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Voicing Women's Marginalization and Activating Solidarity in The Pull of the Stars

ABSTRACT

Emma Donoghue is a well-known Irish-Canadian feminist author whose works deal with the difficulties of being a woman. She shows many images of how women have suffered in patriarchal societies, especially in the last ten years. Due to patriarchal ideology, women are seen as the "Other". As a matter of fact, women experience dissatisfaction, dependency, powerlessness, and challenging situations. Emma Donoghue, in this regard, depicts female characters that struggle to avoid verbal and physical marginalization. The researcher analyzes Donoghue's novel, namely *The Pull of the Stars* through the lens of feminist solidarity.

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التعبير عن تهميش النساء و تفعيل تضامنهم في رواية سحب النجوم

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الخلاصة:

يتناول البحث رواية ايما دونهيو سحب النجوم وفق النظرية النسوية، حيث ان الكاتبة تسلط الضوء على مشاكل النساء وصراعهن لإثبات وجودهن في مجتمع ذكوري تقوده العادات والتقاليد المتوارثة والتي انعكست بشكل او بأخر على القوانين والنظام الاقتصادي والاجتماعي و السياسي. تتناول الدراسة بالبحث والتحليل والنقد التهميش الذي تتعرض له النساء في فترة اقل ما يقال عنها انها حرجة الا وهي فترة جائحة

الانفلونزا التي اجتاحت كندا في مطلع القرن العشرين، كما يسلط البحث الضوء على المفاهيم الوجودية النسوية التي جاءت بها سيمون دي بوفوار ومدى انعكاس هذه المفاهيم على شخصيات الرواية وعناصر الزمان والمكان، يحاول البحث الاجابة على عدة تساؤلات تأتي في مقدمتها مدى تفاعل الفحوى مع الشكل للخروج بخطاب نسوي تائر على الهوية النسوية المتوارثة، يضاف الى ذلك ان الدراسة تحاول ان تجيب على التساؤل الخاص بقدرة التضامن والتلاحم النسوي على ولادة هذا الخطاب الثوري المشار اليه انفا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النسوية، ايما دونهيرو، التضامن، التغريب، الذات، التهميش

The Literary and Historical Background of The Pull of the Stars

Emma Donoghue, a novelist, short-story writer, dramatist, and historical writer, was born on October 24, 1969, in Dublin, Ireland, to a big, educated Irish Catholic family. Early novels by Donoghue contributed to the development of a large market for novels about individuals who have been confined by conventional and traditional social system. This can be recognized in her most famous novel Room which tackles the issue of women's confinement, marginalization, and Otherness. Intertextual references, parody and pastiche, are all used in Donoghue's work and obviously directed toward deconstructing the accepted values, duties, tales, and histories that influence women's life .

Donoghue combines postmodern techniques with feminist concern. Her feminist poetics of rewriting allow her to examine, undercut, and start opening the traditional narrative, customary themes, and stereotypical pictures that all too frequently guide one's vision into familiar patterns. She is dedicated to giving the other side of the story, offering a different point of view, and replacing diversity for the monolithic voice. Her work, like other types of rewriting, is based on the conflict between "the known and the new." (Sellers,14, 2001)

Donoghue's *The Pull of the Stars* is set against the background of the 1918's influenza epidemic inflicted upon Ireland during World War I. Aiming at creating a fictitious tale about healthcare professionals who are confined to a tiny room in a hospital and forced to fight for their lives, the author draws on historical data. Three ladies are presented by Donoghue to support one another and assist pregnant mothers voluntary. As such, they represent a unified force because they share responsibility for other people's lives and work closely and tenderly to better society.

The story is set over three days, opening in the morning of October 31st, 1918. The main three characters in the novel are Julia Power, a nurse working in a Dublin hospital where the major events are set, Bridie Sweeney, a young woman, comes as a helper to assist Julia, and Dr. Lynn, a new doctor in the hospital who allegedly participates in anti-British rallies in Ireland. On the other hand, the novel presents other types of women who are marginalized and subjugated by different forces of life. These women are Ita Noonan, one of the pregnant women who dies along with her unborn fetus, and Honor White, who expects her second child from a previous relationship and who dies after giving it birth. Among these three fictional characters only Dr. Kathleen Lynn is a real one.

About the authentic representation of 1918's epidemic, Donoghue believes that:

The story emphasizes on one of the uninteresting, low-paying, yet extremely tough vocations that save so many lives amid a worldwide disaster. In 1918, in particular, doctors' treatments for flu patients were so limited and largely ineffective that it was widely accepted that the gentle loving care provided by nurses sacrificing their lives was the only thing likely to get you through. (quoted in Palko516)

Donoghue's authenticity is not confined to the forceful conditions represented in the novel, it rather entails the title of the novel. The title is derived from the pandemic of influenza itself. It was believed that this particular pandemic was caused by stars. As such, pulling the stars would end it. This is, in parallel, referred to in *The Pull of the Stars*:

The stars are so bright, I'm dazzled! I looked up and found the Great Bear. I told her, in Italy, they used to blame the influence of the constellations for making them sick _that's where influenza comes from. "..... "That's what *influenza* means, she said. *Influenza delle stele*-the influenza of the stars. Medieval Italain thought the illness proved that the heavens were govern their fates, that people were quite literally star-crossed. (Donoghue104-169)

On a symbolic level, *The Pull of the Stars* implies the idea that the paths of women's lives are determined not so much by the skies as by poverty, sexism, and violence, and a culture that forces women to carry responsibilities that men should bear, leaving children to suffer the repercussions. In an article entitled "Between Being and Becoming: A Gynocritical Reading of Selected Narratives," Awfa Hussein Al-Doory and other critics confirms the idea that: "Feminism by its very nature, is an interdisciplinary revisionist movement that is mainly concerned with how women are socially defined and how this definition affects their being and becoming." (Al-Doory, 2019, 52) In linking this with the title of the novel, one can say that all through *The Pull of the Stars*, Donoghue avoids the use of quotation marks because she wants the dialogue to swim in a sea of thought and thus being engaged in a constant process of being and becoming that transcend the patriarchal forces. This is exemplified by

Julia's thoughts and words are presented as a whole structure without quotation marks. Furthermore, Donoghue omits quotation marks in dialogue shared among the main characters in the novel so as to enhance their unity of thoughts and thus solidarity.

Calling for solidarity, in fact, can be the direct cause for establishing the plot's fictional structure on the backdrop of an epidemic. Donoghue utilizes the setting to highlight the limitations women face. This confined space, namely the room in a hospital, represents a small patriarchal structure that women have occupied as a result of their circumstances: "This room were an antechamber of hell." (Donoghue 81). However, this hell, and despite its limitation, motivates women to strain and expend all of their energy to demonstrate their strength via their bodies. Donoghue, in this sense, presents women within the context of a powerful picture in order to demonstrate how they can bear everything for the sake of their being. Feminist solidarity is a way of being that fights back the socio-economic inequalities established by the patriarchal power and the ongoing prevalence of sexism, exploitation of women's labor, emotions, and bodies. Accordingly, feminist solidarity is a form of an organized and unified structure which envisages a shared responsibility for the lives of others, works with care and intimacy and acts with caring and closeness for social reforms enabled by "democratic engagement" (Segal 228).

Otherness of Woman's Body in *The Pull of the Stars*

Donoghue presents the idea of women's Otherness through different means to indicate the fact that women are captured by different forces which become increasingly a means of emancipation. Interestingly enough, Donoghue highlights the way feminine body is Othered and how this Otherness is enhanced by the flu inflicted upon it. The novel's conflict crystalizes the antifeminist traditional convention that the pregnant body is nothing but a disease. This is repeatedly exemplified by women whose bodies are surrendered by two forces, namely pregnancy and the flu:

Eileen Devine, the barrow woman. Her flu had turned to pneumonia—all yesterday she'd coughed up greenish-red, and her temperature was a kite jerking up and down...the woman had been so dazed, she wouldn't have noticed if the Pope had come from Rome to pay her a visit. The only mercy was that her delirium was of the low type, not the high kind that could sufferers chase, whack, or spit at us. (Donoghue, 4-10)

Donoghue's representation of the objectified feminine body finds its echo in what Simon de Beauvoir believes about the pregnant body and consequently motherhood. She believes that

women are perceived as "others" because of their role as mothers. They are conditioned to consider motherhood as the essence of their lives and as the fulfillment of their destiny. y (de Beauvoir 1953, 48) Donoghue, however, transforms this particular Otherness into a source of collective solidarity and thus a collective potential energy.

This transformation writes back the antifeminist Platonic discourse in which women always appear to be the less rational and the more emotional gender. Plato repeatedly enhances the weakness of women and their inequality to men who can only be punished by being turned into women in their reincarnation circle. In the "Timaeus" Plato says:

According to the probable account, all those creatures generated as men who proved themselves cowardly and spent their lives in wrong-doing were transformed at their second incarnation, into women. And it was for this reason that the gods at that time contrived the love of sexual intercourse by constructing an animate creature of one kind in us men, and of another kind in women; and they made these severally in the following fashion. (Plato, 1925)

To complicate matters further, feminists contend that this struggle between mind and body may be regarded as a battle between men and women. As noted by Simon de Beauvoir, upon entering adolescence, the young woman's body becomes a source of dread and shame for her: "This new growth in her armpits transforms her into a kind of animal or algae." (Beauvoir, 1982, 333) Beauvoir presents a descriptive phenomenology of female bodies as lived in specific situations:

ensnared by nature the pregnant woman is plant and animal ... an incubator, a conscious and free individual who has become life's passive instrument ... not so much mothers... as fertile organisms. (Beauvoir, 1982, 365-67)

Beauvoir argues that the way a young girl, and later a woman, perceives her body is a result of internalizing how others see it:

Through compliments and admonishments, through images and words, she discovers the meaning of the words pretty and ugly; she soon knows that to be pleased is to be pretty as a picture; she tries to resemble an image, she disguises herself, she looks at herself in the mirror, she compares herself to princesses and fairies from tales. (Beauvoir, 2010, 304)

The way women live their bodies as objects for another's gaze is rooted in society and circumstances, rather than in anatomy. In other words, Beauvoir's objectification of women's bodies seeps into the idea that women's bodies are sculpted and molded according to long-established historical norms. This finds its echo

Donoghue, however, highlights the significance of the feminine body by means of celebrating the pregnant body. She shows her reaction against ideas such as woman's body is nothing but a mechanical entity, woman has no authority over her own body, and being female is the absolute sign of disease. She uses the pregnant body to demonstrate the complicated link between feminism and woman. Donoghue dives into considerable bodily details to show how women give birth, how do they bleed, how do they vomit and breast-feed, as well as how do they die:

Five minutes later the placenta slid out of Mary O'Rahilly on its own, whole and healthy-looking. No bleeding, even. And after all this first-timer had been through, she was barely torn...her pulse was safely down in the low eighties now...I got her sitting propped up in Fowler's position to let all her fluids trickle out and fastened her into an abdominal binder as well as nursing one for the breasts, with flaps of gauze over her great brown nipples. (Donoghue, 145)

The simple focus on these details show women's effort, agony, and fortitude, and how the routes of their lives are so frequently dictated by the functioning of their bodies. In these instances, the pregnant body offers up new options and routs towards being, a matter that is echoed by the hidden power the pregnant body has: "These mothers are often stronger than they look." (Donoghue 37)

The pregnant body in *The Pull of the Stars* provides the characters with the chance to be closer to each other via their living bodies. Marry, the 17 years old, is an eight months pregnant. However, she has such a limited understanding of the female reproductive system to the extent that she thinks that her baby will emerge from her navel. Julia explains:

Mary O Rahilly was clutching her bump through the nightdress, poking one finger into her navel. I asked, is that where it hurts? She shook her head and cough with the back of her hand. Just wondering how I will know when it Is about open. I stared. Your belly button? Her voice trembled as she paced. Does it do it on its own or will the doctor have to...force it? I was embarrassed for her. Mrs. ORahilly, you know that's not the baby comes out? The girl blinked at me. Think of where it got started. I waited, then whispered: Below. The information shook her she opened her mouth wide. (Donoghue47).

Julia in this situation functions as Mary O Rahilly's guide. This is paralleled by the fact that women were not educated about their own bodies, sex, and sexuality. In an attempt to liberate Mary from such ignorance that separates her from her body, Julia, as a feminist tool symbolically represented by Donoghue, aims at liberating women from the legacy of their ignorance imposed upon them by patriarchy. Mary and Julia, thereby, are engaged in a liberation process that would eugenically result in superior reproduction, yielding better bodies and minds to serve society. In this sense, the pregnant body becomes a source of

power, influencing how pregnant women feel concerning their bodies, how do they think about themselves, and how they deal with their bodies physically. As Julia Kristeva claims: "pregnancy seems to be experienced as the radical ordeal of the splitting of the subject: redoubling up of the body, separation and coexistence of the self and another."(31).

Invisibility and its Oppositional Representation

Julia does not consider her work with pregnant women as a "nightmare". This experience allows her to be engaged with Ita Nanon, Garrett White, and Mary's living bodies; it gives her the opportunity to share them empathetically their suffering and thus establishes a bridge of solidarity. However, one cannot ignore the fact that Donoghue represents marginalization through other facet that reflects the other ways by which other characters are rendered invisible despite their hard labor. Julia and Bridie are marginalized by underpaid and unpaid labor.

Women, as represented in *The Pull of the Stars*, are the most affected since they are the ones that undertake essential care labor and are in charge of social reproduction in order to keep their families and communities alive during and after the pandemic. This enhanced by Jackie Dunham who claims:

There's this idea that we're all in this together, but in many ways, it certainly is not an equal-opportunity pandemic.... The people that are impacted most will always be the most marginalized and that includes all women. (Green and O'Reilly, 42)

Many of the disadvantages that women face may be traced back to being confined to particular duties such as caregiving. These issues are rooted in the institutional discrimination against women and their ability to get promotion in their jobs. Among such institutional discrimination against women is tackled by Donoghue through the reference to "blood tax" paid by men during war. One of the male characters in the novel, namely Groyne, rejects women participation in voting since unlike them they do not pay blood tax. However, during the epidemic of the flue, nurses in hospitals are exposed directly to the disease because of their duties as caregivers. Usually, these duties are unpaid regardless the fact that they may lose their lives and regardless the difficulties they confront or the hard time they find themselves in. Julia, as a case in point, has to manually cut the umbilical cord from a bleeding mother. She eagerly dips into what she describes as: "a cave behind a waterfall; hot red past the gloves all the way up my arm."(Donoghue 63). Minutes later, another woman in labor dies because of bleeding described as "a sea of red."(Donoghue155).

Disease outbreaks affect people equally regardless their gender, color, and social status, a matter that highlights equality during pandemics. However, inequality is not necessarily obvious in global health policy. Harman claims that "women are conspicuous in the delivery of care and thus the delivery of health, but are invisible to the institutions and policies that design and implement global health strategies." (Harman, 526) Since it is devalued and perhaps underappreciated, care is a key field of inquiry in the feminist debate and among public health experts. As such, Donoghue tackles this when she describes the way nurses "worked here [in the hospital] for three days. Tirelessly, for nothing." (Donoghue200). Donoghue confronts the gender wage gap in *The Pull of the Stars*, demonstrating that "In Dublin Nurses were notoriously underpaid, but my brother and I managed to rent a small house, mostly thanks to Tim's military pension." (Donoghue6). In this quotation, Donoghue talks about Julia's unpaid labor. Despite the fact that Julia works, she cannot afford to rent their apartment, but her brother can. The standards and practices of women as nurturers in homes and larger societies may explain the feminized burden of care. Using Rai's definition as a guideline, social reproduction, biological reproduction, unpaid domestic production of commodities in home, and the replication of culture and ideology are identified by the term "reproduction," which includes the assumption that women will take time off work for biological reproduction. In society and international public policymaking, such responsibilities are undervalued, and they are frequently unappreciated or underpaid (Rai et al. 1–18).

Women bear the force of caregiving responsibilities through self-sacrifice and dependence on the family. In this sense, in *The Pull of the Stars*, Donoghue uses the term "shock absorber" to describe Bridie Sweeny (the helper) during the Pandemic. Bridie works for free despite the risk of infection. In this sense, Sister Luke exploits Bridie Sweeny: "I hope Sister Luke told you there's no pay?" "I wasn't expecting any." (Donoghue30).

The lack of link between the gendered aspects of care may be explained by the presence of what Elson refers to as "man bias" in the policy-making process. Elson contends that male prejudice results from ignorance of economic structures that "work in favor of males as a gender and against women as a gender," rather than from purposeful male bias. (Elson1-28). In a related passage, Donoghue makes reference to the circumstances of Dr. Lynn in order to discuss male privilege: "I was given a post some years ago, she continued, but their medical men shied away from the possibility of a petti coated colleague." (Donoghue101)

Feminist political economists argue that the unpaid labor economy has to play a significant role in policy due to the predominance of women in the reproductive sector and

the absence of communal and commercial attention put on these activities (Rai 1-18). Important but usually ignored components of global health include gender assumptions in policymaking, the official and informal care economy, and other related topics. The functioning of the whole health system depends on healthcare and the reproduction of healthy bodies.

The 1918–1919 pandemic had a profound impact on society, and the decade's events permanently changed the role of women. The global spread of the flu virus was facilitated by World War I. There were many job possibilities generated by both the 1918 pandemic and World War I. Although these options allowed women to join some sectors in the past, they disregarded the reality that certain of these professions, including textile manufacture. and even medical laboratory work, might be unsuitable or too risky for women. However, women's willingness to take on the challenges of such work motivated them to become more active in advancing women's rights, notably the right to vote. Yet, because of the epidemic, authorities outlawed gatherings and large assemblies, making it difficult for women's rights advocates to speak out during political campaigns and rallies. Suffragists immediately changed their tactic to focus on smaller communities of neighbors and friends when women's right to vote was at issue.

This collective feminist awareness is addressed in *The Pull of the Stars* in such an implicit and symbolic way. Julia overcomes difficulties and grows into a strong, independent woman due to her contacts with other female characters in the story including Bridie and Dr. Lynn. Each of these ladies first gives her a sense of comfort while also providing emotional, material, and physical support. In reality, these women must concentrate largely on ways to reduce the barriers that, for example, prohibit pregnant women from achieving independence. Julia therefore learns the ability to defend herself against the patriarchal ideology's restrictive impact. This is the method through which Emma Donoghue's female heroine defeats the power of a system like this. The main three female characters achieve subjectivity via solidarity. This finds its echo in what Bell Hooks claims:

We learned that the self-existed in relation, was dependent for its very being on the lives and experiences of everyone, the self not as signifier of one "I" but the coming together of many "I"s, the self as embodying collective reality past and present, family and community. Social construction of the self in relation would mean, then, that we would know the voices that speak in and to us from the past, that we would be in touch with . . . our history. Yet it is precisely these voices that are silenced, suppressed, when we are dominated. It is this collective voice we struggle to recover." (Dean152).

This "we", in *The Pull of the Stars*, alters the limiting perspectives of women and strengthens solidarity, which may be shown as a minimum of three-person interaction.

Donoghue wants to change the gender norms and give women a higher share than males. She uses the family name, Power, for Julia as a symbol of her independence. Being the narrator of the novel, gives Julia the connotations of being and becoming. Furthermore, Emma Donoghue presents Julia as the first model for guidance that influences Bridie. Despite her lack of education, Bridie is smart, and pretty. Julia's medical experiences serve as Bridie's principal source of knowledge. As an inquisitive woman, Julia does not hesitate to share her knowledge with Bridie. Julia says: "I was taken aback by her ignorance. Well, I said. Now I will show you how to wash your hand" (Donoghue34).

Julia's interactions with others reveal the bond of sisterhood she shares with others. This inspires ethical pride and self-awareness in Bridie and aids the maturation of both Julia and Bridie. Julia provides Bridie with love and support. She shares everything with Bridie, even her birth date, as Bridie does not know it:

You said I was a tonic, Julia. Indispensable. Didn't you put balm on my hands when you didn't even know me? Gave me your comb. And a birthday as well. When I broke the thermometer, you said it was your fault! You've taught me so much in two days. Made me your helper, your runner. Made me matter. (Donoghue 176).

In such a precarious situation, Julia sacrifices herself to protect her patient from the same experiences of the dead women. When Honor White goes into labor during her painful birth, Julia attempts to give her original blood via a blood transfusion, but the attempt fails miserably: "Dr. Lynn said loudly, Mrs. White, I am going to put a pint of Nurse Powers' blood into you." (Donoghue155).

In the novel, Dr. Lynn emerges as a live example of sisterhood as well as a significant representation of an independent woman. She is among the women in the story who contribute to Julia's emergence as an independent woman. Further, Dr. Lynn is the novel's principal illustration of a political personality. She condemns the demeaning circumstances that oppress and encircle women's status. Lynn is the one who is responsible for Julia's political perspectives. Though Julia has no time for politics, she recognizes that a pandemic exposes society's flaws and increases women's awareness of other aspects of the world they want to alter. As such, "She had to be coming into the hospital today out of civic duty rather than for a locum s measly wages." (Donoghue167).

Dr. Lynn, in the same way, represents a political woman who supports poor women and blames the government for Dublin's increased levels of poverty. While Julia does not have time for politics, Dr. Lynn attributes

everything to politics, don't you know?" that means the government is reacting to everything and putting Irish people in a horrible situation rather than providing a wonderful life for their citizens: "So, it is true, then, that you were with the rebels on the roof of city Hall? She corrected me: with Irish citizen army (Donoghue101).

Women in the Dublin of *The Pull of the Stars* are afflicted by poverty and a lack of the most fundamental requirements of existence; thus, they have more diseases and more children:

Always on their feet, these Dublin mothers, scrimping and dishing up for their misters and chi sellers, living off the scraps left on plates and gallons of weak black tea. The slums in which they somehow managed to stay alive were as pertinent as pulse or respiratory rate, it seemed to me, but only medical observations were permitted on a chart. So instead of poverty. I'd write malnourishment or debility. As code for too many pregnancies, fistula, torn cervix, or uterine prolapse. There was a saying I'd heard from several patients that struck a chill in to my bones. She doesn't love him unless she gives him twelves. In other countries, women might take discreet measures to avoid this, but in Ireland, such things were not only illegal but unmentionable. (Donoghue15).

Poverty and health discourses obscure the experiences of poor and ill women while stereotyping and defining them as Other. Poor and unhealthy women are portrayed as having poorly controlled their choices: "Our poorer mother came in here with too little flesh on their bones." (Donoghue36). In this sense, poor and unhealthy women are stereotyped and kept invisible, as well as potentially alienated from society. They are socially characterized as lacking the will to exert power and cooperate.

The government and society both contribute to the strong link between poverty and women. As a consequence of being mistreated by society and the government, women are now alienated and helpless. To the fullest extent possible, tyranny and exploitation are not confined to the patriarchal sphere; they also occur in the economic sphere. Julia brings up the Ita Noonan situation: One she was delivered in January, she'd return to the shell factory again for the grand wages and the cheap meals too; she'd have her eldest girl bring the baby in for feeds, she assured us. Mr. Noonan had been jobless" (Donoghue 16).

From a Marxists point of view, women suffer double marginalization engendered by two different systems, the patriarchal system and the capital one: "she told us about all her job at the shell -filling factory, where her fingers had been yellowed by handling the TNT. She'd return to it as soon as she was over this flu, despite what she referred to lightly as her gammy leg." (Donoghue16). The reason for women's labor is that they are forced to work for survival rather than empowerment. These women are possessed by the duties of nursing and nurturing,

in addition to the requirement of earning money. Working, on the other hand, makes women vulnerable to exploitation.

Articulating these issues by Donoghue in such a histotrophic atmosphere helps to present her as a political and literary defender of woman's rights. This is enhanced by Habib who asserts that women novelists employ a secret solidarity in their texts, sharing them with their partners and readers. Their goal in writing prose is to justify women's existence and oppose patriarchal society (Habib 691). Simply speaking, through this novel, Donoghue wants to present a strong characters whose strength and production are increased through the strength of their union.

Conclusion

The Pull of the Stars is a feminist discourse that rejects the predetermined subordinated feminine identity and calls instead for new feminist meaning that diverts from the one assigned by the patriarchal system. Emma Donoghue demonstrates how women may thrive in harsh conditions and how they a potential power that would enable them to endure more suffering than one would believe a human being is capable of.

Reading Donoghue's novel may enhance the Old Historicists approach in a sense that the novel provides a historical background about women and their issues during that time—the 1918's flu epidemic. Donoghue aims at voicing the silenced issue and bringing them to the forefront so as to empower women spiritually and psychologically. Voicing women issues enables Donoghue to answer de Beauvoir's question, "do women exist?" This question is implicitly answered by means of the collaborative relationship between the message she wants to deliver and the suitability of the fictional form to this message.

Everything inside the fictional world of the novel is employed intentionally to write back the patriarchal discourse. The hospital, the rooms, and the pregnant body are all obstacles in the face of women existential non-being. However, Donoghue subverts these obstacles to be supportive tools for more shared empathetic and sympathetic response among womenfolk.

Donoghue, furthermore, presents two types of women who represent two phases of feminism. While Julie is the feminine who imitates man, Dr. Lynn is a feminist because of the radical approach she follows advocating the rights of minorities. The novel seeks, as such, to

plumb the ideological struggles hidden behind well-known public figures and events and to imaginatively reconstructs the lives of ordinary people forgotten in the folds of history.

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