

SEBASTIAN BARRY’S CRITICAL REVISITING OF WOMEN’S  
REPRESENTATION IN ANTI-COLONIAL NATIONALIST  
NARRATIVES: *ON CANAAN’S SIDE* AND *THE SECRET  
SCRIPTURE*

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*ON CANAAN'S SIDE AND THE SECRET SCRIPTURE***

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## ABSTRACT

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The experience of the socially- and politically-marginalized in Ireland during the anti-colonial struggle against Britain and its aftermath emerges as a major concern in Sebastian Barry's works of fiction. This entails an ongoing exploration in his work of the question of the national identity of “Irishness,” religious and political identities such as being Protestant, Catholic, Unionist or Republican. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the scholarship on Barry’s fiction, particularly, the research on his postcolonial approach to and concern with the treatment and representation of the socially- and politically-marginalized in Irish history in *On Canaan's Side* (2011)

and *The Secret Scripture* (2008). Both novels feature outcast women narrators who retrospectively give an account of their lives against the background of Irish history, particularly during Ireland's anti-colonial nation-building process in the first half of the twentieth century. It will be argued that in these novels Barry adopts a postcolonial and feminist approach to the anti-colonial nationalist era of Irish history and displays a critical attitude toward nationalist history-writing and homogenizing nationalist practices in Ireland by offering an alternative reading of anti-colonial nationalist history through individual historiographies/"petit narratives" written by socially-marginalized female characters.

**Keywords:** Sebastian Barry, *The Secret Scripture*, *On Canaan's Side*, Irish women and nationalism, postcolonialism

## ÖZ

SEBASTIAN BARRY'NİN *ON CANAAN'S SIDE* VE *THE SECRET SCRIPTURE*  
ROMANLARINDA SÖMÜRGEÇİLİK-KARŞITI MİLLİYETÇİ ANLATILARIN  
KADINLARI TEMSİLİNE ELEŞTİREL YAKLAŞIM

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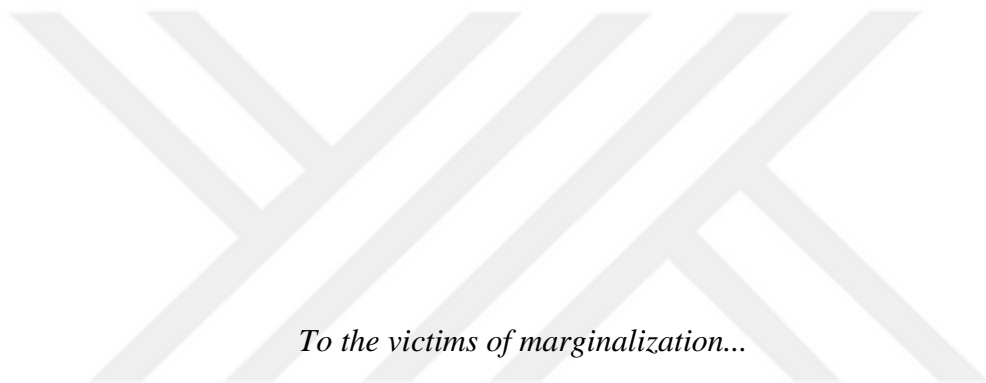
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Britanya'ya karşı sömürgecilik karşıtı mücadele sırasında ve sonrasında İrlanda'da sosyal ve politik olarak ötekileştirilenlerin deneyimi, Sebastian Barry'nin kurmaca eserlerinde değinilen en temel meselelerden biridir. Bu konu Protestan, Katolik, Birlikçi veya Cumhuriyetçi olmak gibi dini ve siyasi kimlikler ile “İrlandalılık” ulusal kimliği meselelerini de beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu tezin amacı, Barry'nin yazını üzerine yapılan araştırmalara, özellikle de *On Canaan's Side* (2011) ve *The Secret Scripture* (2008) adlı romanlara dair yapılan araştırmalara katkıda bulunmak, ve bu metinlerin İrlanda yakın tarihinde sosyal ve politik olarak



ötekileştirilmiş olanlara sömürgecilik-sonrası ve feminist bir perspektiften yaklaştığının altını çizmektir. Her iki romanda da öykü İrlanda'nın yirminci yüzyılın ilk yarısındaki sömürgecilik-karşıtı ulus inşası sürecinde sosyal ve politik olarak dışlanmış kadın anlatıcılar tarafından geriye dönük olarak anlatılır. Bu çalışmada öne sürülen düşünce, söz konusu romanların İrlanda tarihinin sömürgecilik-karşıtı milliyetçi dönemine sömürgecilik-sonrası bir yaklaşım sergilediği; hakim milliyetçi tarihin alternatif bir okumasını sunarak, toplumsal olarak ötekileştirilmiş kadın karakterlerin yazdığı bireysel tarih yazıları/“küçük anlatılar” aracılığıyla İrlanda'daki milliyetçi tarih yazımına ve milliyetçi pratikleri homojenleştirmeye yönelik eleştirel bir tavır sergilediğidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sebastian Barry, *The Secret Scripture*, *On Canaan's Side*, İrlanda'da kadın olmak ve milliyetçilik, sömürgecilik-sonrası yaklaşımlar



*To the victims of marginalization...*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This study aims to examine the portrayal of women narrators in Sebastian Barry's two novels, *On Canaan's Side* and *The Secret Scripture*, in the light of postcolonial and feminist approaches to women's representation in anti-colonial nationalist discourses. To be more specific, this thesis explores how Barry's novels deal with the experiences and representation of Irish women during Ireland's anti-colonial nation-building process in the first half of the twentieth century. It will be argued that in these novels Barry adopts a postcolonial and feminist approach to the anti-colonial nationalist era of Irish history and displays a critical attitude toward nationalist history-writing and homogenizing nationalist practices in Ireland by offering an alternative reading of anti-colonial nationalist history through individual historiographies/"petit narratives" written by socially-marginalized female characters.

Sebastian Barry is an Irish novelist and playwright. He was born in Dublin in 1955. He studied at The Catholic University School and Trinity College in Dublin. He is the author of the following novels and plays: *Boss Grady's Boys* (1988) *The Steward of Christendom* (1995), *Our Lady of Sligo* (1998), *The Whereabouts of*

*Eneas McNulty* (1998), *Annie Dunne* (2002), *A Long Long Way* (2005), *The Secret Scripture* (2008) and *On Canaan's Side* (2011). He has won various awards such as the Irish-America Fund Literary Award, the Christopher Ewart-Biggs Prize, the London Critics Circle Award and the Kerry Group Irish Fiction Prize ("Sebastian Barry"). He was also shortlisted twice for the Man Booker Prize with *The Secret Scripture* and *A Long Long Way*, and he won the Costa Novel Award with *The Secret Scripture* in 2008. He lives in Wicklow, Ireland, with his family ("Sebastian Barry").

Barry's works of fiction are studied mainly in relation to the following issues: first, there are studies exploring Barry's treatment of trauma and traumatic memory of the Irish people. For example, in *Trauma and Recovery in the Twenty-First Century Irish Novel* by Kathleen Costello-Sullivan, Barry's concern for the traumatic memory of the Irish people is discussed and Barry's interest in presenting stories of individuals who are traumatised is highlighted. Another significant work, *Contemporary Trauma Narratives: Liminality and the Ethics of Form*, edited by Susana Onega and Jean-Michel Granteu, includes a chapter by Rudolf Freiburg on Barry's literary understanding of "historical trauma" and examines "its narrative representation" in *The Secret Scripture*. According to Freiburg, traumatic incidents, such as mass starvation and emigration because of the Great Famine or Easter Rising, occupy an important place in Barry's literature. It is also underlined that Barry's historical narratives should not be treated as chronological historical records but rather they should be considered a remedy for the traumas of the nation. Another study that includes Barry's works is *History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction* by Beata Piątek. Like many scholars, she investigates the effects of violent historical events on nations and individuals, focusing on Barry's

four novels: *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*, *A Long Long Way*, *The Secret Scripture* and *On Canaan's Side*. Similarly, Tara Harney-Mahajan's article, "Provoking Forgiveness in Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture*" deals with a similar issue, yet with an emphasis on the question of how Barry's works are preoccupied with restoring the lost, or unknown stories of marginalised figures that could be found in Irish history. An unpublished dissertation by Kristi Good, "Blown off the Road of Life by History's Hungry Breezes: Sebastian Barry as Therapist and Witness," similarly, focuses on the healing power of narrative and testimony to comprehend the experiences of traumatic people in the past of Ireland. Good examines Barry's role as a "therapist" and "witness" by looking at his life and works.

Another prominent theme in the Barry studies is his works' engagement with Ireland as a nation and the notion of Irishness. In an edited collection titled *Subversions: Trans-national Readings of Modern Irish Literature*, Terry Phillips focuses on Barry's novel, *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*, which is a prequel to *The Secret Scripture*, to examine the novel's treatment of the self-perception of the Irish as a nation. Similarly, in his article, "Sebastian Barry's Portrayal of History's Marginalised People," Phillips explores the complexity of the situations in which socially isolated people in Ireland find themselves in with regard to Irishness. In his article, "'To every life an after-life. To every demon a fairy tale': The Life and Times of an Irish Policeman in the British Empire in Sebastian Barry's *The Steward of Christendom*," Hyungseob Lee underlines that Barry's main focus is to crack the surface homogeneity of Irish identity by re-imagining "ourselves."

Another major theme that comes to the fore in the critical literature on the work of Sebastian Barry is his approach to history and historiography. In *Reading the*

*Contemporary Irish Novel, 1987-2007*, Harte states that in most of Barry's work history emerges as a significant theme, in that "he is concerned with the suppressed history and the story of people silenced and forgotten by the dominant ideology and social groups (Harte 199). Harte also adds that Barry has gained his popularity after the publications of *The Secret Scripture* and *A Long Long Way*, in which he becomes the voice of the silenced individuals in Ireland. Another study dealing with Barry's approach to history and historiography is "Queering the Nation: Hegemonic Masculinity, Negative Sovereignty and the Great War in Sebastian Barry's *A Long Long Way*" by Juan Meneses. In this study, the construction of the new sovereignty, which locates itself against the teleological understanding of the history of Irish independence from the British Empire, is discussed. Again, Piątek in his work called *History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction* mentions historiography and highlights Barry's critical approach to official history writings of dominant groups in the Irish society. Similar to Piątek's perspective to Barry's works, Rudolf Freiburg also points out Barry's postcolonial stance on "ambiguity, multiperspectivity, the asymptomatic nature of truth, vagueness" (74) through a reading of his trauma narratives. It is underlined that "Barry presents an alternative to 'grand récit' of official Irish history" (83).

Lastly, there are several studies foregrounding the postcolonial aspects of Barry's work. Liam Harte, in *Reading the Contemporary Irish Novel, 1987-2007*, discusses Barry's literary career and his works from a postcolonial perspective by including the notions of identity and exile. He argues that Barry is concerned with the history's "leftovers," who do not conform to the Irish master narrative. Tara Harney-Mahajan, in her article, "Provoking Forgiveness in Sebastian Barry's *The*



*Secret Scripture*", scrutinises Barry's novels from a different perspective. She regards forgiveness as an instrument of power in postcolonial texts, and she interprets Barry's works accordingly. She argues that Barry writes historiographic metafiction with a postcolonial agenda, in that the emphasis on the protagonists' individual histories is indicative of the significance of memory in recovering marginalised figures in the history of Ireland. Terry Phillips, in his article "Sebastian Barry's Portrayal of History's Marginalised People" also underlines Barry's postcolonial approach by focusing on his treatment of Ireland's involvement in World War I in *A Long Long Way*.

Although there are studies focusing on the postcolonial aspects of *The Secret Scripture* and *On Canaan's Side*, the connections between these novels' interest in female protagonists' character development in response to the nationalist ideology and practices in Ireland and Barry's postcolonial approach to the question of nationalism has not received much attention. Therefore, this study aims to focus on Barry's two female protagonists, Lily and Roseanne, who suffer from and yet manage to resist oppressive nationalist ideology and practices in the light of postcolonial and feminist approaches to nationalism and women's representation in nationalist discourses.

According to Harte, Sebastian Barry's "historically informed use of the specificity of individual experience" aims "to counter the prejudicial force of categories and fixed stereotypes" (200). As Harte states "what is at issue is not how we come to know and represent the past 'per se' but rather the substance of the received narrative of Irish history and the blind spots and elisions it contains" (202). Indeed, Barry scrutinises the official historiography through which a narrative of

“Irishness” is constructed by foregrounding the "experiences that have previously been excluded from" (201) the history of Ireland. Adopting a postcolonial perspective, this study aims to explore Barry’s approach to the question of how the social and historical contexts of Ireland affect the individuals living in the shadow of dominant groups in society. With this regard, the study will focus on the female protagonists and narrators, Lily and Roseanne, in *On Canaan's Side* and *The Secret Scripture*, respectively, who are positioned as outcasts in the new Free Irish State. Furthermore, the novels’ engagement with the question of the reliability and role of the collective and individual memory in the construction of history will be discussed.

Chapter 2 will provide a historical, political, and theoretical background for the discussions in Chapters 3 and 4. The chapter is divided into three parts: The keystones of Cultural and Political History of Ireland; Representation of Women during Nation-Building Processes in Nationalist Narratives – The Case of Ireland; and, Reading Barry's Novels as Postcolonial Revisitings of Women’s Representation in Anti-Colonial Nationalist Narratives in Ireland.

Chapter 3 will study *On Canaan's Side* with an aim to examine Lily Bere's, experiences as a daughter of a Unionist father and a wife of a man called Tadg Bere, who is a member of the Blacks and Tans group fighting on the side of Great Britain against supporters of the Irish national independence. Lily experiences extreme difficulties as a consequence of the homogenising nationalist practices in Ireland at the time and has to flee to the U.S. The novel, in the form of Lily’s memoir, displays an alternative reading of nationalist, anti-colonial Irish history. The novel brings forward the significance of petit narratives, solidarity between women and the significance of affiliations over homogenising grand narratives like nationalism.

Chapter 4 will focus on *The Secret Scripture*, whose protagonist and one of the narrators is Roseanne, the daughter of a Presbyterian father, who is a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary in the new nationalist Free Irish State. She is an outcast, marginalised and non-conforming female character. In this chapter, the clashes between the Free Staters and Republicans, and the entanglement of nationalism and Catholicism in the new nation are examined. As in *On Canaan's Side*, in this novel, too, Barry throws light on the situation of the marginalised and oppressed women, which entails significant criticism to the reliability of history writing, memory and nationalist Irish history. As in *On Canaan's Side*, this novel also offers alternatives to the exclusionary nationalist historiography by emphasising petit narratives and foregrounding individuality over collectivity.

## CHAPTER 2

### ANTI-COLONIAL NATIONALISM IN IRELAND AND WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

The aim of this chapter is to provide a historical, political and theoretical context for the discussion of *On Canaan's Side* and *The Secret Scripture* in the forthcoming chapters. This chapter is divided into three parts under the headings of "The Keystones of Cultural and Political History of Ireland", "Representation of Women during Nation-Building Processes in Nationalist Narratives – The Case of Ireland" and "Reading Barry's Novels as Postcolonial Revisitings of Women's Representation in Anti-Colonial Nationalist Narratives in Ireland". First, a brief overview of the political history of Ireland will be provided with references to some major events during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial time periods. Second, women's representations in both colonial and post-colonial Ireland are discussed by engaging with postcolonial and feminist studies regarding women's representation in nationalist narratives in general. Third, Sebastian Barry's critical approach to women's representation in anti-colonial nationalist narratives of Ireland will be highlighted.

## **2.1 The Keystones of Cultural and Political History of Ireland**

The history of Ireland bears various cultural and political upheavals. Most of them are directly related to political issues such as independence, home rule and anti-colonial struggle against English colonialism in the island throughout its history. After having been invaded by the Norseman, the Irish state tried to evolve its unity around the Catholic Church of Ireland in the twelfth century (Curtis 35). However, that effort did not work well since The Pope sent Henry II to control the Irish church and reformation according to Papa's will, which started the period of English sovereignty over Ireland. Although it is hard to claim there was an absolute control of England over Ireland, there was no unity among the lords of different regions in Ireland during the twelfth century before the arrival of the English forces. There were only some English settlers such as commanders and nobles controlling small areas (52). Later on, King John

set up a royal administration and created a State Church, dealing as best he could with the outlying feudal and Gaelic lords . . . The Kings court in Dublin was to be the supreme court of the realm . . . A coinage for Ireland was struck and those assizes in which Henry had applied the jury system to criminal and land cases were extended to Ireland. (60)

It is seen that depending on the symbolic decisions and events taking place about sovereignty over the land, the official conquest of Ireland began against the baronage system with the beginning of the thirteenth century. Therefore, it could be stated that the English lordship was admitted by the Irish mainly because of the disagreements among the Irish lords and kings (77). In the fifteenth century, Ireland regained its power, and Irish lords expanded their territories because of the upheavals in England.

However, this situation only lasted until the second conquest of Ireland by the Tudor monarchy.

With the fall of the House of Kildare, the Tudor government had a chance to work on Ireland to take over the control of the island. From that time on, Aristocratic Home Rule came to an end and England started to rule Ireland (Ranelagh 55). Henry VIII was confirmed as the king of Ireland by the parliament in Dublin and Ireland became a part of the United Kingdom. Following this incident, England started to shape the Irish Church. Although it remained a Catholic church, it was loyal to the central government in England. Moreover, at this time, English settlers took the place of native lords in ruling Ireland (148). During the reign of Elizabeth I, Ireland encountered Protestantism, which was named as "the queen's religion" by the native people (158). In the light of all these incidents, Irish people had come to gain a hybrid attitude towards identity and nationalism, which is described by Curtis as follows:

From the battle of Kinsale<sup>1</sup> onwards Ireland entered upon a new phase in her history. A new Irish nationality emerged, Catholic by conviction, a mixture of English and Gael by race, becoming in the upper classes ever more and more English-speaking. But in the common people we see a blended race who in the long run have proved to be the characteristic Irish people, feeling a sense of common history and a common Faith, with an intense passion for the land which nothing has been able to shake, and speaking that Gaelic language which was the speech of the majority up to 1800. (192)

This also explains the general social context of Ireland in terms of identity, independence and society since the dominion of the English forces and Protestantism

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<sup>1</sup> It was a battle taking place in Kinsale between Catholic Irish-Spanish and English forces in 1601. It resulted in the fall of Gaelic order and Catholic religion in Ireland (Morgan 2002).

over the newly emerging Protestant upper-classes in Ireland changed the attitude of the native Irish people towards nationalism and identity.

In 1641, a significant rising occurred because of the unfair practice of England in Ireland in terms of representation, trade and political rights. England's support of the Protestant English settlers in Ireland paved the way for a rebellion against the rule of England.

The rising at home began with a plot . . . to seize Dublin castle on October 23rd 1641. The plot failed through treachery, but many of the Leinster Irish appeared in arms, and there was a general rising in Ulster . . . , in which the long-suppressed fury of the native race found vent in cruel massacres of the planters, whose losses amounted to perhaps some 10,000. (210)

As it is indicated in the quotation above, this might be interpreted as one of the first mass upheavals against the central authority of England in Ireland by the natives as a collective response. During the reign of Cromwell, it was obvious that Catholic landowners became a minority in that although they were the majority in number, the major share of power to take decisions was held by Protestant English settlers in the Dublin Parliament (219).

From the eighteenth century onward, however, Catholic middle-class Irish people started to gain some rights from the Crown and reached prosperity to some extent. Regulations on penal laws about the Catholic Irish resulted in economic and social changes. Although there was another rebellion against the British rule in Ireland in 1798, which was called the "united Irish rising," it was rather mainly on an economic basis and it was not able to get sufficient support from the southern part of the Ireland. Later, the Act of Union (1801) passed in the parliament (Ranelagh 102). Therefore, this rebellion became a failure (283). However, the Act of Union brought its own problems together with it. The nationalist, Catholic people of Ireland

did not approve of this act since “the Union had not been a treaty made with the Irish people” (303).

During the nineteenth century, the lost political rights of the Irish people in terms of representation in the parliament were regained, and it could be stated that the struggle for being an independent nation started against the rule of the Crown. The attempts of Young Irelands<sup>2</sup> to become an independent nation as well as the passing of the Reform Act<sup>3</sup> could be given as evidence for the new changes. Nevertheless, “in September 1845 the potato blight appeared and it was not till 1848 that the Great Famine ended in complete exhaustion” (315). This became one of the worst disasters in the history of Ireland since the population of the Ireland reduced 3 million because of the death and emigration caused by the famine. This incident played a significant role in the Irish people's reaction, as a collective nation, against England since the people saw England's limitation policy of import and export of food supply in Ireland as the only and real reason of the famine. The Great Famine also affected the Gaelic culture and language. Most of the people in the Gaelic parts of the Ireland emigrated or died because of the famine, as a consequence of which richness of the Irish language received great harm. Considering the effect of these disastrous incidents on the people's attitudes, the desire for Home Rule and independence grew far more from that time on. Finally, Ireland achieved Home Rule in 1914 after various attempts.

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<sup>2</sup> It was a political group rejecting the 1800 Irish Act of Union with Great Britain, aiming to form an Irish identity independent from British impact (Dugger 461-185).

<sup>3</sup> The 1832 Reform Act provided development in electoral process and representation of people in the parliament (Trueman 2015).



However, this achievement was not put into force until the end of World War I. Ireland remained in the Union, and fought on the side of Great Britain (349). However, Ireland's involvement in World War I together with Great Britain did not receive full support of the Irish people; actually, there was very little interest in going in a war. Consequently, "a rising was planned by the Irish Republican Brotherhood"<sup>4</sup>, and on Easter Monday 1916 the Post Office and the other buildings in Dublin were seized" (349). This sudden rising lasted only four days, and Great Britain responded to it with a heavy bombardment and a large British force. Although it might be seen as a small attempt and a failure, this rebellion contributed further to the consolidation of a collective Irish national identity (349).

Following the end of the Great War, Ireland proclaimed its independence as "Free State" of Ireland in 1919 (350). It was not a smooth transition to an independent state, and there occurred a struggle between Republicans and the members of the Royal Irish Constabulary including "Blacks and Tans"<sup>5</sup> on their side in 1920 (351). After a while, both supporters of Free State and Unionists came to an agreement recognizing Free State as a self-governed country but Britain having control of Irish harbours in London, which caused serious objections in Ireland. Nevertheless, it might be stated that Irish authority over the island was largely restored in the early 1920s.

This agreement, however, did not end the violence and dispute over the terms of the partition; instead, it gave way to a more violent and bloody stage of Ireland,

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<sup>4</sup> It was a revolutionary nationalist part of a group called Irish volunteers, who did not support acting together with Great Britain (Easter Rising).

<sup>5</sup> Black and Tan is a name given to British recruits enrolled in the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) from January 1920 to July 1921; they were mostly former soldiers (*Britannica*).

which lasted two years. Although people supported the pro-Treaty side, the IRA was split into two. The anti-treaty group in IRA protested the Treaty and did not recognize it. As they did not get the full support of the Irish people, they could not stand against the army of Irish Free State despite various vicious fights. Many members of the IRA were executed by the new government, and this civil war left a huge impact on both sides of the public with nearly four thousand dead.

Although it does not receive any specific emphasis in the official political history of the Irish against the sovereignty of the United Kingdom, it must be noted that it is a known fact that women in Ireland took significant parts and played crucial roles in the history as a subaltern<sup>6</sup> double-colonized minority of the Irish society. Even in the early medieval times, especially before the invasions of Norseman and England in the 11th and 12th centuries, women's political role in inheritance to gain more lands for the lords of Ireland was important and common. Furthermore, women's agency during the struggles of power, independence against the Crown's military power or any power out of Ireland was proved when they were described as "rebellious" (Ryan and Ward 17) and powerful such as Finola MacDonnell, "the dark lady<sup>7</sup>," (180) because of their involvement in risings, spying and raising troops against the English (Ryan and Ward 17). Curtis, in his book *A History of Ireland : From the Earliest Times to 1922*, states that both as low-ranking IRA members or as upper-class ladies, such as Finola MacDonnell, who gathered men and supplied

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<sup>6</sup> It is codeword for any class of people (but especially peasants and workers) subject to the hegemony of another more powerful class . . . with the aim of providing a kind of counter-history, to address the imbalances of 'official' histories, which tend to focus exclusively on the affairs of the state and the ruling class (Oxford Reference).

<sup>7</sup> She is called as "Ineen Duv" as "the Dark Lady" because of her participation in power struggles by gathering armies in order to seize power through her sons ( Curtis 2002)

soldiers against Great Britain in around 1570 (180), women in the history of anti-colonial struggles of Ireland took active roles in shaping their country's journey in history. Although they were usually silenced by the dominant anti-colonial nationalist ideology, which left hardly any room for individuality, difference or hybridity so that the new Free Irish state could assert its own unified and homogenous national identity against the (former) colonial powers, women were still able to construct their own identities and assert their very existence.

## **2.2 Representation of Women during Nation-Building Processes in Nationalist Narratives – The Case of Ireland**

According to Feldman, "the hegemonic process of constructing a nationalist ideology depends upon distinguishing between self and other, us and them, in the creation of a common (shared) identity; women as symbol, men as agents of the nation, colonized space as feminine, colonial power as masculine" (177-178). So, it can be held that identity formations of individuals in a nationalist atmosphere of a country are inevitably interwoven with that of the newly-emerging nation. State intervenes in the process and imposes its own needs to form a new nation. Common cultural values and ideology are exerted upon both men and women by dominant and official forces in society.

As Jayawardena remarks about colonized nations in general, "the creation and assertion of a cultural identity was itself dialectically related to the growth of the Imperialism" (4). Therefore, the impact of Imperialism on women's identity development should also be taken into consideration. With this regard, having a critical eye on women's struggle for emancipation and equal rights could be useful to

gain a deeper understanding about women's role in a post-colonial context, particularly in Ireland. Women are not assigned only one role or duty in decolonized societies. They have different social duties and roles to take into consideration while exploring the notion of womanhood in a postcolonial environment.

One of the significant roles that women are to carry out has to do with asserting a collective national identity. As “struggles for women's emancipation were an essential and integral part of national resistance movements” (8), women's participation in independence processes in the formerly colonized countries may give significant evidence about women's role. According to Jayawardena, many countries which assert a new national culture and identity against an imperial power perceive women as significant agents in this process. Women are assigned the duty of forming society and family according to the nation's needs. For instance, in India,

Indian women were to participate in all stages of the movement for national independence, they did so in a way that was acceptable to, and was dictated by the male leaders and which confirmed to the prevalent ideology on the position of women (108)

In other words, women's political activism for national independence did not automatically entail a women's movement for their own rights, as in this example of India. On the contrary, it should be noted that women took part in creating an anti-colonial national identity against colonizing powers even if it meant accepting the duties attributed to them by the patriarchal dominant ideology at the time in India. In nationalist struggles in many different countries, “men were the main movers of the history. They organized nationalist movements and political parties, set the parameters for struggle, even determined the role that women should play” (Jayawardena 216). So, it could be claimed that decolonization does not automatically create a change in women's oppression, which continues in their now

independent countries, for which they fought together with their fellow men to free their homeland from the colonizers.

Similarly, what Chatterjee states regarding the nationalist need for essentializing the domestic aspects of life in colonized countries also highlight “the role that women should play” in nationalist anti-colonial narratives:

"spiritual" or "inner" aspects of culture, such as language or religion or the elements of personal and family life, was of course premised upon a difference between the cultures of colonizer and colonized. The more nationalism engaged in its contest with the colonial power in the outer domain of politics, the more it insisted on displaying the marks of "essential" cultural difference so as to keep out the colonizer from that inner domain of national life and to proclaim its sovereignty over it." (Chatterjee 26)

Under such circumstances women in the community are assigned the task of maintaining that “essential cultural difference” by the newly-independent state. Women’s individuality is not an aspect underlined by the hegemonic nationalist culture. On the contrary, women of the nation, as a unified group, are assigned the duty of maintaining the “essential” boundaries between “home” and what is left outside home. As Chatterjee puts it, "the home was the principal site for expressing the spiritual quality of the national culture, and women must take the main responsibility for protecting and nurturing this quality" (126).

Anthias and Davis, too, underline the notion of “collectivity” that emerges in nationalist narratives particularly in relation to women. They underline that “the central dimensions of the roles of women are constituted around the relationship of collectivities to the state” (1). According to Davis and Anthias,

“women's link to the state is complex. On the one hand, they are acted upon as members of collectivities, institutions . . . and as participants in the social forces . . . On the other hand, they are special focus of state concerns as a social category” (6).

In other words, state's policy regarding women in shaping the new nation affects the roles assigned to women directly since they are considered as actors to perform in keeping with the dominant ideology in society when they carry out their social duties; yet, their individuality may not be acknowledged. In other words, what they indicate is that women are seen as a mass or a large collective, through whom the state can exert its ideology on the rest of the society. Yet, paradoxically, as Yuval Davis points out, there is an ambivalent aspect of women's positioning in collectivities:

On the one hand, they [women] often symbolize the collectivity, unity, honour and *raison d'être* of specific national and ethnic projects, like going to war. On the other hand, however, they are often excluded from the collective "we" of the body politics, and retain an object rather than a subject position. (47)

Similar to the situation stated by Chatterjee, Yuval Davis and Davis and Anthias, this tendency of silencing women and pushing them aside by nationalist narratives could also be observed in the de-colonized Ireland. As stated earlier in this chapter, women were silenced in the social and political arena by the dominant ideology in Ireland, and that their existence was also ignored in Free Irish State. When the legislation process is considered, "it should be noted . . . that some legislation that was beneficial to the rights of women was passed between 1922 and 1937" (Mohr 55). However, despite all the progress having been made so far, nationalist governments in Ireland continue making decisions regarding women's lives through the power of constitution by making laws. So, even after gaining independence from the colonial rule, Irish women's oppression has not ended in social, economical or political spheres. This tendency of silencing and othering

women in the nationalist Irish context could also be noticed in the Constitution of 1937 in Free Irish State:

The Irish Free State would have come into existence at the vanguard of progress towards gender equality. How effectively the application of such a constitutional guarantee would have operated when confronted with a largely conservative legislature and judiciary is open to speculation. . . the 1937 Constitution came into force with an equality provision in Art 40.1 whose performance to date has proved to be less than impressive (Mohr 58-59)

Regarding this, it might be inferred that although there were some progress made by the act of legislations after independence such as those which "guaranteed to women equality of status with men in regard to all privileges of citizenship" on Art 3 in the constitution (Mohr 57), there is still a lot to be considered for women in Ireland, as well.

In addition to women's duty of acting within collectivities, women are also considered necessary for the "expansion and consolidation of the nation because they are biological reproducers of the members of national collectivities" (Yuval Davis 4). This is another example illustrating how women are treated as tools for nation-building mechanism in nationalist narratives of decolonized nations. The role assigned to women as "biological reproducers" of the members of the new nation may even go further in that women's sexuality is strictly controlled and policed. This may even be applicable for women who occupy socially-privileged ranks in society. The concept of legal marriage is "generally a condition if the child is to be recognised as a member of the group and very often religious and social traditions dictate who can marry whom so that the character as well as the boundaries of the group can be maintained" (Davis and Anthias 9). In Ireland, for instance, as a consequence of de-Anglicanization, the consolidation of the cultural values of

Ireland was considered very important after the country's gaining independence from Britain, and it was women who were assigned the very significant task of educating the children of the nation on these values. Furthermore, women's sexual relations with men who were the citizens of foreign countries emerged as a problem in Ireland after independence (Biletz 2002). For example, in the twentieth century, women from Anglican or Protestant roots or those who received Protestant education were seen as if they were foreign missionaries in Ireland since they represented Anglican and Protestant cultural values (65). Since women are perceived as guardians of national and religious values, women's practice of raising children, their marriage or sexual relations came to be considered as political matters. Consequently, the nation's anti-colonial struggle against the imperial power was carried out in the cultural realm in terms of women's individual private affairs.

Motherhood and breeding are very significant aspects of a woman's role in anti-colonialist, nationalist contexts. For instance, according to the British Naturalisation Act in 1870 "a British woman was deemed an 'alien' if her husband was not British" (Davis and Anthias 22). So, it might be concluded that in the nationalist and anti-colonial process of constructing the notion of womanhood, state and civil society perform together. Nationality is considered a characteristic transmitted to one by birth. Accordingly, women are situated in the centre of the nationalist struggle of identity for the new nation state because of their biological capacity for breeding. This duty imposed on women could also be observed in Ireland. Since "Anglicization threatened the survival of the indigenous language, music, literature; hampered the development of a self sufficient Irish economy; generally degraded the national character" (Blitz 61), keeping Irish women restricted



in choosing their husbands and rearing their children was considered a matter of national significance.

Since nation is an abstract notion that does not have a solid, concrete shape for people to be faithful to (Davis and Anthias 58), Davis states that “one of the focused role of women is to foster national identity through their child-rearing and domestic responsibilities” (62). However, it is also significant to note that women's “ideological and political contribution as opposed to their biologically reproductive role was much marginalized. Their invisibility in the public political arena persisted (65). So, while women's position in society remained mostly unquestioned, the duty assigned to women in rearing new generations conforming to the new nationalist identities of dominant political ideology gained much more significance.

Chatterjee, too, points out this aspect of womanhood in post-colonial countries as follows:

position of women underwent considerable change in the world of the nationalist middle class. It was undoubtedly a new patriarchy that was brought into existence, different from the "traditional" order but also explicitly claiming to be different from the "Western" family. The "new woman" was to be modern, but she would also have to display the signs of national tradition (9)

Just like Indian women, women in Ireland from a different ethnic, politic or religious background from the Catholic Irish were also expected to abide by the rules of the Irish government and act accordingly. Otherwise, it might be noticed that those who do not want to conform to new nationalist traditions of the state suffer from a fragmented self. Their nationalist duty to the new government gains more importance compared to their own selves.

Parallel with what is stated above, it can be added that the woman figure had a significant role in the Irish nationalist narrative. As early as the nineteenth-century

Ireland, women played a symbolic role in narratives of nationalism as it is expressed in James Clarence Mangan's famous poem, "Dark Rosaleen":

To and fro, do I move.  
The very soul within my breast  
Is wasted for you, love!  
The heart in my bosom faints  
To think of you, my Queen,  
My life of life, my saint of saints,  
My Dark Rosaleen!  
My own Rosaleen! (Dark Rosaleen)

In this stanza, the poet "associates the figure of woman with topographical land imagery" (Rennie 60). Women, literally and symbolically, were targeted by the nationalist project, and here in these lines, Mangan associates Ireland with the name of Rosaleen. As this poem was first published in *The Nation*, "the rebel newspaper of 'Young Ireland'" (Nevinson 257), the name Rosaleen is historically associated with Ireland, motherland, lover and mother for Irish nationalism. Ironically, Sebastian Barry also chooses Roseanne as a name for his female protagonist in *The Secret Scripture*. His name choice alludes to the patriotic name Rosaleen; yet, as it will be discussed in detail later on, it is ironic and subversive that this name is given to a female protagonist who is marginalized and suffers due to the nationalist narrative of Free Irish State.

It can be summed up that women in decolonized nations are generally seen as a collective, that is, as homogenous members of society rather than individuals. Their significance for the newly independent nation state comes from the duties they are required to carry out such as giving birth to new members of the nation, conveying national values onto their children, and constructing and maintaining family unity.

In addition to what has been discussed so far, Chatterjee also underlines an interesting class dynamic regarding the roles assigned to women in a post-colonial context:

Women from the new middle class in nineteenth century India . . . became active agents in the nationalist project – complicit in the framing of its hegemonic strategies as much as they were resistant to them because of their subordination under the new forms of patriarchy. (148)

So, it could be indicated that particularly middle-class women were expected to put themselves in the position of the oppressor for those who do not conform to new nationalist values in the process of nation building. They also played parts in oppressing culturally, politically, economically marginal people. Middle-class women were expected to indoctrinate the socially disadvantaged in keeping with the new dominant cultural values of the newly independent nation. Similarly, specifically with regard to the relationship between women from different generations and social classes during nation-building processes, Nira Yuval Davis claims that:

Very often it is women, especially older women, who are given the roles of cultural reproducers of "the nations" and are empowered to rule on what is "appropriate" behaviour and appearance and what is not and to exert control over other women who might be constructed as "deviants". (37)

While considering the dominant cultural atmosphere in decolonized nation-states to explore its impact on women, it is significant to underline the fact that “the primary goal of the anti-colonial nationalist movements is to eject the colonial authority and to establish, or re-establish, a sovereign nation-state” (Ryan and Ward 2). Therefore, exploring how women are represented in the narratives of anti-colonial, nationalist states cannot be carried out without paying attention to the political aspect of these narratives, in which women function as “symbols of the

nation and guardians of national traditions” (2) – the very traditions that the state wants to build the new nation on. In this respect, it may not be surprising to see such practices that restrain women in the domestic side of social life and restrict women’s participation in the public sphere. What an anonymous female IRA volunteer in an interview admits is illustrative of this pressure on women: “I have two battles to fight,” she states, “one against the Brits and secondly with the men of my own organisation” (Fairweather et al.241).

Specifically in relation to the Irish context, there is also the case of the “Anglo-Irish plantocracy” who “had long settled in Ireland and which increasingly, although sometimes ambivalently, identified itself as Irish” (Innes 26). As a consequence of the

Resistance [which] increased in the late eighteenth century and continued throughout the nineteenth, from the Rising of 1798 . . . the members of Anglo-Irish Ascendancy class saw themselves as threatened with dispossession, in terms of political and economic power, and the related issue of land ownership (27)

Together with the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy class, women belonging to this minority group in Ireland also emerge as highly vulnerable figures in terms of their identity and social roles. As nationalism of the new Free Irish State had a huge impact on shaping Irish womanhood, Anglo-Irish women’s ambivalent identity, which did not let them subscribe totally to the new order, created a tension. They are perceived as the continuations of the old order and remnants of colonialism because of their Anglican roots in the Irish society although the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy class might see themselves as Irish having spent a long time in Ireland together with the Irish community. For example, what William Butler Yeats, someone with Anglo-Irish roots and related to Anglo-Irish Ascendancy class, points out in the quotation below

is suggestive of the situation of the Anglo-Irish in the country in general in the aftermath of the independence:

I think it is tragic that within three years of this country gaining its independence we should be discussing a measure which a minority of this nation considers to be grossly oppressive. I am proud to consider myself a typical man of that minority. We against whom you have done this thing are no petty people. We are one of the great stocks of Europe. We are the people of Burke; we are the people of Grattan; we are the people of Swift, the people of Emmet, the people of Parnell. We have created the most of the modern literature of this country. We have created the best of its political intelligence. Yet I do not altogether regret what has happened. I shall be able to find out, if not I, my children will be able to find out whether we have lost our stamina or not. You have defined our position and given us a popular following. If we have not lost our stamina then your victory will be brief, and your defeat final, and when it comes this nation may be transformed. (Qtd in Pearce 99)

Yeats' speech against subjection of the members of Anglo-Irish Ascendancy class to the legislation based on Catholic teachings in the newly-independent Ireland shows that formerly powerful and influential Ascendancy class suffers in the new order of Ireland.

Attempts to define "Irishness" constituted a significant aspect of identity formation in post-colonial Ireland and Catholicism was a very significant constituent of the Irish national identity. Therefore, being a member of the Irish Catholics or remaining outside of this Catholic nationalist group inevitably affected women's representation and treatment in Irish society. "With the slowly increasing political and economic strength of a Catholic middle class . . . accompanied by the growth in numbers, power and authority of Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland" (Innes 37), women whose origins were not of this growing class experienced various difficulties in asserting their identity as Irish in nineteenth-century Ireland. Since they were perceived as the former holders of power and capital, they were marginalized, and they became outcasts of society because of their non-Catholic religious identity.

Furthermore, Innes adds that “female images had become potent social, political and moral forces in Catholic Ireland (41).” It was for women that they provided models of behaviour and ideals of identity such as, being a mother, loyal and good wife to a man, and conforming to all the orders of Catholic Church related to social life. It is significant that the roles assigned to women in the nationalist Irish community were shaped by the Catholic ideals, which were linked to anti-colonial, nationalist Irish identity that emerged as a reaction to British imperialism in the nineteenth century. The women’s role could be expressed as “those who must act are the sons; the role of the female is either inspire or to resist (Innes 47-48). In other words, it is stated that women should be passive and stay within the confines of their houses shaped by the dominant ideology, and it must be men who will actively take responsibility and act in the public sphere in the name of the nation and women.

Although women were expected to take responsibility in the new nation-formation process in order to attain the goals of the new dominant anti-colonial ideology, they are positioned in nationalist discourses as objects to be taken care of by men and usually excluded from the “we” constituting the nation.

### **2.3 Reading Barry's Novels as Postcolonial and Feminist Revisitings of Women’s Representation in Anti-Colonial Nationalist Narratives in Ireland**

To start with, to consider the distinctions between the terms postcolonial and anti-colonial could be beneficial for the discussion in what follows. Very briefly, the term anti-colonial denotes any resistance to colonial or imperial domination over people or places. It is about asserting an oppositional presence against the colonial power. In an anti-colonial criticism and/or political stance, the notions of the

colonizer and the colonized are not problematized; these categories are taken as homogenous and oppositional. However, the term postcolonial suggests a different understanding of the period starting with anti-colonial resistances (English 85). It offers an analysis which "disturbs the very foundation of the distinction between West and East (or North and South), colonizer and colonized, metropole and periphery, by showing their historical, political, and cultural imbrication" (87). It further analyzes what anti-colonial criticism did earlier, and adds onto it by considering the multiple voices in the anti-colonial community rather than focusing on the process of finding a single, unified voice against the colonial power (Barry 2007).

Both *On Canaan's Side* and *The Secret Scripture* by Sebastian Barry dwell on significant issues for the people of Ireland concerning the process after the ending of the dominion of colonial power over Ireland. In these novels, Barry engages critically, from a postcolonial and feminist perspective, with anti-colonial nationalist movements in formerly colonized communities in general and Ireland in particular.

Both novels reflect Barry's belief that nationalism is not inclusive enough to represent equally each and every member of the community in Ireland in the post-colonial era. The novels suggest that nationalism is not a sufficient way to include all kinds of identities and does not provide enough space for people build their own identities. Therefore, they claim that there might not be a need for grand narratives to shape people's identities. The novels rather foreground that people's own individual experiences and traumas should be paid attention to in order to understand who they are and how they perceive the world. The novels emphasize the significance of the Other, the forgotten and the marginalised, bringing to the fore characters from

different backgrounds such as loyalist Catholics or the condition of women rather than focusing on broad notions like Irishness. Barry's novels underline the impossibility of writing a shared, objective national history and suggest considering subjective traumas and histories of the past that individuals experienced in order to give a space for everyone to exist in the postcolonial community.

With this regard, Barry portrays characters who are silenced by the official historical narratives of Ireland. Roseanne, for example, who is the main character in *The Secret Scripture*, is a woman separated from her husband and eventually from the community because of her behaviour that is not considered "normal" according to the dominant ideology. A similar example can also be seen in Barry's other novel "*On Canaan's Side*". Lily is driven out of the community and becomes marginalised since she falls in love with someone whose values are not approved of by the new Irish Free State. Therefore, we see that she also shares the same fate with her lover.

Furthermore, in keeping with the changes in the perception of identity and emerging alternative understandings in the twentieth century all over the world, the shift in Barry's writing from concerns for social groups that are oppressed and vulnerable to violence of any kind such as exploitation and marginalization on the basis of religion, ethnicity and social class has been observed (Heyes 2020). He has started to include the victims of the Irish community and their sufferings in his fiction. For instance, in both *The Secret Scripture* and *On Canaan's Side*, Barry includes two main characters who belong to socially-oppressed minorities in Ireland. He sheds light on their individual traumatic experience in anti-colonial Ireland under the influence of the dominant Catholic and Republican groups in the country. Just as Christine Doran points out,



Although there was liberation from the Western imperialist overlords, other social structures, most notably those of class, either remained in place or, more often transformed to bring the populations of the previous colonies under the control of indigenous ruling class. (94)

Sebastian Barry approaches nationalist anti-colonial contexts of decolonized countries such as Ireland from a postcolonial perspective. Although most of his works take place in the anti-colonial setting of Ireland, this setting gives him the chance to display the homogenizing practices of this nationalist anti-colonial atmosphere on people and their identities. His novels bring to the fore the lack of inclusivity and silencing of the voice of subaltern people such as women and ethnic minority groups. As Doran puts it, Barry reveals the condition of the people in decolonized Ireland to his readers (2019). However, Barry's main motive is not just to display critically the nationalist anti-colonial practices; in fact, he attracts readers' attention to sufferings, unfair and unequal conditions in post-colonial Ireland. His characters give voice to the silenced people of the Irish history in general and women in particular. Clearly, he suggests an alternative, postcolonial and feminist reading of the nationalist anti-colonial Irish history and its marginalized figures.

### CHAPTER 3

#### NATIONALISM AND WOMEN IN SEBASTIAN BARRY'S *ON CANAAN'S SIDE*

This chapter will focus on Sebastian Barry's *On Canaan's Side*, a novel about the life story of an Irish woman called Lily. She herself gives an account of her eighty-nine-year-long life by keeping a journal, which, undoubtedly, gives us hints of her character, as well. Lily's memoir also displays important social events of the Irish struggle of independence and the position of the women during and after that period of time. With this regard, I will examine Lily's individual experience in Ireland and America against the background of nationalist and anti-colonial grand narratives that hold power over her life. It is my contention that Lily's keeping a journal can be considered an alternative historiography informed by a postcolonial perspective towards nationalism and women's roles in nationalist narratives. In keeping with this argument, I aim to discuss how Sebastian Barry problematizes these homogenous narratives and how his postcolonial perspective informs Lily's character development throughout the novel.

*On Canaan's Side* is a story of a woman, Lily Bere, who goes on an exile to America because of the political chaos and upheaval in the country of her birth,

Ireland. She is a member of an Irish family that supports the Unionists in the Irish civil war. Her father is a police officer on the side of Great Britain and her brother, Willie Dunne, is a soldier who fights and loses his life for Great Britain in World War I. It is a first person narrative; Lily Bere tells her life story in her journal entries, seventeen in total, day by day. The novel begins with the day when her grandson, Bill, dies. This very first entry also contains an account of the day when her doll was broken when she was a little child. Thus, from the very beginning, the present state of mind and feelings of the narrator are intertwined with her account of her past. She writes she is going to end her own life because of her grandson's death, which suggests that the ending of her journal writing, at the end of the seventeenth day, corresponds to her suicide.

Lily tells her own story in pieces. She is engaged to Tadg Bere, who fights for the British forces in World War I and becomes a part of the Black and Tans<sup>8</sup> group back in Ireland, which makes the couple a target for Irish nationalists and forces them to flee to the new Canaan, i.e., America. However, Tadg cannot escape from death; he is killed by an IRA member at a museum in Chicago. Later, it turns out that the assassin is a man named Mr. Nolan, who has been a life-time supporter of Lily in America mainly because of his regret for what he did earlier to Tadg. After Tadg's death, Lily runs away from Chicago and finds herself in Cleveland. She begins a new life there with her new friend Cassie Black, who works as a servant in Mrs. Wolohan's house. Lily, too, begins to work for Mrs. Wolohan, a wealthy, strong and independent woman, in her house. During that time period, she meets a policeman,

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<sup>8</sup> It is a group of British ex-soldiers recruited by the British government in Royal Irish Constabulary to cope with Irish Republican Army members in Ireland ("Black and Tan").

Joe Kinderman, whose roots and identity remain mysterious for Lily for a long time. They have a child called Ed. One day, Joe disappears suddenly and Mrs. Wolohan helps Lily raise Ed. When Ed is a young man, he joins the American army to fight in the Vietnam War. Returning from the war, Ed finds it very difficult to adapt to his former life. He decides to live on his own, away from society. When Lily is lonely and desperate in her life, she meets her grandson Bill. From that time on, Lily devotes her life to her grandson. However, as her brother and her son in Vietnam, Bill also joins the army and fights in the Gulf War. Just like other men of the family, he returns shattered and confused, which leads Bill eventually to commit suicide. Following his suicide, Lily begins to contemplate about her life and keep a journal, thinking of ending her life.

Sebastian Barry is a writer who is mostly concerned with individuals,' and, especially, women's, representation in post-colonial Ireland rather than society as a whole since he believes that grand narratives, like anti-colonial nationalist narratives, are not sufficient to represent individuals and their identities since he perceives such narratives as obstacles for character development (Piątek 158). In keeping with this, in *On Canaan's Side*, Barry designs the novel in the form of a woman's journal in first-person narration to give voice to people like Lily who are silenced by and in nationalist anti-colonial official history; in other words, Lily's journal can be read as a response to oppressive practices of othering; a portrait of a woman who does not conform to nationalist narratives (Fraser 67). The novel is divided into seventeen days, each of which states how many days pass after Bill's death. With the help of these divisions, the novel suggests that it measures time on the basis of Lily's individual flow of time instead of following an official historical understanding of

linear time. With her 89 year-old, outcast woman narrator witnessing many significant events in the history of Ireland and America, Barry presents an alternative historiography of these nations and their people from a postcolonial perspective.

To begin with, from the outset it is clear that Barry offers an account of Irish history through Lily's journal, and follows the flow of time according to Lily's own writings since Barry believes that grand narratives focus on only official records so they are questionable (Keen 87). Lily's alternative historiography is informed by a critical perspective towards nationalism. On the first day without Bill, Lily writes in her journal her feelings about her grandson Bill's death as follows:

Bill is gone.

What is the sound of an eighty-nine-year-old heart breaking? It might not be much more than silence and certainly a small slight sound. (*On Canaan's Side* 3)

As Doran states in general about nationalism, nationalist narratives fail "to include peasants, subalterns, women, indigenous and ethnic minority groups" (Doran 95) as agential figures. Lily underlines her weakness as an individual compared to the power of homogenous, official national narratives in society. However, she also measures time according to her own life by putting her trauma in the very centre as opposed to a common understanding of time since the linear, scientific concept of measuring time is not individualized so it cannot register the lived experience; therefore, she measures out her time according to her own traumas. It might indicate that Lily, as an old woman, is aware of her marginal social position. These opening lines of the novel foreground Barry's critical attitude to the nationalist assumption regarding inclusiveness of official national histories, in that the novel suggests they cannot embrace every individual in the nation equally. Instead, the novel presents Lily's journal as a "petit narrative" (Joy 32) against grand narratives. Regarding the

assassination attempt the day after her father got promoted to the Commissioner of the British Police forces in Dublin, Lilly makes the following remark:

I wonder is it mentioned or described in any annal of the Dublin police, I suppose not, because who is there left on the earth to read of the doings of the DMP<sup>9</sup>? I can imagine all the books, all the daybooks and the night sergeant's ledgers, the infinite and infinitely growing sheaves of reports and court-papers and the like, put into some cellar like the very coffins of vampires, and left there for the million pages to soften and melt together, so that not even the eyes of angels could turn them. (*On Canaan's Side* 18)

These lines indicate the inefficacy of the official historical narratives. Indeed, Barry's novel puts emphasis on the insignificance of the nationalist historical narrative (McCoppin 86). In the passage above it is underlined that historical narratives of a state do not take subjective perspectives of individuals into account in narrating the history of the people. In other words, as Lily states, they are doomed to be useless in the "cellar like the very coffins of vampires" (18) unless they cover any subjective aspects of individuals.

Lilly reinforces her awareness of being an outcast and pushed out to the margins of the society with flashbacks from her own childhood in the time of her early school days by reflecting on how she used to see the world as a little girl:

When I was shown the Catholic catechism at four, in the little infants' school attached to the castle, and the very first question was posed, *Who made the World?* I knew in my heart that the teacher Mrs O'Toole erred in providing the answer *God*. . . . But the world, as I thought she ought to have known, was made by my Father James Patrick Dunne, not quite that time, but later to be, chief superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. (5-6)

This childhood memory shows that she was raised as a child, who used to see the world under the influence of her father's political significance and power in Ireland at the time. She well knows the fact that we all lead our lives under the influence of

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<sup>9</sup> DMP is an abbreviation for "Dublin Metropolitan Police" in colonial Ireland.

narratives about who we are and what kind of society and/or nation we live in; therefore, we cannot orient our lives freely or autonomously. Hence she comments in her journal on the school days:

The Bible is a particular music, you cannot always catch the tune of it . . . I like stories that other people will tell you, straight from the mouth – or the gob as we used to say in Ireland. Easy-going tales, off the cuff, humorous. Not the heavy-hearted tales of history . . . And I have had enough history for a life time from my own life itself. (10-11)

She clearly expresses her preference for small personal stories over Biblical or historical tales exerted upon her in school. The stories people tell about themselves look more reliable and enjoyable to Lily. Instead of a grand narrative of the Bible, Lily prefers petit narratives. Here, the novel suggests that Lily, or any individual in general, cannot be identified by any historical narrative shaped under the influence of dominant ideologies in society.

Another entry in Lily's journal that illustrates her distrust of grand narratives is as follows:

And be thinking, remembering. Trying to. All difficult dark stuff, stories stuffed away, like old socks into old pillowcases. Not quiet knowing the weight of truth in them much any more. . . Mightily healing, deeply, and what else could we have come here for except to sense these tiny victories? Not the big victories that crush and kill the victor. Not wars and civil ructions, but the saving a grace of a Hollandaise sauce that has escaped all the possibilities of culinary disaster and is being spread like a yellow prayer on a plump cod steak – victoriously. (27-28)

Here in this passage, by putting emphasis on "tiny victories," the novel suggests that the grand narratives and official histories of a nation are insufficient to embrace all individuals in the national community. Stating that she does not know "the weight of truth in them" (28), Lily underlines that she discredits narrations of both sides. They cannot provide people with happiness by assuming that community has a homogenous identity. Therefore, Lily's "tiny victories," the "daily contentment" she

receives as a good cook, might be given as an example of the novel's critical attitude to "big victories" of history. Lily, as an outcast, having a Unionist family background and forced to move away from her own homeland, considers her cooking skill as a weapon to overcome those homogenizing practices. That is why when she mentions Cassie, who teaches her how to cook better, she writes, "Dear Cassie Black, who gave me these guns and bullets for the long fight of life" (28). In other words, Barry focuses on petit narratives of individuals and displays the importance for plurality of narratives by focusing on small incidents shaping Lily and her life.

Furthermore, as Lily states about official histories in general, they are highly partial accounts of events:

It is always at the back of my mind the things I have read since about the time of the war of independence, the capture of rebels, and they being held somewhere in the castle, and I fear tortured . . . I do now know how much such histories are weighted against the losers, in this case men like my father, loyal to kings and the dead queen, but I am sure there was evil and cruelty on both sides. (41)

The novel's critical attitude toward the reliability and inclusivity of official historiography is also informed by a postcolonial attitude. According to McCoppin ,

These characters [in *A Long Long Way* by Barry] gather together as Ireland is on the cusp of nationhood, united by the shared trauma and grief wrought by an entirely different conflict. They will all, ultimately, be left out of official versions of nationalist history, but this brief moment demonstrates the possibility of a different kind of national community. (92)

Regarding Barry's characters in another novel, *A Long Long Way*, McCoppin underlines that they are portraits of individuals left out of history in the nationalist context of Ireland. His remarks also hold true for *On Canaan's Side*. In this novel, too, Barry underlines that official histories as a form of nationalist and anti-colonial grand narratives told by countries are partial and that individuals are likely to be the victims of nationalist ideas and practices in the process of nation building. The novel



portrays Lily as a member of a Catholic Irish family but she lives in Dublin Castle, which was, according to Irish nationalists, a strong symbol of Britain and its colonial presence in Ireland. As Gardiner points out in his work about Anglo-Irish clashes and the function of Dublin Castle, "RIC<sup>10</sup> men were occasionally injured and sometimes killed whilst enforcing the laws and ordinances set down by Dublin Castle" (24), Dublin Castle is strongly associated with the colonial presence of Great Britain. However, Lily has a postcolonial perspective towards grand narratives and the context around her all the time. Just like her stance against nationalist and Catholic narratives, Lily, in the passage quoted above displays her critical stance against Unionist positions and narratives despite her father's position as a Chief Superintendant in Dublin. It is seen that she manages to stand in equal distance to both sides.

Lily displays an explicit critical distance in her narration of the events affecting her father's life. Although Lily's life is shaped under the influence of her father and familial values, she is able to put a distance between herself and her father's political stance. This is how she reflects on the notion of freedom as an old woman:

Now I am laughing in my kitchen, but who is to hear that laughter? There are many forms of freedom, and this is one of them, to be so old I can lay claim to those I loved, without my own mind qualifying, erasing, hiding. My father was chief superintendent of police under the old dispensation. He was the enemy of the new Ireland, or whatever Ireland is now, even if I do not know what that country might be. (42)

As these lines indicate, Lily does not subscribe to Unionist political views under the influence of her father. She does not feel involved in what has happened to her father

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<sup>10</sup> Stands for 'Royal Irish Constabulary', which is a police force governed by the British.

because of the political chaos in Ireland. Furthermore, it can also be noticed that there is a conflict between IRA members and Unionists about the political stance of the new Ireland. Although being Catholic, Lily and her family are members of the Anglo-Irish Plantocracy, which is seen as the representatives of the old colonial and imperial order (Innes 26). Moreover, her father works as a Chief Superintendent in Police Force in Dublin for the British, and her brother Willie fought for the British army in World War I. As McCoppin states:

Barry's protagonists tend to be victims of the process of Irish nation-building. In *On Canaan's Side*, for example, Willie's sister Lilly Dunne spends most of her life fleeing the political consequences of her husband's involvement with the Black and Tans (92)

By considering all these, it can be held that Lily is on the "wrong" side of the nation building process in the newly-independent Ireland; consequently, she becomes its victim (McCoppin 92). She has to flee her country and start a new life in America because supporters of the nationalist and anti-colonial movements and organizations in the country of her birth do not equally welcome every individual in the community; on the contrary, they push aside the people who do not conform to the new order and marginalize them.

All the same, this does not mean that Lily, or, the novel as a whole, displays a nostalgic or an uncritical attitude toward the British rule or imperialism in general. The way in which Lily describes the ceremony held for her father's being the Chief Superintendant of Police forces in Dublin illustrates this point well:

with his uncharacteristically unsure face, beaming his smile, the photographer under his cloth, the soldiers passing respectfully enough, but not entirely so, because this was mere police business, and they were soldiers, mighty soldiers. (20)

In the scene above, Barry displays Lily's awareness of the situation and underlines the fact that Lily does not idealize the English or the English rule, which is indicated by her awareness of the English soldiers' "not entirely" respectful gaze on her father. Lily is aware of the situation that despite her father's submission to and support of the British rule, her father did not receive enough value from the soldiers of the British rule in Ireland.

On the other hand, in these lines that follow the incident above, the novel draws attention to another aspect of the situation:

from the shadows into the explaining sunlight a long brown creature, at first on all fours, and then when it saw my father's back, reared up, and most foully roared out, roared out like a great steam engine emitting steam, making my father spin around in adroit terror his substantial feet, and stand there entirely frozen, the soldiers also frozen, but then in a moment one of them rushed forward and levelled his rifle, and fired it just by my right ear . . . instant of the bullet a sudden poppy of blood appeared on the bear's face . . . hitting the stone with a soft bang . . . (20-21)

The bear is sent by the Republicans to kill Lily's father since he was the Chief Superintendent of the Royalist police force in Dublin Castle, but it fails to do so because one of the British soldiers sees the bear and shoots it. Lily's father and his family are perceived as an enemy by the Irish Republicans, and this scene clearly throws light on the clash between British imperialists and Irish nationalists. Nevertheless, in this struggle, it is the bear that suffers the most and consequently dies. If the bear is taken as a figure symbolic of Ireland, since Ireland was once a home for wild brown bears ("Bears"), it might be inferred that Barry's novel suggests how much Ireland is damaged as a consequence of this struggle. Furthermore, considering the novel's emphasis on the pain the bear suffers in the sentence "it was a bear, reared up further, in violent pain, his last pain on this earth, and fell full length out onto the top of granite steps" (21), it can be claimed that Barry displays

his critical distance to both imperialists and nationalists, in whose hands the nation suffers exceedingly.

Barry's novel suggests a postcolonial understanding in replacement of imperialist and nationalist grand narratives, which is voiced explicitly by a character in the novel, Mr. Dillinger, one of Lily's friends in America. On the fourth day after Bill's death, Lily talks to him about migration and different ethnicities in America.

Mr. Dillinger states:

Three letters, Mrs. Bere, D-N-A. Don't ask me what they stand for. The DNA of every modern person goes back to one, or maybe three women in Africa. The good news is, we are all the same family. The bad news is, we are all the same family. . . . The point is, all these wars, all these teems of history, all this hatred of difference, and fear of the other, has been a long, elaborate, useless, heartbreaking nonsense. America is not a melting pot of different races, it is where the great family shows its many faces. (58)

In the light of Bhabha's concept of the "third space," O'Brien states that "It is not vacillating between extremes. . . . '[R]econjugation' and 'permutation' of her [Lily's] identity which continually occurs throughout her life opens up a 'third space' (O'Brien 43). Mr. Dillinger's remarks undermine polarized understandings of identity and creates another centre for Lily. In fact, the way Lily acts throughout the novel or the decisions she makes are in keeping with these words of Mr. Dillinger. For instance, she marries Tadg Bere, who is a supporter of the Unionist group in Ireland and who fights in the World War I for Great Britain. In other words, she sees no problem in marrying a man who is considered a traitor and outcast in Ireland simply because she loves him.

Reflecting on the moment of his arrival to America, Mr. Dillinger shares with Lily the "strange feeling" he has had:

Which might explain the strange feeling I had standing on the deck of our ship as it approached New Heaven. There was a scent, the scent of

America, that came off the land, so suggestive, so subtle, there was something in that claimed my heart. . . As if I had been there before, had left it, and was returning after a long voyage. (58)

In the novel, America, i.e. the Canaan in the title, emerges as a metaphor for a postcolonial alternative to nationalist narratives of home. America enables Lily to have the freedom to be an individual rather than a “proper” national subject of Ireland. After moving to the new Canaan, she keeps making decisions that are not bound to any grand narratives. For example, she marries Joe Kinderman, who, as his friend Mike Scopello tells Lily, is an undocumented man:

It's not just the death cert. We can't even find a birth cert for Joe. We can't find any sort of cert for him except his marriage licence. Any information he gave when he started his training doesn't quite tally with any actual document. There's not one piece of paper can tell you anything about him. (162)

Lily chooses a man to marry with no roots or anything that can bind him to a particular national identity. As in her first marriage, her guiding principle when it comes to marriage is love. “He didn't need to be from anywhere,” Lily thinks, for her to love him. “He didn't need to have a story or history” (138). As Jayawerdana states, women in countries trying to form a national culture are perceived as significant agents as “guardians of national culture” (14); and, they are expected to submit themselves to a “common shared identity” (Feldman 177) since they are “cultural reproducers of the nations and what is appropriate” (Yuval Davis 37). Similarly, Meaney in *Gender, Ireland and Cultural Change* observes that “women are crucial to national expansion and consolidation in their role” (4). However, both instances highlight Lily as a character liberated from any notions attributed to women in nationalist narratives. She reacts against the roles that nationalism has assigned to her as a woman; she rejects collectivity, and she marries only for love.

On their way to America, Lily reflects on her relationship with history and comments upon how one's life is shaped strongly by historical narratives, especially if approached "unthinkingly":

It was easier for us there certainly, because there was no history. I realised slowly that as my father's daughter, unthinkingly, I had lived as a little girl and young woman through a certain kind of grievous history, where one thing is always being knocked against another thing. Were my father's respect for the King was knocked against Tadg's father being in the Irish Volunteers, where Willie's going to war was knocked against his dying, where even Wicklow life was knocked against Dublin life . . . (71-72)

She draws a sharp line between herself and exclusionary narratives told by Unionists and nationalists. Actually, she develops a postcolonial perception of home, which problematizes essentialist/nativist understandings of home. In *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Edward Said underlines the distinction between the terms "affiliation" and "filiation" as follows:

What I am describing is the transition from a failed idea or possibility of filiation to a kind of compensatory order that, whether it is a party, an institution, a culture, a set of beliefs, or even a world-vision, provides men and women with a new form of relationship, which I have been calling affiliation but which is also a new system. (Said 19)

Lily is a character who privileges "affiliation" over "filiation" since she does not privilege any biological relations in order to call a place "home" for herself. Indeed, she establishes friendships and build a home and family for herself and hold her friendships much more dear than her blood ties to Ireland and her relationship with her biological family.

For example, Lily describes one of the significant moments she has experienced since she moved to America together with her friend, Cassie Black, and her future husband, Joe Kinderman, in an amusement park as follows:

We poised, three beating hearts, three souls with all their stories so far in the course of ordinary lives, three mere pilgrims, brilliantly unknown, brilliantly

anonymous, above a Cleveland fun park, with the wonderful catastrophe of the sunlight on the river, the capricious engineering of the tracks, the sudden happiness of knowing Joe, his clever kindness to Cassie (119)

As pointed out in the previous chapter of this study, according to Anthias and Davis, women "are acted upon as members of collectivities, institutions . . . and as participants in the social forces" (6). Moreover, women are perceived as "national icons" (Ryand and Ward 58), and they "symbolize the collectivity, unity" (Davis 47); or, like Innes (1993) indicates, women might be "victims of patriarchal rule" (72) in nationalist, anti-colonial grand narratives. Therefore, it might be seen in these lines that Lily's and Cassie's personalities are acknowledged independently of any grand narrative. Clearly, it is seen that home is not just about family or nation for Lily. She builds an entirely different perception of home for her in America with two different people coming from different backgrounds. According to Lily, home is the place where you feel belong and happy. As Lily says, since they are "brilliantly unknown, brilliantly anonymous" (119) individuals, there is not necessarily a need for a collective identity to feel at home. As Lily puts it in another journal entry, "whatever society the human creature finds itself in, it tries to live in it" (168).

Throughout the novel it is seen that Lily perceives America as her new home, a "glittering Canaan" for the rest of her life. However, Lily's (and the novel's) postcolonial approach to home also informs the portrayal of America in the novel. For instance, although America is a place where, according to Mr. Dillinger, "the great family shows its many faces" (58), we can see examples of racism, to which Lily's close friend Cassie Black is exposed. She is expelled from a car because the motorman thinks "she don't look like no queen" (114) to him. Furthermore, she is abused and treated badly by her boss, as a consequence of which she gives an end to

her life. Similarly, Joe Kinderman's effort to hide his own blackness is another example of racism that Lily witnesses in America. Joe, whenever Lily asks him about his family background, tells a different story. For instance, sometimes his grandfather is a "Hollandish man" (133); or, sometimes his origins are Jewish as Lily tells "He did tell me once also that he was Jewish, but I must confess, on having relations with him, he was not a circumcised person, that I could judge" (134). Therefore, Lily "could not quite establish what part of the country he came from" (134). Joe's effort to hide his origins, however, is understood later when he confesses the truth to Lily:

My great-grandfather, the one who swam the tunnel to get to his wedding, you remember? He was white all right, but his bride was black, and all his children. And Jürgen Neetebom, he was the only white man ever in my family. And when I was born, his great-grandchild, by God if I wasn't so black at all, which I know now can happen, it's, you know, skipping generations, and I was very confused in those days . . . and when you got pregnant, I feared, I feared so bad the child would be black, and I knew you would leave me, I knew I would lose everything. (198)

Obviously, Joe Kinderman has a deep fear that his black origins will be uncovered at some point, and he does not know how to deal with racism in America. The portrayal of Joe emerges, therefore, as another example of the novel's concern with the effects of racism on people in America.

In keeping with the novel's critical attitude to racism in America, the novel displays an anti-war attitude to the wars in which America has been as well as the World Wars. In fact, Lily does not perceive wars as heroic acts at all. After losing her older brother, Willie, in World War I; her fiancé, Tadg Bere, because of the Irish civil war; sending her friend Mike Scopello to World War II and her son to Vietnam for America, she sees war as a traumatic experience as can be seen explicitly in these lines:



It was an earthquake, tearing at the sons of America, trying to swallow them up. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful sons, that women had reared, has kissed and screamed at, and that fathers had stared at intently in their cots, to see themselves in the wondrous mirrors of their babies. (151)

Although America is presented as a new opportunity, a Canaan, to build a new life for Lily, Barry's novel establishes a critical distance to America, in that it avoids celebrating America's global military decisions. On the contrary, the suffering these wars have caused to "the sons of America" and their families are highlighted.

Lastly, the remaining of this chapter will focus on the solidarity that we see between Lily and other women characters that she encounters during her life journey. The friendship between women, especially when Lily is in exile, far from Ireland, emerges as another example of the novel's emphasis on the notion of affiliation as a means of undermining filiation – a notion that underpins essentialist understandings of family and nation. When Lily moves from Ireland to America, it is a totally foreign place for her. However, she manages to survive in a new country after some time. Although she lives in solitariness, it is seen that she has the capacity to build her life upon friendship.

In the following lines, Lily describes how she feels about being an outcast Irish woman even when she is in America:

How I feared when first I worked for Mrs Wolohan's mother that she would cast me out if she discovered who I came from. . . . Because she knew who I was, I gradually came to see myself better. When a criminal gets out of prison, he looks for work, but must be upfront about his prison term. Whoever takes that man knows all about him, and if he is lucky enough to find such a person, he might well find a strange and unexpected happiness working for him. (43)

In this passage, Lily describes how she feels when she is hired by Mrs. Wolohan's mother to cook for their family. Since Mrs. Wolohan's mother is also "an Irish-American, who loved Ireland, and the idea of Irish freedom, which for her was heroic

and inspiring" (42), Lily, as a daughter of a father who was on the side of the Unionists, that is, on the opposite side of what Mrs. Wolohan's mother thinks, feels insecure initially. Therefore, it could be inferred from Lily's reflection on her concerns about building a new life as an outcast female character that she does not count on any filiations. Indeed, it might be noticed that she prefers friendship and trust among women. Here, the emerging friendship between Lily and Mrs. Wolohan's mother, who is politically on the opposite side of Lily's family in Ireland, shows a strong evidence for Lily's openness to and preference for building up affiliations.

Similarly, when Lily reflects on her own thoughts about Cassie Black, she states:

The depth of safety I felt with her, sleeping at her side, and taking her instructions in the house, caused a great gratitude in me. Loving Cassie was where in truth I started to love America. Maybe for me Cassie was America. (103)

When Lily thinks about the time that she thinks she loves America, she remembers Cassie, her best friend, since both Cassie and Lily share similar experiences in their lives. They both suffer from solitariness as single women. Just like Cassie's marginalization because of her skin colour, Lily is aware that she was also marginalized in Ireland because of her family's political decisions, and she is marginalized again as a single woman in exile. Therefore, these lines suggest that trust is important for Lily to form a positive relationship with people and the place where she lives rather than depending on any family or blood bonds. Similarly, when Lily thinks about being a single woman and how hard it is for herself, this struggle reminds her of Mrs. Wolohan, and she describes her as follows:

Mrs. Wolohan is a woman who has endured vast vicissitudes. What has saved her generally in life is not just her courage, which is signal, and her faith,

which is solid, but her enjoyment of all the minute pleasures of being alive, something that always gave me pleasure also, in cooking for her. (125)

Mrs. Wolohan's life energy and the support she gives to Lily help her keep struggling against all the hardships she encounters in the rest of her life.

Another female character who helps Lily in a difficult period of her life is Maria, Mike Scopellos's sister. Lily sees Maria as a "saint" (168) because after giving birth to Ed at a hospital in the absence of Joe Kinderman, Maria accepts Lily and her baby into her home without any hesitation.

She had already been primed up to get napkins for Ed, who right enough was wearing one so heavy with pee it was as big as the rest of him. Tiny and soft, as gentle-looking as the first thing in God's creation to be called gentle, . . . 'And you can have your bath, Lilly, I have so much hot water in the cistern I could set out to sea with it like in a steamship. My God, I wait and wait. How long it take to drive down from Cleveland? (180)

Maria is ready to help Lily and her son immediately after they are introduced to each other. Apart from Maria's care for Ed, as Lily states, "I must have been with Maria three years, and when I was fit and well, after a month, worked with her in the great fruit market outside the city" (180). In other words, Maria also supports Lily in both financial and social aspects of life to help her adapt to her new life.

"I went back to where I come from, where I am known, where people know me for who I am, and I married a girl that was local" (197) tells Joe to Lily to explain why he has left her. Unlike Joe, Lily trusts strangers, especially women she makes friends with. She gets her strength to carry on from the women she knows, the friends that she has in her life. By depending on affiliations, "non-biological, social and cultural forms" (Said 23), in forming relationships, Lily can recover from being an outcast.

*On Canaan's Side* foregrounds the liberating possibility of seeing the world and relationships in a way that is different than the essentialist and insular perspective of nationalist narratives. The following lines where Lily describes her feelings about nationalism back in Ireland reveals how much she feels terror even after moving to America:

the huge war of it, the suddenness, the completeness, the colossal ungenerosity of it, implacable eternal hatred of it, that they wouldn't let us go, forgive us our trespasses. That they wouldn't allow us to cross into Canaan, but would follow us over the river, and kill him [Tadg Bere] on Canaan's side. (82)

Lily's statements display the bitter fact that the official, homogenous nationalist narrative of the new Ireland does not let individuals be who they are. It follows them in every part of their lives and gives them no choice but to die or be obedient citizens. With this regard, Barry's novel presents the significance of solidarity and the notion of affiliation, particularly among women, as the possibility of forming an alternative narrative. Lily's relationships with Maria, Mr. Wolohan and Cassie Black displays evidence for the possibility of constructing and living according to such a narrative.

To conclude, in *On Canaan's Side*, Barry highlights the impact of the nationalist, anti-colonial era in Ireland on a woman character like Lily, who emerges as an outcast as the daughter and wife of Unionist men. The novel underlines the homogenizing assumptions and practices of these narratives, and examines how these narratives cause traumas and extreme difficulties in the lives of individuals who do not subscribe to them. As a fictional memoir/journal of an old woman, the novel gives voice to a marginalized Irish woman figure and displays an alternative postcolonial reading of nationalist, anti-colonial Irish history in the light of Lily's narrative. The novel brings to the four alternatives of nationalist practices such as the

significance of “petit” historiography against official history; postcolonial attitudes over community and diversity in defining identities; and women’s solidarity and affiliations over filiations and homogenizing grand narratives.



## CHAPTER 4

### NATIONALISM, CATHOLICISM AND WOMEN IN SEBASTIAN BARRY'S *THE SECRET SCRIPTURE*

Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture*, too, tells the story of an old Irish woman, who is named Roseanne. Through her writing, under the subtitle of “Roseanne’s testimony of herself,” we see the struggles of a non-conforming woman for existence during the political turmoil of Ireland, especially between the 1920s and the end of the Second World War. Roseanne, almost at the age of one hundred, displays, apart from her individual experience, some of the significant social matters in Ireland such as the conflict between the members of different religious groups or the violent outcome of the division between the loyalists (i.e. supporters of the Irish Free State) and republicans in the country (IRA) during the civil war when a new nation, Ireland, was about to emerge. Like *On Canaan’s Side*, this novel, too, emphasizes the unreliability of history and gives voice to a marginalized woman character, who, at a very old age, writes her “testimony” against the background of Irish history. Different from *On Canaan’s Side*, the emphasis in this novel falls on the entanglement of the newly independent Irish state’s nationalism and Catholicism in the oppression of women. Another difference between the two novels is that the

story in *The Secret Scripture* is not thoroughly informed by a postcolonial perspective; but, it can be claimed that this novel, too, has a postcolonial attitude to the issue of nationalism. Furthermore, the novel portrays Roseanne as a colonized character, which comes to the fore in particular scenes of the novel as will be discussed in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

The novel contains the accounts of two narrators: Roseanne Clear (later to be named McNulty), a patient in Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital, writes her childhood and youth memories in the town of Sligo, Ireland. Roseanne is the child of a Presbyterian family. Her father is a loyalist and a police officer in the Royal Irish Constabulary. The novel covers mostly the events following her father's death because of a disagreement among the loyalists and IRA members at that time in Ireland. There is also a second, alternating narrative, "Dr. Grene's Commonplace Book," in which, Dr. Grene, the senior psychiatrist at the Roscommon hospital, writes about both his private life, mainly his relationship with his wife, Bet, and his relationship with the patients, especially Roseanne.

Roseanne narrates her story in a fragmented way. Although she acknowledges that her memory is not reliable, she writes her story depending on her earlier memories. She, in her testimony of herself, mentions her childhood, her relationship with her parents, and Father Gaunt's intervention in her life after her father's death in order to maintain the rule of Catholic Church over the people of Sligo. She writes about her independent way of living as a single woman, and her strong character until she meets her Catholic husband, Tom McNulty, and his family. We see her as a happy woman with her decisions until Father Gaunt shows up in her life and declares her marriage annulment because of her non-conforming attitude

towards the Church. After the annulment, she becomes an outcast in Sligo. During this time period, she becomes pregnant from Eneas McNulty, Tom's brother. Since she cannot get any help, she gives birth to the child on her own outside by the sea and faints afterwards. She never finds out what happens to her child. She is sent to a mental hospital by her former husband's family and spends the rest of her life as a resident of this hospital first and then of Roscommon. At the end of the novel, by the help of Roseanne's testimony, Dr. Grene discovers that the child to whom Roseanne gave birth is himself.

In this novel, Sebastian Barry is concerned with, among other things, the unreliability of memory and history. A significant difference between *On Canaan's Side* and this novel is that in *The Secret Scripture* the problematization of memory comes to the fore. To begin with, there are two narrators in the novel, Roseanne and Dr. Grene, whose alternating accounts of Roseanne's past are not always in agreement. Roseanne suffers a trauma after her father's death in her childhood; therefore, she is not a reliable narrator. The following passage is her account of her father, who, she remembers, carried out an experiment using a hammer and feathers "to prove to [her] the ancient premise that all things fall at the same rate, in the realm of theory" (20):

I am standing there, eternally, straining to see, a crick in the back of my neck, peering and straining, if for no other reason than for love of him. The feathers are drifting away, drifting, swirling away. My father is calling and calling. My heart is beating back to him. The hammer are falling still. (23)

However, Dr Grene, on the basis of Fr. Gaunt's writing, states that this "experiment" was actually what Roseanne witnessed as a child when her father was beaten by the "rebels":



But Father Gaunt has him being murdered by the rebels, the first attempt in the very round tower Roseanne so fondly remembers, his mouth stuffed with feathers and him beaten by mallets or hammers, which in terms of post-traumatic stress, sounds like what really happened, and suggests that Rosanne for survival's sake has sanitised it completely, even moving the event back to a time of relative innocence. (289)

Interestingly, however, Dr. Grene's account, as he realizes later on, is not reliable, either. While Roseanne tells what has happened in the way she remembers it, Dr. Grene's account is shaped by both his conversations with Roseanne and his reading of a document written by Fr. Gaunt regarding Roseanne's life. Dr. Grene reflects on his own opinion regarding Roseanne's account of the experiment as follows:

I have just gone back to Fr. Gaunt's actual account, . . . and I find to my absolute astonishment and even shame that in his account of the events in the tower, he doesn't actually say Roseanne's father's mouth was stuffed with feathers, just that he was beaten by hammers. For some reason, in the gap between reading his account and summarising my own brain must have supplied this detail. . . . Her father showed her the nature of gravity at the tower, and some years later an attempt was made to kill her father in the tower, both of which events she witnessed, but would not record the second. So that my first inclination to identify her memory as a traumatic one, with details transposed and corrupted, and the ages changed, was even if unlikely, actually too simple. Then there was of course my own weird interpolation – oh dear, oh dear. Of course, of course, it is just possible that years and years ago she told me about the hammers and feather as an anecdote, and I simply forgot all about it. . . . I actually seem to have a vague memory of it. (290-291)

Interestingly, as Dr. Grene realizes, he, too, experiences problems with his memory in forming an account of what has happened in the past. By presenting multiple narrators/accounts of the same events, the novel further problematizes the reliability of memory.

As for Fr. Gaunt, he also narrates the events from his point of view, judging Roseanne from his position as a Catholic clergyman. For instance, according to Roseanne's account, when Fr. Gaunt visits her to let her know of the annulment of her marriage, he says:

We do not believe your indiscretions are confined to one instance, an instance you will remember I was witness to with my own eyes. It was not thought probable that that instance did not have a history, given of course your own positions vis-à-vis your early years, not to mention of course the condition of your mother, which we may assume was hereditary. Madness, Roseanne, has many flowers, rising from the same stem. The blooms of madness, from the same root, may be variously displayed. In your mother's case an extreme retreat into herself, in your case, a pernicious and chronic nymphomania. (232)

Here it is seen that although Roseanne opposes by saying "I never had relations with another besides Tom . . . You may ask John Lavelle. He will not fail me" (233), Fr. Gaunt makes his decisions about Roseanne's life without any further and concrete evidence. This decision of Fr. Gaunt might indicate that he, as a Catholic clergy man, rising in power and authority in the new nationalist Free Irish State, wants to support a Catholic powerful family like the McNultys. Therefore, his account cannot be reliable, either.

As in *On Canaan's Side*, in this novel, too, the unreliability of official history is foregrounded. In his journal, Dr. Grene remarks on the practices of the new Free Irish State:

The Free State Army . . . burned almost every civil record to ashes, births, deaths, marriages, and other documents beyond price, wiping out the records of the very nation they were trying to give new life to, actually burning memory in its boxes. (262)

It is underlined here that the nationalist historiography of the Free Irish State does not include every member of the nation and every story equally. Since official history is not inclusive, the novel seems to suggest that private histories of individuals could emerge as an alternative for grand narratives. Barry's novel begins with an epigraph from Maria Edgeworth's Preface to *Castle Rackrent*: "Of the numbers who study, or at least read history, how few derive any advantage from their labours!... Besides, there is much uncertainty even in the best authenticated ancient

and modern histories; and that love of truth, which in some minds is innate and immutable, necessarily leads to a love of secret memories and private anecdotes” (1). Very much like Lily’s journal in *On Canaan’s Side*, the “private anecdotes” that Roseanne provides us with in the novel emerge as an alternative historiography. In addition, as suggested by Edgeworth, since the audience of these “secret” and “private” memories is mainly the writer herself/himself, they could even be more reliable compared to “authenticated ancient and modern histories.”

As in *On Canaan’s Side*, in *The Secret Scripture*, too, Barry, gives voice to a marginalized woman figure in the nationalist Irish context. The novel is particularly concerned with how Roseanne’s life is shaped under the influence of the nationalist ideology. Roseanne is portrayed as a strong and independent woman protagonist and the testimony she writes emerges as a major example of the novel’s concern with giving voice to women like her who are silenced and marginalized in the official national history.

Early in the novel, reflecting on her youth, Roseanne writes:

Sligo made me and Sligo undid me, but then I should have given up much sooner than I did being made or undone by human towns, and looked to myself alone. The terror and hurt in my story happened because when I was young I thought others were the authors of my fortune or misfortune; I did not know that a person could hold up a wall made of imaginary bricks and mortar against the horrors and cruel, dark tricks of time that assail us, and be the author therefore of themselves. (3-4)

In these lines, Roseanne shares with her audience that she used to feel she was a part of the community where she used to live; however, she comes to an understanding that it was a mistake that she regrets. Indeed, the novel, through Roseanne's self reflection, suggests that what should really matter for one is to be able to see oneself as the author of one’s life rather than merely conforming to the norms and

expectations of a larger community. As it will be illustrated below, Roseanne reacts against grand narratives such as nationalism and Catholicism and does not want to lead her life according to these narratives since they are "lack of inclusivity" (Doran 95). Similarly, Roseanne underlines this fact with a bitter sentence in her testimony, which is "No one even knows I have a story" (4). So, through her testimony, she authors her own life story. Remembering her childhood days, Roseanne writes:

So I was paying but half heed to my father and his world. I was more concerned with my own mysteries, such as, how to get curl into my wretched hair. I spent many hours labouring at this with a collar iron of my mother's, which she used to iron my father's Sunday shirt . . . So I was preoccupied with the fears and ambitions of my age. (36)

It is seen that Roseanne, since her childhood, has been mainly concerned with her own individual interests without feeling a need or obligation to subscribe to any grand narratives surrounding herself and her family. Nevertheless, she is also aware that "My own story, anyone's own story, is always told against me, even what I myself am writing here, because I have no heroic history to offer" (56). No matter how determined she is since her childhood about leading a life in the way she wants it to be, the grand narratives surrounding her life such as nationalism and Catholicism make her the Other in the Irish community she lives in. In other words, due to her non-conforming attitude, she is marginalized.

Her religious identity also plays a significant role in her being a socially-marginal figure. Soon after her father's death, Father Gaunt visits Roseanne at her home and lectures her about how she should act from now on as a good-looking, single, Presbyterian young woman in a Catholic community:

Roseanne, you are a very lovely young girl, and as such I am afraid, going about the town, a mournful temptation, not only to the boys of Sligo but also, the men, and as such and in every way conceivable, to have you married would be a boon and rightness very complete and attractive in

its- rightness . . . You will be very aware, Roseanne, of the recent upheavals in Ireland, and none of these upheavals favour any of the Protestant sects. Of course I will be of the opinion that you are in gravest error and your mortal soul is lost if you continue where you are . . . I can find you a good Catholic husband as I say, and he will not mind your origin eventually. (98-99)

Regarding Father Gaunt's reference to Roseanne's religious identity as a "gravest error" and his intention to convert her by finding her a "good Catholic husband", Myriam Ansay states that "as a Protestant and an individualistic non-conforming woman, the fictional character Roseanne was a doubly Other for this regime, and therefore a threat to its stability" (15). She becomes an outcast in the new national Catholic atmosphere of the country. Later on in the novel, when Roseanne gets pregnant, Father Gaunt visits her again together with her former brother-in-law, Jack, with a similar intention to keep her under control:

'Well' said Fr. Graunt, 'I think we have done our business here, Jack. You must stay where you are, Roseanne, get your groceries from the shop every week, and be content with your own company. You have nothing to fear, except your own self.' (222)

Here, Father Gaunt's attitude shares some similarities with an Orientalist attitude as is defined by Said: the West "deals" with the "Orient," Said states, "by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3). Father Gaunt attempts to "rule over" Roseanne because of her Presbyterian religious origins and non-conforming attitude towards dominant Catholic ideology. Yet, it should be added that although Roseanne is marginalized because of her family's religious background, as is seen in the following passage, she manages to be critical about Presbyterianism:

I seem to remember my father mentioning one or two – on the history of Protestantism in Ireland, my father held opinions not always favourable to

himself. That is to say, he thought of the Protestant religions as an instrument as soft as a feather transformed into a hammer by the old dispensation, and used to batter the heads of those that laboured to live in Ireland, the most of them Catholics by nature. (64)

Roseanne does not let religion define her. She maintains her distant attitude towards the Protestant narrative, as well, and displays a critical stance against homogenous narratives of religion in nationalist Ireland because she is aware that:

I was a Protestant, but maybe not the right kind of Protestant. Jack liked the big-house Protestants and he had it in his head that he was sort of Catholic gentry. I don't think he thought much of the great Presbyterian tradition in Ireland. Working-class. That was the dread phrase. (155)

Although Roseanne here underlines the fact that she is not a member of the Protestant Ascendancy Class, which used to have privileges over Catholic working class Irish people in the past, by writing these sentences, Roseanne shows she is aware that Protestantism may symbolize the Anglo-Saxon Protestant Ascendancy Class and its practices upon Catholic working class people in the past. In other words, she makes it clear that she understands the reason behind the biased attitude of the Catholic community towards herself.

Despite her Protestant background, Roseanne says "It's just that I don't like the religious . . . They are so certain about things, and I am not. It's not because I am Presbyterian" (193). She questions both Catholicism and Protestantism. She does not pick a side for herself to define her own character from within a specific narrative. She maintains her distant attitude towards religious narratives in developing her own character since she believes that "no one has the monopoly on truth. Not even myself, and that is also a vexing and worrying thought" (134).

Apart from Roseanne's Protestant background, her father's political position in Ireland during the Irish civil war also has a significant impact on her character

development. Her approach towards the political practices and contexts displays important aspects of her character. Roseanne writes that her father as "the superintendent of the graveyard, and for this work he had been given quite a resplendent uniform, or so it seemed to me as a child" (5), and she states that he used to wear "a blue uniform and a cap with a peak as black as a blackbird's coat" (9), which suggests that her father was on the side of the loyalists as a superintendent. Moreover, this indication is also supported by Dr. Grene's journal, in which he notes his conversation with Roseanne about a document referring to her father's job:

This copy was in a very poor state, typed but very faint as one might expect. And a great part of it missing. Something from an Egyptian tomb indeed. It referred to your father being in the Royal Irish Constabulary, which is not a phrase I had seen for many a long year . . . The document said your father was an RIC man in Sligo during the height of the troubles in the twenties, and was tragically killed by the IRA. (116-117)

It is understood that Roseanne's father was a member of Royal Irish Constabulary, which was a police force working for Great Britain in Ireland. During the civil war, he was killed by IRA, which supported Ireland's independence from Britain. This incident plays significant role in Roseanne's marginalization within the Irish community at the time. Dr. Grene, too, points out in his journal Roseanne's extremely vulnerable position in Ireland during the civil war:

She was it seems the child of a police sergeant in the Royal Irish Constabulary (which I already knew from the damaged section I had found here). De Valera<sup>11</sup>, as a young leader during the war of independence, had declared that any member of the police could be shot if they in any way obstructed the aims of the revolutionary movement. So such individuals, though Irish and for the most part Catholic (Roseanne's father was Presbyterian), and their families lived under constant threat and in real danger. (142-143)

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<sup>11</sup> De Valera's role and significance in the history of Ireland will be mentioned later.

Irish citizens who were non-Catholic or affiliated with political groups other than nationalist Republicans were othered and rendered vulnerable to violence. As McCoppin states:

Barry's protagonists tend to be victims of the process of Irish nation-building. In *On Canaan's Side*, for example, Willie's sister Lilly Dunne spends most of her life fleeing the political consequences of her husband's involvement with the Black and Tans. (92)

Roseanne, just like Lily in *On Canaan's Side*, is located on the "wrong" side of the new Irish nation. As a Protestant woman and a daughter of a loyalist father, she is victimized and marginalised by the nationalists. As Dr. Grene writes in his journal:

She lives nowhere, and is nothing. She has no family and almost no nation. A Presbyterian woman. . . . The fact is we are missing so many threads in our story that the tapestry of Irish life cannot but fall apart. There is nothing to hold it together . . . Roseanne is just a bit of paper blowing on the edge of the wasteland. (190-191)

Although Roseanne is marginalized and left alone, it seems that she does not pick a side, or does not locate herself on the opposite side of the nationalist narrative to support and define herself and develop her character according to that grand narrative. Obviously, when Dr. Grene says "the fact is we are missing so many threads in our story that the tapestry of Irish life cannot but fall apart." (191), the novel suggests that official history writing from a nationalist perspective does not offer an inclusive solution for each individual in the society. Considering this expression, it can be asserted that Roseanne's writing her testimony from her own perspective is significant for Barry's postcolonial criticism against nationalist narrative. Indeed, Roseanne expresses her own point of view on grand narratives such as history that attempts to define individuals and their characters in these lines at the end of her testimony:



Well, I supposed all these things. It is not history. But I am beginning to wonder strongly what is the nature of history. Is it only memory in decent sentences, and if so, how reliable is it? I would suggest, not very. And that therefore most truth and fact offered by these syntactical means is treacherous and unreliable. And yet I recognise that we live our lives, and even keep our sanity, by the light of this treachery and this unreliability, just as we build our love of country on these paper worlds of misapprehension and untruth. (304-305)

As Terry Phillips underlines, "Barry's work privileges the individual over political affiliation" (235). In other words, it can be held that Roseanne rejects affiliation with nationalist narratives or building her character through nationalist bonds. Apart from this, when Roseanne questions memory by saying "memory in decent sentences, and if so, how reliable is it? I would suggest, not very." (304), as it is discussed before, she underlines that history writing and memory are not reliable sources to rely on to narrate an event or define a person according to them.

In addition to Roseanne's marginalisation because of her family's religious background and her father's political position in Royal Irish Constabulary, Roseanne's resistance against Catholicism, especially, her defiance of Fr. Gaunt, is another significant factor in her emergence as a marginal figure in the new Free Irish State. When Fr. Gaunt approaches Roseanne after her father's death and asks "What will you do now, Roseanne, now that you poor father is gone? . . . Will you be advised by me?" (97), Roseanne reacts differently than Fr. Gaunt expects her to do. She insistently states that she will "leave school, Father, and get a job in the town" (97), and, however hard it is, she manages to tell him "'I can support us' I said, 'I am sure I can,' I said, and less sure of anything in my life I had never been" (98). Similarly, when she learns about Fr. Gaunt's decision related to the annulment of her marriage with Tom McNulty, she again does not surrender with a silence. Indeed, she cries out her demands to Fr. Gaunt without any hesitation and says "I want my

husband to come here"(232); and she poses questions to him such as "How do you reckon that"(232), or "what is the word you used" (232). She insists on her demands and defends herself against Fr. Gaunt's claims. When all the factors such as Roseanne's religious background, political position and her defiance of Fr. Gaunt are considered, it can be held that Sebastian Barry, as he does in *On Canaan's Side*, presents an alternative historiography of a socially-marginal woman so that Roseanne and her story can be remembered. In other words, the novel does not want to allow Ireland to "[forget] its lost women there" (33).

In *The Secret Scripture*, Barry also foregrounds the entanglement of the newly- independent Irish state's nationalism and Catholicism in the oppression of women. In order to display this entanglement, Sebastian Barry refers to significant historical events in Ireland, mostly the political prevalence of Eamon de Valera, who was the first president of Free Irish State and later Ireland (Gwynn). In his journal, Dr. Grene writes about what happens to Roseanne's father in the aftermath of independence:

Then the independence came, the imperial police were disbanded, increasing I must suppose the fears of Roseanne's father, then . . . Indeed in due course he lost this job and was given the job of rat-catcher in Sligo, surely the ultimate insult to such a man. (187)

When Ireland gained its independence from Great Britain, non-Catholic people and supporters of Irish Free State lost their position in the community. This signifies that with de Valera's rise to power, the cultural identity of Ireland came to be defined mainly in Roman Catholic terms (Gwynn). "In December 1918, de Valera and nationalist Sinn Fein party won the Irish elections overwhelmingly, capturing 73 of the 105 Irish seats in the British parliament" (Sarbaugh 145) and "instead of going to London, these newly elected representatives establish an Irish Parliament" (145). De

Valera was a very strong and influential political figure in Ireland at the time and his political agenda shaped the country. One of the ways in which the novel registers the entanglement of nationalism and Catholicism is through the pre-eminence of Fr. Gaunt. He judges Roseanne's religious identity by telling her "you are in gravest error and your mortal soul is lost if you continue where you are"(99). As Kiberd states, "there is a tendency of Catholic Ireland to equate itself with nationalist Ireland in the early years of Free State" (Kiberd 7). In keeping with Kiberd's remark, Roseanne also writes about the situation in Free Irish State as follows: "priests felt in those times that they owned the new country" (219). It is obvious that Sebastian Barry suggests that nationalist policies went parallel with Catholicism in Ireland at the time, and it is this context that makes people like the character Roseanne in Barry's novel perceived as the Other in the nationalist Irish community.

Furthermore, Fr. Gaunt's efforts to mould Roseanne into a shape that he deems proper, that is, a shape that the nationalist and Catholic new Irish Free State would approve of, is another significant aspect in the oppression of women that the novel brings to the fore. For example, after Roseanne is seen together with John Lavelle, whose brother is killed by Irish soldiers and who meets Roseanne when he comes to the cemetery to bury his brother, Fr. Gaunt goes to see her together with Jack McNulty to tell her how she should act:

'Well' said Fr. Gaunt, 'I think we have done our business here, Jack. You must stay where you are, Roseanne, get your groceries from the shop every week, and be content with your own company. You have nothing to fear, except your own self.' (222)

Fr. Gaunt attempts to discipline Roseanne so that she can act according to what the new nationalist and Catholic values demand.

After the annulment of her marriage by the Catholic Church, Roseanne has a relationship with Eneas McNulty, her former husband's brother, and she "gets pregnant, and bears a child" (239) out of wedlock. What makes her decision even more interesting is that Eneas is an Irish man, who joined British army as a soldier despite his nationalist family background. According to Jayawerdana:

In the search for a national identity, the emergent bourgeoisie also harked back to a national culture: the new women could not be a total negation of traditional culture . . . They still had to act as the guardians of national culture (14)

In this regard, by deciding, on her own, with whom she has a sexual relationship, regardless of the man's social positioning, can be considered an act of protest on Roseanne's part, which displays her critical attitude towards the nationalist ideology and the duties it assigns to women. Indeed, Roseanne resists such narratives by refusing to act "as the [guardian] of national culture" (14).

When Roseanne gives birth to Eneas McNulty's child in a public place, Fr. Gaunt takes the child away and send him somewhere else since "in those days of course the illegitimate child was thought to carry the sin of his mother" (281). This incident bears an importance since it gives an important insight about the family and the roles assigned to women in the new nationalist state in Ireland. In *Irish Women and Nationalism- Soldiers, New Women and Wicked Hags*, Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward state that, in twentieth century republican writings, women as "mothers were a national icon in a nationalist rhetoric and symbolism" (61), and "in typical republican writings women are demonstrated within enclosed domestic space" (58) since they are perceived as continuation of the nationalist values and traditions "through their child-rearing and domestic responsibilities" (Davis and Anthias 58). Considering this perception of women in newly-founded nationalist

countries such as Free Irish State, it might be noticed that women are not considered as individuals; they are rather seen as tools of asserting a new nationalist rule in the country in the anti-colonial struggle against a colonial power. Therefore, Roseanne's story is a fictional example of many other actual stories of oppressed women in Free Irish State. For example, according to an article published in *The New York Times* in June 6, 2018:

Orders of Roman Catholic nuns ran the [Magdalene] laundries for profit, and women and girls were put to work there, supposedly as a form of penance. The laundries were filled not only with "fallen women" — prostitutes, women who became pregnant out of marriage or as a result of sexual abuse and those who simply failed to conform . . . At least 10,000 women and girls are believed to have passed through the laundries between independence from Britain in 1922 and the closing of the last one in 1996. (O'Loughlin)

In Ireland, there were thousands of women sent to institutions like Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital where Roseanne spends most of her life. As women are seen significant in both the so-called domestic sphere of life and the construction of a nationalist state, *The Secret Scripture* underlines that those who do not conform to these dominant domestic and nationalist narratives, they are, just like Roseanne, are "incarcerated." Sebastian Barry throws light on the forgotten stories of those thousands of women who are "incarcerated" in Ireland through Roseanne's portrayal in Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital.

As pointed out earlier, one significant difference between *On Canaan's Side* and *The Secret Scripture* is that the story in the latter is not thoroughly informed by a postcolonial perspective; all the same, particularly, with regard to the issue of nationalism, it can be claimed that this novel, too, treats it critically from a postcolonial perspective. Furthermore, the novel portrays Roseanne as a colonized

character, which comes to the fore in particular scenes of the novel as will be discussed below.

In her testimony, Roseanne mentions her father's love of Ireland and his family history as follows:

The truth was my father loved his country, he loved whatever in his mind he thought Ireland to be. Maybe if he had been born a Jamaican, he might have loved Jamaica just as much. But he was not. His ancestors hadeld the little sinecures available to their kind in Irish towns, inspectors of buildings and the like, and his father had even gained the eminence of a preacher. He was born in small minister's house in Collooney, his infant heart loved Collooney, his growing heart expanding in its love to the island entire. (63-64)

Roseanne problematizes nationalism and unconditional love for one's country of birth by underlining "maybe if he had been born a Jamaican, he might have loved Jamaica just as much" (64) The novel suggests that one's attachment to a country or a nation is something learned, a social and cultural construct since nation "is an imagined political community" (Anderson 6). The novel's critical stance to nationalist narratives is solidified through Roseanne portrayal. As Phillips states about Roseanne's stance in relation to grand narratives, "Roseanne, at the beginning of her account of her life recognises that history is a narrative in that it inevitably includes elements of selection and organisation as it seeks order in lumber room of memories and records" (253). Clearly, Roseanne is located as the Other in the new Irish Nationalist historiography. However, this does not mean that she can be identified as a Protestant woman, either. She writes about her father's position as a superintendent in Sligo, which is full of Catholic people, as follows:

Of course it was a Catholic yard. My father had not got that job because of his religion, but because he was deeply liked in the town by all and sundry, and Catholics did not mind their graves being dug by Presbyterian, if it was a likeable one. Because in those days there was often much

greater ease between the churches than we give credit for . . . At any rate, there is seldom a difficulty with religion where there is friendship. (19-20)

As this passage illustrates, Roseanne values friendship more than any grand narrative. As in *On Canaan's Side*, in this novel, too, Barry suggests that affiliations like friendships are much more significant than filiations. In addition, Roseanne also displays a critical attitude towards the patriarchal values of the nationalist ideology in the aftermath of her father's death. "I can support us," she says, "I am sure I can" (98) to Father Gaunt when he tells her that she should marry a Catholic man from Sligo so that her husband can support both Roseanne and her mother. Roseanne, without any hesitation, shows confidence in herself as a very young woman; she has enough courage to resist the oppressive patriarchal, Catholic and nationalist ideology of the new Irish nation.

Roseanne is portrayed as a character who creates her own space rather than submitting herself to any grand narrative surrounding her such as Presbyterianism, Catholicism or nationalism. In the following conversation, for instance, between Dr. Grene and Roseanne, she highlights her understanding of how she sees herself in the community:

'My maiden name was Clear ' I said suddenly.  
'That is what I thought. I read it, didn't I, in that little book?' he said. That's of course a rare name. There can't have been too many of that name . . .  
'I think it is a Protestant name and maybe comes out of England long ago.'  
'Do you think? Of course, McNulty is a common enough name. You might find McNultys everywhere.'  
'It is an old Sligo name. My husband told me they were the last recorded cannibal tribe in Ireland' (118)

Here, in this dialogue, Dr. Grene attempts to identify Roseanne by considering her surnames. Actually, he tries to locate her into either the category of Protestantism or Catholic nationalism. Roseanne, however, responds to Dr. Grene stating that she is

"happy without them" (119), that is any surnames that she used to have. Regarding Homi Bhabha's term "third space," Fetson Kalua states that

it represents an act of unleashing that post-dialectical moment when people reject structures and hegemonies and occupy any one of the heterogeneous spaces where they negotiate narratives of their existences as well as of particular spaces of meanings and different identities within the postcolonial condition. (25)

Stating that she does not need any of these surnames to be happy, Roseanne claims a third space, which is free of the grand narratives that were predominant in the nationalist context of Ireland. In other words, As Shelley Feldman underlines,

The hegemonic process of constructing a nationalist ideology depends upon distinguishing between self and other, us and them, in the creation of a common (shared) identity; women as symbol, men as agents of the nation, colonized space as feminine, colonial power as masculine (177-178)

So, Roseanne, by not choosing any surnames representing the two opposite margins of the Irish society, breaks the boundaries and displays a postcolonial approach.

The reason why Roseanne's resistance to the patriarchal, nationalist and Catholic ideologies and practices in Ireland during the civil war and the early stages of de Valera's rule can be defined as "postcolonial" is that the novel invites us to see the parallels between Roseanne's positioning in Ireland and that of the colonized. This comes to the fore particularly through the portrayal of the character named Jack McNulty. He appears in two key moments in Roseanne's life: the first one is when Roseanne wants to see her husband Tom when he leaves her after hearing about Roseanne's secret meeting with John Lavelle. This is how Roseanne describes him in her testimony:

He was hardened by his sojourns in Africa, it was like hitting a tree, he put his arms around me as I tried to break away down the hall, and I was screaming, screaming for Tom, for mercy, for God. His arms closed around my waist, closed tight tight around, hamma-hamma tight, to use the words he had learned in Africa, the pidgin English he liked to mimic and



mock, he drew me to him, so that my bottom was fastened into his lap, docked there, held tight, fast, impossible to get away. (217)

Jack, as an obstacle before Roseanne, blocks her way and will to access her husband. By "his arms closed around" Roseanne, not letting her go, he, indeed, seizes Roseanne like a colonial subject, which is suggested by Roseanne's citing of the pidgin words that Jack learns in Africa in her account of the scene.

The second time when he appears in Roseanne's life about the annulment of her marriage with Tom, Jack tells Roseanne:

'We want to keep the party clean. We want to act the white man here. Everything has a solution, no matter how knotted it has become. I believe this to be true. Often in Nigeria there have been problems that seemed insurmountable, but with a certain flair of application... Bridges over rivers that change their course every year.. That sort of thing. Engineering has to meet all these problems.' (220)

Jack's reference to himself as the "white man" (220) demonstrates that he sees Roseanne as a person that should be colonized and ruled over. He likens his approach to the annulment of the marriage between his brother and Roseanne to "engineering," i.e., the white man's burden, aiming to "civilize" the "savage" Roseanne since she "represents a site of conspicuous danger because an unmarried, pregnant woman directly violated the ideology of the new Irish State" (Harney-Mahajan 61). Ironically, however, while Roseanne undergoes this treatment in Free Irish State, the state has been pursuing an anti-colonial struggle against Great Britain.

To conclude, in *The Secret Scripture* Sebastian Barry focuses on the impact of the nationalist and Catholic ideologies and practices on a woman character who occupies a socially-marginal position in Free Irish State. Roseanne, as a daughter of a Presbyterian father, who is a member of Royal Irish Constabulary, is an outcast, an isolated but non-confirming woman. The novel examines the oppression Roseanne

suffers due to both Catholic norms and expectations from women and as a consequence of the political clashes between Free Staters and Republicans in Ireland during the civil war and the early stages of the independent Irish Free State and later on Ireland. In the novel, Barry displays how his protagonist develops her character in response to the homogenizing grand narratives and emerges as a postcolonial character. Through Roseanne's "testimony of herself," the novel gives voice to her, an oppressed woman figure left outside the nationalist official history of Ireland. The novel emphasizes the unreliability of memory and history-writing, and approaches nationalism from a critical perspective. Furthermore, the entanglement nationalism and Catholicism in the oppression of Irish women during the civil war and early years of the Irish Free State and later on in Ireland is foregrounded.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This study has analysed *On Canaan's Side* (2011) and *The Secret Scripture* (2008) by Sebastian Barry with regard to the portrayals of the women narrators in both novels against the historical, social and political context of Ireland, particularly during the first half of the twentieth century. With its findings pointed out below, this study aims to contribute to the scholarship on Barry's fiction, particularly, the research on his critical approach and concern with the treatment and representation of the socially-marginalized in Irish history.

On the basis of the analytical chapters of this study, it is claimed that in both novels the narrators, with their writings, offer an alternative to the official history of the dominant ideology. In *On Canaan's Side*, Lily Bere, as an isolated and marginalised female character, tells her own individual story against the background of the historical events taking place in Ireland and America. In this respect, Barry's novel displays an alternative, "petit" narrative in place of a grand narrative such as nationalism since the latter is not inclusive enough to welcome a marginalised outcast character like Lily Bere. Similarly, in *The Secret Scripture*, Barry offers

Roseanne's "Testimony of Herself" as an alternative reading from the margins of the Irish history during the civil war era and its aftermath.

Another remarkable similarity between the two novels is that both protagonists are women and rendered outcast for similar reasons. First of all, they are perceived in society as being situated on the "wrong" side of the national divide in Ireland. Both women's fathers are supporters of the British colonial rule and members of the Royal Irish Constabulary; to be more specific, Roseanne's father is a police officer and Lily's father is the chief superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. The fathers' political stance renders the daughters socially very vulnerable because of the homogenizing nationalist discourse and expectations from women in the newly-founded Irish State. Secondly, neither Lily nor Roseanne yields to oppression or threat. Lily, in *On Canaan's Side*, rejects the duties that nationalist narratives assign to women such as being a social reproducer of the nationalist values and "guardians of national culture" (Jayawerdana 14) by marrying the right "husband" in order to support and consolidate national values. Similarly, in *The Secret Scripture*, Roseanne also rejects acting according to Catholic values, which were closely intermingled with the nationalism of the Free Irish State, by refusing to marry the husband picked up for herself by Father Gaunt. To sum up, both female characters share the same critical attitude and insist on making their own decisions, liberating themselves from the limitations of the nationalist context that they live in. They emerge as non-conforming characters, who do not subscribe to any grand narratives. In this study, it is also claimed that this critical attitude toward women's treatment in Ireland, particularly, during the first half of the twentieth century, is informed by Barry's postcolonial approach to anti-colonial nationalism.

All the same, it should be added that these two women characters differ in some ways. For one thing, they are different in terms of their religious identities although this difference does not change their marginal position in society. While Lily comes from a Catholic background, Roseanne's family is Presbyterian. In addition, their response to the nationalist threat that they face in Ireland is also different. While Lily decides to leave the country and start a new life to create for herself a space in her "Canaan," America, Roseanne does not leave the country although she, too, considers it, briefly, as an option. However, she manages to create a "heterogeneous [space]" for herself where she "negotiate[s] narratives of their existences as well as of particular spaces of meanings and different identities within the postcolonial condition" (Kalua 25) in the mental hospital where she stays. Yet, compared to Lily, who finds comfort, starts a new life and feels at home thanks to female characters around her, Roseanne becomes isolated and lives without support from any other women, and spends most of her life, "kept," in a mental hospital.

Apart from the historical aspects mentioned in both novels, the figure of woman in nationalist narratives of Ireland is still a valid issue to be considered. Since Sinn Féin, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, the nationalist parties in Ireland, collected most of the votes in the most recent election in 2020 (Clarke), it can be said that nationalism is still on the table in Ireland as an oppressive force for women. Furthermore, there are some significant events taking place in Ireland that can be related to this issue. The marriage equality referendum held in 2015 emerges as an important milestone in Ireland. According to *The Guardian*, "out of an electorate of more than 3 million, 1,201,607 backed gay marriage, while 734,300 voters said No" (McDonald). Although over 700,000 people were opposed to gay marriage, it can be

still interpreted as a significant progress. People in Ireland are still trying to make progress for themselves so that they will not feel marginalised as the Other or traumatised because of the practices of the dominant ideology. Another significant matter is the issue of abortion in Ireland. According to a news article published in 2019 by *The Guardian* with a heading "Why Ireland's battle over abortion is far from over" (Hogan), it is seen that abortion is still a very contested issue in the political and social arena of Ireland. Although abortion was illegal until 2018 and Irish women had to travel abroad in order to undergo an abortion (Mulligan 239), it is now legal; yet, having an abortion is still considered by some a stigma for women in Ireland (Hogan). With this respect, it might be inferred that there are contemporary factors that might have led Sebastian Barry to focus on the oppression of women characters in *On Canaan's Side* and *The Secret Scripture*. The points that Barry underlines specifically with regard to women in both of these novels have relevance in today's Ireland, as well.

In addition to women's marginalisation against the background of the anti-colonial nationalist era in Irish history, as Elizabeth Cullingford states, Barry's general literary "desire to give voice to the historically occluded native collaborator" (qtd in Harte 199) in his works seems to be another fruitful question to explore specifically in relation to these two novels because they both include several characters that can be examined with respect to the notion of the "occluded native collaborator" in detail, such as Willie Dunne, Eneas McNulty, Roseanne's father, Joe Clear, Lily's father, James Patrick Dunne and her fiancé Tadg Bere. In fact, Barry provides a detailed background for each of these characters in both novels. A further

research can be carried out to explore the politics of the novels' attitude toward such characters.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: TRKE ZET / A TURKISH SUMMARY

Kadın figrnn temsili milliyeti anlatılarda her zaman anlatılan ve tartıřılan ve nemli bir konudur. Milliyetilik ve bu anlatılarda kadınlara biilen pay, onların karakter geliřimleri ve kimlik arayıřları sırasında deneyimledikleri tekileřtirilme abaları nemli arařtırma konularından olmuřtur. İrlanda tarihi boyunca da kadın figrnn milliyeti anlatılarda tasviri ve yeri nemli bir yer tutmuřtur. Britanya'ya karřı smrgecilik karřıtı mcadele sırasında ve sonrasında İrlanda'da sosyal ve politik olarak tekileřtirilenlerin deneyimi, Sebastian Barry'nin kurmaca eserlerinde deęinilen en temel meselelerden biridir. Bu konu Protestan, Katolik, Birliki veya Cumhuriyeti olmak gibi dini ve siyasi kimlikler ile “İrlandalılık” ulusal kimlięi meselelerini de beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu sebeple, bu tezin amacı, Sebastian Barry'nin yazını zerine yapılan arařtırmalara, zellikle de *On Canaan's Side* (2011) ve *The Secret Scripture* (2008) adlı romanlara dair yapılan arařtırmalara katkıda bulunmak, ve bu metinlerin İrlanda yakın tarihinde sosyal ve politik olarak tekileřtirilmiř olanlara smrgecilik-sonrası ve feminist bir perspektiften yaklařtıęının altını izmektir.

Bu romanlarda Barry'nin İrlanda tarihinin smrgecilik karřıtı milliyeti dnemine postkolonyal ve feminist bir yaklařım benimsedięi ve toplumsal olarak marjinalleřtirilmiř kadın karakterler tarafından yazılan bireysel tarih yazıları/“kk

anlatılar” aracılığıyla sömürgecilik karşıtı alternatif bir okuma sunarak İrlanda'daki milliyetçi tarih yazımına ve milliyetçi pratikleri homojenleştirmeye yönelik eleştirel bir tavır sergilediği tartışılacaktır.

Barry'nin eserleri esas olarak aşağıdaki konularla bağlantılı olarak incelenir: ilk olarak, Barry'nin İrlanda halkının travmatik hafızasını ve travma tedavisini araştıran çalışmalar vardır. Freiburg'a göre, Büyük Kıtık (Great Famine) veya Paskalya Ayaklanması (Easter Rising) nedeniyle kitlesel açlık ve göç gibi travmatik olaylar Barry'nin edebiyatında önemli bir yer tutar. Barry'nin tarihsel anlatılarının kronolojik tarihi kayıtlar olarak ele alınmaması, daha çok ulusun travmalarına çare olarak görülmesi gerektiğinin de altı çizilmektedir.

Barry çalışmalarında öne çıkan diğer tema, eserlerinin bir ulus olarak İrlanda ile olan ilişkisi ve İrlandalılık kavramıdır. Hyungseob Lee "To every life an after-life. To every demon a fairy tale": The Life and Times of an Irish Policeman in the British Empire in Sebastian Barry's The Steward of Christendom" adlı araştırmasında, Barry'nin ana odak noktasının “kendimizi” yeniden hayal ederek İrlanda kimliğinin yüzeydeki homojenliğini kırmak olduğunun altını çiziyor.

Barry'nin çalışmaları üzerine eleştirel literatürde öne çıkan bir diğer önemli tema, onun tarihe ve tarihçiliğe (historiography) yaklaşımıdır. Bu bağlamda, Liam Harte Reading the Contemporary Irish Novel, 1987-2007 (Çağdaş İrlanda Romanını Okumak, 1987-2007) adlı çalışmasında, Barry'nin çalışmalarının çoğunda tarihin önemli bir tema olarak ortaya çıktığını, "bastırılmış tarih ve egemen ideoloji ve sosyal gruplar tarafından susturulan ve unutilan insanların hikayesiyle ilgilendiğini belirtiyor (Harte 199).

Son olarak, Barry'nin çalışmalarının postkolonyal yönlerini ön plana çıkaran birkaç çalışma bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmalar, Barry'nin insan hafızasının, İrlanda tarihindeki ötekileştirilmiş insanların yeniden dikkate alınmasının, sürgün, kimlik gibi kavramları ve affetmenin Barry'nin postkolonyal yazınındaki önemini ve bir güç aracı olduğu hakkında tartışmaktadırlar.

Bölüm 2, Bölüm 3 ve 4'teki tartışmalar için tarihsel, politik ve teorik bir arka plan sağlayacaktır. Bu bölüm, İrlanda'nın Kültürel ve Siyasi Tarihinin Temel Taşları, Milliyetçi Anlatılarda Ulus İnşası Süreçlerinde Kadınların Temsili – İrlanda Örneği ve Barry'nin Romanlarını İrlanda'da Sömürge Karşıtı Milliyetçi Anlatılarda Kadın Temsilinin Postkolonyal Yeniden Ziyaretleri Olarak okunması olarak üçe ayrılmıştır.

Bölüm 3, Lily'nin, Birlikçi bir babanın kızı ve Büyük Britanya tarafında İrlanda ulusal bağımsızlığını destekleyenlere karşı savaşan Blacks and Tans grubunun bir üyesi olan Tadg Bere adlı bir adamın karısı olarak deneyimlerini incelemek amacıyla *On Canaan's Side*'i inceleyecektir. Roman, milliyetçilik gibi büyük anlatıların homojenleştirilmesinden ziyade küçük anlatıların, kadınlar arasındaki dayanışmanın ve mensubiyetlerin önemini öne çıkarıyor.

Bölüm 4, *The Secret Scripture*'da kahramanı ve anlatıcılarından biri, yeni milliyetçi İrlanda'da, İrlanda Kraliyet Polis Teşkilatı üyesi olan Presbiteryen bir babanın kızı olan Roseanne' odaklanmaktadır. *On Canaan's Side*'da olduğu gibi, bu romanda da Barry, ötekileştirilmiş ve ezilen kadınların durumuna ışık tutup ve tarih yazımının, hafızanın ve milliyetçi İrlanda tarihinin güvenilirliğine önemli eleştiriler getirmektedir.

Tezin ikinci bölümü, *On Canaan's Side* ve *The Secret Scripture* tartışması için tarihsel, politik ve teorik bir bağlam sağlamaktadır. İlk olarak, sömürge öncesi,

sömürge ve postkolonyal dönemlerdeki bazı önemli olaylara atıfta bulunularak İrlanda'nın siyasi tarihine kısa bir genel bakış sağlamaktadır. İkinci olarak, hem sömürge hem de postkolonyal İrlanda'daki kadın temsilleri, genel olarak milliyetçi anlatılarda kadınların temsiline ilişkin postkolonyal ve feminist çalışmalarla ilgili tartışmalara yer vermektedir. Üçüncü olarak, Barry'nin İrlanda'nın sömürgecilik karşıtı milliyetçi anlatılarında kadınların temsiline yönelik yaklaşımını vurgulamaktadır.

İrlanda tarihi çeşitli kültürel ve politik çalkantılar barındırır. Çoğu, tarihi boyunca adada bağımsızlık, iç yönetim ve İngiliz sömürgeciliğine karşı sömürgecilik karşıtı mücadele gibi siyasi konularla doğrudan ilgilidir. İşgal edildikten sonra, İrlanda devleti birliğini on ikinci yüzyılda İrlanda Katolik Kilisesi etrafında geliştirmeye çalışmıştır (Curtis 35). Ancak bu girişim beklendiği gibi iyi gitmemiştir. Bu durum adada İngiliz egemenliğiyle son bulmuştur. Kildare Hanedanı'nın düşmesiyle, Tudor iktidarı adanın kontrolünü ele geçirmek için İrlanda üzerinde çalışmalara başlamıştır. Buradan sonra, Aristokratik Özerk Yönetim sona ermiş ve İngiltere İrlanda'yı yönetmeye başlamıştır (Ranelagh 55). Dahası, İngiliz yerleşmeciler İrlanda yönetiminde yerli lordların yerini almıştır (148). Bu sebeple, İngiliz kuvvetlerinin ve Protestanlığın İrlanda'da yeni ortaya çıkan Protestan üst sınıflar üzerindeki egemenliği, yerli İrlanda halkının milliyetçilik ve kimliğe yönelik tutumunun değişmesine neden olmuştur.

İngiltere'nin İrlanda'daki Protestan İngiliz yerleşimcilere verdiği destek, İngiltere yönetimine karşı bir isyanın yolunu açmış ve 1641'de İngiltere'nin İrlanda'da temsil, ticaret ve siyasi haklar açısından haksız uygulaması nedeniyle önemli bir isyan yaşanmıştır. Bu, İrlanda'daki İngiltere'nin merkezi otoritesine karşı

yerliler tarafından toplu bir tepki olarak ilk kitlesel ayaklanmalardan biri olarak yorumlanabilir.

On sekizinci yüzyıldan itibaren, Katolik orta sınıf İrlandalılar Kraliyetten bazı haklar elde etmeye başlamış ve belirli bir refaha ulaşmışlardır On dokuzuncu yüzyılda İrlanda halkının parlamentoda temsil açısından kaybettiği siyasi hakları geri kazandığı ve bağımsız bir ulus olma mücadelesinin Kraliyet egemenliğine karşı başladığı söylenebilir. Son olarak, İrlanda 1914'te özerk yönetim hakkını elde edebilmiştir. 1. Dünya Savaşından sonra, İrlanda 1919'da bağımsızlığını "Özgür İrlanda Devleti" olarak ilan etmiştir (Ranelagh 350). Ancak bağımsız bir devlete sorunsuz bir geçiş olmamıştır ve 1920'de Cumhuriyetçiler ile İrlanda Kraliyet Polis Teşkilatı üyeleri arasında "Blacks and Tans" de dahil olmak üzere bir mücadele yaşanmıştır (351).

Birleşik Krallığın egemenliğine karşı İrlandalıların resmi siyasi tarihinde özel bir vurgu yapılmasa da, İrlandalı kadınların tarihte önemli roller üstlendiği ve önemli roller oynadığı bilinen bir gerçektir. "Kara hanım" olarak da bilinen Finola MacDonnell (Ryan and Ward 180) gibi kadınların kraliyet güçlerine karşı mücadelelerde casusluk ve bilgi taşıma gibi rollerde bulunması İngilizler tarafından İrlandalı kadınların asi olarak tasvir edilmesine neden olmuştur. Curtis *A History of Ireland: From the Earliest Times to 1922* adlı kitabında hem düşük rütbeli IRA üyeleri olarak hem de 1570 (180) civarında Büyük Britanya'ya karşı katılımcı toplayan ve asker tedarik eden Finola MacDonnell gibi üst sınıf bayanlar olarak, İrlanda'nın sömürgecilik karşıtı mücadele tarihindeki kadınların aktif rol aldığının altını çizmiştir. Kadınlar Bağımsız İrlanda Devleti eski sömürgeci güçlere karşı kendi homojen milli kimliğini oluşturması için baskın sömürgecilik karşıtı milliyetçi

ideoloji tarafından genellikle susturulmalarına rağmen, kadınlar hala kendi kimliklerini inşa edebilmiş ve varlıklarını kabul ettirebilmişlerdir.

Jayawardena'nın belirttiği gibi, "kültürel bir kimliğin yaratılması ve kabul ettirilmesi, emperyalizmin büyümesiyle diyalektik olarak ilişkilidir" (4). Bu bağlamda, kadınların özgürleşme ve eşit haklar mücadelesine eleştirel bir gözle bakmak, özellikle İrlanda'da, sömürge sonrası bağlamda kadınların rolü hakkında daha derin bir anlayış kazanmak için faydalı olabilir.

Chatterjee bu konuda kadının bireyselliğinin, hegemonik milliyetçi kültürün altı çizilen bir yönü olmadığını söylemiş ve aksine, birleşik bir grup olarak ulusun kadınlarına, “ev” ile evin dışında kalanlar arasındaki “temel” sınırları koruma görevi verdiğinin belirtmiştir (26). Anthias ve Davis de milliyetçi anlatılarda özellikle kadınlarla ilgili olarak ortaya çıkan “kolektivite” kavramını vurgulamaktadır. Bu bölümde daha önce belirtildiği gibi, kadınlar İrlanda'daki egemen ideoloji tarafından sosyal ve politik arenada susturulmaktadır ve varlıkları Özgür İrlanda Devleti tarafından göz ardı edilmiştir. Hatta, milliyetçi İrlanda bağlamında kadınları susturma ve ötekileştirme eğilimi, Özgür İrlanda Devleti'ndeki 1937 Anayasasında da fark edilebilir.

Kadınlar “ulusun genişlemesi ve sağlamlaşması için de gerekli görülmektedir çünkü onlar ulusal toplulukların üyelerinin biyolojik yeniden üreticisidirler” (Yuval Davis 4). Annelik ve üreme, bir kadının sömürgecilik karşıtı, milliyetçi bağlamlardaki rolünün çok önemli yönleridir. Milliyet, doğuştan bir kişiye aktarılan bir özellik olarak kabul edilir. Buna göre, kadınlar biyolojik üreme kapasiteleri nedeniyle yeni ulus devlet için milliyetçi kimlik mücadelesinin merkezinde yer almaktadır. Dolayısıyla, kadının toplumdaki konumu çoğunlukla sorgulanmadan

kalırken, egemen siyasi ideolojinin yeni milliyetçi kimliklerine uygun yeni nesiller yetiştirmede kadınlara verilen görev çok daha fazla önem kazandığı görülmektedir.

Belirtilenlere paralel olarak İrlanda milliyetçi anlatısında kadın figürünün önemli bir rolü olduğu da eklenebilir. Barry'nin *The Secret Scripture* romanındaki ana karakteri olan Roseanne için seçmiş olduğu ismin "Dark Rosaleen" isimli milliyetçi bir şiirin ismiyle olan benzerliği ilgi çekici bir durum olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. İrlanda'da hakim olan milliyetçi anlatı sebebiyle acılar çeken ve ötekileştirilen bir karaktere milliyetçi bir şiir olan Dark Rosaleen'den esinlenerek isim vermesi, Barry'nin postkolonyal yaklaşımı hakkında ip uçları vermekte olduğu söylenebilir.

İrlandalı kadınlığın, Anglo-İrlandalı kadınların ikircikli kimliğinin şekillenmesinde Özgür İrlanda Devleti'nin büyük etkisi görülmektedir çünkü bu gruba mensup kadınlar Anglikan kökleri endeniyle eski düzenin devamı ve sömürgeciliğin kalıntıları olarak algılanırlar. "İrlandalılığı" tanımlama girişimleri, postkolonyal İrlanda'da kimlik oluşumunun önemli bir yönünü oluşturur ve Katoliklik, İrlanda ulusal kimliğinin çok önemli bir bileşeni olduğu bilinmektedir. Bu nedenle, İrlanda Katoliklerinin bir üyesi olmak veya bu Katolik milliyetçi grubun dışında kalmak, İrlanda toplumunda kadınların temsili ve muamelesini kaçınılmaz olarak etkilemektedir. Bu sebeple, Milliyetçi İrlanda toplumunda kadınlara biçilen rollerin Katolik idealler tarafından şekillendirilmiş olması önemlidir.

Yeni ulus oluşum sürecinde kadınların sorumluluk alması beklense de, milliyetçi söylemlerde erkekler tarafından bakılması gereken nesneler olarak konumlandırılırlar ve genellikle ulusu oluşturan "biz"den dışlanırlar.

Barry'nin romanlarını postkolonyal çerçevede okunması bağlamında ise bu tezin amacına yönelik olarak Postkolonyal ve anti-kolonyal terimleri arasındaki ayrımları göz önünde bulundurmak tartışma için faydalı olabilir. Çok kısaca, anti-kolonyal terimi, insanlar veya yerler üzerindeki sömürgeci veya emperyal tahakküme karşı herhangi bir direnişi ifade eder. Ancak, Postkolonyal terimi, sömürgecilik karşıtı direnişlerle başlayan dönemin farklı bir anlayışını önerir (English 85). Batı ve Doğu (veya Kuzey ve Güney), sömürgeci ve sömürgeleştirilmiş arasındaki ayrımın temelini bozan bir analiz sunar (87). Bu romanlarda Barry, postkolonyal ve feminist bir perspektiften, genel olarak daha önce sömürgeleştirilmiş topluluklardaki ve özelde İrlanda'daki sömürgecilik karşıtı milliyetçi hareketlerle eleştirel bir şekilde ilgilenmektedir.

Her iki romanda da Barry'nin milliyetçiliğin İrlanda'daki toplumun her bir üyesini eşit olarak temsil edecek kadar kapsayıcı olmadığı inancı yansıtılmaktadır. Romanlar, milliyetçiliğin her türlü kimliği içermek için yeterli bir yol olmadığını ve insanlara kendi kimliklerini inşa etmeleri için yeterli alan sağlamadığını öne sürmektedir. Romanlar, milliyetçilik anlatısı yerine insanların kim olduklarını ve dünyayı nasıl algıladıklarını anlamak için kendi bireysel deneyimlerine ve travmalarına dikkat edilmesi gerektiğini ön plana çıkarmaktalar.

Eserlerinin çoğu İrlanda'nın sömürgecilik karşıtı ortamında geçse de, bu sömürgecilik karşıtı ortam ona bu milliyetçi sömürgecilik karşıtı atmosferin homojenleştirici pratiklerini insanlar ve kimlikleri üzerinde sergileme şansı veriyor. Barry, açıkça, sömürgecilik karşıtı milliyetçi İrlanda tarihinin ve onun marjinalleştirilmiş figürlerinin alternatif, sömürgecilik sonrası ve feminist bir okumasını önemektedir.



Tezin üçüncü bölümü ise Barry'nin Lily adında İrlandalı bir kadının hayat hikayesini anlatan *On Canaan's Side* adlı romanına odaklanmaktadır. *On Canaan's Side*, doğduğu ülke olan İrlanda'daki siyasi ve kaos ayaklanması nedeniyle Amerika'ya sürgüne giden Lily Bere adlı bir kadının hikayesidir. Babası Büyük Britanya tarafında bir polis memuru ve kardeşi Willie Dunne, I. Dünya Savaşı'nda Büyük Britanya için savaşan ve hayatını kaybeden bir askerdir. Birinci tekil şahıs anlatımına sahip bir romandır. Lily Bere, toplam on yedi günlük yazılarında hayat hikayesini gün be gün anlatmakta ve Roman, torunu Bill'in öldüğü günle başlamaktadır.

Lily kendi hikayesini parçalar halinde anlatmaktadır. Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda İngiliz kuvvetleri için savaşan ve Black and Tans grubunun bir parçası olan Tadg Bere ile nişanlıdır ve bu durum onları ülkedeki milliyetçi bağımsızlık savunan grupların hedefine koyar. Bu sebeple İrlanda'dan kaçmak zorunda kalan çift Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ne giderler. Burada da daha sonra Lily'nin hayat boyu destekçisi ve dostu olacak olan IRA üyesi Bay Nolan peşlerini bırakmaz ve Tadg Bere Chicago'da öldürülür. Lily Chicago'dan kaçır ve kendini Cleveland'da bulur. Orada yeni arkadaşı Cassie Black ile yeni bir hayata başlar. Bu süre zarfında, kökleri ve kimliği Lily için uzun süre gizemli kalan bir polis memuru Joe Kinderman ile tanışır. Ed adında bir çocukları olur. Bir gün Joe aniden ortadan kaybolur ve Bayan Wolohan, Lily'nin Ed'i büyütmesine yardım eder. Ed genç bir adamken, Vietnam Savaşı'nda savaşmak için Amerikan ordusuna katılır. Savaşın dönen Ed, eski hayatına uyum sağlamakta çok zorlanır. Toplumdan uzakta kendi başına yaşamaya karar verir. Lily hayatında yalnız ve çaresiz kaldığı bir zamanda torunu Bill ile tanışır. O andan itibaren, Lily hayatını torununa adar. Ancak, kardeşi ve oğlu

Vietnam'da olan Bill de orduya katılır ve Körfez Savaşı'nda savaşıır. Tıpkı ailenin diğer erkekleri gibi, o da paramparça ve kafası karışmış bir şekilde geri döner. Sonunda Bill de intihar ederek hayatına son verir. Torunun intiharının ardından, Lily kendi hayatı hakkında düşünmeye ve hayatına son vermeyi düşünerek bir günlük tutmaya başlar.

Barry, *On Canaan's Side*'da, Lily gibi milliyetçi sömürgecilik karşıtı resmi tarih tarafından susturulan kişilere ses vermek için romanı birinci ağızdan bir kadın günlüğü biçiminde tasarlar; başka bir deyişle, Lily'nin günlüğü baskıcı ötekileştirme uygulamalarına bir yanıt olarak milliyetçi anlatılara uymayan bir kadın portresi olarak okunabilir (Fraser 67). Barry, Lily'nin günlüğü aracılığıyla İrlanda tarihinin bir açısını sunar ve Lily'nin kendi yazılarına göre zamanın akışını takip eder, çünkü Barry, büyük anlatıların yalnızca resmi kayıtlara odaklandığına ve dolayısıyla bunların sorgulanabilir olduğuna inanmaktadır. Doran'ın genel olarak milliyetçilik hakkında belirttiği gibi, milliyetçi anlatılar “köylüleri, , kadınları, yerli ve etnik azınlık gruplarını kapsamaz” (Doran 95). Bu sebeple Barry'nin Lily gibi bir karakteri romanın ana karakteri yapması, Barry'nin postkolonyal yaklaşımına güzel bir örnek teşkil etmektedir.

Romanda, Barry “küçük zaferler”e ,Lily'nin hayatında kişisel başarılarına değinerek, vurgu yapmaktadır. Böylelikle bir milletin büyük anlatılarının ve resmi tarihlerinin, milli topluluktaki tüm bireyleri kucaklamak için yetersiz olduğunu öne sürer. Dahası, Romanın resmi tarih yazımının güvenilirliğine ve kapsayıcılığına yönelik eleştirel tutumu, aynı zamanda postkolonyal bir tutum olarak da ele alınmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Barry, ülkelerin anlattığı milliyetçi ve sömürgecilik karşıtı büyük anlatıların bir biçimi olarak resmi tarihlerin taraflı olduğunun ve ulus

inşası sürecinde bireylerin milliyetçi fikir ve uygulamaların kurbanı olma ihtimalinin yüksek olduğunun altını çizmektedir.

Lily, babasının etkisi altında Britanya yanlısı siyasi görüşlere katılmaz. Lily'nin babasının rütbeli bir Britanya yanlısı polis şefi olması, nişanlısının da Black and Tans üyesi bir Britanya yanlısı olduğu dikkate alındığında, Lily'nin yeni bağımsız İrlanda'da ulus inşa sürecinin “yanlış” tarafında olduğu söylenebilir; sonuç olarak, bu sürecin kurbanı olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır (McCoppin 92). Lily'nin babasının Dublin'de Polis Kuvvetleri Baş Müfettişi olması için düzenlenen töreni anlatma şekli Lily'nin, İngiliz veya İngiliz yönetimini idealize etmediğini açıkça göstermektedir. Bu yönüyle, Barry her iki tarafa da mesafeli bir davranış sergileyen bir karakter ile kendisinin postkolonyal yaklaşımını gösterdiği söylenebilir.

Öte yandan, roman Lily'nin babasının polis şefi olmasını kutlayan resmi törende bir ayı ile suikasta uğramasını ve bir İngiliz asker tarafından ayının vurularak babasının kurtarılması olayında dikkatleri başka bir bakış açısına çekmektedir. Bu sahne, İngiliz emperyalistleri ile İrlandalı milliyetçiler arasındaki çatışmaya açıkça ışık tutmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, bu mücadelede en çok acı çeken ve dolayısıyla ölen ayıdır. Ayı, İrlanda'nın simgesi olarak alınırsa, İrlanda bir zamanlar vahşi boz ayıların ("Bears") yuvası olduğu için, Barry'nin romanının İrlanda'nın bu mücadelenin bir sonucu olarak ne kadar zarar gördüğünü gösterdiği sonucuna varılabilir.

Barry'nin romanı emperyalist ve milliyetçi büyük anlatıların yerine postkolonyal bir anlayış önermektedir. Barry kutuplaşmış kimlik anlayışlarını baltalamakta ve Lily için başka bir alan/merkez yaratmaktadır. Romanda Amerika, yani başlıktaki Canaan, milliyetçi yurt anlatılarına postkolonyal bir alternatif için bir

metafor olarak ortaya çıkıyor. Amerika, Lily'nin İrlanda'nın “uygun” bir ulusal öznesi olmaktan ziyade bir birey olma özgürlüğüne sahip olmasını sağlıyor. Böylelikle, Bir kadın olarak milliyetçiliğin kendisine biçtiği, "ulusal kültürün koruyucuları" (Jayawerdana 14), "ulusun değerlerine uygun kültürün üreticisi olmak" (Yuval Davis 37) gibi rollere tepki göstermektedir.

Lily kendisiyle Britanya yanlılarının ve milliyetçilerin anlattığı dışlayıcı anlatılar arasına keskin bir çizgi çekip, aslında, özcü/yerelci ev anlayışlarını sorunsallaştıran postkolonyal bir ev algısı geliştirdiği görülmektedir. *The World, the Text, and the Critic* adlı kitabında Edward Said, “affiliation” ve “filiation” terimleri arasındaki ayrımın altını çizmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Said'in altını çizdiği terimler Lily'nin davranışına açıklık kazandırmaktadır. Aslında Lily dostluklar, kendine bir yuva ve aile kurarak ve dostluklarını İrlanda ile olan kan bağlarından ve biyolojik ailesiyle olan ilişkilerinden çok daha değerli tuttuğu görülmektedir.

Roman boyunca Lily'nin Amerika'yı yeni evi olarak, hayatının geri kalanında "parıldayan bir Canaan" olarak algıladığı görülmektedir. Ancak, romanın Amerika'daki ırkçılığa karşı eleştirel tavrına uygun olarak roman, Amerika'nın içinde bulunduğu savaflara ve Dünya Savaşlarına karşı savaş karşıtı bir tavır sergilemektedir. Aslında, Lily savaşları hiç de kahramanca eylemler olarak algılamaz ve savaşı travmatik bir deneyim olarak görmektedir. Bu bağlamda, Amerika, Lily için yeni bir hayat inşa etmek için yeni bir fırsat, bir "Canaan" olarak sunulsa da, Barry'nin romanı Amerika'nın küresel askeri kararlarını kutlamaktan kaçındığı için Amerika'ya kritik bir mesafe koyduğu görülmektedir.

Tezin üçüncü bölümünde son olarak, Lily ile karşılaştığı diğer kadın karakterler arasında görülen dayanışma ele alınmıştır. Kadınlar arasındaki dostluk,

özellikle de Lily İrlanda'dan uzakta sürgünündeysen, romanın "filiation" baltalamak için bir araç olarak "affiliation" kavramına yaptığı vurgunun bir başka örneği olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Lily yalnızlık içinde yaşamasına rağmen, hayatını dostluk üzerine kurma kapasitesine sahip bir karakter olduğu görülmektedir. Aslında, Bayan Wolohan, arkadaşı Cassie Black ve Mike Scopello'nun kardeşi Maria ile kurduğu bağlar göz önüne alındığında kadınlar arasında dostluk ve güveni milliyetçilik gibi büyük anlatılara tercih ettiği fark edilebilir. Bu sebeple, *On Canaan's Side*, dünyayı ve ilişkileri milliyetçi anlatıların özcü ve soyutlayıcı perspektifinden farklı bir şekilde görmenin özgürleştirici olasılığını ön plana çıkardığı söylenebilir.

Bu tezin amacına uygun olarak üçüncü bölümde, roman, büyük anlatıların homojenleştirici varsayımlarının ve uygulamalarının altını çizmekte ve bu anlatıların, onlara boyun eğmeyen bireylerin yaşamlarında nasıl travmalara ve aşırı zorluklara yol açtığını incelemektedir. Yaşlı bir kadının kurgusal bir hatırası/dergisi olan roman, marjinal bir İrlandalı kadın figürüne ses vermiş ve Lily'nin anlatısının ışığında milliyetçi, sömürgecilik karşıtı İrlanda tarihinin alternatif bir postkolonyal okumasını sergilemiştir.

Bu tezin dördüncü bölümde, tezin amacına uygun olarak *The Secret Scripture* kitabında milliyetçiliğin, Katolik inancı ve kadınların temsil edilişi incelenmektedir. *The Secret Scripture*'da Roseanne adında yaşlı bir İrlandalı kadının hikayesini anlatılmaktadır. Yazıları aracılığıyla, özellikle 1920'ler ile İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın sonu arasında, İrlanda'nın siyasi kargaşası sırasında, uyumsuz bir kadının varoluş mücadelelerini görüyoruz. *On Canaan's Side*' da olduğu gibi bu roman da tarihin güvenilmezliğini vurgulayıp ve marjinalleştirilmiş bir kadın karaktere ses vermektedir. *On Canaan's Side* romanından farklı olarak, bu romandaki vurgu,

bağımsızlığını yeni kazanmış İrlanda devletinin milliyetçiliği ile Katolikliğinin, kadınların ezilmesiyle iç içe geçmesine odaklanmaktadır. Ayrıca roman, Roseanne'i sömürgeleştirilmiş bir karakter olarak tasvir etmektedir.

Bu romanda Barry, diğer şeylerin yanı sıra hafızanın ve tarihin güvenilirliği ile ilgilenmektedir. *On Canaan's Side* ile bu roman arasındaki önemli bir fark, *The Secret Scripture*'da hafızanın sorunsallaştırılmasının ön plana çıkmasıdır çünkü Roseanne, çocukluğunda babasının ölümünden sonra bir travma yaşar; bu nedenle, güvenilir bir anlatıcı değildir. Bir diğer yandan, Roseanne'in anlattıklarının yanı sıra Doktor Grene'in de tuttuğu notlarda anlattıklarının güvenilir olmadığı ilgi çekici bir durumdur. Bu sebeple, roman, aynı olayların birden fazla anlatıcısını ve bakış açısını sunarak, belleğin güvenilirliğini daha da sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, *On Canaan's Side*'da olduğu gibi bu romanda da resmi tarihin güvenilirliği ön plana çıkmaktadır. Resmi tarih kapsayıcı olmadığı için, romanın, bireylerin özel tarihlerinin/hikayelerinin büyük anlatılara bir alternatif olarak ortaya çıkabileceğini öne sürdüğü görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, *On Canaan's Side*'daki Lily'nin günlüğüne çok benzeyen Roseanne'in romanda bize sunduğu "özel anekdotlar" alternatif bir tarihçilik olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

*On Canaan's Side*'da olduğu gibi, *The Secret Scripture*'da da Barry, milliyetçi İrlanda bağlamında marjinalleştirilmiş kadın figürüne ses vermektedir. Roman Roseanne'in yaşamının milliyetçi ideolojinin etkisi altında nasıl şekillendiğiyle ilgilenmektedir. Roman, Roseanne'in kendi yansıması aracılığıyla, kişi için gerçekten önemli olan şeyin, yalnızca daha büyük bir topluluğun normlarına ve beklentilerine uymaktan ziyade, kendini hayatının yazarı olarak görebilmesi olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Sosyal-marjinal bir figür olmasında Roseanne'in dini kimliği önemli bir

rol oynamaktadır. Peder Gaunt'un Roseanne'in dini kimliğine "büyük bir hata" olarak atıfta bulunması ve onu "iyi bir Katolik koca bularak dinini değiştirme niyeti" ile ilgili olarak bunu düşünmeye itmesi sonucu açıkça görülmektedir ki ülkenin yeni ulusal Katolik atmosferinde Roseanne dışlanmış bir bireydir.

Ancak, Peder Gaunt, Presbiteryen dini kökenleri ve baskın Katolik ideolojisine karşı uygun olmayan tutumu nedeniyle Roseanne'i "hükmetmeye" çalışması Roseanne'in yine de Presbiteryenlik hakkında eleştirel bir tutum takınmasına engel olmamaktadır. Roseanne Protestan geçmişine rağmen hem Protestanlığı hem de Katolik inancını sorgulamaya devam etmektedir.

Roseanne'in Protestan geçmişinin yanı sıra, İrlanda iç savaşı sırasında babasının İrlanda'daki siyasi konumu da onun karakter gelişimi üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahiptir. Roseanne'nin babasının İrlanda'da Büyük Britanya için çalışan bir polis teşkilatı olan İrlanda Kraliyet Polis Teşkilatı üyesi olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Babasının iç savaş sırasında İrlanda'nın Britanya'dan bağımsızlığını destekleyen IRA üyeleri tarafından öldürülmesi Roseanne'in marjinalleştirilmesinde önemli bir yeri olmuştur. Roseanne'in Protestan geçmişi ve babasının politik duruşu göz önüne alındığında, Roseanne, tıpkı On Canaan's Side'daki Lily gibi, yeni İrlanda ulusunun “yanlış” tarafında yer almaktadır. Protestan bir kadın ve Britanya yanlısı bir babanın kızı olarak milliyetçiler tarafından mağdur edilmiş ve marjinalleştirilmiştir. Roseanne marjinalleştirilip yalnız bırakılsa da taraf seçmeyişi ya da kendini tanımlamak için milliyetçi anlatının karşı tarafında konumlanmayışi önemli bir noktadır. Bu bağlamda, Roseanne'nin yazılarını kendi bakış açısıyla yazması, Barry'nin milliyetçi anlatıya karşı postkolonyal eleştirisi için önemlidir.

Roseanne'in ailesinin dini gemiři ve babasının İrlanda Kraliyet Polis Teřkilatı'ndaki siyasi konumu nedeniyle marjinalleřmesine ek olarak, Roseanne'nin Katoliklięe karřı direniři, zellikle Peder. Gaunt, yeni zgr İrlanda Devleti'nde marjinal bir figr olarak ortaya ıkmasında bir bařka nemli faktrdr. Roseanne'in dini gemiři, siyasi konumu ve Peder Gaunt'a meydan okuması gibi tm faktrler gz nne alındığında, Barry'nin *On Canaan's Side*'da yaptığı gibi, Roseanne ve hikayesinin hatırlanması iin sosyal olarak marjinal bir kadının alternatif bir tarih yazımını sunduęu sylenabilir.

*The Secret Scripture*'da Barry, İrlanda devletinin milliyetilięi ile Katoliklięinin, kadınların ezilmesindeki ortak rollerini n plana ıkartıyor. Bu karışıklığı sergilemek iin Barry, İrlanda'daki nemli tarihi olaylara, oęunlukla zgr İrlanda Devleti'nin ve daha sonra İrlanda'nın ilk bařkanı olan Eamon de Valera'nın siyasi etkisine atıfta bulunmaktadır (Gwynn). Bu durumda, Barry'nin o dnemde İrlanda'da milliyeti politikaların Katoliklik ile paralel gittiğini ne srdę aıktır ve bu baęlam, insanların Barry'nin romanındaki Roseanne karakterini milliyeti İrlanda toplumunda teki olarak algılanmasına neden olmaktadır.

Roseanne, Evlilięinin Katolik Kilisesi tarafından iptal edilmesinden sonra Roseanne'in eski kocasının erkek kardeři Eneas McNulty ile iliřkisi vardır ve evlilik dıřı "hamile kalır ve bir ocuk doęurur" (239). Roseanne'in bu Kararını daha da ilgin kılan řey, Eneas'ın milliyeti aile gemiřine raęmen İngiliz ordusuna asker olarak katılan İrlandalı bir adam olmasıdır. Bu baęlamda, Roseanne'in bu tutumu aıka gstermektedir ki Roseanne, "ulusal kltrn [koruyucusu] olarak" hareket etmeyi reddederek bu tr anlatılara direnmektedir (Jayawerdana 14).



Roseanne halka açık bir yerde Eneas McNulty'nin çocuğunu doğurduğunda, Peder Gaunt çocuğu alıp başka bir yere gönderir. Bu olay, yeni milliyetçi devlette aile ve kadına biçilen roller hakkında önemli bir fikir vermesi açısından önem taşımaktadır. Özgür İrlanda Devleti gibi yeni kurulan milliyetçi ülkelerdeki bu kadın algısı dikkate alındığında, kadınların birey olarak görülmediği; onların daha çok, sömürgeci bir güce karşı sömürgecilik karşıtı mücadelede ülkede yeni bir milliyetçi yönetim kurmanın araçları olarak görüldüğü anlaşılabılır. Bu nedenle, Roseanne'nin hikayesi, Özgür İrlanda Devleti'ndeki ezilen kadınların diğer birçok gerçek hikayesinin kurgusal bir örneğidir. İrlanda'da Roseanne'in hayatının çoğunu geçirdiği Roscommon Bölge Akıl Hastanesi gibi kurumlara gönderilen binlerce kadın vardır. Bu bağlamda, tezin yazılış amacına uygun olarak Barry, İrlanda'da "hapsedilen" binlerce kadının unutulmuş hikayelerine Roseanne'in portresiyle ışık tutmaktadır.

Ayrıca, Roseanne arkadaşlığına herhangi bir büyük anlatıdan daha fazla değer vermektedir. Barry, "affiliations" gibi ilişkilerin, "filiations" ilişkilerinden çok daha önemli olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Bu sebeple Roseanne'in roman boyunca etrafında tuttuğu ve ilişki içerisinde olmayı tercih ettiği karakterlerin dikkatle incelenmesi önemli bir noktadır. Bu bağlamda, Eneas McNulty ile olan ilişkisi, John Lavelle ile olan arkadaşlığını devam ettirmesi gibi noktalar Barry'in dikkat çekmek istediği noktayı işaret etmektedir.

Dördüncü bölümün sonucunda ise, Barry, ana kahramanın karakterini homojenleştirici büyük anlatılara tepki olarak nasıl geliştirdiğini ve postkolonyal bir karakter olarak ortaya çıktığını sergilemekte olduğu görülmektedir. Roman, İrlanda'nın milliyetçi resmi tarihinin dışında kalan ezilmiş kadın figürü olanlara ses veriyor. Ayrıca, iç savaş sırasında ve Özgür İrlanda Devleti'nin ilk yıllarında ve daha

sonra İrlanda'da İrlandalı kadınların ezilmesinde milliyetçilik ve Katolikliğin birbirine karışması ön plana çıkardığı da dikkatleri çekmektedir.

Bu tezin sonuç bölümünde ise, her iki romanın incelemelerinde tespit edilen benzerlikler ve farklılıklar sergilenerek vurgulanmıştır. Her iki romanda da anlatıcıların yazılarıyla egemen ideolojinin resmi tarihine bir alternatif sunduğu iddia edilmektedir. Barry, *On Canaan's Side* romanında büyük anlatı yerine alternatif, "küçük" (petit) bir anlatı sergilemektedir. *The Secret Scripture*'da ise Barry, İrlanda tarihinin kenarlarından alternatif bir okuma olarak Roseanne'in yazılarını sunmaktadır. Diğer dikkat çekici benzerli ise, her iki kahramanın da kadın olması ve benzer nedenlerle dışlanmış olmalarıdır. İkincisi, ne Lily ne de Roseanne baskıya veya tehdide boyun eğmemektedirler. *On Canaan's Side*'da Lily, milliyetçi anlatıların kadınlara yüklediği görevleri reddederken, *The Secret Scripture*'da Roseanne Katolik değerlere göre hareket etmeyi reddetmektedir. Bununla birlikte, bu iki kadın karakterin bazı yönlerden farklılık gösterdiğini de eklemek gerekir. Bu iki karakter dini kimlikleri açısından farklı olsalar da bu durup toplumdaki marjinal konumlarını değiştirmemiştir. Her iki romanda da değinilen tarihsel yönlerin dışında, İrlanda'daki milliyetçi partiler Sinn Féin, Fine Gael ve Fianna Fail'in 2020'deki en son seçimde en çok oyu almış olması (Clarke), İrlanda'nın milliyetçi anlatılarında kadın figürünün hala üzerinde durulması gereken geçerli bir konu olmaya devam etmesine neden olmaktadır.

**APPENDIX B: TEZ İZİN FORMU / THESIS PERMISSION FORM**

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**YAZARIN / AUTHOR**

**Soyadı / Surname** : TANRIÖVERİ

**Adı / Name** : HALİLCAN

**Bölümü / Department** : İNGİLİZ EDEBİYATI

**TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS** (İngilizce / English) : SEBASTIAN BARRY'S CRITICAL REVISITING OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN ANTI-COLONIAL NATIONALIST NARRATIVES: *ON CANAAN'S SIDE AND THE SECRET SCRIPTURE*

**TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:** Yüksek Lisans / Master

☒

Doktora / PhD

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