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Faculty of Letters and Languages

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## MASTER DISSERTATION

Literature and Civilization

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# Framing the Self and Spirituality in Anne Enright's *'The Gathering' (2007)*

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the of Master Degree  
in Literature

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## **DEDICATIONS**

This dissertation dedicated to

The memory of my dearest father BRAHIM

To the most beautiful women my beloved mother FATIMA

To my brother& best friend Houssam

To my little angle my sister Malak

You are my pillars of strength

Thank you for being my rock, my sounding board, I honor you all.

To my beloved family: my grandmother ,Mounir, Achraf and Massimo, I am beyond grateful  
for your existence and support .

With utmost gratitude.

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All my praises and thanks are to Allah, who granted me light, patience, and stamina to do this research.

*“My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favors which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your Mercy among Your righteous slaves.” (Surah An-Naml ‘The Ants’ 19)*

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation delves into the intricate interplay between framing the self and spirituality in Anne Enright's novel, "The Gathering" (2007), with a specific focus on the protagonist, Veronica, through the lens of psychoanalysis. By employing defense mechanism theory and analyzing Veronica's psychological journey, this study aims to explore how Enright portrays her healing process.

The research begins by elucidating the concept of framing the self and spirituality in "The Gathering," emphasizing the significant role that psychoanalysis plays in understanding Veronica's internal struggles. Through a psychoanalytic lens, the dissertation examines Veronica's psyche and the defense mechanisms she employs throughout the narrative. By drawing upon theories such as repression and denial, the study analyzes how Veronica's defense mechanisms function as coping mechanisms and influence her perception of self and spirituality. Moreover, the researcher highlights the crucial role of psychoanalysis in comprehending the framing of self and spirituality in "The Gathering." By applying defense mechanism theory to analyze Veronica's journey, the study uncovers the nuanced portrayal of her healing process. Enright skillfully depicts the intricate interplay between psychology, spirituality, and personal transformation in the novel.

**Keywords:** Defense mechanism theory, Framing the self, healing process, psychological journey, spirituality.

## DECLARATION

I, Djerou Louiza Sirine, declare that this dissertation titled "Framing The Self and Spirituality in Anne Enright's *The Gathering*" (2007) is the result of my original research work. It has been written independently and in accordance with the academic standards and guidelines of University Of Mohamed Khider. I affirm that all sources used have been properly cited and acknowledged. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other academic qualification.

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sirine".

**Djerou Louiza Sirine**

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# **General Introduction**



## Introduction

Anne Enright's novel, *The Gathering*, stands as a remarkable exploration of the complexities of the self and the profound impact of spirituality on human existence. As a renowned Irish author, Enright delves into the intricate layers of family relationships, memory, and personal identity, offering readers a thought-provoking journey into the depths of the protagonist's psyche. This dissertation, titled "Framing the Self and Spirituality in Anne Enright's *The Gathering*" aims to delve into the profound relationship between self discovery, the framing of identity, and the exploration of spirituality within the novel.

This introduction, it will provide an overview of *The Gathering*, emphasizing its thematic richness and contextual significance. It explores Anne Enright's artistic prowess, her exploration of the human psyche, and the novel's impact on the literary landscape. Additionally, it will outline the main themes that will be examined throughout this dissertation, offering a glimpse into the captivating world of Veronica Hegarty and the spiritual dimensions woven throughout her narrative.

Chapter one starts by introducing Anne Enright as a highly esteemed Irish author who has garnered international acclaim for her literary contributions. Enright has crafted a body of work that combines insightful storytelling with profound introspection. *The Gathering*, a recipient of the prestigious Man Booker Prize, serves as a prime example of Enright's ability to illuminate the complexities of the human experience and explore the depths of the self.

Next, it delves into the world of *The Gathering*, unveiling the narrative's central themes and characters. Veronica Hegarty, the novel's protagonist, embarks on a poignant journey as she grapples with the aftermath of her brother's suicide. Through Veronica's introspection and exploration of family history, Enright shines a light on the difficult facets of personal identity

and the ways in which memories and experiences shape one's sense of self. Additionally, the novel weaves spirituality into the narrative.

This dissertation aims to analyse the framing of the self within *The Gathering*, employing psychoanalytic perspectives and the exploration of defense mechanisms to unravel Veronica's psychological journey. Thus, it will examine how her experiences and the impact of her brother's death affect her perception of self, her relationships, and her understanding of personal identity. Furthermore, the researcher will dig into the presence of spirituality in Veronica's life, exploring how it serves as a source of solace, guidance, and transformation in her quest for self-discovery. Throughout this dissertation, it will draw upon literary analysis, psychological theories, and thematic exploration to shed light on the profound themes within *The Gathering*. By unraveling the intricate interplay between self-framing and spirituality, in hope to contribute to the broader understanding of human psychology, the complexities of personal identity, and the spiritual dimensions present in literary works.

In conclusion, through careful analysis and examination, this dissertation seeks to unravel the complexities of self-discovery, the framing of personal identity, and the exploration of spirituality within the narrative. By delving into the depths of Veronica Hegarty's psyche, aiming to shed light on the transformative power of self-awareness and the intertwining threads of spirituality that enrich the human journey.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The novel *The Gathering* by Anne Enright offers a rich exploration of the self and spirituality within the narrative. However, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis regarding the framing of the self and the role of spirituality in the protagonist's journey.

## **Rational of the study**

From a scientific standpoint, this study aims to contribute to the field of literary analysis by examining the psychological dimensions of the novel through the lens of psychoanalysis and defense mechanism theory. By delving into the complexities of the protagonist's journey, it seeks to deepen the understanding of how self-framing and spirituality overlap in the process of personal transformation. This analysis can offer valuable insights into the complexities of human nature, the construction of self-identity, and the search for meaning in life.

On the personal level, the researcher's interest in this topic is motivated by a fascination with the human psyche, the power of self-reflection, and the transformative potential of spirituality. Through an exploration of these themes in "The Gathering," the researcher aims to gain personal insights and connections to the narrative, while also offering readers a deeper appreciation for the novel's exploration of self and spirituality. Overall, the combination of scientific curiosity and personal engagement forms the foundation for this study, which seeks to contribute to scholarly discourse while exploring meaningful aspects of the human experience.

## **Research Question**

To what extent can surfing on the self and spirituality be seen as an emotional healing in Anne Enright's *The Gathering*?

## **Sub questions**

- How could life complications shape one's identity?
- How do the interactions between the self and spirituality in "*The Gathering*" contribute to the novel's exploration of identity, healing, or personal growth?

- How does Anne Enright's examination of the characters' experiences of loss, grief, and resilience contribute to our perception of the self and spirituality in "*The Gathering*"?

### **Research Methodology**

To thoroughly explore the notions of the self and spirituality, researchers adopt an integrated approach that combines a psychoanalytic study of the self, the utilization of defense mechanism theory, and a nuanced exploration of spirituality. This holistic framework enables a comprehensive examination of the author's perspectives on these concepts, offering a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between the self and spirituality within the research topic. By incorporating these diverse lenses, researchers can unravel the complexities and nuances inherent in the author's views on the self and spirituality, providing a richer analysis of the subject matter.

### **Hypothesis**

It is hypothesized that:

- Experiencing life complications molds one's identity by fostering personal growth, prompting introspection, and influencing the formation of values and perspectives.
- Conceptualizations of self and spirituality in "*The Gathering*" contribute to character development, explore personal identity, and evoke contemplation of existential questions.
- Enright influences our perception of the self and spirituality in "*The Gathering*," fostering reflection on personal identity and the profound nature of spiritual journeys.

## **Objectives of the Study**

- To analyse the portrayal of self-framing and spirituality in Anne Enright's *The Gathering*.
- To examine the role of spirituality in the protagonist's journey of self-discovery and emotional healing.
- To investigate the application of psychoanalytic theories and defence mechanisms in understanding the protagonist's psychological processes.

## **Limitations**

It is important to acknowledge that the findings and conclusions of this analysis may not be easily generalized beyond the specific novel under study and its distinctive portrayal of self-framing and spirituality. The scope of the analysis may also vary depending on the specific focus and depth of exploration, potentially resulting in certain aspects of self-framing and spirituality receiving more attention than others. Additionally, the concept of spirituality itself is multifaceted and can be subject to diverse interpretations by individuals. Thus, the analysis may be constrained by the researcher's own understanding and knowledge of spirituality, which may not encompass all possible perspectives and dimensions. It is crucial to approach the findings with awareness of these limitations and consider the context-specific nature of the novel and its exploration of self-framing and spirituality.

## **Chapters Demarcations**

The study consists of three chapters that delves into the theme of framing the self and spirituality in Anne Enright's novel, *The Gathering*. Chapter 1, titled "Anne Enright's *The Gathering*: Contextual Framework," deals with introducing the author and the Irish Literature

in general, and Irish Women Literature in specific. Also, it introduces the main works of Anne Enright to show her style and how everything is related to the psyche since it her main ground, while also introducing the main themes presented in her work *The Gathering*. The second chapter, which is entitled "Inner self and outer self and spirituality: A Theoretical Debate", represents a diverse methodology of Defence Mechanism Theory and Psychoanalytic Approach. Combining theoretical analysis and psychoanalytic examination, to shed light on the complex dynamics between the inner and outer aspects of the self and the profound impact of spirituality within this context related to existentialism. In the last chapter entitled "a Journey in the Self", the researcher delves into in two major titles: Inner Journey and New Path, to examine how the protagonist overcomes her fear and embarks on new path. Through these chapters, the study aims to deepen the understanding of the complex interplay between the self and spirituality in Enright's *The Gathering*. However, there are many quotes from the novel to ensure any given information that has been given.

***Chapter One: Anne Enright's *The Gathering*:  
Contextual Framework***

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Irish Women Literature

1.2.1 Overview

1.2.2 Issues of Irish Women Literature

1.3 Anne Enright's Work

1.3.1 The Gathering (2007)

1.3.2 The Forgotten Waltz (2011)

1.3.3 The Green Road (2015)

1.3.4 Actress (2015)

1.4 The Gathering Themes

1.4.1 Family

1.4.2. Memory

1.4.3 Love

1.5 Conclusion



## 1.1 Introduction

Anne Enright is an Irish woman writer. She was born in 1962 in Dublin. She studied English and philosophy at Trinity College. She started to work with an Irish radio and television broadcast called RTE<sup>1</sup> as a writer and in the same time as a producer of the Late-night program named Nighthawks. Besides, writing short stories. However, she did not settle for that she is ambitious. Hence, she decided to give up her job and start full-time writing.

Anne Enright is an acclaimed Irish author who explores family relationships, love, loss, and memory in her novels. Her debut, *The Wig My Father Wore* (1995) is about a woman coping with her father's death. *What Are You Like?* (2000) is about separated twin sisters. *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch* (2002) is a historical novel about an Irish woman who became a dictator's mistress. *The Gathering* (2007) won the Man Booker Prize follows an Irish family during a wake where secrets are exposed. *The Forgotten Waltz* (2011) explores the affair of a married woman and a man she meets at a family gathering during Ireland's economic boom and recession. *The Green Road* (2015) follows the Madigan family and their struggle with estranged relationships and belonging after their mother decides to sell the family home in rural Ireland. Anne Enright's non-fiction work, *Making Babies and Stumbling into Motherhood* (2004), is a memoir about her own experiences with motherhood, fertility treatments, and the challenges of being a working mother. (Schneider 3) Enright currently resides in Ireland alongside her husband, actor Martin Murphy, and their two children. Presently, she is engaged in teaching creative writing at the University of Dublin. As a novelist, she openly expresses her admiration for esteemed writers like James Joyce,

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<sup>1</sup>RaidióTeilifísÉireann, which translates to Radio Television Ireland in English. It is the national public broadcaster of Ireland.

and she has even incorporated his famous and captivating line, "did not throw a shadow, he cast a great light," into Irish literature. (Schwall 20)

Anne Enright rose to global prominence primarily due to her triumph in securing the prestigious Man Booker Prize for her book "The Gathering" in 2007. This accomplishment further led to its nomination for the esteemed Irish Book of the Decade in 2010. Prior to this breakthrough, Enright had already garnered significant recognition for her exceptional contributions to the literary world. Her compelling novels, captivating short stories, thought-provoking TV screenplays, and insightful non-fiction works resonated deeply with readers and critics alike. Anthologies curate her remarkable short fiction, while her novels received resounding praise and established her as a highly regarded author renowned for her unique writing style. (Conroy)

It was the resounding reception of Anne Enright's *The Gathering* that introduced a distinctive female voice, capturing the pressing issues of Irish and Western literature and culture, to a worldwide audience. Anne Enright emerged as a prominent figure representing English-language literature in the twenty-first century, alongside esteemed authors such as: Edna O'Brien, Jennifer Johnston, Éilís N'Dhuibhne, Colm Tóibín, John Banville, Roddy Doyle, and Sebastian Barry. Her remarkable contributions propelled her to be named the inaugural Fiction Laureate of Ireland in January 2015, solidifying her influential position in Irish literature.

## 1.2 Irish Women Literature

One notable aspect of Irish women's literature is its exploration of identity. These writers delve into questions of personal and cultural identity, examining the complexities of being Irish,

female, and often marginalized within a patriarchal society. They navigate the tensions between tradition and modernity, individualism and community, and the struggle to find one's voice and place in the world. By giving voice to these experiences, Irish women writers challenge societal norms and offer alternative narratives that empower and inspire readers.

The literature produced by Irish women writers showcases the diversity of voices within the Irish literary tradition. Each writer brings her unique perspective, style, and artistic talent, offering a wide range of narratives and genres. From poetry to novels, short stories to memoirs, their works captivate readers with their lyrical prose, vivid imagery, and emotional resonance.

### **1.2.1 Overview**

In response to social and economic pressures, Irish women writers have embarked on formal and aesthetic explorations to present their lives in fresh and innovative ways. Whether triggered by the crash of the Celtic Tiger post-2008<sup>2</sup> or as a response to the aftermath of the economic boom, these creative collections serve to incorporate gender, cultural, and political issues while also striving to convey the literary essence of diverse text types through the essay form. While Irish women's literature has always existed, it has often remained overshadowed by the spotlight cast on Irish male writers. (Bond and Patrick 127 – 140).

However, the current global recognition of numerous Irish women authors cannot be denied. These talented writers have achieved remarkable success, garnering critical acclaim, prestigious accolades, and remarkable sales figures. It has taken a combination of cultural and socioeconomic factors for Irish women's voices to finally gain the recognition they deserve in

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<sup>2</sup> The Celtic Tiger refers to Ireland's period of rapid economic growth from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s. It was driven by reforms, foreign investment, and a housing boom. However, it ended abruptly in 2008 with the global financial crisis, leading to a severe recession and subsequent austerity measures.

recent years. Throughout history, storytelling has been a powerful means for the Irish people to express their identity. (140- 145)

The global #MeToo movement <sup>3</sup> has compelled numerous institutions to reassess their economic models concerning women's representation and platforms. The impact of Ireland's Celtic Tiger, a period of rapid economic growth from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s, followed by a significant economic collapse, cannot be underestimated in terms of its profound effect on the Irish collective consciousness. The momentous events that shaped Ireland's social transformation, including the landmark same-sex marriage vote in 2015 and the abortion referendum in 2018, were greatly influenced by the personal narratives that were shared. Many of the writers who redefined the narrative of Irish identity in the modern era were women, their voices playing a pivotal role in shaping the evolving Irish society. (Bond and Patrick 138 -140)

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The global #MeToo movement began in 2017, empowering survivors of sexual harassment and assault to share their experiences and demand accountability. It has sparked discussions, exposed high-profile individuals, and prompted changes in policies and attitudes towards sexual misconduct worldwide.

### 1.2.2 Issues of Irish Women Literature

The landscape of Irish women's literature has been shaped by various challenges. One such instance was the election of Mary Robinson as the President of Ireland in 1990. This marked the culmination of a process that began in the 1970s, leading to a significant liberalization that profoundly impacted woman's experiences. Through legal and social reforms, the patriarchal character of the state was greatly diminished (Coughlan 175). Ireland's adherence to ruralist ideology and authoritarian Catholicism had long imposed restrictions on women's rights and perpetuated coercive gender roles and relationships, further reinforcing the patriarchal atmosphere. Beginning in the 1970s, this system started to crumble rapidly, resulting in notable consequences for women's experiences and the overall understanding of Irish society.

In the last decades of the 20th century, Ireland witnessed lively debates surrounding social and moral values, public policies, and cultural self-perceptions. However, it was the transformative impact of Anne Enright's acclaimed novel, *The Gathering* which won the Booker Prize in 2007, that left a lasting impression on the Irish literary landscape. Reflecting on the media coverage of her victory today is intriguing, as it reveals how Enright was often portrayed as an "outsider" who defied all odds.

Furthermore, this language has since evolved as subsequent generations of Irish women writers have achieved remarkable success, consistently winning numerous literary awards. The shifting literary landscape has rendered such descriptions outdated, highlighting the incredible achievements of Irish women writers in recent times. (Schneider 3)

### 1.3 Anne Enright's Works

Anne Enright is a highly acclaimed Irish author known for her distinctive writing style and her exploration of complex human emotions and relationships. Enright stands out for her lyrical prose, introspective characters, unconventional narratives, candid exploration of taboo subjects, and thought-provoking sociopolitical commentary. Her unique style and ability to delve into the depths of the human psyche make her an exceptional and distinctive voice in contemporary literature.

#### 1.3.1 The Gathering (2007)

Anne Enright's highly successful fourth book, *The Gathering*, published in 2007, connects the past and present to narrate the tale of a large Irish family and the tragic suicide of one of its members. This thought-provoking exploration of memory earned Enright the prestigious Booker Prize in the same year. Known for her experimental, fantastical, and grounded writing styles, Enright has drawn comparisons to esteemed authors like Don DeLillo, John Banville, and Patrick McCabe. Her works often delve into domestic relationships, particularly the complexities between mothers and daughters, earning favorable comparisons to the writings of Anne Tyler. (Conlan,17)

Enright once mentioned in an interview with Dr Clare Hutton at Loughborough University said: 'I like to disturb the readers idea about what should come next [...] I kind of looking for disturbance'. This is what we can say about it actually, it is indeed disturbing in a good way. (Hutton 03:34) In *The Gathering*, the protagonist and narrator, Veronica Hegarty, undergoes a mental breakdown after witnessing her brother Liam's tragic suicide by jumping into the sea with his pockets filled with stones. Following his death, Veronica embarks on a quest to uncover the

truth behind a traumatic incident from their shared childhood. As she delves into three generations of family history, long-held secrets, memories, and betrayals resurface, profoundly impacting her present-day relationships with her husband and children. Through its lyrical and often humorous prose, "*The Gathering*" skillfully portrays the complex dynamics of being a member of a vast and intricate family, tackling themes of death, disappointment, potential sexual abuse, and mental instability.

### **1.3.2 The Forgotten Waltz (2011)**

After her Booker Prize win in 2007, Anne Enright ventured into the realm of adult romance with her novel, "*The Forgotten Waltz*." Released on April 28, 2011, the book was honored with the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Fiction. Set during a snowy winter in 2009, the story unfolds in Dublin, where the city comes to an abrupt standstill and the deserted, snow-covered streets serve as the backdrop for a retrospective narrative.

In "*The Forgotten Waltz*," Anne Enright departs from her previous style seen in "*The Gathering*" and explores a new romantic theme. The novel features poignant chapter titles inspired by tearjerking pop songs, including "Will You Love Me Tomorrow, stop!", "In the Name of Love," and "Save the Last Dance for Me." Within the narrative, the protagonist Gina fervently expresses her deep affection, declaring, "I love him. And that is as much as any of us can know" (p 87). Her intense longing for her beloved is revealed through phrases like "if I did not see him soon again, that I would surely die." (The Forgotten Waltz 45) This shift in Enright's writing style showcases her ability to immerse readers in a heartrending and passionate tale. (Schneider)

At first glance, the narrative may appear familiar. It revolves around a 34-year-old Dubliner, a beautiful, athletic, and independent married woman, who unexpectedly finds herself captivated by Sean Vallely, an equally attractive married man she encounters at her sister's house. Interestingly, it is her deep trust in her long-term partner, Connor, that emboldens her to engage in eye contact with this stranger. This pivotal moment of their encounter leaves an indelible mark, permeating the entire text like a lingering stain.

Gina's affair with Sean unfolds over the years, revealed through her retrospective narration. Their relationship takes place in foreign hotel rooms, while they navigate the complexities of being coworkers. Gina's emotions towards Sean are conflicting, as she oscillates between being deeply in love with him in one moment and feeling repulsed in the next. She experiences shock when Sean, behaving like an experienced adulterer, gifts her a Hermès scarf and perfume that smells like rain and fabric freshener. Even mundane actions, like his use of a fountain pen during a work meeting, leave her feeling humiliated. (25-26)

However, Gina acknowledges herself as an unreliable narrator, aware of the weaknesses in her own arguments. Despite her genial and supportive husband Connor, Gina decides to dissolve their marriage for reasons unknown to herself and most readers. She shows little sympathy for Sean's daughter Evie and his affectionate wife Aileen, claiming she understood Evie from the beginning and nothing she did surprised her. Gina's encounter with Sean initially leaves her feeling suicidal, but she describes it as feeling like she had taken her own life while nobody else perished, resulting in a heightened sense of being alive. Ultimately, Gina ends up living with Sean, taking on the role of stepmother to Evie. Their life together lacks any extraordinary elements, characterized by the ordinary inevitability of daily routines. (30)



### 1.3.3 The Green Road (2015)

Anne Enright's *The Green Road* (2015) delves into the lives of the Madigan family from County Clare, Ireland. The novel explores the evolving relationships between Rosaleen Madigan and her children: Dan, Emmet, Constance, and Hanna. The third-person narrator tells the story in the past tense, divided into two parts. In the first section, the children leave their Irish home to forge their own paths. However, in the second section, they return when their mother decides to sell the family home. (Cape)

At the outset of the book, the Madigan family consists of Rosaleen and her four children, with their father, Pat, having passed away. Rosaleen grapples with adjusting to life without her beloved partner, symbolized by the stagnant clock since his demise. The novel is divided into "Leaving" and "Coming Home" sections, each with distinct chronological dates. While the first section focuses on the individual journeys of the five family members, only the three youngest siblings venture far away, with Constance remaining nearby and the others embarking on a brief trip to Dublin. (Cape)

Anne Enright's *The Green Road* is divided into two sections: Leaving and Coming Home. Each part covers a different period and focuses on the individual experiences of the five family members. Constance, after a brief trip to Dublin, stays nearby and takes care of her mother while raising her own children.

Both sections provide snapshots of the characters' lives and highlight their activities, as well as the events involving their siblings and mother. These events, while moderately significant, may not be life-changing. The story begins in 1980 with Hanna, who is twelve years old. The major moment revolves around her older brother, Dan, declaring his intention to become

a priest. Rosaleen, deeply affected by this, withdraws to her bed, while Hanna and Dan's girlfriend, whom Hanna meets, remain unfazed. Constance, who was living in Dublin at the time, is compelled to stay and manage the household. This leads to the discovery of the family's history, particularly the conflict between the Considines (Rosaleen's relatives) and the Madigans, as well as the Considines' pharmacy.

Rosaleen's motivation for selling the house is partially driven by her children's lack of financial success and progress in life. None of them have achieved significant financial stability or fulfillment. Emmet describes his life as poured into the African sands, with nothing to show for it. The sense of unaccomplished aspirations is deeply felt by all family members. Only Constance is married and settled, while Emmet has a semblance of a career. Like many families, they face typical challenges and are not particularly happy, stable, or prosperous. Anne Enright skillfully portrays a flawed and relatable family that struggles to find purpose and direction. She examines their weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and delves into their psyche, rather than focusing on their strengths. (North Bailey)

#### **1.3.4 Actress (2015)**

Katherine O'Dell, a renowned figure in Irish theatre, is the focus of her daughter Norah's exploration in the Booker-winning author's seventh novel. *Actress*, published in 2015, delves into the memories of a woman whose mother, despite her damaged state, shines brightly in the limelight. With great skill, the book uncovers the hidden truths and deceptions surrounding the famous theatre performer, as well as the profound influence her fame has on her adoring daughter. This sophisticated novel delves into the complex dynamics of mother-daughter relationships and exposes the darker side of celebrity and adoration. It also serves as a captivating

and heartfelt tale of sexual power, fame, and a daughter's relentless pursuit of her mother's undisclosed secrets. (Charles)

The story revolves around Katherine's extraordinary life, spanning from her early days of Hollywood stardom to the highs and lows of her performances on the renowned stages of Dublin and London's West End. However, Norah, as a young girl, remains a passive observer in the audience, watching her mother's performances unfold throughout her life. Regrettably, the weight of Katherine's personal history and the harm inflicted by the outside world eventually fracture the once-strong bond between mother and daughter. Norah embarks on a journey to uncover her mother's unspoken truths, only to discover some unsettling revelations about herself along the way. As events take a peculiar turn, with Katherine committing an inexplicable crime, her celebrity status descends into infamy. (Norton)

Actress centres on a daughter's quest to uncover the truth behind Katherine's tragic descent and the concealed, sinister secret beneath her glamorous facade. Additionally, the novel effectively explores the profound and complex relationships between mothers, daughters, and the men who intersect their lives. It skilfully captures the contrasting elegance of post-war America and the gritty reality of 1970s Dublin, evoking a poignant blend of emotions. The story is both a sorrowful and triumphant tale of liberation from toxic love and the burdensome scrutiny of the public eye. Furthermore, it offers a captivating examination of the corrosive effects of fame.

#### **1.4 The Gathering: Themes**

Discussing *The Gathering* without falling into the familiar clichés often associated with Irish literature is a difficult task. Catholicism, family, alcoholism, child sexual abuse, and sorrow

all converge to create a remarkable piece of work. However, Enright skillfully subverts these notions by introducing a thought-provoking exploration of memory and storytelling. Additionally, it is worth acknowledging Enright's ability to prevent the story from becoming overwhelmingly distressing and bleak. The book revolves around three key themes, which are as follows:

#### **1.4.1 Family**

From the title 'The Gathering' itself, it becomes evident that the central theme of the novel revolves around the gathering of the family due to Liam's death. This theme of family takes center stage throughout the narrative. However, Veronica, as a character, and Enright, as an author with an Irish heritage, are acutely aware of the predictability that often accompanies Veronica's family dynamics. In an interview, Enright shed light on this matter, stating:

There is always a drunk. There is always someone who has been interfered with, as a child. There is always a colossal success, with several houses in various countries to which no one is ever invited. There is a mysterious sister. These are just trends, of course, and, like trends, they shift. Because our families contain everything and, late at night, everything makes sense. We pity our mothers, what they had to put up with in bed or in the kitchen, and we hate them or we worship them, but we always cry for them. (184)

Nevertheless, the theme of family takes on a central role in the narrative. It explores what the concept of family means, how it impacts the lives of Veronica and Liam, and the deeper significance it holds. Enright skillfully captures the essence of a family gathering, portraying it with vivid detail and emphasizing the setting and the preparations involved.

Moreover, in her novel *The Gathering* (2007), Enright delves into the complexities of family history and the hidden secrets that shape individuals and their choices. The novel explores the notion of destiny and the lack of control we have over the events that shape our lives. Enright suggests that our very existence is influenced by our ancestral parentage, genetic makeup and the actions of our parents. We are formed by the fundamental elements of our being, including our bones, blood, and DNA, as well as the choices and sacrifices made by those who came before us. (Mars-Jones 2007)

#### **1.4.2 Memory**

Veronica, the central character and narrator of the novel, finds herself immersed in a sea of memories rather than being fully present in the present. The tragic event of her brother Liam's suicide triggers a flood of recollections from her past. Throughout the story, she frequently expresses concerns about the reliability of her memories and questions the truthfulness of her own narratives. In her quest to comprehend the abuse her brother suffered, which she witnessed during her childhood, Veronica undergoes three distinct narrative levels that each possesses unique discursive qualities. (Carol 59-74)

Initially, Veronica interprets her faltering memory as an indication of her own unreliability in recounting the events of the past. However, as the novel progresses, she undergoes a transformative shift in perspective. By the end, she embraces doubt not as a reflection of her personal unreliability, but rather as a reflection of the failure of the Irish country and state to protect its citizens. Through Veronica's evolving viewpoint, the reader gains insight into the broader social and political context in which these personal traumas occur.

Enright presents a broader perspective on Ireland's tumultuous period during the 1990s and early 2000s, characterized by the revelation of institutionalized abuse within the nation's homes and institutions. Through her portrayal, she casts doubt on the reliability of the narrative, aiming to critique the prevailing culture of silence that had long governed the concept of trustworthy citizenship in Ireland. By challenging the veracity of the narrative, Enright sheds light on the harmful consequences of a status quo built upon silence and encourages a critical examination of the societal norms that allowed such abuses to persist. (Ewins 2007)

### **1.4.3 Love**

The theme of 'love' is explored in the relationship between Veronica and her brother Liam, although she holds her brother's death responsible for her struggle to experience love. This struggle ultimately leads to the dissolution of her marriage with Tom. As Veronica wanders through the house at night, attempting to understand the dysfunction within her family and the reasons for their constant presence, her mind oscillates between memories and fantasies. Meanwhile, her marriage unravels, becoming a silent expression of perceived disconnection, exacerbated by her struggles with alcohol and disrupted sleep patterns. (Schillinger 19)

Veronica's relationship with her mother is complex, as she views love as something that can be chosen or unchosen. This adds further layers of complication to their connection, highlighting the intricate dynamics within their familial bond. Veronica did not choose her family but loved them in her way. In contrast, her husband Tom chose her to love but the love goes away after she felt like her mother, a housewife only. (Schillinger)

## 1.5 Conclusion

Despite Anne Enright's personal biography lacking the sensational elements often associated with captivating life stories, her novel "The Gathering" (2007) emerges as a gripping and potent work that fearlessly delves into the complexities of familial connections, concealed truths, and lingering emotional scars. While Enright herself has acknowledged her life to be marked by a long and contented marriage, devoid of the extremes typically found in tumultuous or adventurous families, the true allure of an author's biography lies in the evolution of their artistic development.

In "*The Gathering*," Enright presents the Hegarty family, with Veronica Hegarty serving as the narrator and protagonist. The novel skillfully unravels the layers of the family's history, unveiling hidden struggles, secrets, and traumas that have profoundly shaped their lives. Enright's introspective and deeply emotive voice through Veronica allows readers to delve into a narrative that explores the intricate dynamics of sibling relationships, the weight of unresolved grief, and the enduring impact of loss.

"*The Gathering*" stands as a testament to the power of artistic development and the capacity of literature to transcend personal biographies. Through its exploration of intense themes, unwavering tone, and profound examination of familial complexities, the novel enthralls readers, immersing them in a world of concealed truths and enduring emotional wounds. Enright's literary finesse and fearlessness in addressing difficult subject matter contribute to the inherent allure and beauty of "The Gathering."

**Chapter Two: Inner self and Outer Self and Spirituality: A  
Theoretical Debate**



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## 2.1 Introduction

Literature has long occupied a significant position in illuminating the intricacies of human existence, capturing both the sublime moments and the haunting depths of psychological anxieties. Anne Enright, a highly regarded contemporary Irish author, unveiled her magnum opus, *The Gathering*, a daring and insightful family saga of remarkable acclaim. The novel follows Veronica as she grapples with the aftermath of her brother's suicide, delving into her profound psychological struggles and the clouding of her memories. Within the tapestry of Enright's work, a multitude of contentious themes are explored, notably the intricate psychology of the self, which serves as the central point of this chapter, alongside an exploration of spirituality. This chapter seeks to create a theoretical debate on inner and outer self and spirituality by combining theoretical analysis and psychoanalytic examination. In order to provide a theoretical framework for the understudied topic.

## 2.2 Psychology of the Self

The individual as a whole, including all characteristics, attributes, mentality, and consciousness, can be defined as the self. A person's opinions, beliefs, personal history, behaviors, origins, or religion can all be used to define them. However, the philosophy of the self embodies a person's consciousness of their inner body, identity, and psychological state. Psychology of the self emerges to understand others through the lens of their subjective experiences through vicarious introspection, particularly interpretations based on the understanding that the self is the primary psychological operator. (Brown 2)

Once the field of psychology is concerned, Sigmund Freud is the first figure come to the mind. In Freudian theory, the human mind is divided into two main parts: the conscious mind and the unconscious mind. The conscious mind includes thoughts and experiences that individuals know about and actively participate in. In contrast, the unconscious mind holds hidden thoughts, desires, and memories that impact behavior and emotions without conscious awareness. (McIntosh 425) It represents the unseen forces that shape our thoughts and actions. Just as an iceberg has a hidden part beneath the water, our unconscious mind holds powerful influences on our behavior and motivations. (McIntosh 429)

According to Freudian theory, concept of self is categorized into three main components, firstly. The Consciousness which is the location of the present thoughts, feelings, and attention. Moving on, the preconscious (also known as subconscious): The following is the location of everything individual can recall or recover from memory. Furthermore, the unconscious which is at the deepest level of our thoughts, our unconscious serves as a source of the mechanisms that control our behavior, including our most basic instincts and desires. (McIntosh)

Moreover, Freud developed his ideas to structure the human psyche into the Id, Ego and Superego. According to him the Id is unconscious and only concerned with instinctive urges and desires. According to Freud, the id is made up of two basic instincts: Thanatos, or the death instinct, which motivates destructive, violent, and aggressive behaviors, and eros, or the impulse to survive, which urges us to participate in life-sustaining activities. Nevertheless, the Ego functions as both a conduit for and a check on the id, attempting to satisfy the id demands in a socially acceptable manner. It starts to form in infancy and is the most connected to reality. Yet, the superego is the part of the mind that controls morality and higher ideals and urges us to behave in ways that are ethically and socially acceptable (De Groot and Jeanne Lampl 7).

Critics argue that Freud's theories, including those related to the self, lack sufficient empirical evidence. Freud relied heavily on clinical observations and case studies, which some argue may not be generalizable to the broader population. The subjective nature of Freud's theories and his heavy reliance on introspection have been seen as limitations in terms of scientific rigor. Furthermore, they suggest that Freud's theories provide a limited perspective on the development of the self. Freud's emphasis on early childhood experiences and the resolution of psychosexual conflicts may overlook the ongoing developmental processes that continue into adulthood. Critics argue that the self is not solely determined by early experiences but is also influenced by ongoing interactions and life experiences. (Bodin 66)

While critics of Sigmund Freud's ideas about the psychology of the self have voiced various concerns and disagreements, there are also areas of agreement or recognition of his contributions. They generally acknowledge Freud's recognition of the unconscious as a significant factor in human behaviour and the shaping of the self. Freud's emphasis on the unconscious mind's influence on thoughts, emotions, and behaviours has had a lasting impact on psychology. (Bodin) Critics acknowledge Freud's contribution to the understanding of defence mechanisms, which are psychological strategies used to cope with threatening or distressing thoughts and feelings. Freud's identification and conceptualization of defence mechanisms have provided insights into how individuals protect their self-esteem and manage internal conflicts.

Psychology of the self relies on conceptualizing the self in order to understand and study its various aspects. Conceptualizing the self involves developing theories, models, and frameworks that provide a structure for understanding how individuals perceive, experience, and define themselves. Therefore, conceptualization of the self is an integral part of exploring and studying the psychology of the self. (Gomez 45- 67)

### 2.3 Conceptualizing the Self

Conceptualizing the self refers to how individuals define and understand themselves. The field of psychology has developed several theories to explain how people conceptualize their identities. One such theory is social identity theory (Alqahtani 14-16) which suggests that individuals identify with certain social groups and derive a sense of self from those group memberships. Another theory is self-categorization theory which suggests that individuals categorize themselves into groups based on common characteristics. (Trimble 21-24) Finally, self discrepancy theory. Proposes that individuals have an actual self, an ideal self and an outer self and that discrepancies between these selves can lead to negative emotions (Pilarska 54)

Conceptualizing the self refers to the process of developing theories, models and frameworks to understand and explain the nature and functioning of the self. It involves creating concepts and organizing ideas about various aspects of the self such as self perception, self identity, self awareness and self esteem. These conceptualizations provide a framework for studying and analyzing the self. Thus, they are not the actual self, the self is the subjective experience and sense of identity that individuals have, while conceptualizations of the self are tools used to better understand and explore that subjective experience.

Through conceptualization, researchers and psychologists aim to make sense of the complex and multifaceted nature of the self. It involves breaking down the self into different components exploring the factors that influence self concept formation and examining how social cultural and cognitive processes interact to shape the self. Conceptualizations of the self are not static or universally agreed upon. They can vary across different psychological theories and perspectives, each conceptualization provides a particular lens or framework for studying and

understanding the self, offering insights into how individuals develop a sense of identity how they perceive themselves and how their self concept can change over time.

Carl Rogers highlighted the importance of self-concept, which is the way individuals perceive and evaluate themselves. He proposed that the self-concept consists of three components: self-image (how we see ourselves), self-worth (our feelings of self-value), and ideal self (our vision of who we want to be).(Turkel and Crymble)

In summary, conceptualizing the self goes beyond the self itself, by providing theoretical frameworks and models to better comprehend and study the complex psychological processes involved in self-perception, self-identity, and self-concept formation.(Harré 24) Furthermore, there is a relationship between conceptualizing the self and framing the self is reciprocal and mutually influencing. How individuals conceptualize themselves can influence the way they frame their experiences and interpret their reality. Likewise, the way individuals frame their experiences can shape their self-concept and influence how they perceive and define themselves.(Cooley 56)

## **2.4 Framing the Self**

The process of defining the framework or issues around a topic, problem, or event in a way that affects how those context or issues are viewed and evaluated. ‘Framing’ is a term that conveys this personal attributes. (Schwalbe177 -180) Kuypers claims that framing is a method whereby communicators, consciously or subconsciously, work to create a point of view that facilitates the facts of a given situation to be understood by others in a specific manner. (Druckman 23)

However, in literature framing is a narrative that frames or surrounds another story or collection of stories, as its name indicates. It often comes at the start and finish of that longer narrative and offers crucial background and essential details for how to interpret it. A story within a story, as the novel *The Gathering* is presented. (Ginsburg 57) The novel started when the brother Liam Hagerty committed suicide, the protagonist began to tell and to recall what happened in their home back then. It's also important to note that the question of how the self is framed in literature, which is complicated and multidimensional, has been studied by authors, academics, and readers alike. This idea centers on how authors develop and portray both their own identities and those of their characters through the use of language, narrative structure, and characterisation. (Ginsburg)

Moreover, framing theory highlights the idea that a problem can be approached and understood from different perspectives, carrying implications for various values and factors. The process of framing involves individuals constructing a particular understanding of a problem or altering their perception of an issue. The notion of framing the self has long fascinated philosophers, psychologists, and artists. It explores how individuals perceive themselves, project their identities to others, and how they are perceived in return. (Peled 88) Within psychology, framing the self is a rich and intricate concept that has received considerable scholarly attention. It involves grasping the self as an individual's personal understanding of who they are, encompassing their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

### **2.4.1 The Inner Self**

The notion of an "inner self" generally refers to the essential essence or basic identity of a person. It is linked to one's fundamental nature, ideas, feelings, ideals, values and spiritual factors

that compose a particular individual's personality and behavior. It speaks to the intrinsic being beyond visual appearances or social roles an individual may decide to adopt. It embraces individual experiences, recollections, ambitions and the exclusive combination of qualities which make-up who the person really is.(Arai and Takeno 35-40)

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis developed a comprehensive theory of the human mind. Which delves into the complexities of human behavior and the inner workings of the psyche. Additionally, he proposed that a significant part of the mental activity occurs outside of conscious awareness in the unconscious mind. The unconscious contains thoughts, memories, desires and emotions that influence individual's behavior and shape experiences. Freud believed that understanding the unconscious was crucial for understanding the inner workings of the self. (Cherry) Nonetheless, Freud proposed a model of the psyche composed of three distinct components the id, ego and superego. The id represents the primal instincts and desires seeking immediate gratification. The ego acts as the mediator between the id the external world and the individual's own values and reality. The superego encompasses the internalized moral and societal standards.(Freud 23) These three components interact to shape the human thoughts, feelings and actions.

Nevertheless, Freud described various defense mechanisms that individuals employ to protect themselves from anxiety or distress caused by conflicts between their instincts and social norms. Examples of defense mechanisms include repression, denial, projection and displacement. (K.M. "The Inner Self") These mechanisms operate at an unconscious level to protect the individual's psychological well being.



Carl Jung, was initially a colleague and collaborator of Freud. Carl Jung eventually developed his own theories that diverged from Freud's psychoanalytic approach. Jung disagreed with Freud's exclusive focus on the role of the unconscious, he emphasized the importance of spirituality, collective unconscious, archetypes and the process of individuation.

One major area of difference between Jung and Freud was their understanding of the unconscious, while Freud emphasized the personal unconscious which consists of repressed desires and unresolved conflicts. Jung proposed the existence of a collective unconscious. He believed that the collective unconscious contains universal symbols, archetypes and patterns of thought that are shared across cultures and have a profound influence on human behavior. (Jung, 1968) He saw the collective unconscious as a deeper more expansive aspect of the self than what Freud described. Jung who had a deep interest in spiritual matters felt that Freud's ideas neglected the significance of religion and spirituality in human life. Jung saw spirituality as important avenues for exploring the inner self and connecting with broader aspects of the psyche such as the collective unconscious. (Jung 11)

However, Freud and Jung found some common ground in their exploration of the inner self. They both recognized the significance of unconscious processes and the idea that individual's thoughts and behaviors are influenced by deeper hidden aspects of themselves. They agreed on the notion that the inner self is not a simple and easily understandable entity but rather a complex and multifaceted construct that requires in depth exploration. (Jung 54) Despite their differences both Freud and Jung acknowledged the impact of early life experiences on shaping the inner self particularly the role of childhood and familial dynamics this shared perspective on the formative influence of early experiences highlights their agreement on the developmental aspects of the inner self. (Mitchell and Black 24)

The concept of the inner self is a multifaceted and complex subject that has been explored by various psychologists and philosophers throughout history. While different thinkers have offered their unique perspectives and theories, there are common threads that emerge. The relationship between the inner self and the outer self is a subject of interest as it offers insights into the complex interconnection between individuals' internal experiences and their interactions with the external world.

### **2.4.2 The Outer Self**

The outer self refers to the external aspects of an individual's identity that are observable and perceivable by others. It encompasses an individual's physical appearance, behavior, and the way they present themselves to the world. The outer self is influenced by societal norms, cultural influences, and personal choices. (Jung 43)

The relationship between the outer self and the inner self is complex. The outer self serves as a visible manifestation of an individual, influenced by their inner self. The thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and values of the inner self shape the outward behavior and presentation of individuals. Furthermore, the inner self influences how individuals express themselves, make decisions, and interact with others. (Jung 130) It is important to note that the outer self may not always accurately reflect the true essence of an individual, as some individuals consciously or unconsciously present themselves in a way that aligns with societal expectations or conceals their inner feelings and desires.

Moreover, the relationship between the outer self and the inner self varies among individuals. Some strive for authenticity, seeking to align their outer self with their inner self. While others may experience a disconnection or incongruence between the two, exploring and understanding this

relationship provides insights into self expression personal growth and overall, well being.  
(Abdullah 33)

In *The Gathering*, the protagonist's outer self is represented through her physical appearance, actions, and interactions with others. She carefully constructs her public persona, using clothing, gestures, and communication styles to shape how she is perceived by the outside world. Influenced by societal norms and expectations; she navigates the delicate balance between conformity and individuality, presenting herself in a way that aligns with social conventions. However, beneath this carefully curated exterior, her inner self remains enigmatic, harboring hidden emotions, family secrets, and personal struggles. The contrast between her outer self and inner self becomes apparent in moments when her true thoughts briefly emerge. By exploring the protagonist's outer self in "*The Gathering*," readers gain insight into the complexities of her character, the challenges she grapples with, and the intricate interplay between her public image and private reality.

The outer self is an important aspect of psychology; because it influences how people present themselves to the world and how they perceive themselves. While the outer self may seem superficial it can have a significant impact on the mental health and well being. Thus, by understanding the role of the outer self in psychology it can be a possible to learn to manage the self presentation, social comparisons, self esteem and impression management in a healthy way this can lead to a more authentic and fulfilling life where the inner and outer selves are in alignment. While spirituality serves as a guiding light that illuminates the path to understanding, framing, and integrating the multifaceted dimensions of the self.

## 2.5 Spirituality

Spirituality refers to the deeply personal and inner journey of seeking meaning, purpose, and connection in life, exploring aspects of the self beyond the material and embracing a sense of transcendence and inner wisdom. (Jung 45). It delves into the profound questions of identity purpose and the nature of existence. Furthermore, it is about grappling with the complexities of life, understanding one's place in the world and finding a sense of inner peace and wholeness. (Jung 68).

Spirituality often involves exploring questions about the nature of existence the meaning of life. It can play a significant role in personal growth well being and the search for inner peace and harmony. It can provide a framework for ethical and moral values offer solace during challenging times and reverence for life it's important to note that spirituality is a deeply individual and subjective experience different people may have diverse interpretations and expressions of spirituality, based on their cultural background, personal beliefs and life experiences. (Abdullah 18-25)

The integration of spirituality into psychology is an emerging field that acknowledges the profound impact of spirituality on human well being, and personal growth. It recognizes that spirituality encompasses diverse beliefs, experiences and practices that provide meaning purpose and a connection to something greater than oneself. By incorporating spirituality into psychology professionals aim to provide a more holistic understanding of individuals psychological experiences. (Jung 32) Addressing existential concerns and supporting their spiritual journeys. This integration recognizes the subjective nature of spiritual experiences, the potential benefits of spiritual practices for mental health and the importance of cultural diversity in spiritual beliefs

and expressions ultimately the inclusion of spirituality. In psychology offers a comprehensive approach that honors individual's spiritual dimensions and their impact on psychological well being and personal transformation. (Abdullah 177)

### **2.5.1 Spirituality in Psychology**

Spirituality has been a topic of interest for many psychologists as it plays an important role in the mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals. Spirituality can be defined as a sense of connection to something greater than oneself and it encompasses beliefs values and practices that give meaning to life. (Koenig 118)

In psychology spirituality is often studied in relation to its impact on mental health coping, mechanisms and overall quality of life. It is also explored as a means of promoting resilience and personal growth. However, the exploration of spirituality and the self is not only relevant to religious or spiritual individuals but also to those who seek a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. By examining how these two concepts intersect we can gain insight into our own values beliefs and purpose (Hill and Pargament 66)

Spirituality and the self are two concepts that have been intertwined throughout human history. It is often defined as a belief in something greater than oneself, while the self refers to one's individual identity and consciousness. (Koenig 118) Nonetheless, the inner journey in spirituality entails the exploration of one's deep thoughts emotions and experiences it is a process of self discovery and personal growth as individuals confront their fears doubts and limitations through this introspection a deeper awareness of the inner self can be cultivated leading to a connection with a sense of peace and tranquility this inner peace has the potential to radiate

outward influencing and positively affecting relationships and interactions with the surrounding world. (Tart 42) Carl Rogers wrote in his book *'A Way of Being,'*

When I am at my best, as a therapist, when I am nearest to my inner, intuitive self, when I am somehow in contact with the unknowable in me, when perhaps I am in a slightly altered state of awareness, then whatever I do seems to be full of healing. It seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner self of the other. Our relationship transcends and becomes a part of something larger. Profound growth and healing and energy are present. (129)

### **2.5.2 Spirituality and Existentialism**

Some argue that spirituality is about existentialism and there is connection between spirituality and existentialism which lies in. They both focus on the individual's search for meaning and purpose. In the face of existential challenges both perspectives acknowledge the importance of personal exploration, introspection and the quest for authenticity. They encourage individuals to reflect on their values, beliefs and choices and to embrace their freedom and responsibility in shaping their own lives.

Jean-Paul Sartre's views on spirituality were largely rooted in his existentialist philosophy, which focused on individual freedom, responsibility, and the search for meaning. In Sartre's existentialist perspective, spirituality was often seen as a subjective and individualistic pursuit. (Sartre 36) He encouraged individuals to embrace their existential freedom and engage in the active construction of their own values and purpose. Sartre focused on the ethical dimensions of human existence, emphasizing the importance of personal authenticity, integrity, and commitment to one's chosen projects and relationships.

While many admire his contributions on individual freedom and responsibility, others have raised various criticisms. Critics argue that Jean-Paul Sartre's portrayal of spirituality within the framework of existentialism tends to reduce it to a state of existential angst or anxiety. They contend that Sartre's emphasis on the individual's confrontation with existential questions, such as the meaning of life, freedom, and responsibility, may overshadow the transformative and transcendent aspects of spiritual experiences. By focusing predominantly on the individual's subjective struggle and the inherent absurdity of existence, Sartre's philosophy may inadvertently overlook the profound moments of connection, transcendence, and inner transformation that can be associated with spirituality. (Sartre)

Critics suggest that by framing spirituality primarily as a response to existential questions, Sartre's portrayal neglects the potential for profound awe, mystery, and the exploration of the divine or transcendent dimensions of human experience. (Davenport 2-30) They argue that a more holistic approach to spirituality should encompass not only the existential aspects of the human condition but also the transformative, transcendent, and interconnected aspects that can contribute to a richer understanding of spirituality. (Klemke)

The relationship between spirituality and the self is complex and multifaceted. By exploring this intersection, individuals can gain insight into their own values, beliefs, and purpose, and cultivate a deeper sense of connection with themselves and the world around them. Indeed, spirituality is a complex and multifaceted concept that has important implications for mental health and personal growth.

## 2.6 Conclusion

The concept of framing the self has garnered considerable attention in academic research, as it is widely recognized for its profound impact on individuals' psychological and social well-being. Scholars have delved into this topic from various perspectives, exploring its intricacies and implications. Within the context of Anne Enright's novel, *"The Gathering,"* the notion of framing the self takes center stage, offering an intriguing lens through which to examine the protagonist Veronica's character development.

Notably, framing the self has emerged as a significant theme of interest in Irish writings, reflecting the cultural and literary landscape of Ireland. It is within this context that the researcher embarks on the subsequent chapter, employing the previously discussed methodologies and conceptual frameworks. By drawing upon established theoretical approaches, the researcher aims to conduct a meticulous analysis of the portrayal of framing the self and the healing process within Enright's narrative.

Through careful analysis and interpretation, the chapter endeavors to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on framing the self, enriching our understanding of its significance within the context of Enright's novel and its broader implications within Irish literature.



## **Chapter Three: A Journey in the Self**

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### 3.1 Introduction

Anne Enright's *The Gathering* is a novel that explores the complexities of family relationships, grief, and memory. The story is narrated by Veronica Hegarty, who returns to her hometown in Ireland for her brother Liam's funeral. As Veronica navigates through her memories and emotions, she uncovers long-buried family secrets and confronts the trauma of her past. Enright's writing is both lyrical and raw, capturing the nuances of human experience with precision and depth.

This chapter is an analysis of the self of Veronica the protagonist in the novel. It consists two parts, the first one is titled 'The inner journey' examines the main character own self, alongside the trauma she faced after the death of her brother and her journey of self-discovering, through memories and reflections. Veronica searches for answers to questions about her family's past and her own identity. The second part is titled 'New Path' analysis the theme self-discovery. Besides, overcoming the fear and accepting the reality as it is.

### 3.2 Inner Journey

Veronica Hegarty's inner journey in Anne Enright's novel "*The Gathering*" is a central theme throughout the story. As she embarks on a quest to uncover the truth about her family's past and understand the events that led to her brother Liam's suicide, Veronica undergoes a transformation that is both emotional and psychological. However, in the beginning of her inner journey Veronica struggle to understand her self and her place in the world, as well as the complex emotional journey she undergoes throughout the novel: "I was a watcher, not a doer. I was a quiet girl, a solitary girl. I was the sort of child who disappeared in a crowd." (8) From a young age, she feels like an outsider in her own family and struggles to connect with others in a meaningful way.

As she grows older, she feels increasingly trapped in a life that doesn't feel true to her especially after she moves away from her family: "I felt as though I was living in two worlds, the world of the present and the world of the past, and I couldn't reconcile them." (11) As she is expected to conform to societal norms and expectations. This creates a sense of shame and inadequacy, as she feels like she is failing to live up to her own standards and the expectations of others. Furthermore, despite having a husband, children, and a successful career, Veronica feels unfulfilled and disconnected from herself: "I had a husband and children, a home and a job, and yet I felt unfulfilled, as if something essential was missing from my life." (14)

However, when her brother Liam dies by suicide, Veronica's world is shattered. She is consumed by grief and guilt, and struggles to make sense of what has happened: "My life had been split in two, and nothing would ever be the same again." (40) Thus, she initially tries to avoid confronting the truth about her brother's death, and instead focuses on trying to understand him and his life: "I was searching for something, some kind of explanation or understanding, some way to make sense of what had happened." (53). As she delves deeper into her family's history and the secrets that Liam left behind, Veronica becomes consumed by a sense of guilt and regret: "I was consumed by a sense of guilt and regret, as if I had failed Liam in some way." (56)

Nevertheless, Veronica felt like she is lost in her grief for Liam, and struggles to find a way to move forward in her life: "I was lost in grief and confusion, unable to make sense of what had happened." (67). Through her journey to uncover the truth about Liam and her family's past, Veronica begins to learn more about herself and her own inner world: "I was starting to see that the past was not something that could be left behind, but something that had to be confronted and understood." (110) Then, she comes to realize that she must learn to forgive herself and others for the mistakes of the past, in order to move forward in her own life: "I felt as though I had been carrying a burden for so long, and now I was finally able to

put it down." (253) Ultimately, Veronica learns to accept the messy, complicated nature of her family and her own life, and finds a sense of peace and resolution: "I had come to accept the messy, complicated nature of my family, and to see that it was a part of who I was." (256)

### 3.2.1 The Own Self

The own self is a central theme in Veronica's journey in *The Gathering*. As she reflects on her experiences, Veronica recognizes the importance of understanding her own thoughts and feelings. She notes, "I was more interested in finding out who I was than in trying to find out what everyone else wanted me to be" (51). This emphasis on self-discovery is further reinforced by the way in which Veronica confronts the painful aspects of her past. As she comes to terms with her brother Liam's suicide, Veronica acknowledges the role that her own feelings of guilt and shame have played in shaping her sense of self. She notes, "I was beginning to understand that I had always been a part of Liam's death, that it had always belonged to me, like a small child's coat, and that I had been carrying it around with me, without knowing it" (161)

Through this process of self-exploration, Veronica begins to develop a more authentic sense of self, one that is not defined by the expectations of others, but by her own experiences and emotions. Furthermore, she struggles to make sense of her experiences, feeling lost and disconnected from the world around her. As she reflects on these feelings, she notes, "I felt as if I were moving through a strange and unfamiliar landscape, where nothing was quite as it seemed" (72). However, as she continues to explore her own emotions, Veronica begins to develop a deeper sense of self-awareness. She notes, "I was beginning to see myself more clearly, to understand the ways in which my own feelings and experiences had shaped the person I had become" (104) Through this process, Veronica comes to recognize the ways in

which her past has shaped her present, and begins to take steps towards a more authentic and fulfilling future.

Veronica's journey to fulfill her own self involved a process of self-discovery, healing, and growth. Throughout the novel, she begins to confront the unresolved issues and emotions from her past and gradually learns to accept and embrace herself. For instance, when she finally opens up about the trauma she experienced in her childhood. In Chapter seven which titled 'The Wake' "I had spent so many years trying to forget, to bury those memories deep down, but now they were rising to the surface, demanding to be acknowledged." (74) By sharing her story, she is able to acknowledge the pain and confront the memories that have haunted her for years. This helps her to begin the process of healing and to gain a deeper understanding of herself "I have found a different language, which talks about who I am and where I come from, and that has made all the difference" (261)

Veronica exhibits number of defense mechanisms throughout the novel including repression and denial. As the narrator describes, "Veronica did not want to remember, so she forgot. And she did not want of to see, so she looked away." (26) This highlights Veronica's tendency to push down and ignore difficult emotions rather than confront them. Nevertheless, Veronica's defense mechanisms also have negative consequences. Her inability to confront her own emotions and take responsibility for her actions causes her to feel a deep sense of shame and guilt. As the narrator describes, "She had not done enough. She had not been enough. She had not been there for him." (229) This shows how Veronica's defense mechanisms are preventing her from fully processing her emotions and moving towards healing.

From psychoanalysis point of view, Veronica represses and denies her memories of the abuse that took place in her family, as well as her own complicity in the abuse. This repression and denial can be interpreted as a defense mechanism that protects her from the

overwhelming emotions and guilt associated with the trauma. For instance, when Veronica confronts her mother about the abuse, she says: "I felt a sort of sickness, a shudder of relief, a confusion of memories and denials" (182) This quote suggests that Veronica is struggling to reconcile her memories of the abuse with her denials and defenses.

Additionally, Veronica is fixated on her brother Liam, both in life and after his death by suicide. This fixation can be seen as a manifestation of her unconscious desire for connection and attachment, as well as her unresolved feelings of guilt and shame over not being able to save him. For instance, when Veronica describes Liam's suicide, she says: "I think I always knew that Liam was going to die. I felt it, inside" (3) This quote suggests that Veronica had a intuition of Liam's death, which may reflect her unconscious awareness of his suffering and her inability to help him.

Throughout the novel, Veronica is searching for her identity and her place within her family and the world. This search can be seen as a manifestation of her unconscious desire for self-actualization and individuation, as well as her fear of rejection and abandonment. For example, when Veronica describes her childhood, she says: "I was always searching for a way to belong. To my family, to my country, to some religion or other" (21). This quote suggests that Veronica is seeking a sense of belonging and identity, which may reflect her unconscious desire for acceptance and validation.

All things considered, Veronica's behavior and experiences in "The Gathering" can be analyzed using psychoanalysis to gain insight into her unconscious motives and conflicts. By examining her fixation on her brother Liam, her repression and denial, and her search for identity, firstly can begin to understand the psychological factors that drive her actions and shape her identity.

### 3.2.2 Mental Exile

In "*The Gathering*," Veronica experiences a mental exile as she confronts the trauma of her past and grapples with her own sense of identity. Throughout the novel, she describes feeling disconnected from herself and the world around her, as if she is living in a state of exile: She feels that she is "living in a dream" and that she is not really present in the world around her (11). This mental exile is a manifestation of her psychological defense mechanisms, which she uses to cope with the pain and confusion of her past experiences.

One of the key moments in the novel that highlights Veronica's mental exile is when she reflects on her childhood memories and the way they have shaped her perception of herself and the world around her: "I think we carry the past with us always," Veronica muses, "and it becomes heavier and heavier as we go along...I think that's what I've been carrying all my life ,that weight of the past, that sense of being marked by something, something I can't quite put my finger on" (64). Through this quote, this shows how Veronica's past experiences have burdened her with a sense of guilt and shame that she has carried with her into adulthood. Her mental exile is further exacerbated by her strained relationship with her mother, who she feels has never truly understood or accepted her: "I think about my mother, how much I love her, and how little she knows me. How little I know her...It was as if there was some essential part of myself that she didn't want to see, and I had to hide it away from her, and from myself" (83)

Veronica's mental exile is also linked to her struggles with depression and anxiety, which often leave her feeling disconnected from the world around her: "I am alone, but I am not alone. The whole world is here with me, under my skin, and I am the only one who can feel it...I am afraid that I am not here at all, that I am only a figment of my own imagination, dreaming myself into existence" (121). However, As Veronica begins to explore her inner



journey, she becomes increasingly aware of the ways in which her mental exile has affected her life. She begins to confront the trauma of her childhood and to work through her feelings of disconnection and isolation. This process is difficult and painful, but it ultimately allows her to find a sense of peace and healing.

Furthermore, one of the key ways in which Veronica overcomes her mental exile is through her connection with her grandmother, Ada. Ada represents a source of wisdom and guidance for Veronica, and she helps her to find a sense of connection and purpose in her life. This is evident in Veronica's description of her grandmother as a "wise, kind" figure who is "always there when you need her" (82)

Overall, the concept of mental exile in *"The Gathering"* is a powerful metaphor for the ways in which trauma and psychological defense mechanisms can separate individuals from their own sense of identity and connection to others. (Collins) Through Veronica's journey, the novel offers a powerful exploration of the challenges and rewards of confronting one's past and finding a path towards healing and wholeness.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, Veronica's mental struggles can be analyzed in terms of her childhood experiences and her defense mechanisms. According to Sigmund Freud, early childhood experiences shape one's personality and behavior, and can manifest in adulthood in various forms of mental illness.

Veronica's traumatic childhood experiences, including the death of her brother Liam, the abuse she suffered from her uncle, and her parents' neglect, likely contributed to her psychological struggles later in life. As a defense mechanism, she repressed these memories and emotions, which resulted in her mental exile and disconnection from her own self.

Through her journey of self-discovery and spirituality, Veronica was able to confront and process these repressed memories and emotions, which allowed her to ultimately heal and move forward. This can be seen as a form of psychoanalytic therapy, where the patient is guided to uncover and work through unconscious conflicts and defense mechanisms.

Moreover, As Veronica describes her childhood, she reveals how her father's death and the subsequent loss of her brother Liam affected her:

I was haunted by the sense of a terrible gap, of something lost, something destroyed. And I knew then that this was the feeling that would remain with me for the rest of my life, the thing that would shape me, define me. (12)

This quote illustrates how Veronica's childhood experiences have a lasting impact on her, shaping her identity and emotional responses to the world around her. Additionally, in terms of defense mechanisms, Veronica often uses intellectualization as a means of distancing herself from her emotions. For instance, when reflecting on Liam's suicide, she states: "I tried to take it apart in my head, to make sense of it, as if sense could be made. But there was only the horror, the shock" (91) Here, Veronica attempts to process the trauma of Liam's death through rational analysis, rather than fully experiencing and expressing her emotions.

Additionally, some critics argue that psychoanalytic theories can be limiting and overly deterministic. To illustrate, feminist scholar Jessica Benjamin critiques the idea that defense mechanisms are simply psychological strategies employed by individuals to protect themselves from emotional pain. Instead, she argues that these mechanisms are shaped by cultural and social forces, and that understanding them requires an analysis of broader societal power dynamics (Benjamin 1-28)

Similarly, psychoanalyst and cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek critiques the idea that trauma can be fully processed and resolved through psychoanalytic therapy. He argues that traumatic experiences are inherently disruptive and that individuals must learn to live with these disruptions rather than attempting to fully overcome them (Žižek 16).

To sum up, Freud's psychoanalytic perspective on Veronica would focus on the role of her unconscious mind, the impact of childhood memories and trauma on her adult psyche, and the defense mechanisms she used to cope with psychological distress. Besides, how she can heal from those traumas can lead her into new beginning.

### **3.3 New Path**

New Path refers to a variety of things, from a change in career or lifestyle to a spiritual or personal transformation. The idea of finding a new path is often associated with a sense of dissatisfaction or disconnection with one's current circumstances, and a desire to explore new possibilities and directions. (Gurian) In literature, the theme of the new path is often explored through the character's journey of self-discovery and exploration. This journey can be marked by challenges and setbacks, but ultimately leads the character towards a greater sense of understanding and acceptance. (Gates)

At the beginning of the novel, Veronica is disconnected and dissatisfied with her life. She feels alienated from her family and her Irish heritage, and struggles to find a sense of purpose and meaning. "I have been looking for something I cannot find in Ireland, and I do not know what it is." (19) However, as the novel progresses, Veronica begins to confront the painful truths of her past and to explore new aspects of her identity

I have begun to look back and see things that were not there. Or perhaps they were there, but I did not see them...I would have gone on as I was, living with the anger and the bewilderment, for the rest of my life, if Liam had not died. It was like the arrival of a visitor, a young, thin, long-legged thing that knocked at my door one day and said: I am here. Let me in. (4)

Through this journey, Veronica explores her own desires stating "I knew what I wanted: a boy, and something rough. I wanted someone to push me, to hurt me, to make me feel the edges of my skin." (90) Confronts the impact of trauma on her family and herself, "It was like watching a family of survivors. And I wondered what it was that we had all survived, and how we had survived it." (186) and comes to accept the ambiguity and complexity of her own identity: "I was not a woman who had made choices. I was a woman who had choices made for her." (234) While this process is often painful and difficult, it ultimately leads Veronica towards a greater sense of understanding and acceptance.

In addition to pursuing her own passions, Veronica also begins to seek out new connections and relationships. "I remember the relief of having company in the house...Something to eat, something to drink, something to say." (171) She recognizes the importance of community and connection, and begins to reach out to others in her search for meaning and purpose. This includes her interactions with her family members, as well as her encounters with strangers and fellow travelers.

Throughout her journey, Veronica is forced to confront uncomfortable truths about herself and her relationships with others. Thus, through this process of self-reflection and growth, she ultimately finds a new sense of purpose and meaning in life: "I did not want to go back, but I could not go forward either. So, I lay down beside the dead girl and I slept beside her, with my heart beating and my hands on the ground, for three days and three nights, until

they came to find me." (259). As she comes to terms with her own identity and the legacy of her family history, she is able to move forward with a new sense independence, embracing the possibilities of the future rather than being defined by the limits of the past.

Veronica's journey towards a new path is marked by a willingness to confront the complexities and contradictions of her own identity and history, through this process. She is able to find a new sense of purpose and meaning even as she grapples with the painful truths of her past.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Enright's novel, *"The Gathering,"* unfolds as a powerful and thought-provoking exploration of themes such as mental exile, the search for one's true self, and the transformative journey towards forging a new path. Enright's exquisite use of introspective and lyrical prose style intricately weaves together a narrative that resonates deeply with readers, prompting them to contemplate their own experiences of trauma, identity, and the pursuit of personal growth. Through the protagonist Veronica's profound journey of self-discovery, Enright unveils the profound significance of confronting the past as a catalyst for personal transformation and the pursuit of authenticity.

At the heart of the novel lies the concept of mental exile, a state in which individuals may find themselves disconnected from their own thoughts, emotions, and sense of identity. Veronica's experiences serve as a poignant representation of this psychological landscape, offering readers a glimpse into the complexities and challenges inherent in the process of unearthing one's true self. Through her lyrical prose and profound character development, Enright invites readers to reflect on their own journeys of self-exploration, evoking empathy and introspection.

# **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

Irish women's writings in modern times have made a profound impact on the literary world by shaping and enhancing its landscape. Through their works, they have portrayed the varied experiences, perspectives, and obstacles encountered by women in Ireland, encapsulating the intricacies of their lives and contributing to a more extensive comprehension of Irish society. The themes they explore are diverse, ranging from gender identity, sexuality, feminism, motherhood, historical legacies, social and political issues, and personal growth.

These narratives often challenge conventional norms and stereotypes, providing a voice to those whose perspectives have been marginalized and exposing uncharted territories of Irish culture. In essence, modern Irish women's writings are a testament to the talent, creativity, and resilience of women writers in Ireland. Their works have transcended boundaries, challenged societal norms, and provided a platform for previously unheard voices. By embracing their unique heritage and personal experiences, these writers have forged a literary tradition that continues to inspire and resonate with readers, ensuring that the diverse stories of Irish women are celebrated and cherished for generations to come.

Anne Enright, like other female authors, writing delves into the complexities of human relationships and the intricacies of emotions, often exploring themes of family dynamics, identity, memory, and loss. She has a remarkable ability to capture the subtleties and nuances of human experience, infusing her narratives with a raw and honest portrayal of characters and their inner lives.

One of Enright's most notable works is her novel "The Gathering," which won the Man Booker Prize in 2007. In this deeply affecting novel, Enright explores the impact of family secrets and trauma on the protagonist, Veronica Hegarty. She also depicts how each character is torn between the past and the present, and their struggles to belonging. Through a compelling narrative voice, Enright delves into themes of memory, love, and family, creating a poignant and thought-provoking explorations of family history, healing and personal identity.

The act of framing the self has a significant impact on individuals, shaping their identity, perception of the world, and their place within it. It involves constructing narratives, shaping memories, and selecting which aspects of one's life to emphasize or downplay. This process influences interpersonal relationships, social interactions, and even collective memory, as the stories we tell ourselves and others shape how we are perceived and navigate the world. Framing the self is a deeply personal and transformative process that both empowers and constrains, contributing to individual journeys and the broader fabric of society.

In the novel *The Gathering*, the themes of framing the self and spirituality intertwine to create a rich tapestry of introspection and exploration. Through the eyes of the protagonist, Veronica, readers witness a profound journey of self-discovery. Veronica's experiences challenge societal expectations and conventional notions of identity, prompting her to question and redefine her sense of self. As she delves into her own past, memories, and family history, Veronica grapples with the complexities of her personal narrative and confronts the relationship between the touchable and the untouchable aspects of existence.



Enright skillfully portrays spirituality as a catalyst for transformation, inviting readers to contemplate the deeper dimensions of human experience and the connections between selfhood and the spiritual realm. The novel serves as a reminder that the framing of the self is not a static process but a dynamic exploration, where spirituality acts as a guiding force that allows individuals to navigate their inner landscapes and forge a deeper connection with the world around them. Through Veronica's journey, *The Gathering* invites individuals to reflect on their own paths of self-discovery and the role of spirituality in shaping their perceptions, actions, and sense of purpose.

The current study is relevant and useful. It provides an opportunity to consider framing the self and spirituality a catalyst for personal growth and healing, allowing individuals to make sense of their past and confront their inner demons. Furthermore, It is portrayed as a means of reclaiming one's identity and breaking free from societal expectations and constraints. As Veronica's process of framing her own narrative and embracing her individuality empowers her to assert her existence and find a sense of fulfillment and healing. The same can be applied in every individual's life.

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# Appendices

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Anne Enright

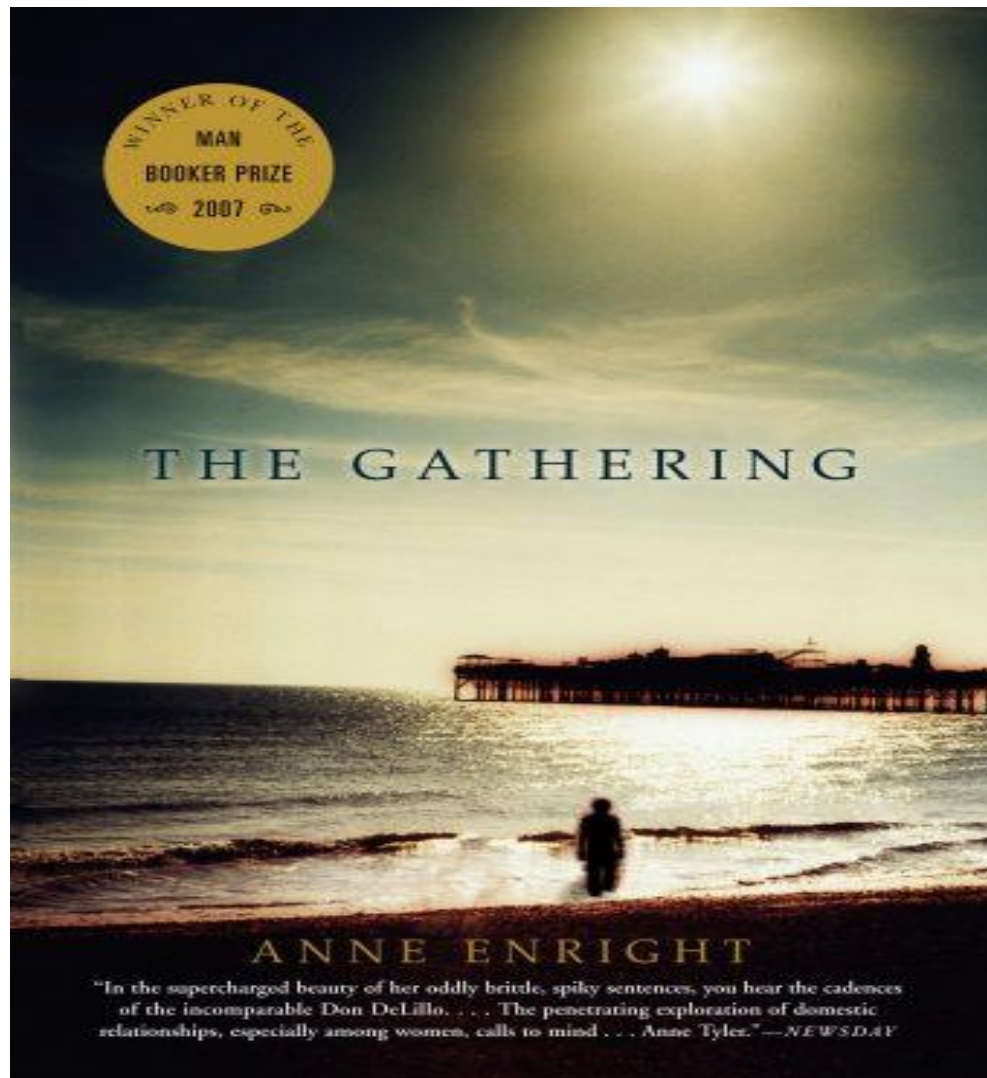
A picture of the Irish writer Anne Enright



Anne Enright: 'My book is the intellectual equivalent of a Hollywood weepie'. Photograph:  
AFP <https://groveatlantic.com/book/the-gathering/>

**Appendix B**

Anne Enright's novel *The Gathering*



**The Gathering Paperback – 1 May 2008**

<https://groveatlantic.com/book/the-gathering/>



# **Glossary**

## Glossary

**Conceptualize the self:** Conceptualizing the self involves understanding and defining the nature and components of one's identity and individuality. It involves recognizing that the self is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects.

**Denial:** Is a psychological defense mechanism that involves a refusal to accept or acknowledge the reality of a situation or experience. It is a way for individuals to protect themselves from painful or threatening information, thoughts, or emotions.

**Inner Self:** refers to the deeper aspects of an individual's identity and consciousness that are not readily visible to others. It encompasses thoughts, emotions, beliefs, values, desires, and personal experiences that shape one's true essence. The inner self represents the innermost thoughts and feelings that are unique to each individual and contribute to their overall sense of identity and self-awareness. It is often associated with introspection, self-reflection, and a deeper understanding of one's true nature.

**Mental exile:** Is a metaphorical term used to describe a state of psychological isolation or alienation within one's own mind. It refers to a condition where an individual feels disconnected from their thoughts, emotions, or sense of identity, leading to a sense of internal estrangement.

**Outer self:** refers to the external aspects of an individual's identity that are visible to others. It includes physical appearance, behavior, social interactions, and the way one presents themselves to the outside world. The outer self is shaped by societal expectations, cultural norms, and social roles. It represents the image that individuals project to others and how they are perceived in their interactions and relationships. While the outer self is important in social contexts, it may not fully reflect the complexities and nuances of one's inner self.

**Repression:** refers to a psychological defense mechanism that operates unconsciously to block or push away distressing or unacceptable thoughts, memories, or emotions from conscious

awareness. It is a process by which individuals try to prevent painful or threatening experiences from entering their conscious mind.

**Self:** refers to an individual's unique and personal characteristics, encompassing their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. It is the core essence that defines who they are as a person and shapes their interactions with the world. The self plays a significant role in influencing their beliefs, behaviours, and perceptions, ultimately contributing to their overall identity and personal growth.

**Spirituality:** refers to the personal quest for meaning, purpose, and connection with something greater than oneself. It also can be a source of comfort, guidance, and personal growth, helping individuals find a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their lives. It is a deeply personal and subjective experience that can vary greatly among individuals.

**The Own Self:** The own self is the core of one's being, representing their innermost thoughts, feelings, and sense of individuality. It is a subjective understanding of oneself and plays a crucial role in self-awareness and self-expression.

## ملخص

تتناول هذه الأطروحة استكشاف التفاعل بين تأطير الذات والروحانية في رواية "التجمع" لأن إنرايت من خلال عدسة علم النفس التحليلي، مع التركيز على البطلة فيرونيكا. من خلال تحليل رحلة فيرونيكا النفسية واستخدام نظرية آلية الدفاع، يقوم هذا البحث بدراسة كيفية تصوّر إنرايت لعملية شفاء البطلة. تبدأ الباحثة في توضيح مفهوم تأطير الذات والروحانية في "التجمع"، مؤكداً دور علم النفس التحليلي في فهم الصراعات الداخلية لفيرونيكا. علاوة على ذلك، تطبق الأطروحة مفاهيم علم النفس التحليلي لاستكشاف نفسية فيرونيكا والآليات الدفاعية التي تستخدمها. من خلال الاستناد إلى نظريات مثل التكميم والإنكار، يحلل البحث كيف تعمل آليات الدفاع لفيرونيكا كآليات تكيفية وتؤثر على تصورها للذات والروحانية. في الختام، توضح الباحثة أهمية علم النفس التحليلي في فهم تأطير الذات والروحانية في "التجمع". من خلال تطبيق نظرية آلية الدفاع لتحليل رحلة فيرونيكا، يكشف البحث عن التصوير المعقد لعملية شفائها. يسلط الضوء على التصوير الماهر الذي قدمته إنرايت للتفاعل المعقد بين علم النفس والروحانية والتحول الشخصي في الرواية.

الكلمات الرئيسية: تأطير الذات، الروحانية، نظرية آلية الدفاع، عملية الشفاء، رحلة نفسية.