



Universidad de Valladolid

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Grado en Estudios Ingleses

**“Edna O’Brien and Molly Keane: An Analysis of
Their Similarities Through the Narratives of
“Irish Revel” and *Good Behaviour*”**

Ana Belén Tapias Vida

Tutor: Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan

Departamento de Filología Inglesa

Curso: 2023-2024

ABSTRACT

In the recent the Irish literary scene there are two authors known for their polemic topics and depiction of Ireland: Edna O'Brien and Molly Keane. Molly Keane depicts in her stories the life of the Anglo-Irish gentry while Edna O'Brien focuses on rural settings and stories of female experiences. Even though both authors appear to be unrelated, they share common characteristics and features which are reflected in their narratives and general style. In particular, these features can be seen in the characters, themes, narrator and literary mode of *Good Behaviour* and *Irish Revel*. Through an analysis of those elements and of the lives of both authors, this work aims to convey the similarities between Edna O'Brien and Molly Keane.

Key words: *Good Behaviour*, "Irish Revel", Similarities, Irish background, Anglo-Irish gentry

RESUMEN

Dentro del contexto de la escena literaria Irlandesa reciente se encuentran dos escritoras conocidas por sus temas polémicos y su representación de Irlanda: Edna O'Brien y Molly Keane. Molly Keane refleja en sus obras la vida de la clase alta Anglo-Irlandesa mientras que Edna O'Brien se centra en escenarios rurales y experiencias vividas por mujeres. Aunque parezca que no hay relación entre ambas autoras, comparten características y rasgos comunes que se reflejan en sus narrativas y estilo general. Concretamente, estos rasgos pueden ser apreciados en los personajes, temas, narrador y modo literario de *Good Behaviour* y "Irish Revel". A través del análisis de esos elementos y de la vida de ambas autoras, este trabajo pretende exponer las similitudes existentes entre Edna O'Brien y Molly Keane.

Palabras clave: *Good Behaviour*, "Irish Revel", Similitudes, Origen Irlandés, Clase alta Anglo-Irlandesa

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1. Introduction

Edna O'Brien and Molly Keane can be classified among the most important Irish authors in the country's recent literary history. ("Irish Literature") Their relevance is such that they are part of important associations such as Aosdána, in the case of Molly Keane; and can be considered representatives' of their country's culture and literary tradition. ("Molly Keane") Based on this idea of their fame and status, it would be strange to see them as separated authors with no relation among themselves, which is how I perceived them during one of the courses of Irish Literature imparted in this degree. It may be true that the characters they write about in their works and the settings in which these take place may appear different from one another. However, one look at their biographies is enough to realize that their lives are more similar than it seems. Moreover, the writers share literary characteristics which may not be clear at first but through the analysis of some of their narratives are easy to identify.

As it was said before, the differences that can be found in the Irish authors' works relay mainly on the setting and the topics. While Molly Keane writes about the Anglo-Irish gentry and its slow fall, using in her works resources such as the Irish big house and depicting activities proper of this social class, for instance, balls and events that take place during the hunting season; ("Molly Keane") Edna O'Brien portrays in her narratives a more rural world, with stories that take place mainly in the countryside; and female characters who have to suffer society's unfair treatment. ("Edna O'Brien") Nevertheless, even with this diversity of topics it is possible to see similarities in these narratives. What this paper aims to do is find the features which both authors share, not only as writers from a broad point of view, but also the similarities that their works may have. For this reason this dissertation offers an analysis of two of their stories, Edna O'Brien's "Irish Revel", and Molly Keane's *Good Behaviour*, centered on the characters, the narrator, the themes and the literary mode; which will be used to support the main idea of this work.

In order to offer a clear image of the similarities between both authors, this work has been divided in three sections which contribute to the final conclusion. The first section contains the information about Edna O'Brien and Molly Keane that was considered to be related to the topic being discussed in this paper, beginning with a short biography of the authors which highlights the most relevant parts of their lives, including the aspects that have been portrayed in their works. Apart from the biography, in this part it is also possible to find the main features of both authors in terms of their literary production; and a brief rapport on their relationship with their mothers. The second one consists on a summary of "Irish Revel" and *Good Behaviour*. This summary will serve as an example of the features characteristic of the authors that have been stated in the previous section. Moreover, it can also be considered a guide for the elements that will be examined in the last section and that will be used to explore the similarities between Molly Keane and Edna O'Brien. The final part is dedicated to the analysis of the features of the narratives selected that can be used to extract similarities between the authors. There are four main aspects that have been analyzed: the characters, the narrator, some of the themes that both works share and the literary mode.

2. Edna O'Brien, life and literature

Edna O'Brien is an Irish novelist, short-story and screen writer and one of the most important Irish literary authors. (Edna O'Brien) Her works reflect topics about feminism while maintaining a typical Irish base. Some of her texts have been banned in Ireland and for a long time, she has not been considered as part of Ireland's most important writers. This has made her character stand out for both the praise and the disapproval she has received. (Ingram 8) This praise has come from both her readers and her colleagues who appreciate her determination in depicting Ireland even when it was a difficult task. (Doyle) However, due to this ability and interest in denouncing Ireland's issues and flaws, she has also been critiqued. Many of her works have been banned in the country and have been considered inappropriate due to O'Brien's depiction of women as a suffering collective, and men as grotesque and negative characters. (Mooney 2)

Edna's most relevant characteristics can be seen in her literature, and in the main topics of her works, which find its origin in her relationship with her mother. Moreover, she shares with Molly Keane her writing inspiration, the motives behind the publication of their works and even Irish features that demonstrate that their origins remained with them even if they were forced to leave their country. (Edna O'Brien)

2.1. Biography

Edna O'Brien was born on December 15, 1930 in Twamgraney, County Clare, Ireland. She was the daughter of the farmer Michael O'Brien and his wife Lena neé Cleary O'Brien. She grew up in a rural environment in which books were scarce, and had a difficult childhood due to her father's alcoholism. However, the issues created by her father's behaviour motivated her creativity and her desire of becoming a writer. ("Edna O'Brien")

She attended the national School in Scariff for six years and thanks to a scholarship, studied at the Convent of Mercy in Loughrea, where she received a strict Irish Catholic education and got close to a nun who replaced her mother as a maternal figure. After school Edna moved to attend the Pharmaceutical College of Ireland and obtained her license in 1950. (Griffin, 6)

During this period, she was already thinking about becoming a writer and it was James Joyce who turned her idea into reality. After reading his novel *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), (Marlowe) the Irish author became her main influence, and she adapted what she learned from him to the style and setting of her works. (Ingram 28) Joyce's influence is less noticeable in Molly Keane's writing but still present in some of her narratives.

In 1952 Edna married Ernest Gebler, novelist, and they had two sons, Carlo and Sasha. They moved to London in 1959, year in which Edna, encouraged by her husband, took writing as a job. Her first novel, *The Country Girls*, was published in 1960, and it was received negatively in Ireland. Ernest and Edna's love story did not work and they got divorced in the mid-60s. ("Edna O'Brien")

After *The Country Girls*, Edna continued writing, publishing the other two novels from *The Country Girls* trilogy, *The Lonely Girl* (1962) and *Girls in their Married Bliss* (1964); and others such as *House of Splendid Isolation* (1994), *In the Forest* (2002), and *Girl* (2019), a novel inspired by the kidnapping of the Nigerian girls by Boko Haram. Apart from novels, she also published short stories collections such as "The Love Object" (1967) "Lantern Slides" (1990) and "Saints and Sinners" (2011). (*Edna O'Brien*)

O'Brien has also written plays, screenplays for television and non-fiction about Ireland. She has published works about relevant writers such as Joyce, her biggest inspiration, in a study called *James Joyce* (1999); and Lord Byron, *Byron in Love* (2009). She became an important and wealthy artist who gathered in her house at 10 Carlyle Square in Chelsea, relevant figures from the literary and entertainment scene such as Marlon Brando, Paul McCartney or J.D. Salinger. (Marlowe) However, a period of ten years in which she did not publish anything and a bad use of her money caused her to lose the house and to forcefully adapt to a more cautious lifestyle. Nowadays, she has few luxuries but she understands that what happened to her is part of life and it brings her closer to her hero, James Joyce. (Marlowe) She has already published her memoirs twice under the titles *Mother Ireland*, in 1976; and *Country Girl*, which came out in 2012.

At 92, O'Brien is still writing actively. In 2022 she published a play about James Joyce, *Joyce's Women*, about which she talked in an interview for *The Irish Times* the 17th of September 2022. In said interview, when discussing her economic situation and the need to write in order to survive, she added: "If I don't write, I might as well not live." (Marlowe)

2.2. Edna O'Brien and her relationship with her mother

The relationship between Edna O'Brien and her mother has been one of the main influences in O'Brien's literature and one of the features she shares with Molly Keane. Many of Edna's works show complicated mother daughter relationships that resemble Edna's own life. (Ingram 33)

Edna O'Brien's mother was Lena O'Brien, a woman with strong catholic values which affected Edna's education. At Edna's childhood home there were no books due to her mother's belief that "literature was bad and could lead to sin". (Griffin 6) The fact that Edna liked literature and developed an interest on writing shows how her ideas and way of being were already contrary to her mother's.

These ideas towards literature would explain Lena O'Brien's attitude regarding her daughter's books which from the beginning was negative. This reaction was caused by her own mentality and by the fact that O'Brien's books were even banned in Ireland. In an interview for *The Guardian*, on the 13th of December 2020, when talking about the release of *The Country Girls* Edna said: "She was very ashamed of my books and made more ashamed by people in the village and that barrier was always there." When talking in depth about this, Edna has revealed her mixed feelings about not wanting to upset her mother and at the same time, a need to make her suffer. (Hughes)

These issues were reflected in Edna's novels in which problematic relationships between mothers and daughters are constant topics. Her stories, usually told from the point of view of the daughters, show how the mothers' own issues, motivated by relationships with

negative male dominance, influence the way in which they treat their daughters and have an important effect on the daughters lives and own ability to “mother”. (Ingram 12) It is easy to see the origin of these situations in Edna’s life, in which her mother was against literature and Edna achieved a literary career and moved to England, instead of living by her mother desires.

Some works which reflect this dynamic are “Irish Revel”, story that will be analyzed later, *Cords* (1968) and *The Love Object*. However, one of the best examples is *A Rose in the Heart of New York*, which almost resembles an autobiography of Edna’s childhood and youth. In this narrative, the strong relationship a mother and her daughter share is lost when the daughter decides to work towards a future that her mother disapproves. (Ingram 33, 34)

2.3. Her literature

Edna O’Brien is a realist writer who, as it was mentioned before, has created various polemics due to her topics and way of writing. Her main topics center on women in Ireland, sexuality, mother-daughter relationships, lesbianism and the influence of Catholic Ireland on women’s lives. (Ingram 12)

Her books have been banned on Ireland because O’Brien was able to depict perfectly the unfair situations lived in the country. These situations concerned a patriarchal society in which women were silenced and had to suffer and accept a life they did not want due to the society’s restrictions. (Ingram 12)

In her works, Edna focused on women’s deepest and most suppressed desires to the point of depicting lesbian relationships in short stories such as “The Mouth of the Cave” or “Sister Imelda”. The ironic thing about these stories is that they are not set in Ireland, showing that even such things as homosexual relationships could not take place in the country due to its strict Catholic mentality. (Ingram 22)

And it was this mentality that, handed through patriarchal figures, was retained by the mothers of her stories, who seem to be trapped in the past and passing that mentality on to their daughters. However, the daughters in Edna's stories rebel against their mothers, trying not to commit the same mistakes and causing the mother-daughter relationships to deteriorate. (Ingram 17)

Even though she has been criticized for showing the Irish society and general situation without living in the country for almost her whole life, there are elements of her writing that remain Irish. One of them is, as it has already been mentioned, the use of Irish settings for almost all of her works. Grotesque images, biographies and storytelling are part of the Irish literary culture and, in addition, Edna mixes realism with fantastic elements that remind the reader of Irish folklore stories about midwives and fairies. (Mooney 3)

In terms of literary techniques, influenced by modernism, Edna started using stream-of-consciousness during the 1970s in stories such as "Over". (Ingram, 21) She also makes use of inter-textuality by mixing characters, events and symbols. (Meyer 1)

Edna's main literary influence was James Joyce, author who contributed to her decision to write professionally, and who she considered to be one of the best writers of all times and of whom she said: "I learned more from Joyce than anyone else in the world... I learned how to put one word after another and make sense of them." (Marlowe) Many of Edna's works, one of them being *Irish Revel*, include Joyce's paralysis, his anti-climax and use of imagery. (Ingram 28) And even one of her memoirs, *Country Girl*, has elements of Joycean style in the way in which she recalls her childhood traumas, family issues and some domestic details. (McWilliams 12) Another similarity between both authors is their ability to focus on both external and internal issues. In addition, Edna's first novel was a bildungsroman, something characteristic of Joyce's literature. (Doyle)

Finally, another valuable characteristic of this writer is her compromise to accurate depiction and to showing the whole picture. For her novel *Girl*, which tells the story of the girls that were kidnapped by Boko Haram, she travelled twice to Nigeria. In the country,

she carried on an investigative labour of talking with the families of the girls, and even escaped girls themselves, and the specialists who had helped them in order to perfectly understand what they had gone through and be able of reflecting it in the novel, while at the same time make it resemble a fable. (Hughes)

3. Molly Keane, life and literature

Molly Keane was an important Anglo-Irish novelist and playwright. (“Molly Keane”). In her works, she depicted the life of the Anglo-Irish gentry and denounced the social reality of her country, writing about controversial topics that affected negatively her image in Ireland. (“Molly Keane”)

Even though her determination to portrait the reality of the Anglo-Irish gentry was criticized, she is also considered a great writer. Critic Mary Gordon talked to *The New York Times* about Keane’s earlier novels, highlighting her ability to describe the high social class’ inner world while introducing more modern topics such as homosexuality. (d’Alton)

Even though her earlier novels were already excellent, it was not until the publication of *Good Behaviour* and her latest works that she was recognized as writer. In 1981 she was elected a founder member of Aosdána, awarded the degree of D.Litt. from the NUI and the University of Ulster and became Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. (d’Alton)

Despite coming from a different background than Edna O’Brien, her life and mainly the relationship with her mother have been the principal sources of inspiration for her works, and her literature contains Irish features that she was able to preserve, even though she was forced to move to England for a period of time. (“Keane, Mary Nesta (‘Molly’)”)

3.1. Biography

Molly Keane was born as Mary Nesta Skrine at County Kildare, Ireland and the dates and place of her birth vary according to the source. She may have been born on the 4th or 20th of July in Ballymore Eustace or Ballyrankin. (“Molly Keane”) Molly’s father, Walter Clarmont Skrine (c. 1860–1930), belonged to an old Somerset family, and migrated to Alberta, Canada, coming back to Ireland in 1902; and her mother was a poet known as Moira O’Neill (1865–1955). (“Keane, Mary Nesta (‘Molly’)”)

Her family was part of the Anglo-Irish gentry, and she received a “fin-de-siecle” education, with governess who taught her at home, making her feel like she was not really learning anything, until she started attending the French School, in County Willock. She did not like being at school and began writing in order to deal with it. Neither did she have a happy childhood due to the importance that her family gave to hunting and social events, that was bigger than the one given to their own children. (“Keane, Mary Nesta (‘Molly’)”)

She started writing in her 20s as M. J. Farrel; a name she saw on a pub’s sign. (“Keane, Mary Nesta (‘Molly’)”) She chose not to write with her birth name because she believed that people did not like reading female authors and she did not want to have a bad reputation among the people from her social class: “I would have been banned from every respectable house in county Carlow...” (d’Alton)

Under the penname of M. J. Farrel she published 11 novels from 1926 to 1951, including her first one, *The Knight of Cheerful Countenance* (1928), *Devoted Ladies* (1934) and *Two Days in Aragon* (1941). (d’Alton)

Molly’s true potential was developed after a visit to the Perry family, in Tipperary. The actor John Perry was a friend of Molly’s family and through that stay, she discovered the literary life of London and this environment influenced her main stylistic characteristics: wit, intelligence and scandalous topics. Together with Perry, Keane started writing plays, some of them are *Spring Meeting* (1938), *Ducks and Drakes* (1942) and *Treasure Hunt* (1949). (Owens 168)

In 1933 Molly met her ideal man, Robert Lumley Keane (1910–46), a gentleman farmer with a good position in society, who supported her literary career. The couple managed to maintain their romance a secret for almost five years, something unthinkable in the period. They finally got married in 1938 and had two daughters, Sally and Virginia. Unfortunately, Robert passed away in 1946, and the grief provoked by this death caused Molly to stop writing from the end of the 1940s to the 1970s. (“Keane, Mary Nesta (‘Molly’)”). After Robert’s death, Molly

moved to England during the period in which her daughters received their education; going back to Ireland in 1952. (“Keane, Mary Nesta (‘Molly’)”)

Molly Keane went back to writing in 1981 with the publication of *Good Behaviour*, when she was 77 years old. Even though the story had difficulties to be published, it was shortlisted for the Booker prize that same year. (“Keane, Mary Nesta (‘Molly’)”) Keane wrote and published this novel for the same reason she had published her other works, a need for money. (d’Alton) Despite coming from a good family, Molly had gone through different houses, according to her financial power at the moment. During her youth, she was able of establishing connections with important families but this status disappeared with the Anglo-Irish gentry and it was at the end of her life when she regained recognition despite having a life unthinkable for the class she was born into.

Following *Good Behaviour*, Keane published *Molly Keane's nursery cookbook* in 1985, and *Molly Keane's Ireland: an anthology* in 1993, this last book was written by her and her daughter Sally Phipps. After the publication of *Good Behaviour*, she used “Molly Keane” for all the stories she wrote. (“Keane, Mary Nesta (‘Molly’)”) Some of these works, *Good Behaviour* and *Time After Time* (1983), have been adapted to television.

Sally Phipps, Molly’s oldest daughter published *Molly Keane: A Life* in 2017. This book is a biography of her mother in which the late Molly intervened, suggesting ideas about the format of the book and other aspects, something that can be read in *The Guardian*’s review, “Molly Keane: A Life by Sally Phipps review-mother, writer, mentor...”, from 29th January 2017. (Kellaway)

Molly Keane died the 22nd of April 1996 and was buried in Ardmore, County Warrerford. (“Keane, Mary Nesta (‘Molly’)”)

3.2. Molly Keane and her relationship with her mother

As an artist, Molly Keane received this heritage from her mother, who also was a writer. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they both shared the same interests and views, and they had many conflicts that inspired some of Molly's stories.

Molly Keane's mother is a poet mainly known under the pen name Moira O'Neill, with which she published literary works such as *Songs of the Glens of Antrim* (1916) and the novels *The Elf Errant* and *An Easter Vacation*. Given that her mother was a writer who did not use her name to publish, it is logical that Molly chose to write under a pen name for the first decades of her career. (d'Alton)

Keane did not have a good relationship with her mother, mainly due to their opposite natures. Moira had been born on the previous century and she had the ideas and customs of Victorianism applied to her whole life. Molly, on the contrary, was born in 1904 and her way of being, especially during her youth was too modern for Moira's protestant values. (Owens 167) In an interview to *The Guardian* the 4th of February 2017, Sally Phipps, Molly's oldest daughter, described their relationship with these words: "With Nesta and Molly, [...] the problems came down to different temperaments, and there was a lack of rapport.[...] They didn't see eye to eye, and that meant Mrs. Skrine found Molly very difficult and disapproved of her, [...]" (Kellaway).

In addition to their lack of understanding, Molly's parents belonged to the Anglo-Irish gentry, a social class in which children did not matter much, which meant that Keane was raised by nannies and governess and felt rejected and abandoned by her parents, who were more focused on horses and foxhunting. (Owens 167).

This failed relationship marked Molly's life, as Sally Phipps explained in the interview for *The Guardian* previously mentioned. Right before dying Keane apologized to her daughter, believing that she had been a bad mother due to their different temperaments. Sally admits that, for this reason, their relationship had not been easy, although this apology shows that Molly had learned from her own mother-daughter experience. (Moorhead).

Moreover, Molly Keane used the feelings produced by her family issues in her novels, creating conflictive mother-daughter ties in which the daughter ends up losing the love and relationship with her mother. This can be seen in *Good Behaviour*, a novel in which Aroon, the protagonist, kills her mother; or *Loving and Giving* (1988), in which the protagonist abandons her mother for her lover. (Moorhead)

3.3. Her literature

As a writer, Molly Keane had one main topic, the depiction of her social class, the Anglo-Irish gentry. At the times during which she was writing, this social group was decaying and she portrays an appropriate image of decadence, hopelessness, poverty and solitude; which contrasts with the image given by her contemporary Elizabeth Bowen, who showed in her works a cultured Anglo-Irish high class. (d'Alton)

What characterizes Molly even more than her choice to expose a “hidden” side of her social class is her way of doing so with wit, irony and a “sharp eye”, satirizing the gentry’s main interests such as fox hunting. (Owens 168)

And something that increases the value of this image is how, due to her belonging to the social class, Keane’s image was personal, depicting issues she had gone through her whole life. Her works contain autobiographical elements such as the obsession with horses and foxhunting that Molly shared, she once said "I really disapproved of people who didn't ride, it was the only thing that counted."; and the need for money in order to maintain their high way of living rather than to merely survive, as it was already mentioned, Molly Keane chose to write and publish her works as a way to earn money, not for leisure. (Gibbs).

In her stories, Molly has featured controversial issues such as homosexuality, in *Good Behaviour* and *Devoted Ladies*; (Owens 168) the terrible treatment some members of the Ascendancy families suffered; and the good behavior that they had to show despite their situation of decline. In addition, her works rescue elements from international and Irish

literature such as the bildungsroman, characteristic from Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; the unreliable narrator that had been previously used by Gaelic-Irish authors but not by Anglo-Irish ones, and that appears in *Good Behaviour*; and the Big House genre, which she rescues for the setting of her novels and plays, since the interior of a house is as important as the relationships of the people who live in it. (Gibbs)

Molly was aware of her characteristic literary style and tried to ensure its continuity, at least in her biography, which was written by her daughter, Sally Phips. In order to do that she suggested the approach of the biography as if it was a novel and she had the fear that Sally would not be "nasty enough". (Moorhead).

4. Summary of the works

4.1. “Irish Revel” Summary

“Irish Revel” is a short story published by Edna O’Brien in 1968 which gathers a lot of the characteristics that made her literature unique and groundbreaking when she started publishing. It was part of the short stories collection *The Love Object*, which helped her achieved a recognized writer status. (Ingram)

Its protagonist is Mary a seventeen year old young lady who lives in a farm in the Irish countryside and is going to her first party. This is something new for her, as she rarely goes out of the farm and her life consists on helping her family doing all kinds of chores.

Although she is just going to be absent for one night, it is hard for her mother to let her go, she considers that the party cannot be good for Mary and she needs her help at the farm.

This over protective mother is the main reason why it has taken so long for Mary to go to a social event.

After some difficulties with her bike, Mary arrives to the Commercial Hotel, where the party will be held and she is received by Mrs. Rodgers, the hotel owner and two girls from the village who do not like her. The three of them are asked to prepare the room in which the party will take place, and while Mary works, disappointed due to the situation, the other two girls, Doris and Eithne, start drinking and making fun of her because of her rural origins.

The party starts and it is not the glamorous event Mary expected, with food being served in paper plates in what they believe to be in style in Dublin’s high society. Otherwise, the party develops normally with the guests remembering stories and singing. Mary is surprised by the rudeness and outspokenness of the town people and she soon wishes she had stayed home, where things are simple and everything follows the same routine.

Once the party ends the female guests go get ready for bed as they will all sleep in the same bedroom of the hotel. O'Toole, a man from the village who is interested in Mary and got drunk at the party, tries to be alone with her against her will and almost manages to do so but Doris and Eithne help Mary, and O'Toole, resentful, pours all of the alcohol contained at the hotel into the floor. The girls discover this in the morning and get angry at Mary as if it had been her fault.

Mary is already on her way to the farm, because she has to get home in time to milk the cow. She is unhappy with the experience and feeling sorry for herself, but relieved to be back home. The events of that night, however, have not affected her desire to discover the world outside the farm and she still wonders whether all her future experiences will be similar to this one.

4.2. *Good Behaviour* Summary

Good Behaviour is the novel with which Molly Keane went back to the writing scene in 1981. After three decades without publishing, the need for money made Molly release a new novel, which despite some difficulties, was shortlisted for a Booker Prize, and helped her establish her literary status. ("Keane, Mary Nesta ('Molly')")

The story begins with a tragedy, when Aroon, its protagonist, gives her mother rabbit for lunch, causing her death. This continues with Aroon, the only remaining member from a family of the Anglo-Irish gentry, reflecting on her life, the difficult situation the family had to endure and how incompetent she always was for them.

The book consists mainly in its protagonist narrating her life since she was a little kid. Her family belonged to the Anglo-Irish gentry but had very little money, something that limited the lifestyle it was supposed to have. Nevertheless, the family always tries to keep a perfect image of wealth and high status.

This high status has to be maintained and taught to the younger generations through a very strict education, which demands a lot from the governess the children have, and this leads to unfair treatment of the employees dedicated to this task. This is the case of Mrs. Brock, a governess who gets fired after being unable of teaching Aroon and her brother things that they will never use throughout their lives.

Aroon reaches her teenage years living an easy and simple life, with the only issue of not feeling love; and it is during this period that her father goes to the army, where he gets injured and loses a leg. When he gets back home, his wife appreciates it because in that way they can be present in the high society again. Meanwhile the scarce money the family has continues decreasing. Despite this issue, Aroon attends with her father and brother the balls that take place during the hunting season. She is conscious that the love showed by her family is not truthful but she appreciates being noticed.

It is around this time, that Richard, a boy from another rich family whose governess, when he was a kid, was also Mrs. Brock; visits them and establishes a close relationship with Hubert that seems to evolve into something deeper. Aroon has hopes of being with Richard but she gets ignored by him and Hubert. Aroon's father, however, seems to understand the real nature of the young men's relation, and disapproves of it.

Then, sometime after Richard's visit, in a tragic accident, Hubert passes away, and not long after, the patriarch suffers a seizure that leaves him almost invalid. From that moment on, due to their lack of money, it is the servant, Rose, who is in charge of taking care of the master of the house, although Aroon does not like it due to the close relationship they maintain and to the fact that she feels dominated by Rose and her mother.

Towards the end of the novel Aroon gets invited to a ball, which she attends with hopes of running into Richard. Her car breaks and the family's accountant, Mr. Kiely takes her home and shows his desire of being with her, which she rejects. That same night, Aroon's father dies and she is unable of attending the funeral due to a fall in which she hurts her ankle.

Later, she discovers that her father has left her the house and all his assets and that is the sign she needs to start taking control of her own life.

5. Analysis

5.1. Characters

According to the linguist and literary theorist Tzvetan Todorov, characters can be classified into primary and secondary. The primary characters are those who have relevant roles in their stories, the ones who are more present, revolving the events around them. On the contrary, the secondary characters have much less protagonism and some of their functions are to give coherence to the story. (Garrido Domínguez, 92) Another classification made is that of dynamic and static characters. The static characters usually show one main feature, which can be a virtue or a flaw, and do not change throughout the story. The dynamic characters, more complex, have more importance than the static ones. (Garrido Domínguez, 93) For the analysis of both works, *Good Behaviour* and “Irish Revel”, the characters have been divided into primary and secondary, and some of them are also being classified into dynamic or static, given that this particular characteristic influences the view on the main characters and their stories.

5.1.1. Primary characters: Aroon and Mary

The protagonist of *Irish Revel* is Mary a young Irish girl who lives in a farm in the Irish countryside with her big family. She is a hardworking girl who always helps her family, having to take care of tasks that would be usually be done by men, due to her father and brothers working for the forestry. She seems to be an intelligent and obedient girl who does not mind helping others, as she does before the party when Mrs. Rodgers asks for her help.

Aroon Iris St. Charles is the protagonist of *Good Behaviour*. She is the first and only daughter of a family that belongs to the Anglo-Irish gentry. Her family is composed of her mother, her father and Hubert, her younger brother. All her life, her family has tried to educate her so that she can be a perfect lady for society, something which she acknowledges by mentioning how she always has known how to behave. Due to this way in which Aroon was taught she considers the people who work for her as subordinates and finds it strange that she can be looked down on by other people. In spite of this, she is conscious of her family’s economic situation throughout the book and she seems like

someone who can adapt to income changes and do things that are not typical of her social class.

Both of the stories analyzed have female protagonists who share some characteristics. Mainly, they are conscious that their lives are not ideal, even though they could be worse, and they are aware of the possibility of a better future, which leads them to being curious about what their respective societies have to offer. The two of them, Aroon and Mary, are young women in a journey to discover themselves and the world in which they live. They share hopes and dreams of a better life in which they do not have to be under their parents' orders or opinions. In "Irish Revel", Mary has to come back soon from the party in order to milk the farm's cow and finds herself at risk of not attending the party because of her mother's view on that type of reunions. Even though she has already achieved an age close to maturity, she has to behave according to her mother's ideas and wishes, showing that she probably will not be able to control her own life until she stops living at the farm. Aroon finds herself in that same situation throughout the whole story, dominated not only by her mother but also by Rose, who is a servant whose rank does not prevent her from ignoring her mistress' orders. Even after gaining control of her father's assets, Aroon is not able of escaping her mother's will and the situation continues being the same for some years until the death of the Mrs. St. Charles takes place.

Another common feature that both protagonists share is their innocence and naivety, which, together with their strong hopes of improving their situation lead them to having big expectations about some situations. To begin with Mary, she is excited for the party, not only because she has never been to an event of that kind but also because she expects John, the man who visited her farm some time ago, to be there. She is conscious that a marriage with John could be the only way of changing her fate and being able of leaving her family. Aroon constantly wishes she had a man in her life and when Richard appears to stay some time in Temple Alice, she sees him as her opportunity to escape her mother's dominance. Even after the disillusionment caused by that episode of her life, she awaits for a gentleman to get her out of Temple Alice, and she still dreams of Richard being that person.

The previously mentioned hopes and dreamer-like features of these protagonists lead to disappointment that both characters have to go through several times in the story. In the case of Mary, it begins when she arrives to the bar and realizes she will have to help in the same way she would have to do at home. This situation continues throughout the party, with Mrs. Rodgers making her serve the guests the whole night and it leaves her with a feeling of understanding towards her mother, seeing that parties are not a big deal as she thought. In *Good Behaviour*, parties are also ideal places for disappointment to be produced. One example is the Hunt Ball, to where Aroon goes excited until she finds out that she has only been invited to act as the company of a man named Uncle Ulick. The reunion turns out to be a huge deceit and a proof of what high society can be like. The other big disappointment for Aroon comes in the shape of Richard, who she had believed to be her ideal future husband but, during his stay, ends up spending more time with her brother and ignoring her, something to which Aroon seems partially oblivious. Despite having to suffer disillusionment in several occasions, both Mary and Aroon show strength of mind while going through difficult situations. Whether it is due to a mountain farm education or to that of the Anglo-Irish high class, both girls have learned to show no emotions and display always their best behavior.

In addition, other complicated situations the protagonists have to go through have to do with their physique. Mary stands out from the other girls due to her curly dark hair, which according to the other girls of the party, Doris and Eithne; makes her look like a gipsy. Ironically, the ones who believe her physical aspect is not ideal for the society they belong to are the ones who purposely curl their hair, trying to make it look similar to Mary's. She also stands out due to her origin. Apparently, the people who live in the mountains are not considered the same as the people from the village according to Eithne and Doris. In the case of Aroon, she has always been a big girl, a feature that may not be ideal in the high society they belong to, when trying to get a husband. For this reason, she receives a lot of shaming from her mother, who, in addition to that, barely pays attention to her because she does not seem like the daughter that would help her ascend in the social scale. Moreover,

she has to deal with the lack of money of her family, which limits the amount of social reunions she can attend to, and also decreases her attractiveness as a young woman suitable for marriage.

5.1.2. Secondary characters

The secondary characters are mainly characterized by the fact that they have few interactions with the primary characters, in the case of these stories the protagonists, and they receive less attention in the stories. Moreover, they can serve the function of adding coherence to the story and showing different perspectives. (Garrido Domínguez, 93)

In “Irish Revel”, the main secondary characters are the girls from the party, Doris and Eithne. They are two girls whose age is not specified although they seem to be the same age as Mary, seventeen, who are friends and live in the village. One of them, Doris, is studying to be a secretary and seems to have the need to get out of her little village and go to a bigger population, such as Dublin. Both girls remind of normal teenage people who like to take care of their physical aspect, trying to follow the most recent fashion. One thing in which they differ from Mary is that they just think, at least during the evening of the party, of having fun and do not listen to Mrs. Rodgers, demonstrating some disrespect that Mary would never be capable of showing. Even though their interactions with Mary are minimal, through them it is possible to see the idea of Mary that the people in the village have. The two girls treat Mary poorly mainly because she lives in a mountain farm far from the village and they consider her inferior. Moreover, they make cruel comments about her physical aspect mainly out of envy, something which can be seen when Eithne admits to Mary that she likes her hair and dress.

Another relevant secondary character is O’Toole, a man from the village who works in the slate quarry and is just a simple inhabitant with not a lot of knowledge and no outstanding features other than his hair, which is exceptionally bleached by the sun. He is one of the party guests, and likes Mary mainly because she seems different from the other girls. However, this does not keep him from treating her as if she had no volition and should be

doing whatever he wants. Moreover, when trying to get her to go with him, he keeps calling her Doris, as if he was ashamed of admitting his interest in a farm girl. In conclusion, the secondary characters in this story help the reader create an image of Mary as someone who is not appreciated despite having good qualities; and that for these reasons can be easily manipulated.

In *Good Behaviour*, the main secondary characters are the members of Aroon's family. One of them, the mother, fits quite well in this definition due to the fact that her interactions with Aroon are minimal, even though the few ones that take place are enough to prove why Aroon is not suitable for the kind of society the family belongs to. This woman comes from an important high class Irish family who had lost their fortune throughout the years. Even though social life can appear to be very important to this type of families, Mrs. St. Charles does not like it and is more keen on staying at home, occupying her time on hobbies such as painting and gardening. Nevertheless, she tries to maintain the image of wealth and superior behavior inside Temple Alice. She is worried about the image they project and thus, she constantly reminds her daughter of how she should behave or dress in order to impress the Anglo-Irish gentry. These interactions give the reader the idea that Aroon does not fit in her social level and that, in the same way Mary was, she is undervalued.

In addition, Aroon's mother can be also considered a static character, the one whose features do not change in a story, due to the fact that her behavior and attitude towards life and her daughter do not change throughout the whole book. (Garrido Domínguez, 93) Despite their lack of money, this woman refuses to modify her lifestyle and to adapt to the circumstances. As it was already mentioned, after the moment in which Aroon receives her inheritance she keeps being an authoritarian figure for her, not allowing her daughter to take control over her own life. Most of Aroon's actions in Temple Alice will be judged and disapproved by her mother even when those decisions are the right ones.

Continuing with the static characters classification, Mary's mother can also be added to this group. The story does not give any information about her character other than the fact that

she seems used to the farm life and does not like parties. Nevertheless, even if the format of the narration does not leave space for a personality transformation; it is possible to see that Mary's mother is a woman of principles, who has her life's development well organized, while being conscious of the image she can give to other people, mainly the reason why Mary accepts Mrs. Rodgers' invitation. She does not seem to care about her daughter's individuality and does not pay much attention to her, at least in the scenes shown. For her, the functioning of the farm is crucial and no special occasion can disrupt it, hence, why Mary has to come back the morning after the party in time to milk the cow.

Moreover, the fact that both mothers are static characters who try to live their life as it has been arranged helps the reader become aware of how both protagonists stand out in their social circles. Aroon is willing to adapt her lifestyle to the family's income, and she does not mind having an image that does not fit with the one she should have. On the contrary, her mother refuses to change her lifestyle and that is the main reason for her death. In the case of Irish Revel, Mary thinks back on certain occasions to the routine that is kept in her house and that never seems to change. Through that, it is possible to see that she has ideas of the possibility of a different way of living, which does not mean she will not accept and adapt to the farm life she already knows.

5.2. Themes

5.2.1. Good manners

In Temple Alice, Aroon's home, money is scarce but that does not cause the family to stop showing an image of wealth and good behavior. A clear example of this is the ceremony that dinners seem to follow, a kind of ritual in which even the clothes worn must be meticulously prepared, and that should not be interrupted under any circumstance. At the beginning of the story, when Aroon and her brother Hubert are young, Hubert gets ill and Aroon goes to the dining room to tell her parents about it. Even though their son is in a dangerous situation it takes a lot of time for the married couple to react and Aroon feels like she is not showing an adequate behavior.

In “Irish Revel”, even though the protagonist comes from a totally different social group; good manners seem to be equally important. Being Mary’s family farmers, they have to maintain a façade of toughness that does not allow them to show emotion. The only exception to this, which is revealed while Mary hides her tears at the party, is the death of someone. This need to maintain a strong image keeps her from acting on her feelings towards the man who had visited the farm two years before. And the image they have to maintain is not only of toughness but also of decorum. This is shown when Mary arrives to the pub where the party will take place. Even though she has been invited, she feels like no one should see her there because it could be embarrassing for her family. In fact, she enters through the back door, instead of using the main entrance.

This idea of maintaining a good image comes back towards the end of the story, when O’Toole tries to get Mary to go with him and the other girls have to help her escape from him. Despite not being the one that caused the issue, Mary feels embarrassed and is more worried about making a scene than about what could have happened if she had not gotten the girls’ help.

5.2.2. Complicated mother-daughter relationship

Aroon, from the beginning, notices lack of affection from her mother. Being a big girl, someone who is not likely to find a husband and not the perfect lady for the society to which they belong, her mother feels disappointed with her and considers that other issues such as keeping a perfect wealthy image at the house may be more relevant than her own daughter. Moreover, the relationship she maintains with Rose, the servant, helps decrease Aroon’s authority for even when Aroon’s reasoning is correct, Rose’s opinion will always be above Aroon’s. After a whole life of suffering her mother’s humiliations and following her orders, when she finally dies it is not clear if it happens due to an unfortunate accident or due to Aroon’s exhaustion which makes her disregard her mother’s needs with a fatal result.

At the beginning of the story, Mary mentions how it is her first time going to a party despite being old enough to have already gone to various parties. This is due to her mother's overprotectiveness, which is why for Mary it feels like a unique opportunity to be attending the celebration. Moreover, Mary's mother has one priority, the farm's functioning. That is why, even though her daughter will be spending the night outside her house, she has to be back early in order to milk the cow. To the reader, it seems that the chores assigned to Mary at her house are a burden for her and she wishes she could have some help. In addition, Mary's mother does not want her to have distractions and can be rather cruel in doing so, for example, when she started using Mary's drawing to sweep dust.

5.2.3. Innocence

Both protagonists, as it has been said before, show signs of wanting a better life; and they expect a man to get them out of their everyday routines. This leads them both to have high expectations of others, especially on the few suitable men that appear in their lives. Neither, Aroon nor Mary are capable of seeing the reality of their relations with these gentlemen and put quite high hopes on them.

Some years previous to the events of the story, a foreigner stays with Mary's family for a summer and Mary falls in love with him. During his stay she starts seeing him as her way out and even after his departure, she dreams of seeing him again. Now, Mary seems to be a sensible, logical person; however, in this case she faces the situation with a high level of naivety. At first, even the reader might believe that the long gone man can be the one waiting for her at the pub. Nevertheless, as soon as Mary starts thinking about that summer and reenacts his last words, the reader becomes aware of the low probability of a new encounter, given that John told Mary about his own family. It seems that the young girl, despite knowing that her beloved is a family man, expects, hopefully that his affection for her will be stronger than his feelings for his stable domestic life.

Aroon shows the same attitude towards Richard along the story. It is logical that she sees him as her only chance of getting married, nevertheless, it is clear from the beginning that

Richard prefers being with Hubert than with Aroon. Despite this, she tries to spend every minute she can with the boys, being helped by her father who does not approve of the kind of relationship Hubert and Richard seem to have. Aroon's blindness about the situation gets worse when Richard, probably to dissimulate his real feelings, visits her bedroom one night. Even though there is barely any sexual interaction between them, Aroon believes that they have had a great night and that it will happen again. After that event, she bases all of the hopes about the gentleman on the night during which they shared a moment. Her naivety has transformed the events her mind and due to her lack of advising figures she keeps being desperate for another encounter with Richard, which, as expected; never takes place.

5.3. Literary mode

According to the Cambridge dictionary a bildungsroman is "a story, especially in the form of a novel that is about events and experiences in the life of the main character as they grow up and become an adult". (Bildungsroman) Considering that definition, the stories analyzed could, if not considered bildungsroman, be described as a narrations similar to a bildungsroman in the way that they tell stories about maturing and new life experiences.

This is more evident in the case of *Good Behaviour*, which follows the life of Aroon along several years and depicts a process of changing in behavior. Throughout the book, Aroon becomes aware of the dominion she is subject to and little by little tries to gain control of her own life, obtaining it finally after her mother's death. Moreover, she has to go through various events, such as her brother's death, which mean important variations in her life. It is also relevant the fact that the author of the book, Molly Keane, used the resource of the bildungsroman repeatedly in her works. This is a common Irish literary feature, and the Irish James Joyce was an author famously known for the writing of bildungsroman.

When talking about "Irish Revel", due to its shorter format it is more difficult to classify it as a kind of bildungsroman. However, the story shows how the protagonist goes through events in her life that change her idea of the world, or at least of her small village, and will

have an influence on her future life. Moreover, some of the events that take place on the night the story revolves around are related to previous episodes of Mary's life that we are shown through memories. These memories, together with the events of the party result in a change of Mary's view on some situations and probably of her attitude towards her young adult life. Edna O'Brien, the author of the short story, was a declared admirer of James Joyce, who as it was mentioned before is considered an important precursor of the bildungsroman. It is safe to say that this story is influenced by that kind of narrative.

5.4. Narrator

Following the classification made by the French literary theorist Gerard Genette, it is possible to consider three types of narrators according to what is known as focalization: external, internal and zero. The external narrator does not belong to the story in the sense that it is not one of the characters. Nevertheless, this narrator may intervene with its own ideas or reproduce what the characters say in an indirect way in which the dialogues can be preceded by an introduction; presented in a free indirect way, with no introduction; or just be citations of the characters' words. (Garrido Domínguez, 136) The narrator with zero focalization is the one that, similarly to the external one, is not one of the characters of the story; nevertheless, this narrator knows everything about the characters, including their thoughts and feelings, and is able of showing events that take place simultaneously. This type of narrator is commonly known as omniscient. (Garrido Domínguez, 135) Finally, the internal narrator's main feature is its belonging to the story, being one of the characters. This type of focalization is sometimes altered by what is known as *paralepsis*, which takes place when the narrator knows more than it should about the other characters. (Garrido Domínguez, 135, 137) "Irish Revel" and *Good Behaviour* do not share the same type of narrator; however, there are similarities in the way the stories are narrated.

5.4.1. Narrator in *Good Behaviour*

In *Good Behaviour*, the protagonist, Aroon, is the narrator of the story. From the first scene, the events are told using the first person and everything is seen from Aroon's

perspective. At first, it seems that the narrator is internal although it is not clear if there is or not *paralepsis*. Aroon makes a lot of comments about every character or event that appears in the story. Taking as an example the first scene of the book, Aroon talks a lot about Rose, a servant, and her way of being, which she finds quite infuriating. Moreover, she also talks about her mother and other elements of everyday life, criticizing them and their general behavior. However, these comments reflect features or actions that can be easily known by spending time with someone or sharing situations from everyday life. For example, Aroon explains how Rose likes to ignore her orders, her mother will listen more to Rose than to her own daughter, and the time that the exchange for a call lasts is always too much. Given these examples, it would be logical to say that there is no *paralepsis*.

Now there is a part of the story, in chapter three, in which Aroon talks about her former governess, Mrs. Brock. She goes back to her time with Mrs. Brock and explains how her knowledge about her increased due to the relationship with Richard that she and her brother Hubert maintained. Richard, together with his siblings, had once enjoyed the services of Mrs. Brock as a governess; and during the time he and the Temple Alice children spent together, they shared stories about the Mistress, creating through memories their image of the governess. It is logical that these tales about Mrs. Brock come from real events and only few parts may have been created through imagination or a distorted memory about the woman. Later in that same chapter, Aroon tells the account of Mrs. Brock at the time she spent in Richard's house. The issue with this part of the story is that Aroon does not take any part in it, meaning that the narrator is no longer a character in that specific story.

Although it is possible for someone to get to know this information through a third person, and there is no specific or direct expression of the different characters' thoughts; it is not clear how Aroon gets to know the whole story with such detail and accuracy.

Finally, it is relevant to mention that Aroon can be considered an unreliable narrator, that is, the one that offers its personal view of the story, and by doing so influences the reader's view of the characters and events. (Davison) At the end of chapter one, before the reader has had time to know the whole story and create its own opinion about it, she insists that

during her life she has done nothing more than try to help her loved ones. Reading that, one might consider her a kind of heroine or a martyr; nevertheless, being that her personal opinion in a story narrated by her, it is easy to question her criteria and to have a change in the view of the protagonist while reading the novel. At the end of it, although it is clear that Aroon is not a bad person and has indeed given support to her family throughout her whole life, her final image does not coincide with the one she gives at the beginning of the novel, making her account not fully reliable and the story more questionable to the eyes of the readers.

5.4.2. Narrator in “Irish Revel”

The narrator in “Irish Revel” can be classified as being of zero focalization. Despite following Mary’s story due to her being the protagonist, it is not one of the characters and its only task is to tell the events of the short story. Moreover, it could be considered an omniscient narrator because from the beginning, it offers the thoughts of the characters on various issues, such as the mother’s view on the party, or later, O’Toole’s idea of Mary. Another characteristic that makes this narrator omniscient is its ability to play with time and space, showing situations that have happened earlier on the story or that take place simultaneously. During the story there are various examples of this for, although it follows the present time of what Mary is doing, there is information about past events, such as Mary’s conversation with her mother about the party; and moments, such as the one that takes place before the party, in which two of the guests Edna and Doris are talking about the protagonist and that conversation leads to a depiction of what Mary was doing while the other conversation between the two girls was taking place.

Finally, in this story, due to the type of narrator and how it is told, there is no possibility of having an unreliable narrator. Nevertheless, the order in which Mary’s thoughts are displayed can lead to a misleading idea about her situation with John, the man of her dreams. This is due to the fact that the reader is shown the protagonists’ thoughts as they take place and at first instance, it may seem like Mary still has a chance of being with John. Later, though, she starts remembering past conversations in which he admitted to having a

family back in Italy, which makes it clear that he is not coming back. Due to the narrator having zero focalization and therefore, making no comments during the text; that the story can lead to confusion about some events, although this can be attributed to having an unreliable or naïve protagonist, not an unreliable narrator.

5.4.3. Narrator in both stories

As it was explained before, both stories share the idea of a young woman going through changes and finding its way in a difficult social environment. Due to this, the view of the narrator and how the events are depicted becomes quite relevant. Both narrators follow the protagonists' actions and depict their thoughts and feelings, which give the reader an idea about the main characters. Despite the narrators having a different type of focalization, there are still some similarities that can be seen in the purpose and telling of the stories, for example, the way in which they create a portrait of specific parts of the Irish society.

In *Good Behaviour* Aroon decides to go back to the story of her life to reach conclusions about why her life has ended being a certain way and why many members of her family have been unhappy. In order to do that, it is especially relevant that she is the one telling the story, the internal narrator. In that way, she can give information about her closest family that only she knows, or to revisit her behavior and way of being throughout her whole life. Aroon being the narrator also gives a personal sense to the story because it serves as a good way of discovering her reactions to certain issues and the way she interacts within a complex social class.

The narrator of "Irish Revel" is omniscient, meaning that the story is not told from a perspective as subjective as that of *Good Behaviour*. Nevertheless, the omniscient feature results in the reader having access to the thoughts and feelings of the characters, which gives a deeper insight of the account. The short story is centered on Mary going through an important experience in her life which can influence her later self. Thus, the relevance it has that the narrator follows the protagonist's actions. Even though the narrator has access

to all characters' minds, the one from which more information is shown is Mary's, this gives a more detailed idea on what she is like and what this event means to her.

And the focalization of the narrator does not only mark a difference in the way of perceiving the story but also in the depiction of other elements of the story such as the historical background. This historical background can be useful at understanding in a better way the events of the stories. In terms of historical depiction, *Good Behaviour* is set in a family that belongs to the Anglo-Irish gentry, which, as it can be seen clearly in the novel, was already decaying. Despite the decadent image the family projects, they are still a great part of the high society of their area and it is through that and through the balls Aroon attends that the novel creates the image of this type of society during a specific period. Moreover, Aroon, the narrator does not fully fit in that type of society due to her abilities and physical aspect. Since the story is narrated by her, the reader can get a more detailed idea of the social class that would not be achieved through the perspective of a more socially perfect character.

Finally, although the narrator in "Irish Revel" is not internal, it also serves the function of offering some historical background and may give an image similar to that in *Good Behaviour*. Being omniscient, the narrator has access to the characters' thoughts and that is enough to create an image of the society Mary belongs to. The characters' actions and the description of the village done at the beginning give a clear idea of what this part of the country is like. In addition, the dislike shown towards Mary by some characters helps seeing that even in small rural villages there can be social differences among the inhabitants.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this work was to make a demonstration of how it is possible to consider Edna O'Brien and Molly Keane similar authors, whose personal lives have been reflected in the literary works they have produced, providing them with coinciding characteristics that can be seen in narratives such as "Irish Revel" and *Good Behaviour*. This was done through elements such as their lives, their kind of literature and other elements of the narratives already mentioned.

To begin with, their lives seem pretty common, although they share some events. Both authors went through a difficult childhood marked with a lack of love or affection. In the case of Edna O'Brien this was due to her father's addiction to drink, which made her seek comfort in writing. Moreover, her mother held a strong posture against literature and Edna could not receive approval from her, even when she was a renowned author. Despite being born in a totally different social class, Molly Keane's childhood was not happy either. Her parents were too immersed with the usual occupations of the Anglo-Irish gentry, which resulted in their children being a secondary matter to them. Even if her mother was also a writer, they shared no interests and maintained a very distant relationship.

Both writers received a strict education and resorted to looking for affection outside their family unit. Once they reached their adulthood, both married men they loved and who encouraged their passion for writing, starting very successful careers. Nevertheless, their marriages were unsuccessful, with a divorce for Edna, and the death of Molly's husband. Even though they maintained a comfortable lifestyle in terms of money, for some years; these writers also published books motivated by a need for money and ended up having quite modest lives.

In terms of their literature, their topics may vary, as it was stated in the introduction. However, Edna O'Brien and Molly Keane have been recognized for maintaining a strong Irish style and for their interest on depicting the Irish society of their period with no shame. The two of them have been criticized for their accurate depiction of Ireland in stories which

denounced negative issues of the country such as the decadent and almost ridiculous situation of the Anglo-Irish gentry, or the state of denigration that the Irish women were subject of. Moreover, they share inspirations, such as James Joyce's stories.

And James Joyce was not only what inspired Edna O'Brien to start writing, this author also influenced her style, for instance in the sort of stories she wrote. One of these types, which can be seen in "Irish Revel", is the bildungsroman, a characteristic that this narrative shares with *Good Behaviour*.

The stories analyzed are also similar in other elements, for instance, their characters. The protagonists, Aroon and Mary are young girls who dream of a better life and can sometimes be quite naïve, giving themselves false hopes on some situations. The secondary characters of these stories do not act in a kind way towards the protagonists due to a lack of affection or to having a different way of being. Nevertheless, these secondary characters play the function of making the protagonist stand out for their romantic or innocent qualities, and of giving the reader a portrait of the protagonist and their image inside their social context.

Another element analyzed was the narrator. *Good Behaviour* is narrated in first person, using an internal narrator; while "Irish Revel" employs an omniscient narrator. Despite the difference in focalization in both narrators, they coincide in how they follow the protagonist's journey throughout the whole story, offering mainly Mary and Aroon's point of view. Moreover, it is possible to have access to the other characters' opinions, which contributes to the function, stated in the previous paragraph; the narrator has in these stories.

And the final part of the analysis is that of three themes found in the narratives: good manners, a bad mother-daughter relationship and innocence. As it was already explained in the characters' analysis, both protagonists are quite naïve and innocent, a feature that makes them vulnerable to the world's harsh reality. In addition, their relationships with their mothers are not ideal, with Aroon being depreciated by Mrs. St Charles and Mary's mother

being severe and over protective. Finally, the social situations depicted in these narratives portray perfectly the need to keep a good behavior in whatever social sphere you are, which is something that both Aroon and Mary have quite present.

Once the analysis has been done, it is possible to state that Edna O'Brien and Molly Keane can be considered relevant Irish authors who have had to fight for recognition in the literary industry and have made of their writing not only a job but also a way of maintaining themselves in countries and situations that could be challenging. Both authors have been able of reflecting their Irish origins in their works, keeping characteristics that remind of previous Irish literary elements such as the Big House genre and James Joyce's bildungsroman. Another relevant feature is that they have been able to depict Ireland's situation in a realist and accurate way without any fear of the consequences this action could have. This can be appreciated in the stories that have been analyzed, in which it is possible to see unpleasant situations that may take place in diverse social contexts. *Good Behaviour* and "Irish Revel" also share other features such as the function of the narrator or the main themes, which derive from the issues that both authors have had to go through in their respective lives.

In conclusion, Edna O'Brien and Molly Keane are two authors which may be considered similar and who have wrote narratives which, despite being set in different environments, share common features. Given this statement, their works can be used to create an idea of the aspect the Irish country has presented in different social settings and what some of the characteristics of this country's literature are.

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