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STATUS OF FEMININITY AND MOTHERHOOD IN THE WORK OF ANNE ENRIGHT

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СТАТУС ЖЕНСТВЕННОСТИ И МАТЕРИНСТВА В ТВОРЧЕСТВЕ ЭНН ЭНРАЙТ

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Abstract. The aim of this work is to identify the ways of image representations and to reveal authorial positioning in Irish literature. As the image of mother and the topic of the family are inextricably linked, and they have become crosscutting themes in foreign writers' fiction as well as in the works of Anne Enright's unusual interpretation of this key image in Irish literature is of great interest for the researchers.

Аннотация. Цель данной работы — выявить способы репрезентации изображений и выявить авторское позиционирование в ирландской литературе. Поскольку образ матери и тема семьи неразрывно связаны, и они стали сквозными темами в художественной литературе зарубежных писателей, а также в произведениях Анны Энрайт, необычная интерпретация этого ключевого образа в ирландской литературе представляет большой интерес для исследователей.

Keywords: motherhood, feminine, patriarchal, society, ideal mother.

Ключевые слова: материнство, женственность, патриархальность, общество, идеальная мать.

Ireland is often called the island of saints, poets and writers, Nobel laureates, which cannot but arouse admiration and respect. Three awards in literature (W. B. Yeats, C. Heaney and S. Beckett), a figure more than impressive for a small country, declares the presence of a strong and distinctive national culture, which took its rightful place in world culture and contributed to the subsequent development of literature and art in Ireland. The awarding of such significant awards proves the fact that the world has recognized the outstanding services of the Irish literature. During the twentieth century and now in the twenty-first, Ireland has added a lot of literature to the world. In the last thirty years, twenty-three Irish authors have won or been short-listed for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction, and one has won the Nobel Prize (Seamus Heaney was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995). They produced literature calling for independence from England and literature on the aftermath of the creation of the free state of Ireland. Although Anne Enright is a somewhat new voice in Irish fiction, she is a very talented and well-known author in Ireland today.

Irish English writer Anne Enright, who was born in Dublin in 1962, is recognized by many critics as one of the most modern, talented writers. Her works cover a wide range of genres, and she has published seven novels, they are: *The Wig My Father Wore* (1995), *What Are You Like?* (2000), *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch* (2002), *The Gathering* (2007), *The Forgotten Waltz* (2011), *The Green Road* (2015) and *Actress* (2020); nonfiction essay *Making Babies: Stumbling into Motherhood* (2004); three short stories collections *Portable Virgin* (1991), *Taking Pictures* (2008) and *Yesterday's Weather* (2009). She has won a lot of awards for her work:

- 1991 Rooney Prize for Irish Literature for *The Portable Virgin*
- 2001 Encore Award for *What Are You Like?*
- 2004 Davy Byrne's Irish Writing Award

- 2007 Booker Prize for *The Gathering*
- 2008 Irish Novel of the Year for *The Gathering*
- 2010 Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature
- 2012 Orange Prize for Fiction shortlist for *The Forgotten Waltz*
- 2012 Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction for *The Forgotten Waltz*
- 2012 Honorary Degree (DLit) from Goldsmiths College, University of London
- 2016 Kerry Group Irish Fiction Award for *The Green Road*

Enright regularly writes essays and commentaries along with her prose. Her works have appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Granta*, *The New Yorker*, *London Review of Books*, *The Guardian*, *The Irish Times* and *The Penguin Book of Irish Fiction* publications.

Caitriona Moloney, in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, calls Enright “one of the most promising fiction writers to appear in Ireland in the 1990s” and notes that she “has received considerable critical attention and literary accolades for her short stories and novels”. Moloney also declares that Enright’s work “challenges traditional belief systems and epistemologies; she conflates the genres of journalism, history, and fiction to make problematic the official records and shared memories of the past” [1]. The new, but brilliant, voice Enright brings to the field offers critics new ways of understanding the experiences of Irish life and the struggles authors face in recreating who they are in modern Ireland.

From the beginning of her career, in 1991, Enright presented her first collection of short stories, *The Portable Virgin*, and began writing a series of novels and short stories, which were praised in various places, including her former teacher Angela Carter, who called her prose “elegant, scrupulously poised, always intelligent and, not least, original” [2]. Since 1993, she has devoted herself entirely to writing. Her first novel was *The Wig My Father Wore*, which has now been translated into many languages. Anne Enright covers major literary topics such as illness, death and loss, spirituality and physical condition. Fantastic episodes and the use of Irish expressions are repetitive stylistic features of this and subsequent works, such as its conflict with themes like sexuality, originality, and complex family structures.

While Enright has been praised by critics, she was relatively little known until she won the award. She finally made her breakthrough with *The Gathering*, a family story that spans many generations. Since winning the *Man Booker Prize* for *The Gathering* in 2007, she has become one of the most internationally skilled and well-known, and unique writers of Irish culture — given her vivid portrayals of women’s sexuality, motherhood, and violence against the vast national history of patriarchal hegemony. Taking all of this it was written in a very skillful style. *The Gathering* is an example of the desire to explore what has remained silent in Irish public historiography, especially modern social change to restore female identity. *The Gathering* is a serious and powerful book that accurately portrays painful family relationships, hidden secrets, and emotional trauma.

Enright makes the personal political by tracing three generations of Hegarty women from post-Independence to the Celtic Tiger in order to re-envision the archaeology of motherhood in Ireland. Enright is now regarded as part of a great tradition of Irish writers who study Irish family life in an intense and often detailed way. Notwithstanding, her images of family relationships, love, sex, repression, and Catholicism are brutally portrayed, they are almost always combined with heavy and delicate humor, rich and sometimes legendary prose style. Enright’s prose is sharp, direct, and humorous, with a poetic and somewhat imaginative character that has a distinctive taste for some readers.

The similarities between Enright's *The Gathering* and *The Green Road* are that both plays explore family members, the breakup of children, blaming their mothers for their difficult lives and

considering their mothers insane, sibling relationships, and the mother's efforts to bring her children into her family.

Her two novels *What Are You Like?* and *The Gathering*, and a collection of essays, *Making Babies*, explores the issue of motherhood, the relationship between mother and child. What is at the center of my interest is the different ways in which motherhood is portrayed in these novels, and the connection between maternity, language, and originality, which is the basis of almost all books, including essays.

In her non-fictional book *Making Babies: Stumbling into Motherhood*, Enright describes the experienced details of pregnancy and maternity. It's a very funny story that depicts a journey from early pregnancy to the age of two. She demonstrates in this view how she reacts to the large flow of bodily changes in the mind of a pregnant woman and a mother who has just given birth: "Motherhood happens in the body, as much as in the mind. I thought childbirth was a sort of journey that you send dispatches home from, but of course, it is not – it is home. Everywhere else now, is abroad" [3].

Ann Enright's latest collection, published in *Today*, the next second *Taking Pictures* collects news that doesn't prevent you from reading a compatibility collection between different stories written between 2006 and 2008 in response to various petitions, magazines, literary festivals, or radio broadcasts. And it published ten years after the first collection in 2008. In addition to working with a wide range of topics and interests, motherhood is often the focus, and the female perspective is a constant in both sets. Each story in it, as the title suggests, is a "snapshot" of life, mostly about the experiences of women (like most works).

Enright's short stories are constructed through the consciousness of the protagonists whose feelings, hopes and memories constitute the main interest of the story. Thus, the innovative feature of her works is the difference between the reality proposed by her protagonists, especially in *Taking Pictures*, and the image an ideal mother/daughter/wife/worker woman presents in many current discourses in Irish society [4].

According to her, perfection in the social and cultural history of Ireland, which belongs to the image of the Mother, is one of the legends that helped shape the Irish nationality. In her works, Enright demonstrates her deep concern about how feminine elegance is portrayed in modern Irish literature, which aims to undermine the perfect, virgin, and pure image of the Irish woman.

Women are usually imagined as ideal virgin, or, conversely, prostitutes in a patriarchal society. The reason for this is that patriarchy maintains the role of the mother's resistance in its actions (both pure and misleading) by reflecting this resistance on two different women: whether she is a virgin or a prostitute, subject or object, asexual or sexual, is to remove without any intermediary. In *Taking Pictures*, Enright opposes the issues of pregnancy and motherhood, the usual images that promote male dominance in Irish culture, and the truth and perfect woman/mother/wife in Irish traditions such as "In place of the real mother, Enright had observed that Irish Writing has traditionally either appointed 'the iconized mother figure', or posited an absence [5] always pays attention to the conscious filling of the space between the images.

Because Enright's female protagonists are usually happy or sad, love to travel, live adventure-filled lives, and are challenging, these objects are always portrayed as imperfect motherhood. Thus, one of the goals of Enright's works is to change the image of the idealized Irish mother, to restore the identity of women, to ensure that they have a place in society.

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