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Civilization

Transgressing Male Centered Views in Claire Keegan's *Small Things like These* (2022)

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

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DEDICATIONS

I would like to thank Allah for granting me the strength to persevere until the completion of my dissertation.

I dedicate this dissertation to my cherished family, whose unwavering support has been a constant source of inspiration, despite the physical distance between us. To my loving parents, “your belief in me” has been instrumental in my journey, and I hope to make you proud of me.

I would also like to extend my dedication to my dear friends who have been with me throughout this process. Nesrin, Maria, Haizia, Serine, Amani, Ilhame, Rofa, and Farida, your unwavering support and encouragement have meant the world to me. Additionally, I am immensely grateful to my beloved uncle Nacer, who not only served as my supervisor but also went above and beyond to guide and assist me. Your help will always be treasured.

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ABSTRACT

Modes of transgression became a point of interest to multiple academic studies. It appears to be the target of number of research works in the field of literary criticism. Claire Keegan stress on the inquiry of women's self-realization to transgress male centered views. The present study is an attempt to examine, using gender theories and Feminist perspectives, the need to transgressing man's habit in Claire Keegan's *Small Things like these*. A Feminist Theory is used to deal with the writers views on the suffering of women. Gender theories: two theories suggested (gender as a social construction and Judith Butler's gender performativity) to deal with how the feeling of support towards women crops up in man's logic. The researcher also uses these two theories to disassemble the main character Bill Furlong and his struggle to achieve his support for women in order to chart a new path for her, despite the patriarchal norms imposed on him through transgressing man's habit of thought. Results show that Bill Furlong's support to women right is determined by a challenging journey of self-realization.

Keywords: Feminist Theory, Judith Butler's gender performativity, Social construction, Self-realization, transgression, Patriarchal norms.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the content of this dissertation is purely the result of my research, and that appropriate references or acknowledgements to the work of other researchers are made where required.

Signature

A square image with a blue border containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'RAYANE SLIMANI'.

RAYANE SLIMANI

Table of Content

DEDICATIONS	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
ABSTRACT	III
DECLARATION	IV
Table of Content	V

General Introduction

Introduction	1
Rationale of the Study.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Research Question	2
Research Methodology	3
Hypothesis.....	3
Objectives of the Study	3
Scope and Limitation	3
Chapters Demarcation.....	4

Chapter One: Claire Keegan's *Small Things Like These*: Contextual Background

1.1 Introduction	8
1.2 Irish women Literature/ An Overview	8
1.3 Irish Women Literature Main theme.....	10
1.4 Claire keegan Main Themes	14
1.4.1 Patriarchy.....	15
1.4.2 Gender Inequality	17
1.4.3 Family.....	19
1.4 Conclusion.....	20

Chapter Two: Man, Manhood and Masculinity: Theoretical Debate

2.1 Introduction	23
2.2 Conceptualizing Gender	23
2.2.1 Musculinity	27
2.2.2 Femininity	28
2.3 Man's Transgression	30
2.4 Hegemony	34
2.5 Conclusion.....	36

Chapter Three: a Journey to Self Realization

3.1 Introduction	39
3.2 Transgressing Han's Habit of Thought	39
3.3 Man's Reaction	42
3.4 Women's New Path	45
3.5 Conclusion.....	48
General Conclusion	50
Bibliography.....	53
Appendices.....	62
Glossary	65
ملخص.....	67

General Introduction

General Introduction

Thousands of women and girls were imprisoned in "Magdalene laundries" in Ireland from 1922 until 1996. The Catholic Church and the government managed and provided funding for these workhouses, which were for-profit laundries. The exact number of individuals kidnapped is still unknown. The church purposefully lost, destroyed, or blocked access to records from the laundries. The church mistreated women while they were there, making them work nonstop and subjecting them to physical and mental abuse. 'Fallen women' was a common term used to characterize the women and girls who were being imprisoned against their will.

Keegan had written a beautiful master piece entitled it *Small Things like these* which get the booker prize. Claire Keegan has dedicated the book to the women and children who suffered in these places over the years, the last of which was closed in 1996. Irish women modes of transgressing appear to be the target of a number of research works in the field of literary criticism. As a result of this transgression Claire Keegan portray man's support to women throughout a transgressing character who choose to rebel against the Irish society centered views. *Small Things like these* considered as a deeply moving story written by an Irish writer.

It's a wonderful, tragic book about the value of upholding your morals and acting in the best interests of those around you, even when doing so compromise the safety and dreams of your family. This short story symbolizes the world rather than the wonderful dimension. Although this organization purports to support love, faith, and charity, its commercial control of the town's laundry sector, in cooperation with the Irish government to exploit and torture disadvantaged women, demonstrates a horrible betrayal of Christian ideals. Although Keegan

write a very short pages but she uses language so perfectly to convey an important messages .The reader can understand everything easily in short time because every word have its specific meaning. Keegan had written in short because her depiction of Furlong's character precisely and concisely, so he isn't someone who says much so a longer novel would not have suited his personality. All circumstances furlong had witnessed in his childhood help him to develop a transgressing character.

This study aims at investigating the manifestation of transgressing male Centered views in Claire Keegan's *Small Things Like These*, with demonstrating how this transgression paved the way for Irish women to get freedom and have the same rights to man .The study also intends to highlight man's reaction towards that support because this act may disrupt the dominant logic towards Irish women.

Statement of the Problem

Irish women modes of transgressing appear to be the target of a number of research works in the field of literary criticism. Claire Keegan's booker prize Small Things like These is a story about the nature of evil emerged from hash circumstances. It explores the complicity of Irish community, which makes it possible for such cruelty to persist. The novel enlightens readers about the injustices exercised on Irish women.

Rational of the study

This subject is chosen because of the need to examine what woman can get if she gains man's support and how can this support influence man's logic .Also this study can paved the way for other new subject of the same field.

Research Question

How can a male's transgression disrupt the dominant logic toward Irish women in Claire

Keegan's *Small Things like These*?

Sub questions

1. What makes Claire Keegan's portrayal of man's support to women suffering different from other Irish women writers?
2. How are the concepts of man's transgression, gender and hegemony perceived in the literary sphere?
3. What gains could be found in Claire Keegan's portrayal of man's support to women?

Research Methodology

To approach the aforementioned topic, the researcher uses a mixed approach consists mainly of:

1. Feminism: the theory is used to deals with the writers views on the suffering of women characters
2. Gender theories: two theories are suggested (gender as a social construction and Judith Butler's gender performativity) to deal with how does the feeling of support toward women crop up in man logic?

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that:

- Transgressing man's habit of thought is a result of man's support to women.
- Women can establish new path throughout this support.

Objectives of the Study

1. To display how Claire Keegan introduces the transgression of the male character towards the Irish society behaviour on Claire Keegan's "Small Things like these".

2. To picture Irish women suffering from the patriarchal norms imposed by Irish man .
3. To explore Man's reaction towards transgressing male habit of thought.

Scope and Limitation

The focus of present research is on transgressing man's habit of thought exercised by the male main character (Bill Furlong) in Claire Keegan's *Small Things like these*. The study, however, is about the feminist experiences, which assisted on the reformation of a woman's identity from a patriarchal society to free, independent woman, being treated as man. Throughout changing and breaking man's habit of thought. The researcher attempts to introduce the framework of this transgression as well as the results caused by that action.

Chapters Demarcations

This research is partitioned into three well-planned chapters that serve the significance of the study, a theoretical framework that thoroughly explains, introduce and cover the contextual background of Irish women literature focus on Claire Keegan *Small things like these* the novel we will study. The chapter that follows is titled "Man, Manhood, and Masculinity: A Theoretical Debate." The first section is conceptualizing gender, while the other two are The two categories of femininity and masculinity will therefore be defined in this section in light of gender theories, specifically Judith Butler's Gender Performativity and gender social construction. Man's transgression will be defined in the second section, which will be followed by a section on hegemony, and a conclusion. The last chapter portrays how the protagonist of *Small Things like these* achieved self-realization by transgressing man's habit of thought, disrupting the dominant logic towards Irish women, and fighting against his own society to open a new path for women.

Chapter One: Claire Keegan's Small Things Like These:

Contextual Background

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Irish women Literature

1.2.1 An Overview

1.2.2 Irish women literature main themes

1.3 Claire Keegan main themes

1.3.1 Patriarchy

1.3.2 Gender Inequality

1.3.3 Family

1.5 Conclusion

1.1 Introduction

This research is about transgressing male centered views in Claire Keegan's *Small Things like These*. This study is divided into three parts. The first part will be the backbone of the contextual background; investigating Irish women literature main themes and emphasized on Claire Keegan ones. The theoretical structure of any dissertation is vital to the success of the task. Therefore; the present chapter is devoted to explain, introduce and cover the contextual background of Irish women literature focus on Claire Keegan the writer of the novel under study.

The contextual background of this research is divided into two sections; each is divided into subtitles in order to cover as much material. The first section would explore the historical context of Irish women writers and themes. It has two subtitles: the first is an overview of Irish women writers. The second is a list of the subjects they addressed. It explores three key themes: patriarchy, gender inequality, and family dynamics. These subtitles serve as focal points for the topics the researcher addresses.

1.2 Irish Women Literature: An Overview

During the 1700s, the literacy rate among Irish women was low, and their opportunities for exposure to the outside world were limited. Most women lived in rural areas, rarely ventured beyond their homes, and had limited access to plays or books. However, by 1960, significant changes had occurred. All Irish women were attending primary school, granting them access to a wide array of books, magazines, newspapers, and popular media. These external influences became an integral part of their daily lives, contributing to a widespread increase in literacy. As a result, Irish women began writing more frequently, delving into various topics related to parenthood, relationships, and sexuality from a female perspective. There is a prevailing notion that women from disadvantaged backgrounds are encouraged to

express themselves using languages and narratives that have been marginalized in society. (Cagnolati 783)

The position of women in Irish society since independence in the 1920s is reflected in the mainly subservient role they play in literary affairs. The blossoming of female writers in Ireland during the 19th century coincides with the romanticism movement's departure from social conventions. Women writers in Ireland and other parts of Europe in the early 19th century are credited with shaping literature. Due to the loss of their literary works and consequent lack of availability to press, many of these authors receive little respect. Gender specific issues arise while researching those women's lives and works, the most fundamental of which is determining the author's identity. Female authors present an array of potential appellations for the researcher that goes beyond the predictable combination of married and maiden names. When publishing their literary works, women often leaned towards maintaining anonymity, and their chosen pen names encompassed various elements such as geographical locations, initials, social standing (such as "by a lady"), and even male names. (Colman203)

Consequently, they sought alternative solutions, namely anonymity (keeping their real identity hidden) and pseudonyms (fictitious names used by authors). For example, Miss Carew demonstrated a noticeable ambivalence towards gender by publishing her works under both the names Mrs. Frank Pentrill and Frank Pentrill throughout her career. Lady Dufferin, on the other hand, began writing her rhymes using a pseudonym or her sister's name, Lady Caroline Norton, due to her husband's objection to her name appearing in print. Irish women refused to be defeated or constrained. (Colman203-204) Despite enduring oppressive circumstances for centuries, they persisted in writing, initially in Gaelic¹ and English and later

¹ A Goidelic language brought from Ireland in the 5th and 6th century AD and spoken mainly in the high lands and islands of western Scotland. Relating the Goidelic languages, particularly the Celtic language of Scotland, and the culture associated with speakers of these languages and their descendants. (Arabic English dictionary)

primarily in English. Judging from the surviving body of their work, it is evident that they wrote with great skill and talent.

According to Virginia Woolf, the critics perceive this book as significant due to its exploration of war, while also acknowledging its significance in portraying the emotional experiences of women in a drawing room. Woolf argues that a scene set on a battlefield carries greater importance than a scene set in a shop. Across various contexts, these differences in value persist, subtly shaping our understanding and perception of what is deemed important or worthy of attention. She writes:

This is an important book the critics assumes, because it deals with war this is an significant book, because it deals with feelings of women in a drawing room .A scene in a battlefield is more important than a scene in a shop- everywhere and much more subtly the differences of value persist. (Quoted in Owens 2)

During that period, Irish women faced considerable obstacles that hindered their entry into the literary field and restricted their ability to express their emotions. These challenges were not a matter of personal choice but rather the result of the prevailing circumstances in Ireland. Virginia Woolf highlights the notion that women possess a greater emotional and practical sensibility when it comes to literature.

1.3 Irish Women Literature Main Themes

Irish women writers believed they had a duty to defend women's rights and show that they were just as much a part of this world as men were, thus they entered the literary sphere. Irish women's works were marked by a critical view of tradition. They shared a common interest in historical events and individual memories, but they were also open to incorporating fresh viewpoints and interests.

The importance of the body in the mediation of traumatic states is one of the reasons why it has been an area of representational difficulty for women writers who struggle at once to present and to re-think the symbolic reading of the female body in Irish myth and history. Suffering is expressed in these poems in both occluded and explicit ways: sometimes the expression of taboo subjects at once confirms and breaks the silence of oppression. (Collins 13)

Undoubtedly, the agony of Irish women and other unfulfilled wishes, unpleasant memories, and buried fears associated with modern life served as important inspirations for the author. Irish women's literature is also unique in that it explores the nature of women's existence in the past and analyzes the trauma they experienced due to their inability to explain or describe their condition by drawing on traditional sources, beliefs, and popular myths. Instead, they also experienced oppression and silence. Irish women's topics were therefore direct expressions of the lives they actually had.

One of Ireland's most renowned writers is Deirdre Madden. She frequently returns to themes of memory, identity, and the complexity of familial connections, the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and the integrity of the artistic life in her modest yet impactful work. The second is Sally Rooney, Irish author of novels that emphasize topics of intimacy, politics, art, and class injustice. *Beautiful World, Where Are You?* *Conversations with Friends* and *Normal People* are some of her best-known works. The third one is the American author Tana French who is of Irish ancestry. Seven books were authored by her between 2007 and 2018. The majority of her books have received high praise from critics. She decided to pursue a career in show business because performing was her first love. She later switched to writing crime novels, nonetheless. The last one is Maeve Binchy an Irish journalist and best-selling novelist who write about small-town life in Ireland. Binchy, who was praised for her skill as a storyteller, probed her characters and their relationships with wit and profundity. (Kenny427)

The dynamics of family and interpersonal relationships are often explored in Irish women's literature. Writers delve into the complexities of familial bonds, mother-daughter relationships, and the impact of societal expectations on personal lives. Themes of love, marriage, motherhood, and the challenges faced by women in intimate relationships are common. Gerry Smyth noticed that family had been a major concern for Irish women literature, he characterized it as “one the most enduring and resonant of Irish cultural obsessions” (Smyth 55) Irish women writers have always focused heavily on the family and have written about family dynamics in a variety of contexts. As the background and foundation upon which this child's character is constructed, the circumstances in which a young child grows up with his family will undoubtedly have an impact on his life as an adult, his future, and his profession.

Another important issue in the Irish novel is the situation of women in society and the family. Women have always been neglected and had no rights, because they considered as weak creators, and cannot be on the same level as men just because they are female. Due to Britain's maltreatment of Ireland, it has always been portrayed as an old, destitute lady who has to be replaced in order to demonstrate her virtue and morality. The role of women in the Irish society

has changed more dramatically in the twentieth century, in particular over the last three decades, than in any other period of Irish history, with the majority of these changes attributed to changes in the economic and labour structures of the country. In fact, one of the most dramatic changes in the Irish society has been the substantial increase in the number of women participating in the paid workforce and the concomitant change in gender roles. (Sheehan et, al 162)

The fight against colonial oppression and gender inequality saw the nation's century-long struggle for independence as a mirror of women's struggle for equal rights. Women's

obligations, such as those related to the home, family, and motherhood, which establishes a woman's social status, acted as a barrier to her ability to succeed and remain independent.

Women's identities and masculine roles needed to be reexamined, according to Irish women. Over the last 20 years, Irish literature has flourished, the Irish mother, as a noble example of self-sacrifice for the sake of her family and the Church, contrasts with a negative picture of mothers that was projected by some writers in a negative way. The shocking revelations of the church's abuses in the 1990s, as recounted by author Claire Keegan in *Small Things Like These* where the protagonist Furlong assisted a girl who was attempting to escape the church's trafficking in women operations. Moreover he discovered the identity of the institution “Magdalene Laundries” that was holding thousands of girls and women captive while forcing them to labor nonstop while they were subjected to physical and psychological abuse.

The positive portrayal of the relationship between a mother and her daughter is one of the themes that have received a lot of attention in Irish literature for women. In the past, the relationship was marked by constant conflict, and the daughter was constantly attempting to flee from her mother and the violence she used against her in order to avoid living another frustrating life. Irish women writers work to counteract this negative perception by showing affection for their moms, trying to revive their memories of them, and looking for them in the depths of their souls.

Horror and terror were a theme spreading in entire Ireland throughout women literature which receive wide propagation for readers .Ireland the beautiful country which called “ Emerald Isle¹ ”; because it consists of large green ripe areas; witnessed some phenomena

¹The majority of Irish jewelry is made using green gemstones that resemble emeralds. The poet, physician, and political activist William Drennan is credited with coining the phrase “emerald isle”.

that women are now topping the lists of the best-selling authors by compiling novels full of suspense and excitement. Just as well they gain ground and achieve renown outside Ireland especially in Germany that it is known for its translations of those women's novels. Those women who picked the pen and try to write for women by women; portraying her as a part of society. Depending on their words women of Irish society describe the situation of women at that time that which is the spread of violence against women that stimulates them from writing and expressing their fear of crime and horror caused by Men.

Since for decades novel writing in Ireland was equivalent only with male writers such as: Oscar Wilde and James Joyce, women literature is considered as an important development. Catherine Ryan Howard the Irish novelist believed that the outspreading in the number of women writing talking about crime related to personal experiences of women's life. In *Our Little cruelties*, Liz Nugent think that writers are write from different angels because men are more likely to write about the hero who has strength, while women are more likely to write from the point of view of stalked victim (Michnowicz). Although the Irish society was dominated by the Catholic Church along with the government control until the early mid 1990's women had no options or voices to be heard. The number of female writers in Ireland are increasing fast according to the changes that take place in Irish society over the past few decades as well as the technological development and also the emergence of new generation.

1.4 Claire Keegan Main Themes

The 1968-born Irish author Claire Keegan is well known for her award-winning short stories. Keegan was the youngest child raised in a large Roman Catholic family. Keegan visited New Orleans, Louisiana, when she was seventeen and enrolled at Loyola University to study political science and English. She later earned her degree from Trinity College Dublin. Her writings have been translated into 30 other languages. Her first collection of short stories,

Antarctica, was listed among the "Best Books of 2001" by the Los Angeles Times. *Walk the Blue Fields*, her second collection of highly praised short stories, was released in 2007. The 2009 Davy Byrnes Short Story Award went to Foster, a well-known "long, short story" by Keegan.

Richard Ford, the award judge, said Keegan had a "thrilling" talent for choosing the right words. The last novella by Claire Keegan, *Small Things like These*, which is set in Ireland in the middle of the 1980s, was released in late 2021 and was hailed as "a timely and powerful read." It made the 2022 Booker Prize shortlist. Many people admire Claire Keegan since she has won numerous honorary degrees and is widely regarded as a "great writer" (Ford et al.) and "a writer already touched by greatness" (Kiberd).

1.4.1 Patriarchy

The term patriarchy, which simply means "the authority of the father or the patriarch, was first used to refer to a particular kind of male-dominated family—the large patriarchal household, which included women, junior men, children, slaves, and domestic servants—all of whom were subject to the patriarch's authority. Varied thinkers have different definitions of what patriarchy is. The term patriarchy according to feminist psychologist Mitchell" refers to kinship systems in which men exchange women" (Mitchell 24) According to Walby, "patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women" (Walby 20). She deconstructs the patriarchy as a system in order to disprove biological determinism, or "the notion that every individual man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one," which holds that men and women are naturally different due to their biology or bodies and are, therefore, assigned different roles (Ibid).

Claire Keegan has used Patriarchy in her stories as a theme to describe the status of women in Ireland. In *Quare Name for a Boy*, which was published in Antarctica in 1999,

Claire Keegan offers a relatively contemporary perspective on a character grappling with life problems as she considers her alternatives for parenting, marriage, and employment. This short story's analysis aims to demonstrate how feminism's successes have given women the power to decide their own futures in terms of relationships, parenthood, and careers. In order to cross the patriarchal boundaries the main character chose to walk on her path rather than follow her relatives "They are flat-bellied, temperamental women who've given up and call it happiness. We come from women who comfort men, men who never say no." (Keegan101). Not only be independent women but also to destroy male stereotypes put against women in society which has been historically consolidated in the figure of the loving daughter, who turns into a dutiful wife and mother, and is responsible for the management of the domestic space, which becomes her only domain in a patriarchal society.

It seems for Keegan patriarchy is the expansion of male dominance over females in the household, over females in society at large, and over children. It suggests that men dominate all significant institutions in society and that women lack access to this authority (prhDanielab148). Clair Keegan utilized the illegal intuitions sponsored by the church and the government that were laboring unmarried women and forcing them to work day and night as another example of the patriarchy theme in *Small Things like These*. Additionally, these women had to submit to the authority of church men and put up with their physical and mental abuse. Furlong the main character discovered something horrible events in the church , "He'd carried on to a small, lighted chapel where he found more than a dozen young women and girls, down on their hands and knees with tins of old-fashioned lavender polish and rags, polishing their hearts out in circles on the floor"(Keegan 31).Magdalene Laundries was the name of that institution from1992 till1996 which contain thousands of girls and women who were held prisoner in these institutions in Ireland and that's marked the patriarchal society who marginalize women.

1.4.2 Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is when one sex or gender is frequently given more priority or advantage than the other due to discrimination based on sex or gender. Gender equality is a fundamental human right, and that right is violated by gender-based discrimination. “Most of the societies are male-dominated where a woman is only supposed to be a mother, an ideal wife and a home-maker with multifarious roles attributed to her in the family”(Akhter, Tawhida 593). Women seem to be ignored and neglected in patriarchal society while giving up their lives and goals to care for their homes, husbands, and kids.

Gender inequality is one of the current problems. Every major topic of the day was covered in writing by authors from around the world. Gender inequality is one of these problems. Some authors have personally experienced this social threat and have written about it in their works with a deep and sensitive awareness. The delusions about the members of the family and society as a whole contributed to this gender imbalance. These authors continued to be active reformers working for societal change.

To grantee women equal rights is to practice feminism. Women have been striving for autonomy, suffragette’s rights, and equality. “The main feminist writers were Simone de Beauvoir (The Second Sex), Betty Friedan (The Feminine Mystique), Mary Wollstone Craft (A Vindication of the Rights of Woman), Fredrika Beamer (The President’s Daughter) and so on”. (Akhter, Tawhida 594) . Women have endured low status, exploitation, oppression, and loss of self-determination in almost all class communities around the world and in most settlement societies. Most women have lived their lives as slaves to men, even if they came from better socioeconomic classes. So, in a sense, the battle of women began long ago, whether on purpose or accidentally to broke the boundaries between men and women and to guarantee women wrights on all over sectors.

Ingman believed that “many Irish women writing, from all parts of the twentieth

century, implicitly or explicitly deals with women trying to find a place for themselves within the narrative of the Irish nation” (1) .As a result of gender inequality Irish women writers picked their pens and start to write for women by women . The sensitive and intriguing fiction of Claire Keegan features female characters of various ages attempting to deal with cramped lives as daughters, mothers, and wives in a variety of circumstances. These include the violence their dads and husbands inflict on them, their marginalization at home and in society, and the conflicting emotions and effects of motherhood (love, sacrifice, loss). The historical and rural settings of many of Keegan's stories may, at least in part, explain why her female protagonists continue to struggle to meet their needs and deepest sentiments in the face of persistently difficult material circumstances.(Luppino & Claudia par. 26)

Although the topics of child abuse, gender violence, and parental maltreatment are touched upon in some of Keegan's stories, the majority of them are reflections on lengthy unequal roles defined by nuclear family structures that are unchallenged by the dominance of a gender hierarchy. If it is true that Keegan’s prose has been outlined for the bitter rendering of imbalanced gender relations governed by old-fashioned values anchored in the past. (O’Hagan el al 1)

Thus, *Antarctica* appears as a series of tales that depict an unequal world divided by gender and unaffected by the influences of a contemporary worldview, where the gender gap serves as a tool for male domination and power. According to Butler “gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes [...] the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing”(Butler 24–25) that explain why Claire Keegan through her writing is trying to protect women image from patriarchal society.

1.4.3 Family

Family is a unit of acceptance, selfless giving, joy, support, and love that is based on a lineage of resiliency and a path of humility from the past, present, and future generations. Claire Keegan used the theme of family almost in all her short stories because she viewed it as an important stage that can affect the child's character because families boost the child's confidence and make him feel loved. Parents are the pillars of strength who never fall instead keep him strong so they become better people.

In her Short story "foster" Claire Keegan used two examples of families and introduced them to a world where people are trying their best to cope with the difficulties that life has thrown at them. One family is trying to cope with poverty and neglect, largely as a result of irresponsible, alcoholic father while the other family is trying to come to terms with the loss of their only son to drowning in a tragic farm accident. The story's narrator grew up in an impoverished rural home. Her father is dishonest, unreliable, and harsh however her new father Mr. John Kinsella is hard worker, reliable man and loving father. It quickly dawns on her that her new temporary residence "is a different type of house." In contrast to her own limited experience of home, the Kinsella household is a very different environment. The unsung hero of this tale turns out to be John Kinsella.

Declan Kiberd claims that John Kinsella "the kind of loving father the girl never had". As the plot progresses, we learn more and more about his positive traits, including his compassion, love, generosity, adoration, and kindness, he treats the young girl as if she were his own daughter. The young girl felt that she finally got a real family in Kinsella household "is a different type of house. Here there is room and time to think and grow. There may even be money to spare" (13) a notice that Keegan through her writing try to shed light on the role of family whatever it was good or bad; it affect the child.

The concept of family is similarly represented in Clair Keegan's last published book,

Small Things Like These, where protagonist Bill Furlong expresses his sense of alienation after realizing that he was raised by his mother and no father “Furlong had come from nothing. Less than nothing, some might say.” (Keegan 10) However, only Mrs. Wilson embraced them both. As a result the only memories that he remember are within Mrs. Wilson’s house “The main of Furlong’s infancy was spent in a Moses basket in Mrs. Wilson’s kitchen and he was then harnessed into the big pram beside the dresser, just out of reach of the long, blue jugs”. (Keegan 10) Family is the primary factor that led to the infant trauma, which is why Furlong still has some issues as an adult, much as it does in Claire Keegan's literature “Unknown was all that was written in the space where his father’s name might have been”.(Keegan .13)

Furlong made the decision to never allow his daughter experience the same fate as him as a result of his miserable childhood “Now, Furlong was disinclined to dwell on the past; his attention was fixed on providing for his girls” (Keegan 12) He also worked to keep his family safe from dangers brought on by males “He imagined his girls getting big and growing up, going out into that world of men. Already he’d seen men’s eyes following his girls.” (Keegan 13)

1.5 Conclusion

The very first chapter is concentrated on providing background details regarding the context of Irish women's literature in particular before focusing on our case study Clair Keegan the author and the major subjects she wanted to address. Therefore, the researcher based our analysis of her key themes on the data we acquired concerning Irish women writers' major themes in the first part. Therefore, she focused on Claire Keegan *Small Things like These*, in the second section. As a result, the next chapter will be focused on a theoretical study of Man, Manhood, and Masculinity.

Chapter Two: Man, Manhood and Masculinity: Theoretical

Debate

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Conceptualizing Gender

2.2.1 Masculinity

2.2.2 Fimininity

2.3 Man's transgression

2.4 Hegemony

2.5 Conclusion

2.1 Introduction

Claire Keegan's short story *Small Things like This* wants to enlighten readers about the circumstances that allow evil to exist, are more the focus of the book than its nature. In addition to exploring Furlong's modest courage, it also examines the community's silent, self-serving involvement in allowing such violence to continue. The protagonist of the story, Bill Furlong is presented by the writer as a transgressed character in order to establish a new path for women through his support. To make this point, the researcher need to explain how the concepts of man's transgression, gender, and hegemony are perceived in the literary sphere in this chapter. The following chapter is entitled "Man, Manhood, and Masculinity: A Theoretical Debate". It will be divided into three section, the first one is conceptualizing gender, So in this section, there will be a definitions of the two concepts (femininity and masculinity) based on gender theories of course, which are gender social construction and Judith Butler's Gender performativity .The second section will be a definition of man's transgression, and the following section is about hegemony, at the end a conclusion.

2.2 Conceptualizing Gender

Over the past 15 years, the field of sociology has seen a significant rise in the examination of gender. Presently, researchers classify biological distinctions between genders as "sex," while socially constructed differences between women and men are referred to as "gender" (Marini '95). Put simply, gender pertains to our understanding of ourselves as boys, girls, or individuals beyond those categories, rather than being solely determined by our physical attributes, DNA, and hormones. The expression of gender encompasses diverse manifestations, rendering gender identification more intricate than a mere "male" or "female" designation (ReachOut.com).

Marini define gender role as

Gender role differentiation is associated with gender differences in behavior, attitudes, and dispositional traits. This differentiation also leads to gender stereotyping, or the formation of consensual beliefs about differences between the sexes. In keeping with similarities in the pattern of gender role differentiation across societies, there is similarity in gender stereotypes. (98)

It seems like males typically exhibit expressive features whereas females tend to exhibit instrumental traits. Men and women share a strong consensus regarding characteristics that separate the sexes, and this consensus is unaffected by race, age, religion, education, or marital status. Moreover, gender stereotypes have remained largely consistent in recent times.

Judith Lorber Professor Emerita of Sociology and Women's Studies writes in her book *The social construction of gender* "Talking about gender for most people is the equivalent of fish talking about water"(112) .she define gender as " Gender is so much the routine ground of everyday activities that questioning it's taken-for-granted assumptions and presuppositions is like thinking about whether the sun will come up.' Gender is so pervasive that in our society we assume it is bred into our genes"(Lorber112).From this definition the reader conclude that most individuals find it difficult to accept that gender is constantly produced and destroyed by social contact and that gender is both the structure and content of that social life. But, just like culture, gender is a product of human activity that requires continual participation from all individuals.

Additionally it sometimes takes a conscious disturbance of our preconceptions of how men and women should behave in order for us to pay attention to how gender is formed because gender is such a known aspect of daily life. We frequently ignore gender indications and signals because they are so ordinary, unless they are absent or unclear (Lorber 112). As a result once the researcher has successfully assigned the other person a gender status, people are no longer uncomfortable because doing so makes them feel socially at ease.

Early feminist writings are where the gender identification issue first came up. In academia, the term gender first entered use in the late 20th century. During this time, patriarchy was strongly opposed by feminist writers. Gender has traditionally been used to refer to the state of being male or female before its extended connotation. Women are biological entities, yet scholars contend that socially constructed subjugation of them is not true. They also contend that sex might seem as either male or female. They claim that gender describes the fact of being male or female (Mboho and Atairet 27). All in all these thinkers draw attention to the way that institutions like religion, society, and education shape gender.

One must consider sex as a fixed reality and gender as something that can vary continuously through time and space in order to comprehend the term "gender." Many works have developed the idea of the ephemeral nature of gender, particularly in two related approaches: Social construction approach; Scholars distinguish between biological gender and the gender social contract, which has made gender a contentious topic. Gender is seen as a "social construction of sex and to the categorizations and classifications into femininity and masculinity" (Oakley) rather than as facts of biology. Societal structures are built on gender roles, and people create a gendered hierarchy according to their gender. The social construction of masculinity and femininity, which can be further broken down into masculine and feminine, is known as gender (Ben Abderrezak 37). It seems like gender stereotypes are created as a result of this method because people become conscious of their maleness and femaleness.

Butler writes: "The very injunction to be a given gender takes place through discursive routes; to be a good mother, to be a heterosexually desirable object, to be a fit worker, in sum to signify a multiplicity of guarantees in response to a variety of different demands all at once" (145). The social construction approach examines the various components of social groupings, including gender, which is an essential component of every social group's

structure. Gender impacts the one's appropriation for education, career, family and authority. Social construction places a strong emphasis on the fact that both men and women participate in different social interactions and are subject to change as actors playing roles that are set by society (Ben Abderrezak 38). In other words through institutionalizing a change in their gender identification, these interactions may mold atypical expectations for them. With codes, patterns, structures, norms, values, and beliefs unique to a particular society, social construction's core characteristics are rooted in both space and time.

Gender performativity: *Judith Butler* the feminist who wrote *Gender Trouble* advocate that gender can also be seen as a set of "periodic practices based on performative theory of gender acts that disrupts the categories of the body, sex, gender, and sexuality and occasion their subversive resignification and proliferation beyond the binary frame" (xxi). So Butler explains that an action is performative if it produces a series of effects. Gender is performative means that gender identity cannot exist before gendered action, because action continuously constitutes identity (Ben Abderrezak 40). As if the researcher is concerned Butler want to clarify that no one can be gendered before engaging in gender-based acts, so gender here is a doing.

Butler develops *De Beauvoir's* belief that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (De Beauvoir). Moreover she implies that being a woman is something we do, not something she is. In other words, the body is not required to portray masculine or feminine roles even though it can be male or female. A person can choose their gender up to a point, just as gender manifests itself in a doing. In order to establish norms for what men and women are expected to accomplish, gender serves as a collection of social and cultural regulations.

Two instances are given to help demonstrate these points: Gender identity, as seen from a performative perspective, is not an innate quality that is manifested via behavior but rather

the result of repeated actions that mimic gender standards. From a performative viewpoint, for example, "a man" is someone who consistently emulates masculine gender standards. In the second instance, a woman could play out her gender by adopting traditional feminine traits in her voice, habits, and look. Whether done intentionally or based on socially educated understandings, this is a repetition and a performance of gender.

2.2.1 Masculinity

The degree to which people perceive themselves as masculine or feminine in light of what it means to be a man or woman in society is referred to as one's gender identity. Instead of being founded in one's biological sex, femininity and masculinity are social (one's gender) in nature.

The Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell believes that although the concept of "masculinity" is not present in all countries, all have cultural descriptions of gender. In its current meaning, the phrase implies that a person's behavior is a reflection of their personality. In other words, a person who lacks masculinity might act differently, such as being peaceful rather than violent, forgiving rather than controlling, hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual conquest, etc. This idea assumes that people believe in individuality and personal agency (Connell 42). It seems like 'Masculinity' doesn't exist until it's in opposition to 'femininity,' though. A society that does not view men and women as representing absolutely opposite characters does not have a concept of masculinity in the sense of modern culture.

The behaviors, languages, and practices that are typically associated with men and are therefore regarded as not feminine in particular cultural and organizational contexts make up what is known as masculinity (Itulua-Abumere42). In other words masculinity exists as both a positive and a negative, in that it offers some ways for men to express their identities and that

they are not the "other" (feminine). Male behaviors and masculinity are not just the results of biological or genetic predispositions.

Scott F Kiesling is Assistant Professor of Linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh. He has published on a wide variety of sociolinguistic projects. He defines the term "masculinity" as referring to a collection of positions that share a claim to authority that places a person at the top of some hierarchy (defined as a rank ordering of individuals in a social arena or field), regardless of whether it pertains to the structure of an institution, the structure of society, the nature of someone's knowledge, or the nature of their experience (Kiesling 252). To sum up the idea of Kiesling's masculinity is defined as an undefined standpoint, a sort of norm one uses to articulate their own gender as well as that of others.

“Masculinity is understood as an attribute of being a ‘man’ or its juxtaposition with ‘manhood’. It is associated with men’s behavior in the context of gendered identity formation and the actions associated with the male gendered behavior are called masculinity” (Wassan 2012). In other words, masculinity is how men exist and represent themselves in immediate and extended communities. As a result, males are perceived as being more physically powerful than women, even if they might be a little rough around the edges. They are also perceived as being assertive, gregarious, arrogant, and psychologically powerful.

2.2.2 Femininity

According to a brief explanation from Wikipedia, femininity is a collection of traits, behaviors, and tasks that are typically linked to women and girls. It is possible to see femininity as a social construction, and there is some evidence that certain behaviors that are regarded as feminine are impacted by both biological and cultural influences. Another brief definition from the researcher Beverley Skeggs, the British sociologist, and the author of the influential study *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* (1997), “Femininity is the

process through which women are gendered and become specific sorts of women”(Skeggs 7).All in all femininity is a set of attributes, behaviors, and roles associated with women and girls. It is socially constructed and can be influenced by both cultural and biological factors.

Moreover being, developing, practicing, and doing femininity look significantly different for women from various social groups, so-called "races," ages, and countries. Although the two are combined under the name "femininity," the labor of appearing feminine, or the labor of possessing feminine traits like nurturing, supporting, passivity, and non-assertiveness, can also be differentiated (Skeggs 7) . So femininity is seen as a series of roles often imposed by society and it differ from one culture to another, as a result of these role the girl develop her femininity.

Butler (1993) asserts that femininity is a mode of embodying and re-embodying established gender norms, which manifest as a variety of ordinary human styles. Being a woman is an accomplishment. That is an investment as well. It is one of the forms of cultural capital that are accessible to working-class women of all races. To sum up femininity is the opposite behavior of masculinity for example women are more likely nurturing, compassionate, and affectionate, moreover; they are magnetic, attractive, warm and welcoming, sensual, and they also take good care of their selves.

Some theorists believe that “femininity and masculinity are social and historical constructions, they are not natural. For social construct of a human being, in other words, no one is born a man or a woman –they are created” (Saigol et al) .It seems likely It goes on to say that the connection between biological sex and gender identities is the basis for the association of women with femininity and men with masculinity. It also asserts that particular characteristics, like domination, passivity, strength, bravery, and emotionality, are linked to either femininity or masculinity. In other words, femininity and masculinity are defined by the

relationship between their respective features and gender identities. Yet, the Femininity Study also notes that just as men can have feminine features, some women may view themselves as having male traits or may be thought to have them by others.

Significantly in most communities, masculinity and femininity are mirror reflections of one another. For example, if males are expected to dominate and control, women must be subservient; if men are expected to give commands, women must obey; and so forth. Males typically respond by describing themselves as masculine while girls typically identify themselves as feminine. Members of society decide what it means to be a boy/man or a girl/woman (e.g., dominant or passive, brave or emotional), and males will typically reply by defining themselves as such. In this regard, manliness is a process of developing as a socially constructed idea. The primary issue of masculinity is consequently, who exercises the Power?

2.3 Man's Transgression

The Word "Transgress" In English, it is a word that means "to violate a law, command, moral code, etc.; offend; sin. To pass over or go beyond (a limit, boundary, etc.); to go beyond the limits imposed by (a law, command, etc.); violate; infringe."¹ In Hebrew there are several words that translate transgress, transgression. The primary word is *pasha*, and is used eighty times and rendered in all versions as "transgression." Its meaning is rebellion; the fundamental idea of the root is a breach of relationships, civil or religious between two parties.² There is the Hebrew word *abar*, and the meaning of this word is to go beyond, to move outside or beyond the requirements³ (Patterson 371).

¹Dictionary.com.Unabridged
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/transgress> (accessed June 10, 2008)

²R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishing, 1980), s.v. "pasha".

³*Ibid.*,s.v. "abar."

Also there is the Hebrew word *maal*, that means breaking or violation of law, to commit a trespass against the Lord. In Greek, as in the Hebrew, there are several words translated for transgress, transgression, the main being, *parabaino*. The meaning of this word is to go beyond. We also have *huperbaino*, meaning overstepping the limits. The next Greek word we find is *parerchomai*, the meaning of which is rendered to come by or pass over. *Parabasis* means overstepping (always of a breach of law, a going aside). *Paranomia*, means lawbreaking, contrary to law (Patterson 372).

According to the previous definition that Patterson collect; transgression is a term used to characterize disobeying the norm, failing to submit or cross a line, and jumping the gun away from what is right and true. It is the person who breaks the rule's instructions and/or prohibitions, turns away from the path of righteousness, stops acting righteously, goes overboard, and fails. This is what it looks like to disregard the rules and commit a transgression.

Additionally the term transgression is defined in different contexts (e.g. geology and genetics).

In geology transgression is the spreading of the sea over land as evidenced by the deposition of marine strata over terrestrial strata; in genetics it means a peculiar case of heterosis - the increase in growth, size, fecundity, function or other characters in hybrids over those of the parents. (Pieronkiewicz 1261)

On the other hand Kozielski (1987) employs the concepts of a conscious and purposeful transgression of physical, social, or symbolic boundaries in his translation into psychological ground. The idea of psychological transgression emphasizes the significance of the part that stepping outside of one's comfort zone and disobeying restrictions play in everyone's life (Pieronkiewicz 1261). According to these multiple definition man is a self-directed, extended

being that willfully transcends the lines that are seen as dividing what he represents and what he owns from what he might become.

According to Koziellecki (1987, 1997), there are four worlds of transgression where the act of crossing boundaries can be applied: 1) Physical objects represent territorial expansion in the physical world; 2) Other people represent increasing control over them, as well as generosity and the extension of individual freedom; 3) Symbols represent intellectual expansion; going beyond the information provided, developing knowledge of the world; and 4) Oneself represent self-creation, self-development, unlocking one's ability, and overcoming somebody's areas of weakness(Pieronkiewicz 1261).In a certain perspective, transgression can take many different forms, including psychological or historical, individual or collective, constructive or destructive, but they can also, on another level, take the form of breakthroughs or new ideas.

Scholars argue that there are two specific types of the heterostatic motivation that lead to transgression which are the hubristic motivation and the cognitive motivation. The first one, which has been coined by Koziellecki, the hubristic motivation “conceived as a cluster of motives that make people assert and enhance their self-worth” (Koziellecki 177).It is the main motivator for transgression. The word "hubris" (sometimes spelled "hybris") comes from Greek literature and philosophy. It used to be a negative term for pride, disobedience, and arrogance, but not anymore. Every person has the need to stand out from the crowd, to be significant, and to draw attention to others at some point in their lives (Pieronkiewicz 1263).It seems likely that this transgressed idea of man acknowledges this. The pursuit of superiority or perfection is a manifestation of hubristic motivation. It has narcissistic and selfish desires that satisfy its insatiable, highly emotional nature.

The second type of the driving force specific for transgression is cognitive motivation. “It is none goistic, instinct to master and competence, governed by the principle of growth” (Pieronkiewicz 1263). It can be stirred up by the innovation or sophistication of the topic, uncertainty or a lack of knowledge, as well as the cognitive conflict that results from simultaneously holding two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values, or from the confrontation of preexisting beliefs, etc., with new, directly contradictory information. A good example of that type is Claire Keegan’s portrayal of the protagonist Bill Furlong as a transgressed character when he chooses to be opposite to his society’s norms and behaviors.

“The transgressive man desires to deal with content serving absolute purposes, associated with the truth as a value in itself, as an autotelic good” (Tański 63). Tański believe that when a person want to look for the truth from his internal feeling first, then show it to the society . In this case Tański want to shed light to the point that a transgressive man is guided only by individualism, the desire to meet his own needs (especially related to the strengthening of self-esteem, that is strengthening own ego), where he becomes himself his own rudder and the ship or the spiritual values, such as dignity, responsibility, autonomy (freedom) help him to expand to the world (Tański 65).

As Leszek Gawor states one could define this human dignity as a value dominant above all goals. This value is important for the purpose of sustainable development (Gawor 95). The man must be motivated by his belief in his own dignity in order to advance. Without this faith, a transgressive man would not be ready to deal with hardship, fail, or experience existential shocks. So he must therefore be aware of his own dignity in order to fight (to be resilient to the stress that life brings), for which the struggle is ingrained in active involvement in the vortex of daily life. Koziński's strategy would now be in line with the axiology of sustainable development at this point. A man, according to the psychologist, turns into a sad dictator, controlled by external forces that he can no longer understand, and his life becomes

colorless, which results in a loss of the sense of existence, when there is a lack of dignity (Tański 65). As a result this loss of self-worth and a lack of self-will are some ways that alienation manifests itself.

2.4 Hegemony

The simple definition of the concept of hegemony is the dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas. But the meaning of this concept is much more difficult to grasp. This can be traced back to several reasons according to Sandra Destradi:

“firstly, hegemony is often used as a synonym for both leadership and empire; secondly, it is employed by authors belonging to extremely different schools of thought with sometimes radically diverging research interests; thirdly, like ‘empire’, also ‘hegemony’ has become a normatively loaded term, especially in the context of the US debate and the alleged transition of the US from a cooperative and benevolent hegemony to an egoistic and greedy empire”(912).

So hegemony is a sort of authority that is exercised by more sophisticated means than are used by powers acting as rulers. The methods used to exercise power range from applying pressure to offering material rewards to discursively promoting the norms and ideals of the hegemon.

On the one hand Connell state that “[h]egemony’ means a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes”(Connell 184). On the other hand Antonio Gramsci the Marxist thinker who wrote Prison Notebooks analyzed this concept with reference to the realm of social relations. Ideational and material power resources are constantly working together and influencing one another in this process. Although though

hegemony doesn't include the use of force, for Gramsci, it is still a kind of dominance. Gramsci believe that power is always contradictory and embraces both compromise and hegemony on the one hand, as well as the use of force and coercion on the other. Hegemony dominates to the amount that the agreeable dimension of control takes center stage. Although it is omnipresent, coercion is only used in extreme, abnormal situations (Destradi 913).It seems likely that Hegemony is sufficient to ensure that most people behave faithfully most of the time.

Moreover as a result of the writings of Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), the concept of hegemony now is used in the social sciences and social history. The term also is increasingly more frequently used to describe the intricate ways in which power permeates all facets of the social environment. Power has an impact on both short-term and long-term social practices, as well as the reproduction and potential alteration of social connections (Smith 216).As far as Antonio Gramsci explains the idea of hegemony has contributed significantly to our understanding of how power shapes the social person and the various ways in which people perceive the world in which they live.

As Williams demonstrates in his definition of hegemony “A lived hegemony is always a process. It is not, except analytically, a system or a structure. It is a realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits”(112).For him hegemonic processes need to be extra careful and receptive to the alternatives and resistance that challenge or risk their domination.

All in all Mike Donaldson (645) summarizes some of the major characteristics of hegemony as being about gaining and maintaining power and the resulting emergence (and dissolution) of social groups. It focuses on how the ruling class builds and retains its hegemony. A crucial component of the process is the capacity to impose a definition of the situation, to determine the parameters within which events are interpreted and concerns are

debated, and to formulate ideals and define morality. Hegemony requires manipulation of the major portion of the population, particularly through the media, and the formation of social institutions in ways that appear natural, ordinary, and normal. The state plays a major role in this negotiation and enforcement through the penalty system for non-compliance (Boden15).

1.6 Conclusion

Because of man's support to women, male's transgression has become the subject of number of academic research .As a result of crossing these norms , the dominant logic toward Irish women in Claire Keegan's *Small Things like these* is disrupt. Man's transgression serves as a theme of interest in the contemporary Irish writings as it deals with how the feeling of support toward women crops up in man's logic? In the next chapter the researcher applies the concepts, methodologies, and notions discussed in chapter tow to examine the issue of transgressing male centered views in Claire Keegan's work.

Chapter Three: a Journey to Self-Realization

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Transgressing Man's habit of thought

3.3 Man's reaction

3.4 Women's New Path

3.5 Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

Small Things like these present a character which transgresses Male centered views. This transgressions teems mostly from the author's depiction of the Irish women bad treatment, and challenges in protect themselves from the patriarchal society they live in .Keegan includes women characters of different social orientation, and different level of transgression, by representing the gloomy shades of the Irish society .The story discover a scandal that were happening at that time from 1922 until 1996, thousands women were held prisoner in ‘Magdalene laundries’ in Ireland. These workhouses were commercial and profit-based laundries run and funded by the Catholic Church and the state.

The following chapter is an analysis of the transgression that the protagonist of *Small Things like these* had achieved. It underlines some steps by which the protagonist fulfilled his journey to self-realization. The first part entitled: “Transgressing Man’s Habit of Thought” examines the main character as being transgressed character who wants to cross the bounds of Irish society and give the support to a women from the convent .The second part entitled: “Man’s reaction” explores how male transgression disrupt the dominant logic toward Irish woman .The last part as entitled “women’s New path” analyses how bill Furlong believe in his principle and fight against his own society in order to make his way through life towards self-realization and open a new path for women throughout his support.

3.2 Transgressing Man’s Habit of Thought

Claire Keegan presents Bill Furlong as a character who challenges the conventional thinking of men. Despite being an ordinary member of Irish society, Bill Furlong lived a modest life as a coal and timber merchant alongside his wife Eileen and their five daughters.

His difficult and distressing upbringing, along with witnessing unfortunate events, instilled in him a sense of empathy and support for women. This, in turn, leads him to venture beyond the confines of his community. For instance, his mother, while working as a domestic for Mrs. Wilson, became pregnant, which caused distress within the community: "When his mother's pregnancy became known, and her own people indicated their disassociation from her..." (Keegan 10).

After the death of his mother Mrs. Wilson had taken care of him "The main of Furlong's infancy was spent in a Moses basket in Mrs. Wilson's kitchen" (Keegan10) .So Mrs. Wilson, who didn't have any children of her own, took him under her protection as he developed and provided him minor household duties and reading assistance. As an impact of this events in the infancy of Bill Furlong, he decided to change the way of treating women as the Irish society do so he rebel against his community .According to what Pieronkiewicz explain about transgression "Every person has the need to stand out from the crowd, to be significant, and to draw attention to others at some point in their lives" (1263).

Beginning with how much the main character suffered as a child, Claire Keegan goes on to discuss how he started to create a beautiful life for himself. Furlong considers himself to be a highly moral and devout man. After getting married to Eileen, he made the decision to focus solely on his family" Now, he lived in the town with his wife, Eileen, and their five daughters" (Keegan11). Despite the gravity of what he experienced, he made a promise to put the past behind him, concentrate solely on the here and now. Besides he tries to do everything in his power to preserve the lives of his daughters, make them happy, and protect them. In contrast to the principles that characterized the community he had grown up in

“Now, Furlong was disinclined to dwell on the past; his attention was fixed on providing for his girls” (Keegan12).

According to Tański “a transgressive man is guided only by individualism, the desire to meet his own needs (especially related to the strengthening of self-esteem, that is strengthening own ego), where he becomes himself his own rudder and the ship or the spiritual values, such as dignity, responsibility. (Tański 65)

So Claire Keegan want to depict Furlong’s character as a unique; a hero who want to fight all people around him for his daughters; “Other times, Furlong would hear a sharp, hot whistle and laughter, which made him tense. He imagined his girls getting big and growing up, going out into that world of men” (Keegan14) as a result he considered as a character that transgress man’s habit of thought.

Furlong had a distinct perspective on women and consistently expressed his support for them in many different situations. Despite the nature of the atmosphere in which he was raised and the ideals he acquired from his society he choose to transgress man’s habit of thought “Inside the laundry, one of the nuns suggests Furlong must be disappointed as he has five girls and ‘no boy to carry on the name’. Furlong replies by saying: ‘What have I against girls?’ [...] ‘My own mother was a girl, once. And I dare say the same must be true of you and half of all belonging to us” (Keegan 47).

Another example illustrate that the main character had transgressing man’s habit of thought when Furlong begins to see the gravity of the local convent's cruel treatment of single women and their newborns. Feel any type of worry for him as he comes to terms with what is taking place. Chooses how he must act in good morality, and accepts the price that action in a small town where the church

predominates would impose on him, his wife, and his daughters. “he’d carried on to a small, lighted chapel where he found more than a dozen young women and girls, down on their hands and knees with tins of old-fashioned lavender polish and rags, polishing their hearts out in circles on the floor” (Keegan31) he made the decision to defend these girls after witnessing this image, despite the risk to his life and those of his family.

To convey the purpose by which the protagonist was able to break the bounds of the Irish community and man’s habit of thought there through the narrative .Claire Keegan made the character Sarah ask for help .So furlong wanted to share what’s happening with his wife but she totally disagree with his decision “Furlong considered going over no part of what he’d witnessed at the convent with Eileen, but when he told her, she sat up rigid and said such things had nothing to do with them” (Keegan33). Eileen’s reaction choked him because she is a women and she must support them .But she insisted that it is not their problems because they are not their girls “ Well, there’s girls out there that get in trouble, that much you do know...This is the very thing I’m saying,’ she said, rising again...Tis not one of ours.’(Keegan34).

3.3 Man’s Reaction

Claire Keegan’s *Small things like these* is a novel about an ordinary man of a small Irish town who decide to transgress male centered views of that community. Claire Keegan portrayed the radical transformation of the protagonist from an orphan to a good father who wants to protect his five daughters from any danger. After he discovering thousands of girls and women were held prisoner in the

convent headed by the church, he decided to help them although this decision will lead him and his family to great troubles.

In the context of Irish society, where the notion of male superiority is upheld, men's perception of women is severely lacking in humanity. Within this patriarchal society, girls and women were confined to institutions run by the church and the government, ostensibly for their protection. However, in reality, they were subjected to forced labor without any remuneration. This disturbing reality is highlighted by Keegan in her novel through a vivid depiction: "where he found more than a dozen young women and girls, down on their hands and knees with tins of old-fashioned lavender polish and rags, polishing their hearts out in circles on the floor" (Keegan 31). To portray the events taking place within these institutions, Claire Keegan introduces the character of Sarah, a victim of the convent. Despite the potential consequences, Furlong decides to assist her in escaping this oppressive environment, fully aware of the sacrifices it may entail.

He'd imagined, while he was in the barber's, that the door might now be locked or that she, blessedly, might not be within or that he might have had to carry her for part of the way and wondered how he'd manage, if he did, or what he'd do, or if he'd do anything at all, or if he'd even come here 'You'll come home with me now, Sarah' (Keegan69).

Furlong's sense of responsibility towards Sarah stems from the lessons he learned from Mrs. Wilson during his childhood, who emphasized the importance of treating people well to bring out their best (Keegan 60). Through her portrayal of Furlong, Claire Keegan aims to draw attention to the violence and mistreatment endured by women in Irish society. Furlong, as a courageous individual, makes the decision to defy societal norms and advocate for a girl who is not his own, challenging the prevailing mindset. This evokes a strong negative reaction from men who perceive his actions as a transgression against their established beliefs. In

essence, Furlong's actions disrupt the dominant ideology regarding Irish women, as they challenge the notions of hegemony and control that are traditionally associated with men. Hegemony is characterized by the pursuit and maintenance of power, leading to the emergence of specific social groups (Boden 15).

Furlong's decision to give help to Sarah 'the girl from the convent' was very hard to take because he was afraid from the society's reaction. So he tried to tell his wife first. "That night, in bed, Furlong considered going over no part of what he'd witnessed at the convent with Eileen" (Keegan33) but as he believed Eileen's reaction was negative:

"She sat up rigid and said such things had nothing to do with them, and that there was nothing they could do, and didn't those girls up there need a fire to warm themselves, like everyone? And didn't the nuns always pay what was owing and on time unlike so many who would put everything on the slate until you had to put the squeeze on, and there the trouble would come." (Keegan33)

Claire Keegan wants to shed light on the protagonist who sticks believing in the importance of staying true to his values of doing right by those around him. Even if it puts his family's security and aspirations at risk, and that what's Mrs. Kehoe warned him from "You can't side against one without damaging your chances with the other... Thank you, Mrs. Kehoe I'm much obliged to you for saying" (Keegan63).

Despite the negative response from society, Furlong remained committed to assisting Sarah. As they continued their journey, Furlong encountered familiar faces, individuals whom he had known and interacted with for a significant part of his life. Initially, they were eager to engage in conversation, but upon noticing the bare, black feet of the girl accompanying him, they realized she was not one of Furlong's own (Keegan 70). During their walk, they also encountered another woman known to Furlong, who stopped him to inquire about the girl's

identity, questioning whether she was one of the girls from the laundry (Keegan 70).

3.4 Women's New Path

Claire Keegan's Booker prize *Small Things* like these draw attention to the decades-long complicity that existed within the Catholic Church and the local community. All these exist in this gorgeous, extensively resonant short story. The main character, coal and timber merchant Bill Furlong, accidentally discovers the suffering and mistreatment of women at his local convent's laundry. Furlong, who resides with his wife Eileen and their five daughters, is a good-hearted family man. One day, in the run-up to Christmas 1985, Furlong reaches a turning point in his life. While delivering coal to the local Convent, he sees something genuinely alarming, clear signs of women abuses that proves hard for him to ignore.

Over time, Bill's courageous action will have an effect on his girls, whose welfare originally motivated him to hope for drastic change. *Small things* like these is a short story of a man's journey to self-realization, redefining identity and forges a new path for the Irish women as a result of his support to them. The novel first begins with Bill Furlong a father of five daughters who working very hard to provide a good life for them. Then he start remembering his miserable childhood. Furlong's mother, Sarah, who became pregnant while working as a servant for Mrs. Wilson, a rich Protestant widow, impacted Furlong's childhood in New Ross. Sarah was able to keep her employment and the baby because Mrs. Wilson took a more sympathetic stance.

Furlong's indebtedness to Mrs. Wilson is profound, as she not only fostered his love for reading but also treated him with fairness and modesty despite his orphan status. However, when he stumbled upon the convent, where countless women were imprisoned, his life took a dramatic turn. The image of the girls laboring on their hands and knees, tirelessly polishing

the floor, haunted him (Keegan 32). Disregarding the prevailing beliefs of Irish society regarding women, Furlong, as a courageous individual, makes the decision to assist the girl. Despite the potential consequences, he remains steadfast in his principles and convictions. Furthermore, he embraces his uniqueness and embarks on a path of self-realization, forging his own way forward.

Bill Furlong's journey began with sufferings and struggles. And he still faces the critique of an entire village in blacklisting these women and children to moral subordination and inhumane servitude. Because Claire Keegan does not put an end to this story, the reader could imagine what would happen to Furlong.

The worst was yet to come, he knew. Already he could feel a world of trouble waiting for him behind the next door, but the worst that could have happened was also already behind him; the thing not done, which could have been – which he would have had to live with for the rest of his life. Whatever suffering he was now to meet was a long way from what the girl at his side had already endured, and might yet surpass”(Keegan 72) .

According to him not thing important than saving a human being life, even though he is man but he always support women because he is a good man “Was it possible to carry on along through all the years, the decades, through an entire life, without once being brave enough to go against what was there and yet call yourself a Christian, and face yourself in the mirror?”(Keegan71).

Despite the fact that Furlong was surrounded by the believes of Irish society and the church , he could not blind his eyes towards this evil that happen “Feeling little or no obligation to say very much or to explain, Furlong smoothed things over as best he could and carried on along with the excitement in his heart matched by the fear of what he could not yet see but knew he would

encounter”(p71). He thought of his own girls what if one of them get in trouble ,also he remembered his mother “In an earlier time, it could have been his own mother he was saving – if saving was what this could be called. And only God knew what would have happened to him, where he might have ended up” (Keegan72).

Furlong’s journey entitles him to achieve new goals, help women to find new path in the Irish society. He is the only man who choose to be righteous and not to follow the evil that was happen against women “If a part of him wondered over what he was doing, he carried on, as was his habit, but found himself bracing as he pressed the bell then flinched when he heard it ringing within”(Keegan43).This kind of support had open new ways for women to take the responsibility of protecting their selves rather than to be victims .Although he was afraid of that action but he stick to his believes “and once more the ordinary part of him simply wanted to be rid of this and get on home”(Keegan43).

Furlong’s quiet heroism to help Sarah is considered as a great act that can change a horrible faith that is waiting for her .Sarah’s fear from man prevent her from trusting Furlong at first “The only thing he thought to do was to take his coat off. When he did, and went to put it round her, she covered. ‘There’s no harm,’ Furlong explained” (keegan42) .Then she feel safe and start ask him about her baby “Again, he reached out and pressed the bell. ‘Won’t you ask them about my baby?’ ‘What?’ ‘He must be hungry,’ she said. ‘And who is there to feed him now?’ ...‘He’s fourteen weeks old. They’ve taken him from me now but they might let me feed him again, if he’s here” (Keegan 43).

In the novel, the protagonist's assistance to Sarah plays a pivotal role in empowering women to discover new paths of self-realization. Initially portrayed as a typical coal merchant

with concerns centered around his wife and five daughters, Furlong's life takes a transformative turn when he encounters a deeply distressing incident while delivering coal to the local convent. The evidence of women being subjected to abuse becomes undeniable, creating a conflict that Furlong cannot ignore. Despite the prevalent silence and complicity surrounding him, he defies the societal norms of Irish society and takes a stand to halt this wrongdoing.

3.5 Conclusion

Claire Keegan *Small Things like these* is a representation of transgressing male centered views throughout the protagonist Bill Furlong, whose life is exposed to diversity if changes because he will open new path for women by give support to them. Ranging from domestic violence, discrimination and patriarchal society which believe that man is superior than women. Furlong's support to women provides the hope for them to overcoming such wrongs ideals that exist in the Irish society. So they can get new path for respect, human rights, and the protagonist's journey to self-realization can be achieved.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The discussion of Irish culture, history, and most importantly, destiny is evoked in the work of contemporary Irish women. The discussion of how Irish culture has stratified and changed as a result of historical, social, and ethnic variety is the focus of their current conflict. Irish women's writings transcend against adversity to become widely acknowledged on a global scale, yet they still battle bravely for the social and ideological emancipation of women. In addition to the predicament of Irish women. Since women's literature aims to give a voice to the oppressed, which endured countless rejections and is neglected by the patriarchal and political bias that seek to reduce the female status of womanhood to subtle traits of submissiveness, abuse, and man's oppression, Irish women writers seek to redefine the stereotypical image of the female that has been distorted by patriarchy.

Claire Keegan, like other female authors, is interested in examining Irish women modes of transgression. Her writings shed light on sensitive historical events that occurred on Ireland like the scandal of Magdalene laundries in 1900's. Despite her focus on female characters and their dire situations, Keegan does not write with a particular gender in mind. She is particularly interested in the bigger issue of family as well as hope and love. She views history and culture as impersonal constructions, and she believes that for the effects of such creations to be legitimate, they must be personally experienced. Keegan is fascinated with women's history, which male historians have chosen to ignore in their publications, and is concerned with women's needs and aspirations, which patriarchy expects them to neglect. Her work explores the cultural demands placed on women, with the main characters all being strong female protagonists who are fighting for their identities

and opposing violence. However, in her most recent novella, she chose to write a transgressed character who is a man rather than a woman.

Claire Keegan's *Small Things like these* is a representation of transgressing man's habit of thought throughout the protagonist Bill Furlong. His character is exposed to a diversity of changes which introduce various struggles in his life, but it gives a new path for women. Ranging from domestic violence, oppress, Loss, mistreatment and, kidnapping *Small things like these* provides the hope that overcoming such serious life hardships towards a future where ideals as self-realization, love, hope and motherhood can be achieved. The novel portrays the feminine struggles and the complicity of the whole community to the violence practiced by the institution that led by the church and the Irish state.

This study aims at investigating the manifestation of transgressing male centered views in Claire Keegan's *Small Things Like These*, with demonstrating how this transgression paved the way for Irish women to get freedom and have the same rights to man. The study also intends to highlight man's reaction towards that support because this act may disrupt the dominant logic towards Irish women. Transgressing man's habit of thought has worked on changing the whole life of the protagonist Bill Furlong. In order to overcome the new life challenges, the protagonist have to be strong and ignoring man's reaction, which may put him in great danger as well as his family. The protagonist transgression is the changing point in his life; it is only when the protagonist achieve self-realization throughout defending women case, so they now had a new path. The current study is relevant and useful. It provides an opportunity to consider transgressing man's habit of thought in the light Claire Keegan's *Small things like these*. Keegan examines this

mode of transgression in relation to patriarchy, femininity, gender, history in her novel.

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Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A:

Demonstrates a picture of the Irish writer Claire Keegan



<https://districtmagazine.ie/news/claire-keegan-has-been-shortlisted-for-the-booker-prize/>

Appendix B:

Keegan's *Small Things like These* page cover



<https://twitter.com/CKeeganFiction/status/1449120736157786115>

Glossary

Glossary

Fallen women: was a common term used to characterize the women and girls who were being imprisoned against their will. Women who had grown up in state or church care, those who had mental health conditions or disabilities, unmarried moms and their daughters, and those who had experienced sexual abuse were more likely to be among them.

Feminist Theory: It was created to describe an important period in women's history when they realized they had less freedom than men. It aims to reclaim sexual politics based on gender and comprehend women from their points of view. Feminism emerged as a result of a growing interest in understanding women's experiences from a female perspective. As the social standing of women has become the focus of feminist writings, this prevents a difficult and continuous argument that continues to this day.

Gender performativity: The performativity theory is supported by Judith Butler. Gender, according to the author, can also be seen as a series of behaviors that recur based on the performative theory of gender actions that undermine the categories of the body, sex, gender, and sexuality and create their transgressive resignification and proliferation outside of the binary frame. Sex and gender are emphasized as social performances. In fact, gender roles that are either controlled or reinforced in daily life are being played out by both men and women. So Butler believe that gender is a doing

Magdalene laundries: it was a convent later it changes the name into Magdalene Laundries this institution was managed and supported by the Catholic Church with cooperation from the Irish State. Thousands of girls and women were imprisoned in these prisons for

about 200 years, often against their will, and were made to labor in horrible circumstances for little or nothing in return. Many of them were mothers by themselves who had been deserted or rejected by their families, and whose children had been adopted, sold, or even killed. The strong Catholic Church kept them under control and prevented them from practicing their normal lives and activities.

Self-realization: Self-realization liberates a person from their own selfish desires and worldly concerns. They are also freed from external forces like political and economic factors, cultural and social expectations, etc. They are transcending self-delusion and worldly ties. Self-realization entails letting up of many aspects of one's own identity in order to discover one's real self, which is timeless and unchangeable. The distinction is between identifying with one's ego and one's true self.

Social construction: it's an approach state that the manners that different gender roles are acted out and recreated depend on the social context. In this sense, gender is not viewed as a biological fact but rather as a social construction of sex and to the categorizations and classifications into femininity and masculinity. Therefore this approach views gender as something that can be changed constantly over time and space.

Transgression: Going beyond the boundaries set by society, the law, and the people around you is referred to as transgression. A transgressed man is one who exceeds the rules' norms and regulations and shifts from the community's path. In other words, transgression highlights the importance of the role that going against the norm and breaking rules play in everyone's life. The transgression could take the form of a deed or a thought.

المخلص

أصبحت دراسة أنماط مواجهة وتجاوز الظواهر المجتمعية موضوعًا مهمًا في البحوث الأكاديمية، خاصة في مجال النقد الأدبي. تسعى الكاتبات الإيرلنديات، وخاصة كلير كيجان، إلى استكشاف الذاتية للمرأة والتحرر من معايير المجتمع الأبوي من خلال تحدي عادات التفكير الرجالية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف وتجاوز تصورات المجتمع الأيرلندي حول الجنس من خلال شخصية بيل فور لونج، بطل رواية "أشياء صغيرة مثل هذه" لكلير كيجان. يستخدم الباحث النظرية النسوية للتعامل مع آراء الكتاب حول معاناة الشخصيات النسائية. بالمثل، تصور "أشياء صغيرة مثل هذه" تجارب سارة، الفتاة من الدير التي تعاني من الاضطهاد من قبل الكنيسة. لم تكن سارة الوحيدة المسجونة والمضطهدة، بل كان هناك العديد من الفتيات والنساء اللواتي تم احتجازهن في غسيل المغاسل في جميع أنحاء إيرلندا. حتى في عام 1996، كانت هذه المؤسسات تواصل عملها، والعديد منها كان تحت إدارة المنظمات الكاثوليكية الرومانية بمساعدة الحكومة الإيرلندية. تم اقتراح نظريتين للتعامل مع قضايا النوع الاجتماعي: نظرية النوع الاجتماعي كبناء اجتماعي، ونظرية جوديث بتلر عن أداء الجنس. يستخدم الباحث هاتين النظريتين لتحليل الشخصية الرئيسية بيل فور لونج ونضاله لدعم المرأة وصنع مسار جديد لها، رغم القيود التقليدية المفروضة عليه من المجتمع الأب

الكلمات المفتاحية: النظرية النسوية، نظريات النوع الاجتماعي، الذكورية، تجاوز الأنماط، تحقيق الذات، جوديث بتلر

الجنسين، البناء الاجتماعي