

The Doctor's Wife: between Two Worlds: The Crises of Reconciliation and Adjustment in Exile

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Abstract

The Irish-Canadian novelist Brian Moore (1921 –1999) places women at the center of his novels. His principal aim in choosing to write about women is to avoid becoming a writer of autobiographical fiction. The manner of Moore's writing about women also reveals his paramount sympathy with them as individuals doomed to a greater and perhaps more complicated suffering than their male counterparts did in this existence. This paper focuses on Moore's eleventh novel *The Doctor's Wife* (1976). It illustrates the heroine's role in delineating the important alterations in the author's life from the moment of choosing self - exile from Northern Ireland until his warm reconciliation with it. The central character's dilemma highlights the fact that it is not the environment alone but personal reasons are also responsible for the individual's dramatic choice of escaping to an alien culture. Sheila's crises of frustration and disappointment in her marriage to a famous but an unimaginative doctor prefigures women's likewise sufferings everywhere in this universe.

Keywords: Self-exile, Reconciliation, Feminism, Bliss Resurrection, Stream -of- Consciousness, Modern Concept of Tragic Hero.

Introduction :

The Irish-Canadian novelist Brian Moore (1921-1999) often places women at the centre of his novels. One of his principal objectives in choosing to write about women is to avoid being known as a writer of autobiographical fiction. Discussing the creation of his first novel *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne* (1955) with the critic Hallvard Dahlie, Moore states: "I wanted my major character to be someone who wasn't me: - who could never be mistaken for me. And yet, I was lonely for much of my life, and so I put something of myself into her".² Yet, Moore's perceptive analyses of their particular female crises reveal that his interest extends beyond their being mere vehicles for presenting his personal life and development as a writer in exile. Indeed, the manners of Moore's writing about women conveys his unflinching sympathy and solidarity with them as individuals doomed to a greater and perhaps more complicated suffering than their male counterparts in this universe. This concern for their agonies and their basic needs for self-assertion and fulfillment seems to be a recurring issue in Moore's novels, which he presents it primarily from a female perspective. He wrote in a letter to his publisher Andrew Deutsch that *Judith Hearne*,

Is also a book about a woman, presenting certain problems of living, peculiar to women. I wrote it with all the sympathy and understanding that I am capable of ... and I think it is a book for women to read because they understand the viewpoint, and for my own sex, it is an effort to help men gain a greater understanding of women like Miss Hearne.³

However, women in Moore's Irish novels are employed as symbols of the spirit of the place; they represent the individuals' struggle with the crippling forces of their authoritarian environment. They also embody the values and the traditions of the past, which often constitute a positive force in sustaining their identity in the present.⁴ In Moore's North American novels women are reminders of the world of actuality that the artist- hero consciously tries to eradicate in his striving to achieve his artistic ambition. Ultimately, it is worth mentioning that Moore's passionate preoccupation with women put him in line with other twentieth century feminist writers. He intentionally transcends the boundaries between his male and female characters to the degree that a particular female crisis may submerge into a medium for delineating universal predicaments related equally to men and women in this contemporary world of instability and continuous shifting.

This paper focuses on Moore's eleventh novel *The Doctor's Wife* (1976). The novel was published during a crucial period in the author's life when leaving Northern Ireland.⁵ This paper aims to examine the heroine's role in

mapping the important alterations in the author's life and ideologies, from the moment of choosing exile to the stage of his ultimate adjustment and reconciliation with the land of his forefathers. The analyses of the central character's dilemma illustrate that people should not always blame the environment for their shortcomings or choosing exile. Personal factors may also induce such crises in a human life. The fact that Sheila's frustration with her husband is primarily motivated - as in the case of Virginia Woolf's heroine, Mrs. Dalloway - by the neuroses of her middle age enhance the course of Moore's narrative structure in this direction. Finally, the paper aims to decipher into the very nature of Sheila's crises of loneliness, isolation and lack of fulfillment that are universal problems in essence.

2- Sheila's Crises in a Reminiscence of Her Past:

In the "Work and Publishing Diary" of Judith Hearne, cited by Hallvard Dahlie in his book *Brain Moore* (1981), the following entries appear:

"September 7, 1955 "X Day and notes - novel
older woman - young man affair"... "X Day Novel",
"Began writing Chapter I", "Novel X", "Novel Chapter I"
"Novel Chapter I Recast"... October 3...
"Began book as Mr. Devine Ch. I" (p.130).

The above stated daily entries from the seventh of September until the third of October prove that Moore had actually made some early attempts to start *The Doctor's Wife* (marked as the novel x in the entries) perhaps, immediately after the publication of *Judith Hearne*. Yet, the possibility of repeating himself seemed to hinder this task, due to certain points of unavoidable similarities that the author felt to exist between these two works. Elaborating on the genesis of *The Doctor's Wife*, Moore states during a CBC interview in 1963:

I have always wanted to write a love story...and the story of this book is based on a reversal in a sense, of an experience that happened to me when I first came to Canada. I fell in love with an older woman and followed her to Canada actually, and in my present novel...she is the Irish person and he is the trans-Atlantic person, so I reverse the roles of the two characters. That was one of the reasons I wanted to write the book, but... I wanted also to explore, perhaps, further *the breakdown of values* ... which I think is not confined simply to Northern Ireland, but fairly general in Western Europe and ...in American society to day.⁶
(My italics).

Thematically speaking, *The Doctor's Wife* focuses intrinsically, as *Judith Hearne*, on the consequences of "the breakdown of values" in the heroine's life. Yet, the most obvious parallelism between the two works occurs in the opening scenes when both heroines express their panic for approaching their middle age, without having a true sympathetic male companion to eliminate their innate fear and isolation at this crucial period of transition in their

Lives. Other points of similarities in both works seem to be rather technical in nature. Nonetheless, they ascertain the fact Moore has thought of *The Doctor's Wife*, while writing his first novel *Judith Hearne*. For instance, the name of the daughter of Judith's lover, James Madden, is Sheila. More interestingly, Judith's landlady's absurd son, Bernie Rice, reappears in *The Doctor's Wife* as Sheila's fellow acquaintance from college days. She recalls how his mother used to haunt "the college waiting to give him his lunch in a picnic basket" (p.12).

However, being the wife of a successful Irish doctor and a mother of a sixteen-year-old boy, the heroine Sheila Redden is credited with a better social position than the spinster Judith Hearne. Nonetheless, our initial encounter

with her in the apartment of her friend Peg Conway in Paris reveals her stricken by insurmountable feeling of inner desolation, in a manner echoing her older predecessor in her first day in her seedy lodging at the Rice. She contemplates: "What did he think a woman did alone in the South of France. Eating solitary meals in the dining room, going alone to the beach, dragging around the streets of Nice - what sort of holiday was that? (p.30) Sheila's inward despair and loneliness are also foreshadowed in her vain repetition to herself: "On the day of Uncle Dan's funeral I traveled alone on the train to Dublin. Kevin had to stay behind to operate... alone, two years. If you were alone in a place, the time was very long (pp.14-15; p.41).

Her assertion, like Judith Hearne, on loneliness being the essence of her dissatisfaction with her present highlights the notion that it is an epidemic disease that contaminates Irish women of different generations. Yet, Moore's intense invocation of the images of destruction, rubble, and bombings in Belfast, in the early scenes, prompts the belief that the war is probably responsible for these women's unhappiness and discontentment with their lives. Moore employs these gloomy pictures of life in Ireland in order to provide an additional motivation for Sheila's anticipated choice of self-exile in the narrative. In transplanting Sheila into a more expansive culture as Paris, Moore offers her a unique chance for a temporary liberation from the strains of her rigid society. In this respect, She is considered to be the luckiest of Moore's heroines in his novels about Ireland, who remain trapped within the shackles of their decadent world. Interestingly, Moore structures the narrative technique of *The Doctor's Wife* in a manner similar to that of Emily Brontë's in *Wuthering Heights* (1847). The narrative shifts from the present to the past and to the present again. The only difference is that there is no Nelly Dean or a third person narrator as a key figure in uniting these three crucial periods in the discourse of the narrative structure together. The whole events are revealed, analyzed and set into coherence via the stream of the heroine's recollections.

However, compared to the backward looking Judith Hearne, whose education did not go beyond a convent school in Belfast, Sheila Redden is a modern, imaginative, romantic and intellectual heroine with a university degree in arts and literature from Paris. Her character reminiscences Moore's adolescent heroine, Una Clark, in his second book about Ireland, *The Feast of LupercaL* (1957). In spite of the age difference between the two heroines, they both appear to be highly conscious of the negativism of their world. Likewise, they dream to escape it and have a fresh start in a free culture. Both women also strive to have a socially recognized leading role in their community, where they can fulfill themselves as independent individuals. Unna's relationship with the Irish schoolteacher Devin renders her helpless in achieving her ambitions. Sheila marries Kevin Redden, thinking that he is different from the provincial Irish men around, because of his prestigious position and knowledge as a doctor. She imagines that their eternal matrimony is the golden key for opportunities of self – alleviation from her stereo type role and dry and meaningless existence. He is a doctor and certainly will understand her particular womanly needs and assist her in realizing them. Unfortunately, Sheila's expectations turn into empty shadows, for doctor Kevin is a copy of his stultifying and stagnant world. He does not only show his entire lack of consideration and oblivious of her basic female cravings, but he is also unable to imagine the existence of an alternative reality for himself and his wife beyond Belfast. She ponders in Peg Conway's apartment:

I'm not Peg, she's done all the things I never had
the guts to try, going on to London for postgraduate
work after getting her M.A., then the U.N. in New York
with the Irish delegation, and now Paris, and this big
money with the Americans. She lives like a man, free,
having affairs, traveling, always in big cities,
whereas, look at me, stuck all these years at home,
my M.A. a waste (p.16).

The above quotation penetrates into the reality of the traumatic wastes in Sheila's years of marriage to Kevin, as she surrenders to her tedious daily routines of cooking, cleaning, and washing dishes. The only occasion of real happiness with Kevin was when they had their honeymoon in Paris. Apart from this occasion, their whole marriage was a complete failure, epitomized in their disparity and alienation from each other:

At home, these last years, conversations seemed to

tail. At home, if she would try for an hour of "general" talk, it was like floating on water. The moment you thought of sinking, you sank. Kevin would turn back to the television, she to a book. Lately, she read books the way some people drank. (p.33).

The depiction of Doctor Kevin's naive mannerism towards his wife in the above passage is of supreme importance. Above all, it places Sheila's predicament with her husband within the perspective of male and female sufferings from the cultural modes of upbringing that essentially breed human rigidity and ignorance of the individual's spontaneous needs and passion. Most importantly, Moore uses Kevin's limitations as man and a doctor to justify his own reasons for choosing self-exile. He believes that it is the existence of such shortsighted and narrow men, like doctor Kevin, who are not only blind to the inward ailing of their people, but they also aid in the continuum of the very system of suppression and denial, which induces his conscious choice of flight from Ireland. In his interview with Richard B. Sale in London, Moore states:

I always want to give my character more diversity, more intellectual strength – something of that wonderful Dostoevskian quality of the unexpected, which, on examination turns out to be the logical? the underlying truth in their behavior. But, so far, each time I simply lack the ability to bring this off and lacking it, settle for what my pessimism and my experience tells me is possible (pp.73-74).

For Sheila to undertake a challenge like her creator, she has to undergo the experiences that enlighten her further about the true nature of this withering in her life at home in Ireland.

3-Sheila's Relationship with Brian Boland: Her Choice of Exile:

Brian Boland is a family friend of Sheila and her husband Kevin. Though he is originally from Belfast, yet she feels a great affinity with him. He has been abroad and "can talk about something else besides Paisley and Provosts" (p.24). He is also intellectual, imaginative and spends his time reading great books in literature. As such, Sheila finds a tremendous solace in her companionship with him. Boland revives her dull existence and emancipates her from the shell of her confinement in the pretentious role of a happy and contented housewife. Whenever they meet, they enter into an enthusiastic discussion of some romantic masterpieces. Boland overwhelms her with sentiments and ideas that are entirely alien to Kevin's scope of comprehending: "Lately, she read books the way some people drank. But now with this stranger, talk came easy as she told him of things that had happened here last summer.... He was different" (p.33). In due course, Kevin's anger, frustration and jealousy prompt his accusation of her having the tendency of flirting with men, instead of sympathizing with her. She remembers how,

Kevin kept after her, mimicking her, mimicking Brian's English accent, showing how she got excited when Brian talked about books, and then Kevin started to sing, "Dancing in the Dark", making fun of her, and it was the most awful, hateful, hurtful row, malicious he was, he wouldn't stop. (p.24).

At first, Kevin's degrading reaction startles Sheila. She wonders whether he was right in his assumption about her promiscuous nature. She ponders, "was it true that what she thought of as just being nice was leading a man on?" (Ibid). Consequently, she decides to give up seeing not only Brian Boland and but also the men in her community altogether: "And, after that, she went out of her way to avoid Brian Boland, and if by any chance a man started flirting with her, she would make some excuse and move away. She did not want to give Kevin a chance to start in all over again (p.25). In bitterness, she retreats, once more, to her inner void and annihilation. Nevertheless,

her experiences with Brain Boland engenders a new understanding of her husband's reality in a way that she has never thought of before acquainting with the former. Kevin's childish attitude in "mimicking Brian's English accent" (P.24) illustrates that despite being a doctor, he fails short in handling a simple human condition. This is because his Irish upbringing cripples his maturity into a caring and sympathetic adult. Kevin's self-demeaning behavior in this instance leads to her aching realization of the true deficiencies in his character; he is too practical and lacks Boland's imaginative power to grasp her romantic feminine nature and aspirations. Hence, he fails to embrace her soul and her intellectual needs in the same way as Brian Boland does. Instead, he keeps blaming the reality of the war in Ireland for his failure with his wife. He often confides to her that the injured in the war are more in need of him than his family. But Sheila is convinced that the political situation in Ireland shouldn't be a scapegoat for Kevin's obliviousness of her need to realize herself in a better environment. Thus, she feels as frustrated and unfulfilled now in her middle age, as when she was in her youth. This sudden awareness accentuates her innate fear of remaining as such for the rest of her life. As a result, she determines to run away and exile herself in the land of her youthful dreams, Villefranche in Paris, before it will be too late for her to do so. She will disappear like "the man who walks out of his house saying he's going down to the corner to buy cigarettes? And he's never heard from again" (p.142). She tells her friend Peg Conway:

To sail away from all of the things that hold and
bind me, to sail away, to start again in some city
like Brussels or Amsterdam. Into her mind came the
place Kevin always took them to for their summer
holidays, a Connemara village.. That's Kevin's idea
of escape. That village is the only faraway place
he ever wants to be....How I get so bogged
down in ordinariness that even this once I couldn't
do the spontaneous thing, the thing I really wanted
to do. The future is forbidden to no one. Unless
we forbid it to ourselves (pp. 16-17; pp.30-31; p.37).

It is worth mentioning here that Moore's aim in rendering the triangle relationship between Sheila, Kevin Redden and Brain Boland at this stage in the narrative is three-dimensional. In the first instance, he wants to place Sheila's crises within the context of her suffering, like all Irish people, from a rigid environment. Yet, in shedding light on Kevin's unimaginative personality, he endows their failure in marriage with an atmosphere of universality. The disparity depicted between Sheila and her husband, due to the differences in their nature, is a widespread criterion in the relationship of any married couple in modern societies. Hence, the paralysis of life in Ireland may not be the sole cause for the individual's choice of leaving it. The last facet of Sheila's struggle ascertains this fact and paves the way for the climate of reconciliation to emerge, after a period of internal volcanic eruption epitomized in Sheila's experiences with another male partner in the following section.

4- Sheila's Experiences in Villefranche: Towards Self- Realization, Adjustment and Reconciliation:

Sheila's encounter with the twenty six year old American graduate, Tom Lowry, at Café Atrium in Paris evolves into a miraculous opportunity for restoring her youthful dreams and starting her life all over again with Him. Moore portrays Tom Lowry to be completely different from both Kevin and Brain Boland. He is energetic, ambitious and filled with breathtaking cravings for change and travel. Most importantly, Tom is well informed about Irish culture through his doctoral theses on Anglo- Irish literature. For these reasons, we are told that just a short time after meeting with Tom,

Mrs. Redden was walking down a Paris street with
this boy she had just met...she turned to him,
seeing him toss his long dark hair, his eyes shining,
his walk eager, as though he and she were hurrying off
to some exciting rendezvous. And at once she was back

in Paris in her student days, as though none of the intervening years had happened, those years of cooking meals and buying Danny's school clothes, being nice to Kevin's mother, and having other doctors and their wives in for dinner parties, all that laundry list of events that had been her life since she married Kevin (p.22).

Sheila believes that being from the emancipated American culture, Tom will certainly sympathize with her needs for a similar kind of expansive living in her life. With Tom Lowry, she hopes to capture all the youthful dreams that she has missed or sacrificed in her suffocating marriage to Kevin. The irony here is that in her nostalgic odyssey to her youth, Sheila is forgoing the factor of the age gap between herself and Tom. In other words, she is going to live in a magic dream world of her own imaginative creation. In reality Tom is young enough to be nearly of her son Danny's generation. At this point in the narrative, Sheila's experiences with Tom are shrouded, yet again, with universality, for the incompatibility in a love relationship between a young man and an older woman is an everlasting problem, since the creation of Adam and Eve.

Kevin's failure to join Sheila in this significant trip, which is meant to restore their decaying and colorless marriage, offers her enough time and space to proceed with her exciting and dreamy attachment to Tom: "She knew she should not lead him on, but she wanted to do it. Besides, Kevin was hundred of miles away tonight and tomorrow she would-be hundreds of miles south of here" (p.25).

Sheila's enchantment with her Trans-Atlantic male savior proves to be up to her expectation at the start. It climaxes- as in the case of several of D.H. Lawrence's heroines in novels like *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley's Lovers* - into the peak of her equal self-recognition and fulfillment as a woman. As stated earlier, Tom's knowledge of the true nature of an Irish woman's needs, through his study of James Joyce, motivates his sympathy with Sheila. Above all things, he succeeds in penetrating into her inner being and, hence, awakening her suppressed emotions. She tells her older brother Owen, who is a doctor and arrives to Paris in order to persuade her to return to her home in Belfast: "I feel very happy, I feel alive in a way I never felt before (p.141).

Moore traces the manifestations of Sheila's experience of exultation with Tom in a manner that conveys his exceptional understanding of the behavior of a woman in love. First and foremost, we are told that, as an infatuated young adolescent girl, Sheila begins to pay extraordinary attention to her body, her clothes and to her make up that she finds herself spending hours, taking care of all the minute details of her external look in the mirror, before rushing to a flaming rendezvous with Tom Lowry:

She took out the big flame-and-white Givenchy scarf that had been a Christmas present from Kevin's mother, and tied it, babushka fashion, around her head. It was all wrong. She retied it, but it was no better. There was another scarf, a yellow cotton one...when she tried it on, it was worse than the first scarf... and felt she could weep, why was it when you had more clothes than you ever used to have, nothing looked right? *She tried a last time, wanting the mirror to be kind, but the mirror was not her friend..* she was shocked at herself for caring so much. But there it was. She did (p.46, p.53).

The Mirror image is always referred to as a teller of truth. But Moore employs it in this novel to highlight Sheila's utter self-deception. ⁷

However, Sheila realizes that each occasion of sexual encounter with Tom becomes an instance of self-resurrection and a celebration of her female identity. Like heroine Bertha in Katherine Mansfield's short story "Bliss" (1922), She feels herself in a state of inner peace, ecstasy and elation that her " former life, her marriage, all that had gone before, now seemed to be her sin. These few days with Tom were her state of grace. I am in grace. In my state of grace "(pp.77-78). The symbolic act of taking off her wedding ring conveys her longing to remain forever with Tom in the present, for the sublime and heavenly sentiments that put her in touch with the essence of her femininity.

Unfortunately, Sheila's wish is short lasted. Tom's request to join him in his journey to settle back in America shatters her daydreams and awakens her to the world of actuality in which she has to make a dramatic decision. She has to choose either to abandon her past commitments in Ireland or sacrifice her self fulfilling and creative relationship with her American boyfriend . As a result ,she enters into a comma of indecision , which is paralleled to that of Moore's own , when choosing self-imposed exile from Ireland. Both choices are too difficult to make for in her heart, she knows that she will be the one who is going to absorb their consequences. Tom does not show any enthusiasm in this matter. She is the one who has to determine whether to remain imprisoned within Irish parochialism or to celebrate the future in the far away American land of dream with Tom Lowry : "I am the one who must make the choices: he knows that .That's why he gets angry and talks about never being with a married person before" (p.80).

After all the achievements she has accomplished in France, going back to Kevin in Belfast will be devastating for her. At the same, perusing the future with a careless young lover will be a tragic decision for her to make at this stage, when she is going to be beyond her middle age soon. In desperation, she consults her brother Owen:

I don't know, Owen. It's complicated.
Most of the time I feel very happy. I feel alive in a way I never felt before. But the other night I woke up feeling suicidal. I think I know why. It was because I was still unwilling to face up to what's happened to me. I was still looking for some way out . Some way I could go on feeling like this but not having to pay for it. Now I know that's not Possible . I'll have to pay. I've accepted that (p.141).

Sheila's perplexity and imprisonment in the limbo of indecision precipitate her recollection of the past, which she instantly juxtaposes it with her present. In The oscillation between these two worlds foreshadows the difficulties inherent in her choice of uprooting herself from her past heritage in Ireland and following Tom to a paradise , doomed to be retreat from reality : " Imagine if I could forget my past forever. My Past, that small story which is my life. That story which began in my mother's big brass bed on the top floor of 18 Chichester Terrace, November 7, 1937... all of it gone now, quiet as a memory, its only souvenir a few photo albums "(p.10).

However, two important revelations occur to Sheila to help determine her next move and redeem herself from her present agitation. The first revelation takes place when she learns through her brother Owen that Kevin blames her desertion of him on the books which she has used to read alone in her private sewing room:

Yes, exactly. It's books, of course; that you got all your notions from. Not from real life. All those novels and trash that's up there in your room at home... you're not the heroine of some bloody book. And that *wee* boy back in Belfast is not just something in a book. He's sitting here in the den in the Somerton Road this minute, expecting his mummy to come home. And I'm not the buck stupid husband in some bloody novel (p.187).

The passage highlights the ironic implication of the title of the novel and reassures Sheila of her earlier gloomy perception of her husband's reality. Compared to young Tom Lowery, Kevin, even with his high qualification as a doctor, will never be able to conceptualize her true plights as a woman; he is trained to consider the prospect of marriage as a mere commodity, rather than its being an opportunity for equal sharing and recognition of selfhood between the partners. For him, Sheila's role is sufficed to her being a mother and a traditional housewife with no perspectives of her own to fulfill in a marriage relationship. The hopelessness of her situation with Kevin results in her reluctance of perusing a life of an utter waste with him.

The second revelation to aid Sheila in her ordeal happens in a moment of epiphany. Her observation of Tom with his duffel bag in the Hotel des Balcones, during their lasting meeting, sparks memories of an earlier seen in Peg Conway's flat of his ex-girl-friend, Debbie, with her back pack. The affinity between them confirms their belonging to the new generation of migrant, unrelated and unbound young men and women who are interested in their own freedom more than seeking any moral, social or familial commitments in their lives. For the first time Sheila contemplates the fact If Ireland suffers from stagnation and paralyses, America offers too much freedom for its people to settle down. Accordingly, she decides that she is at an age that she can not be shifting with uncertainty from one country to another after her young lover: "He sees our lives in terms of movement, of having enough money to go some place, of getting visas and jobs, of making a new start together" (p.150). She instantly rejects Tom's proposal; she can not accept it as an exchange for the stability of her past life, even when he made her feel alive and touched her selfhood and femininity: "He had been waiting for her to turn, to wave, to give one last look back. But she left him as she had left all the rest, Danny, Kevin, home. No look back. He stood for a moment, then went out of the park gate" (p.216).

Sheila's observation of some children playing in the airport, while watching Tom's departure, turns into another climactic moment of epiphany which endorses her self realization. She suddenly remembers her son Danny, back in Ireland: "My son. He is what I did in life. Apart from him, my life will disappear like the lives of my parents, a few more documents will be stuffed in that drawer" (p. 102). Inevitably, she perceives her own selfishness in leaving him behind and forgetting her moral obligations and responsibilities towards as a mother. He is her only child and he needs her more than either Tom Lowry or Kevin. Not only this, but Danny is her sole link with who she was in the past and probably with who she will be in the present and the future. At the peak of her recent crises, She conceives him to be her true male savior from the present chaos of belonging to no one and being nowhere in her life. Indeed, Danny ties her with her past memories, Kevin and all the things that they shared together as a family back in. She states to Owen: "My son. He is what I did in life. Apart from him, my life will disappear like the lives of my parents, a few more documents will be stuffed in that drawer... My past in a drawer" (p.102).

Realizing that Danny is her only hope for a meaningful existence, Sheila determines to go back home and accept the way things are with Kevin. She also adjusts herself to Kevin's accusation of her being too obsessed with her daydreams and delusions. She tells her brother:

Oh, God, no. The Troubles, you can't blame the
Troubles for everything. That's become our big excuse.
We have the Troubles.... Kevin used to tell me that
life wasn't all dancing in the dark... If I'd been
romantic I would have tried for different life... But
I would have tried. That's what I blame myself
for now. I didn't try (p. 142 ; p.149).

The above passage avowedly displays the manner of Sheila's reconciliation with her husband Kevin and the very world she has resented and chosen to exile herself from it. In this respect, the symbolic act of embracing her brother Owen can be regarded as a token of her resignation and acceptance of the ways things are in Ireland at the end her ordeals.

Indeed, Owen notices that, "Something had changed. He could not say, exactly, but she looked older" (p. 213).

From Moore's perspective, the cyclic end of the novel with Sheila being back in the heart of Ireland records the triumph of the individual over the limitations of his personal and social circumstances. Despite being an ordinary woman, Sheila manages to make a heroic and brave choice in her life. She accepts to remain the “She” of the first half of her name but with an awareness of the realities of her world and her responsibility to protect her son Danny. It is interesting to note that Sheila’s status at the end of novel recalls to the mind the heroine Isabel Archer in Henry James’s novel *The Portrait of a lady* (1881). likewise, the heroine Isabel Archer chooses to renounce her adolescent dreams and refuses to return to the States, because of her obligations to Osmond ‘s daughter, Pansy .

5- Conclusion:

Moore's novel, *The Doctor's Wife*, has become an international best seller. It crowns Moore as one of the genius writers of the present century , who skillfully permeates the minute details of his Irish female protagonist's sufferings with his own personal crises , when choosing exile from Ireland . In all his earlier works about Ireland, his artistic objectives were complicated with his own prejudices and antagonistic feelings, prior to his maintaining the ultimate reconciliation with it. For the first time in this novel, Moore employs the Irish scenes as a background for delineating his growing compassion for his motherland, Ireland. He informs his critic Richard B. Sale:

Although, I feel warmer towards the Irish nowadays because I have lived through my long period of irritation with Ireland...When one lives in an alien place one perceives one's own country in a new way. I have lived most of my life as an alien, and, more than that, I have lived in a self-imposed mental exile from Ireland all of my adult life. I have been in this mental Robot long now that I begin to think better of the Irish than I used to . (“An Interview in London with Brian Moore” p68)

While Sheila retreats to her former world, Moore determines to continue his life in exile. Like his Irish predecessor, James Joyce, he believes that being away from Ireland is a necessity for achieving his artistic ambitions. In his article "The Writer as Exile", he states: “I am leaving home because I do not want to be a doctor, like my father and brothers. Because I want to be a writer” (p.7). At the same, he acknowledges that to chase a life of exile, after realizing the true worth of his country, requires him to maintain a Sheila-like courage and endurance. Hence, it is arguable that Sheila's character exhibits features of the “modern concepts of a tragic hero “adopted by the famous American playwright Eugene O’Neill. She is not a princess and her tragic flaw stems from living with a passive husband in a stultifying environment. Nonetheless, she portrays sings of heroism in enduring the painful consequences of her choices for the rest of her life.

The other important finding of this paper is that the male characters are shown to be significant as Sheila herself in conveying facets of Moore’s struggle and experiences in exile. This parallel between the roles of male and female characters supports Moore feminist stance as a writer, who wholeheartedly advocates the authenticity of women in highlighting the philosophies and artistic perspectives of his works.

The last point to be made in this conclusion is that the crises depicted in Moore’s pioneering novel *The Doctor's Wife* are not only restricted to men and women in Irish society. They remain serious conflicts in the twenty first century reality of violent confrontation and wars that enforces the individuals’ choice of expatriation from their homeland. Hopefully, this paper will enhance some understanding of the dangers involved in making such a dramatic decision in human life.

Notes:

1-Hereafter cited *Judith Hearne* in the paper.

2-Dahlie, “An Interview with Brian Moore”, p.9

3-*Brian Moore Collection*, 12 June 1954.

4-For further discussion see Hilda Spear, “Two Belfast Novels : An Introduction to the Work of Brian Moore” pp.33-37 ; Michael Paul Gallagher, "The Novels of Brian Moore" , pp.180-94 5- For details See Hallvard Dahlie , "Brian Moore: Biocritical Essay", pp. 1-13 .

6-"David Watmough Interviews Brian” CBC Radio, I June, 1963. See also Brain Moore, "The Writer as Exile", pp.8-9.

7- See Jack Ludwig "A Mirror of Moore", pp.18-23.

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