under the strong influence of Rome. At that time, the Papal authority declared two doctrines entitled "the Immaculate Conception" (1854) and "the Papal Infallibility" (1878) as the "Articles Doctrine" (38). The Immaculate Conception as explained in *Ineffabilis Deus* issued by Pope Pius IX aimed to prove Mary's purity and sinlessness starting from her first existence in the maternal womb. It can be understood that the cult of Virgin Mary is built on her desexualisation, purity and virginal motherhood from the very beginning. Marina Warner states that the Conception refutes the Virgin Mary's all biological functions except "lactation and weeping" (256) while Innes notes that even her ability for lactation is disregarded in Ireland (38). Therefore, Virgin Mary's body is closed to semiotic flows and her potential to threaten the patriarchal society is blocked as she turns into a product of the symbolic – this time, defined by the Catholic Church.

The image of Mother Ireland constructed by the symbolic through an association with the Virgin Mary is promoted by many pioneering nationalists of the nineteenth century as recorded in the previous section. For example; when Patrick Pearse was executed following the 1916 Easter Rising, Irish nationalists designed "post-execution posters on Dublin walls depicting Pearse in pieta position supported by Mother Erin" (Cairns and Richards 109). In the depictions of *pietà*, Jesus's dead body lies on the lap of his mother, the Virgin Mary, and he is idealised as a martyr who died for the sake of his people. Similarly, the posters with a reference to this religious scene manifest Pearse's ascension to the level of martyrdom through his blood-sacrifice. Regarding the Kristevan argument that maternity "turns out to be an adult (male and female) fantasy of a lost continent" and an idealised stage of primary narcissism, the depictions in the posters can be read as a longing for a return to the maternal womb where the infant is in unity with its mother during the pre-Oedipal time ("Stabat" 133). In this context, Pearse becomes complete and recovers from the loss of the maternal only through sacrificing himself for Mother Ireland; therefore, his chivalric death is actually a tribute to his land

and a return to the maternal womb. Kiberd draws attention to the emotional power of mother's love in the discourse of the Easter Rising and claims in relation to Pearse that "the mother's love feeds his egotism even as it robs him of his self, gratifies his vanity even as it drains him of all hope of constructing a personality of his own" ("Fathers" 127). Here, Kiberd reveals how nationalists extolled mother's love and granted a superior position to the self-sacrificing son, turning the mother-son relationship into a pathological case, because this over-attachment to the mother to define the self stimulates an archaic desire to re-unite with the mother in her womb and deprives the child of his own subjectivity.

Valente argues that putting the "image of Ireland as sexually pure Mother" in opposition to the "British image of Ireland as wife" does not mean "to reject the imperialist iconography, so much as to engage it in a sort of family romance, to set up a conflict between seniors and juniors, fathers and sons, over the allegorical body of the wife/mother" ("Myth" 196). That means that the *fin-de-siècle* representation of Mother Ireland – an ideological image in the hands of the militant nationalist discourse – is a product of the symbolic, since it is an extension of the Irish nationalist project to fight against the masculine English by reclaiming their own masculinity. Pearse and his counterparts reimagined Mother Ireland in a thoroughly Catholic culture and reconstructed her within the symbolic realm of the Roman Catholic Church, after cutting off her link with the semiotic rooted in Ireland's archaic past. Thus, the Irish problem is double-edged; the nationalist propaganda aims at people's desire for going back to their Irish essence, to their mother; however, the problem is that the Mother Ireland remodeled in the image of the Virgin Mary can neither embody the semiotic *chora* – where subjectivity starts in Kristevan theory – nor put her womb into the service of Irish children. Still, the image turns into a commonly-employed symbol of Ireland.

Innes claims that Anglo-Irish revivalist writers like Samuel Ferguson, Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats also want to make use of the "mother-culture" since its "descendants could include Protestants and Catholics alike" (42). In this context, chivalric loyalty and self-sacrifice for Mother Ireland also become the dominant themes of early Revivalist works. Yeats returns to the mutual Gaelic past and includes the elements of Gaelic

folklore into his play *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902) due to his belief in the unifying power of pre-Christian times far from sectarian conflicts; thus, his preference of the mythical Cathleen ni Houlihan figure to personify Ireland is a strategic move. In the play, Michael, the son of a rural Irish family, leaves his fiancé as well as his own mother to serve Cathleen ni Houlihan who is sanctified and granted a respectful place in the paternal sphere. Similar to the Virgin Mary, Cathleen ni Houlihan whom Irish men are ready to worship is presented as superior to the rest of Irish women with her unattainable physicality and self-sacrificing image (she loses her beauty due to her sons' betrayal). As can be observed, despite their different views on the definition of Irish nationalism, both Yeats and Pearse contributed to the myth-making process of the nineteenth-century Irish nationalism, recreating Mother Ireland in the symbolic.¹

The sanctity of the Cathleen figure is constructed by copying the desexualised portrayal of the Virgin Mary, because “the ascetic renunciation of the flesh” relieves the “viciousness” of woman’s nature while “life of self-denial” is accepted as “a form of martyrdom” in Christian societies (Warner 70-71). Nevertheless, the suppressed feminine identity under the cult of the Virgin Mary and of Cathleen, who are commonly depicted as damsels-in-distress, cannot contribute to the formation of a distinctive Irish identity but only paves the way for a parade of Irish masculinity within the nineteenth-century Irish nationalist movement, because Irish nationalists “abjected” the corporeality of Mother Ireland by highlighting her sanctity in order to justify their Oedipal obsession with the mother. In her article entitled “Stabat Mater” Kristeva draws attention to the link between the image of the Virgin Mary and the lady of courtly love tradition, claiming that this Christian figure combines “the qualities of the desired woman and the holy mother in a totality as perfect as it was in accessible” (141). Similarly, Mother Ireland reimagined either in the body of Cathleen or in the body of the Virgin adorned the male fantasy in the nineteenth century while laying down the inapplicable rules of idealised femininity for Irish women. Certainly, the image is fictive and has no counterpart in the tangible world, which has the possibility to drag Irish children, who are already abjects because of their colonised status, into psychosis.

¹ Pearse’s nationalism foregrounds Catholicism as a defining part of the Irish identity and treats patriotism as a kind of religion while Yeats who underlines the Gaelic heritage of the land finds Pearse’s approach restrictive (Deane, *Celtic* 94-95). Still, both writers make use of the gendered image of the Irish land by attributing new qualities to Mother Ireland in line with their own patriarchal ideologies.

Therefore, Mother Ireland turns into a devouring rather than a generating mother both for Irish women and men who are obsessed with her fictitious existence. The idealised Irish woman embodied by the Mother Ireland prototype brings about emotional oppression on Irish women who are expected to identify themselves with this unreal image while triggering Irish men's self-sacrifice for a fantasy. The impossibility of a pregnant virgin body and the Irish obsession with Mother Ireland entrap Irish children into a fantasy, defining them with psychosis in the symbolic sphere.

The myth of Mother Ireland, her passive but devouring power as well as the subsequent process of Irish masculinisation also polished the heroic "Cuchulain" and the tragic "Deirdre" stories of the Gaelic past under the influence of Standish James O'Grady's *History of Ireland: The Heroic Period* (1878) covering some Cuchulain and Deirdre stories. Later, Lady Gregory also compiled and published Cuchulain legends under the title of *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902). As highlighted by Ronan McDonald, "[i]n seeking to establish the value and dignity of Irish manhood, the revivalists held up the figure of Cuchulain, the Irish mythic hero whose legendary athleticism in Gaelic sports and prowess on the battlefield seemed to provide Ireland with its own Achilles" (75). For instance, both Yeats and J.M. Synge (1871-1909) made use of the heroic heritage of Cuchulain as inspiration for their literary works although Yeats presented "a more tormented and modernist figure [of Cuchulain] than that of Patrick Pearse's militaristic cult," in his Cuchulain poems and his play *On Baile's Strand* (1904). The story of the legendary Irish heroine Deirdre, which is one of the "Three Sorrowful Tales of Erin",¹ also inspired various Irish writers including Yeats, Synge and George William Russell, each of whom brought a new interpretation on the Deirdre character. Still, these writers' portrayals of Deirdre are akin to the portrayals of Cathleen ni Houlihan in terms of her metaphorical role representing the Irish land as well as her charming beauty and damsel-in-distress status waiting for men's self-sacrifice. Different from the portrayal of

¹ "Three Sorrowful Tales of Erin" is composed of three legendary folk stories as "The Fate of the Children of Turenn", "The Fate of the Children of Lir" and "Deirdre of the Sorrows." Before Fedlimid's daughter Deirdre's birth, the court druid Cathbad tells Conchobar mac Nessa, the king of Ulster, that Deirdre will be a beautiful girl for whom kings will go into war and three legendary warriors will be exiled. Therefore, Conchobar decides to kill her, but seeing her beauty, he changes his mind and keeps her for himself. He entrusts her to a wise woman Leabharcham until she grows old enough to marry. One day Deirdre meets a young warrior called Naoise in the forest, and the two fall in love with each other. Knowing the prophesy, Naoise's brothers help them flee to Scotland and they live there for a long time. Yet, Conchobar finds out their love and sets a trap for Naoise and his brothers. These three brothers sacrifice themselves for Deirdre, and Conchobar marries her. However, Deirdre commits suicide in the end.

Cathleen, the maternal role is not foregrounded in the case of Deirdre; but another typical personification for the Irish land, namely the beautiful maiden image, is exemplified.¹

In Synge's *Deirdre of Sorrows* (1910) that is defined by Mahony as his "sole foray into myth and the aristocratic" (13), Deirdre is represented as the stunning beauty for whom many sacrifice their lives as can be understood from her lover Naisi's words: "It's a long while men have been talking of Deirdre the child who had all gifts, and beauty that has no equal. Many know it, and there are kings would give a great price to be in my place this night, and you grown to a queen" (1.408). The lines suggest that Deirdre's beauty is considered sacred and worthy only of queens; so, she is desired by the kings, which symbolises her political image by reminding the ancient belief that an Irish king must marry the goddess Eriu to legitimize his coronation (Mac Cana 7-8). In the play, many Irish men fall in love with Deirdre and die in her service, although they are aware that they will never possess her "physically." In this context, Deirdre's sacred beauty is once again detached from sexuality, turning her into a goddess-like figure that stands for the Irish land.

The literary examples that are given above feature various sacred images of Mother Ireland and she is a passive but a devouring woman in all of them. Due to both the Irish nationalists' and the English colonisers' claims on the Mother Ireland figure, she stands in the midst of a complex network of ideological discourses; thus, she cannot go beyond being a construct of the symbolic. She is an abject figure in the English discourse, symbolising a place of wilderness, primitivism and chaos while she is a sacred figure in the Irish nationalist rhetoric, being estranged from her semiotic nature. When interpreted through the Kristevan lens, it is seen that she cannot exist as a speaking subject in the symbolic realm in both cases and cannot reveal her semiotic energy and due to the pioneering role of the semiotic associated with the womb in the process of

¹ Here, it must be highlighted that the Irish Revivalists do not make a distinction between the feminine and the mother in terms of the representation of the Irish land, thus the Deirdre example does not fall outside the concern of this section although she is a young girl. The point is that, in the Irish nationalist and the Revivalist discourse, the gendered representations of Ireland whether in the image of Deirdre, Dark Rosaleen (see James Clarence Mangan's patriotic poem) or in the image of Cathleen, "poor old woman" and the Virgin Mary are all male constructs and deprived of their semiotic energy.

subjectivity, the infant's step into the symbolic to become a subject is impossible without a corporeal mother.

1.3 ABJECT CHILDREN SET OFF TO EXPLORE THE IRISH SEMIOTIC

All the attempts to redefine the Mother Ireland image throughout the colonial history of Ireland reveal that the image is always under construction in the Irish collective unconscious haunted by the memory of the "usurped" mother. This process of construction cannot come to an end, because the mother that turns into an allegory for pre-colonial Ireland is already lost to Irish people; in other words, they are estranged from the maternal womb as of the beginning of English colonialism. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish nationalists had to reconstruct their mother under the shadow of English colonialism which degraded the Irish land by associating it with the so-called feminine qualities and regarded it as an abject mother. Thus, Irish nationalists created a "proper" mother established on the Virgin Mary model. However, in line with Kristeva's arguments, the absence of the mother figure to abject or the imposition of the image of an abject mother on the child causes serious psychological problems.

Oliver points out the Kristevan division of the mother image in the child's mind as "the abject" or "the sublime" to claim that "[m]aking the mother abject allows the child to separate from her and become autonomous. But if the mother is *only abject*, then she becomes the phobic object and the child himself becomes abject" (*Reading* 61; my emphasis). When the Irish nationalists' glorification of their feminine land by detaching Mother Ireland from semiotic qualities and restricting it to a heavenly woman image is considered, it becomes clear that the maternal corporeality associated with otherness, *jouissance*, instincts and emotions is reduced into a "phobic" object while Mother Ireland reconstructed in parallel to the Virgin Mary turns into a barren object of worship imprisoned in the symbolic. Also, Ludger Viefhues-Bailey claims that the child must "both lose the mother and to find her again in symbols – in language – thereby negating the original loss" (144). During the fervent days of Irish nationalism in the nineteenth century, the loss of the mother under English colonialism could not be restored as Irish

nationalists created a sublime image without a semiotic *chora* for Mother Ireland. Besides, their failure in creating a nationalist discourse free of colonial influence prevented Irish nationalists from creating their own symbolic where the semiotic corporeality of the mother image would be redeemed. Thus, the mother figure remained absent and protected her existence as a lost object of love in the Irish nationalist discourse. Oliver warns against the danger of the “only sublime” mother, arguing that it will make the child’s necessary separation from the mother impossible, and “[h]e will have no subject or object identity whatsoever, no primary repression and thus no secondary repression. In other words, the Other will have been completely foreclosed, never set up, and the child will be a psychotic” (*Reading* 61). Accordingly, it can be argued that the absence of a corporeal mother figure deprives Irish children of the semiotic embodied by the maternal womb and results in abject children who are after fantasy images like Cathleen ni Houlihan. In this context, the idealised mother image puts an emotional burden on the shoulders of Irish children, forcing Irish men to sacrifice themselves for an unreal entity while discouraging Irish women from exploring their female corporeality associated with the semiotic. Therefore, Irish women entrapped by their own “abject” status cannot produce individuals, but give birth to many more “abjects” that are after a phantasmagoric image. Not surprisingly, the virgin mother constructed in a fight against the English symbolic turns into an obsession for abject children, as in the case of Patrick Pearse.

J. M. Synge is the first one to challenge the fantastic sanctified image of Mother Ireland through his realist mother/women portrayals in his dramatic works. Synge’s drama is different from the works of early Revivalists foregrounding Celtic heritage in the Irish identity by adopting a romantic nationalist outlook. On the opposite, his well-known plays such as *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903), *Riders to the Sea* (1904) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) subvert the idealised Mother Ireland image as well as the romanticised rural Ireland. Synge generally focuses on the peasant life in Ireland, writing in the realistic form. In *Riders*, Synge tells the tragic story of a family of fishermen. The mother of the house, Maurya, loses all the male members of her family to the fierce waves of the sea. When she is compared to Cathleen ni Houlihan as a mother-figure, “her age and grief give her dignity, but the loss of her menfolk makes her

older rather than younger” (Innes 51). In other words, the self-sacrifice of her men brings no rejuvenation to her but reduces her into an old mourning woman. *The Playboy* undermines the understanding of Irish heroism based on self-sacrifice while exposing the desire for patricide. Establishing the storyline on Christy Mahon’s claim of patricide and his subsequent glorification as a hero by the country folk, Synge once again introduces a different portrayal of Irish women and men, and draws a huge backlash from the public which goes down in history as the *Playboy* riots. On January 28, 1907, *The Freeman’s Journal* condemned the play as a “libel upon Irish peasant men and, worse still, upon Irish peasant girlhood,” revealing the Irish sensitivity over the topics. The women characters of the play are surely the embodiment of unconformity in the eyes of the Irish. For example, Pegeen Mike, who is engaged to a Catholic man but leaves him for Christy, is a frivolous woman that pursues her own desires by disregarding her responsibilities towards her father and fiancé. In this respect, she conforms neither to the image of Cathleen nor the Virgin Mary, and her extrovert personality that voices her own views is a direct challenge against these iconic figures. Besides, Synge mocks Irish heroism through Christy who has a coward nature under the mask of a father-slayer. Kiberd, referring mainly to the texts of the Revivalist writers, highlights the metaphoric dimension of the confrontation between the father and son. He notes that “[t]he writer, typically, began the autobiography as a subject in the colony, clashed with and surmounted a father, and ended as the citizen of a free state or of a state intent on freeing itself” (*Inventing* 101). However, Synge subverts this nationalist writing pattern as it is revealed that Christy fails in killing his father. If the father figure – Mahon – is read as a metaphor for the English coloniser, it is seen that Christy who attempts to kill Mahon at the start, submits to him in the end. So, his battle against his father does not end with victory; namely, he cannot achieve his own symbolic by killing the father but becomes a subject to him.

The twist in the plot can be interpreted as Synge’s disillusionment with the nineteenth-century attempts to create a separate Irish identity against the English father. The main reason for the failure lies in the heart of pseudo Irish masculinity shaped by the patriarchal discourse. In order to grasp the essence of Irishness and produce an Irish tradition in drama, Synge visited the Aran Islands between the years of 1898 and 1901,

and reflected the mundane lives of the Irish by including the local concerns and linguistic usages into his texts. Similarly, the nineteenth-century nationalists and Revivalists should have dived into the originating point of Irish subjectivity; the maternal *chora* which is heterogeneous as well as far from the colonial binaries and idealised pictures. The pioneers of cultural nationalism including Samuel Ferguson, W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory used Gaelic myths in their works to reach the maternal *chora*. However, they adopted the masculine discourse of the coloniser to clear the Irish of colonial charges of femininity. Thus, their works could not shatter the English colonialism based on male/female dichotomy and failed in exploring the semiotic origins of the Irish identity. On the other hand, Synge discovered the “abjected” Irish self by starting with a journey into the suppressed femininity of Irish mothers, sensing that subjectivity was initiated by the mother in the womb.

Another significant figure to break up with the romantic patterns of the Revivalists is James Joyce (1882-1941). Known for his experimental style in his portrayal of Dublin life, Joyce believes that his art will grant “presence” to Ireland by recovering its absent status. In Deane’s own words, “the presence is itself dependent on the conviction that, before Joyce, there was nothing” (*Celtic* 97). In other words, Ireland’s “unfinished and uncreated culture” is to be constituted through Joyce’s art that rejects “all previous abortive attempts” (97). Joyce keeps himself distant from the literary traditions of cultural nationalism, criticising hyper-masculinity of Irishmen for the sake of Mother Ireland as well as the religious overtones; instead, he introduces both thematic and technical innovations to Irish literature. Rejecting the invitations to participate in the Irish nationalist movement, in a letter written in 1906 to Grant Richards, Joyce says "I believe that in composing my chapter of moral history in exactly the way I have composed it, I have taken the first step towards the spiritual liberation of my country." In other words, he regards his modernist art challenging the literary patterns of his day as a liberating force for his country. Different from the works of the Revivalists and the nationalists, Joyce’s fiction is characterised by his desire to leave Mother Ireland that restricts his individuality and artistic creativity. As opposed to the nationalist mentality, self-sacrifice in the name of Mother Ireland does not liberate the country from English oppression and prove Irish heroism, but it blocks any attempt to explore the essence of

Irishness and Irish identity by going back to the semiotic associated with the maternal womb. Scrutinising *Dubliners* (1914), Emer Nolan explains Joyce's preference of short story – rather than novel writing – as the starting point of his career and states that his characters are “disturbed by memory or futile desire” since they live in a society which “seems incapable of producing individuals” (30). The “memory” or “futile desire” can be interpreted as the Irish search for a blissful pre-Oedipal union with Mother Ireland. Since Irish people are banished from the maternal womb by the English colonisers and occupy the status of an abject, they can neither go back to the semiotic womb nor enter the symbolic defined by the English. In the end, they end up with psychosis triggered by the unreal Mother Ireland image and their subjectivity is blocked.

When Joyce's works are analysed, it is seen that Irish society under the oppression of British and Roman authorities fails in creating a separate Irish identity; as a result, citizens with more liberal views are forced to leave the land in order to pursue a separate self. The nineteenth-century nationalist attempts promoted a fixed definition of Irishness determined by patriarchal authorities like the Church and the State, and killed Irish subjectivity in the end. However, Joyce's understanding of Irishness is different, because he believes in the heterogeneous nature of Irishness that cannot be reduced into one definition. In this context, he undermines all the icons of traditional nationalism to explore the real Irish subjectivity masked by the oppressive constructs. Certainly, the image of Mother Ireland becomes Joyce's main target for attack. For instance, Joyce depicts a devouring mother in his story “A Mother” published in *Dubliners* to subvert the mother-nation metaphor of the nationalist discourse. In the story, Mrs. Kearney educates her daughter in line with her own nationalist interests and ruins her concert when her financial expectations are not fulfilled. Deprived of her free will, the daughter figure is a puppet in the hands of this over-ambitious mother, and therefore the story can be read as Joyce's subversion of the Irish nationalist discourse that is based on self-sacrifice and the Mother Ireland cult.

Joyce's distaste of the emotional oppression of Mother Ireland can also be traced in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) that concentrates on a young man's exploration of his true identity through art. The protagonist Stephen Dedalus who is “a

subject forever in process” mirrors Joyce’s own pangs to create his artistic identity, which results in his self-exile from Ireland (Nolan 38). Stephen is a character that is haunted by the narrow-minded nationalist discourse of Ireland embodied by his family and other state institutions like the Church and school. Yet, he craves for an exploration of his “real” self. His religious mother exemplifies the Irish mother created by the symbolic while the father figure with strong nationalist feelings cannot fulfill his loving role as an imaginary father. Therefore, his parents cannot prepare the necessary background for Stephen’s creation of the self, but imprisons him into the colonial past of Ireland. As a result, Stephen who cannot abide by the Irish norms of his day ends up as an abject figure, rather than a subject. Stephen’s final farewell to Ireland with his words “Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” can be interpreted as his journey to discover his “Irish” essence rooted in the unknown, in the maternal semiotic (Joyce, *Portrait* 213). Indeed, Joyce’s writing career going on with *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939), in which he masters the technique of stream-of-consciousness, plays with language, fuses the real with the mythical, and epitomises his search for an identity by oscillating between the semiotic and the symbolic. Michael Mays relates Joyce’s narratives with Pearse’s desire for a national identity, and claims that Joyce’s search for his “lost origins and unrecoverable absences” constitutes the central theme in *Finnegans Wake* (10). However, different from Pearse, Joyce does not look for the essence of Irishness in the virgin image of Mother Ireland created by mimicking the norms of the symbolic. Rather, he believes that he can find his “Irish” essence hidden in the maternal womb only by abandoning the closed and stable body of the virgin mother. In his self-exile, Joyce leaves Mother Ireland behind in order to go into the depths of the semiotic *chora* embodied by the (m)other in foreign lands. In this way, he takes advantage of his abject status and becomes the foreign other, himself. He puts his experience of the semiotic as the foreign other down on paper through his *avant-garde* linguistic style. He has to write, because as Kristeva underlines, writing is the only way of “resurrection” for the abject that is “the equivalent of death” (*Powers* 26).

It is evident that the nationalist reconstruction of Mother Ireland promoted on the days of fervent nationalism turns into a suffocating and demanding figure in the works of Joyce, and her existence as a sublime image, rather than a real mother with her semiotic *chora* prevents not only the subjectivity of Joyce's characters but also their journey into any kind of symbolic by condemning them to an eternal abject status. To overcome the image of Mother Ireland that is suffocating from Joyce's perspective, he unleashes the corporeal energy of the mother and portrays a different mother figure in the Molly Bloom character of *Ulysses*:

Accordingly, where the principal organizing metaphor of Irish nationalism is that of a proper paternity, of restoring the lineage of the fathers in order to repossess the motherland, Joyce's procedures are dictated by adulteration. Joyce's personal obsession with adultery is well documented and it is a commonplace that the plot of *Ulysses* itself turns around Molly Bloom's adulterous relationship . . . (Lloyd 105)

As stated by David Lloyd, Irish nationalism is based on the patriarchal discourse of the gendered nation and aims to "repossess" the mother who stands for the lost object of love in the symbolic realm of language. Therefore, she appears as a sanctified figure created under melancholy and nostalgia. However, Joyce challenges this "sanctified" representation of Mother Ireland whose semiotic *chora* is suppressed by the Church and the State. Creating an alternative to the conventional Mother Ireland image through Molly Bloom, Joyce restores Mother Ireland from a "lost" status, voices her corporeal drives, and thus he takes Mother Ireland's revenge on muscular nationalism. In parallel to the argument, Richard Kearney defines Molly as "a distinctively Irish woman" (117). It can be claimed that Molly as an alternative to Mother Ireland frees Irish men and women from the enslaving influence of the idealised motherland.

Only after his exploration of the maternal semiotic *chora*, Joyce manages to create his "self" expressed by his *avant-garde* style in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. The power of the semiotic becomes visible through his modernist/post-modernist style based on his stream-of-consciousness technique that is full of word plays, repetitions, allusions, puns etc. in both novels. In addition to eruptions of the semiotic in his linguistic usage, Joyce also grants superiority to the mother figure by ending *Ulysses* with Molly's much-quoted soliloquy projecting her sexual desire:

. . . I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall . . . I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes. (732)

The quotation with a depiction of a love scene and a continual emphasis on the word “yes” expressing female *jouissance* portrays a sexually-active “mother” as opposed to the passive image of Mother Ireland. In her article “Women’s Time,” Kristeva asserts that female subjectivity uses a different modality of time shaped by “*repetition* and *eternity*” and adds that “there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm which conforms to that of nature and imposes a temporality whose stereotyping may shock, but whose regularity and unison with what is experienced as extrasubjective time, cosmic time, occasion vertiginous visions and unnameable *jouissance*” (16). In line with Kristeva’s argument, the repetitions draw up a cyclical pattern as well as forming a rhythmic movement in Molly’s soliloquy by standing for an active female body; besides, the continual repetitions scattered throughout the soliloquy can be associated with the poly-centred *jouissance* standing “beyond the phallus” (Lacan, “God” 145). In this respect, her language exemplifies a “polyphonic discourse of desire” (Henke, “Introduction” 7). Through Molly, Joyce surely subverts the virgin image of Mother Ireland and transforms her into a real mother figure with a semiotic *chora*, therefore, he shatters the patriarchal discourse of his “two masters” that are the English coloniser and the Roman Catholic Church (*Ulysses* 20). Also, his linguistic style shaped by the semiotic eruptions can be regarded as a new discourse to define “Irishness” that is based on the discourse of the (m)other.

In conclusion, although Synge and Joyce adopt different methods to explore the semiotic powers of the maternal, they are two pioneering “abject” figures who are courageous enough to challenge the impositions of the symbolic set either by London or Rome. By returning to the maternal *chora* to start their subjectivity, both writers manage to oscillate between the semiotic and the symbolic in their works, resurrecting the “once- abject” Irish essence hidden in the maternal body. Following in their footsteps, contemporary writers like Edna O’Brien, Patrick McCabe and Colm Tóibín

also set off to re-discover the Mother Ireland embedded in the archaic times; that is the real pre-Oedipal mother that nurtures semiotic flows on her body as being free from the image of Virgin Mary or Cathleen ni Houlihan. The endeavour to go back to the semiotic realm of the maternal womb (which was prohibited to the Irish during the colonial times) can commonly be observed in the twenty-first century Irish fiction as the dynamics of the mother-child relationship change, especially after the death of Freudian fathers. At this juncture, changing patterns of the mother-child relationship can be read not only as reconciliation with the abject mother but also as a necessary phase for the development of a new Irish identity free from the colonial influence. In order to explore the literary representations of the mother-child relationship and its changing patterns in the Irish context, O'Brien's, McCabe's and Tóibín's aforesaid novels must be studied in line with Kristeva's theory of subjectivity.

CHAPTER II

EDNA O'BRIEN'S *THE COUNTRY GIRLS TRILOGY*: SUBJECTIVITY CRUSHED BY MOTHER IRELAND

Edna O'Brien (1930-present) is an Irish writer who was born to a religious Catholic family in Tuamgraney in County Clare in 1930. She started her education at the National School in 1936 and attended the convent school between the years of 1941-46. She moved to Dublin in 1946 and received her university degree from the Pharmaceutical College in Dublin in 1950. Her writings started to appear in *The Irish Press* during her college years. In 1952, she married the Czech/Irish writer Ernest Gébler and they moved to London; however, her marriage was troubled by the oppressive attitude of her husband and ended in 1964, leaving her with two sons (Eckley 17; Hughes-Kersnowski xvii-xviii). The material of her early works including *The Country Girls* (1960), *A Pagan Place* (1970) and *Mother Ireland* (1976) draws heavily from her first-hand experience in rural Ireland. O'Brien highlights the autobiographical details and her experience of the land in her writings, saying “[m]y work is influenced by my religion, by my parents, particularly my mother. She influences me a great deal. But also the place. My books are a part of County Clare, the place is as strong in the books as the characters of the story” (McCrum). In this respect, O'Brien's works featuring women characters and projecting their inner worlds under the historical burden of the mother/land trope are important reservoirs to analyse Irish women's journey of identity formation after the independence of the Irish state.

This chapter aims to read *The Country Girls Trilogy* (republished as one volume in 1987) consisting of *The Country Girls* (1960), *Girl with Green Eyes* (1962) and *Girls in Their Married Bliss* (1964) from Kristevan perspective by mainly focusing on the identity-formation process of Caithleen, the main narrator. The self-sacrificing mother figure haunts Caithleen's whole narrative while the father figure turns into a source of hatred in her life, foregrounding the mother/nation trope in the Irish collective conscious and opening the text to an allegorical reading in parallel to the country's historical

background. Building her work on the notion of Irish maternity consciously, O'Brien defines her first novel *The Country Girls* that she penned just after her arrival in England as her "farewell" to her motherland in an interview with Guppy (21). Indeed, O'Brien's love-hate relationship with her native country is heavily influenced by James Joyce who has a distaste for his country's narrow-minded nationalism and exiles himself from his home in order to create his identity as a writer. Similarly, O'Brien manages to produce her literary works only after she exiles herself from Ireland; besides, she always cites Joyce's name as her literary master, saying that "he is a blinding light and father of us all" (Roth). Joyce paves the way for O'Brien's rejection of the strict Catholic rules imposed on Irish women, and his writings encourage her to explore the suppressed colours of Irish womanhood. As well-explained by Kathleen Jacquette, "while Joyce captured the male reaction to Catholicism, O'Brien revealed the feminine confrontation with the patriarchal Church" (267). Regarding the marginal status of their writings as well as their personalities, it can be argued that both Joyce and O'Brien are abject children of Irish literature as both explore their own identities by leaving the motherland behind but never forgetting their Irish roots. In Kristevan sense, they always occupy the abject level of their psychosexual developments as being haunted by their mother land; however, they manage to turn their abject status into an advantage by transforming the deviant semiotic energy into the generating power of "writing" – the only way of "resurrection" for the abject (*Powers* 26).

As a very prolific writer, O'Brien tried her pen in different fields of literature and produced many award-winning novels, short-stories, poems, non-fiction books and plays, she is famous for her novels and short-stories, though. Her poetry collection is entitled *On the Bone* (1989) while her non-fiction books are *Mother Ireland* (1976), *James and Nora: A Portrait of Joyce's Marriage* (1981), *Vanishing Ireland* (1986), a biography of Joyce entitled *James Joyce* (1999), *Byron in Love* (2009) and a memoir *Country Girl* (2012). O'Brien's literary career and evolvment of her fiction can be examined in two phases; while Ireland between the late thirties and late fifties forms the backdrop for her early works, London or a Mediterranean place is the setting for her late literature in parallel to the writer's immigration to England (Salmon 143). Her novels excepting *The Country Girls Trilogy* are *August is a Wicked Month* (1965), *Casualties*

of *Peace* (1966), *A Pagan Place* (1970), *Zee & Co.* (1971), *Night* (1972), *Johnny I Hardly New You* (1977), *The High Road* (1988), *Time and Tide* (1992), *House of Splendid Isolation* (1994), *Down by the River* (1996), *Wild Decembers* (1999), *In the Forest* (2002), *The Light of Evening* (2006) and *The Little Red Chairs* (2015). When compared to her other works of fiction, her plays are few, including *A Cheap Bunch of Nice Flowers* (1963), *Zee & Co.* (1971), *A Pagan Place: A Play* (1973), *Virginia. A Play* (1980), *Iphigenia [of] Euripides* (2003), *Triptych* (2008) and *Haunted* (2009). As opposed to the small number of her drama, O'Brien has a huge collection of short stories which can be listed as *The Love Object and Other Stories* (1968), *A Scandalous Woman and Other Stories* (1974), *Mrs Reinhardt and Other Stories* (1978), an anthology with some translations entitled *Some Irish Loving* (1979), *Returning* (1982), *A Fanatic Heart* (1985), *Lantern Slides* (1990), *Saints and Sinners* (2011) and *The Love Object: Selected Stories* (2013). O'Brien's women protagonists, problematic mother-daughter relationships and her characters' struggle to create a separate "self" under the shadow of oppressive patriarchal authorities thematically dominate many of her novels.

Set in the early years of independent Ireland, *The Country Girls* is a female *bildungsroman* following up the protagonists Caithleen (Kate) Brady's and Baba Brennan's physical and psychological growths in years. In the first two books of the trilogy, Caithleen tells her story in the first-person narration, starting from her childhood spent in a small Irish village, her convent school days after the tragic death of her mother, and continuing with her move to Dublin and then, to London with Baba and their exploration of life, sexuality and identity in a big city. Meanwhile, Baba's first person-narration constitutes the majority of the third book, recording her marriage for financial reasons, her adulterous affair and her insights on Caithleen. O'Brien's choice of *bildungsroman* as a genre is a strategic move, because it gives voice to Caithleen and Baba, the representatives of suppressed womanhood, and reveals their secret aspirations, sorrows and dilemmas. In this respect, the genre foregrounds the individual to point out the contrast between individual identities and conventional identities imposed by the Irish state, which makes Caithleen and Baba's narrative "a narrative of resistance" (Mansouri). Grace Eckley explains the underlying reason for O'Brien's use of two protagonists, arguing that "[t]he contention between the ego and alter-ego" is

embodied by Kate and Baba (36). Caithleen is a traditional town girl who tries to construct herself in the idealised image of her mother while Baba is extrovert as opposed to Caithleen and a rule-breaker who tries everything to satisfy her desires. In addition to their personalities, Caithleen's and Baba's families are also different from each other, proving the influence of family on a child's personality.

The historical period covered in the novel is very significant to understand the essence of gender roles in rural Ireland. Irish women took an active part in the war of independence, but they were urged to go back to their homes after the declaration of the Free State in 1922. Pointing out "a gradual erosion" in women's political rights, Heather Ingman argues that the government in 1925 "sought to bring in restrictions on women's employment in the civil service, thus excluding women from having a voice in shaping policy on economics, health and welfare" (10). This governmental agenda was legally reified through Eamon de Valera's 1937 constitution that charged women with traditional domestic roles. The Article 41.2.1 of the constitution constructed the notion of womanhood ideologically and politically, saying "the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved" ("Constitution"). Accordingly, women were expected to undertake the traditional roles of motherhood and wifery by staying in their domestic spheres. The following years, namely the 1940s and 1950s, witnessed the domination of the Roman Catholic Church over the nation (Ingman 14). In such a conservative atmosphere, *The Country Girls* caused a great controversy in Ireland due to the young women characters' explicit exploration of sex and love.

O'Connor draws attention to the setting of the novel – the rural west of Ireland in the 1950s – which is considered "the traditional site in nationalist iconography of the 'authentic' and uncorrupted heart of the nation," and claims that O'Brien's "representation of sexual desire, sexual abuse, and even sexual humour" against such a backdrop is the reason for outrage (211). Indeed, life style in post-independence Ireland was not much different from the patterns of nineteenth-century Ireland as it was "predominantly rural in complexion" and "dominated by an overwhelming social and cultural conservatism" (Brown 17). Therefore, the Catholic Church's pioneering role in

the condemnation of O'Brien's novel was expectable during the fervent days of reaction. The condemnation was supported by the Irish Censorship Board that banned the novel in Ireland after its publication; meanwhile, the Minister of Culture and the Archbishop of Dublin regarded O'Brien as a "smear on Irish womanhood" (Kersnowski xviii). Here, the emphasis on "Irish womanhood" must be explained in relation to the Catholic nationalist discourse of post-independence Ireland.

Irish women associated with the Irish land maintained their historical position in the 1950s Ireland. In this context, Virgin Mary was cited as a model for Irish women who were basically defined as mothers in line with the papal encyclicals restricting women's role to motherhood and wifedom (Valiulis 169). Like Virgin Mary, Irish women also appeared as sanctified beings whose "womanhood" was superior to others' because of their alienation from sexuality. As detailed in the previous section of the dissertation in reference to Kristeva's arguments, the Catholic Church relates virginity to cleanliness and promotes virginal motherhood of Virgin Mary to dismiss the subversive power of feminine *jouissance* against the phallus. Throughout human civilisation, female body has always been regarded as being "polluted" by menstruation blood that is the source of her power to create. In this context, the infant's abjection of the mother emerges as a tactic to defend the borders against the threatening (m)other that draws the speaking subject in the symbolic into the pre-Oedipal time of the semiotic *chora*. Thus, Virgin Mary deprived of her generative power seems as the sole way in the Roman Catholic world to put the semiotic energy of the feminine body under the male control (Kristeva, *Powers* 1-5, 53-55, 72-75 and "Stabat").

Following in the footsteps of the Catholic Church, the nineteenth century Irish nationalists transformed the Irish female body associated with the Irish land into a sacred entity by differentiating it from "impure" and "abject" female bodies. Therefore, they created the Mother Ireland image in the "virgin island" imagery and attributed heavenly qualities to the gendered representation of the land, which estranged Mother Ireland from her sexual body as well as from her semiotic energy associated with the maternal *chora*. The image-making process caused the promotion of an unreal and highly idealised mother figure that would remain unattainable and remote as the lost

object of love for the child. In O'Brien's novel, Caithleen's mother Mrs. Brady exemplifies the passive and desexualised image of the Irish mother and reveals the stereotypical Irish mother's devouring role on her children. Estranged from her sexuality, the mother figure does not represent the semiotic flows of the maternal body. Thus, Caithleen cannot explore the maternal semiotic *chora* and carry out her process of abjection that is required for the formation of the self.

As argued in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva seeks individuality in the semiotic and does not exclude the mother from the formation of subjectivity; instead, the mother with her ability to cover the other inside her body bridges the semiotic and the symbolic, initiating the identity-formation process for the child. In other words, the maternal body is the first site for subjectivity and the infant must abject the maternal body through the help of its imaginary father when it is ready to step into the symbolic. Yet, the stereotypical Irish mother alienated from her own body as well as her semiotic energy fails in her preparatory role for subjectivity and produces "abject" children, rather than subjects speaking in the symbolic realm. In parallel to Kristeva's argument, O'Brien relates Caithleen's entrapment in the "abject" level of her identity-formation to her mother who is emotionally and physically absent, and dysfunctional in her daughter's journey into the self. In addition to the absence of the mother, hyper-masculinity of the father figure "emasculated" under the colonial rule puts another obstacle against the child's subjectivity. Therefore, O'Brien's major issue is the failed parentage in Irish family, which produces abject children who are denied exploring their subjectivity from the very beginning.

Throughout the trilogy, O'Brien employs the woman/land metaphor of the Irish nationalist discourse to undermine it by revealing its devastating effects on the new generation of Irish women. The first novel *The Country Girls* opens with a tragic domestic scene where Caithleen – together with her mother – is waiting for the arrival of her drunken father anxiously. Throughout her narrative Caithleen draws a sharp contrast between the mother and the father figures; while the mother is an object of pity with her self-sacrificing nature, the father appears as a selfish, brutal man. In the opening scene, Caithleen watches her mother and says: "She [Caithleen's mother] was

thinking. Thinking where was he? Would he come home in an ambulance, or a hackney car, hired in Belfast three days ago and not paid for? Would he stumble up the stone steps at the back door waving a bottle of whiskey? Would he shout, struggle, kill her or apologize?" (6-7). Caithleen's insight into her mother's mind reveals the mother figure's despair and passivity against her husband. Mrs. Brady never challenges her husband or never tries to change him and her daughter's distressing fate. She is almost paralysed and far from supplying a protection for her daughter. Ironically, Caithleen always glorifies her and can understand the "dysfunctional" nature of their mother-daughter relationship only at the very end of the trilogy. Caithleen's mother is not an ignorant mother; on the contrary, she is fond of her daughter. However, the mother-daughter relationship between the two is an abnormal one. As a child, she is always worried about her instead of finding security and peace on her lap because she is aware of her mother's desperate situation as her father's brutality against his wife occupies her mind continually. For example, while leaving home to go to school, she thinks:

She [the mother] stood on the flag to look after me. She was waving. In her brown dress she looked sad; the farther I went, the sadder she looked. Like a sparrow in the snow, Brown and anxious and lonesome. It was hard to think that she got married one sunny morning in a lace dress and a floppy buttercup hat, and that her eyes were moist with pleasure when now they were watery with tears. (9)

The quotation depicting the mother from Caithleen's viewpoint is very striking because the simile of a desperate sparrow and the emphasis on her sadness, depression and loneliness reveal her mother's weak image in Caithleen's mind that will haunt her throughout her life. At this juncture, the husband-wife relationship must also be analysed in regard to Irish women's societal mission rooted in history and its impositions on individuals, all of which add a political dimension to Caithleen's family drama. In this context, the plight of the mother in the hands of a brutal husband can be related to the Mother Ireland myth and the hyper-masculinised Irish men in the country's history dominated by English colonialism. The portrayal of Mrs. Brady recalls the supernal woman in the *aisling* tradition where the maiden embodying the Irish nation/land starts to lose her youth and beauty under the rule of a brutal Irish king and degrades into an old hag. Indeed, O'Brien leaves no doubt about the allegorical link between Mrs. Brady and Mother Ireland as Jack, a nationalist countryman who is

secretly in love with the mother, says to Caithleen: “[y]our mother, now, has the ways and the walk of a queen” (13). Here, Jack makes a reference to W. B. Yeats’s play *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902) that tells the transformation of Mother Ireland from an old woman into a young maiden upon young men’s self-sacrifice; and in the end of the play, the allegorical woman character suddenly has “the walk of a queen” (1.302). The paradox of Mother Ireland’s transformation lies in the fact that her initially “self-sacrificing” image as a mother wasting her youth for the sake of her children turns into a “devouring” one when she invokes a conscientious responsibility in the child, regardless of its sex. While the son sacrifices his own blood to protect the honour of his “virgin” mother, the daughter hopelessly tries to model herself on this unreal “over-idealised” virgin mother; in both cases, the child’s subjectivity is blocked as they are under the delusion of Mother Ireland. In the same way, Caithleen feels a kind of emotional responsibility towards her “[p]oor Mama” who is “the best mama in the world” (O’Brien, *Country* 6) and tries to build her identity in her mother’s image. Indeed, Caithleen’s feelings towards her mother are a mixture of sympathy, exaltation and admiration that morally and emotionally suppresses Caithleen’s subjectivity.

Like Mother Ireland, Caithleen’s mother fulfills her role of heavenly woman through her so-called self-sacrifice and silence. Meeting the expectations of patriarchal Irish society, she manages to keep her family together in spite of all hardships. However, she is not a strong and protective maternal figure; her passivity in the face of her husband and her seemingly self-sacrificing attitude for the sake of her daughter prevent her daughter’s exploration of her “self.” Caithleen’s mother, with her perfect fit into the notion of “Irish womanhood,” tries to mould her daughter into the expectations of rural Irish society controlled by the Catholic Church and the masculine nationalist discourse; for instance, the only advice she can give to Caithleen about an escape from a tragic marriage is to become a nun (67). C. L. Innes argues that Mother Church and Mother Ireland are similar images as “both demanded the allegiance of men and women alike, but it was for women that they provided models of behaviour and identity” (41-42). Accordingly, Mrs. Brady – an ideal wife conforming to the portrayal of Irish women drawn by the Catholic Church, the agent of the symbolic – sets an unattainable model for Caithleen. Thus, the mother’s death by drowning in the boat of her lover comes as a

shock in the novel. Nevertheless, what is interesting is that Caithleen does not clearly explain her mother's act of adultery, but it is only hinted and does not damage the idealised image of her mother. Tamsin Hargreaves defines Caithleen's indulgence, relating it to the "problem of loss of self" and adds that "this psychological umbilical cord between mother and child leaves Caithleen weak and dependent, she is, upon her mother's death, stranded at an infantile emotional level and condemned to carry a painful sense of loss and need throughout her life" (291). In other words, her mother's idealised image persists as a shadow over Caithleen's life unless she cuts off her pre-Oedipal cord with the mother. So, the mother's seemingly "perfect" womanhood shaped by the Roman Catholic symbolic continues to limit Caithleen's world by setting the major obstacle in her life. In this context, the absent maternal figure turns into a haunting one.

When all the arguments about Mrs. Brady are considered, it is evident that she cannot provide Caithleen with a maternal womb associated with the semiotic *chora* that is the prerequisite for subjectivity in Kristevan theory. In an interview with Nell Dunn, O'Brien claims that "there must be, in every man and every woman the desire, the deep primeval desire to go back to the womb" (95). These words recall the Freudian oceanic feeling that is experienced during the pre-Oedipal time in the maternal womb, and define the infant's peaceful unity with the mother in a protective space. In her article entitled "Stabat Mater," Kristeva also makes a similar argument and defines the concept of maternity in the Western civilisation as "an adult fantasy of a lost continent" (133), a definition first developed by Freud. Accordingly, the strict patriarchal mentality laying the foundations of the Western civilisation labels the mother figure as the nostalgic object of lost love while excluding her feminine body from civilisation defined by men. The exclusion of the mother and the ban on her semiotic energy lead people to a kind of melancholy stemming from her loss. Therefore, pre-Oedipal time when the infant is in unity with its mother turns into times of nostalgia and the infant's departure from the womb haunts the individuals throughout their lives. The maternal womb imagined as a safe haven for the infant is what O'Brien refers to in her statement. However, the womb has another important function in Kristevan theory of subjectivity. Different from Freud and Lacan, the time in the womb is not outside the culture but it is the starting place of

subjectivity although the maternal body must be abjected in time to achieve full subjectivity. In this context, Caithleen's failed relationship with her mother not only deprives her of protection but also nullifies her chance for subjectivity from the very beginning.

O'Brien also subverts the rural Ireland image representing the maternal womb in the Irish nationalist discourse; therefore, the places mentioned in the novel as well as Baba and Caithleen's move from a rural town to Dublin in the second book of the trilogy must also be studied. The move initiates the girls' journey into the self by detaching them from familiar places and faces as in the many examples of *bildungsroman*. However, different from the general pattern, the girls' hometown is not associated with protection but with oppression and sexual harassment. Their small town is not a secure place, especially for Caithleen if her father's violent attitude, Mr. Gentleman's paedophilic desires and Jack's steal of kisses are taken into consideration. In this atmosphere, Dublin does not appear as a dangerous place, but a liberating place for Caithleen during her exploration of the self. Through the failure of an Irish rural town in its protective role, O'Brien undermines another romantic image employed by the nineteenth-century discourse of Irish nationalism. In this respect, her perspective on rural Ireland contradicts Yeatsian works that introduce the Irish land as a place of noble peasantry and glory by embellishing it with romantic images. Since Mrs. Brady is allegorically related to the Mother Ireland associated with the rural landscape, the collapse of the rural Ireland myth stands for the mother's failure in protecting her daughter from moral corruption, which unfolds the illusory nature of the Mother Ireland myth and marks it as a source of imprisonment and oppression for daughters.

As explained in the previous chapter on the construction of the Virgin Mary cult, the image of Mother Ireland is also deprived of her semiotic essence, because she is created by the masculine nationalist discourse that is the mimicry of the Roman symbolic based on the Catholic doctrines, and so is Caithleen's mother. Since the mother in the novel is estranged from her maternal body and reduced into a national icon, she is transformed into an unattainable sublime object as can be observed in Jack's platonic love for Caithleen's mother, Caithleen's blindness to her mother's real nature and Mr. Brady's

ignorance towards her wife's desire for love. None of these characters approach the mother as an individual, because all of them regard her as Mother Ireland, rather than a speaking subject in the symbolic. Mrs. Brady, with her iconic role in the eyes of Caithleen, alienates her child from the semiotic nature of motherhood as well as womanhood, and captivates her into an unreal Mother Ireland image.

McNabb points out the changing patterns in rural Ireland during the late 1950s and early 60s, and appropriates the unifying role to rural Irish women in general, claiming that "the standing of individual families in the community is due to the work and influence of the mother" (199). Mrs. Brady is a typical rural woman in this sense; she does not leave her house and her child in spite of her unhappiness, which sets a limiting role model for Caithleen, though. She keeps the traditional patterns of Irish family despite her drunken husband, and it is only after her death that their house is confiscated by the bank in return of Mr. Brady's debts, Hickey, the servant in their farm, quits his job and Caithleen decides to go to a convent school. The mother's "self-sacrificing" attitude is admired by the townspeople as can be understood from Jack's letter to Caithleen which defines her as an heiress to her mother's place: "*And, my dear Caithleen, who is the image and continuation of her mother, I see no reason why you shall not return and inherit your mother's home and carry on her admirable domestic tradition*" (O'Brien, *Country* 81). The letter samples rural Irish society's expectations from a young woman and the traditional role she is to undertake as underlined by De Valera's constitution. The expectations are so narrow-minded that they neither differentiate between the old and new generations nor regard the changing conditions of the day. With a rural mentality, Jack who was in love with Caithleen's mother proposes to Caithleen, seeing no difference between these two women.

Caithleen's depiction of the proposal scene with particular emphasis on Jack's old mother sitting in the kitchen can be analysed in reference to the Hag of Beare (the oldest Irish woman), one of the personifications of Mother Ireland. The fact that Jack, a fervent Irish nationalist, still lives with his mother reveals the delimiting influence of the nationalist Mother Ireland myth on his life. Caithleen depicts the old woman with the following words:

A candle stood on the mantelpiece beside her, and though it had nearly burned out, the wick had sprung into a final, tall flame and I could see her face very clearly. The yellow skin stretched like parchment over her old bones, and her hands and her wrists were thin and brown like boiled chicken bones. Her knuckles were bent with rheumatism, her eyes almost dead, and I hated to look at her. I was looking at death. (94).

The old woman's portrayal is a grotesque one as her yellow wrinkled skin, thinness and closeness to death evoke a feeling of hatred and disgust in Caithleen. The imagery of the old mother in Caithleen's narrative is also accompanied by "the sour milk, and the candle dying in the dirty saucer, and the smell of must on everything," all of which mark the old woman as a source of abjection (95). Jack's mother allegorically embodies the collapse of the Mother Ireland myth while she is the illustration of a woman's life devoted to this mythical image. In this respect, she is the image of unhappiness, self-restraint and death of female subjectivity as well. Caithleen's disturbance in the face of the old woman can be explained by the fact that the old woman symbolises the future waiting for Caithleen if she continues to stay in her claustrophobic hometown dominated by Irish Catholic nationalism. Here, it must also be highlighted that Caithleen cannot associate her own mother with the old decaying figure of Jack's mother although both women are the products of the same nationalist tradition. Since she idealises her mother even more after her early death and this idealised image prevents Caithleen's exploration of the maternal subjectivity, her abjection of the mother cannot become possible, turning the mother into a Freudian lost object of love in Caithleen's case.

The death of Caithleen's own mother comes very early in the novel, once again, proving O'Brien's distaste for the image of Mother Ireland and the image's devastating effect on Irish women. However, her early death is surely double-edged because of Ireland's ideological/political concept of motherhood. If her mother had not died, Caithleen could not have left her home town. Ironically, it is only after her mother's death, Caithleen becomes courageous enough to leave her father behind, because she no longer has an emotional responsibility towards her "self-sacrificing" mother who shares the same house with her abusive father. In this respect, the death of the mother liberates Caithleen, freeing her from the expectations of rural Irish society embodied by the

mother image. Declan Kiberd also makes a parallel argument, claiming that although Caithleen suffers from her mother's death, a possibility of her mother's coming back makes her afraid ("Edna" 151). Indeed, such an unconscious relief is abnormal and points out the repressive effects of Irish mother on the child. On the other hand, Caithleen's process of subjectivity is left incomplete as she cannot "abject" her mother in a natural way. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva argues that the infant has to abject the mother in order to constitute his/her self. Yet, in Caithleen's case, the mother's early death transforms her into a lost object of love, rather than an abject figure; Caithleen cannot get rid off the emotional burden of her mother's self-sacrificing image while her sad memory continually haunts her, blocking her exploration of the "self." Besides, the failure of the father figure as an agent for separation also complicates Caithleen's psychological development and urges her to find a substitute father.

Caithleen's father Mr. Brady is an epitome of failure and self-destruction. Although there is no detailed information about Mr. Brady's past, it is clear that he was a member of the landed Catholic gentry whose houses were burnt down by the Black and Tans during the Irish struggle for independence (O'Brien, *Country* 10). However, Mr. Brady has not got any social position in the contemporary times and is almost invisible among other men of the town as can be understood from Caithleen's words: "Mr. Gentleman and Mr. Brennan were talking about foot-and-mouth disease. My father coughed a little to let them know that he was there, and he passed them cigarettes two or three times, but they did not include him in the conversation because he was in the habit of saying stupid things" (87). Mr. Gentleman, who is of French origin and one of the elites in the town, is a solicitor working in Dublin while Baba's father Mr. Brennan, who is a veterinarian, is another notable person of the town. These two male figures are opposite of Mr. Brady, since both of them are gentle, educated and rich. In this respect, there is not only a class difference but also a cultural gap between these men and Mr. Brady, and these differences are reflected on the attitudes of each man, revealing Mr. Brady's coarse nature as a source of shame for Caithleen.

Although Mr. Brady is not respected and is "emasculated" in the public sphere, he is brutal and violent in the domestic sphere. The contrast between his public and private

identities cannot be isolated from the country's colonial past. The gendered discourse of English colonialism and the so-called feminine nature of the Celts turn "masculinity" and "femininity" into political concepts in the Irish context. To compete against the colonising father, the colonised men attempt to prove their "masculinity" by adopting "hypermasculinity,"¹ a more muscular and aggressive form of manliness in the domestic sphere. Necessary conditions for hypermasculinity emerge "[w]hen agents of hegemonic masculinity feel threatened by outside forces, hypermasculinity arises by inflating, exaggerating, or otherwise distorting conventional understandings of masculinity" (Agathangelou and Ling 3). In other words, men that are emasculated by "more masculine" discourses tend to adopt hypermasculinity to control the subordinate groups like women and children; and Mr. Brady's psychology can be explained through this tendency. The levels of emasculation among the colonised also change according to their financial status. For instance, "Mr Brennan, a solidly middle-class family man, experiences a lesser degree of emasculation than Mr Brady, an impoverished and disposed farmer" (Peterson 156). Namely, Mr. Brady's social and political disadvantage based on his economic and social failure makes him more aggressive and violent, in return. Although Caithleen is a child, she is aware of the different natures of these three men and fosters a kind of admiration for Mr. Gentleman whose foreign origins differentiate him from the rural Irish men in the town.

The masculinities of Mr. Gentleman and Mr. Brady are different from each other in their essence as they represent two camps of English colonisation over Ireland. Following the rise of nationalism in the eighteenth century, the Irish started to build their image over the discourse of the English coloniser and attempted to strike back against the Empire by mimicking their ways through hyper-masculinity. However, as argued by Joseph Valente, the Victorians regarded manhood as unique to Englishness, pointing out their Teutonic origins standing for pluck, realism and stoic calm as well as their Protestant traditions of individuality, independence and rationality. Moreover, they believed that manhood could only be performed by a metropolitan bourgeoisie male who was capable of self-containment (8-10). Therefore, the majority of Irish men with

¹ Ashis Nandy is the first to define the psychology for "hypermasculinity" while analysing Indian men's status under English colonialism and states that "identification with the aggressor" emerges in the case of the Raj. Accordingly, the Raj regarded the Indians as "crypto-barbarians" and the British rule as "an agent of progress," so the salvation of the Indians lies in "becoming more like the British," including the gender stereotypes (7).

their rural identity and Celtic origins were cast off from the discourse of manhood from the very beginning. In the novel, Mr. Gentleman can be regarded as the representative of foreign occupation on the Irish land and an embodiment of the English-style masculinity (although he is of French origin) whilst Mr. Brady's hypermasculinity stands as a mediocre mimicry of manhood and fails in going beyond the English colonial discourse.

Moreover, Mr. Brady's hypermasculine fashion drags him into a more desperate situation as "the forms available to the subaltern subject or group for the direct assertion of masculinity per se, whether as violent force or aggressive virility, tended to violate the self-disciplinary canons of bourgeois manliness, its call to energetic self-restraint" (Valente 10). Therefore, Mr. Brady gets more frustrated as his inability for self-restraint makes him "the other" in the company of men with social status. In his article "Fathers and Sons: Irish Style," Kiberd clarifies the Irish father's options for survival under colonisation with the following words: "If successful, he lived out his life in a posture of provincial dependency, as a policeman or bureaucrat or petty official in an oppressive and despised colonial administration. If unsuccessful, he retreated into a vicious cycle of alcoholism and unemployment" (132). Although the novel is set after the war of independence – in the 1940s and the 1950s – the psychological effects of English colonialism are still visible on the characters; therefore, Mr. Brady who cannot protect his mansion from the Black and Tans is drawn into a cycle of self-destruction in parallel to Kiberd's argument. Similar to his colonised ancestors who neither managed to step into the English symbolic nor produced their own, Mr. Brady cannot form an Irish discourse of manhood independent from the English one. Allegorically speaking, his failure in identifying with the colonising father triggers a subsequent endeavour to "mimic" the father by exaggerating manhood; yet, still rejected by the colonising father, Mr. Brady ends up as stuck in the level of an abject that cannot exist in the symbolic as a speaking subject. Therefore, the Brady family fall into pieces after Caithleen's mother's unexpected death.

In her work *Tales of Love*, Kristeva puts forth her thesis of imaginary father by elaborating Freud's "father in individual prehistory" (26). Accordingly, to enter into the

symbolic, the infant has to identify itself with the imaginary father who helps the infant's process of abjection. Nevertheless, this father is motivated by "love," contrary to the Freudian father who introduces the incest ban as well as the castration punishment. She explains this process of identification based on love with the following words: "[i]n being able to receive the other's words, to assimilate, repeat and reproduce them, I become like him: One. A subject of enunciation. Through psychic osmosis/identification. Through love" (26). Here, Kristeva points out the inclusion of the infant into the signifying process by "becoming like him" and casts off the function of fear in the infant's transition into the symbolic. When scrutinised through the lens of Kristeva's theory, it is clear that Mr. Brady cannot carry out the role of an imaginary father in Caithleen's process of subjectivity; his relationship with his daughter is based on violence and he is a source of fear for Caithleen. Besides, his subjectivity is also under suspicion due to his rivalry against the father figure. Deprived of an imaginary father, Caithleen plunges into a quest for one, especially after her mother's abrupt death. As a result, she gets involved in an affair with Mr. Gentleman who is interested in her.

Mr. Gentleman poses himself as her father in their relationship and defines Caithleen as "his freckle-faced daughter," which turns the affair into an incestuous one as can be understood from the conversation between the two: "'Are you my father?' I asked wistfully, because it was nice playing make-believe with Mr. Gentleman. 'Yes, I'm your father,' he said as he kissed 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, *Country* 101). Caithleen's approach to Mr. Gentleman aims to satisfy her longing for a father, rather than a lover and Mr. Gentleman, aware of this emotional void in her heart, promises to fulfill the paternal role although his promise includes sexual overtones. Caithleen is both after a romantic love and a kind of protection that she cannot find in her parents; that is why she does not like dating with fellow boys, saying "I always wanted to rush back to Mr. Gentleman, he was much nicer than young boys" (119). Caithleen and Mr. Gentleman's love affair begins just after the death of her mother and it continues even after Caithleen and Baba's dismissal from the convent (because of writing sexual notes about a nun and the father) and move to Dublin.

As Caithleen's illegitimate affair with Mr. Gentleman continues during her early years in Dublin, she tries to perform her mother's passive role of womanhood. Her submissive image under Mr. Gentleman's authority reveals the gendered nature of the coloniser-colonised relationship, and it is emphasised that Mr. Gentleman loves Caithleen's naivety and country girl image. Her appearance characterised by her red hair, white skin and freckled face fits into the stereotypical Irish girl image in Mr. Gentleman's mind as can be understood from his address to Caithleen; "my country girl with country-colored hair" (165). Appropriate to the colonising mentality, Mr. Gentleman approaches the girl almost as an exotic object to explore and to exploit while illustrating the coloniser's violent treatment of the colonised. One of the first scenes projecting her acceptance of passive Irish womanhood is the love scene where Mr. Gentleman says to Caithleen: "We're going to be together. I'm going to make love to you" (162). Allegorically, Mr. Gentleman's authoritative attitude and his treatment of Caithleen as a subordinate person mimic the coloniser's exploitation of the Irish land in the microcosmic level. At this juncture, Caithleen replaces her mother to represent another image of Mother Ireland.

After Mr. Gentleman's quitting the relationship by giving Mr. Brady's threats and his wife's nervous breakdown as an excuse, Caithleen suffers from two years of loneliness in Dublin until she finds another father substitute. In the second book of the trilogy entitled *The Lonely Girl*, Caithleen meets her future film director husband Eugene Gaillard in a cocktail. Similar to Mr. Gentleman, Eugene is of foreign origin and at her father's age, and Caithleen's relationship with him is built on the same coloniser-colonised pattern as she keeps mimicking her mother's passive womanhood. First of all, Eugene starts to call Caithleen "Kate" since he finds her original name "too 'Kiltartan' for his liking" (202); naming is a colonial act and reveals Eugene's position as the coloniser in their relationship. Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, points out the constructed dichotomy between the Western world and the colonised land that represents "the other," claiming that "[t]he Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal' " (40). In parallel to Said's argument, Caithleen is the epitome of "Irishness" fulfilling the irrational colonial girl stereotype that is a submissive, naïve and inexperienced wife as well as a passive

bedpartner for Eugene. Despite his affair with Caithleen, Eugene continues to exchange letters with his ex-wife Laura who is Caithleen's opposite with her intellectual and independent woman image. In one of his letters, he depicts Caithleen to Laura, writing that "*she is Irish and romantic and illogical*" (O'Brien, *Country* 341). It is evident that Eugene's views on Ireland shaped by the gendered representation of the land as well as the Irish stereotypes of the English colonial discourse make Caithleen a luring exotic object in his eyes. Caithleen always feels herself as "the other" among Eugene's intellectual friends while Eugene continually humiliates her because of her lack of manners. Once he chides her, saying "[h]ow am I ever going to take you into society?" (234). His rhetorical question reveals his colonial mentality which charges him with a responsibility of "civilising" Caithleen. On the other hand, he does not want her intellectual development, because her country background helps Eugene achieve superiority over her. After their first night, Caithleen tells Eugene that she will be sophisticated; yet, he replies, saying "I don't want you sophisticated, . . . I just want to give you nice babies" (317). In this way, Eugene maintains his colonial attitude towards Caithleen whom he regards as a feminine body ready to serve the symbolic as a mother.

Not only Eugene but also her father considers Caithleen's body as an object under the control of the symbolic. As soon as the news about her affair with Eugene is spread in the town, her body turns into a battlefield between the narrow-minded men of her town and her lover. While Eugene sees Mother Ireland in the body of Caithleen and wants to exploit it, her father also regards her daughter's body as Mother Ireland and wants to protect it from so-called foreign invasion. Indeed, the myth of Mother Ireland is the greatest illusion of the nineteenth-century Irish nationalism. In *The Sense and Nonsense of Revolt* (1996), Kristeva draws attention to the act of purification in social and religious systems and underlines that the maternal is seen as "impure" because of its corporeality of covering the other and blurring the boundary between the I and the other. Therefore, she claims that "[p]urification, the elimination of taint, and protection against the maternal are at the heart of the constitution of the sacred" (21). Similarly, Mother Ireland is associated with different female figures pioneered by Virgin Mary and Cathleen ni Houlihan whose link with their maternal bodies and the semiotic is cut off by an emphasis on virginity and purity, and who are attributed sanctity by the symbolic,

in return. As a result, these sublimate female personifications of Ireland represent Irish people's longing for an unoccupied land; an Oedipal fantasy in an allegorical sense. In the meantime, the sacred existence of the mother figure constituted in line with the rules of the symbolic justifies Irish people's return to the maternal womb and their incestuous desire towards the mother. The connection between these female images and the Irish nationalists became Irish men's motivation for self-sacrifice during the war of independence. Inflammable anger against English colonialism in the recent past and all the imagery related to the colonial history continue to haunt old-school Irish nationalism.

Mr. Brady, who is disconnected from real life because of his alcoholism, clings to old-school nationalism motivated by the rape metaphor¹ in a last minute attempt to prove his "manhood" by rescuing her daughter from Eugene. Nevertheless, Caithleen's narrative reveals his father's disinterest in his national identity from the very beginning as she records the history of their mansion, saying that ". . . the Tans burned the big house and my father, unlike his forebears, had no pride in land, and gradually the place went to ruin" (O'Brien, *Country* 10). Similar to his ignorance of the ancestral house, Mr. Brady is also irresponsible towards his wife and daughter, causing them to fade away under his brutal authority. And only after he finds out Caithleen's affair with "Jewish" Eugene, does he start to care about her daughter, which exemplifies the effect of Mother Ireland myth on everyday lives. Turning her daughter's affair into a national problem, Mr. Brady and a small group of drunken men raid Eugene's house to get Caithleen back (295). Caithleen's ironic tone in the depiction of the scene reveals her disgust towards this theatre of manhood:

"Are you a Catholic?" the Ferret asked, in a policeman's voice.

"I'm not a Catholic," Eugene answered.

"D'you go to Mass?" my father asked.

. . .

"I would like you to realize that your daughter is escaping from you. I'm not abducting her. I'm not forcing her. – she is running away from you and your way of living..." Eugene began.

"What the hell is he talking about?" Andy said.

¹ The rape metaphor stands for the English coloniser's exploitation of the Irish land in Irish literary history. Seamus Heaney's 1975 poem "Act of Union" is an example for the use of rape metaphor.

“The tragic history of our fair land,” Jack Holland exclaimed. “Alien power sapped our will to resist.”

“They get girls with dope,” the Ferret said. “Many an Irish girl ends up in the white-slave traffic in Piccadilly. Foreigners run it. All foreigners.” (297-98)

The raid scene and the conversation between these men while Caithleen is hiding under the bed, once again, can be interpreted as an example for the object status of Irish women in the colonial discourse as well as their iconic existence in the Catholic nationalist discourse built on woman/land trope. The main topic of the conversation in the quotation above is not Caithleen but the invasion of the land by foreigners. As argued by Amanda Greenwood, “political allusions serve as expressions of Cait’s sexual displacement; references to nationalism crop up like ill omens at points in the text where Caithleen is trying to assert herself so that the boundaries between national and sexual colonization are blurred” (32). In other words, Caithleen’s exploration of female desire and sexuality are always intertwined with politics as it is difficult to separate Irish womanhood from its historical roots. Therefore, all individual attempts to explore and redefine womanhood are threatened by Irish nationalism that accepts such attempts as an attack against Irish nation. All the male characters’ relationships with Caithleen foreground her as an Irish woman, not as an individual. Her object status in these relationships prevents her exploration of the self rooted in her semiotic maternal body.

Besides, Caithleen’s subjectivity is also blocked by her self-censorship as she lives under the idealised portrayal of her mother. In spite of leaving her hometown associated with her mother, Caithleen cannot get rid of her haunting existence as the mother’s shadow follows her wherever she goes. When she enters her new home in Dublin, Caithleen says the decoration of the house featuring “the velvet cloth or the cluttered china cabinet, or perhaps the period of the furniture” reminds her of her mother (O’Brien, *Country* 124), signalling that the dead mother will dominate her state of mind all the time. The sad memory of her mother shadows all her happy moments as if her happiness contradicts her mother’s self-sacrifice, or as if she is betraying the essence of Irish womanhood. For instance, when Eugene goes shopping with Caithleen, she remembers her mother:

I thought of Mama and of how she would love it, and I knew that if she could she would come back from her cold grave in the Shannon lake to avail herself of such a bargain. She was drowned when I was fourteen. I felt guilty on and off, because I was so happy with him and because I had seldom seen my mother happy or laughing. Being in the posh shop reminded me of her. (202)

Her mother's deprivation of a luxurious life and all the sufferings she endured for the sake of her family rend Caithleen's heart. She wants to talk about her mother's "commonplace sacrifice of her life" with Eugene as if she wants to prove her fidelity to her mother (203). Namely, she insists on her pre-Oedipal link with the mother since she cannot abject her in a normal process. Her situation is more pathetic than other orphan girls, since she is after a mythical image – a virgin mother – created in the symbolic with whom she can never identify herself.

Apart from evoking remorse in Caithleen's conscience, the memory of her mother appears as a moral guardian, controlling and discrediting her exploration of the self. One night, upon Baba's insistence, she goes out with two rich men. She suddenly hears her mother's voice in her head: "I heard my mother's voice accusing me, and I saw her shake her finger at me. There were tears in her eyes. Tears of reproach" (147). As understood from Caithleen's own statement, her mother appears as a surveillant figure, rather than a protective and nurturing figure. The way Caithleen imagines her mother is in the tradition of Mother Ireland constructed by masculine nationalism. Thus, the values and impositions of the symbolic haunt Caithleen in the image of her mother, making her another victim of the Mother Ireland myth. Greenwood points out the way Caithleen performs womanhood and states that womanhood "is a role which Caithleen adopts whilst recognizing its shallowness and being conscious of the extent to which she is 'playing'" (25). Indeed, Caithleen is aware of the impossibility of virgin mother image; however, she cannot challenge this idea of womanhood as every man expects her to perform the same role. So, she is "imprisoned in the image of a country girl" (Salmon 145).

In the last book of the trilogy *Girls in Their Married Bliss*, the relationship between Caithleen and the memory of her mother changes as Caithleen becomes a mother, herself. Starting with Caithleen's marriage with Eugene because of her pregnancy, the

last novel records Caithleen's adultery, Eugene's abandonment, Caithleen's guilty conscience, her confrontation with her mother's real nature and the subsequent self-awakening. *Girls in Their Married Bliss* in the voice of Baba projects a different Caithleen who is now a mother and has a first-hand experience of motherhood. This individual experience forces Caithleen to question the essence and meaning of motherhood. Yet, her failure in identifying with her mother's larger-than-life image causes her downfall in the end.

Unhappy under the tyranny of her husband, Caithleen has an adulterous affair with another man, which ends up with Caithleen's banishment from her home and her son after Eugene's detection of the affair. When Eugene files for divorce, he accuses Caithleen of being "unfit to be a mother" (405). Caithleen starts to question her motherhood at this juncture. Her failure in fulfilling the role of self-sacrificing Irish mother is hinted in the scenes of mother-child relationship featuring Caithleen and her son, Cash. After Caithleen starts to live in another house, Cash comes for an overnight stay upon his father's permission. The emptiness of Caithleen's house depicted through the lack of proper furniture and toys represents her failed motherhood, because Cash wants to go back to his father, to his own room and to his toys (482-83). Besides, he once utters that he has "another mum" at home; this is Maura who lives with Eugene and apparently functions as a foster mother for Cash (452). Caithleen's disappointment in her relationship with her son drags her into self-inquiry and the idealised image of her mother stands as a measure for motherhood. In this context, she feels guilty and starts to develop a love-hate relationship with her own mother, because the impossibility of fulfilling her mother's ostensible "virgin mother" role frustrates her as she cannot meet the requirements of the same role in her own life. One day, after being rejected by Eugene while seeking forgiveness, Caithleen has a mental breakdown. Later, when she is at her psychiatrist's clinic, the first outburst of her hatred against her mother appears:

Hills brought a sudden thought of her mother, and she felt the first flash of dislike she had ever experienced for that dead, overworked woman. Her mother's kindness and her mother's accidental drowning had always given her *a mantle of perfection*. Kate's love had been unchanged and everlasting, like the wax flowers under domes which would have been on her grave if she'd had one. Now suddenly she saw that woman in a different light. *A self-appointed martyr. A blackmailer. Stitching the cord back on. Smothering her one child in loathsome, sponge-soft, pamper love.*

She tried to dry her eyes, only to find them leaking. She stood up, made another appointment with the psychiatrist, and went through the waiting room so distraught that she wrung the pity of people who were worse off than herself.” (476-77; my emphasis)

As the extract reveals, she suddenly becomes aware of her mother’s over-idealised image in her life. Her mother’s early death and Caithleen’s inability to estrange herself from her mother turn the mother image into a lost and idealised object of love for Caithleen, which precludes her abjection of the mother. However, thanks to her own experience of motherhood, she realises that motherhood does not always mean perfection and her mother is not perfect, either. Rather, her mother is good at “performing” her role of Irish womanhood that is symbolised over Virgin Mary whose purity is associated with her desexualised body and her upright character is defined through her sacrifice of her own son for the sake of humankind, all of which grant her a “sanctified” status of the martyr mother in the eyes of the Church. Similarly, Mrs. Brady is a victimised woman who sacrifices herself by tolerating her husband’s brutal attitudes for the sake of her family. However, as detailed above, she also represents Mother Ireland. Thus, she is “the mother of a nation” and her self-sacrifice helps the continuation of Irish society. The iconic image of Mrs. Brady even covers up her adulterous affair, her crude attitudes and her hypocrisy. As a result, Caithleen’s first discovery of her mother’s mimicry comes very late and is followed by a mental inquisition into her childhood memories:

For days she went around hating her mother, remembering her minutest fault, even to the way her mother’s accent changed when they visited people, and how after going to the lavatory in some strange house or some strange hotel she would make a feeble, dishonest attempt at washing her hands, by putting one hand – the one she’d used – under the tap, when at home she just held her legs apart over the sewerage outside the back door, where they also strained potatoes and calf meal. In that fever of hate and shame she thought one day of something that lessened her rancor. (477)

For the first time in the trilogy, Mrs. Brady is depicted out of her idealised portrayal as her body of flesh and bones is foregrounded in a grotesque scene. Under the idealised mask of Mother Ireland, Mrs. Brady is indeed a law-breaker that threatens the symbolic;

the pee scene dirtying the edible pure food¹ symbolises her challenge against the sacred, making her a figure necessary to be abjected in Kristevan sense. However, an access to her real nature is blocked for Caithleen from the very beginning, since she is crushed under the idealised portrayal of her mother drawn by the symbolic. Caithleen's life-long idealisation of the mother and her pursue of an unreal "flawless" image blocked her act of abjection, transforming her mother into a moral guardian or a surveillant object promoted by the symbolic that haunted her all the time. When Caithleen realises the great contrast between her mother's public mask and her private self, she becomes aware of the cheat and feels a kind of hatred towards her, which must be explained by referring to Kristeva.

In *Powers of Horror* that makes use of anthropological studies to understand human psychology, Kristeva marks the defilement rituals in ancient societies as a way to minimise phobia that is the "crossroad of neurosis and psychosis," and argues that phobia challenges the taboo on contacting with the mother who is associated with the impure in religious texts (63-65). Besides, Kristeva highlights that all religions are dedicated to "the task of warding off that danger," namely, they aim to ban a return to the maternal. Therefore, the rituals of defilement in ancient societies were based on the abjection of all the elements related to the mother and the termination of "the other threat to the subject: that of being swamped by the dual relationship, thereby risking the loss not of a part (castration) but of the totality of his living being" (63-64). It is evident that Caithleen's attempt to mimic the unreal image of Mother Ireland embodied in the body of her own mother as well as her later disappointment with this idealised image bring about her own death, in the end. As emphasised by Kristeva, abjection is required, since it "is the symptom of an ego" and proves the speaking subject's position in the symbolic as well as his/her attempt to keep his/her borders (*Powers* 45). However, Caithleen who is unable to explore and then, abject her mother during her childhood cannot create the "self" as a woman but urges herself to mimic the unattainable "pure" mother figure defined by the symbolic. Since she builds all her life on an endeavour to "mimic" an unattainable figure, the collapse of her mother's idealised portrayal reveals

¹ In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva defines the loathing of food as "the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection" (2), since food is also a polluting object transgressing the borders of the clean and proper body. Besides, Kristeva points out the religious rules over edible food items and humankind's attempts to make differentiation between the "pure" and the "impure" food (75-77).

the greatest illusion dominating her subjectivity, which drags her into hysteria that “brings about, ignores or seduces the symbolic but does not produce it” (45). By way of explanation, she suddenly diverges into the semiotic realm, closing herself to the interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic that is necessary to create a meaning in the symbolic.

As can be understood, the mother must be abjected by the child to form a separate identity, but it must also be stressed that Kristeva’s point is related to cutting the corporeal bond with the mother, rather than rejecting “the mother’s body as the body of a woman” as argued by Oliver (“Feminist” 104). In other words, Kristeva does not support the exclusion of the woman’s body from the site of culture and language; instead, she points out the maternal body as the starting place for subjectivity that must be left in time while the woman continues to exist in culture and language. This is the point where Caithleen fails when she commits suicide after sterilising herself. She ends her ability to give birth, because she is afraid of making “the same mistake again” (O’Brien, *Country* 508). Namely, she regards her motherhood as a failure, as a “mistake.” She cannot differentiate her womanhood from her maternity and considers her failure in one as an ultimate failure of the self. On the other hand, Caithleen’s late encounter with her mother’s true nature necessitates the murder of her own self. As Oliver highlights, a woman’s abjection of the maternal body is very difficult due to her same biology with her mother. Accordingly, “[f]or women, matricide does not ward off suicide. For women, matricide is a form of suicide. A woman cannot properly mourn the lost object. She cannot get rid of the maternal body. Kristeva woefully claims that she carries the maternal Thing with her locked like a corpse in the crypt of her psyche” (*Reading* 63). In this context, Caithleen’s rejection of her mother’s private self which she finds ugly and shameful also means the end of her identity formation process; by her own act of matricide, she ends any possibility to actualise her real self. Moreover, since Caithleen is already the “other” or the abject figure as an orphan Irish girl, she does not have a stable place in the symbolic; therefore, her attempt to abject the (m)other cannot become possible without committing suicide.

When Caithleen's abject status stemming from her mother's unattainable semiotic *chora* and her father's failed paternal function are considered, the shift of narration from Caithleen to Baba in *Girls in Their Married Bliss* is worth attention. Here, Kristeva's interpretation of the act of writing and its relation to the abject must be mentioned. Since the status of an abject is equal to death in Kristevan theory, writing that is associated with the paternal sphere in the history of civilisation appears as the only way of "resurrection" for the abject; Kristeva notes that "[w]riting then implies an ability to imagine the abject, that is, to see oneself in its place and to thrust it aside only by means of the displacements of verbal play" (*Powers* 16, 26). In other words, writing establishes the abject figure's connection with the symbolic, initiating his/her signifying ability. It constitutes the firm ground for the abject, preventing his/her full entrapment by the semiotic *chora*. In this context, Caithleen's act of writing embodies her struggle for subjectivity as it is an attempt to build her "self" in the symbolic by putting her experience into sentences. However, she gives up recording her story, her thoughts, and her feelings in the last book. Her encounter with the "abject" nature of her mother destroys the mother's idealised portrayal and destabilises Caithleen's already precarious status as an abject child without an imaginary father. Since her attempts to establish her "self" in the symbolic are always interrupted because of her problematic relationships with the father figures, her discovery of Mrs. Brady's semiotic nature causes the sinking of her total being "irretrievably into the mother" (Kristeva, *Powers* 64). Thus, she degrades into the status of a "mad" woman during her search for an imaginary father through some other extramarital affairs, which can be read as her defeat in the process of subjectivity. Baba defines her ravings as follows:

She kept jumping from one thing to another, said she couldn't pray anymore, mumbled petitions to St. Anthony but felt a hypocrite. Then she quoted Van Gogh, said he wanted to paint infinity. I thought, Her ear will be off next. Asked me what I thought was infinity, if there was something more to life. She said it was the emptiness that was the worst, the void. Then she contradicted herself and said it was the hallucinations. (O'Brien, *Country* 529)

Baba's narrative depicts Caithleen while she is suffering from another failed affair after her divorce. Once again, she is left by her lover who is supposed to fulfill the role of an imaginary father in Caithleen's process of subjectivity. Considering that she can neither form her subjectivity nor fill up the imaginary father's place with another person, item

or pursuit, she ends up missing her last chance for the symbolic (also symbolised by her loss of faith in God) and losing herself in the semiotic *chora* that she faces during her late encounter with her abject mother. Her obsession with “infinity” and her emphasis on the “emptiness” and the “void” can be interpreted as her return to the maternal womb associated with the semiotic *chora*. However, having lost her ability for signification by diving into the semiotic, as can be observed in her gibberish talk, she cannot create a meaning; so, she gives up writing and cannot actualise her “resurrection.” Although Caithleen’s death can be read as the failure of Irish women’s subjectivity, O’Brien makes a twist in the plot by handing over the task of narrative to Baba. Therefore, Baba says the last word and becomes the one who records Caithleen’s nervous breakdown and suicide.

Although Baba’s mother Martha is not an idealised mother, she also delimits Baba’s subjectivity and haunts her life. In *Mother Ireland*, O’Brien defines Irish understanding of motherhood with the following words: “Mothers were best. Mothers worked and worried and sacrificed and had the smallest amount on their plates when the family sat down to eat, mothers wore aprons and slaved and mothers went to the confraternity on a Sunday evening and whispered things to each other in the chapel grounds about their wombs and their woes” (50). The lines draw a self-sacrificing and religious portrayal for the Irish mother who suppresses her feminine aspect symbolised by her womb and keeps her silence against patriarchy. With her submissive stance, Mrs. Brady fulfills her maternal role. On the contrary, Baba’s mother Martha is a careless and alcoholic mother, and cannot meet the societal expectations to become an “Irish” mother. For example, Caithleen describes Martha as “too beautiful and cold” to become a mother, and adds that

Martha was what the villagers called fast. Most nights she went down to the Greyhound Hotel, dressed in a tight black suit with nothing under the jacket, only a brasserie, and with a chiffon scarf knotted at her throat. . . . Madonna face, perched on a high stool in the lounge bar of the Greyhound Hotel; they thought she looked sad. But Martha was not ever sad, unless being bored is a form of sadness. She wanted two things from life and she got them – drink and admiration. (O’Brien, *Country* 30-31)

For Caithleen, Martha is a marginal figure in terms of her appearance and attitudes contrasting the notion of motherhood. Her sexual beauty is in the foreground as opposed to the Virgin Mary model and she cannot be associated with the domestic sphere. Yet, her husband's money supplies her with a superior social position and protects her from a possible humiliation by society. Still, she is not a liberating figure for Irish women; she is a woman who gives up her dream of becoming a famous ballet dancer to get marry (32). In this context, she cannot achieve her real self in the symbolic through her subjectivity, but she is a paragon of failed female subjectivity as she finds happiness in alcohol and luxury. Besides, she fails in her maternal role as she does not have proper communication with Baba and cannot turn the semiotic essence of her maternal body into generative power. For instance, Baba underlines her lack of communication with Martha, saying "I hardly ever talked to my mother about anything, because when I was four I had scarlet fever and she sent me away to a Gaeltacht to learn Irish. She really sent me away so that she wouldn't have to mind me" (385). Baba's resentment towards her mother is clear in her words, which proves that Martha devours not only her own self but also her daughter's subjectivity. When Baba's preference to enter the symbolic through marriage is considered, Martha's restricting influence over Baba's subjectivity becomes visible.

In her epilogue, Baba refers to her loveless marriage to a rich man and reveals Martha's satisfaction with the situation. She writes, "[m]y mother had a right old time. 'He's a good man, your Frank,' she'd say to me across a table in one of those lurid places, and then she'd look around for him and raise her glass and say, 'Frank, take care,' and they'd drink to me: the bloody sacrificial lamb" (386). Baba calls herself "the bloody sacrificial lamb," pointing out her sacrifice of beauty and youth in return for money. At this juncture, Mrs. Brady and Martha are not different from each other as both of them sacrifice their daughters to maintain their position in society. Besides, both are emotionally absent mother figures who fail to initiate their children's subjectivity, since they cannot present their semiotic *chora* to their service. While Mrs. Brady is a perfect model for Irish womanhood in the eyes of townspeople, Martha represents the opposite. Both mother characters are the products of Irish patriarchal society and deprived of a

subjective feminine identity. Certainly, the failure of these two mothers adversely affect their daughters' subjectivity processes.

Due to an idealised image of Mrs. Brady, Caithleen cannot abject her and is dragged into hysteria. As discussed by Kristeva, hysteria "brings about, ignores or seduces the symbolic but does not produce it" (*Powers* 45). In other words, hysteria threatens the meaning in the symbolic and destabilises the self by ending one's commute between the semiotic and the symbolic. In parallel to Kristeva's argument, Caithleen's divorce from Eugene and the collapse of her mother's idealised portrayal prevent the protagonist's entrance into the symbolic and turn her into a hysterical woman. If Eugene and her idealised mother are regarded as the products of the symbolic realm, it becomes evident that she misses her chance for the symbolic after losing these two symbolic figures in her life. As she cannot restore her loss, her fragile connection with the symbolic is totally cut off. As an abject figure without an imaginary father, she withdraws into the semiotic *chora* that imprisons anyone into a continuous creation and negation process unless there is an imaginary father.

Baba also suffers from a dysfunctional relationship with her mother. Because of her mother's failed subjectivity, she is also deprived of the semiotic *chora* to explore her real self. Thus, she cannot form a separate self, but survives in the symbolic by adopting herself to patriarchal rules; she gets married to a rich man, diverges into alcohol, and ends any chance for subjectivity through an unhappy marriage. The effect of the symbolic over Baba is so oppressive that she emulates Caithleen when Caithleen starts to suffer from hysteria – a result of her withdrawal into the semiotic. Baba explicitly writes,

I was livid with her on two counts: first of all, why should she be having this goddamn, occasional illicit ecstasy when I had to settle for a boring life and put jelly in my privates to fake a bit of long-forgotten desire, and why couldn't she see reason, why couldn't she see that people are brigands, what made her think that there was such a thing as twin-star perpetuity, when all around her people were scraping for bits of happiness and not getting anywhere. (528)

The extract reveals Baba's dissatisfaction with her life in the symbolic. She carries on her marriage by pretence while her real self is left unexplored. Baba highlights the

mimetic and stagnant existence of people in the symbolic and even gets jealous of Caithleen's hysteria and her "*jouissance*." Kristeva draws attention to the "mimetic logic of the advent of the ego, objects, and signs" to claim that one cannot form a separate self and become "heterogeneous" without seeking and losing her/himself, and experiencing "*jouissance*" (*Powers* 10). In other words, the feeling of *jouissance* associated with the maternal semiotic *chora* is necessary for subjectivity. The *chora* lies beyond the totalitarian nature of the symbolic defined by syntax and grammar, and paves the way for subjectivity as a place of semiotic energy. In this respect, Caithleen's experience of the semiotic *chora* frees her from the symbolic oppression, she runs the risk of hysteria without the intervention of the imaginary father, though. On the other hand, marriage and luxury subordinate Baba to the symbolic, preventing her exploration of the semiotic *chora*. Baba starts to discover the self in the *chora* only after replacing Caithleen as the narrator of the story.

In her retrospective narration written twenty years later, Baba criticises Caithleen's motherhood by pointing out her excessive devotion to her son that turns into a haunting experience for the child, however, Baba's motherhood is also a failure. It can be observed that both Caithleen and Baba fail in their maternal roles as they try to perform motherhood by mimicking their own mothers. Like Martha, Baba becomes a mere stereotype that is "too cold" to become a mother as she cannot form her subjectivity and merge her feminine nature with her maternal role. For instance, Baba's daughter Tracy rejects her mother from the very beginning; she vomits her milk, leaves home at the age of thirteen and threatens her mother, saying: "You better love me or I'll be a mess" (515). Tracy's rejection of Baba's milk stands for her abjection of the mother, but the abjection comes at an early stage, debarring Tracy from the semiotic *chora* and degrading her into another abject figure. However, different from Caithleen and Baba, Tracy is aware of the importance of maternal love in her subjectivity and speaks out against her mother. In this way, she urges a change in the understanding of motherhood as the representative of a younger generation. Tracy's attempt at subjectivity raises awareness in Baba. Thus, she writes in the epilogue that Caithleen's mistake is her "old umbilical love" towards her son (515). In other words, she relates Caithleen's downfall to her traditional understanding of motherhood that produces "mother-smothered,

emotionally sick people” as Eugene defines in his letter to Caithleen (504). Stressing that “[t]he rupture had to come sometime,” Baba points out the infant’s necessity of abjection of the mother to form subjectivity (515).

Baba learns to confront her “abject” and “true” self as different from Caithleen, so she tries to form an alternative space for her “abject” self. Her epilogue projecting her “unconventional” inner world as well as Caithleen’s dilemmas is an attempt at “resurrection” through the power of art in Kristevan sense. Her epilogue subverts the traditional form of epilogue writing that is based on a chronological list of events and a closure (Byron 19). Instead, she commutes between the past and the present, sometimes directly addressing Caithleen as in the example: “Oh, Kate, why did you let the bastards win . . . why buckle under their barbaric whims?” (O’Brien, *Country* 513). Moreover, as pointed out by Byron she “delays closure, playing instead with the idea of disclosure” (20). In this context, Baba’s play with the traditional forms established by male authorities and her attempt to write a “feminine” epilogue undermining the male tradition can be regarded as O’Brien’s hope for Irish women’s subjectivity as well as the end of their enslavement by the Mother Ireland image. Besides, Baba’s retrospective writing has a healing effect on her psychosexual development, since the act of writing paves the way for her journey into the self that remains unexplored in the semiotic. While writing an end to Caithleen’s story, Baba tries to inscribe their abject voices into the symbolic and even forgives the failure of her own mother. She says, “[y]ou’ll think I’m bitter about my mother, but I’m not. . . . I missed her more than I ever thought I would” (386). In this way, she manages what Caithleen cannot. She delves into her own mistakes, questions and confronts her “abject” mother as well as her “abject” self to understand Irish maternal subjectivities suppressed by the symbolic. Still, it is unknown if her epilogue finds an addressee in the symbolic or it remains only as a self-auditing text that aims at addressing to Caithleen.

Referring to the general framework of O’Brien’s fiction, Summers-Bremner points out the haunting maternal images and the infantile “dreams of oneness premised on an unmediated, and thus deadly, maternal union,” and then she argues that these images and dreams impede the subjectivity of women characters by dragging them into

melancholy. Accordingly, O'Brien's women characters are "entrapped between two worlds" as they "remain stopped at the threshold where the social world could compensate for lost communion with the mother" (3). Summers-Bremner's argument about women characters' dilemma between two worlds, which can be considered the maternal and the paternal spheres, the semiotic and the symbolic or the unconscious and the conscious, are also applicable to Caithleen's and Baba's cases. However, it should be kept in mind that Irish collective conscious haunted by the colonial past of the country makes such a "social world" impossible, because the adverse effects of colonialism on Irish people are still visible during the time of Caithleen's story. The Irish nationalist discourse excludes the semiotic essence of womanhood from the social sphere, turning the paternal sphere as a devourer of the semiotic. In this respect, Caithleen's and Baba's stories epitomise Irish women's search for "loving" parents to create a post-independence Irish woman's identity.

To conclude, *The Country Girls Trilogy* concentrates on two country girls' struggle for a place in the symbolic, which means their search for an acceptable identity in society. However, their subjectivity is blocked by the emotional or the physical absence of their parents, which prevents their step into the symbolic as "subjects." While Caithleen's search for a loving male figure to fulfill the Kristevan imaginary father's place must be considered a part of her identity-formation process, her mother's idealised portrayal as an endproduct of the nineteenth-century nationalist discourse appears as the greatest obstacle against her subjectivity. Meanwhile, Baba's mother Martha illustrates another woman whose subjectivity is suppressed by the male discourse. As both characters fail in their maternal role of submitting the semiotic *chora* to their daughters' exploration, Caithleen and Baba end up as abject figures stuck between the semiotic and the symbolic.

CHAPTER III

PATRICK MCCABE'S *BREAKFAST ON PLUTO*: OBJECT BODIES' STRUGGLE FOR A SELF

Patrick McCabe (1955 - present) was born to a working class family in 1955 and his birthplace was Clones in County Monaghan. After receiving his education at St Patrick's Training College in Dublin, he started to teach at Kingsbury Day Special School in London and published his first work during his teaching years. Music, comics and American pop-culture are always among his top interests and contribute to his sarcastic writing style that portrays the claustrophobic, mundane and tragic lives of ordinary people in rural Ireland during the time of the Troubles in the late 1960s; his mixture of pop-culture and music with serious political problems turns his fiction into black comedies. Setting his stories before the years of Irish economic growth called "Celtic Tiger," McCabe's two major thematic concerns are social changes in the 1970s and 1980s Ireland as well as abnormal mental states (Imhof 288).

Music on Clinton Street (1986), *Carn* (1989) and a children's story *The Adventure of Shay Mouse: The Mouse from Longford* (1985) are McCabe's early works, but he establishes his literary reputation after the publication of his fourth work *The Butcher Boy* (1992) that features a child protagonist with an unstable mind and follows up his transformation into a murderer because of his dysfunctional family. The novel was adapted for the stage with a new title *Frank Pig Says Hello* in 1992, and it was followed by two new novels entitled *The Dead School* (1995) and *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998). Both *The Butcher Boy* and *Breakfast on Pluto* were shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction and adapted into a movie by Neil Jordan. His later works *Emerald Germs of Ireland* (2001), *Call Me the Breeze* (2003), *Winterwood* (2006), *The Holy City* (2008) and *The Stray Sod Country* (2010) secured McCabe's literary position, making him one of the world-renowned Irish novelists of the contemporary world. Also, he has a short story collection entitled *Mondo Desperado* (1999) and several radio plays produced by

RTE (Ireland's national broadcaster) and the BBC Radio (Hahn; Lacey 50-51; O'Mahony).

McCabe's birthplace Clones, which is a small town situated near the Northern Ireland border, inspires the fictional settings of his novels that are characterised by a gloomy atmosphere. The author, himself, coins the term "bog Gothic" to describe his fiction with dark elements such as madness, murder and violence dominating everyday life in Irish border towns at times of the Northern Ireland conflict (Kilfeather 94). In parallel to the border towns serving as his settings, his protagonists are also marginalised personalities whose fates are closely intertwined with the fate of their countries, and who suffer from emotional breakdowns as they cannot situate themselves into the symbolic realm associated with grammar, order and syntax in Lacanian linguistic theory; as a result, they end up as social objects that are stuck between the maternal semiotic and the paternal symbolic. In this context, the characters' exploration of subjectivity under the burden of Irish identity that has been shaped by the violent history of the land paves the way for a Kristevan reading of McCabe novels.

Breakfast on Pluto tells the tragicomic story of a transgender prostitute Patrick "Pussy" Braden who is born as a product of a violent rape in a small border village called Tyreelin. One morning the parish priest Bernard McIvor rapes his teenage housemaid Eily Bergin and impregnates her. In order to prevent the outbreak of his scandalous act, Father Bernard forces the girl to leave the baby to Mrs. Braden. After leaving her baby to Mrs. Braden, Eily disappears and nobody knows what happens to her. Having an unhappy childhood at the hands of her drunken foster mother, Braden discovers his interest in women's clothes and men, which makes his life unbearable in a small conservative town as he is a social misfit in the eyes of local people. Therefore, Braden who suffers from lack of love leaves for London in the 1970s to find his biological mother. During his quest for his mother, Braden is involved in many affairs with different men, one of whom is a famous politician killed by the IRA (Irish Republican Army). As the IRA violence escalates both in Ireland and in England during the 1970s, Braden finds himself in the midst of violent bombings. He is arrested by the English police and accused of being involved in the IRA when a bomb explodes at a disco,

killing many English soldiers in London. Braden has an emotional breakdown during the violent process of interrogation and starts to dream about his mother as well as his revenge on Father Bernard and Tyreelin people. When the police set Braden free, he receives psychological support in an attempt to recover from his past traumas and starts to write down his life story upon his psychiatrist Terence's advice. Therefore, the whole novel is based on Braden's unreliable retrospective account recorded in a highly fragmented manner. Moreover, he admits including some fabricated elements into his narrative, which makes the story more problematic, blurring the line between fact and fiction, the conscious and the unconscious, the semiotic and the symbolic. The narrative is dominated by Braden's idealisation of his lost mother, his hatred towards the father figure as well as his search for a "self," making a metaphorical reading with postcolonial overtones possible, since McCabe plays with the fixed definitions of Irish identity and Irish motherhood constructed by the nineteenth-century Irish nationalism. Throughout the narrative, Eily represents the illusionary Mother Ireland image that her son must overcome in order to exist while Braden's transgender nature points out the birth of a new Irish identity that undermines the hyper-masculine discourse of the previous times. Disappointed by his failure in finding his real mother, McCabe's transgender protagonist whose discursive body and identity threaten the patriarchal worldview of narrow-minded Irish nationalism turns himself into a mother figure in the end, and embodies the birth pangs of a new multicultural Ireland. Thus, his act of writing his own story can be read as his claim to create a "self" in the symbolic.

The emotional or physical absence of parent figures – also, the recurring literary pattern in O'Brien's novel – haunts Braden and urges him to find or invent parents for himself. The first mother figure that appears in Braden's life is Mrs. Braden and surely, she is not an ideal mother. Braden portrays Mrs. Braden as a very unpleasant person who is stern like an Oedipal father, always drunken, foulmouthed and indifferent to her children. Braden regards her as a masculine figure, rather than a feminine one and calls her "Hairy Ma" (McCabe 9). In this respect, she is a foil to the Mother Ireland image that is a paragon of idealised femininity associated with virtue, grace, passivity and maternity in Irish culture. Still, similar to the Mother Ireland image, Mrs. Braden is a restrictive figure and far from helping Braden explore his subjectivity in the semiotic

chora. For instance, when Braden's school teacher Mr. Egan visits Mrs. Braden to complain about Braden's inappropriate essay that is "a direct challenge" to his authority, Mrs. Braden grows violent and threatens Braden, saying that "Don't talk like that to the Master! He's a cur! From the day and hour I took him in off the street, Mr Egan, a cur!" (11). In spite of her drunkenness and aggressive nature, Mrs. Braden is a regular churchgoer, which creates a great irony in the text. She does not function as a proper mother in the domestic sphere; however, she fulfils her role in the public sphere by attending the masses. In this respect, Braden's cross-dressing in front of the mirror and his effeminate behaviour disturb Mrs. Braden who represents the hypocrisy of narrow-minded piety.

Braden imagines his biological mother Eily Bergin in opposition to Mrs. Braden. Since he never meets her in person, he idealises Eily in his mind and creates a larger-than-life mother image that is the product of his nostalgia. Unlike the iconic Mother Ireland figure, the imaginary Eily character is capable of exploring her semiotic energy in the maternal body and prepares her son for his journey into the self. For Kristeva, the mother's union with her child in the semiotic *chora* embodied by the foetus in the womb starts the infant's process of subjectivity; and in time, the child must abject the semiotic *chora* which is a heterogenous place without the border of "I" and the (m)other to draw the boundary between the self and the other; in other words, to create his/her own identity (*Powers* 5-7). However, the time before abjection is a necessary component of infant's subjectivity. Under the lens of Kristeva's theory, Braden's dream mother fulfils her preparatory role in the process of subjectivity as opposed to the Irish mother stereotype modelled on Virgin Mary. For example, Eily is imagined as a loving mother who does not question Braden's gay identity but always supports him to act out his real "self." Her maternal womb is the producer of all heterogeneous aspects of Braden's identity and ready for his service without judging him. When he questions his brutal father's role in his gay identity, hinting that his identity is abnormal, his fictitious mother wards off his surmise, saying: "Of course not, silly! You simply wear them [women's clothes] because that's just how you are!" (McCabe 150). Here, the mother is not portrayed as a restrictive figure but a liberating one who helps her child's subjectivity as well as discovery of his desires; in this way, she produces an individual

rather than a soldier for society. Yet, it is important to note that Eily is the product of Braden's imagination; therefore, she is an unreal and idealised figure just like Mother Ireland.

As the notion of motherhood is a blank space for Braden, he fills up this space according to his own dreams. In his imagination, Braden's mother is a very beautiful young woman who looks like American actress Mitzi Gaynor. Besides, she is a light-hearted and happy girl who lives in her dream world full of pop music and culture. Braden dreams of Eily as a successful girl growing up in a happy family and he believes that if she had not been raped by Father Bernard, she would be one of the few Tyreelin girls who would go to university (124-30). Nevertheless, his mother's life is turned upside down after the rape which abruptly kills her youthful dreams. Namely, the vulgar father image that can be associated with the Freudian or the coloniser father prevents Eily's subjectivity. During one of his mental breakdowns under custody, Braden visualises the rape scene by identifying himself with Eily:

‘Who is this girl?’ she kept asking herself as she looked down from a height at the creature whose head kept bumping off the table leg. It wasn't her, that was for sure, for she kept pleading: ‘Stop! Stop!’ It was obviously someone else, someone else who looked like her. She hoped it wouldn't upset her, that she might not regret it some day. Because Eily knew that was what it did, that sort of conduct. Her mother had told her. Not in so many words, of course. And especially – most especially with a priest – even if it was the priest's fault. All Eily could think was: ‘I'm glad it's not me!’ Because she was saving herself for marriage. She might dance at the hops and everything – but marriage to her was something pure and clean and wholesome. White as driven snow. Not at all like what Father Bernard was doing right now. (127)

This fictionalised scene reveals Eily's innocence, her helplessness in the face of Father Bernard as well as her anxiety over the societal morals imposed by her mother that would make women feel guilty in rape incidents. Eily's pitiful situation contrasts with Father Bernard's greediness and ugliness in Braden's imagination, making him angry with his father. He is the one who ends his mother's subjectivity-in-process by his violent act and causes Braden to become an orphan. Throughout the narrative, Braden always regards his father as an intruder and a devourer who terminates his pre-Oedipal unity with his mother. In this respect, Father Bernard who represents the Catholic Church and patriarchal order in general, appears as an obstacle in Braden's entrance into

the symbolic, preventing a healthy and responsive mother-child relationship from the very beginning.

Although the 1960s cover the time period when the authority of the Catholic Church is openly challenged in Ireland through the spread of educational facilities in addition to the increase of accessible media organs like television (TV channels start to broadcast Irish soap operas like *Tolka Row* and *Bracken* that adopt a liberal treatment of sexuality) (Maher 49), those winds of liberalism are not very effective in Braden's small town standing on the border where nineteenth-century Irish nationalism with its conservative views on women is still very dominant. In the novel, changing patterns in Irish women's everyday life can be sensed as Braden imagines his mother going dancing or listening to American music; however, the doctrines of the Catholic Church still have a restricting power on women. As underlined in the previous chapter, the 1920s were dominated by the ecclesiastical discourse in Ireland; a few of the prominent arguments in relation to women include the religious glorification of motherhood over womanhood, importance of women's domestic role as wives and mothers and the association of Irish women's chastity with the nation's glory (Valiulis 168-78). Yet, these arguments continue to linger in Eily's time as can be understood from her concerns about her chastity during the rape scene. The Church still regards women as secondary to men, associates purity with women's sexuality and develops a distaste for new movements threatening the Irish conventional life style. In the rape scene, Braden's insights into Eily's mind project the general understanding of marriage in society and point out women's entrapped status in the Irish patriarchal system. In parallel to the influence of the ecclesiastical discourse on everyday life, Eily – even while being attacked – thinks about how the Father's violent act will stain her fame and prevent her dream of getting married. In a metaphorical reading of the rape scene, it can be argued that Eily's semiotic energy revealing itself through her dreams is suppressed as her chance to overcome the Virgin Mary image by exploring her semiotic essence is obviated by the violent act of the Catholic Church. From a larger perspective, Father Bernard's assault represents the Irish Catholic Church's oppression on Irish women that delimits feminine subjectivity. In this respect, Braden thinks that both his mother and he have a special interest in arts, and this is regarded as the product of the subject's oscillation between

the semiotic and the symbolic, but they are victimised under Father Bernard's rule and lose their chance for subjectivity. Braden differs female subjectivity from the male one, and relates it to the world of music, cinema, and fashion. For instance, he imagines his mother as a young woman who has simple dreams like buying "Perry Como's latest record" or "the complete, long-playing soundtrack of *South Pacific*" (McCabe 25). The imaginary portrayal of his mother reveals his fascination with pop music, fashion as well as the colourful Hollywood world, all of which are the products of creativity linked to the semiotic. His narrative mixing the real with the imaginary, the history with pop culture also draws a similar portrayal for Braden who resists the rigid and stereotypical identity forms of the symbolic as his subjectivity is rooted in the semiotic. However, his explorations of the "self" embedded in the semiotic are rejected and punished by the symbolic embodied by his father.

The father's role as a violent intruder and his punishing violence against female subjectivity rooted in the semiotic can be analysed in the colonial context, because Braden's search for his lost origins and his idealisation of the lost mother figure under the shadow of a brutal father evolve in the same direction with Ireland's anti-colonial struggle. While explaining Ireland's nation-building process against the English coloniser that exploits the Irish land by regarding it as a woman's body, Mays draws attention to the Irish nationalists' defence strategy, which is the glorification of Mother Ireland (*Nation* 9). Deprived of peaceful unity with their land because of English colonialism, the nineteenth-century Irish nationalists regarded Mother Ireland as a lost object of love that embodied "the promise of a return to preoedipal wholeness" (Mays 9). Similarly, Braden turns Eily into an object of pre-Oedipal obsession and idealises her. Nevertheless, he does not construct her idealised portrayal by making use of the patriarchal discourse of the Catholic Church. Instead, he models her on Mitzi Gaynor and the Hollywood notion of womanhood. In this respect, Braden individualises motherhood, freeing it from the Catholic Church's monopoly. Still, her mother cannot go beyond being an unreachable icon for him. In the end, Braden turns the mother figure into a fantasy image and is entrapped by psychosis.

For Braden, Eily represents the best mother in the world and his idealisation of the mother figure puts Eily in the same unattainable place with Mother Ireland. In Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls*, the same idealisation of the mother figure due to her absence is observed. Caithleen's subjectivity is blocked by her mother's early death which transforms the mother figure into a lost object of love while entrapping Caithleen into a fantasy of pre-Oedipal reunion. Similarly, Braden's idealisation of the lost mother damages his process of subjectivity in the long run on the grounds that he cannot replace her with any other figure and initiate the process of abjection. Therefore, he is enticed by the same desperate fantasy. Moreover, his obsessive search for his biological mother leads him to deviant relationships. For example, Braden tries to replace his mother with his landlady Louise who lost his son Shaunie in a bus accident, and the two get involved in an odd affair as each tries to overcome his/her loss through the other. Braden wears Shaunie's clothes and starts to suck on Louise's nipple, saying "Mammy" to mimic Shaunie (McCabe 91). Yet, one day, he suddenly thinks that he betrays his mother Eily through this role-playing with Louise and feels guilty. Then, he starts to look for Eily everywhere, asking women in the streets of London whether they are Eily Bergin or not (93). When Kristeva's insistence on the mother figure as the start of subjectivity is considered, Braden's search for his mother is not groundless because unless he finds her and abjects her in a normal way, he cannot form his own "self." Braden's explicit complaint verifies Kristevan thesis of the mother's preparatory role; he exclaims once: "She should never have just gone like that! For without her, how can I ever belong on this earth?" (101). According to Kristeva, the mother figure establishes the infant's first connections with the world and becomes the initiator of its transference into the symbolic. In other words, she is not outside the culture as argued by Freudian psychoanalysts but forms its cornerstone as Kristeva places the "concrete operations" before the acquisition of language and charges them with an ordering function in the "preverbal semiotic space" (*Revolution* 27). Thus, the physical and emotional absence of Braden's mother affects his subjectivity process and makes him stuck in the abject phase, which prevents his creation of the "self" in the symbolic. Similar to the nineteenth-century Irish nationalists who created an idealised Mother Ireland figure associated with the pre-colonial times, Braden pursues an illusionary mother image to

create his “self” but this mother image remains an illusion for Braden throughout his narrative.

The title of the novel also points out the impossibility of Braden’s unity with his mother, because the mother figure is no more than a fictional construct in Braden’s world. The title is a direct reference to Don Partridge’s 1969 song with the same name. Braden quotes some lines of its lyrics, following his narrative of the rape in an attempt to contrast his mother’s colourful world with his father’s selfishness. The lyrics quoted by him are as follows, “Go anywhere, go anywhere without leaving your chair/ and let your thoughts run free/ Living within all the dreams you can spin/ There is so much to see/ We’ll visit the stars and journey to Mars/ Finding our breakfast on Pluto!” (McCabe 29). The song sketches a dream world where everything is possible through imagination reflecting the inner self; in other words, it is the world created by the semiotic. If the song is examined as an address to his mother, the lyrics also reveal Braden’s dream of uniting with her in a faraway land. However, the impossibility of having a breakfast on Pluto expresses Braden’s inaccessible dream of pre-Oedipal reunion. Meanwhile, the father figure as an intruder must also be analysed in detail in Braden’s process of subjectivity. From Braden’s perspective, his father is the major figure who not only interrupts Eily’s exploration of female subjectivity by his violent attack but also stands against his son’s pre-Oedipal union with his mother. At one point in his narrative, Braden abruptly stops quoting the song and lashes at his father in his fantasy world:

It’s a beautiful song, isn’t it, Father? You could be a dandelion seed floating out across with the world when you hear a song like that.
Do you think that was what she was as she laughed all the way out there on her own, Daddy? A dandelion seed in a happy childhood song?
No – you’re right, daddy – she wasn’t.
And all because of you! All because of naughty Papa who should never left *his* chair to do his naughty wandering! Isn’t that so, Daddy? Don’t you think that’s true, when you think about it – *Father-of-the-Year?* (29)

The father figure emerges as the spoiler of this pre-Oedipal dream and turns into an object of hatred as Braden’s ironic language suggests. For Braden, Father Bernard representing the phallus and the symbolic is guilty of ruining his mother’s dream world by his rape. When Bernard forces Eily to leave the town, he puts the burden of his

shameful act on her shoulders and dismisses her from his symbolic realm by marking her maternal body as abject. However, his guilt is double, since he is also the one that deprives Braden of the maternal womb and condemns him to an eternal search for a mother. Therefore, Braden's desire for revenge always revolves around Father Bernard who is the head of his microcosmic world and represents the symbolic with his ecclesiastical authority. Braden explicitly accuses his father modelled on the prohibitory Freudian father of bringing "the poison to the valley!" (McCabe 170). Braden's statement can be read in a few different ways; he is the rapist who destroys his mother's semiotic explorations for subjectivity and banishes her from Tyreelin, he is the representative of the Catholic Church that redefines womanhood over the Virgin Mary image and represses the semiotic essence of the maternal womb by cutting off woman's link with her body, or it can be argued that he stands for the coloniser with its symbolic power over the "feminine" Irish. In each of his roles, the father/male figure writes off the feminine other as an abject in an attempt to control her body.

In Freudian sense, Braden's hatred against his father is an example of an infant's Oedipal hatred against the father figure. The dissolution of this hatred and the identification with the father are necessary for an infant's passing into the paternal sphere. In addition to the absence of the maternal figure in his life, Braden's inability to overcome the Oedipus crisis through identification with the father results in his stuck into the Kristevan phase of an abject. In this context, the main problem with Father Bernard's existence is related to his Oedipal intervention that blocks Braden's psychological development in the maternal semiotic and endangers his subjectivity. Moreover, his hostile attitude towards his son is another factor against Braden's subjectivity because only love can encourage an infant to step into the symbolic as argued by Kristeva in *Tales of Love*.

Kristeva underlines the existence of a "Third Party" before the emergence of the Oedipal ego and claims that in order to step into the symbolic, an infant has to shift its interest from the mother to her object of desire defined as "the Third Party." She argues that "[t]he loving mother, different from the caring and clinging mother, is someone who has an object of desire; beyond that, she has an Other with relation to whom the

child will serve as go-between. She will love her child with respect to that Other, and it is through a discourse aimed at that Third Party that the child will be set up as ‘loved’ for the mother” (*Tales* 34). The Third Party in Kristevan argument, namely the mother’s object of desire, is the imaginary father that helps the infant’s transference into the symbolic. Kristeva highlights the importance of love for identification with the father figure to argue that only through love, the infant can manage this identification. Accordingly, in case of the absence of an imaginary father, the infant becomes “abject, in-between, emptiness” as well as “the borderline between drives and symbols” (Oliver, *Reading* 84). In McCabe’s novel, the rape of the mother by the father figure haunts Braden all through his life and causes him to associate the father with hatred rather than love. His inability to forgive his father’s abjection of both his mother’s and his existence turns him into a discursive figure against the symbolic. In one of the imaginary conversations with his mother, Eily wants him to forgive his father but Braden rejects, saying: “I can’t, you see! I’ve tried and tried!” (McCabe 153). Braden’s resistance against the symbolic that abused his mother can also be considered as a political criticism in the context of the Irish-English relations. Accordingly, England’s colonisation of Ireland creates a traumatic effect on the Irish, causing them to put up a strong resistance to the English in the role of a father. Both in a literal and allegorical reading, the father figure cannot emerge as the mother’s object of desire in the novel. As a result, Braden unconsciously tries to find a loving father substitute during his journey into the self.

While he is a child, Braden waits for his father to appear, at least, on special occasions like Christmas but he never shows up. Therefore, he suffers from the absence of a father figure as well as a mother figure and utters his longing for a father from time to time. Since the father cannot communicate with the child through his corporeality as the mother does (the foetus emerging in the womb and breastfeeding establish a corporeal relationship between the infant and the mother), the child’s recognition by the father figure can be accepted as the confirmation of his/her status in the symbolic as a speaking subject. Therefore, identification and communication with the father is very important in the process of subjectivity. Yet, the father’s image as a rapist in Braden’s mind and his Oedipal role that banishes Braden from his mother block a possible

communication between the father and the son. As a result, the identification with the father cannot be possible in Braden's case and the idealised mother figure becomes his "primary object of gender identification" (Lehner 176).

As his narrative reveals, Braden relates his transgender identity to his dysfunctional family; allegorically speaking, to his country's colonial background. In one of his dream chapters inserted in his autobiography that is based on the mixture of the real and the fantasy, Braden situates himself in a romantic picture of rural Ireland that is regarded as a place of tranquillity:

Here in this one small cottage, there is a feeling of peacefulness. Which is so overwhelming that it appears as if this is how it has been right from the beginning of time. What we see before us is a fine, stone cottage, built by the labouring hands of a gentle, strong man who is husband to the woman who now softly reads to her bright baby boy whose name is known to all as Patrick. Is this Patrick – Pat Puss of the girly doodle dandies, son-of-priest and naughty nipple-licker of a Mum called Louise Ward – fame? No – this is simple, ordinary Patrick – son of the man called Daddy, who with great big shovel hands this cabin proudly raised. And look upon his lady now as each page she slowly turns. Sweet Eily who perhaps once made breakfast for a lascivious, hungry cleric? (McCabe 108)

This dream scene making references to the real figures is the product of Braden's wishful thinking and it reproduces the idealised portrayal of rural Ireland as well as the conventional gender roles that are promoted by nineteenth-century nationalism. In a paradoxical manner, Braden dreams himself as a "baby boy" rather than a girl in this functional family, which denotes his real-life dysfunctional parents as the reason for his transgender identity. Moreover, Eily finds her place as an ideal mother in this happy family picture but Father Bernard is replaced by an imaginary figure called "Daddy" due to Braden's enmity against him. Braden's dream can be interpreted by the argument that his sexual identity would not be in paradox with his body if he had a conventional family. However, he can neither identify himself with the father figure nor abject the maternal body in his real experience because he has not got a proper family that can serve as proper role models for him. Once again, Father Bernard appears as a figure of menace and an intruder in this happy dream while the figure of a parish priest haunts the baby Patrick by standing in the corner of his room (109).

Braden's gay identity also constitutes an obstacle to the father-son relationship, since Father Bernard turns a blind eye to his son's corporeal existence. Braden exposes his craving for paternal recognition as well as his rejection by his father with the following words: "All I wanted him to do was say: 'Hello there, Patrick,' once in a while. Even nod, for heaven's sake! But he couldn't even do that much! As a matter of fact, any time he saw that I was sitting on the summer seat, he put his head down and made a detour around by the back of the chickenshed" (58). The scene reveals Father Bernard's ignorance of his son, which can also be interpreted as Braden's rejection by the symbolic embodied in the figure of his priest father. In the end, father's ignorance exiles Braden from Tyreelin that stands for the Irish symbolic with the absence of a proper mother figure and its conservative nationalism based on conventional gender roles. Jeffers argues that "the hegemonic control of the Catholic Church" in the town makes Braden's mother and her illegitimate baby "abject" (164). Therefore, Braden has to leave his hometown in order to restore his abject status and to create his "self." As can be understood, Tyreelin is far from illustrating the romantic image of rural Ireland; instead, it is a place of oppression for Braden. And similar to many other abject children of Irish literature,¹ he leaves the father's symbolic, which also exiles his mother, in an attempt to achieve his real "self" that originally emerges in the suppressed semiotic of the maternal body. In this context, Braden's departure from his rural town to find his mother and his attempt to quench his thirst for paternal love through his gay affairs must be studied in reference to his exploration of subjectivity. It is evident that he is trying to create a functional family for himself that would set the necessary conditions for his psychological development.

Braden's gay partners can be regarded as a part of his search for an imaginary father, since he generally chooses the ones who are superior to him in terms of age or social position. Thus, there is always a hierarchical relationship between Braden and his partners; this hierarchy sometimes stems from the husband-wife nature of the relationship while some other times from the father-child nature; however, what stays intact in his affairs is his demand for love and protection. For instance, his first affair is with a well-known politician whom he calls Mr Dummy Teat. As a strong and rich

¹ Few examples can be listed as Stephen Dedalus in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Cathleen in O'Brien's *The Country Girls*, Francie in McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*.

figure, he meets Braden's financial and emotional needs like a proper husband or a father. Braden utters his search for love very explicitly in his date with Silky String during his days of prostitution in London. He is really impressed by Silky who has a "[n]eat suit, steel-grey hair and not a single speck of dirt on his fingernails" (65). The image portrays a paternal figure and all Braden expects from Silky is to play the "sugar daddy" and to treat him like a kitten (64). Understanding Braden's thirst for love, Silky pretends to be a man of love until he stops the car and attempts to strangle this "Irish" prostitute by racist inclinations, which causes a huge disappointment in Braden. His long-term affair with "old" Berts is also based on a mutual need for love, and Berts, like a father figure, supplies him with a home – a kind of protection. However, among all these figures, it is Dr Terence who looms large in Braden's search for an imaginary father by motivating him for the symbolic. Terence's professional identity of a psychiatrist is very important at this juncture.

As opposed to the Freudian threatening father, the imaginary father is associated with love, and his support and interaction with the mother is the only way for an infant's transition into the symbolic. Kristeva believes that the pattern of love in the father-child relationship is also necessary for psychoanalysis which is a process of revealing the analysand's unconscious fears, traumas and taboo feelings by transferring them into the symbolic for a definition and a meaning. Kristeva reveals the analyst's role in the psychoanalytical process as follows:

During treatment, the analyst interprets his desire and his love, and that sets him apart from the perverse position of the seducer By ensuring a loving Other to the patient, the analyst (temporarily) allows the Ego in the throes of drive to take shelter in the following fantasy: the analyst is not a dead Father but a living Father; this nondesiring but loving father reconciles the ideal Ego with the Ego Ideal and elaborates the psychic space, where, possibly and subsequently, an analysis can take place. (*Tales* 30)

As the extract explains, the analyst must replace the loving father in order to encourage the analysand to unravel his/her unconscious through words, because the analysand feels secure enough to leave the maternal shelter, only after seeing the loving Other. Embodied in the figure of the imaginary father, the loving Other is also the object of mother's love. Thus, the analysand must identify him/herself with this Other to step into

the symbolic. In the novel, Braden develops emotional intimacy with Terence and trusts him and he starts to write down his unconscious mind following his advice. Terence's support for Braden to inscribe all his feelings and childhood memories can be interpreted as a way to step into the symbolic, because the act of writing transfers Braden into the world of linguistic order and helps his pre-Oedipal concerns be formulated and signified. However, Braden's idealisation of the absent mother figure causes him to identify himself with the mother instead of the father; as a result, Terence's position as a loving father changes into a husband as the narrative evolves. Braden claims that there appears a romantic love between the two during the Christmas and records: "we loved one another like any man and woman should" (McCabe 96). Since Braden suffers from an emotional breakdown, his narrative is unreliable. Therefore, it is not certain whether Braden's romantic love with Terence is real or not. Nevertheless, it is evident that his identification with the mother figure resulting with a transvestite identity degrades Braden into an abject status in masculine society. In other words, his transgender identity in addition to his Irish background doubles his marginalisation in England.

In an allegorical reading, it can be claimed that Braden's gender identification with the mother stems from his Irish identity that has evolved in relation to the colonising father/husband and the colonised mother/wife images dominating the colonial literature of the land. In this context, Braden's feminine identity can be considered representing the Irish land as opposed to Terence who stands for England with his control over Braden's body as his doctor. Posing as an authority, Terence points out Braden's Irish identity as the reason for his psychological problems, which is revealed by his following statement: "Oh, it's perfectly clear that your provincial small-town Irish background has left you ill-equipped to deal with the challenges of a major cosmopolitan city!" (94). Terence's words hint at Braden's abject status in London due to his colonial identity, and his contrast between the small Irish town and the cosmopolitan London city epitomises the hierarchical relationship between the two countries in the English colonial discourse.¹ In this respect, Braden's abnormal identity-formation process and

¹ In the English colonial discourse, Ireland associated with the rural landscape stands for the mother, wilderness and emotions while England associated with a cosmopolitan city like London represents the father, civilisation and materialism.

his failure in identification with the father figure can be read in parallel to Ireland's failed process under English colonialism, during which the Irish develop enmity against the English standing for the father figure and imprison themselves into a fantasy of the pre-Oedipal reunion with the mother. Braden who exiles himself from the Irish symbolic is also despised by the English symbolic due to his transgender Irish identity, and thus he is condemned to go back to the maternal womb in order to form the essence of his subjectivity and to constitute himself.

As an orphan who is dismissed from the Kristevan semiotic *chora* by his father – the patriarchal authority figure – Braden suffers from melancholy and craves for a pre-Oedipal reunion with his biological mother. The fact that Braden's whole narrative is based on this lack of maternal love marks his premature expulsion from the maternal sphere as the main problem of his identity-formation process. Therefore, his fantasy of pre-Oedipal union drags him into a psychosis. He pounds the London streets in search of his mother and his desperate quest turns into a pathetic one as can be understood from his records:

... thinking of her I'd give my life to find the one-and-only Eily Bergin. 'Where are you, Mammy?' I might often be heard to choke. 'Where are you?'

For how long already had one been searching? Since the very day of arrival, to be honest! Once – can you believe it! – a pallid face observed in a passing tube: 'It's her! I swear it's her!', for Mitzi she did, in truth, resemble! Mitzi as she might be now in 1973! How many people in this teeming city? Ten million? More? How long to find one's mammy? Has anyone seen my mammy?" (74)

The quotation reveals Braden's obsession with his quest during which he tries to visualise his mother's appearance in 1973 and scans all the faces that resemble the image in his mind. Towards the end of the novel when he gives a reason for his cross-dressing by putting himself into Terence's shoes, Braden explicitly links his identity crisis with the absence of his mother: " 'I think the truth is, Patrick,' I can hear him [Terence] saying, 'is that maybe you always secretly wanted to *become* her. Eily. After all – she could hardly walk away then!' " (94). As the lines suggest, Patrick's cross-dressing gives him a chance to dream himself in unity with her mother physically. In other words, by wearing women's clothes and behaving like a woman, he wants to

reach his mother or to become a mother to himself, so that he can give birth to his “self.”

Braden’s endeavour to substitute her mother by transforming himself into a mother figure exposes his inability to step into the symbolic. Since the lost maternal figure turns into an object of idealisation and psychosis for Braden, he cannot abject his mother but is haunted by her idealised portrayal. Therefore, Braden imagines himself as a loving mother during some of his daydreams in spite of the biological impossibility of his male body. His greatest dream is to become a mother to ten children all of whom he will raise with great love and all of whom will come to his side as he lies on his deathbed:

My eyelids closing in a gesture of recognition – a small smile playing upon my lips. So many there with all their partners, each one of them of Mammy proud. ‘Who will love them for me?’ was a question I once had asked, when I dreamed of being from this world gone early. And now, I had my answer. Everyone would my children love for they themselves knew love and shared it. (41)

The dream scene presents the power of love in Braden’s life and points out the importance of maternal love. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of a father figure in this fantasy of maternity, which can be linked to Braden’s troublesome experience with his own father. Still, he imagines his children with partners, which points out his belief in future parenthood and happiness. It is evident that Braden-the-mother stands for instinct energies like love as the representative of the semiotic *chora* that is dominated by drives. In this respect, he fulfills the Kristevan role of motherhood and takes an active part in his children’s subjectivity by putting his love into their service. Different from Braden’s biological mother that turns into an unattainable object of love for her son, Braden-the-mother is an attainable figure whose children can integrate themselves into society and become healthy “lovable” individuals. In such a scene, both the mother and her children recover from their abject status in society, and thus subjectivity is achieved.

Braden’s unconventional understanding of the maternal body also needs to be scrutinised. As explained in the Kristeva chapter of the dissertation, maternal body is considered heterogeneous since it covers the other in itself and transgresses the

ideological and ontological borders of the ideal body which is accepted as the male body in the Western philosophy.¹ Braden overtly protests the male discourse while undermining his biological reality to insist that he is the one giving birth to his children. He asks in a challenging way: “And who would ever to deny it dare? To say: ‘They are not hers! For she has no vagina!’” (41). Through his male body in the role of a maternal womb, Braden-the-mother becomes a discursive figure; in this respect, his transformation of himself into a mother can be regarded as a direct challenge against the male concept of Irish motherhood. His maternal body subverts the dichotomy of male/female and carries the mother figure beyond her role as a bearer. In Braden’s mentality, the mother is not just a body to be abjected as argued by the nineteenth-century Western philosophy but a main actress in the development of her children’s subjectivity. Moreover, while Braden lies on his deathbed as a mother, he exhibits his corporeality in front of his children; and his hybrid body appears not as something to be warded off as argued by the symbolic. Instead, it stands out with its unifying power because even the dying body manages to recall all its offspring. Therefore, Braden-the-mother re-includes the hybrid maternal body into the subjectivity process and adds a corporeal dimension to the sanctified concept of Irish motherhood. Different from the devouring and haunting existence of the idealised Irish mother, Braden-the-mother is an attainable individual figure and his existence does not depend on his children’s self-sacrifice and worship but their capacity to love as they learn from their mother.

Moreover, the transgender body of Braden-the-mother includes “the other” in itself because his maternal identity is not an extension of the idealised portrayal of motherhood in Irish culture that is constructed in line with the Western attempts excluding the (m)other from one’s self to achieve stability in the symbolic. Braden-the-mother embodies a vision of a polyphonic Irish identity that is reconstructed after the rejection of colonial discourse and the exploration of the “abject” mother. In this context, Braden’s understanding of motherhood and its relation to the postcolonial identity formation process can be analysed in reference to the Kristeva’s argument that the semiotic body associated with the maternal body is the key notion to understand the

¹ In the Western philosophy and psychoanalysis, the female body is defined in comparison to the idealised male body. Thus, it is identified with the “lack” of the phallus and considered chaotic as argued by Lacan. Later, many feminist intellectuals like Simone De Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray argue against the misogynist arguments over the feminine body to underline its reproductive and creative role.

other within the self because it reveals that “all distinctions between subject and objects, all identifications of unified subjects, are arbitrary” (Oliver, *Reading* 9). In other words, the maternal body subverts the ideological male hegemony that sets itself as the centre and maintains its authority through binary oppositions. The semiotic body sets the bodily drives and the semiotic activity free as argued by Kristeva, and thus it is generative and creative although it threatens the symbolic realm (*Desire* 285). The semiotic *chora* free from the symbolic oppression is necessary for identity and subjectivity, since it is the origin situated before the Word. Thus, Irish nation must return to its essence lying beyond the Word to form its subjectivity, for which reconciliation with the semiotic essence of motherhood is required. Similarly, Braden-the-mother’s semiotic body paves the way for exploring and confronting the “abject” feminine other within the self¹ and guides his Irish children to cast off the masculine discourse of the colonising father. Lehner also claims that the feminised man in postcolonial fiction heralds the “post-patriarchal and post-national sex-and-gender relations for the future” (155), causing Braden’s maternal fantasies to be read as the future of Ireland in reference to the postmodern worldview based on plurality and multiculturalism. Namely, Braden’s fantasies of motherhood that disregard his male body appears as a liberal curve in the Irish identity construction process with its interest in the feminine other.

Braden’s reconciliation with the semiotic aspect of motherhood draws his stance closer to James Joyce’s Molly Bloom in *Ulysses* (1922) on the grounds that both of the characters stand against the asexual Mother Ireland image while introducing a new model on Irish motherhood that is based on semiotic essence (McWilliams 398). Here, the semiotic content must be understood in relation to Hélène Cixous’s understanding of feminine writing that is based on “a systematic experimentation with the bodily functions, a passionate and precise interrogation of her [woman’s] erotogeneity” (“Laugh” 334-35). In this context, similar to Molly Bloom’s frankness about feminine sexuality, Braden’s sexual explorations and quest for love symbolise the release of semiotic drives on women’s body that starts subjectivity. In other words, Braden-the-mother’s semiotic essence draws a new portrayal for Mother Ireland in an attempt to

¹ The English colonial discourse regards the Irish as the feminine other.

replace her idealised image that was constructed by the nineteenth-century muscular nationalism. Braden's Mother Ireland is not alienated from her semiotic nature but she is of flesh and bone as well as sexual, contradicting the imaginary "virgin mother" figure. However, because of Braden's abject status as an Irish transgender person, his new understanding of motherhood cannot find a way to be signified in the symbolic. In other words, his notion of motherhood is marginalised and considered an "abject" notion by the English as well as the Irish symbolic. Both symbolic realms start a war to keep Braden's unconventional body out of society and both fail in deciphering the meaning of his own language that is encoded in his transgender body; the body which combines the woman and the man to undermine the greatest binary opposition in the Western thought system. As a result, his male body reconstructed as feminine turns into his greatest weapon against the symbolic during his struggle for an identity.

As underlined by Jeffers, "[t]he physical body is put through a great deal in this novel; it is ridiculed, beaten, abandoned, blown up, tortured, raped, and occasionally adored" (162). It must be underlined that all the actions torturing the body are always operated by male authorities in Braden's story, reminding the Cartesian mind-body dichotomy that despises the body over the mind. Therefore, violence against the feminine/homosexual body must be studied in a larger matrix as it symbolises the symbolic oppression on the semiotic, the masculine authority over the feminine and the coloniser's abuse of the colonised. In this context, the clash of the semiotic and the symbolic represented by Braden's transgender body also illustrates Mother Ireland's struggle to give birth to her "self." In the same way with the maternal body, Braden's homosexual body can be regarded as abject by the symbolic that promotes the abjection of the (m)other for a stable self. Defining abjection as a "narcissistic crisis," Kristeva states that "[n]arcissism then appears as a regression to a position set back from the other, a return to a self-contemplative, conservative, self-sufficient haven" (*Powers* 14). By way of explanation, the subject preserves his stable place in the symbolic by abjecting the (m)other. However, this stable self dependent on the expulsion of the (m)other is an illusion as it estranges the self from its essence and the abjected material disturbs the stability of speaking subject through "desire" that is the only "witness to that 'primal' pulsation" in the semiotic *chora* (*Powers* 14). Different from the stable

subjects in the symbolic, Braden who carries the other in his own body has nothing to lose. Thus, threats by the symbolic prove futile as soon as Braden attempts to dive into the semiotic *chora* where his homosexuality can find a place at the cost of psychosis.

During Braden's search for the self, he always situates his semiotic existence composed of love, sexuality and art in opposition to the symbolic intertwined with violence, guns, murders and bombs. While the Northern Ireland conflict rises and the Provisional Irish Republican Army starts to gain popularity in the late 1960s, Braden turns a blind eye to this highly masculine organisation¹ and values his psychosexual development above anything else, saying: "I, of course, was much too preoccupied with my own personal revolution to be bothered with anything so trivial" (McCabe 22). In Chapter Seven of his narrative entitled "A Real Soldier and a Work of Art Delivered" where he contrasts the IRA member Irwin's attempts to become a soldier with his act of writing, Braden sets the violent world of the symbolic against the artistic world of the semiotic to undermine the so-called superiority of the symbolic. As the representative of the semiotic essence of his identity, Braden's unconventional autobiographical compositions addressed to Father Bernard aim to erode the Irish symbolic that is dominated by Catholic clergy. Nevertheless, the symbolic authorities abject Braden's semiotic world revealed through his artistic homosexual body in order to stay intact in the symbolic realm.

The encounter between Braden and the English symbolic represented by the English police force during the interrogation scenes reveals the symbolic agencies' struggle against the feminine other, and the vicious circle the feminine other experiences in the semiotic *chora* where the subject is "both generated and negated" in a continuous process unless there is an imaginary father (Kristeva, *Revolution* 28). While the English police torture him to confess his "assumed" role in the IRA attacks in London, Braden dives into his fantasy world. His fantasy world, especially his dreams about his mother, cuts off his contact with the tangible world and benumbs him towards the violent acts of the symbolic:

¹ The Provisional IRA is the successor of the IRA that is an example of all-male secret society organisations (Howe 236).

Which makes one wonder what he'd [Inspector Routledge] have thought if he'd seen where Pussy and Mumsy had landed now! Prostrate beneath a bending palm, on an infinite stretch of powder sand. 'O Mammy!' said Puss as he hugged her arm and she ran her fingers through his hair. Far away in the distance, a tiny porpoise rose and came down curving in the blue. Close by, the lush vegetation made a hushing sound that was all its own. Colour-splashed across the trees, the parakeets began an unholy racket. (McCabe 152)

The island surrounded by water can be considered a symbol for the womb in Freudian psychoanalysis as explained by Ernest Jones's readings on Irish history¹ and points out the infant's longing for a peaceful unity with the mother before the intervention of the father figure. The island situates the mother and the child out of linear time while isolating them from the symbolic realm. In this scene, even the narrator becomes the third person, proving Braden's alienation to his own circumstances. Therefore, while their harmonious unity in the womb is restored, Braden's connection totally breaks off, making his attempts for the self meaningless in the symbolic. His entrapment in the pre-Oedipal fantasy disturbs the stability of the symbolic agencies as well; Inspector Routledge's reaction must be interpreted in this context: " 'Fuck this!' muttered Detective Inspector Routledge to himself as he shoved the receiver into its cradle. 'I need a holiday, away from all this fucking insanity!' " (152). Under the guidance of Kristeva's theory, Routledge's definition of Braden's fantasy world as "insanity" can be considered his abjection of the (m)other to stay on firm ground. Yet, his definition of Braden also ends Braden's chance of passing into the symbolic as an abject figure.

Braden, both as an Irish and a transgender person, constitutes the ultimate "other" in the 1960s English society. As argued by Smith, homosexuality "exists in heterocentric perceptions as an unrealistic mode of being, one that can be readily ignored or dismissed as would the purely imaginary" in the 1960s ("Introduction" xiii). Namely, his transgender nature is not accepted as an identity by patriarchy and his individuality is easily cast off. Moreover, his national identity and the escalating IRA violence in England make him a potential terrorist in the eyes of the English police as the scene suggests:

¹ There is detailed information about Jones's essay on page 38.

When Routledge and Wallis came rushing into the cell, they hadn't the faintest idea of course that there was some kind of debate going on on a desert island! All they saw was a teenage bombing suspect bouncing himself off the walls and about to do some serious damage (McCabe 153)

The extract clearly highlights the invisibility of Braden's world in the English symbolic as well as the symbolic agencies' disinterest in his individual identity. What the detectives want is to label him in line with their own value system that stereotypes an Irish wandering around the bombing site as a terrorist: "Why would he just not talk? Why could he not just admit he had dressed up as a woman in an ingenious scheme to disguise himself – for they would stop at nothing, these mad, fanatical bombers – and his plan had gone horribly wrong!" (148). Detectives' interrogation of Braden and Braden's "nonsensical gibberish" (148) in return epitomise the indecipherable world of the feminine abject in the eyes of the symbolic that tends to exclude it from the scene of civilisation defined by the white man.

Since Braden is stuck in the phase of an abject due to his inability to abject the mother, writing becomes his only recipe for resurrection; that is, his only way to enter the symbolic (Kristeva, *Powers* 26). However, Braden's writing style subverts its own reliability by occasionally shifting the narrators, estranging Braden from his gender identity by interchangeably using the s/he pronoun, blurring the line between the real and the fantasy, and with suspicious statements like "Was it any wonder I fed him [Terence] a load of lies about feeling oppressed and being a key figure all along in the IRA English bombing campaign! Which he swallowed, of course – hook, line and sinker! – the great old idiot!" (McCabe 94). In this way, his narrative raises the question whether he is actually involved in the bombings, but it stays unanswered as the mystery of his semiotic narrative and his hysteria under custody cannot be resolved by the English police. In the end, the police let him go, labelling him as an abject figure that is "nothing more than a drifting transvestite prostitute from the back-woods of Ireland" (149). Also, Braden's attempt to disturb the symbolic represented by Father Bernard through his fabricated compositions is ignored and does not receive any response from the father. When all these details are taken into consideration, it can be claimed that both the Irish and the English authority figures of the symbolic disregard the Irish

child's endeavour to return to the semiotic *chora* but insist on maintaining their societal order as well as their impositions on the feminine identity.

Braden's writing that is surely "feminine" with its challenge against the eighteenth-century realism reflects his semiotic and chaotic world explored through the semiotic *chora*. Therefore, Lehner's argument that regards the womb "not only [as] a metaphorical but also an authenticating means to engender both self and story, and nation" is a congruous finding (182). As argued in the very beginning, Braden as an allegory of Mother Ireland must return to his roots in order to give birth to a real self. The roots or the essence, which is the maternal womb/the semiotic *chora*, protects him from the rigid identities and the symbolic violence. Yet, his highly semiotic world that can be defined as postmodern cannot find a proper place in the 1960s and 70s Ireland and England, causing Braden to be entrapped in the pre-Oedipal stage. Pre-Oedipal stage of Freudian psychoanalysis corresponds to the union of mother and child in the Kristevan semiotic *chora*, as detailed in the chapter one of the dissertation. For Kristeva, the *chora* process is required for subjectivity, but the self can be formed only after the infant's act of abjection that is promoted by the imaginary father. Although Braden manages to return to the semiotic *chora* by turning himself into a mother figure and creates a new mother type, his failure in finding a father substitute for himself blocks his step into the symbolic.

In parallel to the argument, the novel ends with Braden's disillusionment with Terence as he quits his job in the hospital without informing Braden. But for his abrupt abandonment, Terence, who initially encourages Braden to write down his story, could become an imaginary father and help Braden's entrance into the symbolic. Upon his disappointment, Braden writes "I was on the verge of burning everything I'd written for him and everything to do with him," he does not burn his writings, though (McCabe 197). Still, Braden's failure in persuading Terence to read his writings is another proof of his non-existence in the symbolic. Besides, Braden never finds his mother, and hostility against his unconventional identity by the patriarchal agencies continues even in the last scene. When building workers molest Braden with their words, Braden refuses to respond: "It was all I could do not to answer: 'Sorry to disappoint you, boys!

Wrong planet, I'm afraid!' but then I thought – what's the point, and just turned the key and came inside," (198). Braden's indifference to the violent followers of the symbolic and his isolation in his house to be left alone with his mother's memory can be read as his withdrawal into the semiotic *chora*. Nevertheless, he does not lose his hope for being recognised by the symbolic as can be inferred from his desire to tell his "fondest wish" to Terence one day in the future. In this respect, the novel has an optimistic end. It concludes with Braden's voice revealing his wish: ". . . to wake up in the hospital with my family all around me, exhausted after my ordeal maybe, but with a bloom like roses in my cheeks, as I stroke his soft and tender head, my little baby, watching them as they beam with pride, in their eye perhaps a tear or two – who cares! – hardly able to speak as they wipe it away and say: 'He's ours,' " (199).

In conclusion, Braden's dream of having a family and a baby stays intact at the end of the novel. As argued before, he associates his abject status (his unconventional gender identity) with his dysfunctional family and believes that if he had a proper family, he would not be an abject figure. Therefore, Braden gives birth to his "dream" self in the last scene. If Braden-the-mother's attainable corporeality and his new definition of motherhood are put into an allegorical context, the baby surely represents a dream Ireland that dives into its semiotic *chora* to find out the real "self." It can be argued that Mother Ireland must negotiate with her past and get itself free from the masculine militarist concerns during the postcolonial process in order to give birth to a unique multicultural Irish identity that starts its subjectivity in the semiotic *chora* without turning the mother image into a phobic object. Besides, a functional family preparing the subject for the symbolic is required to fulfill the role of an imaginary father.

CHAPTER IV

COLM TÓIBÍN'S *THE BLACKWATER LIGHTSHIP*: ABJECT MOTHER REDISCOVERED TO CREATE THE SELF

Colm Tóibín (1955 - present) is one of the most prolific and best-known contemporary Irish writers. Born to a nationalist family in Enniscorthy, County Wexford, Tóibín received his secondary level education at the St Peter's College in his hometown. Since his grandfather joined the IRA and took part in the 1916 Enniscorthy uprising and his father was a member of the Fianna Fáil party, he is acquainted with the nationalist politics as of his birth. However, the conservative political tendencies of his family members urged him "to get away from them all" during his youth, revealing their distaste for liberal thought (D'Erasmio 166). When he started the University College Dublin in the early 1970s, he wanted to escape from the oppressive rural atmosphere of his hometown. Upon his university graduation in 1975, he moved to Barcelona and came back to Ireland in 1978. He worked as a journalist for *In Dublin*, *Hibernia*, *The Sunday Tribune* and *Magill* during the 1980s, and in 1990 he published his debut novel *The South* that is set in Barcelona but features an Irish Protestant woman in her quest for the self. Due to the protagonist's Anglo-Irish lineage, fragments from the troublesome Irish history can be seen in the background. Indeed, history is always an important field to explore for Tóibín whose revisionist approach to Irish history needs attention as his protagonists are always haunted by the past in his writings ("Biography", Delaney 1-7, D'Erasmio 165-66).

Revisionism in Irish history questioning the grand narratives of history-writing started in the late 1930s, and became popular after 1969 as the South was disturbed by the increasing political violence during the Troubles (Whelan 184-90). Contributing to these revisionist debates through his postmodern stance, Tóibín points out the constructed and fictive content of Irish history that promotes "martyrs and heroes" in addition to the idealised images and myths about Ireland ("What"). In his 1987 essay

“Martyrs and Metaphors,” Tóibín overtly claims “the thing we used to call our history, but could more correctly call our mythology, is a series of short stories” (6). In other words, he stresses the lack of objective and scientific material in Irish history-writing that is shaped by the Irish patriotic discourse; his understanding of history tends to question the “glorious” past narratives. Evidently, Tóibín follows in James Joyce’s footsteps and stands against the nationalist and militarist myth-making process that enabled the 1916 Easter Rising as well as the IRA violence during the Troubles. His writings challenge the idealised portrayals of Mother Ireland that depict a virgin mother degrading under English colonialism and the hyper-masculinised images of self-sacrificing Irish men. Instead, they offer a self-interrogation and reconciliation with the past. In this way, Tóibín not only paves the way for different readings of history but also unearths Irish subjectivities masked by the ideological and stereotypical images in an attempt to suggest a more pluralist and liberal worldview.

Apart from *The South*, Tóibín’s other novels like *The Heather Blazing* (1992), *The Blackwater Lightship* (1999), *Brooklyn* (2009) and *Nora Webster* (2014) are also entangled with the Irish content, covering different time periods of Ireland. As all of them reveal their protagonists’ search for the self in the foreground, they also subvert the idealised portrayal of rural Ireland and go beyond the grand narratives and the stereotypes associated with the Irish land. These novels come up with new Irish subjectivities, stretching the rigid framework of the nineteenth-century Irish identity. Not limiting himself as a writer with the Irish social and political problems, Tóibín enlarges both the setting and the thematic concerns of his fiction through his novels entitled *The Story of the Night* (1996) concentrating on an Argentinian man’s relationship with his mother and exploration of his gay identity, *The Master* (2004) drawing a new Henry James portrayal and *The Testament of Mary* (2012) giving an alternative account on Virgin Mary. Also, Tóibín is famous for his short story collections *Mothers and Sons* (2006) and *The Empty Family* (2010), coupled with his non-fiction writings; an essay collection with the title of *Martyrs and Metaphors* (1987), a travel book entitled *Bad Blood: A Walk Along the Irish Border* (1994) and *The Sign of the Cross: Travels in Catholic Europe* (1994) are only few of his many non-fiction works.

When the dominant motif of Tóibín's writings – his characters' struggle to achieve the self despite the past traumas – is considered, it becomes clear that the characters' struggle is aggravated by

[i]llness, loss, the early death of a parent; melancholy, elegy and grief; the excavation of a hidden life or the veiling of a secret self; the politics of the family and the relationship between mothers and sons; the importance of place and the painful need to belong; the residual attraction of rituals, customs and prayers; the intricate play of power and the intimate gradations of class; the culture of a ruling party; the relationship with Europe; and the changing shape of Irish society and the law (Delaney 10)

Namely, Tóibín's protagonists are stuck between the past and the present, the public and the private, the politics and the individual, the ancient and the modern as well as the Kristevan semiotic and the symbolic. In this respect, they are restless abjects who look forward to achieving subjectivity and Tóibín finds this "in-between" situation beneficial for the future of Ireland as can be understood from his statement that "ambiguity is what is needed in Ireland now. No one wants territory, merely a formula of words ambiguous enough to make them feel at home" ("New" 6). At this juncture, his understanding of "ambiguity" must be interpreted in reference to the various theories of postmodernism that favour decentralisation, inclusive discourses and multiculturalism. Encouraging negotiation with the abject (m)other, Tóibín challenges the oppressive grandnarratives of Irish culture featuring Cathleen ni Houlihan or Virgin Mary as well as the exclusivist nationalist arguments constructed on Catholicism and masculinity. In this sense, *The Blackwater Lightship*, shortlisted for the Booker Prize, is a typical Tóibín fiction.

Although the time period covered in the novel does not stretch back to the depths of Irish history, *The Blackwater Lightship* voices Tóibín's revisionist concerns through three-generations of women characters symbolising the changing values of Ireland and their endeavour to relieve their abject child, Declan. None of these women embody the idealised image of Mother Ireland as each of them fails in their practise of motherhood. Tóibín introduces maternal subjectivities into the Irish context by disregarding the stereotypical mother image entrapped in the symbolic. In this respect, he reveals Irish women's need to explore their own mothers in their journey to the self. Moreover, in his review of Tóibín's novel, Terry Eagleton argues that the Irish setting adds an

ideological and political message into a universal mother-child story as it “raise[s] questions of tradition and modernity, of pure-hearted rural Gaeldom v. decadent urban gayness, which touch the nerve of a nation increasingly divided between the Treaty of Rome and the Bishop of Rome, between secular modernity and a still powerful Church” (8). Projecting a panorama of the 1990s Ireland that witnesses great economic and cultural changes accompanied by the clashes between the older and the younger generations, *The Blackwater Lightship* gives the Irish child a chance of liberation from the colonial legacy embodied by the enslaving mother image (the lost object of love) and of forming his/her own subjectivity by reconciling with the past without being entrapped by it. Accordingly, the child’s abjection of the mother to create the self after his/her exploration of Irish maternal subjectivities – rather than a moment of vulgar separation under the rule of a cruel “colonising” father – forms the basis of a new Irish identity.

Set in the 1990s Ireland, the novel revolves around a limited number of characters that commute between Dublin and Wexford. Helen O’Doherty is a young woman who lives in Dublin with her husband and two children, and has a problematic relationship with her mother, Lily, and her grandmother, Dora. One day, she finds out that her homosexual brother Declan is dying of AIDS and he wants to spend his last days at his grandmother’s house in rural Wexford. As a result, these three women have to come together and reconcile for Declan’s sake. However, this encounter at grandmother’s house, which also includes Declan’s two gay friends Paul and Larry, evokes painful childhood memories in Helen’s mind, making the visit a time for settling of accounts. The novel is told from Helen’s viewpoint as the narrative shifts between the past and the present. Since Helen’s father had cancer and Lily was accompanying him in the hospital during their childhood, Helen and Declan were sent to their grandparents’ house on the Wexford coast. As the routine of the siblings’ life changed, they started to suffer from loneliness and the absence of their parents. During their stay in Wexford, Lily neither called her children nor visited them, which caused a traumatic experience for the children who regarded themselves as abandoned by their parents. The news about their father’s death also came as a shock to the children who had not been informed about his worsening health beforehand. Later, Lily’s inability to cope with the loss of her husband

and her emotional coldness towards her children resulted in a lack of communication in family, which haunts the family members throughout their lives. When the colonial overtones of the mother-child relationship in the collective conscious of Irish society and the importance of the Irish mother figure are considered, Helen's enmity against her mother and her grandmother that constitutes the main tension in the novel enables allegorical links with the Mother Ireland imagery.

Mother Ireland, a metaphor for the Irish land/nation, is an important character and sets the model for other Irish mothers in Irish literature as underlined in the previous chapters. Not surprisingly, this image also occupies a great place in Tóibín's fiction although his major aim is to eradicate this larger-than-life image modelled on the suffering Virgin Mary. In his collection of short stories *Mothers and Sons*, "the mothers are foremost represented through their disembodied duality as a haunting presence/absence: a function with which the son must not only cope with, but eventually overcome, in his own torturous psychological development" (Post 126). In other words, the sons must get rid of the haunting image of the mother and learn to mourn for her so as to overcome the melancholy stemming from the loss of the mother. In the Irish Revivalist culture of the nineteenth century, the Irish mother idealised by the symbolic could not activate her preparatory role for the Irish child since she was estranged from her own semiotic essence by transforming into a lost object of love, which blocked the child's exploration of the maternal *chora*, interrupted his/her subjectivity and entrapped him/her into a pre-Oedipal dream of reunion with the mother. In order to overcome the deadlock, Tóibín first excludes the father figure from the infant's psychosexual development process and prevents his paternal interruption. Later, he introduces a realistic and subjective portrayal of the mother by which the child can explore her semiotic *chora* and then, proceed to the stage of the maternal loss and the process of mourning; in the end, all these stages conclude with the formation of the ego by the child's abjection of the mother to direct his/her libidinal energy into a new object of desire (Post 133). In this way, the psychological development of Tóibín's protagonists is maintained in Kristevan pattern that regards the mother as an initiator of subjectivity but also as a killer of it, because the subject in the *chora* is exposed to a continuous generation and negation process if s/he cannot have an imaginary father

(Kristeva, *Revolution* 28). Accordingly, the child must avoid turning the mother into a lost object of love, but s/he must eventually abject her to form a separate identity after completing his/her development in the semiotic *chora*. The mother-child relationship in *The Blackwater Lightship* follows the same pattern, in this context.

The eldest woman/mother character in the novel is Declan's grandmother Dora who lives in isolation at her rural house in Wexford. Declan's desire to go back to her grandmother's house while his health is weakening starts Helen's confrontation with her childhood memories. As she drives towards Dora's house, her hesitation about her cold relationship with her grandmother besieges her. And with her step into the house, she notices the same "smell of must and damp" left from her childhood days (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 55). In her childhood memories the grandmother is depicted as an authoritarian figure and Tóibín illustrates the value system of older generations through her portrayal. She is portrayed as a serious character, "[s]he hated breakfast for music and the appearance of writers or film stars or English people. They told too many funny stories; she wanted argument, not amusement. But she remained silent and tense when religion was discussed, watching some nun or priest or concerned layperson out of the side of her eyes" (64). As the lines suggest, the world of arts and humour is trivial in the eyes of Dora while the Church, an agent of the symbolic, dominates her everyday life. Dora's negative approach to humour and arts, both of which are associated with the semiotic and have the potential to violate the social, linguistic and cultural codes based on the symbolic, proves the grandmother's dogmatic worldview resisting novelties. In this respect, she stands like a primordial mother figure whose personal archive can be read as an allegory for Irish nation. As an old woman raised during the fervent days of Irish nationalism and struggle for independence, her prejudice against the English must be interpreted, regarding the colonial history of Ireland. Dora must be placed into the historical context, so the heavy effects of colonialism on the older generations of Ireland must be pointed out in reference to her.

Dora's rural house – representing the maternal *chora* – has a symbolic importance in the novel. In the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literatures, rural Ireland, far from the English colonial influence, "contributed mightily to the Irish identity and imagination"

as it was associated with the uncorrupted essence of Irishness (Hachey, et al. 263). Especially, the Yeatsian literature is full of romanticised images of Irish countryside as well as “spiritualized” Irish peasants (Hirsch 1117). However, Tóibín undermines this romantic image and Dora’s house cannot achieve its role of protection and peace. When Helen and Declan are sent to their grandparents during the absence of their parents, Dora does not comfort them by presenting her maternal love into their service. Instead, her old-fashioned way of living, the rural house and loneliness of the siblings in the house constitute a source of fear, especially for Declan:

He was afraid of the dark and the cold and of his grandparents’ movements upstairs which seemed to echo in the rooms below. And Helen knew that there was another fear, which was never mentioned in all that time: the fear that their parents would never come back, that they would both be left here, and that these days and nights – Helen was eleven then, Declan eight – would become their lives, rather than an interlude which would soon come to an end. (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 56)

Darkness, cold and the dreadful presence of the grandparents (Dora’s, rather than the grandfather’s presence) disturb Declan. A while later, he starts to have nightmares during which he feels himself “tiny” and “floating” while everything is “huge” (69). His nightmares simply point out his despair and anxiety over the changing course of his life. In a more Freudian interpretation, his sense of tininess and floating can also be interpreted as symbolising the condition of foetus in the womb in parallel to the rural house/maternal womb trope. However, in Declan’s case, the womb is not a place of Freudian oceanic feeling that explains the harmonious union between the mother and the child, but it is an isolating and empty place invoking fear of abandonment. Besides, while taking care of her grandchildren, Dora does not pose as a loving grandmother but behaves in an oppressive way, which highlights the paradoxical nature of the maternal *chora* as a devouring and a generating place in the Kristevan argument. For instance, Dora insists on her menu for Declan, disregarding his dislike of certain food, which starts “the battle” between the children and the grandmother (60). Dora does not respect Helen and Declan’s subjective choices; in other words, she does not let them explore their subjectivities. Thus, she fails not only in becoming a loving mother substitute for her grandchildren but also promoting the generating role of the *chora*.

Dora becomes an example of a devouring mother and her physical existence does not necessarily mean her emotional support. It is clear that Tóibín employs his typical empty maternal womb image in *The Blackwater Lightship*, since “[t]he figure of the dead, absconded or recalcitrant mother is perennial and recurrent motif in Tóibín’s novels” and the maternal womb is dysfunctional as “the voided, haunted place of the mother function” (Fogarty 168). As a result, Declan and Helen cannot accept the grandparents’ house as their own and their sense of abandonment increases and causes a trauma that will endanger their stable status in the symbolic and haunt the siblings throughout their lives. In Declan’s case, the nightmares cause him to become “withdrawn” as well as “forgetful and distant” (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 68). The sudden absence of the father and the mother figures and the haunting presence of the grandmother interrupt his psychological development, and he turns into a shadowy figure unable to raise his voice in the symbolic. Declan’s marginal identity as an Irish homosexual and his lack of a stable house in Ireland during his adult years can be considered the direct result of his traumatic childhood.

Regarding the decaying status of Dora’s rural house dominated by the smell of damp, her oppressive existence and her old fashioned views – all of which refer to her strong links with the country’s past – the portrayal of the grandmother can be associated with one of the well-known personifications of Mother Ireland, “the poor old woman.” This maternal image evolves from the image of Catholic peasant mother that is “shrewd and kindly enough, but limited and limiting in her vision, which is entirely pragmatic and domestic in its concerns” (Innes 48). However, the novel is set in the 1990s when “differing views on society, religion, and politics” emerge and well-educated youths of the country adopt a more modern and liberal worldview, finding “the lack of ‘progress’ in traditional Ireland frustrating and backward” (Hachey, et al. 257). In the midst of these socio-cultural changes, the traditional maternal figure loses her idealised image and is criticised under the influence of the developing social, cultural and economic conditions of younger generations. Therefore, Dora’s relationship with her grandchildren goes beyond becoming a mere personal issue and it exemplifies “the palimpsestic, personal-political narratives” in Tóibín’s fiction (Costello-Sullivan 6). Different from O’Brien and McCabe’s novels where the mother figure is idealised and

cannot be reached, which blocks the subjectivity of Irish children, characters in Tóibín's novel are struggling to confront the "abject" mother to experience her subjectivity rooted in her maternal body just to create their own selves. The variety in the approaches of children to the mother figure is surely related to the changing social, political, and economic patterns of Irish society.

Dora is an abject figure in the eyes of her grandchildren as well as her grand-grandchildren, symbolising the "frustrating and backward" Ireland. In one of Helen's retrospective journeys, she remembers her children's visit to Dora. They get disturbed by her existence, complain about "an awful stink" in the house and refuse to drink her soup. Helen tries to empathise with her children and thinks that "[t]here was something frightening about her [Dora's] presence" (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 131-32). The grotesque depictions of Dora in Helen's memories overlap with the "abject" mother portrayals in patriarchal discourse. In parallel to the children's refusal of Dora's food, Kristeva defines food loathing in *Powers of Horror* (1980) as "the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection," linking food and sex prohibitions in archaic societies as both of them pollute the body (3, 57). She claims that "[d]ietary abomination has thus a parallel — unless it be a foundation — in the abomination provoked by the fertilizable or fertile feminine body (menses, childbirth)" (100). In other words, woman's ability to give birth and her bodily liquids that shatter the borders of clean and intact body associated with the male body¹ are regarded as a threat against the patriarchal authorities. Patriarchy creates its own system based on the superiority of men and introduces the incest taboo on the mother's body in an attempt to exclude her corporeal existence from civilisation.² As a result, the male gaze turns her so-called "grotesque" body into a source of fear for speaking subjects who embrace all societal codes to pass into the paternal sphere. In Dora's case, Helen's sons loathe the smell of the house as well as their grand-grandmother's food, implicating Dora's abject existence, and Dora does nothing to touch her grandchildren's heart. The highly symbolic scene can be interpreted as representing children's broken ties with the country's past. Here, the

¹ In the Western philosophy and psychoanalysis, the female body is defined in comparison to the idealised male body. Thus, it is identified with the "lack" of the phallus and considered chaotic as argued by Lacan. Later, many feminist intellectuals like Simone De Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray argue against the misogynist arguments over the feminine body to underline its reproductive and creative role.

² A detailed argument on civilisation founded by the "father" can be found on the pages 35-38 of the dissertation.

maternal figure is no more an idealised object of love, but she appears as an abject figure. Since the semiotics and the symbolic have equal importance in Kristeva's theory of subjectivity, her abject existence and children's fear of Dora hinder their exploration of the self (metaphorically, the grandchildren's exploration of the semiotics of Irish identity) in the maternal body.

Through Dora who personifies the primordial mother as the oldest generation, Tóibín challenges the self-sacrificing Mother Ireland image constructed by the Irish symbolic and projects the uneasy relationship between the myth of Mother Ireland and her children. In this context, Dora's daughter Lily and her approach to motherhood must also be analysed. Elizabeth Grosz defines maternity as the site for the semiotic and accepts it as "the precondition of the symbolic" ("Body" 96). Like Kristeva, her approach to maternity and her stress on the mother's preparatory role for the symbolic shed light on the significant position of Mother Ireland in the formation of Irish identity. Tóibín also believes in the importance of the semiotic roots in one's subjectivity. Using three different mother figures and drawing a cause-effect cycle for their failed motherhood, he illustrates Irish people's gradual confrontation with the history while providing Irish children with a chance of confronting and negotiating with Mother Ireland in their quest for subjectivity. As an example of the second generation of Irish mothers, Lily is alienated from her own semiotic nature, and thus fails in her maternal role. In this respect, while Dora appears as a devouring mother, Lily becomes an epitome of the absent/lost mother in Irish literature. Yet, in both cases, the children suffer from melancholy stemming from the absence of the supportive mother figure.

Lily's failure in her maternal role starts when she sends her children to Wexford and ends her communication with them during her stay at the hospital. At that time, she completely devotes herself to her husband and neglects her children. Even after her husband's death, Lily cannot fulfill her maternal role but leaves her children motherless. Although Declan's feelings towards his mother are ambivalent, Helen's hatred becomes obvious as she utters her desire to kill her mother more than once throughout the narrative. Once she describes her hatred towards Lily, saying, "[s]he'd drive us up to school in the morning from here, and I'd close my eyes when I came out at the end of

the day and hope when I opened them that she wouldn't be there" (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 88). Lily's presence disturbs Helen as hatred and anger dominate her feelings.

Although Lily cannot become successful in motherhood, she achieves success in business after her husband's death by setting up her own computer course and becoming "the first in the country to include computer skills in her commercial course" (92). In this respect, her success proves the changing status of women in Irish society during the 1990s when Mary Robinson becomes the first woman president of Ireland and urges women out of their domestic spheres (Kennedy 252). If the business world with its rules, order and norms is regarded as an extension of the symbolic, it is evident that Lily is not a passive figure in social sphere. However, "Lily the businesswoman" and "Lily the mother" are depicted almost as two different characters and there is no conciliation between the two. In her office, Lily appears as a self-confident and strong-minded woman, but her seemingly strong position in the business world is threatened by her suppressed and unsettled semiotic world as can be observed during her reunion with her children at Dora's house. She feels guilty due to her failure as a mother and it triggers her aggressive attitudes. While fostering enmity against Helen, she also gets jealous of Declan's two gay friends who undertake the parental role and offer their protection to Declan. In one of these scenes of encounter, Tóibín defines Lily as follows:

It was that hopeless mixture of looking for sympathy and demanding attention; it was the ability to turn hot and cold, swamp you with affection and then turn her back because she was busy. As Helen passed the limekiln she could picture her mother's head over the crowd at the funeral, and she pictured her again now as she sat at the table in Cush, and Helen saw in both versions of her mother's face a desolation and a helplessness, and, more than anything, a fear that would never leave her now. (*Blackwater* 217-18).

In Helen's view, Lily is portrayed like a child, rather than an adult. Her paradoxical emotions and impulsive attitudes expose her position at the threshold between the semiotic and the symbolic with a possibility to fall into the abject status at any time. Similar to Helen, Lily also has communication problems with her mother Dora who always avoids seeing Lily (122). At this juncture, Lily and Dora's abjection of each other as the mother and the daughter figures cause the main problem in Irish woman's subjectivity as it also means Irish woman's abjection of the self. As argued by Oliver,

“matricide is a form of suicide” for women due to the same biology of the mother and the daughter (*Reading* 63). In this respect, when Lily abjects Dora without exploring her semiotic world that forms her maternal subjectivity, she also loses her chance to explore her own semiotics that constitute the basics of her identity. Thus, her maternal subjectivity rooted in the semiotic stays unexplored and cannot concur with the symbolic. Therefore, under Lily’s mask of a successful businesswoman, there comes forth a child-like and destitute woman who needs to explore and negotiate with her “self” in the semiotic by going back to the maternal womb. Depicting failed communication between the mother and the child, Tóibín implies the importance of the mother figure in the process of subjectivity and tacitly accuses Mother Ireland of blocking an access to her semiotic womb.

Dora’s dysfunctional womb cannot function as a place for subjectivity as can be understood from the rigid rules of her house. Thus, it cannot stimulate the everlasting generation-negation dynamic of the womb. Instead, it oppresses her grandchildren, triggering them into depression. In addition to Dora’s dysfunctional womb, Tóibín points out the failure of Lily’s maternal role over the empty house/room metaphor. When Helen meets her mother years later and has to step into her house, the emptiness and coldness of Lily’s house strikes her:

Helen . . . walked into the room, noting an armchair and a sofa and a television in one corner, but aware more than anything of the emptiness in the room. And then it struck her what the room looked like; it resembled her mother’s offices on the top floor of the building in Wexford. It also had a high-beamed ceiling and the same roof-lights, the same cool austerity. It must have been done, she thought, by the same designer. She wondered if there was another smaller, cosier room where her mother could sit in the evenings and at weekends, (*Blackwater* 112)

Lily’s house is designed like an office and lacks a warm home-like atmosphere. In parallel to the argument given above, Lily’s office-like house symbolises her businesswoman identity constructed by the symbolic while the lack of cosy atmosphere that is expected to reflect Lily’s private world can be interpreted as her suppressed semiotic. Kristeva’s “theory of signification” rejects the notion of unitary subject in the symbolic and investigates his/her formation by referring to the “corporeal, linguistic and social dialectic” (*Revolution* 15). Therefore, corporeality enters the scene of

psychoanalysis and the semiotic realm embodied by the maternal body looms large in search of subjectivity. In this context, Lily's return to Dora's house upon Declan's request – metaphorically, her return to the maternal body – is a necessity for her subjectivity as it displaces her from her fixed position in the symbolic and puts her back into the maternal *chora* where she is negated and recreated to achieve “a new modality of the signifying process” (Margaroni, “Lost” 79). And only through this negation and creation process, which can be read as her confrontation and reconciliation with her (m)other side, Lily can overcome her estrangement from her semiotic corporeality that is represented by the empty house/womb imagery. Then, she can break her silence to re-establish a communication with her children. In other words, she can achieve a new identity that is based on the interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic by blending her maternal subjectivity with her identity as a businesswoman.

In Tóibín's fiction discontinuity between the generations in Ireland reveals itself in the form of silences and gaps that dominate the mother-child communication, *The Blackwater Lightship* is full of such examples. There is a noticeable failure of communication between the two camps; for example, Dora never informs her grandchildren about Lily's letters and hides them away while keeping her silence about the deteriorating health condition of their father. Since Helen is older than Declan, she is aware of her father's illness and seeks an answer to her questions by trying to find out the letters, however, she fails. It is seen that she is traumatised not only by the absence of her parents but also “by a lonely childhood and by the silence and secrecy of elders,” which result in her suffering from emotional detachment and “a kind of aphasia that serves to perpetuate the trauma” (Ledwidge 202). As a result, Helen loses her ability to communicate with her mother and grandmother, and Tóibín always underlines her paralysis against these two maternal figures. For instance, she does not know how to treat her grandmother, because “[s]he had never in her life kissed her grandmother, or shaken her hand . . .” (*Blackwater* 46). In another instance, silence standing like a wall between Helen and her mother is depicted with the following words, “[s]he wondered had this really happened, the non-answers to questions, the sense of her mother as being utterly remote, lost to her” (58). In parallel to the extract, it can be argued that the mother's silence in her dysfunctional relationship with Helen blocks the daughter's

exploration of the maternal semiotic and turns the mother into an unreachable distant figure.

Silence and unanswered questions in Helen and Declan's communications with the adults is a characteristic Tóibín device since "silence informs the subject and the style of what is narrated, and it helps to shape the story that is being told" (Delaney 19). Therefore, even silence is functional in Tóibín's narrative on the grounds that its main concern is to draw attention to the dysfunctional family institution in Irish society and the lack of communication between the generations as a result of the country's past dominated by the colonial discourse. As argued by Moane, the reason for the domineering silence in Irish society can further be explored in a socio-political context and explained through the country's traumatic history witnessing the Famine, the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence and the Civil War (116). That is, the older generations refrain from talking about the painful and horrific memories of the national and the individual past in order not to reproduce the pain. Yet, the problems which cannot be verbalised surely impose an emotional burden on the private self, thus staying intact. In the context of Tóibín's novel, the unspoken memories and Irish mothers' reluctance to talk about their hidden selves prevent the children's exploration of subjectivity in the maternal *chora*, alienating them to their "abject" mother as well as building an unhealthy communication based on silence, secrecy and isolation.

It is evident that Tóibín is not an austere revisionist who completely rejects the past. Instead, he "is aware of the need for roots and communal allegiances and aware, too, of their specious allure," as argued by Eagleton in his article "Mothering" (8). In this context, his employment of mother figures can be related to his search for the "roots" and can be explained in reference to Kristeva's theory that tracks down subjectivity in the maternal *chora*, since it is the place where the "roots" can be found. Also, Tóibín shows his awareness of the mother's paradoxical role as a devouring and productive figure. Thus, he wants to subvert the Irish mother stereotype and lets his characters explore their mothers' subjectivities by sending them back to the grandmother's hearth. In this way, the characters learn to abject their mothers on their own, rather than dreaming of or getting angry with the unreachable mother image that is stripped off

from her subjectivity to exist only as a national icon. As a result of the exploration of maternal subjectivities, Mother Ireland also frees herself from the lost object status and becomes a subject. At this juncture, Declan's demand to spend his last days at his grandmother's house together with Lily and Helen enables a return to the roots while making him a self-sacrificing figure.

Declan's choice of Dora's house as his last stop instead of Lily's house is very significant. Dora stands for the primordial mother figure by being the origin of all the characters, in other words, all their subjectivities start in Dora's womb. Therefore, Declan wants to visit Dora's house in spite of his unpleasant childhood memories, saying, he "need[s] these creeps" (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 115). Declan's words referring to the darker side of maternity can be interpreted as a desire to meet the abject (m)other to achieve a kind of unity. Declan's homosexual body covering the other inside is situated between the semiotic and the symbolic, and his abject status in society embodies Ireland's exclusion of different identities during the state formation process as well as the abjection of the feminine (m)other from the social realm by *fin-de-siecle* nationalism. As a homosexual suffering from AIDS which casts him off as the ultimate other, Declan is already an abject figure and stands outside the Irish symbolic; therefore, he has nothing to lose in the symbolic by returning to the maternal womb.

Different from Declan, Helen has a settled life with a family and a professional position as a school principal in the symbolic. In her case, her husband Hugh can be considered as an influential support for Helen's existence in the symbolic, although she cannot feel herself comfortable in his realm. Hugh is a neo-nationalist; he likes Irish culture and speaks Irish with his friends, which creates a linguistic barrier between him and Helen as she feels herself an outsider amidst his friends and questions "why he needed someone who had none of his virtues," and feels "suddenly distant from him" (16-25). Helen's inability to speak the Irish language and her discomfort in a Gaelic atmosphere represent the barrier between Helen and her mother culture while pointing out her rupture from the maternal *chora*. Therefore, similar to Lily, she suffers from melancholy and uneasiness as her identity is threatened by the image of an abject

mother. Due to her sense of abandonment left from her childhood, she cannot achieve her self-confidence in the symbolic:

Somewhere in the part of her where fears lay unexplored and conflicts unresolved, there was a belief that the life she had made with Hugh would fail her; not precisely that he would leave her, but more exactly that she would some day or night appear at her mother's door asking to be taken in and forgiven and her mother would tell her that her room was always there for her, and that she could stay as long as she liked. (120)

As the extract suggests, Helen is afraid of being unhappy in her marriage life. In other words, her fear stems from her longing for a mother figure which results in her dissatisfaction with her life in the symbolic. She thinks that she will go back to the maternal womb one day in an attempt to negotiate with her absent mother who turns into an abject figure in time in Helen's fantasy. She longs for maternal protection; however, her destitution causes anger and hatred, assuring Lily's image as an abject and frightening mother. The following extract reveals her secret fantasies as well as her act of abjection:

The boys did not exist in this scenario [her fantasy of going back to the maternal], nor the possibility that she could ever take refuge in her mother's new house, and she realised that it was a fantasy, and something that she must not think about. However, it overcame her like a sudden nausea, and she knew that she could not tell Hugh about it, it would seem too dark and disloyal to him, it would frighten him even more than it frightened her. (120)

Her sons and husband, all of whom symbolise the family institution and are situated in the symbolic, appear as obstacles against Helen's exploration of the maternal semiotic. The analogy between her fantasy to visit her mother's house and the sudden sense of nausea is worth mentioning, since nausea is one of the human reactions in the face of an abject sight and helps keeping the borders of "I" intact (Kristeva, *Powers* 3). Transforming her longing for the maternal figure into a grotesque feeling, Helen abjects her as she wants to keep her mother outside her symbolic position. Kristeva claims that abjection is a kind of defence mechanism for the subject:

A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A "something" that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is noth- ing

insignificant, and which crushes me. On the edge of non- existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me. There, abject and abjection are my safe- guards. The primers of my culture. (*Powers 2*)

As can be inferred, “uncanniness” is associated with the sudden intervention of the semiotic material coming from the forgotten past when the (m)other and the infant was in unity, disrespecting the borders separating the “I” from the (m)other. Therefore, it refers to the chaotic time in the semiotic *chora* where there is an eternal signification as well as a continuous generation and negation process for the subject (*Revolution 28*). In order to constitute a separate self and refrain from its destructive dynamics, the maternal semiotic must be abjected by the subject in Kristeva’s theory. In parallel to the theory of abjection, Helen’s endeavour to exclude her mother can be read as an attempt to maintain her “seemingly” stable life in the symbolic. However, her childhood abruptly ends when her mother leaves them, and her grandmother treats her “as an adult” while treating Declan “as a child” (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 62). By way of explanation, she is abjected from the maternal womb before her completion of the semiotic stage and suffers from the absence of the father figure during her childhood. Thus, Helen’s process of subjectivity is complicated by her own abject status. Since the subject is “the expression of the interaction symbolic/semiotic” (Gambaudo 44), Helen’s subject position in the symbolic becomes monotypic and unproductive without the contribution of the semiotic. Kristeva gives importance to the production process of the self, rather than the identity as an end product, and rejects Hegel’s “impenetrable and atomistic subjectivity” for the sake of “exclusive individuality” (*Revolution 199*). That is, she does not believe in a unified subject and is against fixed identities, because the subject who is exposed to a continuous signifying process is always in the process of becoming in Kristeva’s theory. Therefore, Helen’s identity in the symbolic must be negated and regenerated in the maternal womb to achieve the real “self.” Besides, abjecting the mother means abjecting the self for a woman, and Helen is aware of this fact as her own words suggest, “these two women [Dora and Lily] are the parts of myself that I have buried, that is who they are for me, both of them, and that is why I still want them away from me” (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 187). Helen’s repudiation of the maternal figures blocks her own exploration of subjectivity as well, and builds an invulnerable wall between her mother and her.

Declan who shares the same status with Helen as an abject child also desires to explore the maternal *chora*. Once, Larry speaks about Declan's craving for maternal love and recognition in a conversation with Dora, and discloses his secret drives to Lily's house in Wexford in the hope of coming across her (143). Yet, Declan never comes across Lily during these visits and cannot be courageous enough to knock at her door. When Helen's fear of her own yearning for the mother figure and Declan's attempts for the maternal protection are considered, it becomes evident that Helen's and Declan's views on Lily emerge in different ways. For Declan, the mother is an idealised object of love and he tries to return to her at every turn; on the other hand, in the eyes of Helen, she is a threatening "abject" object who must be kept away as explained above. Declan's demand to make up for the loss of his mother with his friends is observable in his relationships with them. For instance, Paul explains that Declan starts to behave like a small child during his stays in Brussels: "My best memory of him was in the morning; he would crawl in the bottom of our bed. He was like a small boy, and he'd talk and doze and play with our feet. François always joked about adopting him; he even bought a child's pyjamas for him as a joke and folded them on his bed" (174). The anecdote suggests that Declan tries to establish a family for himself during his search for love and protection, because his heterosexual family proves to be dysfunctional as can be understood through the images of the empty womb and the absent father. However, as his final days are approaching because of his deteriorating health, Declan's abject body can find a place only in the maternal *chora*, which urges him to return to the (m)other. Yebra reads Declan's decision of returning to the *chora* as an act of self-sacrifice and makes an analogy between Christ and Declan, writing "he is a victim born and dead for his people to (metaphorically) come to terms with the past and hence open up to the future" (99). In other words, Declan realises Helen's need for the (m)other and sacrifices himself for future generations. Declan's illness constitutes a means of conversation for Dora, Lily and Helen. It reminds them of their common roots and has a unifying role; they start to speak the same language, then.

During the second visit to Dora's rural house, the house functions as the primordial womb where all the characters are "both generated and negated" in Kristevan sense¹ as all the fixed meanings are deconstructed to form new signifying processes and new subjectivities. In other words, the characters re-shape their relationships with each other, question their identities and pave the way for a new dialogue. In this respect, the grandmother's house embodying the maternal womb no longer appears as an oppressing and haunting place, but appears as an encompassing place favouring pluralism and tolerance. The changing representation of the house/Dora's womb in comparison to its oppressing representation in Helen's childhood memories must be studied in reference to the changing conditions of Ireland in the 1990s. Since it is the time for "the rise of the 'Celtic Tiger' and unprecedented economic growth," "De Valera's image of Ireland as a simple rural society had passed into history" (H. Kearney 47). In parallel to urbanisation, Irish society started to change, evolving into a liberal one. In June 1993, the Irish government abolished the law criminalising homosexuality and the legislation was amended to satisfy "the need for new modes of political and cultural identity in response to demands arising from the community" (Smyth 156). The challenges against the conservative nature of Irish society as well as the romantic images left from the times of Revivalism inspire Tóibín's conciliatory revisionism of the past. As a result, the changing face of Mother Ireland is presented through a new perspective on Dora's womb.

By virtue of Declan's self-sacrifice, new generations get a chance to explore the semiotic *chora* while the maternal figures urge themselves to negotiate with children by presenting their womb into their service, without the intervention of the paternal authorities. When Declan and his gay friends arrive at Dora's house, Dora never rejects them but hosts them all. Moreover, her portrayal is much more sympathetic when compared to Lily and Helen. For example, Lily fosters a particular hatred against Paul and accuses him of being a bad influence on Declan. She says, "When Declan left my house, he was a young man anyone would be proud of" (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 207). Her words are homophobic and hint at her distaste for Declan's homosexual identity. In

¹ Kristeva claims that ". . . the semiotic *chora* is no more than the place where the subject is both generated and negated, the place where his unity succumbs before the process of charges and stases that produce him." (*Revolution* 28)

contrast to Lily, Dora accepts Declan's identity, heralding the birth of a new pluralist society (147). In the contemporary setting of the novel corresponding to the 1990s, Dora looms large with her wisdom and her inclusive attitudes. Despite Lily's coercion to leave the rural house in Cush, Wexford, Dora insists on staying there, which stands for her allegiance to old Ireland. Still, she does not stand as a narrow-minded figure and Eagleton defines her portrayal as the grandmother as "a feisty controversialist who wears make-up, sports a flick knife and learns to drive a car" (8).

Declan's friends are functional in terms of the family members' exploration of each other, because they do not have any grudge or prejudice against the maternal figures of the house. Instead, they try to understand, rather than judge and cast them off as "abject" figures, which sheds light on the women's unexplored personal archives. During one of the conversations between Dora and Declan's friends, Helen and Declan learn for the first time that Dora is the one who prevented Lily from becoming a nun. Afraid of Lily's withdrawal into a pious lifestyle at a secluded convent, Dora made a secret plan and sent her to a dance party with her cousins to make her experience other life styles (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 149-53). In this respect, she breaks with tradition and does not conform to the stereotypical Virgin Mary image of the Irish mother. In another instance, she overtly utters her disapproval of the gossiping Kehoe sisters that illustrate the closed society structure dominating the rural Ireland (140). Besides, she takes advice from the gay architect Larry to re-design her house (156-57). Dora's attempts can be regarded as her openness to change; allegorically, it points out the transition period Mother Ireland passes through. While Helen's childhood memories draw a rather cold and oppressive portrayal for Dora, her later portrayal features a comforting figure. Thus, it can be argued that her subjectivity becomes visible for Declan and Helen, only in the present tense when Declan urges everybody to come together, leaving the past resentments behind.

Ironically, the main tension between the characters is created by Lily whose aggressive attitudes towards Declan's friends as well as Helen must be studied in the scope of her past trauma. As recorded by Helen, Lily "seemed totally transformed" following her husband's death and became "regal, remote, the last person a little girl would want to

hug or seek comfort from” (214). She cannot voice her grief while her husband’s death overburdens her, thus she closes her semiotic world to the outside world. As a result, “Lily’s inability to include her daughter in her grief further shuts Helen out of story” (Ledwidge 215). Indeed, neither Helen nor Declan can find a place in Lily’s semiotic *chora* from that moment on, becoming abject children. The reunion at Dora’s house years later unleashes all the suppressed semiotic flows, and the closer Declan’s death gets, the more intimate dialogues start between Helen and Lily. Lily’s return to Dora’s maternal womb – embodied by the rural house – also becomes functional in terms of her negation of the businesswoman identity that is imposed on her by the symbolic, although she finds the experience “depressing” (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 113). On one occasion, when they go for a walk for Declan’s sake, Lily points out the lighthouse, Tuskar, next to which the Blackwater Lightship used to stand and adds:

When I was young, lying in bed in your granny’s house,’ ‘I used to believe that Tuskar was a man and the Blackwater Lightship was a woman and they were both sending signals to each other and to other lighthouses, like mating calls. . . . And I thought they were calling to each other; it was very satisfying, him being strong and her being faithful. . . . I thought your father would live for ever. So I learned things very bitterly.’ (192)

It is one of the few moments when Lily opens her inner world to Helen’s sympathy and utters how she feels as a result of their father’s death. In other words, it is the time when she lets Helen explore her subjectivity, challenging the remote and cold maternal image in Helen’s mind. At this juncture, the title of the novel also becomes meaningful and the Blackwater Lightship turns into a nostalgic symbol for the past times when all the family members are together. The fact that Lily attributes feminine qualities to the Blackwater Lightship which is destroyed in time can also be interpreted as Lily’s lost femininity after her husband’s death; she becomes alienated from her female nature as well as her maternal role. As she cannot come up with her own maternal subjectivity and fails in combining her businesswoman identity with her maternity, she exists in the symbolic only through her imposed identity. During her stay at Dora’s house, Lily’s rigid boundary separating the semiotic and the symbolic is also shattered as she has to face her maternal side at the sight of her son’s dying body. The positive change in Lily’s attitude becomes very clear towards the end of the novel, signalling the availability of her semiotic *chora*:

Declan shouted down the stairs for fresh underwear and clothes, which his mother went to get. Helen remained surprised, almost shocked, at the tone her mother had taken with her just now, which was instantly confiding and intimate. It was like tasting something not consumed since childhood, or smelling something not encountered for twenty years. It brought anxiety with it as much as reassurance. (189)

As the extract projects, Lily starts to behave like a concerned mother years later, which causes a mixture of “anxiety” and “reassurance” in Helen. Her ambivalent feelings towards her mother prove her fascination with the uncanny/the maternal *chora* from which she endeavours to keep herself away to maintain her borders in the symbolic. Helen’s journey into the maternal womb is twofold because her confrontation with her own (m)other also triggers another one with the maternal self. Helen is not different from her elders in terms of her practice of motherhood. For example, in the opening chapters of the novel, Helen’s relationship with her two sons unconsciously mimic her grandmother’s ways as she attributes an adult identity to Cathal while treating Manus like a baby (4-6). Later, Helen unexpectedly finds herself in her mother’s position; her brother is dying and she leaves her children behind to accompany Declan as did her mother during her father’s illness. Thus, the change in her own maternal subjectivity starts only after her exploration of the self at Dora’s house, which includes a continuous generation and negation process.

Helen’s despair over the situation and her double bind between Declan and her children paves the way to explore her mother’s subjectivity as well as her own performance as a mother:

For a moment, as she lay there in the night, she felt the glow of his [Hugh’s] love, and felt reassured that nothing that had happened to her was being passed on to her children. She resolved to think harder and pay more attention so that Cathal and Manus could feel secure in the world and feel none of the currents which went through her grandmother’s house now every moment of the day. (232)

Helen’s fears are understandable; however, she is also aware of her advantageous position stemming from Hugh’s existence. Certainly, Cathal and Manus’s situation is not the same with Helen and Declan’s on the grounds that Hugh accompanies the two at their grandparents’ house. He underlines his existence, saying: “I’m their father, I’m

with them. You're talking about them as though I don't exist. I'm looking out for them all day" (194). In this context, Hugh can be taken as Kristeva's imaginary father who enables the child's entrance into the symbolic. He is not a prototype for the strict and prohibiting Freudian father, but a loving one. He is an emotional support for Helen as well. Even though Tóibín excludes him from the main storyline in an attempt to foreground the importance of the maternal figure, the father/husband's positive existence can still be sensed through Helen's phone calls. In addition to performing his role as an imaginary father, Hugh encourages Helen to make peace with Lily in spite of the fact that Helen regards her as a threat against her family. Hugh's opinion as a new generation Irish man/father also proves the changing mentality in Irish society. Accordingly, the semiotic nature of the maternal is not regarded as the ultimate threat, but a component of the subject.

The novel comes closer to an end when the entire household except Dora leave the rural house in order to drive Declan to the hospital. Helen cannot decide whether or not to invite her grandmother to Dublin; in the end, "she knew that she would not ask her, that they would leave her grandmother here alone, fretting about her cats, her attitude as steely and direct as ever, but with a loneliness which had only been intensified and deepened by her visitors" (262). Their decision to leave Dora behind and her final portrayal as a lonely old woman can be read as the abjection of the primordial mother/Mother Ireland; however, it is not a premature and violent rupture, and it does not mean the total exclusion of the semiotic. As can be inferred from Kristeva's writings, the very beginning is situated in the maternal *chora* and all the speaking subjects emerge at the intersection of the semiotic and the symbolic. Therefore, Dora whose rural house embodies the maternal *chora* stands intact as her womb is ready to be explored forever. In this sense, the image of erosion approaching Dora's house is also important because it represents the dissolution of old beliefs and traditions in Ireland in Tóibín's literature (Corcoran 98). Nevertheless, erosion stops or slows down before destroying Dora's house, and as Helen thinks, "[n]o one knew why. Years earlier, it had seemed just a matter of time before her grandmother's house would fall into the sea, just as Mike Redmond's and Keatings' outhouse had done," (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 51). Metaphorically, it symbolises the persistence of the roots and the inevitable need for the

mother to achieve subjectivity. As appropriate to Tóibín's hidden political agenda, the exploration and negotiation with the mother, rather than her total exclusion from the social, is needed for Irish subjectivity.

Besides, her house standing on the border between the sea and the land – metaphorically, the womb and the social – re-emphasises Tóibín's favouring “ambiguity” rather than rigid identities (“New” 6). The border image is important in the new Irish fiction as it represents “the grey area where established narratives of identity and authenticity come under pressure, where the things which we use to differentiate self from other, past from present, presence from absence, are tested” (Smyth 144). Therefore, the children's re-union at Dora's house is a dynamic and required process, although the encounter with the abject figure can be both destructive and generative; only after all the negation and confrontation processes going on at Dora's house, can Lily and Helen come together and discover their own maternal subjectivities. In the end, “[y]our granny wears me out,” Lily says to Helen and adds, “and now that you and I are talking again I don't want to do that to you” (Tóibín, *Blackwater* 273). Lily's words can be considered the precursor of a revision of the traumatic past and a new understanding on motherhood.

As they are on their way to the hospital, Helen hears her mother singing an old Gaelic song in the back of the car for the first time in years: “. . . thin and shaky on high notes, it started softly as though Lily were nervously checking to see if she could still sing. Then it became louder and stronger. It was a song she used to sing at night when Helen and Declan were very young . . .” (264). In the quotation, the song becomes the strongest symbol of the maternal semiotic while Lily's increasing voice as Declan's sick body lies next to her can be interpreted as a form of elegy, an apology as well as an attempt for reconciliation with her children. When she finishes the first verse, she asks help from Helen and these two maternal figures, different in their subjectivities but the same in their semiotic essence, come together to finish the song (264). Lily's and Helen's explorations of their mother's semiotic *chora* and their own maternal semiotics promise the birth of a new Mother Ireland image, for which the old one must be studied, explored, and then abjected to form new subjectivities. Certainly, the whole scene must

be recorded as Declan's success. His border status as an Irish gay man and his act of self-sacrifice for a new Mother Ireland composed of different subjectivities is Tóibín's greatest subversion of the Revivalist myth that promotes young men's self-sacrifice for Mother Ireland as an act of heroism. In this respect, Tóibín's abject child challenges not only the hyper-masculine discourse of Ireland but also the domineering Mother Ireland image which is alienated from her own essence and re-constructed as an idealised "object of love" by the Irish symbolic.

CONCLUSION

Suffering from a loss of national identity under English colonialism, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish nationalists set out to search for the uncorrupted “essence” of Irish nation that differentiated the Irish from the English colonisers. To return to the Irish essence, the nationalists of the century used different tactics, including the revival of Irish language, the promotion of Gaelic culture or the employment of Catholic discourse to foreground the distinctive identity of the Irish. These initiatives ignited Irish nationalism that paved the way for independence; however, they could not produce a liberal Irish identity subverting the English coloniser’s gendered discourse. Modern and contemporary Irish writers have also adopted the same aim with the early nationalists and wanted to formulate a unique Irish identity, their understanding of “essence” and methods to reach this essence are different, though. While early nationalists used a masculine discourse extolling an iconic Mother Ireland that was an unreachable object of love, the contemporaries believe that they can return to the Irish “essence” only by discovering the subversive nature of the Irish mother that was abjected by the English coloniser. In this context, the “essence” stands for the maternal womb and the maternal body from which the Irish were alienated in the past. Using Kristeva’s theory of subjectivity that foregrounds the function of the mother, this dissertation has analysed the contemporary writers’ changing relationship with the “abject” mother after the formation of the Irish Republic, their search for proper parentage and challenge against the colonial past in the representative works and concluded that a functional family with an attainable mother figure and an imaginary father is a prerequisite for Irish identity-formation.

When the importance of parental figures in a child’s psychological development is considered, it can be claimed that Irish ancestors’ failure in their paternal roles stands in Irish children’s way to subjectivity on the microcosmic level. In a wider perspective, the dysfunctional Irish parents raised within the colonial culture block Irish nationalists’ search for an authentic “self” by entrapping them into a colonial discourse, because the

formation of “the self” requires a return to the Irish essence originated in the maternal body of Mother Ireland. As underlined by Walter, “nationalistic selfhood” can be discovered only in the semiotic *chora* that is associated with the maternal womb in Julia Kristeva’s theory of subjectivity (316). Starting with James Joyce in the twentieth century, many modern and contemporary Irish writers have exiled themselves from the Irish symbolic to explore and negotiate with their “abject” mothers just to initiate their own subjectivities in the maternal *chora*. Analysing Edna O’Brien’s *The Country Girls*, Patrick McCabe’s *Breakfast on Pluto* and Colm Tóibín’s *The Blackwater Lightship*, this dissertation has illustrated Irish writers’ endeavour to understand the unsuppressed nature of Irish mothers as each novel features an abject child who has difficulties in establishing his/her own subjectivity due to the lack of a functional family. Since the novels cover different time periods that record the historical and cultural development of post-independence Ireland, they project a gradual negotiation with the abject mother, which also paves the way for the progressive discovery of suppressed Irish subjectivities.

The Country Girls depicts the devastating influence of the Mother Ireland myth on young Irish women, their fear/dilemma in the face of the abject mother and failure in forming a separate self in the symbolic while *Breakfast on Pluto* concentrates on a transgender character who introduces an alternative figure to the virgin image of Mother Ireland at the cost of psychosis by staying isolated in his semiotic world. *The Blackwater Lightship* is different from these two novels as the political agenda is more stable and the effects of the colonial history on Irish people are diminishing. Thus, the main character does not blindly follow the idealised Mother Ireland image, but she is ready to explore the semiotic *chora*, negotiate with the abject mother and create a stable self in the symbolic, which promises a unique Irish identity liberated from the colonial discourse. Accordingly, these representative novels present Irish children’s journey into the self in parallel to the changing social and political conditions of Ireland. During their journeys, a functional Irish family with a real mother figure and an imaginary father appear as the basic need for abject children. Only after discovering the parental subjectivities lying beyond the colonial stereotypes, Irish children manage to establish an interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic, and form their own identities.

Set in the 1950s and 1960s, *The Country Girls* questions the narrow-minded Irish nationalism rooted in the nineteenth century, the gender roles defined by the Catholic Church as well as the long-term effects of colonialism on Irish identity amidst De Valera conservatism dominating rural Ireland. Caithleen's desperate attempts to mimic the unreal "virgin" image of her mother promoted by the agents of the symbolic drag her into psychosis, in the end. While she feels depressed due to her failure in her maternal role defined by patriarchy, her late encounter with the "abject" semiotic world of her own mother imposes an emotional burden on her shoulders as she cannot cope with the real image of her mother. The collapse of her mother's idealised image leaves her without a role model. Besides, she does not have an imaginary father that can establish her contact with the symbolic; thus, she sinks into the semiotic world and loses her contact with the symbolic. In the funeral scene of the novel that is told by Baba, Caithleen's ashes are scattered "between the bogs and the bog lakes and the murmuring waters" (O'Brien, *Country* 523). The imagery of water and the bog can be associated with the womb within the context of the dissertation, so her death can be interpreted as a return to the semiotic *chora* of her mother. Yet, her failure to abject the mother after exploring her semiotic realm ends her subjectivity and kills her. In the third novel of the trilogy, it is seen that Caithleen loses her position as the writer of her own story after losing her ability to create a meaning in the symbolic due to her nervous breakdown. Therefore, her loss of the signifying power that requires an interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic causes her downfall. Meanwhile, Baba who is more courageous to follow up her instincts and her subjective desires ends the novel by recording Caithleen's last days. Although Baba is another abject figure who cannot form her subjectivity, her last-minute attempt to end Caithleen's story symbolises Irish women's everlasting struggle for the self. The problem is that the social and political atmosphere in the 1950s and 60s' Ireland cannot fulfill the necessary conditions for a liberal Ireland that is free from colonial impositions.

McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* tells Patrick Braden's escape from rural Ireland in search for a self. Braden, just like Caithleen and Baba, is an abject child with a dysfunctional family and suffers from a lack of proper parentage. As the illegitimate child of a young

girl raped by a church father, Braden hates his father representing the coloniser and craves for a pre-Oedipal union with the mother. Different from Caithleen and Baba, Braden never knows his real mother, so motherhood is a blank area which he can design in line with his imagination. And his already-bject status as a transsexual person in patriarchal Irish society helps Braden use the semiotic power of the abject to fill up the blank area. Using the creative power of the semiotic, Braden produces a dream mother modelled on his favourite actress Mitzi Gaynor as an alternative to the Mother Ireland image. The irony is that Braden turns his dream mother into an unreachable object of fantasy by following in the footsteps of Irish nationalists. In this respect, his blind pursuit for an idealised mother echoes the impossible pursuit of the Irish nationalists and results with psychosis due to his lack of a proper father figure.

Unlike the Irish nationalists who resisted against the coloniser father, the abject children of O'Brien's and McCabe's novels are trying to substitute a loving father for their brutal fathers, which can be interpreted as an attempt at establishing the self in the symbolic. Kristeva draws attention to the importance of the imaginary father in the subjectivity process and claims that he must support the infant to step into the symbolic by showing his love. In both novels, the characters' travel to London – the paternal sphere in colonial terms – can be interpreted as their desire for a paternal recognition. Nevertheless, the children are rejected and humiliated by the father in both cases and return to the maternal womb in despair without completing the abjection process. In Caithleen's case, Eugene who is associated with the coloniser approaches Caithleen as an exotic body to be exploited. Meanwhile, Dr Terence uses a similar colonial discourse and relates Braden's psychological problems with his Irish lineage. The act of writing is also important in both novels, because as Kristeva claims, writing is the only way to resurrect for the abject (*Powers* 26). Writing constitutes an important part of Caithleen's and Braden's psychological developments, since forming sentences by using syntax and grammar rules requires an imaginary father who establishes the link between the semiotic and the symbolic. However, Caithleen and Braden know neither their mothers' subjectivities rooted in the semiotic nor their imaginary fathers who represent "the mother's love" (Oliver, *Reading* 70). Therefore, both characters make wrong choices to substitute their absent fathers. Caithleen's act of writing ends when Eugene – both a

husband and a father figure – forsakes her, and Braden’s writings cannot reach any readers in the symbolic, although he starts to write through Dr Terence’s encouragement. In this respect, Eugene and Dr Terence fail in fulfilling the role of Kristeva’s imaginary father as both adopt a humiliating and hostile attitude towards their partners at the end of their relationships. Thus, Caitheleen and Braden are silenced and their subjective voices cannot find the necessary support from the symbolic. Still, as opposed to Caitheleen’s suicide, Braden’s story ends with his optimistic dream where he gives birth to a healthy boy, signalling his ongoing hope for paternal recognition.

Tóibín’s *The Blackwater Lightship* concentrates on abject Irish children’s eventual encounter with the abject (m)other. Dora’s rural house representing the maternal womb undertakes a unifying and protective role as all the children return to it to restore their past mistakes under the shadow of Declan’s deteriorating health. As opposed to Caitheleen and Braden, Tóibín’s characters do not migrate to Dublin or London in search for a self. Instead, his abject children’s move is towards rural Ireland that was regarded as the essence of Irishness by the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century nationalists. In this respect, the children’s movement to Dora representing Mother Ireland paves the way for Tóibín’s revisionist project of challenging the Mother Ireland myth that restricts Irish subjectivity. Tóibín is aware of the importance of national roots for one’s subjectivity and believes that healing comes through Irish children’s peace with the abject mother. During their visit, Dora, Lily and Helen have a chance to question each other and to understand the individual reasons for the past mistakes; in this way, they go into the depths of maternal subjectivity and the mother’s semiotic *chora*. While the narrative evolves, the Irish mother gets a tangible existence, getting rid of her divine existence. As a result, her children can explore, confront and then abject her in a healthy process, without turning her into the Freudian lost object of love. Through Dora, Tóibín draws a new portrayal for an Irish mother. Representing the changing face of Ireland, Dora opens the doors of her house to abject figures like Declan and his gay friends without judging them. Allegorically, her rural house represents the heterogeneous maternal body covering the other inside and proves that the essence of Irishness rooted in the semiotic *chora* is a tolerant, multicultural, dynamic (open to change) and encompassing place in contrast with the paternal symbolic defined by rigid rules and stability. Besides,

different from O'Brien and McCabe, Tóibín excludes the father from the text and dominates his story with maternal figures in order to give voice to “real” Irish mothers. The only father character is Hugh and he is not a vulgar father figure oppressed by the colonising father, but a neo-nationalist whose Irish identity is in harmony with the changing social conditions. Through his tender character, he also fulfills the role of an imaginary father and encourages Helen to make peace with her mother; in other words, he supports her exploration of the semiotic *chora* which is necessary for her identity in the symbolic.

Time periods of the novels must be discussed as the main reason for the change in the mother-child relationships as well as in the portrayals of mother and father figures. *The Country Girls* coincides the post-war Éamon de Valera period when a monophonic Irish identity evolving around Catholic conservatism dominates the country. During these early years of the Irish Republic, gender roles are well-defined in line with the Church and the image of Mother Ireland sets the role model for Irish women, restricting their subjectivity. Therefore, the 1950s cannot prepare the necessary conditions for a confrontation with the “abject” mother. On the other hand, *Breakfast on Pluto* is set against the backdrop of the Troubles (1968-98) when Catholic Irish nationalism is increasing its violence, especially in Northern Ireland. Throughout his story, Braden associates manhood with the IRA nationalists as well as the English police, and contrasts his own “feminine” and “semiotic” worldview with their aggressive “masculine” one. Nevertheless, in the world where Irish nationalists use hyper-masculinity as a weapon in their attack against the colonising father, Braden’s hybrid “feminine” existence can find a place neither in English nor in Irish society. In this context, he wages his war against the patriarchal mentality which is also the core of colonialist arguments. In parallel to Braden’s transsexual identity pushing the boundaries and his search for the self, the Troubles is a transgressive period; it witnesses increasing violence in the streets, mass attacks and political turmoil because of the political rivalry between the colonising English and the colonised Ireland. In other words, the clash between the Irish and the English is parallel to the rivalry between Braden and his father. Allegorically, Ireland is searching for a mother and paternal recognition just like Braden although the process is difficult and painful. As an

allegory, Braden-the-mother and his baby represent his hope for a new Ireland. Braden's time covering the 1970s promises a change, because the old values clash with the new ones while postmodern arguments subvert all the dichotomies like man/woman, centre/margin and fact/fiction by pushing the limits of the rigid definitions of identity, culture and history.

Embodying transgression through his transgender identity, Braden believes that peace can be found in heterogeneous bodies that cover the other inside, so he dreams of a new Mother Ireland in harmony with her semiotic maternal womb, the mother still remains absent, though. *The Blackwater Lightship* is set during the 1990s Ireland where Mary Robinson rules as the first female president, improving Irish economy known as "Celtic Tiger" boost hopes and societal transformation takes place as a result of urbanisation. In parallel to the changing conditions of the country, women characters are in the foreground in Tóibín's novel and they are ready to encounter their "abject" mothers as well as their "abject" selves in their journey into the semiotic *chora*. Helen's encounter with Dora and Lily enables her to explore the maternal body and then, to abject the mother in Kristevan pattern, rather than in a moment of rupture. In this way, Helen heals her past wounds, familiarises herself with her "abject" mother as well as her "abject" self. In the end, she attempts to reconstruct a more stable and subjective identity in the symbolic. Her final duet with her mother in a Gaelic song symbolises not only Helen's, but all Irish children's reconciliation with their motherland.

In conclusion, the socio-political background has been regarded as an important factor in the Irish child's identity-formation process throughout the dissertation, and thus Ireland's contemporary situation with an emphasis on its new understanding of motherhood and its revolutionary approach to the gender issue must be taken into consideration in the future studies on Irish identity. When Ireland's socio-political development since the establishment of the Free State is considered, it is evident that Ireland has forged ahead in terms of women's position in society especially after Robinson's election. Besides, as emphasised in her address entitled "Cherishing the Irish Diaspora" that was delivered at the Irish Parliament in 1995, Robinson's policies favoured multiculturalism and diaspora identities. In this respect, her approach

introduced a new perspective on the definition of “Irishness.” Today, Leo Varadkar who is the son of an Indian father and an Irish mother is expected to become the next and the first gay Irish prime minister. His queer and hybrid identity covering the other inside boosts the hopes for a more liberal and diverse Ireland in the following years while his election to the seat surely represents the changing mentality of Irish citizens in the 2010s. Although Irish people are still confronting some difficult issues like the constitutional law restricting abortion, housing problems or the possible adverse effects of Brexit on Ireland, it seems that the country will continue its improvement in its social, cultural and economic fields, which will solidify Ireland’s position in the world and encourage the development of new Irish identities as represented in the literary works studied within the context of the dissertation. If “Irishness” that was once established on a rigid gendered discourse frees itself from the colonial influence, abject children of Ireland can find a place for themselves in a more inclusive society and restore their abject status.

WORKS CITED

Primary Sources

McCabe, Patrick. *Breakfast on Pluto*. Oxford: Picador, 1998. Print.

O'Brien, Edna. *The Country Girls*. 1960. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1986. Print.

---. "Edna O'Brien." Interview by Shusha Guppy. *The Art of Fiction* 82 (1984): 21-39. Web. 2 June 2016.

---. *Mother Ireland: A Memoir*. 1976. London: Penguin, 1978. Print.

Tóibín, Colm. *The Blackwater Lightship*. 1999. New York: Scribner, 2001. Print.

---. "Martyrs and Metaphors." *Martyrs and Metaphors*. Dublin: Raven Arts Press, 1987. 5-20. Print.

---. "New Ways of Killing Your Father." *London Review of Books* 15.22 (1993): 3-6. Web. 1 Sep. 2016.

---. "What the epaulets were for." *The Dublin Review* 12 (Autumn 2003): 107-27. Web. 20 May 2016.

Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Ed. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1980. Print.

---. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1982. Print.

- . *Revolution in Poetic Language*. 1974. Trans. Margaret Waller. New York: Columbia UP, 1984. Print.
- . *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis*. 1996. Trans. Jeanine Herman. Vol.1. New York: Columbia UP, 2000. Print.
- . "Stabat Mater." *Poetics Today* 6.1-2 (1985):133-52. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. *JSTOR*. Web. 3 Feb.2016.
- . "The Subject in Process." *Tel Quel Reader*. Eds. Patrick French and Roland François-Lack. New York: Routledge, 1998. 133-178. Print.
- . *Tales of Love*. 1983. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1987. Print.
- . "Women's Time." 1979. Trans. Alice Jardine and Harry Blake. *Signs* 7.1 (1981): 13-35. *JSTOR*. Web. 3 May 2015.

Secondary Sources

- Adelman, Paul. *Great Britain and the Irish Question:1800-1922*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996. Print.
- Agathangelou, Anna M. and Ling, L. H. M. *Transforming World Politics: From Empire to Multiple Worlds*. New York: Routledge, 2009. *Googlebooks*. Web. 21 July 2016.
- Arnold, Matthew. "On the Study of Celtic Literature." 1867. *Online Books Library Upenn*. Web. 10 Dec. 2014.

- Banerjee, Sikata. *Muscular Nationalism: Gender, Violence and Empire in India and Ireland, 1914-2004*. New York: New York UP, 2012. *ProQuest ebrary*. Web. 19 Oct. 2015.
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009. Print.
- Beardsworth, Sara. *Julia Kristeva: Psychoanalysis and Modernity*. New York: SUNY Press, 2004. Print.
- “Biography.” *Colm Tóibín*. Web. 1 Apr. 2016.
- “Blood Sacrifice.” *BBC History*. 22 Sept. 2014. Web. 24 Dec. 2015.
- Brown, Terence. *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922 to the Present*. London: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Buchanan, Jason. “‘The First Few Steps’: Gender and Forgiveness in Patrick McCabe’s Breakfast on Pluto.” *Irish Studies: Geographies and Gender*. Eds. Marti D. Lee and Ed Madden. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 69-76. Print.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex.”* New York and London: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- . “The Body Politics of Julia Kristeva.” *Hypatia* 3 (1989): 104-118. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Jan. 2015
- Byrne, F.J. “Early Irish Society: 1st-9th Century.” *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F.X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 25-40. Print.

- Byron, Kristine. “ ‘In the Name of the Mother...’: The Epilogue of Edna O’Brien’s *Country Girls Trilogy*.” *Women’s Studies* 31.4 (2002): 447- 65. *Taylor & Francis*. Web. 8 Feb. 2016.
- Cahalan, James M. “Female and Male Perspectives on Growing Up Irish.” *Double Visions: Women and Men in Modern and Contemporary Irish Fiction*. New York: Syracuse UP, 1999. 105-35. Print.
- Cains, David and Shaun Richards. *Writing Ireland: colonialism, nationalism and culture*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988. Print.
- Canny, Nicholas. “Early Modern Ireland, c.1500-1700.” *The Oxford History of Ireland*. Ed. R. F. Foster. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989. 88-133. Print.
- Chadwick, Joseph. “Family Romance as as National Allegory in Yeats’s *Cathleen ni Houlihan* and *The Dreaming of the Bones*.” *Twentieth Century Literature* 32.2 (1986): 155-68. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Sep. 2014.
- Cixous, Hélène. “The Laugh of the Medusa.” *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Eds. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1993. 334-49. Print.
- “Constitution of Ireland.” 1937. *Irish Statute Book*. Web. 1 Nov. 2015.
- Corcoran, Neil. *After Yeats and Joyce: Reading Modern Irish Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997. Print.
- Cosgrove, Art. “The Gaelic Resurgence and the Geraldine Supremacy: c.1400-1534.” *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T.W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 125-38. Print.

- Costello-Sullivan, Kathleen. Introduction. *Mother/Country: Politics of the Personal in the Fiction of Colm Tóibín*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2012. 1-33. Print.
- Curtis, L.P. *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1971. Print.
- Davis, Richard W. "The House of Lords, the Whigs and Catholic Emancipation 1806–1829." *Parliamentary History* 18.1 (March 1999): 23–43. Print.
- Deane, Seamus. *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature, 1880-1980*. London: Faber and Faber, 1985. Print.
- . "Heroic Styles: The Tradition of an Idea." *Field Day Pamphlets 4* Derry: Field Day, 1984. Web. 15 Feb. 2015.
- . Introduction. *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*. Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward Said. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1990. *ProQuest ebrary*. Web. 23 March 2016.
- . "Yeats and the Idea of Revolution." *Yeats's Political Identities: Selected Essays*. Ed. Jonathan Allison. Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 1996. 133-44. Web. 11 Jan. 2016.
- Delaney, Paul, ed. Introduction. *Reading Colm Tóibín*. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2008. 1-20. Print.
- De Paor, Liam. "The Age of the Vikings: Wars 9th and 10th Centuries." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T.W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 67-80. Print.
- D'Erasmus, Stacey. "About Colm Tóibín." *Ploughshares* 37.1 (Spring 2011): 165-68. *Project Muse*. Web. 1 Apr. 2016.

- Dunn, Nell. "Edna O'Brien." *Talking to Women*. London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1965. 69-107. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. "Mothering." *London Review of Books* 21.20 (1999): 8. 14 Oct. 1999. Web. 1 Sept. 2016.
- Eckley, Grace. *Edna O'Brien*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1974. Print.
- Edwards, Ruth B. *Discovering John: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2015. *Googlebooks*. Web. 2 Feb. 2016.
- Fogarty, Anne. "After Oedipus? Mothers and Sons in the Fiction of Colm Tóibín." *Reading Colm Tóibín*. Ed. Paul Delaney. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2008. 167-82. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its Discontents*. 1930. Trans. David McLintock. London: Penguin Books, 2002. Print.
- . "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex." 1924. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 19. London: Hogarth, 1961. 172-79. Print.
- . "Female Sexuality." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 21. London: Hogarth Press 1961. 223-243. Print.
- . *Interpretation of Dreams*. 1899. Trans. A. A. Brill. New York: Macmillan, 1918. Web. 3 Apr. 2015.
- . *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. 1917. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1977. Print.

- . *Totem and Taboo and Other Works*. 1913. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 13. London: Hogarth, 1955. 1-161. Print.
- Gambaudo, Sylvie. *Kristeva, Psychoanalysis and Culture: Subjectivity in Crisis*. London: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Green, E. R. R. "The Great Famine: 1845-50." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 218-27. Print.
- Greenwood, Amanda. *Edna O'Brien*. Devon: Northcote House Publishers, 2003. Print.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. "The Body of Signification." *Abjection, Melancholia, And Love*. Eds. John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin. London: Routledge, 1989. 80-103. Print
- . *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1994. Print.
- Hachey, Thomas E., et al. *The Irish Experience: A Concise History*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1996. Print.
- Hahn, Daniel. "Patrick McCabe." *British Council: Literature*. 2002. Web. 1 May 2016.
- Hargreaves, Tamsin. "Women's Consciousness and Identity in Four Irish Women Novelists." *Cultural Contexts and Literary Idioms in Contemporary Irish Literature*. Ed. Michael Kenneally. Totowa: NJ, 1988. 290-305. Print.
- Hayes-McCoy, G.A. "The Tudor Conquest: 1534-1603." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 139-51. Print.

- Henke, Suzette A. Introduction. "Defusing the Patriarchal Can(n)on." *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire*. Oxon: Routledge, 2016. 1-11. Print.
- Hirsch, Edward. "The Imaginary Irish Peasant." *PMLA* 106. 5 (1991): 1116-33. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Apr. 2015.
- Howe, Stephen. *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.
- Hughes Kernsnowski, Alice, editor. Chronology. *Conversations with Edna O'Brien*. Mississippi: Mississippi UP, 2014. xvii-xii. Print.
- Hutchinson, John. *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1987. Print.
- Imhof, Rüdiger. "Patrick McCabe." *The Modern Irish Novel: Irish Novelists after 1945*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 2002. 287-98. Print.
- Ingman, Heather. *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women: Nation and Gender*. Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Innes, Catherine Lynette. *Woman and Nation in Irish Literature and Society, 1880-1935*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993. Print.
- Jacquette, Kathleen. "Edna O'Brien." *Catholic Women Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*. Ed. Mary Reichardt. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001. 267-74. Print.
- "James II (1633-1701)." *BBC History*. Web. 10 Oct. 2015.
- Jeffers, Jennifer M. *The Irish Novel at the End of the Twentieth Century: Gender, Bodies, and Power*. New York: Palgrave, 2002. Print.

- Johnson, Paul. *Ireland: A History from the Twelfth Century to the Present Day*, Chicago: Academy Chicago, 2005. *ProQuest ebrary*. Web. 22 Oct. 2015.
- Johnston, Adrian. "Jacques Lacan." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. Edward N. Zalta. 2 Apr. 2013. Web. 4 Feb. 2016.
- Jones, Ernest. "The Island of Ireland: A Psycho-Analytical Contribution to Political Psychology." 1922. *Essays in Applied Psycho-analysis*. London: The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1923. *Archive.org*. Web. 15 Dec. 2015.
- Joyce, James. Letters. *The Complete Works: Novels, Short Stories, Plays, Poetry, Essays & Letters*. 2016. *Google books*. Web. 9 Jun. 2016.
- . "A Mother." *Dubliners*. 1914. London: Harper Collins, 2011. Print.
- . *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. 1916. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- . *Ulysses*. 1922. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- Kearney, Hugh F. *Ireland: Contested Ideas of Nationalism and History*. New York: New York UP, 2007. Print.
- Kearney, Richard. *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Kennedy, Finola. *Cottage to Crèche: Family Change in Ireland*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2001. Print.
- Kenny, Michael, *The Fenians: Photographs and Memorabilia from the National Museum of Ireland*. Dublin: Country House, 1994. Print.

- Kiberd, Declan. "Fathers and Sons: Irish-Style." *Irish Literature and Culture*. Ed. Michael Kenneally. Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1992. 127-43. Print.
- . "Growing Up Absurd: Edna O'Brien and *The Country Girls*." *Irish Studies in Brazil*. Eds. Munira H. Mutran and Laura P. Z. Izarra. Sao Paulo: Associação Editorial Humanitas, 2005. 143-62. Web. 10 May 2016.
- . Introduction. *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. 1995. Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2002. 1-7. Print.
- . "Irish Literature and Irish History." *The Oxford History of Ireland*. Ed. R. F. Foster. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992. 230-80. Print.
- Kilfeather, Siobhán. "The Gothic Novel." *The Cambridge Companion to the Irish Novel*. Ed. John Wilson Foster. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. 78-96. Print.
- Killeen, Richard. *Short History of Modern Ireland*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2003. *ProQuest ebrary*. Web. 19 Oct. 2015.
- Klein, Melanie. "The Psychological Principles of Early Analysis." 1926. *Love, Guilt and Reparation and other works 1921-1945*. London: Vintage, 1998. Print.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis." 1948. *Écrits*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002. 82-101. Print.
- . *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*. 1973. New York: Norton, 1978. Print.
- . "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis." 1953. *Écrits*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002. 197-268. Print.

- . "God and the Jouissance of the Woman." *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*. Eds. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose. London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985. 137-61. Print.
- . "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud." 1957. *Écrits*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002. 412-44. Print.
- . "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function." 1949. *Écrits*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002. 75-81. Print.
- Lacey, Colin. "Patrick McCabe: A Comedy of Horrors." *Publishers Weekly* 245.46 (1998): 50-1. *Ebscohost*. Web. 5 Aug. 2016.
- Lechte, John. "Art, Love, and Melancholy in the Work of Julia Kristeva." *Abjection, Melancholia, and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva*. Eds. John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin. London: Routledge, 1990. 24-41. Print.
- Ledwidge, Grace Tighe. "'What ish my nation?': Nationalism and neo-nationalism in the novels of Colm Tóibín." *Cultural Identity Studies*. Eds. Irene Gilsenan Nordin and Carmen Zamorano Llena. Vol. 12. Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2010. *ProQuest ebrary*. Web. 25 Dec. 2014.
- Lehner, Stefanie. "Feminine Futures?: Gender Trouble in the Postcolonial ImagiNation." *Subaltern Ethics in Contemporary Scottish and Irish Literature: Tracing Counter-Histories*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 154-84. Print.
- Lennon, Joseph. *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History*. New York: Syracuse UP, 2008. Print.

- Lloyd, David. *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993. Print.
- Lydon, J. F. "The Medieval English Colony: 13th and 14th Centuries." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 113-24. Print.
- Lynch, Patrick. "The Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland: 1921-66." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T.W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 272-87. Print.
- Mac Cana, Proinsias. "Women in Irish Mythology." *The Crane Bag* 4.1 (1980): 7-11. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 Feb. 2015.
- Mac Laughlin, Jim. *Reimagining the Nation State: The Contested Terrains of Nation Building*. London: Pluto Press, 2000. *ProQuest*. Web. 19 Oct. 2015.
- MacLeod, Sharon P. *The Divine Feminine in Ancient Europe: Goddesses, Sacred Women and the Origins of Western Culture*. London: McFarland & Co., 2014. Print.
- Maher, Eamon. "Irish Sexuality during the 1960s and 70s." *Doctrine and Life* 62.2 (2012): 48-56. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Aug. 2016.
- Mahony, Christina Hunt. *Contemporary Irish Literature: Transforming Tradition*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Print.
- Mansouri, Shahriyar. "The modern Irish Bildungsroman: a narrative of resistance and deformation." Diss. University of Glasgow, 2014. Web. 10 Jun. 2017.
- Marcus, P. "The Celtic Revival." *The Irish World*. Ed. Brian De Breffny. London: Thames & Hudson, 1977. 199-225. Print.

- Margaroni, Maria. “ ‘The Lost Foundation’: Kristeva’s Semiotic Chora and Its Ambiguous Legacy.” *Hypatia* 20.1 (2005): 78-98. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 Nov. 2015.
- . “The Semiotic Revolution: Lost Causes, Uncomfortable Reminders, Binding Futures.” *Julia Kristeva: Live Theory*. Eds. John Lechte and Maria Margaroni. London: Continuum, 2004. Print.
- Martin, F. X. “The Normans: Arrival and Settlement: 1169-c.1300.” *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 95-112. Print.
- Mayer, Tamer, ed. “Gender, Ironies of Nationalism: Setting the Stage.” *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. 1-24. Print.
- Mays, Michael. “Cultural Nationalism and Irish Modernism.” *A Companion to Irish Literature*. Ed. Julia M. Wright. Vol. 2. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 19-35. Print.
- . *Nation States: the Cultures of Irish Nationalism*. Lanham: Lexington, 2007. Print.
- McCaffrey, Lawrence J. “Components of Irish Nationalism.” *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism*. Eds. Thomas E. Hachey and Lawrence J. McCaffrey. Kentucky: Kentucky UP, 1989. 1-19. Print.
- McCartney, Donal. “From Parnell to Pearse: 1891-1921.” *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 245-61. Print.
- McCrum, Robert. “Deep Down in the Woods.” *The Observer*. 28 Apr. 2002. Web. 30 May 2016.

- McDonald, Rónán. "Nothing to Be Done: Masculinity and the Emergence of Irish Modernism." *Modernism and Masculinity*. Eds. Natalya Lusty and Julian Murphet. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014. 71-86. Print.
- McDowell, R. B. "The Protestant Nation: 1775-1800." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 190-203. Print.
- McNabb, P. "Social Structure." *The Limerick Rural Survey, 1958-64*. Ed. Jeremiah Newman. Tipperary: Muintir na Tíre, 1964. 193-247. Print.
- McWilliams, Ellen. "Madness and Mother Ireland in the Fiction of Patrick McCabe." *Irish Studies Review* 18.4: 391-400. Print.
- Michel, Frann. "All Women Are Not Women All: Ladies Almanack and Feminine Writing." *Silence and Power: A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes*. Ed. Mary Lynn. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1991. Print.
- Mitchell, G.F. "Prehistoric Ireland." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 13-24. Print.
- Moane, Geraldine. "Colonialism and the Celtic Tiger: Legacies of History and the Quest for Vision." *Reinventing Ireland: Culture, Society and the Global Economy*. Peadar Kirby, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin, eds. Virginia: Pluto Press, 2002. 109-23. Print.
- Moi, Toril. *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Monaghan, Patricia. *Red-Haired Girl from the Bog: The Landscape of Celtic Myth and Spirit*. Novato: New World Library, 2003. Print.

- Moody, T. W. "Fenianism, Home Rule and the Land War: 1850-91." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 228-44. Print.
- Moran, Sean Farrell. *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption: The Mind of the Easter Rising*. Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1994. Print.
- Nelson, Bruce. *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2012. Print.
- Ni Dhomhnaill, Nuala. "Why I Choose to Write in Irish, the Corpse That Sits up and Talks Back." *Representing Ireland: Gender, Class, Nationality*. Ed. Susan Shaw Sailer. Gainesville: Florida UP, 1997. 45-56. Print.
- Nolan, Emer. *James Joyce and Nationalism*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- O'Connor, Maureen. "The Mythopoeic Ireland of Edna O'Brien's Fiction." *A Companion to Irish Literature*. Ed. Julia M. Wright. Vol. 2. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 209-23. Print.
- Oliver, Kelly. "Julia Kristeva's Feminist Revolutions." *Hypatia* 8.3 (1993): 94-114. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Feb. 2016.
- . "Kristeva's Imaginary Father and the Crisis in the Paternal Function." *Diacritics* 21. 2/3 (1991): 43-63. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Feb. 2016.
- . *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-bind*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993. Print.
- O'Mahony, John. "King of Bog Gothic." *The Guardian*. 30 Aug. 2003. Web. 1 Aug. 2016.

- Ó Cuív, Brian. "Ireland in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: c.1000-1169." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 81-94. Print.
- Ó Gnímh, Fear Flatha. "The Flight of the Earls." *The Plantation of Ulster*. BBC History. Web. 2 Nov. 2015.
- Pearse, Patrick. "The Mother." *Irish Writing: An Anthology of Irish Literature in English 1789-1939*. Ed. Stephen Regan. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. 393-94. Print.
- . "The Spiritual Nation." 1916. *Collected Works of Padraic H. Pearse*. Eire-Gael Society, 2013. 158-76. Print.
- Peterson, Shirley. "'Meniacs' and Martyrs: Sadomasochistic Desire in O'Brien's *The Country Girls* Trilogy." *Edna O'Brien: New Critical Perspectives*. Kathryn Laing, Sinead Mooney and Maureen O'Connor, eds. Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2006. 151-69. Print.
- Plato. *Timaeus*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. 1998. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 18 May 2016.
- Post, Tyler. "Mourning Mothers: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Parental Relationships in Colm Tóibín's *Mothers and Sons*." *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 13.2 (2014): 123-44. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 June 2016.
- Pramaggiore, Maria. "Unmastered Subjects: Identity as Fabrication in Joseph Strick's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*." *James Joyce and the Fabrication of Irish Identity*. Ed. Michael Patrick Gillespie. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001. 52-70. *Googlebooks*. Web. 30 Ap. 2016.
- Quinn, Kathleen A. "Re-visioning the Goddess: Drama, Women, and Empowerment." *Ritual Remembering: History, Myth and Politics in Anglo-Irish Drama*. Eds. C. C. Barfoot and Rias van den Doel. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995. 181-89. Print.

- Raine, Kathleen. *Yeats the Initiate: Essays on Certain Themes in the Work of W. B. Yeats*. Maryland: Barnes & Noble, 1990. *Googlebooks*. Web. 8 Jun. 2016.
- Ranelagh, John O'Beirne. *A Short History of Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. Print.
- Rickard, John. *Joyce's Book of Memory: The Mnemotechnic of Ulysses*. Durham: Duke UP, 1999. Print.
- . "Studying a New Science: Yeats, Irishness, and the East." *Representing Ireland: Gender, Class, Nationality*. Ed. Susan Shaw Sailer. Gainesville: Florida UP, 1997. 94-112. Print.
- Roth, Philip. "A Conversation with Edna O'Brien." 18 Nov. 1984. *New York Times Book Review*. Web. 30 May 2016.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. 1978. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995. Print.
- Salmon, Mary. "Edna O'Brien." *Contemporary Irish Novelists*. Ed. Rüdiger Imhof. Tübingen: Narr, 1990. 143-58. Print.
- Smith, Patricia Juliana, ed. Introduction. *The Queer Sixties*. New York: Routledge, 1999. xi-xxvi. *Googlebooks*. Web. 2 June 2016.
- Smyth, Gerry. *The Novel and the Nation: Studies in the New Irish Fiction*. London: Pluto Press, 1997. Print.
- Spenser, Edmund. "A View of the Present State of Ireland." 1596. *The Works of Spenser*. Vol. 6. London: J. and R. Tonson, 1750. *Googlebooks*. Web. 6 Dec. 2015.

- Stevens, Lorna and Stephen Brown. "Gender, Nationality and Cultural Representations of Ireland: An Irish Woman's Place?" *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 7 (2000): 405-21. Print.
- Stubbings, Diane. *Anglo-Irish Modernism and the Maternal: From Yeats to Joyce*. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000.
- Summers-Bremner, Eluned. "'The Vacant Room': Afflictions of Memory in Edna O'Brien." *SKASE Journal of Literary Studies* 2.1 (2010): 2-18. Web. 9 Jan. 2016.
- Tonge, Jonathan. *Northern Ireland: Conflict and Change*. London: Prentice Hall, 1998. Print.
- Turkle, Sherry. *Psychoanalytical Politics: Freud's French Revolution*. London: Burnett, 1979. Print.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Valente, Joseph. "Introduction: The Double Bind of Irish Manhood." *Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922*. Urbana: Illinois UP, 2010. 1-25. *ProQuest ebrary*. Web. 14 Oct. 2015.
- Valiulis, Maryann. "Neither Feminist nor Flapper: the Ecclesiastical Construction of the Ideal Irish Woman." *Chattel, Servant or Citizen: Women's Status in Church, State, Society*. Eds. Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert. Belfast: The Institute of Irish Studies, 1995. 168-78. Print.

- Viefhues-Bailey, Ludger H. *Beyond the Philosopher's Fear: A Cavellian Reading of Gender, Origin and Religion in Modern Skepticism*. Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.
- Wall, Maureen. "The Age of the Penal Laws: 1691-1778." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 176-189. Print.
- Walter, Katharina. "From Aisling to Chora: Female Allegories of the Nation in Contemporary Irish Women's Poetry." *Irish Studies Review* 21.3 (2013): 313-25. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Feb. 2015.
- Warner, Marina. *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.
- Whelan, Kevin. "The Revisionist Debate in Ireland." *Boundary 2* 31.1 (2004): 179-205. Print.
- Whyte, J. H. "The Age of Daniel O'Connell: 1800-47." *The Course of Irish History*. Eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin. Dublin: Mercier, 2001. 204-17. Print.
- "Wolfe, Tone." *Ireland-information*. Web. 15 Oct. 2015.
- Wright, Julia M, ed. Introduction. *A Companion to Irish Literature*. Vol. 1 Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2010. 1-14. Print.
- Yeats, W. B. "Cathleen ni Houlihan." 1902. *The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. 211-20. Print.
- . "Deirdre." 1907. *The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. 221-45. Print.
- . "To Ireland in the Coming Times." 1893. *The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. 25-6. Print

Yebra, Jose M. "The Interstitial Status of Irish Gayness in Colm Tóibín's *The Blackwater Lightship* and *The Master*." *Estudios Irlandeses* 9 (2014): 96-106. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Oct. 2016.

Ziarek, Ewa. "At the Limits of Discourse: Heterogeneity, Alterity, and the Maternal Body in Kristeva's Thought." *Hypatia* 7. 2 (1992): 91-105. Print.

APPX. 1:

ORIGINALITY REPORTS

 <p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU</p>	
<p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA</p>	
Tarih: 04/07/2017	
<p>Tez Başlığı / Konusu: İrlandalı Aileyi Kristeva Perspektifinden Okumak: Edna O'Brien'in <i>Kasaba Kızları</i>, Patrick McCabe'in <i>Plüton'da Kahvaltı</i> ve Colm Tóibín'in <i>Denizfenerindeki Işık</i> Romanlarında Kayıp Ana-Babalar, Abjekt Çocuklar ve Melankoli</p>	
<p>Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 186 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 04/07/2017 tarihinde tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orjinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 16'dır.</p>	
<p>Uygulanan filtrelemeler:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç, 2- Kaynakça hariç 3- Alıntılar dahil 4- 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç 	
<p>Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orjinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.</p>	
<p>Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.</p>	
Tarih ve İmza	
<p>Adı Soyadı: Kübra KANGÜLEÇ COŞKUN</p> <p>Öğrenci No: N11244543</p> <p>Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı</p> <p>Programı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı</p> <p>Statusü: <input type="checkbox"/> Y.Lisans <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doktora <input type="checkbox"/> Bütünleşik Dr.</p>	<p>04.07.2017</p> 
<p>DANIŞMAN ONAYI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">UYGUNDUR.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Prof. Dr. Aytül ÖZÜM</p>	



**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT**

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Date: 04 /07 /2017

Thesis Title / Topic: Reading the Irish Family From Kristeva's Perspective: Lost Parents, Abject Children and Melancholy in Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls*, Patrick McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* and Colm Tóibín's *The Blackwater Lightship*

According to the originality report obtained by my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 04/07/2017 for the total of 186 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is 16 %.

Filtering options applied:

1. Approval and Declaration sections excluded
2. Bibliography/Works Cited excluded
3. Quotes included
4. Match size up to 5 words excluded

I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Name Surname: Kübra KANGÜLEÇ COŞKUN
Student No: N11244543
Department: English Language and Literature
Program: English Language and Literature
Status: Masters Ph.D. Integrated Ph.D.

Date and Signature

04/07/2017


ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Prof. Dr. Aytül ÖZÜM

APPX. 2:

ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK

 <p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KURUL İZİN MUAFİYETİ FORMU</p>	
<p>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANADİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA</p>	
Tarih: 06/06/2017	
<p>Tez Başlığı / Konusu: İrlandalı Aileyi Kristeva Perspektifinden Okunak: Edna O'Brien'in <i>Kasaba Kızları</i>, Patrick McCabe'in <i>Platon'da Kahvaltı</i> ve Colm Tóibín'in <i>Dentçilerinindeki Işık</i> Romanlarında Kayıp Ana-Babalar, Abjeç Çocuklar ve Melankoli</p>	
<p>Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmam:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır. 2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmaması gerektirmemektedir. 3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir. 4. Gözlemsel ve betümsel araştırma (anket, ölçek/ölçme çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir. 	
<p>Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurulları ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.</p>	
<p>Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.</p>	
Tarih ve İmza	
<p>Adı Soyadı: Kübra KANGÜLEÇ COŞKUN</p>	06.06.2017
<p>Öğrenci No: N11244543</p>	
<p>Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı</p>	
<p>Programı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı</p>	
<p>Statüsü: <input type="checkbox"/> Y.Lisans <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doktora <input type="checkbox"/> Bütünleşik Dr.</p>	
<p>DANIŞMAN GÖRÜŞÜ VE ONAYI</p>	
	
<p>Prof. Dr. Aytül ÖZÜM</p>	
<p>Detaylı Bilgi: http://www.sosyalbilimler.hacettepe.edu.tr</p>	
<p>Telefon: 0-312-2976860</p>	<p>Faks: 0-3122992147 E-posta: sosyalbilimler@hacettepe.edu.tr</p>



**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK**

**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Date: 06/06/2017


Thesis Title / Topic: Reading the Irish Family From Kristeva's Perspective: Lost Parents, Abject Children and Melancholy in Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls*, Patrick McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* and Colm Tóibín's *The Blackwater Lightship*

My thesis work related to the title/topic above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Name Surname: Kübra KANGÜLEÇ COŞKUN	Date and Signature
Student No: N11244543	06.06.2017
Department: English Language and Literature	
Program: English Language and Literature	
Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Masters <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ph.D. <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Ph.D.	

ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL



Prof. Dr. Aytül ÖZÜM