



universität
wien

DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

„Analysing Colm Tóibín’s Novel *Brooklyn* and
Selected Short Stories of *Mothers and Sons* for the
Purposes of Teaching in the EFL Classroom“

Verfasserin

Julia Schwaninger

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, 2011

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:

A 190 344 347

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt:

Lehramtsstudium: UF Englisch UF Französisch

Betreuer:

Ao. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Franz Wöhrer

Declaration of Authenticity

I confirm to have conceived and written this Diploma Thesis (Diplomarbeit) in English all by myself. Quotations from other authors are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the bibliographical references, either in the footnotes or within the text. Any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors have been truthfully acknowledged and identified in the footnotes.

Hinweis

Diese Diplomarbeit hat nachgewiesen, dass die betreffende Kandidatin oder der betreffende Kandidat befähigt ist, wissenschaftliche Themen selbstständig sowie inhaltlich und methodisch vertretbar zu bearbeiten. Da die Korrekturen der/des Beurteilenden nicht eingetragen sind und das Gutachten nicht beiliegt, ist daher nicht erkenntlich mit welcher Note diese Arbeit abgeschlossen wurde. Das Spektrum reicht von sehr gut bis genügend. Die Habilitierten des Instituts für Anglistik und Amerikanistik bitten diesen Hinweis bei der Lektüre zu beachten.

Foreword

I would like to use the foreword to express my gratitude to a number of people who inspired, helped and supported me during the time when writing on my diploma thesis.

Primarily, I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor Ao. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Franz Wöhrer for his inspiration, encouragement and assistance. My interest in analysing Colm Tóibín's literature, short stories and novels, arose in the various literature courses I have taken at university, especially with him. First, the course "Extra-Marital Love Affairs as a Theme in English Literature. From the Middle Ages to the Present" gave me an overview of the key issues when analysing literature from different epochs and various genres. Then, the course "Cross-Cultural Encounters: Varieties of Immigrants' Experiences as Presented in Contemporary Anglophone Fiction" dealt with, among other things, short stories and novels written between the mid-20th century and the present and the cross-cultural encounters and experiences of immigrants to England, America, Britain and other countries from within the English-speaking world. Another literature course I attended called "'Irishness' - Features of Irish Identity in Contemporary Irish Fiction" dealt with contemporary Irish authors and the various aspects of Irish life, history, society, religion, myth and the cultural heritage. These courses have evoked my interest in both cross-cultural literature, and the aspect of "Irish national identity". Further, I attended "Teachers' Stories - Stories for Teaching" treating contemporary short stories by American, English and Irish writers, which did not only provide me as a future teacher with a large amount of teaching material, but also portrayed different didactic skills and classroom situations in short stories, which had an influence on my diploma thesis.

I have decided to write my diploma thesis on this special topic and to combine it with the teaching aspect because during my work as a private tutor, I have experienced the lack of interest in literature among my students. Moreover, the course "'Doing' Literature in the EFL Classroom" by Assoz. Prof. Mag. Dr. Susanne Reichl has inspired me concerning the theory and practice aspect when teaching literature in the EFL classroom - many thanks go to her as well.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of my friends and thank my family for their help and encouragement.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Teaching a Novel/ Short Story in the EFL Context.....	4
2.1 Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning in the EFL Classroom- the CEFR and the National Curriculum	4
2.2 Pedagogical Options when Using a Novel/ Short Story in the EFL Classroom.....	6
2.2.1 Benefits and Possible Drawbacks of Reading and Teaching a Novel in the EFL Context.....	6
2.2.2 Benefits and Possible Drawbacks of Reading and Teaching a Short Story in the EFL Context.....	7
2.3 “Pre-reading”, “While-reading” and “Post-reading Activities”	9
3. Colm Tóibín’s Novel <i>Brooklyn</i>	15
3.1 General Information about the Author and his Works.....	15
3.2 Plot	16
3.3 Setting and Background	17
3.3.1 Setting: Place.....	18
3.3.2 Setting: Time and Background.....	20
3.4 Narrative Technique.....	25
3.5 Characters and Characterisation	27
3.5.1 The Irish: Eilis Lacey.....	27
3.5.2 The Irish: Rose Lacey	33
3.5.3 The Irish: Mrs Lacey	34
3.5.4 The Italian in America: Tony, his Family and Other Characters	35
3.5.5 The Older Irish Generation in America: Father Flood and Mrs Kehoe.....	38
3.5.6 The Older and Younger Irish Generation in America: The Lodgers.....	40
3.5.7 Minor Characters	41
3.6 Themes and Motifs	44
3.6.1 Features of ‘Irishness’, ‘Irishness’ in America	44
3.6.2 Features of ‘Italianness’, ‘Italianness’ in America.....	47
3.6.3 Features of ‘Americanness’	50
3.6.4 Death and Bereavement	53
3.6.5 Love, Marriage and Divorce	55
3.6.6 Journey and Homesickness	57

3.7 Approaches to Teaching Colm Tóibín's Novel <i>Brooklyn</i> and the Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning Aspect in the EFL Classroom	59
4. Colm Tóibín's Short Story <i>A Priest in the Family</i>	77
4.1 Plot	77
4.2 Setting and Background	77
4.3 Narrative Technique.....	79
4.4 Characters and Characterisation	82
4.5 Themes and Motifs	86
4.5.1 Features of 'Irishness'	86
4.5.2 Ageing and Loneliness.....	88
4.6 Approaches to Teaching Colm Tóibín's Short Story <i>A Priest in the Family</i> and the Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning Aspect in the EFL Classroom	90
5. Colm Tóibín's Short Story <i>A Summer Job</i>	105
5.1 Plot	105
5.2 Setting and Background	105
5.3 Narrative Technique.....	106
5.4 Characters and Characterisation	108
5.5 Themes and Motifs	111
5.5.1 Features of 'Irishness'	111
5.6 Approaches to Teaching Colm Tóibín's Short Story <i>A Summer Job</i> and the Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning Aspect in the EFL Classroom	112
6. Conclusion	123
7. Bibliography	125
7.1 Books and Articles Available: Primary Literature	125
7.2 Books and Articles Available: Secondary Literature.....	125
7.3 Books and Articles Not Available	129
7.4 Electronic Sources	129
8. Index	135
9. Abstract.....	140
10. Zusammenfassung	141
11. Curriculum Vitae.....	142

1. Introduction

The diploma thesis “Analysing Colm Tóibín’s Novel *Brooklyn* and Selected Short Stories of *Mothers and Sons* for the Purposes of Teaching in the EFL Classroom” concentrates on combining the analysis of the primary texts, Colm Tóibín’s novel *Brooklyn* and the short stories *A Priest in the Family* and *A Summer Job* from the short story collection *Mothers and Sons*, with the practical side of teaching.

Beside general teaching and learning ideas, a special focus will be put on the inter-cultural and cross-cultural aspects as the plots of the above-mentioned titles are most likely set in foreign places to the students rather than in their home countries. A large part of *Brooklyn* takes place in Ireland and in the United States of America, representing the Irish, the American and in some instances even the Italian culture; throughout the short stories *A Priest in the Family* and *A Summer Job*, the reader can find direct or indirect references to places in Ireland.

Therefore apart from many other aspects in literature analysis, such as the plot, the setting and background, the narrative technique, the characters and characterisation, the themes and motifs, such as the typical features of ‘Irishness’, ‘Americanness’ and ‘Italianness’, can be analysed. According to Collie and Slater, literature teaching and learning in the EFL context¹ can be seen as “[...] the ideal way to deepen [students’] [...] understanding of life in the country where that language is spoken [...]” (4) as literature texts such as novels and short stories are closely related to cultural enrichment providing the reader with an insight into a foreign culture:

[...] the ‘world’ of a novel, play, or short story is a created one, yet it offers a full and vivid context in which characters from many social backgrounds can be depicted. A reader can discover their thoughts, feeling, customs, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave behind closed doors. [...] a feel for the codes and preoccupation that structure a real society [...] help[s] us imagine what life [is] [...] like in that other foreign territory [...]. (Collie and Slater 4)

In order to deal with the genre of the novel or short story, sections with the analysis of the before-mentioned texts are designed to aid in the EFL classroom. As it is essential to be aware of the large diversity of definitions of literary genres, the thesis relies on Baldick’s definition of a novel dominating the 19th and 20th century as “[...] an extended

¹ In this thesis, I will use the abbreviation EFL for English as a Foreign Language, describing the teaching and learning process of English in the foreign language classroom.

fictional prose narrative [...]. [...] at least long enough to justify its publication in an independent volume, unlike the short story.” (173). In contrast to the novel, the genre of a short story is characterised by its conciseness and limitation on length, concentrating “[...] on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel’s sustained exploration of social background.” (236).²

The teacher should become acquainted with the analysis of the primary texts in order to be able to lead the students on the right path and support their thoughts in the context of the EFL classroom later on. The diploma thesis is divided into four large sections, three of them dealing with one text of the Irish author Colm Tóibín. The first part acts as an introduction to the diploma thesis providing important points when writing about teaching the novel or the short story in the EFL context. Cross-cultural teaching and learning in the EFL classroom in connection with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the national curriculum is discovered in one of the chapters. Then, the pedagogical options, the benefits and possible drawbacks of the novel or the short story and a selection of “pre-reading”, “while-reading”, and “post-reading activities” are provided in order to give an overview of the teacher’s and the students’ options.

In the following three sections of the thesis, I will discuss the three primary sources of the thesis, *Brooklyn*, *A Priest in the Family* and *A Summer Job*. First, some general information on the author and his works will be given in order to contextualise the texts. However, the main focus will lie on the analysis of the above-mentioned titles and the practical side of teaching literature.

After a detailed analysis of the before-mentioned novel and short stories, every section includes the chapter “Approaches to Teaching Colm Tóibín’s Novel/ Short Story *Brooklyn*/ *A Priest in the Family*/ *A Summer Job* and the Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning Aspect in the EFL Classroom” giving a general overview of how the teacher and students can work with the texts and provides a number of teaching ideas in relation to Hedge’s three phase procedure, the “pre-reading”, the “while-reading” and the “post-reading activities”. It is important to see these activities as ideas and concepts that can be used in the EFL context, but not to confound them with fully elaborated lesson plans.

² For further definitions and information on the genres of short story or novel, consult Baldick (173-174, 238), Beckson and Ganz (180-182, 257) and Abrams (190-196, 286-288).

The conclusion acts as a brief summary of my diploma thesis once again relating to important aspects, experiences gained and valuable insights, on the one hand, and to still open questions and possible further research or elaboration of my diploma thesis, on the other hand.

2. Teaching a Novel/ Short Story in the EFL Context

2.1 Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning in the EFL Classroom- the CEFR and the National Curriculum

Cross-cultural teaching and learning is an essential part of the EFL classroom. Especially in literature, the reader is often confronted with cross-cultural features and elements and thus the reading process involves much more than only reading. Carter and Long refer to the phenomenon of “cross-cultural adaptation”; whenever a text is related to background knowledge often connected to cultural aspects, the teacher and students need to discuss it in order to “[...] develop awareness, and to increase learner preparedness for the kinds of points which may occur in any text.” (Carter and Long 153-154). In contrast to native speakers who might be expected to be familiar with some cultural knowledge, the teacher cannot expect from non-native speakers to respond correctly to these features. The reader will therefore “[...] inevitably find many differences in language, food, dress and behaviour.” (Carter and Long 153). Working with these cultural aspects and knowing how to cross culture in a purposeful and target-orientated way is not always a straightforward process. Hesse refers to the concept of “intercultural exchange” when reading literature in the EFL classroom, where “[r]eading leads learners to experience foreign cultures and value systems, which they learn about on the basis of their cultural experiences and value systems.” (78).

According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the main aim of language learning is to build up a so-called intercultural communicative competence, consisting of several sub-branches: the linguistic, the socio-linguistic and the pragmatic competence (see CEFR 108). Certainly, language learning is a process closely connected to culture learning, an inevitable aspect in the mother tongue, the second and, of course, the foreign language. When learning a new language, the learner does not keep these languages separated in “[...] mental compartments [...]” (CEFR 4). They are constantly characterised by interrelations and influences, which makes up part of the communicative competence:

The language learner becomes *plurilingual* and develops *interculturality*. The linguistic and cultural competences in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how. They enable the individual to develop an enriched, more complex

personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning and greater openness to new cultural experiences. (CEFR 43)

Therefore when reading literature in the EFL classroom, the learner is not only confronted with another language, but also with the fact that he or she needs to deal with another culture. In order to turn to the options and benefits concerning the use of literature in the EFL context, in this case the novel *Brooklyn* and selected short stories of *Mothers and Sons*, the national curriculum needs to be explored. Intercultural learning in the common national curriculum in a wider context for all subjects is related to intercultural experience and exchange:

Interkulturelles Lernen beschränkt sich nicht bloß darauf, andere Kulturen kennen zu lernen. Vielmehr geht es um das gemeinsame Lernen und das Begreifen, Erleben und Mitgestalten kultureller Werte. Aber es geht auch darum, Interesse und Neugier an kulturellen Unterschieden zu wecken, um nicht nur kulturelle Einheit, sondern auch Vielfalt als wertvoll erfahrbar zu machen. Durch die identitätsbildende Wirkung des Erfahrens von Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden der Kulturen, insbesondere in ihren alltäglichen Ausdrucksformen (Lebensgewohnheiten, Sprache, Brauchtum, Texte, Liedgut usw.), sind die Schülerinnen und Schüler zu Akzeptanz, Respekt und gegenseitiger Achtung zu führen.³

At upper grades of the Academic Secondary Schools Providing General Education, the teacher has the possibility to turn his or her attention to intercultural learning. When it comes to teaching English as a foreign language, the curriculum for this subject clearly states the importance of the aforementioned intercultural competence. Raising awareness for language diversity and creating openness towards foreign cultures and life styles should be part of the EFL classroom:

Durch interkulturelle Themenstellungen ist die Sensibilisierung der Schülerinnen und Schüler für die Sprachenvielfalt Europas und der Welt zu verstärken, Aufgeschlossenheit gegenüber Nachbarsprachen - bzw. gegenüber Sprachen von autochthonen Minderheiten und Arbeitsmigrantinnen und -migranten des eigenen Landes - zu fördern und insgesamt das Verständnis für andere Kulturen und Lebensweisen zu vertiefen. Die vorurteilsfreie Beleuchtung kultureller Stereotypen und Klischees, die bewusste Wahrnehmung von Gemeinsamkeiten und Verschiedenheiten sowie die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit eigenen Erfahrungen bzw. mit österreichischen Gegebenheiten sind dabei anzustreben.⁴

Moreover, stereotypes and prejudice are supposed to be differentiated and critically observed through the eyes of the students in the EFL context. In order to achieve this

³ <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11668/11668.pdf> April 19 2011, 11:55.

⁴ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11854/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs.pdf April 19 2011, 10:27.

The thesis concentrates on the national curriculum of Austria, the Academic Secondary Schools Providing General Education-upper grades (AHS-Oberstufe) and English as the first foreign language (erste lebende Fremdsprache).

goal, the curriculum relates to the importance of authentic material and real-life encounters, to interdisciplinary teaching and learning and to the variety of themes and text types:

Durch entsprechende Auswahl der Unterrichtsmittel ist für grundlegende Einblicke in Gesellschaft, Zivilisation, Politik, Medien, Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft, Kultur und Kunst des betreffenden Sprachraumes zu sorgen.⁵

2.2 Pedagogical Options when Using a Novel/ Short Story in the EFL Classroom

In general, novels and short stories can be seen as an opportunity to introduce and to confront students with literature in the EFL context. The aim of this section is to consider the options and the benefits, but also the potential drawbacks of using these two genres in the EFL classroom. In general, both the novel and the short story can aim to “[...] help students break down barriers of culture and ethnicity [...]” (Stover and Tway 132) and to teach and experience cross-cultural aspects in the EFL context.

2.2.1 Benefits and Possible Drawbacks of Reading and Teaching a Novel in the EFL Context

According to Thaler, the main problem area concerning contemporary novels in the EFL classroom is that the school canon often excludes and ignores this type of literature (see 101). Due to the fact that teachers often prefer handling the novels they were taught at school and stick to the classics, contemporary literature stays in the background. It is therefore essential to open the traditional canon and introduce learners to authentic contemporary literature, which is clearly one of the aims of teaching English literature.

The large range of subgenres of novels available is definitely an advantage of this genre. Especially for students, suitable novels for the EFL classroom could be, for example, the autobiographical, the detective, the chick-lit or the lad-lit, the dystopian, the fantasy, the multicultural, the science fiction and the utopian novel.⁶ Especially young adult novels, often characterised as “transitional literature” (see Hesse 11), are written in a way to prepare teenagers for more difficult literature later on:

⁵ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11854/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs.pdf April 19 2011, 11:31.

⁶ For further subgenres of novels useful in the EFL classrooms, its descriptions and examples, consult Thaler (102-104).

The adolescent novel provides a perfect vehicle to help the adolescent cross the bridge between literature for children and adult classics. Written about the developmental concerns of teenagers and addressing the problems they worry about, young adult novels address their psychological needs [...] dealing with all aspects of contemporary life. (Samuels 29)

As mentioned in the above citation, young adult novels contain a large number of themes and motifs young adults are often confronted and can identify with, as, for example, friendship, family, death, sex, drugs and alcohol (see Hipple 3-14). Therefore, themes concerning the male or the female gender, that is to say a boy's or girl's relationship to his or her own body, to other girls or boys and to his or her mother and father, are often related to the teacher's choice of a novel for the EFL classroom (see Kelly 154-166).

Moreover, due to the fact that the novel is rather an extended genre and that it cannot be read in one lesson in the EFL classroom, it is often considered more difficult to teach in practice than the genre of the short story. The features of a novel consist of a larger amount and variety of characters, a more complex and dense plot, the before-mentioned themes and topics and, of course, a more detailed background analysis (see Abrams 190). Therefore, depending on the novel, it is essential to apply different reading approaches as it is impossible to read and work with a novel within one lesson.

2.2.2 Benefits and Possible Drawbacks of Reading and Teaching a Short Story in the EFL Context

Concerning the short story, the advantages of using this genre in the EFL context seem to be evident. The most obvious aspect is brevity; the concise texts of this genre are definitely a positive factor to the teacher and the students. It is manageable to read and reread the text within one, two or at most a few subsequent lessons in class, or as homework (see Collie and Slater 196). As a result, the short story "[...] serves as a bridge between simpler coursebook texts and full-length Literature with a capital L masterpieces." (Thaler 91). Moreover, due to its brevity, the short story "[...] centers typically on the significant moment, the revelatory incident, the instant perception; and it aims to give significance to this particular moment" (52-53) and thus better understanding on the students' side and often more detailed preparation on the part of the teacher are possible. As already mentioned before, the action and the plot of a short

story often centre on unexpected situations such as “[...] the intensity of a particular experience, the turning-point in a life, the odd combination of circumstances, the unusual string of events” (Benton and Fox 53) and, therefore, in contrast to the novel, it stays in the reader’s mind as a complete unit. As a consequence, the teacher has the possibility to use short stories with different target audiences varying from the EFL classroom context to sessional courses, as, for example, summer, evening or adult classes where the teacher’s knowledge about his or her students’ background, tastes and interests is limited (see Collie and Slater 169).

Brevity is often connected to another positive aspect of short stories, simplicity. Collie and Slater refer to the fact that this genre activates feelings of achievement and success as students might find it more comfortable to work with a text having a red thread (see 196). It can be said that simplicity is consequently related to the motivation factor as students “[...] get that feeling of achievement at having come to the end of a whole work, much sooner.” (Collie and Slater 196).

For when the reader starts on a story he knows it can be read in one ‘go’; gratification may come within minutes. The pleasures and elements of response [...] are contracted and the process is speeded up. (Benton and Fox 53)

The features of a short story are often considered less complex than the features of a longer text. Due to the limited number of characters and settings, the short period of time covered, the straightforward language, the red thread through the plot with a clear and manageable structure consisting of a beginning, middle and ending (see Benton and Fox 53) and the twist or suspense effect rather at the end of the narrative, a short story is often considered as a convenient opportunity for teaching literature (see Thaler 91). These features are obviously a benefit to the teacher as “pre-reading”, “while-reading” and “post-reading activities” can be prepared in a straightforward way without causing too much difficulty. The aim of these three stages is to support students in a way to create a certain “[...] ability to tackle texts” (Hedge 209) in general, as well as outside the EFL classroom. Concerning the variety factor of the short story, teachers have the possibility to choose from many different forms, as, for example, the plot story, the magazine story, the psychological story, the impressionistic story, the slice of life story, the factual story, the absurd anti-story, the meta story, the woman’s story and the post-colonial story (see Thaler 95), in order to meet the students’ interests and tastes and to gain an insight in diverse types of fiction in a short time (see Collie and Slater 196).

However, Lazar mentions a number of difficulties when using a short story in the EFL context: problems with interpretations, with understanding the plot, concerning motivation, connected to comprehension, with understanding the cultural background and with the style and language (see 73-74). Concerning the first point, students often do not feel confident enough to come up with their own thoughts or ideas connected to the text. Moreover, due to the use of flashbacks, flashforwards, open endings and the often complex narrative technique, students have to cope with ambiguity and the fact that working with literature is not always as straightforward as expected. It is therefore necessary to familiarise students with some basics in narrative technique and the above-mentioned terms. However, the issue of interpretation is not the only one that may pose problems; the style and language of the short story can also arouse difficulties often connected to the students' motivation. Often, students are not used to reading in their first language and unfortunately this pattern is transferred to the classroom situation. It therefore seems important to choose short stories according to the students' needs and interests and students should be involved in the process of decision making. However, the teacher should not forget his or her approach to text selection and the relevance to the present topic covered in class. Of course, these points concern the genre of the novel as well (see Lazar 76).

Therefore, it is the teacher's task to design appropriate "pre-reading", "while-reading" and "post-reading activities", which will be discussed in the following section, in order to facilitate the students' reading process.

2.3 "Pre-reading", "While-reading" and "Post-reading Activities"

In general, the teacher can make use of Hedge's three-phase procedure and design activities according to the stages in order to "[...] ensure that reading is taught in the sense of helping readers develop increasing ability to tackle texts." (209). Of course, not in all cases and with all novels and short stories in the EFL classroom the "pre-reading", "while-reading" and "post-reading phases" are necessary. According to Benton and Fox, this is dependent on the class, on the one hand, and on the type of novel or short story, on the other hand, as "[s]ome books do their own work in drawing readers in and would indeed lose some of their impact if a class did prefatory work." (116). Moreover,

Showalter adds the fact that there are no fixed patterns of how to teach a short story or a novel in the EFL context:

Some teachers begin with the author's biography, or the historical background; I usually begin with the skin of the novel, as if it were a fruit, starting with the cover, the title, and the epigraphs, and then move to the internal structure of books, sections, chapters, and so on. Others plunge immediately into style or character, and many head straight for ideology without pausing to pass "Go". (88)

It is essential to spend some time on the planning of the "pre-reading phase" and to carefully choose appropriate activities⁷ as the first encounter with the novel or the short story leaves impressions on the reader in order to "[...] set the mood, create interest, or spark curiosity." (Collie and Slater 16). According to Hedge, the aim of the "pre-reading stage" is to become familiar with the context and the content of the text by expressing attitudes, experiences and activating existing knowledge (see 210).

Concerning the cultural aspect of the "pre-reading phase", Stover and Tway mention various activities, as, for example, brainstorming individually, in groups or with the whole class on different aspects connected to culture in the novel or the short story. In order to support the students' thinking process, the teacher can make use of the five W questions: who, what, when, why, where.⁸ At first, the teacher should aim at a large number of activities, as, for example, brainstorming about culture, defining the concept culture, learning how to work with cultures, dealing with particular cultures and analysing and discussing typical stereotypes and prejudices connected to cultures are supposed to be carried out in the EFL classroom in order to know the students' competence of intercultural communication and cross-cultural awareness and knowledge in general.⁹ Stover and Tway refer to the following questions:

1. When you meet someone who is different from you in customs, appearance, or in some other way, are you uncomfortable? Frightened? Repelled? Why or why not?
2. Can you learn to be interested in or to appreciate the likeness and differences in the human family? How? Do you think it is important to do so?
3. What book have you read that sensitized you in another's background and way of life?

⁷ The activities mentioned in this chapter are related to the five skills listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing, skills essential for the cultural communicative competence. For further information, consult the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR 26-27).

⁸ <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/5Ws.pdf> May 04 2011, 18:00.

⁹ For further information and activities concerning the concept of intercultural communication and cross-cultural teaching and learning in the EFL context, consult Utley.

4. Just how different is it possible to be, in looks and behaviour, before being perceived as dangerous rather than merely eccentric? Just how far can and should society go in telling its members how to think and act? (147)

Making predictions on cross-cultural differences and similarities the protagonist or the other characters of the novel or the short story might experience or be confronted with and discussing the setting and background of the narrative by asking the students whether they are already familiar with some cross-cultural aspects related to historic, economic or social information in comparison to their own culture, are activities raising cross-cultural awareness (see Stover and Tway 144, Benton and Fox 116).

According to Benton and Fox, cultural preliminary work can also be carried out by letting students interview their parents, grandparents or older friends about the background information of the novel or short story and bringing in their outcomes in class by listening to the interviews or by reporting on their research in a presentation. Moreover, witnesses of a certain period can be invited in order to obtain “[...] some factual information if pupils are to make sense of the context, [...] avoid the arid listing of facts and provide reference points as the class gets further into the novel” (see 116) or the short story.

Considering the title or the cover can also be connected to cross-cultural teaching and can evoke curiosity on the learners’ side as “[...] jotting about possibilities and a pooling of ideas can draw a class into the first chapter curious to check their guesses” (Benton and Fox 116), guided fantasy allowing the students to build up pictures in their minds and discussing them at a later point in groups, showing images of the main themes or discussing situations the students are about to experience when reading the text or part of the text, selecting key words of the first part of the novel or a passage of the short story and letting the students find out the connection between them as a writing or speaking activity and working with quotations describing a character or a situation or creating questionnaires for familiarisation with the students’ opinions and thoughts, are some examples of “pre-reading activities”.

In some cases, it is important to deal with the author of the novel or short story by doing activities connected to photos, objects or place names. With this visual input provided, tasks can consist of students writing diary entries of the author’s diary and writing short texts or character portrayals. Often, information-gap activities about the author can raise interest and curiosity on the students’ side (see Collie and Slater 16-35).

Of course, in the EFL classroom it is very rare that novels or short stories can be read without interruptions as students often need “while-reading tasks” to support their reading and understanding process. Due to the fact that “[...] occasions when texts and classes fuse [...]” (Benton and Fox 118) are more or less exceptional, “[...] activities have to be found to sustain interest and revive involvement on the journey [...].” (Benton and Fox 118). Only in some cases, novels or short stories arouse interest in a way that students are motivated to read them in one go. Therefore, the aim of the “while-reading phase” is to support students in class and also at home, especially the non-habitual readers, so that reading is connected to enjoyment and pleasure. According to Hedge, the focus is not only on language, structure and vocabulary features, but on integrating activities to allow reading merge into an interactive process (see 210).

Concerning the reading process at home, Collie and Slater refer to the fact that the students’ process has to be supported by varying worksheets and activities. These can be designed in a traditional way, as, for example, using the question-and-answer or the completing sentences format, finding out the correct order of events, evaluating statements, writing snowball summaries after each chapter or section of the novel or short story, true or false statements and summaries with gaps or with incomplete questions formats; another option is to prepare students specifically for later activities in class (see Collie and Slater 36-56).

Asking questions in order to recapitulate the most important points is a useful “while-reading activity”, but in order to carry out short or long term anticipation exercises, the teacher needs to check the class atmosphere. Benton and Fox refer to the pleasure of reading which can easily be ruined by “[...] menacing test[s] of the class’s attentiveness and powers of memory. The job may be best done in a game like way [...]” (119), as, for example, creating and asking questions in pairs or groups on matters the students do not understand or simply do not know the answers. According to the before-mentioned authors, cartoon designing on a chapter or a part of the novel or short story is an alternative “while-reading activity” as students are motivated to search for the most important plot elements. This can also be carried out the other way round with activities where students have to guess and to discuss the situation or events before the actual beginning of the novel or short story (see Collie and Slater 34).

Creating reading journals or logs is a useful “while-reading activity” as students are motivated to read attentively by making “[...] speculations about how the story will

develop, judgements, comparisons with their own experience, illustrations of characters, reflections on moments or themes from the book, comments on how the author is telling the story and notes about their own experiences prompted by the book” (Benton and Fox 121), or writing ongoing fictive diaries of the “[...] events and feelings” of one or more characters in the novel or short story (see Collie and Slater 55). Drawing timelines and family trees in order to fight students’ confusion and to support their understanding of the background and character relationships of the text are possible “while-reading activities” which can be added in reading journals and logs as well. Moreover, the teacher can decide on the chapters of a reading journal or log, but should also leave some space for the students’ individual remarks and make use of them at a later point as various findings can be discussed in the classroom context (see Benton and Fox 123).

An important part of the “while-reading phase” is character and theme work based on quotations found in the novel or the short story. However, characters can also be explored by playing or acting out television or radio interviews, writing diary entries and letters.

Concerning the teaching and learning of cultural diversity during the “while-reading phase”, Stover and Tway refer to activities, such as establishing pen pal exchanges with students living in the country the novel or the short story is set, role-plays, selecting quotations concerning cross-cultural differences or similarities and discussing them and giving reasons for why they were chosen by the students, analysing the characters with character charts and adding information concerning the cultural aspect and compiling a list of vocabulary useful when talking about or reflecting on culture and diversity (see 144-145). Benton and Fox also refer to the use of maps “[...] showing the territory to the plot the movements of the characters within it” (123), which can be drawn and designed in the case of a fictive setting.

Of course, a large variety of activities from the “while-reading” can be used in the “post-reading phase” and, therefore, this stage is especially of importance to students to “[...] check and discuss activities done while reading and make use of what they have read in a meaningful way [...]” (Hedge 211). Character work, designing a poster of the film to the novel or the short story, creating a new book cover, drawing a cartoon, writing letters to friends or to the author reporting on the text the students read, writing a newspaper article on “[...] incidents and characters from the plot, with interviews, artists’ sketches or photographs; [...] complete with title banner, price, date,

advertisements, weather forecasts, sports announcements [...]” (Benton and Fox 128) or a book review, choosing quotations and reporting on them, writing a blurb, making speculations on the possible end of the novel or short story, debates and role plays, are examples of activities during the “post-reading phase” (see Collie and Slater 79-92, Hedge 211).

According to Stover and Tway, cultural diversity activities related to the “post-reading phase” include making a collage comparing the initial and the final cultural impressions of the novel or short story, comparing the cross-cultural aspects in the novel or short story to existing knowledge about the culture, searching the media for stereotypes and clichés, debating and carrying out interviews about the culture with characters occurring in the novel or short story. Moreover, discussing the cultural background by drawing a timeline is another idea of a “post-reading activity” (see 145-146).

3. Colm Tóibín's Novel *Brooklyn*

3.1 General Information about the Author and his Works

Born in Enniscorthy, a small town in County Wexford in Ireland, in 1955 and educated at the University College Dublin, the Irish author Colm Tóibín emigrates to live and teach for three years in Barcelona. In 1978, he returns to his home country where he works as a journalist and later sets out on journeys to Africa and South America. He is openly gay and homosexuality is a prominent theme in his works. Being an author of fiction and non-fiction¹⁰, Colm Tóibín has been shortlisted for various awards and has won a number of prizes throughout his life, as in 1995, he is awarded the E. M. Forster Award by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. For his novel *Brooklyn* he receives the Costa Novel Award in 2009 and for his short story collection *Mothers and Sons* the Edge Hill Prize in 2006. Moreover, he is a member of Aosdána, an Irish organisation for arts, he teaches at various Universities and he regularly contributes to newspapers and magazines (see Stringer 670).¹¹

The author openly talks about his own exile he has experienced throughout his life, starting with the death of his father and consequently his mother having to work, also being the initial idea for his work *Brooklyn*. Eilis, the protagonist in his novel, is confronted with a similar situation.

When, after the publication of *The Master*, he was looking for the germ of a new novel, he returned to the archetypal tale of an Irishwoman who crosses the Atlantic into exile, marries secretly, and is brought home by a death in the family, before returning with a full heart to her life in the New World. The subject of exile, so central to the Irish experience, is one Tóibín finds fascinating. It's part of his adult life, moving "back and forth between Ireland and America", and perhaps holds the key to his career as a writer.

[...] "Everything that happened the day before becomes insubstantial when you come home." This has been so for him ever since he first began travelling to Spain as a young man. "You create a world away from home and make new

¹⁰ Among Colm Tóibín's works of fiction, the reader can find *The South* (1990), *The Heather Blazing* (1992), *The Story of the Night* (1996), *Blackwater Lightship* (1999) and *The Master* (2004, winner of Man Booker Prize for Fiction, Los Angeles Times Book Prize, Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger and International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award) and among his non-fiction, *The Sign of the Cross: Travels in Catholic Europe* (1994), *The Irish Famine* (1999), *Love in a Dark Time: Gay Lives from Wilde to Almodovar* (2002), *Lady Gregory's Toothbrush* (2002) and *All a Novelist Needs: Essays on Henry James* (2010). Moreover, the author is editor of *The Penguin Book of Irish Fiction* (1999) and famous for his story collections *Mothers and Sons* (2006, winner of the Edge Hill Prize) and *The Empty Family* (2010), especially dealing with relationships and family matters.

¹¹ <http://www.colmtoibin.com/content/biography> 07 April 2011, 10:02.

For further information concerning the author Colm Tóibín, his works and his life, interviews, reviews on his works and useful links to websites, consult the bibliography.

rooms for yourself. But when you arrive back home in your old rooms the world you've made for yourself ceases to be real. Everything seems to crumble. Anyone who's been sent away to boarding school can understand that."¹²

The setting of *Brooklyn* is strongly connected to Colm Tóibín's childhood; Enniscorthy is not only the place where the author grows up and spends his life, but also the place where his family is later buried. Also, Eilis's childhood, her sister's tragic death and the end of the novel take place in this town:

Tóibín's exile from his childhood and family began when his father died and he went away to school. Before that, there was an idyllic upbringing in the little town of Enniscorthy in the remote south-east of Ireland, the place he frequently returns to in his fiction. His family lies in the graveyard there: father, grandfather, great-grandfather, generations of loyal republicans, some of whom fought in the Easter Rising of 1916.¹³

His short story collection *Mothers and Sons* contains nine stories depicting various mother and son relationships, in which the author gets away from the traditional Irish image of a functional family:

"I'm trying to use the mother-son relationship in these stories to show women who aren't religious, who aren't in the kitchen all the time," he says. "I'm aware of the cliché of Irish motherhood and I'm glad it's there, you can usurp it and play with it - I mean, where's her religiosity? Where's the apron? One mother reads theology but she doesn't practise it. I just wasn't having it."¹⁴

3.2 Plot

In order to provide a detailed analysis of the novel *Brooklyn*, including the narrative technique, the setting and background, the characters and characterisation and the themes and motifs, a short overview of the plot has to be given. According to Beckson and Ganz, the plot can be described as "[t]he organisation of incidents in a narrative or play." (203). Relating to Aristotle's definition of a unified plot, a beginning, a middle and an end part have to be provided in order to satisfy the reader. The first part which is set in Enniscorthy, a small town in Ireland in the 1950s, "[...] initiates the main action in a way which makes us look forward to something more [...]." (Abrams 225). Eilis Lacey lives together with her mother and her sister. Due to the lack of work opportunities in Ireland, Eilis is in search for a job and, finally, helps out in a grocery store on Sundays. Together with Father Flood, Rose arranges for her to emigrate. When Father Flood

¹² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/apr/26/colm-toibin-brooklyn> 01 May 2011, 10:55.

¹³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/apr/26/colm-toibin-brooklyn> 01 May 2011, 11:00.

¹⁴ <http://living.scotsman.com/books/The-mother-of-all-short.2807195.jp> 07 April 2011, 11:30.

offers Eilis a job in Brooklyn, it seems clear that Eilis has to leave Ireland. After a long and exhausting journey, Eilis arrives in America (see *Tóibín* 3-50).

The following two parts, the so-called middle of the plot which “[...] presumes what has gone before and requires something to follow [...]” (Abrams 226), cover two years and take place in Brooklyn and its surroundings. After feelings of homesickness and loneliness, Eilis gets used to the American way of life, her lodging house and visits night classes in book-keeping at Brooklyn College. She gets involved in the Irish community, works at the parish hall at Christmas and attends the dance on Friday nights where she meets Tony, an Italian plumber, with whom she starts going out. However, Eilis receives the news that her sister Rose has died unexpectedly and Eilis is forced to go back to Ireland. On Tony’s request, Eilis marries him before her departure and promises to return and to spend her future together with him (see *Tóibín* 53-199).

As the plot evolves it arouses expectations in the audience or reader about the future course of events and actions and how characters will respond to them. A lack of certainty, [...] about what is going to happen, especially to characters with whom the reader has established a bond of sympathy, is known as suspense. If what in fact happens violated any expectations we have formed, it is known as surprise. The interplay of suspense and surprise is [...] a traditional plot. (Abrams 225)

The beginning, as well as the middle part of the plot, clearly evokes feelings of suspense and surprise. Moreover, the reader starts asking questions which need to be answered.

The fourth part, which also includes the end which “[...] follows from what has gone before but requires nothing more [...]” (Abrams 226), describes Eilis’s life back in Ireland characterised by a number of changes, her mother’s bereavement and her friends. Eilis is offered a job at Davis’s office and slowly adapts to her situation in Ireland. Jim falls in love with Eilis and, therefore, she has to make a choice between staying in Ireland with Jim and accepting the life of her lonely mother, and going back to America where her actual husband is waiting. Finally, Eilis decides to return to her commitment and love in Brooklyn (see *Tóibín* 203-252).

3.3 Setting and Background

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the setting and background of the novel *Brooklyn*. Beckson and Ganz describe the setting as “[t]he time and place in which the action of a

story or play occurs.” (255). Therefore, not only the particular locations and places where the story takes place, but also the time span covered in the story and background information concerning the novel are to be covered. In the case of *Brooklyn*, the term background relates to the social, economic, cultural and historical indicators found in the narrative.

3.3.1 Setting: Place

As already mentioned in chapter 3.2, the first and fourth part of the narrative take place in Enniscorthy, a town in County Wexford situated by the River Slaney (see Tóibín 7), in Ireland. The main actions are set in Eilis’s childhood house, her room (see Tóibín 3) and its surroundings as the reader is confronted with a number of street names, such as Friary Street (see Tóibín 3), Friary Hill (see Tóibín 7), Mill Park Road (see Tóibín 7), Ringwood (see Tóibín 7), Rafter Street, Market Square (see Tóibín 4), Black Road (see Tóibín 243), Castle Hill and Castle Street (see Tóibín 246) and gets to know diverse buildings such as the Cathedral on the hill (see Tóibín 4), Miss Kelly’s grocery shop (see Tóibín 4), Nancy Byrne’s house (see Tóibín 7, 230), Jim Farrell father’s pub in Rafter Street (see Tóibín 18), the dance hall, the Athenaeum for the Sunday night dances (see Tóibín 7, 228), Davis’s office (see Tóibín 219) and the post office (see Tóibín 246). Moreover, the way to Rose’s grave and the cemetery including Summerhill (see Tóibín 209) are described. Other grocery stores such as Hayes’ grocery store in Friary Street, the L&N in Rafter Street and the Sheridan’s in the Market Square are mentioned in a short side remark (see Tóibín 9).

Some other places in Ireland such as Dublin with shops as Clery’s Department Store (see Tóibín 3), Arnotts (see Tóibín 233) and Gresham Hotel (see Tóibín 31), Courtown on Sunday nights (see Tóibín 16), Wexford where Eilis’s cursory medical examination takes place (see Tóibín 28), Rosslare Harbour where Eilis stays a night in a hotel, Cobh (see Tóibín 204), Cork (see Tóibín 248), the boat to Liverpool (see Tóibín 31) and Wexford (see Tóibín 232) can be observed. The way to the beach on Osbourne Road towards the Vinegar Hill and Curracloe and the beach with its dunes itself (see Tóibín 214), the beach at Cush Gap (see Tóibín 220) and the tea tradition at Talbot Hotel (see Tóibín 215), Courtown Hotel (see Tóibín 227) and Cullens’ house (see Tóibín 221) make up part of the novel.

Another setting of the narrative is Liverpool where Eilis meets her brother (see *Tóibín* 31). The action then moves to the berth on the ship as “The room was tiny, with a bunk bed, no window, not even an air hole, and door into a minuscule bathroom that also, as she has been told, served the room on the other side.” (*Tóibín* 37).

The second and third part of the novel are set in Brooklyn; the reader clearly becomes acquainted with various settings such as the lodging house in Clinton Street (see *Tóibín* 54) which consists of the basement where Mrs Kehoe’s rooms, her sitting room, her bedroom and her bathroom, the ground floor where the rooms of two girls and the upper floor where the rooms of four girls and a large kitchen are located (see *Tóibín* 54). Eilis’s “[...] room was at the back of the house and the bathroom was across the corridor. The floorboards creaked and the door, she thought, was made of a light material and the plumbing was loud so she could hear the other boarders if they went to the bathroom in the night or came back home late at the weekends.” (*Tóibín* 53). At a later point, Eilis moves into a room in the basement twice as large as the other rooms with a separate entrance and described as the “[...] best room in the house, the biggest, the warmest, the quietest and the best appointed.” (*Tóibín* 96).

Due to the fact that Eilis works in the apparel store Bartocci & Company, she clearly sees that Brooklyn can have different faces: “Once she arrived at Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn began to feel like a strange place to her, with so many gaps between buildings and so many derelict buildings. And then suddenly, when she arrived at Fulton Street, there would be so many people crowding to cross the street, and in such dense clusters [...]” (*Tóibín* 59). Another essential place in Brooklyn is the parish hall where the dances and the special Christmas celebrations take place in order to raise funds for charities in the parish. This place is especially important to Eilis as it is connected to the nights she spends together with the girls from the lodging house and to her boyfriend Tony. Some minor settings in Brooklyn are the clothes shop Loehmann’s on Bedford Avenue, the bookshop in Manhattan (see *Tóibín* 117), Brooklyn College (see *Tóibín* 114), a cinema in Brooklyn, Tony’s parents’ apartment situated on the second storey of a three-storey building (see *Tóibín* 142), Long Island, Coney Island on Sunday with Nathan’s, its amusements, as, for example, the huge wheel and the beach (see *Tóibín* 157-161) and Ebbets Field where the baseball game takes place (see *Tóibín* 162-166).

All in all, parts one and four are set in a different world than the second and third part. The ship taking Eilis from Liverpool to Brooklyn can be seen as a transition from the

familiar, safe and small town with its surroundings to the new, threatening and international city.

3.3.2 Setting: Time and Background

Due to the indication that Eilis's book-keeping classes are coming to an end, the reader can infer that the novel *Brooklyn* starts in summer 1951 in Enniscorthy (see Tóibín 3). Eilis works some weeks at Miss Kelly's grocery store and it takes some more weeks for the organisational matters and preparation for her journey to America (see Tóibín 28). After one day in Liverpool, the ship embarks at five o'clock in the evening (see Tóibín 32-34). All in all, her travel to Brooklyn takes one week:

She lay down on the bed and put her hands behind her head, glad that the first part of the journey was over and there was still a week left without anything before she arrived. If only the rest of it could be as easy as this! (Tóibín 38)

In New York, the extreme heat is described as "[...] muggy and humid and everybody would move slowly and wearily in the streets" (Tóibín 53) and after three weeks Eilis starts working (see Tóibín 58). When the apparel store Bartocci & Company starts the famous nylon sale three weeks later, the reader can infer that the weather conditions in New York are about to change, which is also referred to in "She noticed the cold in the air for the first time; it seemed to her that the weather has changed." (Tóibín 71) and "The weather grew cold and sometimes in the morning it was icy when the wind blew." (Tóibín 80). The time of the narrative moves to Christmas (see Tóibín 82) which Eilis celebrates in the parish hall and on to January, characterised by harsh winds and low temperatures:

In January, Eilis felt the fierce sharp cold in the mornings as she went to work. No matter how fast she walked, and even when she bought thick socks, her feet felt frozen by the time she arrived at Bartocci's. Everyone in the streets was covered up as though afraid to show themselves, wearing thick coats, scarves, hats, gloves and boots. She noticed that they even covered their mouths and noses with thick scarves or mufflers as they moved along. All she could see was their eyes, and the expression seemed alarmed by the cold, made desperate by the wind and the freezing temperatures. (Tóibín 95)

In the morning there was a biting wind that was new to her. It seemed to blow fiercely in every direction; it carried ice with it and people moved in the streets with their heads bowed [...]. It made her almost smile at the idea that no one in Ireland knew that America was the coldest place on earth and its people on a cold morning like this the most deeply miserable. (Tóibín 97)

Next, the reader is confronted with the seasons of spring and summer as the weather conditions improve, Tony and Eilis visit Coney Island (see *Tóibín* 151) and Eilis's fellow lodgers, Diana and Patty, present their sunglasses for the season (see *Tóibín* 157). Moreover, Eilis's complaints about the heat at work, the use of air conditioning in Bartocci & Company in order to attract "[...] shoppers seeking relief from the heat" (*Tóibín* 161), the sweating during the nights and the possibility to sit outside (see *Tóibín* 161) are indicators for the extreme heat during the summer months in New York. When Eilis returns to her book-keeping classes at Brooklyn College (see *Tóibín* 162), she celebrates Thanksgiving in November with Tony's family (see *Tóibín* 166) and works for Christmas at the parish hall (see *Tóibín* 166), the reader realises that the year 1952 slowly comes to an end. Eilis spends spring time together with Tony; they meet every evening except before her summer exams. Due to her sister's death, Eilis is required to return home to Ireland (see *Tóibín* 213) where the nights are very warm and calm (see *Tóibín* 228), but the days can also be characterised by rain, as, for example, on Nancy's wedding day, June 27th (see *Tóibín* 210, 234). At first, Eilis only wants to stay a month abroad (see *Tóibín* 193), but then she decides to stay a few weeks longer (see *Tóibín* 213) before she returns to Brooklyn in August 1953.

Another very important point is to discover the actual time in which the action takes place. Throughout the novel, the reader is confronted with references to events happening in the 1950s, especially between 1951 and 1953. Firstly, Eilis, her fellow lodgers, some girls from work and Tony watch "Singin' in the Rain" at the cinema: "The following week, when he asked her to come to a movie with him on the Saturday, she agreed because all of her fellow lodgers, with the exception of Dolores, and some of the girls at work were going to *Singin' in the Rain*, which was opening. [...] it became a subject of much discussion at the kitchen table." (*Tóibín* 137). The film is directly released in 1952 without being a Broadway production before.¹⁵

Then, famous baseball players such as Jackie Robinson, Pee Wee Reese and Preacher Roe of the Brooklyn Dodgers playing against the New York Giants (Bobby Thomson) at Ebbets Field are mentioned (see *Tóibín* 161). The real game between these two baseball teams took place on July 3rd, 1952.¹⁶

¹⁵ <http://www.filmsite.org/sing.html> 28 March 2011, 21:56.

¹⁶ <http://www.baseball-almanac.com/box-scores/boxscore.php?boxid=195207030BRO> 28 March 2011, 22:13.

Moreover, the encounter with black people in the apparel store Bartocci & Company clearly relates to the end of racial segregation in the USA. Miss Fortini tells Eilis and Miss Delano to treat all customers equally, to be polite to everyone and to pretend that there are no differences to be made. But still, tension and staring are the reactions to black customers:

‘We’re going to welcome coloured women into our store as shoppers. And we are starting with nylon stocking. This is going to be the first store on this street to sell Red Fox stockings at cheap prices and soon we’re going to add Sepia and Coffee.’ (Tóibín 110)

As she was handed the money, she noticed how white the inside of the woman’s hands was against the dark skin on the back of her hand. (Tóibín 111)

Concerning fashion, the reader can also recognise that the narrative is set in the 1950s. Nylon stockings are first presented at the World’s Fair and the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco in 1939, later offered to a small public in 1941. Only from 1946 onwards they were available to the public in department stores (see Cherry 36), known for the strong and run-proof material: “And nylon stockings are the best, they don’t run as easily as some of the others” (Tóibín 65) and seen as something special as in the famous nylon sale of the apparel store Bartocci & Company (see Tóibín 63). The author Colm Tóibín refers to the research on the nylon stockings in the extract of the interview below:

“I did a lot of work on Red Fox stockings,” Tóibín says, describing his investigation of ‘brasalettes’ and women’s underwear with the relish of a Victorian missionary penetrating the Dark Continent. “I discovered that, for women of colour there was also Sepia and Coffee as well as Red Fox. So then I had a scene. ‘Oh, wow!’ I thought. ‘Look what I can do with that.’” And he does. Nothing goes to waste in Brooklyn. It has the intensity of a short story and the emotional canvas of grand opera.¹⁷

The flannel trousers worn by George and Jim (see Tóibín 227) being characteristic of the 1920s onwards (see Drowne and Huber 115) and the pointy brassieres are only some examples of the fashion worn in the 1950s:

The tight, flat brassiere of the 1920s was no less harmful than the tight, pointed brassiere of the 1950s, but provoked no protests because of the tomboy figure and loose dresses of the 1920s were associated by many with an emancipation feminine ideal. (Thesande 168)

¹⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/apr/26/colm-toibin-brooklyn> 7 April 2011, 11:05.

Then, Eilis refers to the actress Dame Elizabeth Rosemond Taylor and her first divorce as in “The only divorced people anyone in the town knew were Elizabeth Taylor and perhaps some other film stars.” (Tóibín 236). In 1951, Elizabeth Taylor got divorced from her first husband Conrad Hilton after a one year marriage.¹⁸

Emigration and immigration matters in the novel are indications for the 1950s. Not only does the main character leave for the USA, but also her three brothers live abroad for better working opportunities in England. Due to the small pension of their mother in Ireland, they send money home to her on a regular basis. Twice a year, Rose goes to Dublin for the sales because clothes seem to be cheaper (see Tóibín 10, 11). Moreover, Father Flood immigrated to the USA before the war (see Tóibín 21), which clearly is another motivation for leaving the home country. Davis and Goodby refer to the immigration process to the USA and to England by stating the following:

Emigration, internally from the land to Irish towns and cities, and externally from Ireland for Britain, the USA and elsewhere, continued to be a way of life in the twentieth century. It was checked somewhat by WWI, the Independence struggle and the effects of the Depression. But in the early 1940s the outward stream of the ‘suitcase brigade’ increases again, as people were drawn to war work in Britain, and by the 1950s it had become a flood. Between 1945 and 1961, 500,000 left the southern state, 400,000 of them between 1951 and 1961; 80 per cent of all children born in 1931-41 emigrated during the 1950s. (Davis and Goodby 83)

According to Kenny, in the 1950s, 57,332 and in the 1960s, 37,461 Irish immigrants came to the United States, until 1965 when the Immigration and Nationality Act abolished the national quota system of the 1920s and limited immigration to the United States to no more than 20,000 annual immigrants per country (see 221-222). At the same time in Ireland, the Commission on Emigration tries to create programmes in order to fight emigration in 1948, however the first real step against massive emigration can be seen in 1959 with the so-called “Economic Expansion Programme”, Séan Lemass introduces a five-year-plan with 23 per cent of economic growth (see Davis and Goodby 83). In the United States, “[w]ith the decline in Irish immigration, the number of first and second-generation Irish Americans fell rapidly [...]. [...] New York City, [...] the first and second-generation Irish population dropped substantially after the Second World War. As late as 1940, they had together accounted for half a million people, but by 1960 that number had dropped to 312,000 and by 1970 to 220,000.” (Kenny 225-

¹⁸ <http://hollywooddaily.us/2011/03/23/elizabeth-taylor-timeline/> 29 March 2011, 07:59.

226). Father Flood alludes to the strong community sense and representation of the identity of the Irish in the USA by talking about the Irish dance hall and Irish music (see Tóibín 23). Moreover, Miller describes the situation of the Irish community in the 1950s as “The role of traditional music, dance, and song in the lives of Irish immigrants in America and particularly New York can be viewed as an indicator of ever-changing pride and community identity.” (Miller 481) and uses the words “[...] bridge between the traditional culture the Irish had left behind and the new American lifestyle they had encountered.” (Miller 494). Eilis’s parish work on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day clearly relates to the point that Irish people might otherwise lose touch with their families and friends in Ireland (see Tóibín 84).

All in all, the reader realises that the novel contains a large number of indications concerning the time and background. The overall time span of the action covers two years. The starting point is Eilis’s life in Enniscorthy and her travel to Brooklyn in 1951 until the end of the narrative back in Enniscorthy in 1953. Due to the minimal occurrence of flashbacks, the story can be characterised as linear and straightforward, as referred to by the author Colm Tóibín:

“It’s all about keeping the line clear,” he says. “Look at Austen. In her novels, you get a dance, followed by an encounter, followed by a letter, then a period of solitude. No flashbacks and no backstory.” He interrupts himself. “Let’s have no more back story! Can we please have no more ‘I’d like to know more about...’?” A Tóibín class sounds like a bracing experience. “I’m telling them to write first thing, before they check their emails, wash, or even have coffee. Just write and see what happens.”¹⁹

The actual time span of the plot encompasses a larger amount of time. Eilis talks about Christmas, the time when her father was still alive and her brothers still lived at home in Enniscorthy (see Tóibín 12), Nancy’s former boyfriend (see Tóibín 16-17), walks with her mother (see Tóibín 64) and her brother’s letters (see Tóibín 38). These flashbacks provide the reader with more background and additional information concerning the story. Moreover, Eilis’s journey is foreshadowed at a number of points towards the beginning of the novel; this also expresses the character’s insecurity and fear of the unknown, as can be seen in the following citation:

Even when she woke in the night and thought about it, she did not allow herself to conclude that she did not want to go. Instead, she went over all the arrangements and worried about carrying two suitcases with all her clothes

¹⁹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/apr/26/colm-toibin-brooklyn> 7 April 2011, 10:52.

without any help, and making sure that she did not lose the handbag Rose had given her, where she would keep her passport, and the addresses in Brooklyn where she would live and work, and Father Flood's address in case he did not turn up to meet her as he had promised to do. And money. And her make-up bag. And an overcoat maybe to be carried over her arm, although perhaps she would wear it, she thought, unless it was too hot. And it still might be hot in late September, she had been warned. (Tóibín 29)

3.4 Narrative Technique

Concerning the narrative situation²⁰, the reader can identify the figural narrative situation as “[...] the narrator moves into the background, suggesting that the plot is revealed solely through the actions of the characters in the text.” (Klarer 23). The popularity of this technique can be explored especially when looking at modern and contemporary novels. Klarer refers to the main benefit to the reader, which is to “[...] encourage the reader to judge the action without an intervening commentator.” (23). Clearly, the figural narrative situation focuses on the presentation of the thoughts, feelings and emotions of the so-called reflector figure; in the novel *Brooklyn*, the main character Eilis presents this role and “[t]he story is reflected [...] through [...] her consciousness.” (Fludernik 93). The third person omniscient narrator is not directly present in the narrative and stays in the background. It is through the manifestation of the reflector figure that characters, places and background information are presented. Therefore, the narrative is reported by way of a scenic or dramatic presentation where the narrator does not speak out, which has an immediate effect on the reader. Due to the occurrence of a reflector figure, the reader is confronted with the limited knowledge of Eilis, as can be seen in the following examples:

Because of Miss Kelly's manner, Eilis wondered if she had been offended by someone in the town and had mistaken her for that person. (Tóibín 5)

Eilis wondered if this was a reference to her own mother's consistent dealing in another grocery shop, but she was not sure. (Tóibín 5)

When she was calmer, Father Flood drove her to Mrs Kehoe's; Tony was already in the front room. She did not know how long he had been waiting there and she looked at him and Mrs Kehoe, wondering what they had been talking about while they waited for her and if Mrs Kehoe had finally found out that Tony was Italian and not Irish. (Tóibín 175)

²⁰ Chapter 3.4 is based on Franz Karl Stanzel's model of narratology; for references see bibliography.

Another characteristic of the figural narrative situation is the use of free indirect speech and indirect speech, especially when Eilis's thoughts are presented. Moreover, dialogues between the characters are reported and the reader gets a clear insight into Eilis's mind and her perceptions. Indirect speech can be found in the examples below:

If she could sleep a full night, Georgina said, she would feel much better. (Tóibín 48)

When Eilis told her about Tony, Miss Fortini sighed and said that she had an Italian boyfriend also and that he was nothing but trouble and he would be worse soon when the baseball season was to begin, when he would want nothing more than to drink with his friends and talk about the games with no women around. When Eilis told her that Tony had invited her to come to a game with him, Miss Fortini sighed and then laughed. (Tóibín 141)

Free indirect speech is often a prominent feature of psychological novels; Eilis's internal action in combination with her decisions, thoughts and difficulties can be observed throughout the novel, especially when Eilis reflects on her life situation:

The idea of Rose dying in her sleep seemed unimaginable. Had she opened her eyes for a moment? Had she just lain still breathing the breath of sleep, and then, as she thought it were nothing, had her heart stopped and her breath? How could this happen? Had she cried out in the night and not been heard, or even murmured or whispered? Had she known something the previous evening? Something, anything, that might have given her a clue that this was her last day alive in the world? (Tóibín 177)

She could not stop herself from wondering, however, what would happen if she were to write to Tony to say that their marriage was a mistake. How easy would it be to divorce someone? Could she possibly tell Jim what she had done such a short while earlier in Brooklyn? (Tóibín 136)

Moreover, throughout the narrative the reader is confronted with scenes rendered in dialogues and a letter from Jack (see Tóibín 179-181), which are characteristic features of scenic or dramatic presentation. But on the other hand, letter writing is used in different contexts, and letters are sometimes just reported, like in the following examples:

The letters told Eilis little; there was hardly anything personal in them and nothing that sounded like anyone's own voice. (Tóibín 66)

She made the poker game, Eilis noted in a letter home, sound as though it was another form of Sunday duty that she performed only because it was in the rules. (Tóibín 54)

[...] it would be something that she could not mention in a letter home as she did not want to worry them or send them news that might cause them to feel that she could not look after herself. (Tóibín 118)

3.5 Characters and Characterisation

3.5.1 The Irish: Eilis Lacey

Eilis Lacey is the protagonist of the novel.²¹ Concerning Eilis's personal background, the girl lives together with her mother and her sister Rose in Enniscorthy. She attends book-keeping classes which she takes very seriously (see *Tóibín* 3, 80) and she is rewarded with good exam results and the chance to return to Brooklyn College in September (see *Tóibín* 155). At the beginning of the narrative, Eilis works at Miss Kelly's grocery store on Sundays after mass (see *Tóibín* 6). Eilis's attitude at the department store Bartocci & Company in Brooklyn lets the reader believe that she is clever but tries to hide this character trait at the beginning. This strategy can be seen in the following citations: "Eilis did not want to say that they had exactly the same system [...]. Eilis allowed Miss Fortini to explain it to her carefully, as though she had never seen anything like it before." and "She did not tell Miss Fortini that she never made mistakes when she did addition." (*Tóibín* 61). Her social engagement can be observed by the parish work she does on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (see *Tóibín* 84).

Eilis's Insecurity, Lack of Self-confidence and the Role of Georgina, Patty, Diana and Miss Fortini

Before Eilis's emigration and during her journey to Brooklyn, Eilis's character can be described as insecure and lacking self-confidence. On the one hand, concerning her physical appearance, she does not seem to care too much as reflected in such passages as the following: "She was glad that Rose had not seen her before she left, as she would have made her do something more with her hair and put on some make-up and generally try to look smarter." (*Tóibín* 16), but on the other hand, the reader gets the impression that she is not self-confident enough to behave like other girls.

She thought that she would love to know how to put make-up on properly herself in the way that Rose and Georgina knew. It would be much easier, she imagined, to go out among people she did not know, maybe people she would never see again, if she could look like this. It would make her less nervous [...]. (*Tóibín* 50)

²¹ Due to many character traits that can be found with Eilis, her characterisation will be split among sub-chapters.

Moreover, in regard to her voyage to Brooklyn, her insecurity is clearly expressed. She does not seem to be well prepared, finds herself in a situation of being overtaxed and, therefore, she experiences fears, sleepless nights and “[...] she felt that she was being singled out for something for which she was not in any way prepared [...]” (Tóibín 28).

Her naive character trait is expressed in situations where she is easily impressed as in “[...] and even the notepaper itself, its light blue colour, the embossed drawing of a large building over the letterhead, seemed heavier, more expensive, more promising than anything of its kind she had seen before.” (Tóibín 26). The whole situation on the ship can be described as a real chaos and Eilis hopes for Georgina to come and help her. In her desperation, Eilis uses a bucket and mop as a toilet (see Tóibín 42), vomits (see Tóibín 44) and is overwhelmed by the shower on the ship:

[...] she had never had a shower before, and it took her a while to work out how to get the water at the right temperature without turning it off altogether. [...] she wondered if this could be heated sea water and, if not, then how the ship managed to carry so much fresh water. In tanks, maybe, she thought, or perhaps it was rainwater. (Tóibín 48)

Moreover, she asks herself naive questions and is at times scared of losing her life and world in Ireland: “[...] towards the thought that she was going to lose this world for ever, that she would never have an ordinary day again in this ordinary place, that the rest of her life would be a struggle with the unfamiliar.” (Tóibín 29-30).

The girls around her, Georgina, Patty, Diana and Miss Fortini, obviously have an influence on Eilis. During the narrative, her longing to be like the other lodgers and Miss Fortini is expressed through the attention she pays when observing them. At first, she feels embarrassed and not at all comfortable when going out with the girls as they clearly realise that she needs advice concerning her new life situation in America. Moreover, it is strange to her seeing couples dancing so closely (see Tóibín 108):

She hated it when Patty or Diana paid too much attention to her. She was the new girl, and the youngest, and they could not stop giving her advice, or making criticisms or comments. (Tóibín 57-58)

She noticed that both of them were carrying high-heeled shoes in their bags that they would change into once they arrived. Both, she saw, had backcombed their hair and were wearing make-up and lipstick. When she saw them first she was afraid that she herself would look dowdy beside them; she felt uncomfortable at spending the rest of the evening, no matter how short their stay in the parish hall, in their company. (Tóibín 105)

As they approached she felt nothing but dread and wished she could have found an excuse to stay at home. (Tóibín 106)

But then again, Eilis sees that she needs to do something about her appearance in order to adapt to her new lifestyle: “Eilis realized that her hair looked terrible. [...] she would have to do something about it. Her dress, which Rose had helped her to buy, also looked terrible.” (Tóibín 106). Another instance occurs when “Eilis would have given anything now to have been with them, dressed like them, to be glamorous herself, too easily distracted by the jokes and smiles of those around her to watch anyone with the same breath-filled intensity as she was watching them.” (Tóibín 107). She relies on Miss Fortini, who gives her advice concerning her bathing suit and her figure and, therefore, Eilis tries to eat less in order to correspond to the ideal (see Tóibín 155). Miss Fortini is actually the first person seeing Eilis naked: “No one had ever seen her naked like this; she did not know how her breasts would seem, if the size of the nipples or the dark colour around them was unusual or not. She went from feeling hot with embarrassment to feeling almost cold.” (Tóibín 154).

Eilis’s Development of a Hybrid Identity

During Eilis’s two years in Brooklyn, her confrontation with a new country, its culture and people, she develops the sense of a hybrid identity. Smith explains this phenomenon by distinguishing it from assimilation and alternation in a way that “[...] elements of cultures are incorporated to form a new culture.” (3). The main character of the novel enjoys her work at the department store Bartocci & Company, spends time together with her fellow lodgers and her boyfriend Tony, studies a lot for her book-keeping classes and gets used to her life situation in Brooklyn: “[...] she began to observe how beautiful everything was: the trees in leaf, the people in the street, the children playing, the light in the buildings. She had never felt like this before in Brooklyn.” (Tóibín 156).

At some points during the novel, especially after Rose’s death, Eilis questions her new situation in Brooklyn and is shocked about the fact that she did not have the possibility to see her sister before her death: “‘Why did I ever come over here?’ she asked [...]. [...] ‘Rose wanted a better life for you,’ [Father Flood] replied. ‘She only did what was good.’ ‘I won’t ever see her again now.’” (Tóibín 172). These thoughts can also be observed towards the beginning of the narrative, which are closely connected to her

homesickness. Eilis shows her true feelings about her choice and clearly finds herself in a moral dilemma, a typical side effect of a hybrid identity:

The stranger is one new identity that might emerge by combining two identities that were previously discrete and now overlap. They are not seen as individuals, but as a particular type that is the combination of the stranger's identity and the local identity. One resolution to the problem of having two identities, or being identified by two types and labels, is to create a new identity. It is a hybrid identity that includes a local and a global identity form, merged to create the hybrid identity. (Smith 4)

On the one hand, back in Ireland, Eilis is confronted with the fact that she could find suitable work in an office in Enniscorthy, the actual work Eilis has been dreaming of for a long time (see Tóibín 219). She could also spend the rest of her life together with Jim, a young man who has clearly noticed Eilis's changes:

‘Two years ago,’ she said, ‘he wouldn’t even see me. I know that Rose asked him if there was any possibility of a job for me and he just said no. Just no.’ ‘Well things have changed.’ ‘And two years ago Jim Farrell seemed to think it was his duty to ignore me at the Athenaeum even though George had practically asked him to dance with me.’ ‘You have changed,’ Nancy said. ‘You look different. Everything about you is different, not for those who know you, but for people in the town who only know you to see.’ ‘What’s changed?’ ‘You seem more grown up and serious. And in your American clothes you look different.’ (Tóibín 230)

Therefore, she constantly questions her own relationship and marriage to Tony and thinks about her future in both countries and her open and difficult situation: “[...] she and Tony were married she would stay at home, cleaning the house and preparing food and shopping and then having children and looking after them as well. She had never mentioned to Tony that she would like to keep working [...].” (Tóibín 220). On the other hand, Eilis becomes aware of the fact that she develops feelings of strangeness towards her once-beloved surroundings as when standing in her bedroom “[...] which seemed empty of life which almost frightened her in how little it meant to her. [...] all she could do was count the days before she went back” (Tóibín 204-205) and when driving through Blackwater village when she “[...] almost pointed out the places she knew, such as Mrs Davis’s pub where her father has gone in the evenings, or Jim O’Neil’s shop. But she stopped herself. She did not want to sound like someone who had come back home after a long time.” (Tóibín 220). She also experiences that she cannot trust her former friends anymore because of the distance between them.

Moreover, she becomes aware of her true feelings about her life and her marriage. She feels insecure concerning her own marriage, enjoys the time together with Jim but still reflects on her relationship in Brooklyn (see Tóibín 222). “She wished now that she had not married him, not because she did not love him and intend to return to him, but because not telling her mother or her friends made every day she spent in America a sort of fantasy, something she could not match with the time she was spending at home. It made her feel strangely as though she were two people, one who had battled [...] and the other who was her mother’s daughter [...]” (Tóibín 217-218) is a clear example which shows her hybrid identity and that she is torn between two choices of life. The expectations on both sides, her mother and her friends wanting her to stay in Ireland and to marry Jim (see Tóibín 230, 235) and Tony’s emphasis in his letters on how much he loves and misses her (see Tóibín 217) make it difficult for her to make final decisions. The more time Eilis spends in Ireland, the more she adapts to her situation and becomes used to her life, which is another factor of a hybrid identity. She realises that she forgets and postpones writing letters to Tony, Father Flood, Miss Fortini and Mrs Kehoe as for her “[...] everything else that had happened in Brooklyn seemed as though it had almost dissolved and was no longer richly present [...]” (Tóibín 231). Another striking fact is that Eilis slowly starts developing feelings of fright to leave Ireland as the house, her room and its surroundings have become familiar to her (see Tóibín 232).

Eilis’s Personal Development

Throughout the novel, Eilis realises that she has undergone some changes: “[...] her mother looked her up and down in vague disapproval. It struck Eilis that maybe the colours were too bright, but she did not have any darker colours.” (Tóibín 205), but also her friends and people in the streets see the difference: “She noticed a woman studying her dress and her stockings and then her tanned skin and she realized with amusement as she moved towards Nancy’s house that she must look glamorous in these streets.” (Tóibín 208). She gets compliments about how well she looks (see Tóibín 209), her clothes which she chose and bought herself (see Tóibín 211, 213), her sophisticated hairstyle and sun tan (see Tóibín 212). Eilis has gained self-confidence and has developed into an attractive woman; her visit to the beach with Nancy, George and Tim is one situation which gives evidence of her change:

If this had been years ago, Eilis thought, she would have worried during the entire journey from Enniscorthy about her swimsuit and its style, about whether she was too unshapely or awkward on the beach, or what George and Jim would think of her. But now, however, that she was still suntanned from the boat and from her trips to Coney Island with Tony, she felt oddly confident as she walked down the strand [...]. (Tóibín 215)

Now that she was back from America, she believed, she carried something with her, something close to glamour, which made all the difference to her as she sat with Nancy watching the men talk. (Tóibín 227)

Moreover, Eilis's stay in Brooklyn has given her the chance to contrast two different countries. When she returns back home, she finds Irish names quite funny as she has not heard of them for a long time and compares Irish to American men in a way that she is amused about their fashion and their insecurity (see Tóibín 206-207, 223).

Eilis's Relationship to Rose

Eilis sees Rose as a role-model as she provides advice on matters Eilis cannot solve; she gives her tips concerning her behaviour, Eilis uses Rose's expressions and her sister supports her to create her own style. The reader can even observe that she is imitating her sister:

Eilis looked on silently as her sister moistened her lips and then checked herself one more time in the pocket mirror before putting it away. (Tóibín 3)

She found herself thanking him in a tone that Rose might have used, a tone warm and private but also slightly distant though not shy either, a tone used by a woman in full possession of herself. It was something she could not have done in the town or in a place where any of her family or friends might have seen her. (Tóibín 32-33)

'Some people are nice,' she said, 'and if you talk to them properly, they can be even nicer.' They both laughed. 'That'll be my motto in America,' Eilis said. (Tóibín 32)

The relationship is not as close as the reader might think at first read. Although Eilis writes private letters to her about her real problems and also mentions her boyfriend Tony (see Tóibín 139, 168), Rose keeps the secret about her state of health, which is another indication for giving Eilis the opportunity to emigrate and to change her future life although "[...] Eilis wanted to suggest that they change places, that Rose, so ready for life, always making new friends, would be happier going to America, just as Eilis would be quite content to stay at home." (Tóibín 30).

3.5.2 The Irish: Rose Lacey

Rose Lacey is thirty years old and, in contrast to her sister Eilis, described as an independent and glamorous woman. She works in the office of Davis Mills and in her spare time she is an engaged golf player:

Rose, in the hall, was holding her pocket mirror in front of her face. She was studying herself closely as she applied lipstick and eye make-up before glancing at her overall appearance on the large hall mirror, settling her hair. Eilis looked on silently as her sister moisture her lips and then checked herself one more time in the mirror before putting it away. (Tóibín 3)

Rose, at thirty, Eilis thought was more glamorous every year, and, while she had had several boyfriends, she remained single [...]. Eilis was proud of her sister, of how much she took care of her appearance and how much care she put into whom she mixed with in the town and the golf club. She knew that Rose has tried to find her work in an office, and Rose was paying for her books now that she was studying bookkeeping and rudimentary accountancy, but she knew also that there was, at least at the moment, no work for anyone in Enniscorthy, no matter what their qualifications. (Tóibín 11)

She caters for her family, her mother and her sister, not only in a way that she gives her mother money because her pension is very low, but that she organises everything for Eilis and even provides her with clothes, shoes and a complete set of underwear for her stay in the USA (see Tóibín 28). Eilis knows that due to the fact that she is given the chance to emigrate to America, “[...] Rose would not be able to marry. She would have to stay with her mother, living as she was now, working in Davis’s office, playing golf at the weekends and on summer evenings. Rose [...] was giving up any real prospect of leaving this house herself and having her own house, with her own family.” (Tóibín 30). The reader can obviously infer that Rose sacrifices her life and prospects for the welfare of her sister.

During Eilis’s stay in America, the sisters write private letters; according to Rose’s letters she is content and grateful for her sister’s life: “[...] Eilis would, by the summer, be a qualified bookkeeper and could start to look for experience. Rose imagined, she wrote, that Eilis must be really looking forward to getting off the shop floor and having a job in an office, which would not only pay more money but be easier on the legs.” (Tóibín 168). Rose’s sudden death due to heart problems, which she has secretly suffered from for some time, is Eilis’s reason for returning back home to Enniscorthy (see Tóibín 173).

3.5.3 The Irish: Mrs Lacey

Mrs Lacey is widowed and has five children (Eilis, Rose, Jack, Pat and Martin). She indirectly expresses her sadness and loneliness throughout the narrative. Her sons' life in a different country and her situation after Rose's death are only some indications for the above-mentioned feelings. Her loneliness is revealed in such statements as “‘And I said when your daddy died that I shouldn't cry too much because I had you and Rose and the boys and when the boys left I said the same and when you left I had Rose, but I have no one at all now, Eily, I have no one.’” (Tóibín 174) and “[...] how lonely she was and how long the day was and how hard the night. She said that the neighbours looked in on her all the time and people called after tea but she had run out of things to say to them.” (Tóibín 191). But due to her low pension, she is dependent on her daughter Rose and her sons who regularly send money from England. Mrs Lacey clearly favours Rose, compliments her and is proud of her daughter's life style (see Tóibín 3).

Concerning Eilis's departure, her mother expresses feelings of discontent, loss and fear in such statements as: “‘Her face wore a dark strained look that Eilis had not seen since the months after their father died. [...] her mother's expression became almost darker and she had to stand up and walk quietly out of the room. [...] she was going to cry.’” (Tóibín 28-29). On the other hand, she tries to distract herself from her daughter's journey and future life by talking about different matters and laughing (see Tóibín 28). Problems are clearly solved through silence, as, for example, when she receives Father Flood's letter (see Tóibín 15, 25). She does not show real emotions and their relationship seems to be distant, as can be seen in the briefness and superficiality of the letters Eilis writes to her mother. Moreover, the reader realises that the first time Eilis and her mother really talk to each other is after Rose's death. For Eilis “[...] it was hard to speak since her mother seemed to have prepared in advance every word that she said” (Tóibín 203) and her thoughts seem to be somewhere else (see Tóibín 204). When Eilis returns back home from America, her mother does not ask her one question about her stay and does not seem to be interested in her life. Eilis's feeling of being alone with her mother is strange to her as they “[...] always had Rose to stand between [them] [...].” (Tóibín 205). An important person, the mediator, is now missing in their relationship.

3.5.4 The Italian in America: Tony, his Family and Other Characters

Tony (Antonio Guiseppe Fiorello)

Tony, Eilis's boyfriend, represents the Italian second generation in America. He neither looks like a typical Italian man, nor presents the stereotypes the reader might have when thinking of Italian men. When Eilis and Tony first meet in the parish hall, she does not realise that he is Italian; he is physically described as "[...] a young man looking at her. He was smiling warmly, amused at her efforts to learn the dance steps. He was not much taller than she was, but seemed strong with blond hair and clear blue eyes." (Tóibín 126). He does not try to impress her, accepts the way she is and is a very polite and considerate person (see Tóibín 127). Moreover, he is described as honest as he admits that he is not Irish, but from Brooklyn, that his parents are from Italy and that he visited the Irish dance hall because he likes Irish girls (see Tóibín 130, 136).

Furthermore, he is quite a well-known professional plumber, takes his work seriously and helps in his neighbourhood. Moreover, he seems to be successful as he gets tipped every now and then (see Tóibín 149, 136). Miss Fortini is surprised when Eilis describes Tony and his character as in the following dialogue:

'Hold on. He doesn't take you drinking with his friends and leave you with all the girls?'

'No.'

'He doesn't talk about himself all the time when he's not telling you how great his mother is?'

'No.'

'Then you hold on to him, honey. There aren't two of him. Maybe in Ireland, but not here.'

They both laughed. (Tóibín 141)

The conversation above shows that, in contrast to Miss Fortini's experiences, Tony does not correspond to the typical Italian stereotype. Although being part of the Italian second generation in Ireland, he seems to belong more to the American culture. He uses the name "Tony" instead of "Antonio Guiseppe Fiorello" and talks with a strong American accent. His main interest seems to be baseball and he takes Eilis to a game at Ebbets Field where his passion for this sport is described:

Tony, Eilis saw, had ceased to have any interest in her at all. Normally, he was attentive, smiling at her, asking her questions, listening to her, telling her stories.

Now, in the heat of this excitement, he could no longer manage the role of caring, thoughtful boyfriend. (Tóibín 164)

He plans a future together with her and talks about building a house in Long Island, which actually is the first step towards a long-lasting relationship and marriage (see Tóibín 167).

Tony and Eilis

At first, Eilis feels that their relationship develops too fast and she has to slow him down. Eilis is more the person in favour of planning and considering everything and Tony openly shows his feelings and emotions, at the same time unconsciously overwhelming his girlfriend: “Maybe, she thought, she should say to him that she did not want to talk about their kids if had known each other only a short time. [...] And yet she knew that in his mind Tony was moving faster than she was, and she knew that she would have to slow him down [...]” (Tóibín 143). This is an example of Eilis’s different world view. She notices his love for life, “[...] how funny he [is], how alive, how graceful, how alert to things[,] [...] how much he was enjoying himself” (Tóibín 165), his kindness of heart, begins to understand why and how Tony makes her happy and feels an “[...] immense tenderness for him and wondered if she would ever see a side of him that was disagreeable.” (Tóibín 138). For her, he is unique (see Tóibín 139). Their relationship starts developing a routine and they meet regularly; especially during Eilis’s holidays they get together every Thursday, Friday and Saturday in the evening (see Tóibín 137). She is proud of being married to him (see Tóibín 198) and for both of them, especially Tony, it is clear that they will stay together (see Tóibín 138). It is Tony who takes the initiative - he plans building a house in Long Island (see Tóibín 167) and arranges everything for the wedding (see Tóibín 197).

Tony’s Family

Tony’s family lives in a very small apartment on the second of a three-storey building in Brooklyn. Tony is the oldest boy of four and warns Eilis of his family, especially of his young brother, before her first visit (see Tóibín 146-147). There are some indications that his family is prejudiced against the Irish, which is especially expressed by Frank, the youngest family member who is eight years old. He takes his brothers as role

models and he is eager “[...] to know what Tony’s latest opinion was.” (Tóibín 163). He enjoys talking, tells Eilis about the incident in Coney Island (see Tóibín 151) and that the family does not like Irish people because on one occasion Maurice was beaten up probably by Irish people who “[...] had red hair and big legs.” (Tóibín 147). Moreover, Tony’s mother explains that Irish girls are very serious (see Tóibín 133), but in general Eilis is welcomed and accommodated in Tony’s family. Tony’s parents look very young and represent the Italian first generation; they still have a very strong Italian accent (see Tóibín 148).

In contrast to Tony, his brothers, Frank, Laurence and Maurice, have a strong Italian appearance, a difference Tony is aware of and mentions to Eilis with humour:

‘The thing is that all of them are Italians and look like Italians. They are real dark, all except me.’ (Tóibín 146)

She realized immediately that she should not comment on the difference between Tony and the rest of the family since she imagined that every single person who entered this apartment and saw them all together for the first time had a great deal to say on the subject. (Tóibín 147)

His brothers are all tall, have dark hair and brown eyes and Eilis finds great sympathy in them: “She loved them, each of them, and found the differences between the four boys intriguing [...]” (Tóibín 166). The differences between the brothers can be observed at the baseball game. Maurice is described as an open-minded and friendly person and Laurence shows reservation and silence especially towards strangers, but still contradicts some of Tony’s views because he seems to be best informed about the game (see Tóibín 163). They are all planning to live in Long Island in the near future (see Tóibín 167).

Other Characters

Mr Bartocci is the owner of the department store Bartocci & Company in Brooklyn. His daughter Elisabetta Bartocci is responsible for explaining the corporate philosophy to Eilis and is described as a stylish and beautiful person:

She wrote to her mother and Rose about Miss Bartocci’s flaring red costume and white plain blouse, her red high-heeled shoes, her hair, which was shiny black and perfect. Her lipstick was bright red and her eyes were the blackest Eilis had ever seen. (Tóibín 59)

Then, the reader is introduced to Miss Fortini, the supervisor of the sales assistants. She is characterised as “[...] intelligent and interesting” (Tóibín 141), does not show her feelings but recognises Eilis’s homesickness (see Tóibín 59, 72-73). Miss Fortini seems to be biased against Italian men due to her ex-boyfriend who “[...] was nothing but trouble and [Tony] would be worse soon when the baseball season was to begin when he would want nothing more than to drink with his friends and talk about his games with no women around.” (Tóibín 141). Miss Delano works as one of the other sales assistants at Bartocci & Company.

3.5.5 The Older Irish Generation in America: Father Flood and Mrs Kehoe

Father Flood

Father Flood, an Irish-American priest, is very tall and has an Irish-American accent (see Tóibín 22), but can also switch into an accent which is “[...] pure Enniscorthy.” (Tóibín 75). He has known Mrs Lacey and her husband from their childhood. During his first visit to Ireland since before the war, he offers Eilis the opportunity to emigrate and leave Enniscorthy by referring to the work possibilities in America and stating that “[...] there would be plenty of work for someone like you and with good pay” (Tóibín 22) and that “[...] there would be office work for someone who was hard-working and educated and honest.” (Tóibín 23). Moreover, he tries to make the offer interesting by referring to the Irish community in Brooklyn:

‘Parts of Brooklyn,’ Father Flood replied, ‘are just like Ireland. They’re full of Irish.’ (Tóibín 23)

‘Not in my parish,’ Father Flood said. ‘It’s full of lovely people. A lot of life centres round the parish, even more than in Ireland. And there’s work for everyone who’s willing to work.’ (Tóibín 23)

He informs the family about accommodation possibilities and the work place in Brooklyn (see Tóibín 28) and due to his engagement and parish work, he seems to have good connections and contacts in America since he “[...] can pull strings [at] most places.” (Tóibín 75). Father Flood, who finds one of his parishioners to pay Eilis’s book-keeping classes, supports her and is Eilis’s only link home to Ireland (see Tóibín 156). On the one hand, he is described as a very good-natured person, but on the other hand, he clearly lacks emotions and empathy. He only realises Eilis’s homesickness at a

late stage in the novel, but then gives her advice and tries to find a possibility to avoid depressions.

The interesting fact about his personality is that he does not only persuade Eilis to emigrate and work in America but he also integrates her into the Irish parish community, which is of great importance to him and expressed in the following statement: ““I was amazed that someone like you would not have a good job in Ireland. When your sister mentioned that you had no work in Ireland, then I said I would help you to come here. That’s all. And we need Irish girls in Brooklyn.”” (Tóibín 77-78).

Mrs Kehoe

Mrs Kehoe is the owner of the lodging house and, in contrast to Patty McGuire, Diana Montini and Dolores Grace, she shows her strong connection to Ireland and cultivates Irish traditions. She is very religious, goes to Sunday mass in Brooklyn and prays before dinner: “Before dinner each evening they stood up solemnly and joined their hands and Mrs Kehoe led them in saying grace.” (Tóibín 54). The only reason for her to celebrate Christmas is her religious conviction (see Tóibín 82). Her opinion about Father Flood in relation to her religious faith is expressed in ““But I hate a priest rubbing his hands together and smiling. You see that a lot with the Italian priest and I don’t like it. I wish he was more dignified. That’s all I have to say about him.”” (Tóibín 78). Moreover, tea drinking occurs on all occasions throughout the novel (see Tóibín 76, 101), she enjoys her traditional poker game evenings with her friends and she often talks about her former life in Ireland by making reference to places and people in her home country:

Mrs Kehoe, who owned the house, was from Wexford town and loved to talk about her home, about Sunday trips to Curracloe and Rosslare Strand, or hurling matches, or the shops along the Main Street in Wexford town, or characters she remembered. (Tóibín 53)

At one point in the novel, Eilis learns that her husband from Kilmore Quay went to west America with all of their money, the reason for Mrs Kehoe to let out the rooms to lodgers (see Tóibín 54). Due to the fact that Eilis gets the chance to move into a new room, the reader can infer that she strongly favours her to the other lodgers (see Tóibín 99). She is not interested in boyfriends and seems to be reserved when it comes to this matter; her main interests are fashion, shopping and looks: “Changing fashions and new trends were her daily topic, although she herself, as she often pointed out, was too old

for some of the new colours and styles. [...] she dressed impeccably and noticed every item each of her lodgers was wearing. She also loved discussing skin care and different types of skin and problems.” (Tóibín 54).

3.5.6 The Older and Younger Irish Generation in America: The Lodgers

The older and younger Irish generation in America is represented by Miss McAdam, Sheila Heffernan and Miss Keegan, on the one hand, and Patty McGuire, Diana Montini and Dolores Grace, on the other hand. Moreover, the Irish people Eilis sees in the parish hall belong to the older Irish generation which, in many cases, has already lost traits to its home country. The relationship between these two generations can be seen as symbiotic, but characterised by differences:

The attitude of older first generation immigrants toward the new arrivals is one of ambivalence. On the one hand, they dissociate themselves from the new Irish who are frequently labelled “rude and arrogant.” On the other hand, they acknowledge that the arrival of a new generation of Irish immigrants has helped revitalize and regenerate the New York City’s Irish ethnic neighbourhoods. (Corcoran 475)

The Older Irish Generation in America: Miss McAdam, Sheila Heffernan and Miss Keegan

The Irish-American women Miss McAdam, Sheila Heffernan and Miss Keegan stand for the older Irish generation in America and cultivate Irish values and traditions. They do not go out in the evenings and have sentimental feelings towards their home country.

Miss McAdam from Belfast lives on Eilis’s floor and works as a secretary. She does not know a lot about traditions, seems reserved and “[...] was very prim, Eilis wrote in a letter home, and had asked Eilis as a special favour not to leave all her toilet things around the bathroom as the other girls did.” (Tóibín 55). Moreover, she is described as rather conservative as in “[...] nothing good to say about anyone and had sniffed her nose disapprovingly if anyone passed by them who she thought was Italian or Jewish. ‘I didn’t come all way to America, thank you, to hear people talking Italian on the street or to see them wearing funny hats,’ she said.” (Tóibín 56) and is obviously jealous about Eilis’s chance to move into a bigger room (see Tóibín 103). Sheila Heffernan shares the top floor with Patty and there is always trouble between them (see Tóibín 55). She

comes from Skerries and works as a secretary as well. Miss Keegan from Galway lives in the basement with Diana and does not talk a lot unless the talk turns to Fianna Fáil and Éamon de Valera (see *Tóibín* 56). She leaves the house and moves to Long Island to live with her brother and his wife due to her fears created by a man who exposed himself to her (see *Tóibín* 102).

The Younger Irish Generation in America: Patty McGuire, Diana Montini and Dolores Grace

Patty McGuire and Diana Montini represent the second-generation immigrants in America. The former was born in upstate New York and works in one of the large department stores in Brooklyn. Eilis notices that “[s]he was man-mad [...]” (*Tóibín* 55), which actually refers to the main interest of the girl. She helps Eilis in a way that she “[...] show[s] Eilis how to put on the black eye-liner and some mascara and they spent time at the mirror together, ignoring everyone who came in and out. With extra clips that she carried in her bag, Patty put Eilis’s hair up for her.” (*Tóibín* 125). Concerning Diana Montini, whose mother is Irish, lives together with Miss Keegan in the basement and is Patty’s best friend. The two girls both speak with an American accent (see *Tóibín* 55) and are very fashionable, as, for example, when they present their new sunglasses (see *Tóibín* 157) or when they dress up for hours to go out every weekend (see *Tóibín* 55). They have already adopted the American way of life, feel American and have lost roots of their home country, as, for example, when Diana complains that the “[...] food that Mrs Kehoe cooked [...] was too Irish.” (*Tóibín* 55).

Dolores Grace, the new girl from Cavan, takes over Eilis’s room and appears rather at the end of the novel (see *Tóibín* 121). She has red hair, freckles and is merely interested in “fellas”. Her fellow lodgers do not want to integrate her and she calls them “bitches” (*Tóibín* 124).

3.5.7 Minor Characters

There are a large number of minor characters in the novel, but the main focus of this chapter is on Eilis’s brothers, Eilis’s friends and Georgina. Jack, Pat and Martin are Eilis’s three brothers and live in Birmingham, England. They meet on Saturday nights

for the pub and the dancehall, all have girlfriends and send home money for their mother. Jack is nearest to Eilis's age (see Tóibín 10), works in a spare parts warehouse and is responsible for the inventors (see Tóibín 35). It is Jack who sends her the letter about their mother's situation at the end of the narrative. The brothers pay Eilis's travel expenses to America (see Tóibín 26).

In Ireland, Eilis is surrounded by her friends Nancy Byrne, Annette O'Brien, George Sheridan and Jim Farrell. George Sheridan and Nancy Byrne marry towards the end of the novel; concerning the financial background the situation seems to be clear from the following citation:

It was not just that George Sheridan was handsome and had a car, but he ran a shop that did a thriving business in the Market Square; it was a business he would inherit in full on his mother's death. For Nancy, who worked in Buttle's Barley-Fed Bacon behind the counter, going out with George Sheridan was a dream that she did not wish to wake from, Eilis thought, as she and Nancy glanced around the hall, pretending they were not on the lookout for anyone in particular. (Tóibín 17).

With Eilis's development, Jim Farrell's character undergoes certain changes as well. At the beginning of *Brooklyn*, rude behaviour and ignorance characterise his personality, but after Eilis's return from America, he suddenly shows interest in her and her life. He clearly tries to impress her and wants to be together with her, as Nancy and George have already planned when the four friends spend a day together on the beach: "He and Jim, and perhaps Nancy too, had planned a perfect day in which she and Jim would be just as much a couple as Nancy and George." (Tóibín 223). At first, Eilis ignores and patronises him (see Tóibín 213, 215), but then the longer she stays in Ireland and the more Jim confronts her with his real feelings, the more used she could get to her new situation. The obvious approach on both sides can be observed in the citations below:

And almost as an aspect of this care, he made his interest in her totally clear. (Tóibín 225)

All day Jim had behaved impeccably: he had not bored or irritated her, or pressed himself too much on her; he seemed immensely considerate, funny at times, willing to be silent, polite as well. [...] He was handsome, graceful, smart, and, as the night wore on, she was proud to be with him. (Tóibín 228)

He puts Eilis under enormous pressure as he wants to get engaged to her before her departure to America (see Tóibín 241).

Moreover, an important connection with Eilis's transition from Ireland to America is Georgina, the girl Eilis meets on the ship. She calls Eilis "poor little pet" (Tóibín 45), "darling" and "duck" (Tóibín 46) and clearly feels sympathy for her:

Georgina, she thought, was anything between thirty and forty, although she could have been more. Her hair was bright blonde, and her hairstyle was like a film star's. She moved with confidence, and when she lit a cigarette and pulled on it, the way she pursed her lips and narrowed her eyes and released the smoke from her nose made her seem immensely poised and glamorous. (Tóibín 39-40)

She looked at Eilis again with sympathy. She was wearing make-up and seemed untouched by the ravages of the night. (Tóibín 45)

She prepares Eilis for her stay in America, gives Eilis tips on how to wear her hair and make-up, tells her what to wear and how to behave when entering the USA: "In the morning, between arranging to have her trunk carried on deck, Georgina began to put make-up on, getting Eilis to comb her hair out even straighter now that the brushing was done so that it could be tied back into a bun." (Tóibín 49). Then, there are two American ladies with whom Eilis and Georgina are sharing the bathroom on the ship (see Tóibín 47).

Characters from Ireland include George's mother (see Tóibín 237), Kelly, Mrs Kehoe's cousin (see Tóibín 244-246), a girl from the grocery store (see Tóibín 4), Mary, a slow girl from the grocery store (see Tóibín 4-5), Dr. Cudigan (see Tóibín 173), Father Quaid (see Tóibín 171), relatives and neighbours, as, for example, Mags Lawton (see Tóibín 235), names of people who visit Eilis's mother after Rose's death are mentioned, for example, Dora Devereux from Cush Cap, her sister Statia, Nora Webster and Michael (see Tóibín 206). Also, her cousins the DoYLES (see Tóibín 221), Mr Redmond and his son Eamon (see Tóibín 221), Annette O'Brien and her younger sister Carmel (see Tóibín 231), the two Miss Murphys from Arklow (see Tóibín 89, 93), Maria Gethings who works at Davis's and Eilis's boss Mr Brown (see Tóibín 218, 229), Alice Roche and the girl on holiday (see Tóibín 216) are the people Eilis is surrounded by at work and at the end of the novel.

Characters connected with Eilis's book-keeping classes are Mr Rosenblum, her Jewish law instructor, who "[...] also made jokes about being Jewish and spoke in a foreign accent that she guessed was not Italian" (Tóibín 79) and the man working in the bookshop informing Eilis about the Germans by making references to the holocaust (the "churben") (Tóibín 120).

3.6 Themes and Motifs

Especially the themes and motifs occurring in the novel *Brooklyn* need to be analysed in detail as they are important for the cross-cultural teaching and learning aspect (see chapter 3.7).

3.6.1 Features of 'Irishness', 'Irishness' in America

In *Brooklyn*, the characters appearing in Ireland clearly represent some essential features of 'Irishness'. The Irish community in America, especially the older Irish generation, also tries to keep up Irish traditions, as, for example, Mrs Kehoe who cooks Irish food and is a very religious and conservative person:

As they sat at the table, she did not like the girls talking among themselves, or discussing matters she knew nothing about, and she did not encourage any mention of boyfriends. (Tóibín 54)

Diana complained constantly about the food that Mrs Kehoe cooked, insisting that it was too Irish. (Tóibín 55)

An integral part of Irish culture is definitely religion. Throughout the novel, the reader can find a number of indications concerning religion practiced by the Irish in Ireland and the Irish in America: praying and asking God for advice as in "When she came back from receiving communions, Eilis tried to pray and found herself actually answering the question that she was about to ask in her prayers." (Tóibín 236), saying the rosary (see Tóibín 174), going to Sunday mass in Ireland and in America (see Tóibín 54) and praying before dinner: "Before dinner each evening they stood up solemnly and joined their hands and Mrs Kehoe led them in saying grace." (Tóibín 54). Catholicism can be seen as a link between the Irish and the Italians and also something advancing intermarriages between the two cultures at that time.²²

Ireland is said to be the largest consumer of tea in the world²³; in *Brooklyn*, tea drinking occurs at a number of different occasions, as, for example, when Mrs Lacey talks to her daughters: "'I'm starving,' Rose said, 'but I've no time to eat.' 'I'll make a special tea for you later,' her mother said. 'Eilis and myself are going to have our tea now.'"' (Tóibín 3) or when Father Flood visits them (see Tóibín 22). Even in America, Mrs

²² For further information on intermarriage in America, consult Healey (76-77).

²³ <http://oldfashionedliving.com/irishtea.html> April 11 2011, 18:08.

Kehoe's tea tradition is cultivated in the lodging house (see Tóibín 76), alone or in company: "Miss McAdam moved over to the kettle as it began to boil and she filled the teapot before she spoke again." (Tóibín 101). Moreover at the beginning of the novel, the reader can observe that tea is sold at the grocery store and exchanged for a free copy of the Sunday Press (see Tóibín 13-14).

Concerning sports, references are made to the Irish hurling tradition and the Wexford hurling team (see Tóibín 162), a sport considered as "[a]n uniquely Irish game, [...] one of the world's oldest field sports [...] [that] has been played in some form for more than 800 years."²⁴ Also rounders, a game especially practised at schools in England and Ireland, is referred to (see Tóibín 163). Moreover, the Irish golf tradition dating back more than 300 years is highlighted by Rose's interest, her engagement in the local golf club (see Tóibín 11) and by events such as Lady Captain's Day (see Tóibín 239).²⁵

As Ireland is the second largest consumer of alcoholic drinks in the world²⁶, it is clear that parts of the novel relate to the Irish drinking culture. Eilis refers to "[...] country fellows, and then the town fellows [...] [h]alf drunk and just looking to get you up the Tan Yard Lane" (Tóibín 8) and to the pub culture (see Tóibín 220), both in Ireland and America among the Irish community, especially at the parish hall, where drinking stout and whiskey seems to be a cherished habit of Irish men (see Tóibín 88-89). This directly leads to the next point, the representation of the Irish community in America. Due to Father Flood and later Eilis's engagement in parish work on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day and her attendance at dances, where also a large number of Irish people appear who have lost touch with their families and friends in Ireland, the reader gets an insight in some typical features of 'Irishness' and Irish culture: Irish food with "[...] proper stuffing and roast potatoes and Brussels sprouts boiled to death" and the Irish trifle (Tóibín 86), people talking solely in Irish (see Tóibín 88) or "[...] with faith American accents but all of Irish origin" (Tóibín 85), men playing the fiddle, the accordion and the banjo, a man singing in Irish which Eilis identifies as "[...] Connemara Irish because she remembered one teacher from Galway in the Mercy Convent who had that accent. He pronounced each word carefully and slowly [...] she understood the words – 'Mà bhíonn tú liom, a stóirín mo chroí [...]' (Tóibín 90). The typical Irish céilí dance and the "The Siege of Ennis", the talk about Irish traditions, as,

²⁴ <http://www.dochara.com/the-irish/sport-the-irish/hurling-a-traditional-irish-sport> April 11 2011, 18:58.

²⁵ http://www.golfeurope.com/clubs/british_isles.htm April 12 2011, 08:37.

²⁶ <http://factoidz.com/the-worlds-largest-consumers/> April 12 2011, 13:38.

for example, the cattle mart on a Friday or Saturday night and the occurrence of typical Irish names as the “Pat Sullivan’s Harp” or the “Shamrock Orchestra” are referred to (see Tóibín 104-105). These features of ‘Irishness’ in America let Eilis conclude that “[...] it could have been a parish hall anywhere in Ireland on the night of a concert or a wedding when the young people were all elsewhere dancing or standing at the bar.” (Tóibín 89). The Irish are also characterised in the novel as having red hair and white skin (see Tóibín 55, 158).

As already mentioned in chapter 3.3.2, the difficult economic situation of Ireland in the 1950s that led to problems in finding a job (see Tóibín 11) and to an increase in emigration, is constantly referred to in the novel. Not only the United States, but also England is seen as a possible destination for escaping the miserable conditions in Ireland and as a special place offering opportunities: “‘She thought of going to England,’ her mother said, ‘but the boys said to wait, that it wasn’t the best time there, and she might only get factory work.’” (Tóibín 22). Eilis thinks of English names to be posh (see Tóibín 37) and when meeting Georgina she realises the difference between the Irish and the English accent (see Tóibín 38); Jack describes the English as “fair” and “decent” (Tóibín 24). The 1950s in Ireland are also connected to the policies of Fianna Fáil and Éamon de Valera:

In the Free State, the protectionist policies [...] from 1932 onwards led to the protection of indigenous industry and the attempt to develop import substitution (e.g. peat- rather than coal-fired power stations, run by Bord na Mona). Isolation, however, made for stagnation and a massive increase in emigration in the 1940s and the 1950s, which was staunch by the first Programme for Economic Expansion. (Davis and Goodby 80)

After Rose’s sudden death at the end of the novel, there is a description of the Irish wake, which is an integral part of the Irish culture (see chapter 3.6.4). Concerning family matters and due to the fact that Mrs Lacey has five children, she presents the typical Irish ideal of motherhood in the 1950s. In the 1960s, the fertility rate reached a peak at nearly 4,6 children per family. The importance of the big family and its values becomes clear when taking a closer look at the 1937 Constitution of Ireland, where it is stated that “[...] the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law.” (Article 41, 1.1).²⁷ Moreover, the Constitution of Ireland

²⁷ <http://www.constitution.ie/reports/ConstitutionofIreland.pdf> 14 April 2011, 10:09.

sees the women's role in the family clearly at home (see Article 41, 2.1 and 2.2)²⁸, which is reflected by Eilis's mother who stays at home but due to her low pension, is dependent on her children. Divorce was not possible in the 1950s and against the principle of family; the preservation of family values and the "[...] special care the institution of Marriage, on which the Family is founded [...]" (Article 41, 3.1)²⁹ can be seen towards the end of *Brooklyn* when Eilis thinks about her own marriage to Tony and the possibility of divorce (see Tóibín 236). Only in 1995 and after two divorce law referenda, the changes were implemented in the Constitution in 1996, making the dissolution of marriage legally possible.

The beginning and the end of the novel are set in rural Ireland; thus the reader is presented with typical features of Irish country life. People talking about and knowing everything and the speed in spreading of information in the rural community become clear in the situations when Mrs Lacey expresses her opinion about Miss Kelly and her shop (see Tóibín 11) and when Father Flood knows about Eilis's job at Miss Kelly's and her low pay (see Tóibín 22). Moreover, people actively discuss Eilis's journey to America (see Tóibín 27), relations seem to be closely knit and people know each other from incidents in the past or in the present, as, for example, Jim's father and Father Flood (see Tóibín 215).

3.6.2 Features of 'Italianness', 'Italianness' in America

As already mentioned in chapter 3.6.2, throughout its history, the United States of America has been confronted with issues of immigration. In *Brooklyn*, a number of characters represent the Italian culture in America and, therefore, immigration from Italy to America also plays an important role in the novel. Until Italy's economic revival in the 1970s, parts of America and Canada were faced with massive immigration from Italy:

In Canada, in 1950, a major influx of immigrants from postwar Italy re-established vibrant communities. A booming economy, plus Canada's participation in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), helped to fuel the call for immigration. Both the Canadian government and private firms recruited workers. Early in this process, newcomers arrived with one-year contracts to work in the industrial sector, as domestics, or on the land. The majority came as permanent settlers, later sponsoring wives, children, and other relatives. Family

²⁸ <http://www.constitution.ie/reports/ConstitutionofIreland.pdf> 14 April 2011, 10:09.

²⁹ <http://www.constitution.ie/reports/ConstitutionofIreland.pdf> 14 April 2011, 10:09.

“chain migration” from Italy was so intensive that, in 1958, Italy surpassed Britain as a source of immigrants in Canada. Ultimately, the more than half-a-million newly arrived Italians represented almost seventy percent of the entire Italian-Canadian population. (Scarpaci 22)

Due to the Emergency Quota Act in 1921 and the Immigration Acts in 1924 and 1929, immigration to the United States was restricted to the point that only a specific quota of immigrants had the right to enter the country, depending on the already existing representation of the nationality in the United States’ population (see Mitchell 11). Only later, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 repealed the national quota acts and this directly led to “[...] some new life into American-Italian communities.” (Scarpaci 22). Still, the quota system was based on desirability and, therefore, nations “[...] like Great Britain, Germany, and Ireland were given generous quotas, while nations like Russia, the source of most Jewish immigrants, and Italy were cut back.”³⁰ Throughout Eilis’s stay in Brooklyn, she gets to know a number of Jewish people, as, for example, her fellow students in her book-keeping classes (see Tóibín 79) and her Jewish teacher (see Tóibín 144). According to Bloomberg, the Jewish population of the United States is employed in the sectors of garment trades, investment banking, journalism and real estate in the 1950s (see 220-221).

Eilis is definitely confronted with the Italian culture as she seems to be surrounded by Italian people and features of ‘Italianness’; she mentions a woman and her daughter collecting the washing and doing the ironing (see Tóibín 56), the Italian people in her book-keeping class (see Tóibín 79) and the various people at her work at the department store Bartocci & Company, Miss Fortini, Miss Delano, Mr Bartocci and his daughter Elisabetta Bartocci. Moreover, her boyfriend Tony and his family represent some cultural aspects the reader might think of when reflecting on the Italian way of life. Although living far away from their home country, “[...] people don’t forget their local roots, their local cuisine, their local history, and dialect.” (Abbott 53). Especially the older Italian generation is characterised by its existing link to their traditional culture, a phenomenon also observed in the novel: Eilis realises that at times Tony’s mother uses “[...] a strong Italian accent [...]” and is confronted with pronunciation difficulties (see Tóibín 148-149) and Miss McAdam refers to the fact that people talk Italian on the streets, which does not meet her expectations: “‘I didn’t come all the way to America, thank you, to hear people talking Italian on the streets or see them wearing funny hats,’

³⁰ <http://library.thinkquest.org/20619/Timeline.html> April 27 2011, 13:14.

she said.” (Tóibín 56). Sowell refers to the fact that “[w]ith the passage of time, many of the values and patterns of the Italians were modified in an American setting, but others persisted.” (119). The Italian influence on American culture, especially by the older generation is, for example, expressed by Diana when she describes the tradition of changing before going to the beach:

Italians had carried to America with them the custom of putting their bathing suits on under their clothes before they set out, thus avoiding the Irish habit of changing on the beach, which was, Diana said, ungraceful and undignified [...]. (Tóibín 159)

Moreover, allusions are made to traditional Italian food. When Eilis is invited to Tony’s family, they eat spaghetti and drink thick and bitter coffee in tiny cups (see Tóibín 148-150). Concerning family matters and the neighbourhood, the close-knit contacts and links are essential for the Italian people. Solidarity is typical of Italians and according to Solly “[t]he Italian family is a highly sophisticated network of patronage and power held together by a complex system of exchanging presents and performing favours.” (17). On his father’s request, Tony helps in the neighbourhood and, therefore, the reader can infer that working together is taken for granted in the Italian community. However, existing suspicion towards strangers is expressed with Eilis’s feeling “[...] being on display and every word she said was being listened to carefully.” (Tóibín 148-150).

The importance of family in Italian life cannot be overestimated. Your family are the people you can trust, the people you work for, the people you do favors for or who do favors for you. (Abbott 44)

Another feature of ‘Italianness’ is the well-known stereotype of the Italian gigolo and macho man, as described by the older Irish generation at the parish hall: ““They ran a dance in that selfsame parish hall after the war and they had to close it because of immorality. Some of the Italians started to come looking for Irish girls.”” and “[...] great care should be taken with many of them.” (Tóibín 104) or when Miss Fortini talks about her experience with Italian men being “[...] nothing but trouble [...]” (Tóibín 141), only interested in the baseball season and talking about themselves and their mothers. Solly refers to this stereotype in the following quotation:

Italian males rarely leave the nest and, even when they do, these *mammoni* (Mummy’s boys) usually only move in the house across the road, or the flat next door. Statistics show that nearly 40% of Italians in their early thirties still live at home with their parents. Behind every great Italian man there is [...] his mother. (26-27)

They find themselves caught in a trap; wanting to live on their own, but unable to leave the nest and under fire for not doing so. [...] the wives feel unable to compete with the mothers of their *mammoni*. (28)

Miss Fortini talks about the Italian man caring about his own and his girlfriend's appearance: "'Italian men!' Miss Fortini said. 'They don't care in the winter but in the summer on the beach you have to look your best. My guy won't go to the beach unless he already has a tan.'" (Tóibín 151-152) and Patty mentions that they are "[...] lovely-looking [...]." (Tóibín 104).

3.6.3 Features of 'Americanness'

Two parts of the novel *Brooklyn* are actually set in Brooklyn and, therefore, the reader can identify various features of 'Americanness' and aspects of American culture. One of the most prevailing features of 'Americanness', and closely connected to Eilis's reason for emigrating, is the American Dream, originally defined by Adams in the following way:

[...] a better, richer and happier life for all our citizens of every rank which is the greatest contribution we have as yet made to the thought and welfare of the world. (viii)

[...] the American Dream, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement. [...] It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (404)

Eilis's decision to leave her home country is closely linked to the various opportunities waiting for her in America. Especially in the post-war years, people were in search of the American Dream:

She had never considered going to America. Many she knew had gone to England and often came back at Christmas or in the summer. It was part of the life of the town. Although she knew friends who regularly received presents of dollars or clothes from America, it was always from their aunts and uncles, people who had emigrated long before the war. She could not remember any of these people ever appearing in town on holidays. It was a long journey across the Atlantic, she knew, at least a week on a ship, and it must be expensive. She had a sense too, she did not know from where, that, while the boys and girls from the town who lived in England missed Enniscorthy, no one who went to America

missed home. Instead, they were happy there and proud. She wondered if that could be true. (Tóibín 24)

During her journey to America, Georgina describes America as “[...] the land of the free and the brave” (Tóibín 49) and points out the fact that America, being the country of chance and possibilities, is different to any other place in the world. Brooklyn offers Eilis the opportunity to work in the department store Bartocci & Company, to live in the lodging house and to attend evening book-keeping classes in order to receive a good educational and financial background. However, Eilis refers to the fact that her work does not correspond to her expectations and the promises Father Flood and her sister made in Ireland:

This was the work she had been dreaming about as she had stood on the shop floor in Bartocci’s, seeing the office workers walking in and out as she was telling customers that the Sepia- and Coffee-coloured stockings were for lighter skin and the Red Fox for darker, [...]. (Tóibín 219)

This discrepancy between the expectations and hopes of the Irish, on the one hand, and the actual realities they experience when immigrating to the United States, on the other hand, is referred to by Miller as the “Paddy’s Paradox”, deriving from the wave of immigration after the Great Famine, from 1856-1929 (see 100). Ellis Island is also linked to Eilis’s immigration. It is a symbol of American immigration, because from 1892 to 1954 it was the gateway to the American Dream and in total over twelve million people passed the portal of this island.³¹ Georgina mentions that people are stopped if suspected to have tuberculosis, eye diseases and in order to check their documents. But due to the fact that Eilis possesses a full work permit, she does not have any difficulties to enter the United States (see Tóibín 49-50):

One night before they were due to dock, she went to the dining room with Georgina, who told her that she looked wrecked and if she did not take care she would be stopped at Ellis Island and put in quarantine, or at least given a thorough medical examination. (Tóibín 48)

‘Don’t look so innocent,’ she said. ‘When I put some eyeliner on you and some rouge and mascara, they’ll be afraid to stop you. Your suitcase is all wrong, but there’s nothing we can do about that.’

‘What’s wrong with it?’

‘It’s too Irish and they stop Irish.’

‘Really?’

‘Try not to look so frightened.’

‘I’m hungry.’

³¹ http://www.ellisland.org/genealogy/ellis_island_history.asp 26 April 2011, 22:34.

‘We’re all hungry. But, darling, you don’t need to look hungry. Pretend you are full.’

‘And I almost never wear make-up at home.’ (Tóibín 49)

Another cultural aspect concerning ‘Americanness’ is multiculturalism. Eilis is surrounded by different ethnic groups and various religions. Father Flood and Miss Bartocci refer to the different faces of Brooklyn, a city in motion constantly undergoing changes:

‘Brooklyn changes every day,’ Miss Bartocci said as Father Flood nodded. ‘New people arrive and they could be Jewish or Irish or Polish or even coloured. Our old customers are moving out to Long Island and we can’t follow them, so we need new customers ever week. We treat everyone the same. We welcome every single person who comes to this store. [...] You treat the customer like a friend. Is that a deal?’ (Tóibín 59)

It struck her as she crossed the street that by the time she arrived home at six thirty a whole world of things would have happened that she could not tell them about; each moment appeared to bring some new sight or sensation or piece of information. (Tóibín 58)

Brooklyn as an international city is portrayed in a number of different incidents throughout the novel: firstly, Eilis seems to be overwhelmed by the range of books available for her subject book-keeping at the bookshop (see Tóibín 118). At a later point she refers to the fact that “[...] in Brooklyn it was not always easy to guess someone’s character by their job as it was in Enniscorthy.” (Tóibín 140). This multicultural life is reflected also in racist remarks and attitudes. The topic concerning black customers in the department store arouses vivid discussions among the lodgers, all agreeing that “[...] in that store [...] you could get all sort of germs” (Tóibín 116) and that they “[...] wouldn’t like to serve them in a store [...]” (Tóibín 117). However, Mrs Kehoe addresses the point that no one minded their fighting and dying for the country, referring to the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. A striking racist attitude is also expressed by Miss McAdam “[...] who had nothing good to say about anyone and had sniffed her nose disapprovingly if anyone passed by them who she thought was Italian or Jewish.” (Tóibín 56).

As already mentioned in chapter 3.3.2, costume and fashion in the 1950s are a representative feature of American culture as well. With mass-production in factories and the opening of huge department stores, everyone has the possibility to afford fashion (see Rooney 6). According to Rooney, “[...] the fashion scene burst into life, fizzling with color, sensational shapes, and new fibres” (6) and “[...] after the austerity

of the war years, most people wanted to enjoy themselves. Wearing colorful and flamboyant clothes was one way they could express the postwar exuberance.“ (7). The reader can observe this sense of fashion at numerous moments in the novel; Mrs Kehoe, Patty and Diana’s daily discussions on this topic or Eilis’s change in fashion and her new look are some examples for this interest:

[Mrs Kehoe] was mainly interested in clothes and shoes, and where they could be bought and at what price and at what time of the year. Changing fashions and new trends were her daily topic, although she herself, as often pointed out, was too old for some of the new colours and styles. Yet, Eilis saw, she dressed impeccably and noticed every item each of her lodgers was wearing. (Tóibín 54)

When she came back into the kitchen, having her bath and put on fresh clothes, her mother looked her up and down in vague disapproval. It struck Eilis that maybe the colours she was wearing were too bright, but she did not have any darker colours. (Tóibín 205)

The first thing she sold was called a brasalette, and she decided that, when she knew the other boarders at Mrs Kehoe’s well enough, she would ask one of them to take her through these items of American women’s underwear. (Tóibín 62)

Concerning fashion and shopping, Diana and Patty mention Fifth Avenue, today’s most expensive shopping street in the world³², and the difference of life in Brooklyn and Manhattan, being “[...] wonderful over there [...]” and describing it as “[...] the most heavenly place [...].” (Tóibín 115). Moreover, when explaining to Eilis the way to Manhattan, they also allude to the typical address and street names in New York (see Tóibín 115).

Baseball is one of America’s national sports and inevitably referred to in *Brooklyn*. The baseball hype of Tony, his brothers and Miss Fortini’s ex-boyfriend indicates that the sport has won many enthusiastic supports amongst the American immigrants as well (see also chapter 3.3.2).

3.6.4 Death and Bereavement

Eilis mentions her father’s death several times in the novel, but only in a very implicit way, for example, in a flashback referring to the time when her father was still alive (see Tóibín 12), by comparing her departure to America to her mother’s bereavement phase after her father’s death: “Her face wore a dark strained look that Eilis had not seen since the months after their father died.” (Tóibín 28) and when seeing an Irish man

³² <http://www.aviewoncities.com/nyc/fifthavenue.htm> April 27 2011, 12:00.

in the parish hall resembling her father (see Tóibín 86-87). The end of part three and the forth part of the novel explicitly deal with the theme of death as one of the family members dies. It is actually Father Flood who informs Eilis about her sister's unexpected death at Bartocci & Company. However, the reader can clearly observe that Rose's condition of health and her heart disease were kept as a secret.

Rose's death is followed by a long period of bereavement, and is the reason for Mrs Lacey's and Eilis's talk on the phone and Eilis's reason to return home for a month (see Tóibín 177). Eilis reflects on her sister's death and even blames herself for the tragic situation; the difficulty of coping with death and the related bad conscience can be seen below:

The idea of Rose dying in her sleep seemed unimaginable. Had she opened her eyes for a moment? Had she just lain still breathing the breath of sleep, and then, as though, as though it were nothing, had her heart stopped and her breath? How could this happen? [...] She imagined Rose laid out now in the dark robes of the dead with candles flickering in the tables [...]. (Tóibín 177-178)

Eilis felt, despite the improving weather, that all of the colour had been washed out of her world. (Tóibín 178)

In America, as well as in Ireland, a mass is held for Rose; in Ireland, Rose is kept in the house until the evening, and then taken to the cathedral to be buried on the following day (see Tóibín 176-177). Fortunately, Eilis receives help from Tony who "[...] simply held her hand, or put his arm around her and walked her home [...]" (Tóibín 179) and accepts her silence and Father Flood who gives her religious advice and consolation by referring to god's love and support in the process of grieving:

'It's very sad, Eilis. But she's in heaven now. That's what we should think about. And she'll be watching over you. And we'll all have to pray for your mother and for Rose's soul, and you know, Eilis, we have to remember that God's ways are not our ways.' (Tóibín 172)

'Rose wanted a better life for you,' he replied. 'She only did what was good.' (Tóibín 172)

The death of Rose introduces the theme of death and bereavement. The reader experiences a number of practices connected to it: Mrs Lacey says the rosary believing that "[...] she's with [Eilis's] father in heaven now" (Tóibín 174), Rose's funeral and saying farewell to the dead person can be observed (see Tóibín 173-175), going through the things a person leaves behind, reading the letters of condolence and handing out memorial cards make up part of the management of grief (see Tóibín 206). Mrs Lacey's

bereavement is different to Eilis's way of coping with death. She did not have the same relationship to her daughter as her daughters had between each other. The fact that her mother imagines that Rose is still alive is expressed in a number of incidents:

Her mother showed Eilis Rose's bedroom, which was filled with light from the morning sun. She had left everything, she said, exactly as it was, including all of Rose's clothes in the wardrobe and in the chest of drawers. (Tóibín 203)

'You know, I sometimes think she's still alive,' her mother said. 'If I hear the slightest sound upstairs, I often think it must be Rose.' (Tóibín 203)

Mrs Lacey unconsciously puts her daughter under enormous pressure and faces her with the decision either to stay with her in Ireland, or to leave for Brooklyn for good. When Eilis returns to Enniscorthy, she realises that her mother has left Rose's room untouched:

But nothing had prepared her for the quietness of Rose's bedroom and she felt almost nothing as she stood looking at it. She wondered if her mother wanted her to cry now, or had left the room as it was so she could feel even more deeply Rose's death. She did not know what to say. (Tóibín 203)

Eilis feels that her mother sees her as a substitute to her lost daughter as Eilis comes up with the thought of being Rose's ghost (see Tóibín 218). Her mother wants her to wear Rose's old clothes to adopt Rose's role (see Tóibín 203).

3.6.5 Love, Marriage and Divorce

The central themes of love, marriage and divorce are supported by the motifs of virtue in distress, a woman between two men and star-crossed lovers in *Brooklyn*. The aim of this chapter is to analyse these motifs and to provide some textual examples.

The reader might argue that the relationship between Tony and Eilis is not really based on true love but rather evoked sympathy by Eilis's loneliness. At some point, the love affair seems to be a kind of distraction from her homesickness, her thoughts about her mother and her sister and her life in Enniscorthy. However, Eilis seems to be glad to be able to spend the evenings together with someone. The love relationship is rather characterised by differences (see chapter 3.5.4) and different personalities seem to clash against each other. On the one hand, Tony emotionally plans their future together in Long Island and talks about a family and of having children with Eilis (see Tóibín 142). All in all, he seems to be taking big steps, but Eilis, on the other hand, is overwhelmed

by his sentimentality and his way of expressing feelings. Their relationship is also characterised by pre-marital sex (see Tóibín 185), a social taboo for a Catholic woman in the 1950s, and the couple seems relieved and more comfortable after having confessed their sins at Church (see Tóibín 190). Eilis's insecurity about her marriage is expressed in various situations; she is unable to make the decision whether she really wants to marry Tony (see Tóibín 196) and later when her mother asks her about her marriage, the Christian bond between the couple is the reason for her returning to America:

‘And tell me something: if you hadn’t married him, would you still be going back?’

‘I don’t know,’ Eilis said.

‘But you are getting the train in the morning?’ her mother asked.

‘I am, the train to Rosslare and then to Cork.’ (Tóibín 248)

Another relationship described is the love between Jim and Eilis, developing rather at the end of the novel. Eilis seems to be surprised by Jim's change of mind and his sudden affection for her. Eilis obviously does not want to hurt Jim's feelings when leaving for America and, therefore, she only leaves a short note for him (see Tóibín 250).

Concerning marriage, the reader is confronted with the secret marriage of Tony and Eilis, a step taken to make sure that Eilis will return to Brooklyn. Moreover, the official wedding ceremony of Nancy and George in Ireland (see Tóibín 237), and Jim asking Eilis to get engaged to him before her departure to America, are depicted in the novel (see Tóibín 241). The narrative leaves it open if Eilis's marriage with Tony will last, and whether he is the person for an ideal love relationship and a future family. Divorce is another theme in the novel, as Eilis considers divorce when she is back in Ireland reflecting on the options she might have if she stayed in Ireland. She is offered the perfect office job and could spend her future together with Jim, a marriage based on love rather than a marriage of convenience, which the marriage to Tony appears to be. At the same time, she realises that as a Catholic wife of Irish descent divorce cannot be seen as a possible option, even though legally divorce would be possible for her in the United States (see Tóibín 236).

The motifs of virtue in distress, a woman between two men and star-crossed lovers perfectly reflect Eilis's situation, especially after her sister's death. She is confronted with decisions concerning her love and her filial duty, her possible life in Ireland

together with Jim and her mother versus her life as a married woman in America with Tony. Not only the relationship between Eilis and Tony, but also between Eilis and Jim, can be regarded as star-crossed. Mrs Lacey for some time assumes the role of a match-maker, wanting her daughter to get married to Jim:

At the wedding breakfast Eilis spoke to Jim Farrell [...]. She was watched fondly and carefully by her mother. It struck her almost funny that every time her mother put a morsel of food into her mouth she looked over to check that Eilis was still there and Jim Farrell firmly to her right and that they seemed to be having an agreeable time. (Tóibín 237)

3.6.6 Journey and Homesickness

Journey and homesickness are closely connected themes occurring throughout the novel. The journeys from Enniscorthy to Brooklyn and back are described in some detail - on board of a ship, leaving behind the familiar surroundings and emigrating to a new and unknown place; but the journeys are also highly emotional, connected to escape, homesickness and feelings of depression, solitude, guilt and happiness. Especially Eilis's brother Jack, who has already experienced the feeling of emigration, living in England, warns her not to yield to homesickness:

His saying that at the beginning he would have done anything to go home was strange. He had said nothing about this in his letters. It struck her that he might have told no one, not even his brothers, how he felt, and she thought how lonely that might have been for him. Maybe, she thought, all three of her brothers went through the same things and helped each other, sensing the feeling of homesickness when it arose in one of the others. If it happened to her, she realized, she would be alone, so she hoped that she would be ready for whatever was going to happen to her, however she was going to feel, when she arrived in Brooklyn. (Tóibín 38)

In Brooklyn, Eilis constantly refers to the words her brother Jack said to her in Liverpool (see Tóibín 70), and at first her work and her new life situation protect her against feelings of homesickness. When she receives the first letter from home, however, strong feelings of depression are evoked and she reflects on her life in her home country, her beloved surroundings and habits. Moreover, she starts questioning her life situation in America and "[...] the life she had lost and would never have again [...]" (Tóibín 66) as she misses the physical contact with the people at home:

She was nobody here. It was not just that she had no friends and family; it was rather that she was a ghost in this room, in the streets on the way to work, on the

shop floor. Nothing meant anything. [...] Nothing here was part of her. It was false, empty, she thought. (Tóibín 67)

Eilis constantly dreams about her life in Ireland, thinks about her losses (see Tóibín 67-69) and creates feelings of hate as in “She hated this house, its smells, its noises, its colours.” (Tóibín 70). Clearly, these feelings are connected to boredom caused by her loneliness. Father Flood helps her by enrolling her in night classes to keep her busy and to distract her from homesickness (see Tóibín 75). Eilis even blames herself for her psychological state and “[...] wondered then if she herself were the problem, reading malice into motives when there was none intended.” (Tóibín 103). The lack of contact to friends to confide in and trust is also a reason for her strong emotions, but when she gets to know Tony, she experiences closeness, happiness and joy helping her to keep “[...] the thought of home out of her mind, letting it come to her only when she wrote or received letters or when she woke from a dream in which her mother or father or Rose or the rooms of the house on Friary Street or the streets of the town had appeared.” (Tóibín 131).

As has already been referred to in chapter 3.4, letter writing, going hand-in-hand with homesickness, is an essential point in the novel. Eilis constantly searches for news to mention in her letters (see Tóibín 118) and writes different letters to her mother and to Rose (see Tóibín 168). On the one hand, they awake feelings of strong connection to her home country, but then again, she feels that she can overcome her homesickness by writing and receiving letters as she gets information on her mother’s and sister’s life in Ireland, she seems to be up-to-date and, therefore, the sense of separation is temporarily overcome. Jack’s letter informing Eilis of her sister’s wake and their mother’s condition in Ireland is a turning point as it requires Eilis to return home (see Tóibín 179). Letter writing is also the sole contact Eilis has to Tony during her stay in Ireland (see Tóibín 213).

Throughout the novel, the motif of escape is addressed several times. According to Seigneuret, “[...] the term refers to the act of eluding or getting away from danger, pursuit, captivity, or other immediately threatening circumstances.” (460). In *Brooklyn*, Eilis does not only escape her life and the life prospects in Enniscorthy and in Ireland, but she leaves Ireland hoping to experience the American Dream. However, Eilis at some occasions wants to escape embarrassing situations throughout the novel: during her visit to Tony’s family (see Tóibín 147), or when she goes out with her fellow

lodgers, actually feeling uncomfortable and “[...] nothing but dread and [wishing] she could have found an excuse to stay at home.” (Tóibín 106). Moreover, Eilis’s return to Enniscorthy can be seen as an attempt to escape from her marriage to Tony and, in the end, she flees again from her potential future life in Ireland, from her mother and Jim, to live with her moral commitment in America, and to face an uncertain future there.

3.7 Approaches to Teaching Colm Tóibín’s Novel *Brooklyn* and the Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning Aspect in the EFL Classroom

This practically oriented section of the thesis concentrates on general teaching ideas and approaches to the cross-cultural teaching and learning aspects concerning Colm Tóibín’s novel *Brooklyn*.³³

A “pre-reading”, “while-reading” or “post-reading activity” is to work with reviews on the book and to discuss them. Moreover, interviews with the author, which are easily available on the Internet, can be read or watched.³⁴ When listening to an interview with the author Colm Tóibín as a “pre-reading activity”, the teacher has to decide on how far he or she needs to introduce the students to the context and content of the input, following at the so-called “pre-listening stage”.

[...] learners will need to ‘tune in’ to the context and the topic of the text, perhaps express attitudes towards that topic, certainly bring to the front of their minds anything that they already know about the topic, and most probably hear and use some of the less familiar language in the text which would otherwise distract or create anxiety during listening. (Hedge 249)

Using an interview with the author as a “while-reading” or “post-reading activity”, the teacher can expect the students’ basic knowledge concerning the author, the content and the context of the novel and, therefore, the reader can skip the before-mentioned “pre-listening phase”. When listening to the interview for the first time, clearly the aims are general comprehension and grasping the gist, which are parts of extensive listening process (see Hedge 251). The teacher can ask students general questions as in worksheet activity 1. Then, the next step is connected to the intensive listening phase, listening to details and working with specific exercises, such as correction exercises, gap-filling, matching and jumbling tasks and interpretation activities. Moreover, Hedge

³³ In this chapter of the thesis, Hedge’s before-mentioned three-phase procedure (see chapter 2.3) consisting of “pre-reading”, “while-reading” and “post-reading activities” will be applied.

³⁴ A list of online interviews and reviews concerning the novel *Brooklyn* for the EFL classroom is provided in the bibliography of the thesis.

refers to multiple-choice, filling in charts and drawing activities in order to “[...] prevent anxiety and demotivation arising from trying to write while listening” and the traditional note taking activities (see 251-252). As “post-listening activities”, the teacher can integrate activities connected to the other skills, reading, speaking or writing (see worksheet activity 1). The same procedure can also be carried out when watching a scene or the whole film *Far and Away*, depicting emigration from Ireland and immigration to America to realise dreams. Although set in the late 19th century, the motivations for leaving one’s home country are similar to Eilis’s in the 1950s and, therefore, the film can be used in the EFL classroom as well.³⁵

Concerning the novel *Brooklyn*, the teacher can also plan activities related to the text itself. “Pre-reading” and “while-reading activities” are often connected to guessing and creating expectations: confronting the students with the book cover, the opening lines, the blurb, some citations or pictures, in order to serve as an introduction to the novel, doing brainstorm activities in groups or with the whole class (see worksheet activity 2) and reading up to a certain point in *Brooklyn* and designing “while-reading activities” as to “[...] follow the order of ideas in a text; react to the opinions expressed; understand the information it contains; ask themselves questions; make notes; confirm expectations or prior knowledge; or predict the next part of the text from various clues” (Hedge 210) are only some examples of practical activities in the EFL context. Worksheet activity 5, showing pictures of curiosities appearing in the novel *Brooklyn*, can be used as a “pre-reading” or “while-reading activity”. The same activity can be applied by confronting students with quotations on various themes and motifs occurring in the text, as, for example, with death, bereavement, love, marriage, divorce, journey and homesickness. Before the actual discussion of these themes, the teacher could brainstorm the students’ different thoughts upon these.

Moreover, the teacher and the students can design a questionnaire in order to interview parents, grandparents or older friends on emigration and immigration matters and discussing the students’ outcomes in class or letting students present their findings.

Concerning the national curriculum for teaching English as a foreign language, it clearly states the importance of using a balance of the five skills listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing and to use a variety of teaching, learning and

³⁵ <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0104231/> May 15 2011, 11:27.

working methods and strategies, an essential point in relation to the communicative competence:

Eine breite Streuung an schülerzentrierten, prozess- und produktorientierten Lehrmethoden, Arbeitsformen und Lernstrategien ist sowohl dem Fremdsprachenerwerb als auch der Entwicklung dynamischer Fähigkeiten (Schlüsselkompetenzen) dienlich und somit generell anzustreben. Dabei sind verschiedenste Arbeitstechniken einzusetzen (wie zB Stationenbetrieb, offenes Lernen, Präsentationen mithilfe von Medien bzw. anderen Hilfsmitteln, Projektarbeit, Lese- und Lerntagebücher, Portfolios).

Im Rahmen der Lehrmethoden und Arbeitsformen sind verschiedene Wahrnehmungs- und Verarbeitungskanäle zu nutzen und entsprechend vielfältige Angebote an Lernstrategien in den Unterricht zu integrieren. Unterschiedliche Voraussetzungen bezüglich Lerntypen, Lernstile, Lerntempo, sozialer Fertigkeiten, Stärken und Schwächen sind auch in einer differenzierten Lernberatung der Schülerinnen und Schüler durch die Lehrerinnen und Lehrer bestmöglich zu berücksichtigen.³⁶

Therefore, the teacher should choose from a variety of topics, themes and text types. As already referred to in chapter 3.4, letters are a crucial part in the novel *Brooklyn*, which can also be used in the “pre-reading”, “while-reading” or “post-reading phase”. Discussing Jack’s letter can be used as a “pre-reading activity” and students having to write letters, as, for example, between Eilis and Tony when Eilis is back in Ireland, Eilis and Jim after Eilis’s return to Brooklyn, a distant letter between Eilis and her mother before and after Rose’s death and when Eilis is back in Brooklyn, a very personal letter between Eilis and Rose, Eilis and Jack and letters between Eilis and Miss Bartocci and Father Flood can be “while-reading” or “post-reading activities” as well. Writing an alternative ending and a final letter to Tony are possible activities in order to change the ending of the novel. Acting out scenes of *Brooklyn*, role-plays or discussions on various situations within the narrative, as, for example, when Father Flood visits Mrs Lacey (see Tóibín 22), when Georgina talks to Eilis about the United States on the ship (see Tóibín 49), the discussion among the lodgers concerning the coloured customers at Bartocci & Company (see Tóibín 116-117), when Eilis is invited to Tony’s family (see Tóibín 146-151), when Eilis talks to her mother on the phone after Rose’s death (see Tóibín 173-175) and when Tony asks Eilis to marry him before her departure to Ireland (see Tóibín 196-197) are definitely activities raising the students’ motivation.

As the characters and characterisation in *Brooklyn* are crucial for the textual analysis, the teacher has to deal with this topic in the EFL classroom as well. In order to come up

³⁶ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11854/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs.pdf May 10 2011, 14:39.

with character profiles, the teacher needs to do some initial planning and character analysis (see chapter 3.5). Moreover, the teacher needs to decide which characters are essential (often the main characters) and which rather stay in the background of the novel and thus need not be touched in class. As already mentioned in chapter 2.3, character profiling can be carried out during the “while-reading phase” in so-called reading journals and logs, an activity done rather individually, or as a “post-reading activity” where students need to find character traits, character relationships and back their findings with quotations of their primary source, done individually, in pairs or groups. The teacher could also design a handout where character qualities need to be matched with the character and quotations need to be found supporting them (see worksheet activity 3).

Reading journals, logs or diaries are a perfect opportunity to check the students’ comprehension and to consciously confront students with their encounters during the reading process. This can be done by giving the students activities such as answering questions after each part, writing a short plot summary after each part, predicting the next part and critical evaluation of certain situations. Students can also be asked to draw a timeline of the incidents happening in *Brooklyn* starting with Eilis’s life in Enniscorthy and her travel to Brooklyn in 1951 until the end of the novel back in Enniscorthy in 1953. Moreover, information concerning the social, economic, cultural and historical background should be added in sub-branches of the timeline, which is connected to a large amount of planning and preparation on the teacher’s side.

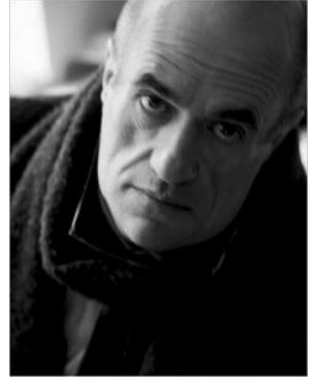
All in all and as already mentioned before, it is important to deal with a variety of text types embedded in authentic encounters, as, for example, “[...] Sachverhaltsdarstellungen, Analysen, Stellungnahmen, Anweisungen, Zusammenfassungen, Berichte, Beschreibungen, Kommentare, Reflexionen, Geschichten, Dialoge, Briefe, E-Mails, Märchen, Lieder, Gedichte.”³⁷ Worksheet activity 4 contains a number of tasks that can be found in a reading log or portfolio also consisting of activities promoting the inter-cultural learning aspect on the one hand, and cross-cultural learning aspect in the EFL classroom, on the other hand, as, for example, activity 3 having to find a definition of “The American Dream” and reflecting on this phenomenon by referring to the primary text. The reader can encounter aspects of emigration and immigration in the novel *Brooklyn* and, therefore, students need to be

³⁷ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11854/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs.pdf May 10 2011, 14:53.

familiarised with this topic in a more general sense and in relation to their home country as well. Activity 6 points out the characteristics of the older and the younger Irish generation in America, which stands in connection with a critical reading process. When it comes to cross-cultural teaching and learning, the existence of stereotypes and the concept of stereotyping are explored with the help of quotations from the novel in relation to the students' own native culture(s) (see activity 10, activity 11 and activity 13). Then, the concept of marriage and divorce in Ireland in the 1950s with reference to the Divorce Referendum of 1995 is treated in activity 18. Due to the fact that *Brooklyn* refers to a large number of different places in Ireland, England and the United States, the teacher could design a map depicting parts of the country the novel takes place and students have to map the most important places.³⁸

³⁸ For a map of Enniscorthy, see http://enniscorthytourism.com/enniscorthy_county_wexford/map.htm June 16 2011, 14:24.

Worksheet Activity 1: Video: Colm Tóibín on his Latest Novel



1. Extensive Listening: **Listening for gist**

Answer the questions below.

- a) Who is speaking to whom?
- b) In general, what do you call such a conversation?
- c) What are the different topics?
- d) Why does the conversation take place?

2. Intensive listening: **Listening for specific information**

Choose the correct answer.

The first reading sample refers to the situation when...

- a) Eilis has to serve black customers for the first time.
- b) Father Flood talks to Eilis about her sister's death.
- c) Eilis has her first working day at Bartocci & Company.
- d) Miss Fortini talks to Eilis about her homesickness.

The second reading sample refers to the situation when...

- a) Eilis talks to Georgina on the ship to America.
- b) Eilis talks to her brother Jack about America.
- c) Eilis reflects on her journey to America.
- d) Eilis talks to Father Flood about America.

The third reading sample refers to the situation when...

- a) Eilis leaves Tony to go back to Ireland.
- b) Tony asks Eilis to get engaged to him.
- c) Jim asks Eilis to get engaged to him.
- d) Eilis reflects on her situation in Ireland.

Finish the following sentences or fill in the gaps.

When Colm Tóibín mentions the origins of the novel *Brooklyn*, he talks about

.....

His reason for writing the story after so many years was

.....

He mentions the famous author and the lack of

..... and the lack of of people's

Brooklyn is a story that could move in a single with no

....., almost no, the sentences lack

....., it doesn't mean that they lack or there is not

an hidden in them, but it is hidden and that's quite

..... work.

For Colm Tóibín, there is a difference between emigration from to

..... and emigration to the If

you went to America, it was forever. There was a thing called the

....., which was really the end of seeing somebody.

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/review/8043976.stm> May 9 2011, 22:00

Worksheet Activity 2: Discussing Quotations in *Brooklyn*

Many she knew had gone to England and often came back at Christmas or in the summer. It was part of the life of the town. Although she knew friends who regularly received presents of dollars or clothes from America, it was always from their aunts and uncles, people who had emigrated long before the war. She could not remember any of these people ever appearing in the town for holidays. It was a long journey across the Atlantic, she knew, at least a week on a ship, and it must be expensive. She had a sense too, she did not know from where, that while the boys and girls from the town who had gone to England did ordinary work for ordinary money, people who went to America could become rich. (Tóibín 24)

- **Who? What? When? Where? Why?**

'Are you sad?'

'Yes.'

'All the time?'

'Yes.'

'Do you wish you were with your family at home?'

'Yes.'

'Do you have family here?'

'No.'

'No one?'

'No one.'

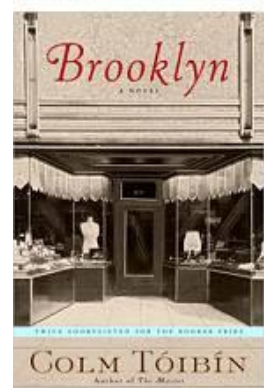
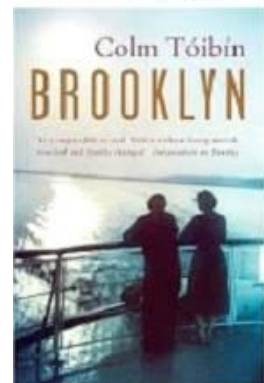
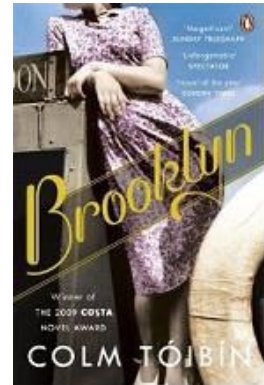
'When did the sadness begin? You were happy last week.'

'I got some letters.' (Tóibín 72-73)

- **Who? What? When? Where? Why?**

She wished now that she had not married him, not because she did not love him and intend to return to him, but because not telling her mother or her friends made every day she had spent in America a sort of fantasy, something she could not match with the time she was spending at home. It made her feel strangely as though she were two people, one who has battled against two cold winters and many hard days in Brooklyn and fallen in love there, and the other who was her mother's daughter, the Eilis whom everyone knew, or thought they knew. (Tóibín 218)

- **Who? What? When? Where? Why?**



Worksheet Activity 3: Character Profiling

Character	Character trait(s)	Quotations
Eilis Lacey		
Rose Lacey		
Mrs Lacey		

Tony		
Father Flood		
Mrs Kehoe		
The lodgers- Miss McAdam, Sheila Heffernan, Miss Keegan		

The lodgers- Patty McGuire, Diana Montini, Dolores Grace		
Jim Farrel		

- protagonist of the novel
- openly shows his feelings and emotions
- clever
- represents second Italian generation (USA)
- represents the older Irish generation (USA)
- interest in fashion, shopping and looks
- American accent
- shows social engagement
- insecure
- lacks self-confidence
- naive
- undergoes changes
- takes Rose as a role-model
- interested in baseball
- quite a well-known professional plumber
- independent and glamorous
- caters for her family
- sacrifices her life and prospects for the welfare of her sister
- sudden death
- puts Eilis under enormous pressure
- suffers from homesickness
- lacks physical contact
- does not present the stereotypes the reader might have when thinking of Italian men
- widowed
- gives advice
- integrates Eilis in the Irish parish community
- offers Eilis the opportunity to emigrate
- lonely
- religious person
- dependant on her daughter
- silence
- does not look like a typical Italian man
- good-natured person
- lacks emotions and empathy
- only link home to Ireland
- strong connection to Ireland
- cultivates Irish traditions
- interested in men
- conservative
- sentimental feelings towards the home country
- rude behaviour and ignorance
- the older Irish generation in the USA

Worksheet Activity 4: Reading Log

Reading process	Activity
Read up to “‘He’s very nice,’ Rose said. ‘He’ll eat anything you put in front of him.’” (Tóibín 22)	Activity 1: Answer the following questions. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As far as you have read, describe Father Flood. 2. What do you think are the reasons for his visit to Mrs Lacey? 3. What do you expect next?
Read up to “Going to work in a shop in Birmingham or Liverpool or Coventry or even London was sheer dullness compared to this.” (Tóibín 32)	Activity 2: Look at the quotation below and answer the following questions. “Eilis was aware that going to work in America was different from just taking the boat to England; America might be further away and so utterly foreign in its systems and its manners, yet it had an almost compensating glamour attached to it.” (Tóibín 31-32) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In what ways can life in the United States be different to Eilis’s life in Enniscorthy or life in England in the 1950s? 2. What encounters might Eilis make in the United States? 3. What is meant by the words “compensating glamour”? Explain. 4. Imagine you have to leave your home country in order to live and work in the United States today. In what ways will life in the United States be different to your life now?
Read up to “It would make her less nervous in one way, she thought, but maybe more so in another, because she knew that people would look at her and might have a view on her that was wrong if she were dressed up like this every day in Brooklyn.” (Tóibín 50)	Activity 3: Look at the quotation below and come up with your own definition of “The American Dream”. The questions below can help you. “‘Well, you are about to enter the land of the free and the brave.’” (Tóibín 49) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In general, in what ways is America considered as the country of opportunity? Compare the 1950s in “Brooklyn” to today’s situation. 2. What are Eilis’s reasons for leaving her home country? Why do her brothers live in England? 3. Search for information on the Internet concerning Irish emigration in general and in the 1950s and the reasons behind this process. Quote your sources! 4. In the past, why and when did people leave your home country? To which country/ countries did people emigrate? Activity 4: Write a summary of Part One of the novel “Brooklyn”.

	<p>Remember the important points when writing a summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary includes the main ideas and helps the reader to understand the most important information of what you have read. • Do not include too many details or information not relevant for understanding the main events! • Do not give your own ideas or opinion in a summary! <p>Write about 150 words.</p>
<p>Read up to “The Italian women, Eilis wrote, ironed everything beautifully and put starch into her dresses and blouses, which she loved.” (Tóibín 56)</p>	<p>Activity 5: With the information given, draw an outline of Mrs Kehoe’s lodging house.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your outline should not be larger than A4 and include the names of the lodgers. <p>Activity 6: Now make a list of characteristics concerning the older Irish generation (Mrs Kehoe, Miss McAdam and Miss Keegan) and the younger Irish generation (Patty McGuire, Diana Montini) in America.</p>
<p>Read up to “That’s all I have to say about him.” (Tóibín 78)</p>	<p>Activity 7: With the information up to now, imagine you are Eilis in “Brooklyn”. Write a letter to Eilis’s mother, Eilis’s brother Jack or Eilis’s sister Rose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write about your first impressions in America (the lodging house, the first weeks at work, the famous nylon sale, the opportunity to attend evening classes in book-keeping, etc.) • Don’t forget to mention your feelings of homesickness (see Tóibín 67-75) <p>Write about 250 words.</p>
<p>Read up to “She wanted to lie on the bed and go over everything that had happened before falling asleep.” (Tóibín 91)</p>	<p>Activity 8: Write a summary of Part Two of the novel “Brooklyn”.</p> <p>Write about 150 words.</p>
<p>Read up to “As Miss McAdam and Sheila Heffernan barely said goodnight to her when they reached home, she decided that, no matter what, she would never go to a dance with them again.” (Tóibín 109)</p>	<p>Activity 9: Write Eilis’s diary entry when she returns home after Friday night at the parish hall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe Patty and Diana in contrast to Miss McAdam and Sheila Heffernan. • Describe your own feelings on your way to the parish hall, during the night at the

	<p>parish hall and when you return home. Write about 250 words.</p>
<p>Read up to “Mrs Kehoe left the room.” (Tóibín 132)</p>	<p>Activity 10: Critical Reading: Look at the quotations below and do the tasks below.</p> <p>“‘We’re going to welcome coloured women in our store as shoppers. And we’re starting with nylon stockings. This is going to be the first store on this street to sell Red Fox stockings at cheap prices and soon we’re going to add Sepia and Coffee.’” (Tóibín 110)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take notes on Miss Fortini’s, Miss Bartocci’s, Eilis’s, Miss Delano’s, Miss McAdam’s, Mrs Kehoe’s, Sheila Heffernan’s, Patty’s opinion concerning coloured people at Bartocci & Company. Back your ideas with corresponding quotations from the text (see Tóibín 109-117). <p>“‘Do the Italians not have dances?’ ‘I knew you were going to ask me that.’ ‘I’m sure they’re wonderful.’ ‘I could take you some night but you would have to be warned. They behave like Italians all night.’” (Tóibín 131)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is meant by stereotype? Provide a definition and give some examples. • Make a list of the typical stereotypes when you think of Italians. • What are some typical stereotypes when you think of your own culture? • What is the danger of stereotypes and what are the possible outcomes of stereotyping?
<p>Read up to “Even though she was studying the following night and would have to miss the dance, she agreed to see him and go for a walk with him, if only for the block.” (Tóibín 146)</p>	<p>Activity 11: Critical Reading: Look at the quotation below and answer the following question.</p> <p>“When Eilis told her about Tony, Miss Fortini sighed and said that she had an Italian boyfriend also and he was nothing but trouble. [...] ‘Hold on. He doesn’t take you drinking with his friends and leave you with all the girls?’ ‘No.’ ‘He doesn’t talk about himself all the time when he’s not telling you how great his mother is?’ ‘No.’</p>

	<p>‘Then you hold on to him, honey. There aren’t two of him. Maybe in Ireland, but not here.’ They both laughed.” (Tóibín 141)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stereotypes is Miss Fortini referring to? <p>Activity 12: Describe the initial relationship between Tony and Eilis and its development by referring to the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do Eilis and Tony do together in their free time? • What are Tony’s/ Eilis’s expectations? In what ways do they differ? • What does Eilis mean by saying “‘Don’t push me.’” (Tóibín 145) <p>Write about 250 words.</p>
<p>Read up to “As the day waned, they were almost the last remaining in the water.” (Tóibín 160)</p>	<p>Activity 13: Critical Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Eilis’s visit to Tony’s family, what stereotypes against the Italian and the Irish people can the reader find? List them.
<p>Read up to “She did not open it immediately but took it downstairs with her when the tea was made so she could read it without being disturbed.” (Tóibín 179)</p>	<p>Activity 14: Answer the following questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As far as you have read, describe Eilis relationship to Rose. 2. What do you think are the reasons for Rose to keep her heart disease as a secret? 3. What speech technique, which is characteristic of the figural narrative situation, is applied in the quotation below? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) direct speech b) free indirect speech c) indirect speech <p>“The idea of Rose dying in her sleep seemed unimaginable. Had she opened her eyes for a moment? Had she just still breathing the breath of sleep, and then, as though it were nothing, had her heart stopped and her breath? How could this happen? Had she cried out in the night and not been hears, or even murmured or whispered? Had she known something the previous evening? Something, anything, that might have given her a clue that this was her last day alive in the world?” (Tóibín 177)</p> <p>Activity 15: With the information up to now, imagine you are Jack in “Brooklyn”.</p>

	<p>Write a letter to Eilis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write about the situation after Rose's death in Ireland. • Mention your mother's loneliness, feelings and difficulties. • Try to convince Eilis of returning to Ireland relating to your own situation of having to stay in England. <p>Write about 250 words.</p>
Read up to "When they finished eating, they walked together towards the subway and waited for the train to take them into the city." (Tóibín 199)	<p>Activity 16: Write a summary of Part Three of the novel "Brooklyn".</p> <p>Write about 150 words.</p>
Read up to "She tried to think of Tony now as a loving and comforting presence, but she saw instead someone she was allied with whether she liked it or not, someone who was, she thought, unlikely to allow her to forget the nature of the alliance and his need for her to return." (Tóibín 232)	<p>Activity 17: Answer the following questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As far as you have read, describe Eilis relationship to her mother. 2. During her stay in America, Eilis has clearly undergone some changes. Choose three situations and quotations which show this fact and explain. In what ways has Eilis developed? 3. In what ways has Eilis developed a hybrid identity? Relate to the quotation below. "It made her feel strangely as though she were two people, one who had battled against cold winters and many hard days in Brooklyn and fallen in love there, and the other who was her mother's daughter, the Eilis whom everyone knew, or thought they knew." (Tóibín 217-218) 4. Do you think Eilis will stay in Ireland or will she return to America? List the advantages and disadvantages of both sides and relate to Eilis's prospects in Ireland in contrast to America.
Finish the novel "Brooklyn"	<p>Activity 18: Look at the quotation below and find information concerning marriage and divorce in Ireland on the Internet.</p> <p>"She could not stop herself from wondering, however, what would happen if she were to write to Tony to say that their marriage was a mistake. How easy would it be to divorce someone? Could she possibly tell Jim what she had done such a short while earlier in Brooklyn? The only divorced people anyone in the town knew were Elizabeth Taylor and perhaps some other film stars." (Tóibín 236)</p>

- What are Eilis's options in Ireland in the 1950s?
- When did divorce become legal in Ireland? Search for information concerning Ireland and compare with your home country. Quote the sources!

Activity 19: Write a summary of Part Four of the novel "Brooklyn".
Write about 150 words.

Worksheet Activity 5: Brooklyn- First Impressions

4. Colm Tóibín's Short Story *A Priest in the Family*

4.1 Plot

A Priest in the Family tells the story of Molly, a widow in her late 70s, being confronted with the fact that her son, a priest, is involved in teenage boys' abuse scandals. However, the surrounding characters, Father Greenwood, her daughters Eileen and Margaret, her friend Nancy and the people she meets in the streets of Enniscorthy, do not show the courage to inform her. After the final revelation of Frank's involvement in the abuse cases and the upcoming court trial, Molly decides to carry on with her daily life routine instead of spending a holiday together with her best friend at the Canaries. She accepts her son's situation, offers help and full support.

4.2 Setting and Background

It seems difficult to discover the actual place of the short story *A Priest in the Family*; only when referring to an interview with the author Colm Tóibín, the reader realises that it is actually set in Enniscorthy, the author's birth place, as can be observed in "'A Priest in the Family' one just occurred to me one day. It's absolutely Enniscorthy, I was just trying to get a set of streets I knew that she could walk in and stuff."³⁹

The main action takes place in Molly's house, a bungalow (see Tóibín 140), a small room off the kitchen (see Tóibín 134), her living room and her kitchen. The latter can be seen as a meeting point between Father Greenwood and Molly (see Tóibín 140), between Eileen and Margaret and Molly (see Tóibín 143) and finally between Frank and Molly (see Tóibín 149) and, therefore, it is a place of revelation where discussions are led and solutions are found. Moreover, the settings move to the library on the Back Road (see Tóibín 136) and to the house of Molly's sister-in-law (see Tóibín 137). At the end of the short story, the action moves to Frank's car (see Tóibín 149). Eileen and Margaret refer to the possibility to go to Dublin or to the Canaries in order to distract Molly from her daily life in Enniscorthy (see Tóibín 146). Frank's parish is described to be further away from the town:

³⁹ <http://www.laurahird.com/newreview/colmtoibininterview.html> May 23 2011, 12:20

It struck her then that her grandsons would have to live with this too, their uncle on the television and in the newspapers, their uncle the pedophile priest. At least they had a different surname, and at least Frank's parish was miles away. (Tóibín 144)

When analysing the time of the short story, the reader is referred to the season of winter. Not only the main character, but also Father Greenwood talks about this season as in "She watched the sky darken, threatening rain. "There's no light all these days," she said. "It's been the darkest winter. I hate the rain or the cold, but I don't mind it when there's no light." Father Greenwood sighted and glanced at the window. "Most people hate the winter," he said." (Tóibín 133), Molly needs a coat, an umbrella and an umbrella coat when she leaves home (see Tóibín 134, 136) and the radiator in the hall way is warm (see Tóibín 140).

The short story starts on Sunday late afternoon when Father Greenwood visits Molly (see Tóibín 143-134) and moves to evening when she records the latest episode of the TV series "Glenroe" and goes out to play bridge (see Tóibín 134). The next day, Monday, is characterised by her visit to the library in the town and to her sister-in-law.

Darkness was falling as she approached her bungalow, but she could clearly make out Father Greenwood's car parked again in front of her car. She realized that he would have seen her in one of the mirrors just as soon as she saw him, so there would be no point in turning back. (Tóibín 140)

However, not only Father Greenwood, but also Molly's daughters, Eileen and Margaret, turn up on this evening until Molly goes out in the late evening (see Tóibín 146). The action moves to the following days of the week and is introduced by "[t]he town during the next week seemed almost new to her. Nothing was as familiar as she had once supposed." (Tóibín 147). Molly keeps her daily routines: she plays bridge on Tuesday and Sunday night, on Wednesday she is visited by her grandsons, on Thursday she goes to the gramophone society and on Saturday she meets some friends (see Tóibín 147). Then, two days before the trial, on the following Tuesday, she meets her son in front of her bungalow (see Tóibín 149).

All in all, the reader can see that the time span of the action encompasses about ten days, starting on a Sunday afternoon and ending on a Tuesday morning with Frank's visit, but on the other hand, due to the occurrence of the narrative devices of foreshadowing and retrospective views, the actual time span of the plot covers a larger space of time (see chapter 4.3).

Concerning the time the short story takes place in, the reader can find a number of hints throughout the narrative. The main character watches the latest episode of “Glenroe”, described as “[a] weekly drama serial telling the lives of the people who live in the Wicklow village of Glenroe”⁴⁰ played from 1983 to 2001. However, when taking a closer look at the short story, the reader can also realise a time indicator when Miriam talks to Molly about sending E-mails and mentions the address “molly@hotmail.com” (see Tóibín 136). The free webmail service Hotmail was launched in 1997⁴¹ and, therefore, the short story has to take place in or after this year. Another indicator of time is Frank’s involvement in teenage boys’ abuse scandals. Scanlan relates to the “[...] allegations about physical and sexual abuse in Ireland’s church-run industrial schools made headlines throughout the 1990s.” (42). Gerrard and McArdle refer to the fall of the Catholic Church’s significance and institutional power in Ireland especially in the 1990s stating “[t]he end result has been a much more chastened and far less aggressive Catholic Church [focusing] [...] mainly on issues like poverty and drug abuse and [avoiding] matters of sexual morality.” (253). In an interview with the author about the short story *A Priest in the Family*, the Ferns Report of 2005 revealing more than 100 allegations of child abuse cases between 1962 and 2005 in the Diocese of Ferns⁴² and St. Peter’s College in Wexford where priests were educated for the Ferns Diocese is mentioned:

That reversal was just one consequence of the Ferns Diocese scandal, and while many of us who grew up in the south-east long suspected that, like any rural region, the place had its ‘Blue Velvet’ side, few could have anticipated that what happened in our backyard would eventually make the cover of Time magazine and hasten the end of the Catholic Church’s iron grip on this country.⁴³

4.3 Narrative Technique

In *A Priest in the Family*, Franz Karl Stanzel’s figural narrative situation can be identified as the thoughts, emotions and inner perspectives of the main character, in this case Molly O’Neill, are presented. Being a reflector character, the internal perspective is portrayed, which also leads to the fact that the reader is provided only with limited

⁴⁰ <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0085020/> May 29 2011, 23:54.

⁴¹ <http://www.theoriginof.com/hotmail.html> May 30 2011, 08:15.

⁴² <http://thedublinreview.com/ferns-report/> June 03 2011, 16:31.

⁴³ <http://thedublinreview.com/ferns-report/> June 03 2011, 16:33.

knowledge, as can be seen in the quotations below. Words such as “she knew” or “she hoped” mediate the intensity of Molly’s perspective:

She believed then that it could not be anything urgent or important. (Tóibín 135)

It would be quiet, she knew, and Miriam the new girl would have time for her, she hoped. (Tóibín 136)

She noticed Jane taking the rosary beads from a small purse and wondered if this were being done deliberately as a way of showing that she had more important things to consider. (Tóibín 139-140)

She touched the radiator in the hallway for a moment and *thought of taking him into the sitting room, but felt then that the kitchen would be easier. She could stand up and make herself busy if she did not want to sit listening to him. In the sitting room, she would be trapped with him.* (Tóibín 140)

It struck her for a moment that it might be the anniversary of Maurice’s death and that he has come to be with her in case she needed his support and sympathy, but she then remembered just as quickly that Maurice had died in the summer and that he had been dead for years and no one paid any attention to his anniversary. She could think of nothing else as she stood up and took her coat odd and draped it over the armchair in the corner. [...] Whatever this was, she thought, she would make sure that he never came to her house unannounced again. (Tóibín 140-141)

He left only when she insisted that he go. [...] *When a car pulled up outside, she knew that it would be the girls, her daughters. The priest would have alerted them and they would want to come now, when the news was raw, and they could arrive together so that neither of them would have to deal with her alone.* (Tóibín 143)

She wondered if they would let him say Mass when he was in prison, or have his vestments and his prayer books. (Tóibín 150)

Basically, when speaking of the figural narrative situation, the third person omniscient narrator’s function is reduced to a minimum. In the example below, the reader can identify the limited presence of the narrator, only providing some information:

Her first thought was that he was blocking her car and she would have to ask him to move. Later, that first thought would stay with her as a strange and innocent way of keeping all other thoughts at a distance; it was something which almost made her smile when she remembered it. (Tóibín 134)

Nancy Brophy was her best friend. (Tóibín 145)

Due to the fact that the characters speak out, which leads to an immediate effect on the reader, the mode of presentation is a typical dramatic or scenic presentation. This is especially achieved by the extensive use of direct speech, as, for example, in dialogues between the main character and Father Greenwood, Miriam, the woman at the library, Jane, her daughters, Nancy and finally Frank.

The large amount of free indirect speech is not only a predominant form of speech in psychological novels (see chapter 3.4), but also present in psychological short stories; the psychological development of the protagonist Molly O'Neill, is described by giving a detailed account of her inner thoughts, feelings and emotions, but in some cases the words "she thought" are added in order to emphasise the character's inner voice:

Anything, she thought, to stop him saying whatever it was he had come to say. (Tóibín 135)

She believed then that it could not be anything urgent or important. *If she could play bridge then clearly no one was dead or injured.* (Tóibín 135)

There was, she thought, nothing to say, and yet there would never be a moment's silence between them. (Tóibín 138)

She realized that he would have seen her in one of the mirrors just as soon as she saw him, so there would be no point in turning back. *If I were not a widow, she thought, he would not do this to me. He would telephone first, minding his manners.* (Tóibín 140)

Immediately she knew what that meant, and then thought no, her first reaction to everything else had been wrong, so maybe this too, maybe she thought, maybe it was not what has automatically come into her mind. (Tóibín 141)

Concerning narrative devices, flashforwards or foreshadowing and flashbacks or retrospective views characterise the time-structure of *A Priest in the Family*. Molly makes a rather short reference to the past when talking to Father Greenwood about the change of the praying tradition (see Tóibín 134), when she visits the library as in "Her fingers had stiffened with age, but her typing was as accurate and fast as when she was twenty." (Tóibín 136), when Jane characterises her as a good card player (see Tóibín 138), when Molly relates to Christmas (see Tóibín 139) and when she reflects on Maurice's death years ago (see Tóibín 140). Allusions to future events, especially flashforwards to particular events covered or not covered in the short story itself, such as when the narrator refers to Molly's morning routine reading "The Irish Times" and watching "Glenroe", when Molly approaches Father Greenwood's car as in "Later, that first thought would stay with her as a strange and innocent way of keeping all other thoughts at a distance; it was something that almost made her smile when she remembered it." (Tóibín 134), when Father Greenwood, later Eileen, Molly and Frank refer to the court hearing on a Thursday (see Tóibín 142, 145, 150) and when Molly refers to summer in a talk with Nancy (see Tóibín 148), are part of the time-structure of the short story.

4.4 Characters and Characterisation

Molly O'Neill

Molly, a widow in her late 70s (see Tóibín 136, 140), is the main character of the short story. According to Miriam, the new girl in the library, Molly looks younger than her actual age (see Tóibín 136). She stays in close contact with her grandchildren and prefers them to her own children: "I'd go mad if a week went by and my lovely grandsons didn't come down on a Wednesday for their tea, and I'm always raging when their mothers come to collect them. I always want to keep the boys." (Tóibín 139). Up to Father Greenwood's second visit, Molly is not informed about Frank's involvement in teenage abuse scandals and, therefore, she feels betrayed by her children and her best friend Jane (see Tóibín 140). However, after her son's revelation, she supports him (see Tóibín 150) and does not want to be a burden to her daughters (see Tóibín 148).

Being a very active person and wanting to keep up-to-date can be seen in a number of incidents throughout the short story, as, for example, her routine of reading "The Irish Times" and watching the latest episode of "Glenroe" (see Tóibín 134), her passion for bridge, although she herself admits that she is getting worse at it (see Tóibín 134, 138), and her existing knowledge and interest in modern technology. Molly uses the video recorder in order to record "Glenroe" as "[s]he worked slowly, concentrating" (Tóibín 134) and gets familiar with some of the basics of computing:

"Look at you Molly, You've gone all modern," one of them said.
 "You have to keep up with what's going on," she said.
 "You never liked missing anything, Molly. You'll get all the news from that now."
 She faced the computer and began to practice opening her Hotmail account [...].
 (Tóibín 136-137)

When her daughters visit her, she is even glad that "[...] she had left her glasses on top of the open newspaper on the table so that it would be clear to them that she had been occupied when they came." (Tóibín 144). Her activeness is also observed by the people around her; especially Father Greenwood characterises her as "[...] a lesson to everyone of your age, out every night" (Tóibín 149) and Molly herself tries to stay occupied (see Tóibín 150).

Concerning Molly's religious conviction, she seems to be unsure and does not believe in the point that life is a prayer: "[...] if I believed in prayer, but I'm not sure I do. But we've talked about that, you know all that." (Tóibín 133) and "She shook her head in disbelief." (Tóibín 134). Moreover, Frank gave up sending Molly the parish newsletter (see Tóibín 139). She has a rather modern view on life in general by referring to the following fact: "Years ago women spent their lives praying. Now, we get our hair done and play bridge and go to Dublin on the free travel, and we say what we like." (Tóibín 134).

An interesting point typical of psychological short stories is that throughout the narrative, Molly's state of mind seems to be connected to the weather condition (see chapter 4.5). She seems to be distant after Father Greenwood's visit as in "[...] she sat at the dining room table and flicked through the newspaper, examining headlines and photographs, but reading nothing, and not even thinking, letting time pass easily." and "She realized that she had forgotten to put butter on the table. She went to the fridge to fetch some." (Tóibín 150). When Father Greenwood informs her about her son's involvement in child abuse scandals, she does not show feelings and reacts drily (see Tóibín 143). Above all, the reader can realise Molly's hate for the rain or the cold, on the one hand, but her indifference to the lack of light during winter (see Tóibín 133), on the other hand, which also stands in connection with her depressive and at one point even suicidal thoughts:

"I dread the long summer days when I wake with the dawn and I think the blackest thoughts. Oh, the blackest thoughts! But I'll be alright until then."
 "Oh, Lord, I must remember that," Nancy said. "I never knew that about you. Maybe we'll go away then." (Tóibín 148)

After her son's revelation, Molly distracts herself by sticking to her life routine and her habits: "Her time was full, and often, in the week after she had received the news of what was coming, she found that she had forgotten briefly what it was, but never for long." (Tóibín 147). People perceive her as an outsider and keep distance (see Tóibín 148).

Father Greenwood

Father Greenwood is an Irish priest and the bearer of the bad news. His bad conscience and his inner conflict are expressed in various situations, as, for example, when he visits

Molly at the beginning of the short story. He seems absent and shows hesitation as in “Father Greenwood sighted and glanced at the window.” (Tóibín 133), asks Molly about Frank (see Tóibín 133), stays in the car in front of her house incapable of leaving (see Tóibín 124-135) and returns to Molly’s house (see Tóibín 140). Moreover, his gestures as in “Father Greenwood, she noticed, had his hands joined in front of him at the table as though ready for prayer.” (Tóibín 141), in “Father Greenwood’s hands were shaking.” (Tóibín 141), his face expression “Father Greenwood smiled at her weakly.” (Tóibín 141) and his tone described as very quiet, “resigned” and “almost forgiving” show his support for Molly. Father Greenwood confesses that he did not have the heart to inform her earlier (see Tóibín 141).

Frank

Frank, an Irish priest, only appears at the end of the short story when he talks to Molly. Throughout the narrative, he is characterised by the people around him. Of course, he is very holy (see Tóibín 134) and Molly describes his engagement in parish work in a conversation to Father Greenwood at the beginning of the action:

“Have you seen Frank lately?” he asked.

“Once or twice since Christmas,” she said. “He has too much parish work to come and visit me very much, and maybe that’s the way it should be. It would be terrible if it was the other way around, if he saw his mother more than his parishioners. He prays for me, I know that [...].” (Tóibín 133)

Moreover, he is mentioned when Molly visits Jane and his name clearly causes a reaction of alarm and nervousness (see Tóibín 139). Father Greenwood is the first person informing Molly about his involvement in child abuse scandals during his teaching at school, an incident and a shock no one would have expected (see Tóibín 148). In the last scene of the short story, Frank appears for the first time having “[...] the face of a small boy.” (Tóibín 148). This is also the point of the narrative where Frank apologises for not having told his mother about the case, probably with the intention to spare his mother (see Tóibín 150).

Minor Characters

Throughout the short story, a number of minor characters can be identified, which however stay in the background. Molly refers to her husband in her conversation with Father Greenwood characterising him as a very holy person. Maurice died some years ago leaving behind his wife and their three children (see *Tóibín* 134, 140). Jane, Molly's sister-in-law, is another character appearing in the short story. In contrast to Molly, Jane who is described as a very religious person, the "[...] holiest one in the family [...]" using the rosary (see *Tóibín* 139), knows about Frank's situation; her tension is expressed in the passages below:

They sat opposite each other as Jane tended the fire almost absent-mindedly. (*Tóibín* 138)

Jane nodded distantly and looked into the fire. (*Tóibín* 138)

"Has Frank been here?" Molly asked.

Jane glanced up at her, almost alarmed. For a moment a look of pain came in her face.

"Oh, Lord, no," she said.

"I haven't seen him much since Christmas either," Molly said, "but you usually know more about him. You read the parish newsletter. He gave up sending it to me."

Jane bowed her head, as though searching for something on the floor. (*Tóibín* 139)

At the end of their conversation, Molly refers to the fact that Jane has grown old, also due to her loneliness "[...] making her responses slower, her jaw set. Her eyes had lost their kind of glow." (*Tóibín* 139). Moreover, Molly's daughters, Eileen and Margaret, who did not have the courage to inform her about Frank's situation, are introduced to the reader. They only support their mother in a way that they propose her to travel to the Canaries for a while, which introduces another minor character, Nancy Brophy, Molly's best friend (see *Tóibín* 145). Being a sensitive person, she is concerned about her friend's situation by telling her that talking is the best remedy. Betty Farrell, another minor character, is a member of the bridge club who offers Molly her help (see *Tóibín* 148).

When Molly visits the library, the reader becomes acquainted with Miriam, the new girl at the library, who helps her with the computing (see *Tóibín* 136). Moreover, there are two women from town returning books to the library who observe Molly "[...] with immense curiosity" and speak to each other "[...] in hushed voices." (*Tóibín* 137).

4.5 Themes and Motifs

4.5.1 Features of ‘Irishness’

Due to the fact that the short story is set in Ireland, the reader can identify some features of ‘Irishness’ and matters belonging to the Irish culture. The “RTE Guide”, RTE standing for “Radio Teilifís Éireann”, being Ireland’s national television and radio broadcaster⁴⁴, the television series “Glenroe”, “The Irish Times” (see Tóibín 134), the references to Ireland’s capital Dublin (see Tóibín 146), and the surnames Brophy and O’Neill, the latter being ranked as the tenth most commonly found surname in Ireland referring to the ancient Celtic king, Niall of the Nine Hostages⁴⁵, are all manifestations of ‘Irishness’.

Throughout the short story, passing remarks are made to some typical Irish food, for example, fishfingers, chips (see Tóibín 147) and toast, and to the tea drinking tradition of Ireland. Tea is not only served to relieve tension as in “It would be easier, more relaxing somehow, she thought, if one of them made tea but Jane was too frail to move very much and too proud to want her sister-in-law in the kitchen.” (Tóibín 138) or “His tone was resigned, almost forgiving. “Would you like me to make you a cup of tea?” he added.” (Tóibín 142), but also as a daily routine at breakfast (see Tóibín 149).

Molly refers to the way of life of an old woman in Ireland, e.g. “She shook her head in great disbelief. “Years ago old women spent their lives praying. Now, we get our hair done and play bridge and go to Dublin on the free travel, and we say what we like.”” (Tóibín 134). Her lack of interest and disbelief in religion is stressed several times in the short story, as, for example, when she refers to the parish letter (see Tóibín 139). On the other hand, the importance of religion is clearly represented by characters such as Father Greenwood stating ““Your whole life’s a prayer, Molly,” Father Greenwood said and smiled warmly.” (Tóibín 134), Jane who makes use of the rosary being described as the ““[...] holiest one in the family...”” (Tóibín 139) and Frank devoting his life to the priesthood (see Tóibín 133).

According to Share and Toby, the religious sensibility of the Irish population is characterised by over 90 per cent, clearly the largest in Europe (see 407). However, the

⁴⁴ <http://www.rte.ie/about/> June 06 2011, 14:27.

⁴⁵ <http://www.ireland-information.com/heraldichall/irishsurnames.htm> June 06 2011, 14:57.

process of secularisation can be seen in the decrease of church attendance, as, for example, from 82 to 72 per cent between 1981 and 1998, whereas the numbers are higher in rural areas, especially among older people. The numbers are lower in cities, such as in Dublin, and among young people, possibly relating to the church scandals, “[...] numerous cases of sexual and physical abuse in church-run institutions, as well as individual cases of sexual and financial abuse.” (409). Moreover, the influence of the media can be interpreted as an “[...] alternative way to pass time and to socialise” (409) promoting other value systems as well. Whereas Molly is representative of the lack of interest in religion, on the one hand, Father Greenwood, Jane and Frank are characterised by their strong beliefs. All characters are familiar with abuse scandals in Ireland, fearing the possible consequences:

“Is there something wrong with Frank?” she interrupted.

Father Flood smiled at her weakly.

“He’s in trouble,” he said.

Immediately she knew what that meant, and then thought no, her first reaction to everything else had been wrong, so maybe this too, maybe, she thought, maybe it was not what had automatically come into her mind.

“Is it...?”

“There’s going to be a court case, Molly.”

“Abuse?” She said the word which was daily in the newspapers and on the television, as pictures appeared of priests with their anoraks over their heads, so that no one would recognize them, being led from courthouses in handcuffs. (Tóibín 141)

In an interview, Colm Tóibín refers to the old truism “A well in the yard; a bull in the field; and a priest in the family”, the significance of the latter changing from “[...] the pinnacle of respectability” to the “black mark”⁴⁶ in the family by referring to the Ferns Diocese Scandal and to the Ferns Report of 2005. The fear of being confronted with an abuse scandal in the family is expressed by Molly’s daughters (see Tóibín 145) and by Father Greenwood (see Tóibín 142). Especially in rural areas, contacts are far more closely knit, information spreads quickly and gossip seems to be part of life:

She turned her head when she heard voices and saw two women from the town returning books to the library. They were studying her with immense curiosity. (Tóibín 137)

[...] she heard them browsing among the stacks of books, speaking to another in hushed voices. (Tóibín 137)

She greeted people she met on the street by name, people she had known all of her life, the children of her contemporaries, many of them grown middle-aged

⁴⁶ <http://www.laurahird.com/newreview/colmtoibininterview.html> June 08 2011, 11:30.

themselves, and even their children, all familiar to her. There was no need to stop and talk to them. She knew all about them, and they about her. When news spread widely that she was learning how to use the computer in the library, one or two of them would ask her how it was going, but for the moment she would be allowed to pass with a kind, brisk greeting. (Tóibín 137)

4.5.2 Ageing and Loneliness

As the short story *A Priest in the Family* is presented through the consciousness of a rather old figural character, the themes of loneliness and ageing are prominent features. At first, the reader might think of Molly being a lonely person, especially when Father Greenwood describes Frank as a person having more contact with his parishioners than with his mother (see Tóibín 133), but, at a second glance, the reader realises that Molly does not primarily suffer from loneliness. Her daily programme, her friends and her family, especially her grandchildren (see Tóibín 139), and her interest in keeping up-to-date with new technology, i.e. learning to use the Internet and a video recorder, reflect her activities and social engagement.

Loneliness is expressed through her sister-in-law Jane who seems to be ageing by spending a large amount of time alone in her house (see Tóibín 139). Therefore, the process of ageing and getting older is a prominent theme in the short story as the reader is not only confronted with an old character, Molly, but also her friend Nancy and her sister-in-law Jane are elderly ladies. Molly, in contrast to Nancy, tries to stay young by adapting to new technology, as, for example, when recording the latest episode of “Glenroe” (see Tóibín 134) or when showing her interest in the Internet and writing e-mails (see Tóibín 136-137). Moreover, she does not seem to be lonely as her weeks are characterised by a full programme: she visits Miriam in the library, is visited by Father Flood, her daughters, her son and her grandsons, plays bridge several times a week and meets other widows of the town. The people she is surrounded by perceive her to be modern and younger than her actual age, as stated by Miriam and two women in the library (see Tóibín 136-137) and by Father Greenwood:

“He says you’re a lesson to everyone of your age, out every night.”
 “Well, as you know, I keep myself busy.”
 “That’s good.” (Tóibín 150)

Molly herself refers to the process of ageing by referring to her physical and mental condition, as can be seen in activities like playing bridge regularly.

Her fingers had stiffened with age, but her typing was as accurate and fast as when she was twenty.

“If I could just type, I’d be fine,” she said now as Miriam moved an office chair close to the computer [...]. (Tóibín 136)

She greeted people she met on the street by name, people she had known all of her life, the children of her contemporaries, many of them grown middle-aged themselves [...]. (Tóibín 137)

“I’m getting worse at it,” Molly replied, “but I’m not as bad as some of them.” [...] “But for bridge you have to remember all the rules and the right bids and I’m too old, but I enjoy it, and then I enjoy when it’s over.” (Tóibín 138)

Jane clearly presents the process of ageing, described by Molly as physically undergoing changes and not being flexible or open enough to adapt to new matters. According to Mullins, “[...] loneliness seems to vary curvilinearly by age. It is highest among adolescents, declines into late middle age, then increases again with advancing older age.” (814). It is therefore especially important to have company:

“I will, Jane, I’ll write him a note. There’s no point in ringing him. You only get the machine. I hate talking into those machines.”

She studied Jane across the room, aware now that all the time her sister-in-law spent alone in this house was changing her face, making her responses slower, her jaw set. Her eyes had lost their kind of glow.

“I keep telling you,” she said, as she stood up to go, “that you should get a video machine. It would be great company. I could bring you down videos.” (Tóibín 139)

Throughout the short story, the reader can identify references to nature, the weather and the season, which symbolically reflect Molly’s condition or states of mind. According to Ferber, winter is often related to age as “[...] old age is described as wintry; it is the last of the four seasons of human life.” (239). Then, at a number of occasions, the reader’s attention is drawn to the darkness of the days in winter (see Tóibín 133, 140, 146), also reflected through Molly’s statements. In general, darkness is related to negative aspects, to “[...] evil, death, ignorance, falsehood, oblivion, and despair.” (Ferber 112). The reader can even observe feelings of depression, as can be seen in the following passage:

“As long as it’s the winter I can manage,” Molly said. “I sleep late in the mornings and I’m kept busy. It’s the summer I dread. I’m not like those people who suffer from that disorder when there’s no light. I dread the long summer days when I wake with the dawn and think the blackest thoughts. Oh, the blackest thoughts! But I’ll be right until then.” (Tóibín 148)

Furthermore, the rainy weather (see Tóibín 136) can be interpreted as “[...] suffering or bad luck [...]” (Ferber 164) and often unhappy moments of life, which also refers to Molly’s situation after her son’s confession of his guilt.

4.6 Approaches to Teaching Colm Tóibín’s Short Story *A Priest in the Family* and the Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning Aspect in the EFL Classroom

This practically oriented section approaches general ideas on teaching and the cross-cultural teaching and learning aspect of Colm Tóibín’s short story.⁴⁷ Due to the fact that the author has claimed that the short story *A Priest in the Family* is “[...] absolutely Enniscorthy”⁴⁸, the teacher will need to include the aspect of Enniscorthy in the classroom as well.

A typical “pre-reading activity” activating the skills of spoken interaction and at the same time spoken production is to work with pictures (see worksheet activity 1). Through the visual input, students are motivated to talk and at the same time they become acquainted with the new subject matter. They could be shown the pictures of Enniscorthy successively or at the same time. This “pre-reading activity” is essential in order to understand the tourist information sheet of Enniscorthy later on and can also be linked with Internet research, for example, identifying and finding information about curiosities. As students are asked to design a tourist information sheet (see worksheet activity 2), they should get familiar with the text type by analysing the core moves. In this case, cross-cultural thinking is applied as students are supposed to relate to their home country by designing a tourist information sheet for a city, a district or a region they are familiar with.

As the short story *A Priest in the Family* is set in a small town in the Irish countryside, it suggests treating the theme of country life in the classroom (see worksheet activity 3). The brainstorming activity aims at familiarisation, necessary for the follow-up activities, namely the analysis of the quotations and the cross-cultural aspect of comparing life in the country in Ireland to the situation in the student’s home country and to draw conclusions of life in the country and in a city. The social format of this activity can vary between individual, pair and group work.

⁴⁷ In this chapter of the thesis, Hedge’s before-mentioned three-phase procedure (see chapter 2.3) consisting of “pre-reading”, “while-reading” and “post-reading activities” will be applied.

⁴⁸ <http://www.laurahird.com/newreview/colmtoibininterview.html> June 14 2011, 11:15.

As already referred to in chapter 3.7, the large amount of interviews with the author about his works is definitely an advantage to the teacher in the EFL classroom. By reading an interview with the class, especially in relation to taboo subjects, students might become interested and motivated to search for further information. Treating taboo subjects, such as sex, torture, religion, alcohol, death, racism, abortion and child abuse in the classroom is a rather controversial topic, but often essential when it comes to language learning, especially when referring to the inter-cultural and cross-cultural aspect. Taboos need to be treated as they exist in all cultures and encounters are possible whenever students are confronted with intercultural communication (see chapter 2.1), one of the main aims of the EFL classroom. Moreover, taboo topics often arouse interest and may lead to productive discussions:

Importantly for teachers, taboos vary from culture to culture. For example, the subject of how much you earn is taboo in the UK but not in other cultures, whereas homosexuality is a subject many British people are comfortable with, but a clear taboo in many other countries. Taboos change as societies change, so topics such as divorce and depression and illnesses such as cancer and AIDS may not be as taboo as they used to be (interestingly, almost no universal taboos have ever been identified, but many are shared by almost all cultures - incest, patricide and cannibalism are three examples).⁴⁹

On the other hand it seems to be clear that taboos are related to emotions and strong reactions on the students' side. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare students carefully in order to prevent offensive or embarrassing situations, conflicts and a negative learning impact in the classroom.⁵⁰

In a way, worksheet activity 4 prepares students for such a taboo subject by working with an interview with Colm Tóibín. As a “pre-reading activity”, students are presented with a picture of the author and his surroundings in order to arouse curiosity. Then, the interview can be read, whereas the reading process is supported by the “while-reading activity” of answering questions. The taboo topic religion in connection with the Catholic child abuse scandals will be introduced in the follow-up activity (see worksheet activity 5). By providing some facts about religion in Ireland, students will automatically start thinking about their own culture and the situation in their home country. However as a first step, information about the religious situation in Ireland has to be linked to some quotations of *A Priest in the Family* so that the actual connection to the primary text, the real context of the taboo topic, remains established, an important

⁴⁹ <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/taboo-classroom> June 14 2011, 10:12.

⁵⁰ <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/taboo-classroom> June 14 2011, 10:22.

aspect when treating taboo subjects in the EFL classroom.⁵¹ The work with the taboo topic is elaborated in worksheet activity 6, a typical writing task. The input of the short text and the short blog posts inform students about the situation, help to generate ideas and activate the planning process of writing. Due to the contextualisation of the task, students “[...] develop a sense of audience [...]” and “[...] awareness of the reader” (Hedge 311), linked to authenticity and to the aspect of dealing with real-life situations in the EFL classroom.

Concerning the short story, the teacher also needs to plan activities directly related to the text. “Pre-reading” and “while-reading activities” are often connected to guessing and creating expectations. Confronting the students with the opening paragraph, some citations or related pictures can serve as an introduction to the short story. Reading up to a certain point and having to do tasks as in a reading diary can be a possible “while-reading activity”. “Post-reading activities” can consist of tasks containing quotations of the short story. This is also a way to deal with characters and characterisation (see worksheet activity 7).

It is important to add that despite the author’s claim that the short story was inspired by a child abuse case in Enniscorthy, the issue of child abuse is a global phenomenon - not only within the Roman Catholic Church, but also in secular communal life (cases of paedophiles, Internet websites of paedophiles, etc).

⁵¹ <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/taboo-classroom> June 14 2011, 10:57.

Worksheet Activity 1: Enniscorthy- First Impressions



Worksheet Activity 2: Tourist Information Sheet Design

Read the tourist information sheet about Enniscorthy.

1. Write down the different parts of a tourist information sheet (=the so-called “moves”) by putting them into the correct order and marking them on the tourist information sheet.

reference to homepage

background information

emergency numbers

information about possible alternative activities and attractions

information about accommodation

information about the audio tour

useful numbers

title

information about activities and attractions

2. Choose a city/ a district/ a region and design a tourist information sheet.

- Include the above-mentioned moves. You can also come up with some extra moves not mentioned above.
- Include visual inputs (pictures).
- Use persuasive language, a clear structure and format in order to convince the audience to travel and to spend a holiday in the city/ the district/ the region.
- Your tourist information sheet should not exceed the size of an A4 page.
- Do not forget to mention the sources from which you have derived your information.

Source: <http://enniscorthytourism.com/downloads/downloads.htm> June 13 2011, 17:34.

Enniscorthy...



Enniscorthy located in the middle of County Wexford in the Sunny South East situated between the Blackstairs Mountains and the Sea and on the main N11 route from Dublin to Rosslare Harbour. Enniscorthy Town is steeped in History, overlooking the town is the famous 1798 historic battle site of Vinegar Hill and to the west stands proud the Gothic Cathedral of Saint Aidans designed by the famous designer Pugin reminding us that Enniscorthy is the Cathedral town of the County.

Enniscorthy was founded by St. Senan in 510. It is a picturesque town situated on the banks of the River Slaney in the middle of Co Wexford making it the perfect destination for your holiday base. Enniscorthy celebrates its 1500 years this 2010 with lots of Activities, Festivals and Events and is the perfect place to holiday this year, with luxury accommodation, nightly entertainment and restaurants from around the world, Irish, Thai, Italian, Chinese, Indian, Mexican as well as Portuguese with all food sourced from local producers where possible.

Located in the centre of the town is the proud Norman Castle which dates from 1205 and now houses the County Wexford Museum expected to reopen after an extensive refurbishment in summer 2010.

Enniscorthy and it's environs have a well developed crafts industry with the oldest pottery in Ireland based near by the town. Every Saturday morning Enniscorthy is fortunate to have its very own 'Farmers Market' in the Abbey Street Square area where you will find many delights of the home produce from Co. Wexford. The All Ireland Farmers Market will take place in Enniscorthy on Sunday 27th June 2010.

A short car journey away you could be walking or trekking the Blackstairs Mountains, swimming in many of the Blue Flag Beaches of Wexford or golfing on one of the many award winning golf courses. There are endless activities around Enniscorthy for the whole family including angling, fishing, equestrian, quad biking, paintballing, water sports as well as open farms. For more detailed information on all the activities & attractions of Enniscorthy visit www.enniscorthytourism.com

Being so centrally located in the South East, Enniscorthy is the perfect base to location in order to tour many of the cities and towns within easy driving distance of it. Wexford 24 km. Waterford 60 km. Kilkenny 58 km. Carlow 50 km. Arklow 47 km. New Ross 32 km. Gorey 29 km.

Audio Heritage Trail

Enniscorthy has it's own walking tour Audio Heritage trail. Your Audio Trail can be collected at the following locations:

Treacys Hotel, Riverside Park Hotel, 1798 Centre and The Town Council Office; to name but a few historic places you will find as you walk around this historic town.

St Aidans Cathedral -
Enniscorthy Castle & County Museum -
(Re opening Summer 2010).
Vinegar Hill -
The National 1798 Rebellion Centre -
The Athenaeum -

Map Grid B4
Map Grid C6

Map Grid C8
Map Grid F5
Map Grid C5

Enniscorthy - the way of having fun - we've got living it up down to a fine art! There's an amazing amount going on! Perfect for an extended party with the gang, family fun filled holiday or a few days away with that special someone. Live your life! Go on, have the getaway of your life! Whatever you're interested in or love to do, you'll find it here in County Wexford... for more on any of the following activities as well as so much more Log onto - www.enniscorthytourism.com

Activities & Attractions

Enniscorthy and Wexford County is filled with things to see and do here are a few of the attractions that are on offer around the County.

Beaches

Courtown 35 Km, Duncannon 45Km, Curracloe / Ballinsekar (Saving Private Ryan Movie Made Here) 20Km, Carne Beach 43 Km, Kilmore Quay 42 Km.

Golf

With some of the finest golf courses in the county Wexford offers the finest weather conditions in Ireland perfect for any golfer. There are numerous Golf Courses within a 30 minute drive of Enniscorthy. To Name a few Enniscorthy 5 Km, Bundclody 20 Km, St Helens 36 Km, New Ross 32 Km, Mount Wolsey 40 Km, Coolattin 40 Km, Courtown 36 Km, Seafeld 41 Km and Rosslare 36 Km. Why not extend your stay and play a number of these wonderful courses for variety.

Quad Biking

www.quadattack.ie Tel: 053-9244660 16 Km
Quad Attack continues to provide the best all weather cross-country driving thrill for all ages.
The challenging course is spread out over 80 acres under the scenic backdrop of the Blackstairs Mountains.

Paintball

www.deltaforcepaintballing.ie 087-0552713 17 Km
Ever thought of joining the army? Well here's your chance to see what it's about first hand, with 60 acres of forest to camouflage yourself with.

Cycling

Co. Wexford has its own cycle routes. Starting in Enniscorthy you can have both half and full day trips around the many cycle routes signposted around Wexford County. There are numerous mountain bike trails. Bikes can be rented in Wexford town from Des O'Neill 053-91-22462 where you can also pick up your route maps.

Equestrian

You will find a number of equestrian centres located around Enniscorthy with treks for beginners to the more experienced rider with forest, beach or mountain treks.

Monart Equestrian 5 Km, Belmont Equestrian 17Km, Butterfly Farm Equestrian 17Km, Ballyellen Equestrian 32 Km, Old Court Stables 32 Km, Shelmallee Riding Stables 25Km, Kingsford Equestrian Centre 24Km and Liosin Riding Centre 36Km.

Walking & Hiking

Rich and winding forest parks offer a haven for keen walkers and nature lovers alike who relish the natural beauty of the great outdoors. Rugged mountain tops such Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs may entice first time hikers or walkers to the outdoor adventure. Some of the more popular walking trails are, The Raven 20 Km, Hook Head 57 Km, Curracloe Beach 20km, Carrigbyrne Hill 25 km, Mount Leinster 30 Km, Our Ladies Island 42 Km and Edenvale Castlebridge 22 Km.



Angling & Fishing

Forget all your worries and try out one of the many angling farms located in Co. Wexford. Loch Mahon Lakes Adamstown Tel: 053-9240407 or Oaklands Lake, New Ross Tel: 051-445348 Alternatively enjoy some of the extensive sea shore and river angling available in the county.

Cookery Schools

For cookery enthusiasts of all levels there are full day courses available, advancing your culinary repertoire with courses designed to suit all levels of skill, tastes and interest there's something for everyone.... Dunbrody House Cookery School Tel: 051-389600 and Phelim Byrne Cookery Academy Tel: 053-9184995

Sports Centres

Within Enniscorthy Town you will find Tennis Courts F4, Soccer and GAA Pitches B1, Astro Turf A1, Hurling and Rugby grounds C1.

Greyhound Stadium D1

An action packed evening every Monday and Thursday at the Enniscorthy Greyhound. Stadium first race 8pm.

Shopping

Enniscorthy town is fortunate to have an array of excellent clothes and shoe boutiques, arts, crafts, pottery and gift shops, so why not enjoy a relaxing day of shopping and see what wonders you can find. Main Shopping Area highlighted in Orange on map.

Pampering

You will find many beauticians and hairdressers located around the town including Monart award winning Destination 5 Star Spa.

Night-Life

Enniscorthy's vibrant town comes alive with live music and entertainment to be found through-out the town nightly to suit every age and taste, as well numerous Festivals throughout the year bringing the very best in music to every corner of the town. Popular Night life areas high-lighted in purple on the town map.

Something for the Children

Enniscorthy Town has 2 public play grounds for children of all ages one located at The Fair Green B3, and the other on the promenade beside the Riverside Park Hotel F6. There is a public swimming pool and a cinema located in Templeshannon beside Treacys Hotel B6.

There are a number of open farms around Enniscorthy where kids can pet and feed the farm animals, Secret Valley Adventure Farm, Blackwater Open Farm, Shrule Pet Farm, Kia Ora Mini Farm. There are also numerous adventure centres, Pirates Cove Courtown, Ross Adventure Playbarn, Wexford Playzone, Leisure Max Bowling, Laser Mania Wexford, as well as plenty of countryside for the children to play

Adventure Days

Shielbeggan Outdoor Adventures based in Duncannon but have activity sites all over Wexford Tel: 051-389550
Have fun filled adventure days for all the family. Sea Kayaking, abseiling, surfing, white water adventures and coasteering.

Recommended Day Trips

Ferns Castle 12km Tel: 053-9366411
Boolavogue Fr Murphy Centre & Ballymore Historic Features 19km Tel: 053-9366898
Craanford Mills Gorey 28km Tel: 053-9428124
Dunbrody Famine Ship New Ross 32 km Tel: 051-425239 www.dunbrody.com
Kennedy Homestead, New Ross 39 km Tel: 051-388264 www.kennedyhomestead.com
JFK Park , New Ross 39 km Tel: 051-388264
Johnstown Castle Gardens Wexford Town, 30 km Tel: 053-9171247
Irish Agricultural Museum Johnstown Castle 30 km Tel: 053-9171247 www.irishagrimuseum.ie
Selskar Abbey Wexford Town 26 km
Our Lady's Island 40 km
Wexford Opera House Wexford Town, 26 km Tel: 053-9122400 www.wexfordopera.com
Hook Lighthouse, Hook Head, Fethard-on-Sea 57 km Tel: 051-397054 www.thehook-wexford.com
Wexford Wildfowl Reserve Ardavan Wexford 26 km Tel: 053-9123129



Hotels

Treacys Hotel 053-9237798 www.treacyshotel.com
Riverside Park Hotel: 053-92-37800 www.riversideparkhotel.com
Monart Spa 053-92-38999 www.monart.ie

Useful Numbers:

Catholic Church (St Aidans) 053-92-35777/35477
Catholic Church (St Senan's) 053-92-37611
Church of Ireland 053-92-33415
Methodist Church 0402-69682
Presbyterian Church 053-92-33415
Bus Eireann 051-87900
Railway Station 053-92-33488
Community Workshop 053-92-33069

Emergency Numbers

Ambulance 053-9142233 or 999 or 112
Caredoc 1850 334 999
Clinic 053-92-33465
Fire Brigade 999 or 112
Garda Station 053-92-42580
Wexford General Hospital 053-91-5300

Worksheet Activity 3: Country Life vs. City Life



1. Brainstorming

Reflect on country life in your home country.

- *What is life in the country like? Name some features of country life.*

2. Analysis

The quotations below are taken from Colm Tóibín's short story "A Priest in the Family".

Reflect on country life in Ireland.

- *In what ways is life in the country described? Name some features of country life.*
- *Do these features apply to Austrian country life as well? Why? Why not?*

Later, when she felt she had used enough of Miriam's patience, she walked toward the cathedral and down Main Street into Irish Street. She greeted people she met on the street by name, people she had known all of her life, the children of her contemporaries, many of them grown middle-aged themselves, and even their children, all familiar to her. There was no need to stop and to talk to them. She knew all about them, and they about her. When news spread widely that she was learning how to use the computer in the library, one or two of them would ask her how it was going, but for the moment she would be allowed to pass with a kind, brisk greeting. (Tóibín 137)

She turned her head when she heard voices and saw two women from the town returning books to the library. They were studying her with immense curiosity. [...] She faced the computer and began to practice opening her Hotmail account as Miriam went to attend to the women, and she did not turn again when she heard them browsing among the stacks of books, speaking to one another in hushed voices. (Tóibín 137)

"Does anyone else know this? Can you answer a straight question?"

"It's known about all right, Molly," Father Greenwood said gently.

"Do the girls know?"

"They do, Molly."

"Does Jane know?"

"The girls told her last week."

"It's being talked about all right," Father Greenwood said. (Tóibín 142)

The town during the next week seemed almost new to her. [...] A few times, when people stopped to talk to her, she was unsure if they knew about her son's disgrace, or if they too had become so skilled at the plain language of small talk that they could conceal every thought from her, every sign, as she could from them. (Tóibín 147)

3. Conclusions

In general, what are the advantages and disadvantages of living in the country? Discuss.

Worksheet Activity 4: Interview Colm Tóibín on the Short Story *A Priest in the Family*

1. Look at the picture of the author and describe it.

- What is Colm Tóibín doing?
- Where do you think was the picture taken?



2. Read the interview below and answer the following questions.

- What was the people's reaction to Colm Tóibín's literary prizes?
- What is meant by "Celtic Tiger" and in what ways can this term be related to Colm Tóibín's success? Search for information on the Internet.
- What do the author and the interviewer have in common?
- What is the main topic of Colm Tóibín's short story "A Priest in the Family"?
- Explain what the interviewer means by stating "[...] the old truism about a priest in the family being the pinnacle of respectability."
- According to the author, what has mainly caused the decline of the Catholic Church's influence in Ireland? Why?

Colm Tóibín interviewed by Peter Murphy

[...] Enniscorthy-born novelist Colm Tóibín was a boarder at St Peter's from 1970-72 before moving onto UCD and establishing himself as one of the country's most acclaimed (and prolific) journalists and authors. He'd left before the college reached its peak Fellini years in the 70s and 80s, but the subject of institutionalised sexual scandal forms the background to two of the short stories in his current 'Mothers & Sons' collection, his first book since 2004's 'The Master', winner of the IMPAC award, the biggest literary prize in the world.

"Everywhere I went people were just congratulating me and saying it was marvellous," Tóibín says of the win. "I don't know if it's the Celtic Tiger thing or the patriotic thing or just people being really nice, but there wasn't one fucker who stopped me and said, 'There's the fuckin' millionaire.'"

Sipping mineral water in the Conrad Hotel lounge, Tóibín rejuvenates old adjectives like 'charming' and 'gregarious'. We'd never met, but having grown up in the same small town, and with only 13 years between us, it turns out we have no shortage of mutual friends and acquaintances. Indeed, once the tape is turned off, the writer takes great relish in relating salacious tales of prominent Wexfordians, not to mention filling me in on the local and autobiographical details of the new stories.

Of those stories, 'The Use Of Reason' and 'A Priest In The Family' deal with the subject of institutionalised abuse in a tangential rather than direct fashion. In the former, a Dublin gangster recalls the psycho-sexual punishing of a fellow inmate in an industrial home, while the latter is a Bergman-like study of a mother dealing with fallout from her clergyman son's involvement in a paedophile scandal. [...]

'A Priest In The Family' one just occurred to me one day. It's absolutely Enniscorthy, I was just trying to get a set of streets I knew that she could walk in and stuff."

It's also a neat inversion of the old truism about a priest in the family being the pinnacle of respectability.

"I put the quote at the back of the book, 'A well in the yard; a bull in the field; and a priest in the family.' No-one knows that quote except me. Did you know it?"

I did indeed.

“It must be a Wexford thing then. But by that year, a priest in the family became a black mark.”

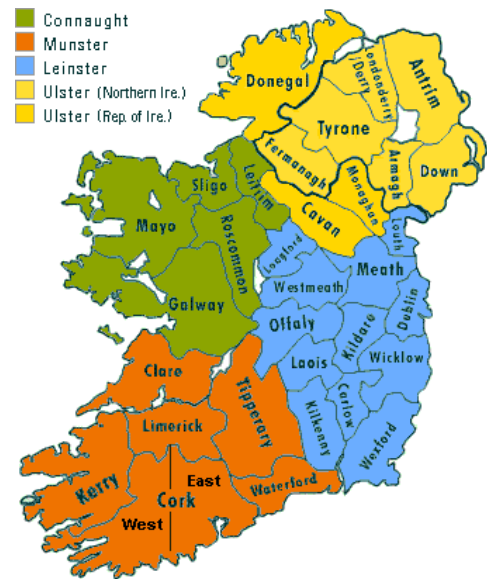
That reversal was just one consequence of the Ferns Diocese scandal, and while many of us who grew up in the south-east long suspected that, like any rural region, the place had its ‘Blue Velvet’ side, few could have anticipated that what happened in our backyard would eventually make the cover of Time magazine and hasten the end of the Catholic Church’s iron grip on this country. [...]

Source: <http://www.laurahird.com/newreview/colmtoibininterview.html> June 13 2011, 10:41.

Worksheet Activity 5: Religion in Ireland

1. Read the facts concerning religion in Ireland.

- About 94% of the people of Ireland are Roman Catholics, fewer than 4% are Protestants (Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist denominations). Freedom of worship is guaranteed by the constitution.
- The religious sensibility of the Irish population is characterised by over 90%, clearly the largest in Europe.
- Still, the process of secularisation can be seen in the decrease of church attendance, decline in the family rosary and family prayer.
- Church attendance is higher in rural areas (the highest in Connacht/ Ulster) and among older people and lower in urban areas (the lowest in Dublin) and among younger people. In 2006, 60% attended mass regularly, but this is a huge decline on the 85% who attended 25 years ago.
- Reasons for the decline in religious practice: sexual and physical abuse in church-run institutions, individual cases of sexual and financial abuse, secularisation, the influence of the media as an alternative way to pass time and to socialise, change of value systems.



Sources: <http://www.dochara.com/the-irish/facts/about-religion/> June 13 2011, 09:33.

Share, Perry, and Tovey, Hilary. *A Sociology of Ireland*. 2nd ed. Cork: Carrigboy Typesetting Services, 2003.

2. In what ways can the facts above be linked to the quotations below from Colm Tóibín's short story "A Priest in the Family"? Be careful about stereotyping!

"Have you seen Frank lately?" he asked.

"Once or twice since Christmas," she said. "He has too much parish work to come and visit me very much, and maybe that's the way it should be. It would be terrible if it was the other way around, if he saw his mother more than his parishioners. He prays for me, I know that, and I would pray for him, too, if I believed in prayer, but I'm not sure I do. But we've talked about that, you know all that."

"Your while life's a prayer, Molly," Father Greenwood said and smiled warmly. She shook her head in disbelief.

"Years ago the old women spent their lives praying. Now, we get our hair done and play bridge and go to Dublin on the free travel, and we say what we like. But I've got to be careful what I say in front of Frank, he's very holy. He got that from his father. It's nice having a son as a priest who's very holy. He's one of the old school. But I can say what I like to you."

"There are many ways of being holy," Father Greenwood said.

"In my time there was only one," she replied. (Tóibín 134)

Jane bowed her head, as though searching for something on the floor.

"I must tell him to call in to you," Molly said. "I don't mind him neglecting his mother, but neglecting his aunt, and she the holiest in the family..." (Tóibín 139)

Immediately she knew what that meant, and then thought no, her first reaction to everything else had been wrong, so maybe this too, maybe, she thought, maybe it was not what had automatically come into her mind.

"Is it...?"

"There's going to be a court case, Molly."

"Abuse?" She said that word which was daily in the newspapers and on the television, as pictures appeared of priests with their anoraks over their heads, so that no one would recognize them, being led from courthouses in handcuffs.

"Abuse?" she asked again.

Father Greenwood's hands were shaking. He nodded.

"It's bad, Molly."

"In the parish?" she asked.

"No," he said, "in the school. It was a good while ago. It was when he was teaching." (Tóibín 141)

3. Search for information about the religious situation in your home country on the Internet. Quote the sources!

4. Compare the religious situation in Ireland to your findings about your home country. What conclusions can you draw?

Worksheet Activity 6: Internet Blog Post

The section "Have Your Say" of the BBC News debated on the topic concerning child abuse scandals.

1. *Read the text and the five Internet blog posts below.*
2. *Respond to one blog post and finally write your own post by answering "Is the Catholic Church doing enough to address these child abuse scandals? Does the Pope's letter go far enough? How has he handled the situation?" Write about 200 words per comment.*

How to write a blog post?

- The title and the first two or three sentences of your blog should be catchy to encourage readers to read your blog post.
- Stick to the topic and your points.
- Highlight your opinion by using phrases such as "As far as I am concerned...", "Personally, I think...", "I would say/ suggest/ like to point out/ add that...", "Some people say/ believe/ are convinced/ might be of the opinion that...", "It is justifiable/ unjustifiable/ important/ essential that...", etc.


[Sign in](#)
[News](#) | [Sport](#) | [Weather](#) | [Travel](#) | [TV](#)

NEWS **Have Your Say**

[« Previous](#) | [Main](#) | [Next »](#)

Can Catholic Church overcome child abuse scandals?

10:39 UK time, Thursday, 18 March 2010

Pope Benedict XVI has apologised to victims of child sex abuse by Roman Catholic priests in Ireland. What is your reaction?

In a pastoral letter to Irish Catholics, he acknowledged the sense of betrayal in the Church felt by victims and their families and expressed "shame and remorse".

The Pope said those guilty of abuse must "answer before God and properly constituted tribunals for the sinful and criminal actions they have committed".

The letter addressed only the scandal in Ireland, not the other cases of abuse which have recently come to light in other countries across Europe, including in the pope's native Germany.

Is the Catholic Church doing enough to address these child abuse scandals? Does the Pope's letter go far enough? How has he handled the situation?

This debate has now been closed. Thank you for your comments.

30. At 11:53am on 18 Mar 2010, **gingerheroine** wrote:

I find this whole story absolutely horrifying. In answer to the question posed - 'can the Catholic church overcome the child abuse scandal' - my answer is yes it CAN (the catholic church can quite clearly do whatever it likes with little rebuke) but no it SHOULDN'T be able to.

I do not have the words at my disposal to express how horrific and shameful this episode is. How the catholic church can lecture on issues such as homosexuality, contraception, sex outside of marriage and other harmless issues and yet cover up horrific crimes on such a massive scale is honestly beyond my comprehension. The sooner the Catholic church - and all religions - are wiped out, the better.

109. At 1:09pm on 18 Mar 2010, **Frank Radcliffe** wrote:

Child abuse, where ever it occurs, is an abomination. There is absolutely no excuse for it.

I am a Roman Catholic and and I am proud to say that. In fact I would go as far as saying I would rather be a Roman Catholic than any other Christian religion.

What has happened in this case is in excusable and is a slur on the church and in particular those who administer it.

I don't know what the answer is, I don't know if the church will recover.

All I can say is, I hope and pray that there are very few of these evil people around, I will always be a Roman Catholic, I will always be proud to be a Roman Catholic. At the same time though I will always vigorously condemn conduct like this and or any person who tries to hide or protect it.

124. At 1:24pm on 18 Mar 2010, **Colin100** wrote:

If the Catholic church allowed its staff to express their sexuality through normal conventional channels (e.g. by permitting and expecting its priests to take a spouse), that sexuality wouldn't need to rear its head in ugly ways.

Abusive priests are proof that every person's sexuality needs a regular outlet and shouldn't be suppressed. Try and suppress it, e.g. by a rule of celibacy and prohibitions against all sexual behaviour, and you get unfortunate consequences.

117. At 1:17pm on 18 Mar 2010, **Lloyd Belle** wrote:

If the Catholic Church stopped this silly self imposed celibacy rule and allowed themselves a family life with wife and children, just like many other people who have a religious vocation, then I am sure these child abuse scandals would not be so rife amongst the Catholic Priesthood.

Will it ever get any better? No. The celibacy rule will stay, and should a priest get caught abusing children in the future the priesthood will always turn to God to sort their unholy mess, rather than contacting the police.

533. At 10:18am on 19 Mar 2010, **M Spalding** wrote:

As an active Catholic its worth pointing out that the church and the faith of a billion people is not at stake here. Not even nearly. What are being discussed are terrible crimes, considered so by catholics too. The offenders and their colluders must and should be found out and punished. Reparations must be paid to the victims. And of course the crimes are so much worse because of the moral trust often awarded to these same people. The punishments should be made to fit that fact too.

But the faith of Catholics and all Christians doesn't depend on those priests, but on a much more fundamental creed. I personally feel ashamed that members of my church have done these acts. I think the church must look hard into itself and make significant change to prevent this ever happening again. Perhaps that will include changes to the traditions around celibacy. But don't expect me or others like me to suddenly turn around and abandon our beliefs. Those are based on an immense foundation of history, tradition, theology and above all direct experience.

Source:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/haveyoursay/2010/03/can_catholic_church_overcome_c.html

June 13 2011, 12:04.

Worksheet Activity 7: Character Profiling

Look at the citations below.

What are the distinctive features of Molly's character? What conclusions can you draw from Molly's behaviour?

"Once or twice since Christmas," she said. "He has too much parish work to come and visit me very much, and maybe that's the way it should be. It would be terrible if it was the other way around, if he saw his mother more than his parishioners. He prays for me, I know that, and I would pray for him, too, if I believed in prayer, but I'm not sure I do. But we've talked about that, you know all that." (Tóibín 133)

She turned her head when she heard voices and saw two women from the town returning books to the library. They were studying her with immense curiosity.

"Look at you, Molly. You've gone all modern," one of them said.

"You have to keep up with what's going on," she said. (Tóibín 137)

She greeted people she met on the street by name, people she had known all of her life, the children of her contemporaries, many of them grown middle-aged themselves, and even their children, all familiar to her. There was no need to stop and talk to them. She knew all about them, and they about her. (Tóibín 137)

"As long as it's winter I can manage," Molly said. "I sleep late in the mornings and I'm kept busy. It's the summer I dread. I'm not like those people who suffer from that disorder when there's no light. I dread the long summer days when I wake with the dawn and think the blackest thoughts. Oh, the blackest thoughts! But I'll be all right until then." (Tóibín 128)

"We'll do the best we can for you, Frank," she said.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

When he lifted his head and took her with a glance, he had the face of a small boy.

"I mean, whatever we can do, and none of us will be going away. I'll be here."

"Are you sure you sure you don't want to go away?" he asked in a half-whisper.

"I am certain, Frank." (Tóibín 150-151)

5. Colm Tóibín's Short Story *A Summer Job*

5.1 Plot

The short story *A Summer Job* depicts Frances's view of her son's relationship and devotion to his grandmother. Having stayed with his grandmother every summer up to now, Frances expects from her son, John, to spend another summer at her mother's. Although John wants to work with his friends in a strawberry factory in the town, he is more or less convinced by his mother. In winter, the old woman dies and due to John's denial to sit with his grandmother, Frances is not sure whether her mother's death can be seen as "[...] the lifting of burden for John or a loss which he could not contemplate." (Tóibín 196).

5.2 Setting and Background

At the beginning of the short story, the action is set in a hospital, John's birth place (see Tóibín 183). Then, the town is mentioned where John grows up and where he has an interview for the summer job in the strawberry factory (see Tóibín 188). However, the reader does not learn the actual name of the town. Williamstown, a small village in North Galway⁵², is characterised by a post office (see Tóibín 183, 184, 186), "[...] a few kindred spirits [...]", forty miles from the above-mentioned town (see Tóibín 184) and the old woman's house. John's bedroom in the first floor with "[...] new wallpaper and [...] a new bed. On the chest of drawers lay a stack of shirts, all freshly ironed, a few pairs of jeans, shaving cream, a new fancy razor and a special shampoo" (Tóibín 186) and with "[...] his own boots and duffle coat, pajamas, books, and comics" (Tóibín 185), the farm and the field John set aside for hurling (see Tóibín 187, 190), the hill near the house (see Tóibín 191), the road (see Tóibín 195) and the old woman's room (see Tóibín 194) are described in the course of the short story. References are also made to the hurling pitch where John's hurling events take place (see Tóibín 188, 191), the strawberry factory (see Tóibín 188), John's school (see Tóibín 189), Rosslare Strand (see Tóibín 192), the Kelly's Hotel, a "[...] resort hotel [running] for four generations

⁵² <http://williamstown.galway-ireland.ie/> June 20 2011, 09:35.

since 1895 [...]”⁵³, Kilmore Quay (see Tóibín 193), England (see Tóibín 194) and Williamstown’s church (see Tóibín 195).

Concerning the actual time, the action opens with John’s birth (see Tóibín 183) and moves to late night when the decision on the name is being taken (see Tóibín 184). Then, the time switches to the time after his birth, when he is four or five, when he is seven or eight and stays at his grandmother’s for a month and, finally, when he is twelve and spends the entire summer at his grandmother’s (see Tóibín 185).

The next point in time is introduced by “One summer when Frances drove him to Williamstown [...]” (Tóibín 186), then Frances’s visit and John’s return back home are described (see Tóibín 188). Time moves to late August, winter and spring, the month of May when John applies for the summer job in the strawberry factory (see Tóibín 188) and a week later when he is accepted and learns that he can start in the second week of June (see Tóibín 189), and to the summer John spends with his grandmother. During the summer holidays, Frances’s day to Rosslare Strand and Kelly’s Hotel is described in detail especially when she meets her son and her mother in the hotel restaurant (see Tóibín 192-193).

The last point in time centres on the old woman’s death in winter, after Christmas and New Year. Then, the two or three weeks before the death, the last week and the late Friday evening upon her death and the Saturday morning are described (see Tóibín 194). All in all, the reader can observe that the time span of the short story covers about ten months, starting in late August when John returns home from his grandmother (see Tóibín 188) to the time of his grandmother’s death in January (see Tóibín 196). However, due to the occurrence of the narrative devices of flashforwards and flashbacks, the actual time span of the plot covers a larger time span (see chapter 5.3).

5.3 Narrative Technique

Franz Karl Stanzel’s figural narrative situation can be identified as the thoughts, emotions and inner perspectives of the main character, Frances, are presented. Being a reflector character, the internal perspective is portrayed, which also leads to the fact that the reader is confronted with limited knowledge. The omniscient narrator clearly stays

⁵³ <http://www.kellys.ie/home.html> June 20 2011, 10:14.

in the background, only providing the reader with background knowledge when necessary:

She had no idea why she stayed for four days. (Tóibín 183)

Frances was not sure what age he was when he began to go to Williamstown for a month in the summer [...]. (Tóibín 185)

Frances loved John for not giving his grandmother the slightest hint as to his unwillingness to stay with her all summer, but as she waved at him before she drove away, he gave her a look which suggested that he would not forgive her for a long time. (Tóibín 191)

She had no idea what he was thinking or feeling. [...] Frances did not know whether her going was the lifting of a burden for John or a loss which he could not contemplate. (Tóibín 196)

Throughout the short story, the characters speak out, which leads to an immediate effect on the reader. Therefore, the mode of presentation is a typical dramatic or scenic presentation, as can be seen when analysing the extensive use of direct speech, as, for example, in dialogues between Frances and her mother, John and his grandmother and John and his mother. As the short story is conveyed through the reflector figure, the inner thoughts, feelings and emotions are revealed. In some cases phrases like “Frances realized [...]” (Tóibín 187), “She noticed that [...]” (Tóibín 192) and “She thought that [...]” (Tóibín 194) are added in order to emphasise Frances’ voice. Moreover, the reader is confronted with the fact that the reflector figure draws her knowledge of information from the people she is surrounded by, as can be seen by phrases such as “She learned that [...]” (Tóibín 187) and “[...] she heard various reports about [...] she was told [...]” (Tóibín 191).

The time-structure of *A Summer Job* is characterised by flashbacks and flashforwards; especially the beginning of the short story starting with John’s birth (see Tóibín 183) until “She purred, as though the thought gave her great satisfaction.” (Tóibín 187) can be seen as a long flashback enabling the narrator to provide the reader with background information. At the end of the short story, a rather short reference to a future event, putting Frances’ mother into a coffin and bringing her to the church, is provided to the reader, which, however, does not occur at the end of the narrative.

5.4 Characters and Characterisation

Frances

On the one hand, Frances, John's mother, seems to be jealous by making fun of her son's special relationship to his grandmother, as in "'No wonder you come here,'" she said. "We don't treat you properly at home. Ironed shirts! Done by your special girlfriend!'" (Tóibín 186) and "'God help the woman who marries you.'" (Tóibín 189) or his grandmother's life, as in "Even when she made remarks about the more comic customers of his grandmother's post office[,] [...] John did not share her amusement." and "[...] he did not smile or acknowledge his special place in her house." (Tóibín 186), but, on the other hand, she is clearly content with John's situation (see Tóibín 187).

Especially when John becomes older, the reader can observe Frances as the main force behind his stay in Williamstown. She talks to John, makes him have a guilty conscience by referring to his grandmother's condition and takes decisions for him:

"What's your grandmother going to do?" Frances asked. "Only yesterday she was on the phone saying how much she was looking forward to June and your coming to stay. We were there two weeks ago and you heard her yourself." [...] "She's old, John, she's not going to last. Just do one more summer with her and I'll make sure that you won't have to do another if you don't want to?" (Tóibín 189)

"Why do you want to do the interview if you know you can't take the job?" (Tóibín 189)

"You can't go to her every summer and then when she's old and weak, decide you have better things to do." [...] she knew he had accepted his fate [...]. (Tóibín 189-190)

"You can hurl all summer in the field your grandmother set aside for you. And keep in mind that it might be her last summer and she has been very good to you. So you can pack your bags now." (Tóibín 190)

Moreover, her son spending time with his grandmother for the entire summer is also an indicator for Frances's lack of interest in her mother. In fact, she is happy to leave her son with her mother (see Tóibín 190). The relationship between John and his mother is characterised through distance; when Frances drops off her son at her mother's (see Tóibín 191) and when Frances and her son meet at Kelly's Hotel (see Tóibín 190-193), John is described as being physically and mentally absent, avoiding contact with his mother. Only at the end of the short story, it appears as if she realises that she has

misunderstood and misinterpreted her son's relationship to his grandmother: "Frances did not know whether her going was the lifting of a burden for John or a loss which he could not contemplate." (Tóibín 196).

Frances's Mother

Frances's mother, named "the old woman" (Tóibín 183) by the reflector character, is described as a person interested in politics, religion, news and other people (see Tóibín 183) and reflecting the generation of traditions: "[...] how proud she was that the name was being carried on in the family in a time when the fashion was all for the new names, including the names of film stars and pop stars." (Tóibín 184).

Concerning her physical condition, she is described as very old and weak, as in "[...] but the old woman herself was too frail to walk up the lane to see John playing." (Tóibín 187), she walks with a stick (see Tóibín 190), she has hearing and respiration problems (see Tóibín 192) and, therefore, "[...] it was clear to Frances that she was ill." (Tóibín 190). Moreover, at the end of the short story, Frances realises not only "[...] the way her mouth hung open when she was not speaking [...] [, but also] a sort of deadness in her eyes." (Tóibín 193).

Although she does not seem to be interested in children in general, this character develops a special kind of relationship to her grandson from the beginning, visiting her daughter when John is born: "Her mother, Frances thought, was interested in most things, but not children, unless they were ill or had excelled in some subject, and certainly not babies. She had no idea why she stayed for four days." (Tóibín 183) and "[...] watching out for him, [...] [being] on his side" (Tóibín 185) when he gets older. Clearly, their relationship is characterised by closeness and contact, they talk on the telephone, she visits him and they enjoy spending time together (see Tóibín 185). Obviously the character is fond of John and devotes all her energy in satisfying her grandson. She sets aside a field for John for his hurling training (see Tóibín 187), organises everything for the driving licence and the car (see Tóibín 190-191) and is clearly proud of her grandson: "[...] the old woman addressed the table. "I hope you are all as lucky as I am, having a grandson as handsome and helpful in your old age."" and ""[...] the best driver in Ireland."" (Tóibín 193).

John

During the long flashback at the beginning of the short story, the development of the relationship between John and his grandmother is described (see Tóibín 183-187). He is depicted as a popular young man “[...] [moving] effortlessly through the world” (Tóibín 186), having a lot of friends and being interested in hurling and getting into the minor team (see Tóibín 190). John is representative of the interest change from a child to an adolescent as well. Although he does not seem to feel comfortable staying with his grandmother, the reader can observe that he feels more ambition to work in the strawberry factory in the town (see Tóibín 188) and training his hurling skills (see Tóibín 189), clearly the priorities of a teenager. Still, he is convinced by his mother to spend the summer with his grandmother, to please his mother and not to have a bad conscience. Not only his distance to his mother, but also his subliminal expression of feelings, as in “[...] he gave her a look which suggested that he would not forgive her for a long time.” (Tóibín 191) and “He shrugged as if to say that he would give nothing away, she could look at him as long as she liked.” (Tóibín 196), refer to his inner conflict. Due to the presence of Frances as a reflector character, the reader does not experience his feelings and state of mind; therefore, it is unsure whether his grandmother’s death “[...] was lifting a burden for John or a loss which he could not contemplate.” (Tóibín 196).

Minor Characters

Among the minor characters of *A Summer Job*, the reader can categorise Jim, Frances’s husband, who only turns up at the beginning of the short story (see Tóibín 183) and in the middle when he does not seem to be excited about hurling (see Tóibín 188). Then, Bill, Frances’s brother, who does not live on the farm anymore, but still works there, is mentioned. Further characters are the old woman’s grandsons (see Tóibín 185), John’s friends (see Tóibín 189), a local nurse (see Tóibín 194) and the women from the golf club (see Tóibín 191).

5.5 Themes and Motifs

5.5.1 Features of ‘Irishness’

Of course as the short story is set in Ireland, a number of places are mentioned. Rural life, living in the country (see Tóibín 184) and meeting people by chance (see Tóibín 191) are some features that can be found when the old woman’s surroundings and the place where John spends his summer holidays are described:

[...] her small post office, her books, her daily *Irish Times*, her special selected television and radio programs, and a few kindred spirits with whom she exchanged views about current events. (Tóibín 184)

In a short remark, Irish names are referred to, characterising them negatively and describing their difficult pronunciation by stating that “[...] the fashion was all for new names, including the names of film stars and pop stars. “The Irish names are the worst, Frances,” her mother said. “You couldn’t even pronounce them.”” (Tóibín 184). Furthermore, family traditions are reflected in the old woman’s wish of carrying on names.

Not only the novel *Brooklyn* and the short story *A Priest in the Family* contain elements of the tea drinking tradition in Ireland, but also in *A Summer Job* this feature of ‘Irishness’ is presented (see Tóibín 185).

When speaking of sports in Ireland, Eagleton describes the Irish as “[...] physically robust [...]” (155), referring to the Irish hurling tradition and the popularity of golf. In *A Summer Job* the interest in hurling is represented by John and his siblings watching hurling matches (see Tóibín 185). Moreover John’s grandmother organises a field to be set aside in order to be used for hurling (see Tóibín 187), one of the motivations for John to visit his grandmother during the summer holidays. Hurling being a team sport is reflected in the fact that John forms a team in Williamstown (see Tóibín 187), that he plays in the school team (see Tóibín 188) and that he wants to make it into the country minor team. Engaging in hurling requires a lot of training, effort and travelling forty miles to the town for a hurling match (see Tóibín 191) shows its importance, on the one hand, and the distances when living in rural areas, on the other hand (see also chapter 3.6.1). The before-mentioned popularity of golf, also in connection with Ireland’s tourism, can be observed in the following citation:

Each year, she and a group of women from the golf club took one day out to go to Rosslare Strand for a long and leisurely lunch at Kelly's Hotel after a morning's golf. If the weather was good enough, they spent the afternoon on the beach. (Tóibín 191)

Prominent themes in the short story are death, bereavement and the traditional Irish wake, still celebrated in Ireland today, especially in rural areas: "At a wake, the corpse is laid out on public view in the family home, and neighbours drop by to commiserate with the relatives, drink, eat, talk, play music and sometimes dance. The whole event might go on for several days." (Eagleton 170). Just some weeks before the old woman's death, she is visited by her children and grandchildren in order to say goodbye and to spend the last days together. When the old woman dies, she is surrounded by people and her room is filled with silence not to break the so-called "spell" (Tóibín 194). At the beginning of a traditional Irish wake "[...] a window is opened to allow the spirit of the deceased to leave the house, no-one must stand or block the path to the window as this may prevent the spirit from leaving and will bring misfortune to the person who blocks the route."⁵⁴ After the process of washing and lying out, as also mentioned in the short story, the sitting with the "[...] the old woman's body, which would not be put into a coffin and brought to the church until Sunday[.]" (Tóibín 195) begins. The process of sitting at the bedside usually takes a few days where "[f]amily members or close friends will stay with the deceased at all times taking it in shifts to watch over the departed."⁵⁵ The funeral is the final stage of the Irish wake.

5.6 Approaches to Teaching Colm Tóibín's Short Story *A Summer Job* and the Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning Aspect in the EFL Classroom

A practical activity in relation to the literary genres of novel or short story is to work with reviews on the primary texts. Furthermore, writing short reviews and reflections on the literary texts the students have read and analysed in class is part of the national curriculum.⁵⁶ Reviews are easily available on the Internet and can be used to confront students with a variety of opinions and are, therefore, often employed as an impulse activity. As the writing of a short review goes hand-in-hand with giving opinions on the short story, students are first engaged in reading some reviews in order to familiarise

⁵⁴ <http://www.yourirish.com/traditions-of-an-irish-funeral> July 10 2011, 22:39.

⁵⁵ <http://www.yourirish.com/traditions-of-an-irish-funeral> July 10 2011, 22:45.

⁵⁶ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11854/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs.pdf July 20 2011, 09:05.

with various thoughts on the short story they have read. The next step is to discuss to what extent they agree or disagree, leading to the final activity, having to write one short review (see worksheet activity 1).

As already referred to in chapter 4.6, taboos are part of any culture and, therefore, need to be understood in the context of inter-cultural and cross-cultural learning. Thus, a good preparation with a number of activities is essential to deal with taboo topics. The short story *A Summer Job* deals with the topics of death and bereavement in Ireland, which can also be seen as an opportunity for teachers to address them in the EFL classroom. Before working with the article “A Typical Irish Wake House”, students should reread the last passage of the short story referring to typical elements of a traditional Irish wake ceremony. This can be seen as a “pre-reading activity” as students have to refer to some points connected to Irish death and bereavement rituals they can find in the text and then compare these to their home country. Clearly, the inter-cultural learning aspect is present as students first need to filter aspects of ‘Irishness’ and then see them in relation to their cultural background. As a “while-reading” or “post-reading activity”, the article about the typical Irish wake is then accompanied by some questions and a list of vocabulary is provided to help students during their reading process (see worksheet activity 2).

Already the title of the short story *A Summer Job* offers various possibilities to the teacher. According to Hedge, activities allowing prediction and guessing are related to arousing interest on the students’ side. Discussing the topic of summer jobs in general and in a more specific way related to the short story can not only be interesting, but also useful to the students as they might have plans to work during their summer holidays. Therefore, the teacher can easily use the short story at the beginning or at the end of the school year. Worksheet activity 3 formulates some questions that could be discussed in the EFL context, also relating to the primary text by providing citations and having to analyse them. Moreover, the students’ own opinion is asked in some questions, an exercise essential for follow-up discussions and debates when, for example, dealing with the change of interests of children and adolescents.

As with all novels or short stories, a reading diary supporting and motivating students during their reading process can be useful. The reading diary below (see worksheet activity 4) can be seen as a collection of activities related to the primary text.

Activity 1, activity 3, activity 6 and activity 9 are typical tasks for the “while-reading” or “post-reading phase” where students need to answer some questions, often related to guessing and predicting, as, for example, activity 9 where students need to invent an alternative ending for the short story. The next activity of the reading log is connected to intensive reading, reading for specific information; students have to fill in certain facts about John’s life and his relationship when he is a baby, four or five, seven or eight and twelve years old (see activity 2). As letter and e-mail writing is part of the national curriculum⁵⁷, students are confronted with this text type in a context having to make a decision between working in the strawberry factory in the town and spending their holidays with their grandmother in the country. Activity 5, a dialogue between John and his mother, provides students with a chance to discuss John’s summer plans. As the events in *A Summer Job* do not seem too difficult, writing a summary of the short story is a straightforward activity, also found in the national curriculum.⁵⁸ Furthermore, students need to check the meaning of some vocabulary occurring in the text, as can be seen in the right column of the reading log. This column of the reading log offers students to add their own remarks, ideas or unknown vocabulary as well.

⁵⁷ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11854/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs.pdf July 20 2011, 09:53.

⁵⁸ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11854/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs.pdf July 20 2011, 10:50.

Worksheet Activity 1: Short Review

1. Read the reviews of "A Summer Job".

- Do you agree? Why? Why not?

Tóibín extends mothering to the grandmother: "A Summer Job" is a wonderful three-way plait about the changing relationship between a mother, her son and her mother, charting the way love transmutes into need and how need changes hands.

Source: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/mothers-and-sons/story-e6frg8no-1111112270943> June 23 2011, 09:26.

In "A Summer Job", a mother observes the enigmatic relationship her youngest son develops with his infatuated grandmother -- part courtship, part grudging duty. "Have I not done enough?" the boy asks at the end, and his raw anguish is apparent even though what he has done remains to his mother, and the reader, a disquieting mystery.

Source: http://ebookstore.sony.com/mb_us/pod/ebook/colm-toibin/mothers-and-sons/_/R-400000000000000072939?&reviewPage=3 June 23 2011, 09:27.

Expectations turned false is a theme that runs through many stories. In "A Summer Job", a woman tries to bring her son to feel something for his grandmother with whom he spends the summers. The old lady is, of course, crazy about her grandson, and there are scenes in which, publicly at least, he seems to return the emotion. However, his mother discovers, later in the story, that his loving exterior may after all be a facade.

<http://patrakaar2b.blogspot.com/2008/07/mothers-and-sons.html> June 23 2011, 10:00.

2. Write your own review of the short story (about 60 words).

Worksheet Activity 2: Discussion

1. Read the last section of the short story again, starting with “The old woman died in the winter [...]” (Tóibín 194) to the end.

- Write down some points of the Irish bereavement, wake and funeral rituals you can find in the section.

- Now think about death and bereavement rituals of your home country. What differences and similarities can you find?

2. Read the article “A Typical Irish Wake House”.

- In your own words, describe the Irish wake house.
- What is meant by “lying out”?
- What is meant by “keening”?
- How is a traditional wake celebrated?

A Typical Irish Wake House

There are many ideas on the origin of the Irish wake for example one such myth is that it originated as a result of the Irish fondness for drinking stout which used to be drunk from **pewter mugs** and this unfortunately had the side effect of causing lead poisoning. The symptoms of this illness was a catatonic state (where the victim appeared to be dead) but would recover a few hours later so friends would watch over the 'corpse' to see if they would eventually awaken. We much prefer the belief that it originated with the Celts. The Celts believed that when a person died they were moving on to a better one in the afterlife and that this was a cause to celebrate.

To-day wakes are held pretty much as they always have been. The wake will traditionally be held in the home of the **deceased** or at the home of a close relative; this is known as the wake house. A room will be prepared for the deceased, in the past it would have been a parlor but more often these days a bedroom is used. After death a window is opened to allow the spirit of the deceased to leave the house, no-one must stand or block the path to the window as this may prevent the spirit from leaving and will bring misfortune to the person who blocks the route. After two hours the window should be closed as this will prevent the spirit from re-entering. The body is washed and dressed; in times gone by they would have been clothed in white. If the deceased was a male he would have been freshly shaved. This is known as being 'laid out'.

A rosary is then **wrapped** around the hands and a cross placed around the neck depending on the religion of the deceased. Candles are placed at the head and foot of the coffin and remain lit while the deceased is still present in the house. Family members or close friends will stay with the deceased at all times taking it in shifts to watch over the departed. All clocks in the house will be stopped at the time the person died and all mirrors will be covered or turned to face the wall as a mark of respect. Also, traditionally all the curtains will be closed.

In earlier times 'keening' would have taken place. This is when the women family members would cry and **wail** over the deceased. This took place after the body had been laid out, if the women started 'keening' before the body was 'laid-out' it would invoke evil spirits. 'Keening' would have carried on for some time. One wonders if this has some bearing in the legend of the **banshee**. To-day 'keening' has faded out of Irish funerals.

Although death is a sad occasion a traditional wake is seldom solemn. Friends and family alike gather and share memories and funny stories about the deceased. Food and drink is always present and although the church tried to ban alcohol from wakes it was unsuccessful. You can always spot a wake house as the men tend to congregate outside if the weather is good. The

women will be in the kitchen making tea, sandwiches and washing the dishes. Friends and neighbours will bring a cake or a plate of sandwiches to help out as wake houses do tend to get very busy with a constant stream of visitors.

The visitors will on entering the house be met by a close family member when they have offered their condolences they are then taken into the room where the deceased is. They will then go to the coffin and stand for a few minutes paying their respects or saying a prayer. They will then be taken into the other room and offered refreshments. Depending on religion the rosary is said twice a day with everyone in the house present to say the responses. There is a special rosary for the dead and it is traditionally said around midnight before the visitors leave.

The Funeral Procession

A wake can last for a few days to allow people to come from afar to pay their respects and to say good-bye. It will end when the body is taken out of the house for the last time and moved to the local Church. On the day of the funeral the coffin is carried by 6 males, usually family or very close friends. A **Hearse** leads the procession to the Church with family & friends following behind the males carrying the coffin. The funeral mass is usually in duration of 45 minutes with priest and loved ones speaking about achievement made by the departed. Again, the coffin is carried by family & friends to the cemetery. If the procession is to pass the house of the departed it will stop as a mark of respect. People who are not part of the funeral celebration will stop in the street or road allowing the procession to pass ahead as a sign of respect for the deceased.

Are there Cremations in Ireland?

There are Cremations in Ireland but it is not as common as the traditional funeral burial and it's not usually something seen by many in Ireland

Source: <http://www.yourirish.com/traditions-of-an-irish-funeral> June 22 2011, 09:33.

Vocabulary:

a pewter mug = Zinnkrüglein	to wail (verb) = to make a long cry out of pain or sadness
the deceased (noun) = a person who has recently died	the banshee (noun) = many legends around the fairy woman, often seen as a sign of death, can have different appearances
to wrap (verb) = to cover, to surround by something	a hearse = a vehicle used to carry the body to the funeral

Worksheet Activity 3: Summer Job

1. What kind of summer jobs do you know? Make a list.



2. Have you already done a summer job? What experiences did you have?

If not, what kind of summer job would you like to do?

3. The citations below are taken from the short story. What kinds of summer jobs are mentioned?

Once John was home, the old woman began to pay more attention to his siblings' birthdays [...] however, all of the children knew that their grandmother came to see John. (Tóibín 184-185)

When Bill finally married and she was alone in the house, the old woman began to invite Frances and her family for Sunday lunch once a month. (Tóibín 185)

[...] but by the age of twelve he would stay in his grandmother's house for entire summer, helping Bill on the farm, working in the post office, and sitting with her at night, reading, or talking to her or, with his grandmother's full encouragement, going out with some local boys of his own age. (Tóibín 185)

In May, as the school year was coming to an end, John remarked casually that he, along with some friends, had filled in an application form for a summer job in the strawberry factory in the town. (Tóibín 188)

"You can't go to her every summer and then when she's old and weak, decide you have better things to do."

"I haven't decided that."

"I have decided that you are going and that's it. As soon as you get your holidays you are going to Williamstown, so you can start getting ready." (Tóibín 189)

Would you rather stay with your grandmother or work in the strawberry factory as a summer job?

In what ways can the stay with your grandmother be considered as a job as well?

Worksheet Activity 4: Reading Diary

Reading process	Activity	Useful vocabulary ⁵⁹
Read up to “Frances was glad when she could go home, and happy when her mother suggested that she herself might return to Williamstown to her small post office, her books her daily <i>Irish Times</i> , her specially selected television and radio programs, and a few kindred spirits with whom she exchanged views about current events.” (Tóibín 184)	Activity 1: Answer the questions below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is Frances surprised that her mother stays for four days? • What do Frances, her mother and Jim think about the name-giving? • How is Frances’s mother characterized in this part of the short story? 	fondly = tenderly = to interfere = jubilant = to soothe =
Read up to “She purred, as though the thought gave her great satisfaction.” (Tóibín 187)	Activity 2: Fill in information concerning John’s life and his relationship to his grandmother when <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he is a baby: • he is four or five: • he is seven or eight: • he is twelve: Activity 3: Answer the questions below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Frances’s reaction to John’s new bedroom? • Which parts show the reader that Frances is happy, on the one hand, and jealous, on the other hand? Write down two citations. 	postal order = barely = frail = to purr =
Read up to “She sighed. “God help the woman who marries you.”” (Tóibín 189)	Activity 4: Imagine you are John. Write a letter to John’s grandmother. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain your difficult situation, the pressure from your mother, on the one hand, and your job application in the strawberry factory in the town 	

⁵⁹ Find a definition for these words in a monolingual dictionary (e.g. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>) and provide an example sentence. You can also add your own words.

	<p>and your interest in hurling, on the other hand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come up with a final decision and provide arguments for it. <p>Write about 250 words.</p> <p>Activity 5: Together with a partner prepare a dialogue between John and Frances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role A- John: You want to work in the strawberry factory in the town and spend your time off hurling with your team and your friends. Role B- Frances: You expect your son to spend his summer with his grandmother as he has always done so up to now. You tell your son that it could be his grandmother's last summer. • Come up with a solution or a compromise. <p>Activity 6: Guessing: How do you think will the short story carry on?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will John stay at his mother's house or spend his summer at his grandmother's? Why/ Why not? • Will John get the job in the strawberry factory in the town? Why/ Why not? • What impact will this have on the relationship on either side? Why/ Why not? 	
<p>Read up to "She reached for John's arm and said a final good-bye to them; she leaned on him and on her stick as the two of them slowly left the hotel restaurant." (Tóibín 193-194)</p>	<p>Activity 7: Answer the questions below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is John's reaction when he sees his mother at Kelly's Hotel? • What is Frances's reaction when she sees her son with her mother? • Write down two citations which show that the atmosphere is rather tense in this particular situation. • How would you react if you saw your mother enjoying herself with some friends after having been sent to your grandmother's for the summer holidays? 	<p>to forge = to detain =</p>
<p>Finish the short story "A Summer Job"</p>	<p>Activity 8: Write a summary of the short story "A Summer Job".</p>	<p>condolence =</p>

	<p>Write about 150 words.</p> <p>Activity 9: Discuss the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why does John not want to stay with his grandmother?• Is the title “A Summer Job” appropriate?• How do you think John’s mother feels at the end of the short story?• Invent an alternative ending. Write about 200 words.	to contemplate =
--	---	------------------

6. Conclusion

The diploma thesis clearly refers to the fact that literary genres such as the novel and the short story can be especially useful for teaching and learning purposes in the EFL classroom.

It has to be said that a long engagement with the primary texts, in my diploma thesis *Brooklyn*, *A Priest in the Family* and *A Summer Job*, was essential for further analysis and later on developing the teaching aspect. Therefore, primary information on teaching a novel or a short story in the EFL context with special emphasis on cross-cultural teaching and learning, the Common European Framework of Reference, the national curriculum and the pedagogical options in relation to the benefits and possible drawbacks of a novel and a short story was provided to act as background information and to refer to possible teaching ideas in relation to the “pre-reading”, “while-reading” and “post-reading phases”.

In this thesis, Colm Tóibín’s novel *Brooklyn* and short stories *A Priest in the Family* and *A Summer Job* were analysed focussing on the literary aspects of the plot, the setting and background, the narrative technique, the characters and characterisation and the themes and motifs. As the three primary texts deal with a large number of themes and motifs as well as taboo topics, the teacher has a large number of possibilities to approach them in the EFL context. The thesis gave an overview of general activities connected to the primary texts which can be used in the EFL classroom, and activities in relation to the inter-cultural and cross-cultural learning aspect. Although handling taboo topics in class is considered as a controversial issue, the teacher should carefully address them. In many cases, taboos vary across cultures and can therefore be integrated in the EFL classroom in a number of different ways; however, the teacher should design appropriate activities to introduce and directly address them.

Not only the fact that the primary texts were written by an Irish author, but also their plot set in countries abroad, as in *Brooklyn* in Ireland and in the United States of America and also referring to the Italian culture through some of the characters occurring in the novel, and in *A Priest in the Family* and *A Summer Job* in different parts and regions of Ireland, relates to inter-cultural and cross-cultural teaching and learning aspects and to the point that students will be confronted with a culture different, but in some way also similar to their own cultures.

When taking a closer look at the collection of designed activities for the EFL context, the reader can observe that not only the CEFR, but also the national curriculum were taken in consideration. First, it has to be said that a large number of activities were designed in relation to the inter-cultural and cross-cultural teaching and learning aspect. However, it has to be added that the primary texts offer a large number of opportunities for general teaching ideas as well. I am of the opinion that students will feel encouraged to carry out the activities and they will gain a certain security on dealing with inter-cultural and cross-cultural aspects, which is always connected to the student's own cultural background.

Further research could be carried out on the practical side of the diploma thesis, integrating the activities into lesson plans, creating a questionnaire and designing a school project, teaching the primary texts, evaluating the questionnaires and drawing further conclusions on how suitable *Brooklyn*, *A Priest in the Family* and *A Summer Job* are for teaching in a real classroom context.

7. Bibliography

7.1 Books and Articles Available: Primary Literature

Tóibín, Colm. *Brooklyn*. London: Penguin Books, 2010.

Tóibín, Colm. *Mothers and Sons*. New York: Scribner, 2008.

7.2 Books and Articles Available: Secondary Literature

Books and Articles Available on ‘Americanness’

Adams, James Truslow. *The Epic of America*. USA: Little, Brown and Company, 1931.

Bloomberg, Jon. *The Jewish World in the Modern Age*. Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House, 2004.

Drowne, Kathleen, and Huber, Patrick. *The American Popular Culture through History: The 1920s*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc, 2004.

Healey, Joseph F. *Diversity and Society: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender*. California: Pine Forge Press, 2010.

Mitchell, Christopher. “Introduction: Immigration and U.S. Foreign Policy toward the Carribean, Central America, and Mexico.” *Western Hemisphere Immigration and United States Foreign Policy*. Ed. Christopher Mitchell. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1992. 1-31.

Rooney, Anne. *Customs and Fashion Source Books: The 1950s and 1960s*. Hove: Bailey Publishing Associates, 2009.

Sowell, Thomas. *Ethnic America: A History*. USA: Basic Books, 1981.

Books and Articles Available on ‘Italianness’

Abbott, Charles. *Culture Smart! Italy*. 4th ed. London: Kuperard/Bravo, 2007.

Barzini, Luigi. *Die Italiener*. Frankfurt am Main: Heinrich Scheffler, 1964.

Scarpaci, Vincenza. *The Journey of the Italians in America*. Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2008.

Solly, Martin. *The Xenophobe’s Guide to the Italians*. Spain: Oval, 2008.

Books and Articles Available on ‘Irishness’

- Almeida, Linda Dowling. *Irish Immigrants in New York City, 1945-1995*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- Ardagh, John. *Ireland and the Irish: Portrait of a Changing Society*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994.
- Bartlett, Thomas. *Ireland: A History*. Cambridge: CUP, 2010.
- Baynor, Ronald H., and Meagher, Timothy J., eds. *The New York Irish*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Bew, Paul. *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity 1789-2006*. Oxford: OUP, 2007.
- Cleary, Joseph N., and Connolly, Claire. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture*. Cambridge: CUP, 2005.
- Corcoran, Mary P. “Emigrants, Eirepreneurs, and Opportunists: A Social Profile of Recent Irish Immigration in New York City.” *The New York Irish*. Ed. Ronald H. Baynor and Timothy J. Meagher. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996. 461-481.
- Davis, Alex, and Goodby, John. *Irish Studies: The Essential Glossary*. London: Arnold, 2003.
- Dolan, Jay P. *The Irish Americans: A History*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008.
- Gerrard, Cathy, and McArdle, Joseph. *Buying a Property Ireland*. London: New Holland Publishers, 2007.
- Graham, Brian, ed. *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Kennedy, Robert E. *The Irish: Emigration, Marriage, and Fertility*. Berkely, Los Angeles: University of California Press Ltd, 1973.
- Kenny, Kevin. *The American Irish: A History*. Harlow: Longman, 2000.
- Law, Gary. *The Cultural Tradition Dictionary*. Belfast: Blackstaff, 1998.
- Logue, Paddy. *Being Irish: Personal Reflections on Irish Identity Today*. Dublin: Oak Tree, 2000.
- Miller, Kerby A. *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class, and Transatlantic Migration*. Dublin: Field Day, 2008.

- Miller, Rebecca S. "Irish Traditional and Popular Music in New York City: Identity and Social Change, 1930-1945." *The New York Irish*. Ed. Ronald H. Baynor and Timothy J. Meagher. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996. 481-508.
- O'Connell, Michael. *Changed Utterly: Ireland and the New Irish Psyche*. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2001.
- Ruckenstein, Lelia, ed. *Everything Irish: The History, Literature, Art, Music, People and Places of Ireland from A - Z*. Cork: Mercier, 2004.
- Scanlan, Margaret. *Culture and Customs of Ireland*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006.
- Share, Perry, and Tovey, Hilary. *A Sociology of Ireland*. 2nd ed. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 2003.
- Spreng, Jennifer E. *Abortion and Divorce Law in Ireland*. Jefferson (NC): McFarland, 2004.

Books and Articles on the Study of English Literature

- Abrams, Meyer H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 8th ed. London: Wadsworth, 2005.
- Baldick, Chris. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. New ed. Oxford: OUP, 2004.
- Beck, Rudolf, and Kuester, Hildegard, and Kuester, Martin. *Basislexikon anglistische Literaturwissenschaft*. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2009.
- Beckson, Karl, and Ganz, Karl. *Literary Terms: A Dictionary*. 3rd ed. New York: Nooday, 1989.
- Bonheim, Helmut. *The Narrative Modes: Techniques of the Short Story*. Cambridge: Brewer, 1982.
- Cuddon, John A. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*. London: Deutsch, 1979.
- Ferber, Michael. *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. Cambridge: CUP, 1999.
- Fludernik, Monika. *An Introduction to Narratology*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Lubbers, Klaus. *Typologie der Short Story*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997.
- Mullins, Larry C. *Encyclopedia of Aging*. Ed. David J. Ekerdt. 7. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2002.
- Seigneuret, Jean-Charles, ed. *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*. 2 vols. New York: Routledge, 1988.

Stanzel, Franz Karl. *A Theory of Narrative*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate, 1984.

The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature in English. Ed. Jenny Stringer. Oxford: OUP, 1996.

The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature. Ed. Robert Welch. Oxford: OUP, 1996.

The Oxford Companion to Irish History. Ed. Sean J. Connolly. Oxford: OUP, 2004.

Books and Articles on Teaching and Learning Literature and on Inter-cultural and Cross-cultural Teaching and Learning

Bassnett, Susan, and Grundy, Peter. *Language through Literature: Creative Language Teaching through Literature*. Longman Singapore: Singapore, 1993.

Bausch, Karl-Richard, and Christ, Herbert, and Krumm, Hans-Jürgen. *Handbuch für Fremdsprachenunterricht*. 5th ed. Tübingen: Francke, 2007.

Benton, Michael, and Fox, Geoff. *Teaching Literature: Nine to Fourteen*. Oxford: OUP, 1992.

Butler, Charles, ed. *Teaching Children's Fiction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Carter, Ronald, and Long, Michael N. *Teaching Literature*. Longman: New York, 1991.

Chambers, Ellie, and Gregory, Marshall. *Teaching & Learning English Literature*. London: Sage, 2006.

Collie, Joanne, and Slater, Stephen. *Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities*. Cambridge: CUP, 1987.

Damen, Louise. *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension in the Language Classroom*. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1987.

Duff, Alan, and Maley, Alan. *Literature: Resource Books for Teachers*. Oxford: OUP, 1991.

Hedge, Tricia. *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: OUP, 2000.

Hesse, Mechthild. *Teenage Fiction in the Active English Classroom*. Klett: Stuttgart, 2009.

Lazar, Gillian. *Literature and Language Teaching: A Guide for Teachers and Trainers*. Cambridge: CUP, 1993.

Markmann, Sigrid. *Kulturelles Lernen im Englischunterricht*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1992.

Reid, Joy M. *Learning Styles in the ESL EFL Classroom*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1995.

Stover, Lois T., and Tway, Eileen. "Cultural Diversity and the Young Adult Novel." *Reading Their World: The Young Adult Novel in the Classroom*. Ed. Virginia R. Monseu and Gary M. Salvner. Portsmouth: Boyton Cook Publishers, 1992. 132-153.

Thaler, Engelbert. *Teaching English Literature*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008.

Utley, Derek. *Intercultural Resource Pack: Intercultural Communication Resources for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: CUP, 2009.

Other Books and Articles Available

Cherry, Robin. *Catalog: The Illustrated History of Mail Order*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008.

Smith, Keri E. Iyall. "Hybrid Identities: Theoretical Examinations." *Hybrid Identities: Theoretical and Empirical Examinations*. Ed. Patricia Leavy and Keri E. Iyall Smith. Leiden: Brill, 2008. 3-13.

Thesander, Marianne. *The Feminine Ideal*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1997.

7.3 Books and Articles Not Available

Delaney, Enda. *Demography, State, and Society: Irish Migration to Britain, 1921-1971*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000.

Glazier, Michael, ed. *The Encyclopedia of the Irish in America*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1999.

7.4 Electronic Sources

Electronic Sources

A View on Cities. 2011. Van Ermengem Bvba. April 27 2011
<<http://www.aviewoncities.com/>>

Baseball Almanac. 2011. Baseball-Almanac. March 28 2011
<<http://www.baseball-almanac.com/>>

Cambridge Dictionaries Online. 2011. CUP. July 14 2011
<<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>>

Can Catholic Church Overcome Child Abuse Scandals? 2011. BBC. June 13 2011
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/haveyoursay/2010/03/can_catholic_church_overcome_c.h.tml>

Cobh: The Queenstown Story- Emigration & Famine. 2003. Cobh Heritage Centre. April 15 2011
<<http://www.cobhheritage.com/emigration.html>>

Constitution of Ireland. 2004. Constitution of Ireland. April 14 2011
<<http://www.constitution.ie/reports/ConstitutionofIreland.pdf>>

DoChara. 2009. DoChara. April 11 2011
<<http://www.dochara.com/>>

Ellis Island. 2010. The Statue of Liberty- Ellis Island Foundation. April 26 2011
<<http://www.ellisland.org/>>

Enniscorthy Tourism. 2011. Enniscorthy Tourism. June 13 2011
<<http://enniscorthytourism.com/downloads/downloads.htm>>

Factoidz- The World's Largest Consumers. 2011. Factoidz. April 12 2011
<<http://factoidz.com/the-worlds-largest-consumers/>>

Fast Facts about Religion in Ireland. 2009. DoChara. June 13 2011
<<http://www.dochara.com/the-irish/facts/about-religion/>>

Filmsite. 2010. American Movie Classics Company LLC. March 28 2011
<<http://www.filmsite.org/sing.html>>

Focus Migration. 2011. Hamburgisches WeltWirtschaftsInstitut. April 15 2011
<<http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/Irland.6269.0.html>>

Golf Europe. 2011. World Golf. April 12 2011
<<http://www.golfeurope.com/>>

Ireland- Demographic Change. 2011. Net Industries. April 15 2011
<<http://family.jrank.org/pages/960/Ireland-Demographic-Change.html>>

Irish Culture and Customs. 2011. Russ Haggerty. April 15 2011
<<http://www.irishcultureandcustoms.com>>

Irish Names. 2005. The Information about Ireland Site. June 06 2011
<<http://www.ireland-information.com/heraldichall/irishsurnames.htm>>

Irish Times: Emigration. 2011. Irish Times. April 15 2011
<<http://www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/magazine/emigration/pre-fam.htm>>

Kelly's Resort Hotel and Spa. 2011. Kelly's Resort Hotel Ltd. June 20 2011
<<http://www.kellys.ie/home.html>>

Moving Here- 200 Years of Migration in England. 2011. Aidan Lawes. April 15 2011
<<http://www.movinghere.org.uk/galleries/histories/irish/origins/origins.htm>>

Old Fashioned Living. 2010. Old Fashioned Living. April 11 2010
<<http://oldfashionedliving.com/>>

RTE Ireland. 2011. RTÉ Commercial Enterprises Limited. June 06 2011
<<http://www.rte.ie/about/>>

The Internet Movie Database. 2011. IMDB. May 29 2011
<<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0104231/>>

The Origin Info of Hotmail. 2008. Hotmail. May 30 2011
<<http://www.theoriginof.com/hotmail.html>>

Think Quest. 2009. Think Quest. April 27 2011
<<http://thinkquest.org/pls/html/think.library>>

Traditions of an Irish Funeral. 2010. Your Irish. July 10 2011
<<http://www.yourirish.com/traditions-of-an-irish-funeral>>

Williamstown. 2007. County Galway Guide. June 20 2011
<<http://williamstown.galway-ireland.ie/>>

Electronic Reviews and Interviews on *Brooklyn* and *Mothers and Sons*

BBC Online: Colm Tóibín Extended Interview (2009). 2011. BBC MMIX. June 12 2011
<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/review/8038695.stm>>

Colm Tóibín Discusses the Writing Process (2008). 2011. YouTube LLC. May 10 2011
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9cMD2eLXPE&feature=related>>

Colm Tóibín on his Latest Novel (2009). 2011. BBC MMIX. May 9 2011
<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/review/8043976.stm>>

Colm Tóibín's Homepage. 2011. Colm Tóibín. June 13 2011
<<http://www.colmtoibin.com/>>

Contemporary Writers: Colm Tóibín (2002). 2011. British Council. June 13 2011
<<http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/?p=auth6>>

Die Zeit: "... und sogar nachts ist die Heizung warm" (2010). 2011. Zeitverlag Gerd Bucherus GmbH & Co. KG. June 12 2011
<<http://www.zeit.de/2011/01/L-B-Toibin>>

Falter: "Zwischen zwei Jobs liegt bloß der Atlantik" (2011). 2011. Valter Verlagsgesellschaft mbH. June 12 2011.
<<http://www.falter.at/web/shop/detail.php?id=33995&SESSID=b6c46ae82435352bcec345fb2740aca3>>

Interview: Colm Tóibín. 2006. Laura Hird. June 13 2011
 <<http://www.laurahird.com/newreview/colmtoibininterview.html>>

Interview: The Mother of All Short Stories (2006). 2011. Johnston Press Digital Publishing. June 12 2011
 <<http://living.scotsman.com/books/The-mother-of-all-short.2807195.jp>>

Mothers and Sons (2008). 2008. Patrakaar2b. June 23 2011
 <<http://patrakaar2b.blogspot.com/2008/07/mothers-and-sons.html>>

Mothers and Sons: Stories (2009). 2009. Sony Electronics Inc. June 23 2011
 <http://ebookstore.sony.com/mb_us/pod/ebook/colm-toibin/mothers-and-sons/_R-4000000000000000072939?&reviewPage=3>

The Australian: Mothers and Son (2006). 2011. News Limited. June 23 2011
 <<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/mothers-and-sons/story-e6frg8no-111112270943>>

The Guardian: "You Can Take the Man Out of Ireland..." (2009). 2011. The Guardian News and Media Limited. June 12 2011
 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/apr/26/colm-toibin-brooklyn>>

The New York Times: "The Reluctant Emigrant" (2009). 2011. The New York Times Company. June 12 2011.
 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/03/books/review/Schillinger-t.html?pagewanted=all>>

The Telegraph: Brooklyn by Colm Tóibín: Review (2009). 2011. Telegraph Media Group Limited. June 12 2011
 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/5291609/Brooklyn-by-Colm-Toibin-review.html>>

The Telegraph: Costa Book Awards Colm Tóibín Interview (2010). Telegraph Media Group Limited. June 14 2011
 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/books-life/7074090/Costa-Book-Awards-Colm-Toibin-interview.html>>

3Sat: "Von Irland in die Neue Welt" (2010). 2011. 3sat/ Kulturzeit. June 12 2011
 <<http://www.3sat.de/page/?source=/kulturzeit/lesezeit/147338/index.html>>

Electronic Sources on (Inter-cultural/ Cross-cultural) Teaching and Learning

Eduplace. 2011. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. May 4 2011
 <<http://www.eduplace.com/>>

Interkulturelles Lernen an österreichischen Schulen. 2011. Bm:ukk. May 9 2011
 <<http://www.projekte-interkulturell.at/>>

Interkulturelles Zentrum. 2011. Interkulturelles Zentrum. May 9 2011
<<http://www.iz.or.at/>>

Taboo in the Classroom. 2011. Teaching English. June 14 2011
<<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/taboo-classroom>>

Understanding Culture and Helping Students Understand Culture. 1998. Birmingham Young University. May 9 2011
<<http://linguistics.byu.edu/classes/ling577lh/culture.html>>

Electronic Sources on the Curriculum

Allgemeiner Lehrplan. 2011. bm:ukk. June 14 2011
<<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11668/11668.pdf>>

Das Unterrichtsprinzip: Interkulturelles Lernen. 2009. bm:ukk. June 12 2011
<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/prinz/interkult_lernen.xml>

Interkulturelles Lernen: Lehrplanbestimmung. 2010. bm:ukk. June 11 2011
<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/prinz/interkult_lernen_lp.xml>

Lehrplan lebende Fremdsprache (Erste, Zweite). 2011. bmu:kk. June 14 2011
<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11854/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs.pdf>

Sources of Illustrations⁶⁰

Brooklyn Bridge and Manhattan (1950). 2007. O Século Prodigioso. July 4 2011
<<http://oseculoprodigioso.blogspot.com/2007/01/feininger-andreas-fotografia.html>>

Coney Island/ Astroland Amusement Park, Brooklyn. 2011. PlanetWare. July 4 2011
<<http://www.planetware.com/picture/new-york-city-brooklyn-coney-island-astroland-amusement-park-us-ny157.htm>>

County Wexford. 2006. Speed-IT Ltd. July 10 2011
<http://www.aluisce.com/county_wexford.asp>

Enniscorthy Golf Club. 2008. Webthings. July 10 2011
<<http://www.enniscorthygc.ie/>>

Enniscorthy Tourism. 2011. Enniscorthy Tourism. July 10 2011
<<http://enniscorthytourism.com/downloads/enniscorthy.pdf>>

⁶⁰ Ich habe mich bemüht, sämtliche Inhaber der Bildrechte ausfindig zu machen und ihre Zustimmung zur Verwendung der Bilder in dieser Arbeit eingeholt. Sollte dennoch eine Urheberrechtsverletzung bekannt werden, ersuche ich um Meldung bei mir.

Flagge Irland. 2011. Zazzle Inc. July 10 2011

<http://www.zazzle.at/kleeeire_flagge_gang_irlands_irischer_karte-137000646093412217>

Guided Tours of Enniscorthy. 2011. Ireland. July 10 2011

<<http://www.ireland.com/activities/walking/guided-tours-of-enniscorthy/182334>>

Irlandbiker. 2011. Firewings- Wolfgang Selin. July 10 2011

<<http://irelandbiker.eu/irlands-counties/index.html>>

Liberty Island, Ellis Island & Manhattan (2009). 2009. UPC Broadband. July 4 2011

<http://photocompetition.upclive.com/seo/photo/554257/liberty_island_ellis_island_manhattan/statue_of_liberty_liberty_island_ellis_island_manhattan_new_york.html>

Master's Apprentices (2004). 2004. The Age Company Ltd. July 11 2011

<<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/07/24/1090464906061.html?from=storyrhs>>

New York Skyline (1950s). 2009. California Literary Review. July 4 2011

<<http://calitreview.com/3887>>

New York Skyline. 2011. vBulletin. July 4 2011

<<http://forum.skyscraperpage.com/showthread.php?t=168502>>

The New York Times: A Portrait of Ellis Island, and Tabloid Fodder (2009). 2011. The New York Times Company. July 4 2011

<<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/05/nyregion/05bookshelf.html>>

The Post and Courier: Summer Jobs (2009). 2011. Evening Post Publishing Co. July 14 2011

<http://www.postandcourier.com/news/2009/apr/07/teens_hunt77786/>

Wikipedia: Enniscorthy Castle. 2009. Wikipedia Foundation. July 10 2011

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Enniscorthy_castle.jpg>

8. Index

A

A Priest in the Family 1, 2, 78, 80, 82, 88, 90, 91, 96, 97, 99, 110, 123, 124
A Summer Job 1, 2, 104, 106, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 122, 123, 124
 Abbott 45
 Abrams 2, 6, 14, 15
 absurd anti-story 7
 abuse scandals 78, 80, 82, 83, 85, 87, 91, 101
 accent 32, 34, 35, 38, 40, 42, 45, 64
 action 6, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 78, 79, 84, 104, 105
 activity 10, 11, 12, 55, 56, 57, 58, 90, 91, 92, 111, 112
 Adams 46
 Africa 13
 ageing 88
 alternation 26
 ambiguity 7
 America 13, 14, 15, 18, 21, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 66, 67, 68, 69, 74, 123
 American 1, 13, 15, 21, 27, 29, 32, 35, 37, 38, 40, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 54, 58, 64, 67
 American Dream 46, 47
 American way of life 38
 Americanness 1, 46, 48
 anticipation exercise 11
 Aosdána 13
 Arbeitsformen 56
 Aristotle 14
 Arnotts 16
 assimilation 26
 authentic 4, 5, 58
 author 2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 55, 60, 78, 80, 90, 91, 92, 97, 123
 autobiographical 5, 98

B

Back Road 78
 background 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 21, 22, 24, 38, 47, 57, 58, 85, 94, 98, 105, 106, 111, 123, 124
 Baldick 1, 2
 Barcelona 13
 Bartocci & Company 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 26, 34, 35, 44, 47, 50, 59, 70
 baseball 17, 19, 23, 32, 34, 35, 46, 49, 64
 Beckson 2, 14, 15
 Belfast 37
 Benton 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
 bereavement 15, 41, 49, 50, 56, 110, 111, 114
 Black Road 16

Blackwater 13, 28
 Bloomberg 44
 Bobby Thomson 19
 book-keeping 15, 17, 18, 24, 26, 35, 40, 44, 47, 48, 69
 brainstorming 9, 90
 brevity 6
 Broadway 19
Brooklyn 1, 2, 4, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 67, 69, 73, 74, 75, 77, 110, 123, 124
 Brooklyn College 15, 17
 Brooklyn Dodgers 19

C

Canada 44
 Canaries 78, 85
 Carter 3
 cartoon designing 11
 Castle Hill 16
 Castle Street 16
 Catholic Church 80, 92, 97, 98, 101
 Catholicism 41
 Cavan 38
 céilí dance 42
 character portrayal 10
 characterisation 1, 14, 24, 57, 92, 123
 Cherry 20
 chick-lit 5
 child abuse 80, 83, 85, 91, 92, 101
 Christmas 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 36, 42, 46, 61, 82, 85, 99, 103, 105
 cinema 17, 19
 city 17, 48, 74, 90, 94
 Clery's Department Store 16
 Clinton Street 17
 Cobh 16
 collage 12
 Collie 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12
 Colm Tóibín 1, 2, 13, 14, 20, 21, 55, 59, 60, 78, 87, 90, 91, 96, 97, 98, 99, 111, 123
 Commission on Emigration 21
 Common European Framework of Reference 2, 3, 8, 123
 community 15, 21, 35, 40, 42, 43, 45, 64
 competence 3, 4, 8, 9, 56
 Coney Island 17, 18, 29, 34
 Conrad Hilton 20
 Constitution of Ireland 43
 contemporary literature 5
 Corcoran 37
 Cork 16, 52, 99
 Costa Novel Award 13
 country life 43, 90, 96
 Courtown 16
 cover 8, 10, 12, 15, 56, 80, 98, 116

cross-cultural 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 40, 55, 58, 90, 91, 111, 123, 124
 cross-cultural adaptation 3
 cross-cultural awareness 9
 cultural enrichment 1
 cultural knowledge 3
 culture 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 12, 21, 26, 32, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 48, 58, 70, 86, 91, 111, 123
 Curracloe 16, 36
 Cush Gap 16

D

dance hall 16, 21, 32
 Davis 15, 16, 20, 21, 28, 30, 40, 43
 Davis's Mills 30
 death 6, 13, 14, 19, 27, 30, 31, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 49, 50, 51, 52, 56, 57, 59, 64, 73, 81, 82, 89, 91, 104, 105, 109, 110, 111, 114, 115, 116
 debate 12, 112
 detective 5
 Diana 18, 24, 25, 26, 36, 37, 38, 41, 45, 49, 64, 68, 69
 Diocese of Ferns 80
 direct speech 73, 81, 106
 divorce 20, 23, 43, 51, 52, 56, 58, 75, 91
 divorce law referenda 43
 dramatic presentation 23, 24
 drinking culture 32, 36, 41, 42, 71, 86, 110, 115
 Drowne 20
 Dublin 13, 16, 20, 78, 83, 86, 87, 98, 99
 dystopian 5

E

E. M. Forster Award 13
 Eagleton 110
 Éamon de Valera 37
 Ebbets Field 17, 19, 32
 Economic Expansion Programme 21
 economic situation 42
 EFL classroom 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 55, 56, 57, 58, 91, 111, 123
 EFL context 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 56, 112, 123
 Eileen 78, 79, 82, 85
 Eilis 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75
 Elizabeth Rosemond Taylor 20
 Emergency Quota Act 44
 emigration 20, 21
 England 20, 31, 38, 41, 42, 46, 53, 58, 61, 66, 67, 73, 104
 Enniscorthy 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, 22, 24, 27, 29, 30, 35, 47, 48, 51, 53, 54, 58, 66, 78, 90, 92, 93, 94, 98
 escape 53, 54
 ethnicity 5

extensive listening 55

F

factual story 7
 family 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 19, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 43, 45, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 61, 64, 72, 85, 87, 88, 97, 98, 99, 100, 104, 107, 109, 110, 115, 116, 117
 fantasy 5, 10, 28, 62
Far and Away 55
 fashion 20, 29, 36, 48, 49, 64, 98, 107, 109
 Father Flood 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 31, 35, 36, 41, 42, 43, 47, 48, 49, 50, 53, 57, 59, 63, 66, 87, 88
 Father Greenwood 78, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 96, 99, 100
 Ferber 89, 90
 Ferns Report 80, 87
 Fianna Fáil 37, 43
 fiction 7, 13, 14
 Fifth Avenue 49
 figural narrative situation 22
 first generation 34
 five skills 8, 56
 five-year-plan 21
 flannel trousers 20
 flashback 7, 21, 22, 49, 82, 105, 106, 108
 flashforward 7, 82, 105, 106
 Fludernik 22
 follow-up activity 91
 food 3, 27, 38, 40, 41, 42, 45, 52, 86, 110
 foreign 1, 3, 4, 40, 56, 66
 foreshadowing 79, 82
 Fox 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 19, 20, 47, 70
 Frances 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 117, 118, 119, 121
 Frank 33, 34, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 99, 103, 105
 free indirect speech 23, 73, 81
 Friary Hill 16
 Friary Street 16, 54
 functional family 14
 funeral 50, 110, 111, 114, 116

G

Galway 37, 42, 104
 Ganz 2, 14, 15
 gender 6
 general comprehension 55
 genre 1, 5, 6, 7, 8
 Georgina 23, 24, 25, 38, 39, 40, 42, 47, 57, 59
 Gerrard 80
 Giants 19
 gigolo 45
 Glenroe 79, 82, 83, 86, 88
 Golden Gate Exposition 20
 golf 30, 41, 109, 110
 Goodby 20, 21, 43

grandmother 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 112, 113, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122
 grasping the gist 55
 Gresham Hotel 16
 grieving 50
 group work 90
 guessing 56, 92, 111, 112

H

Hedge 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 55, 56, 90, 92, 111
 Hesse 3, 5
 Hipple 6
 home country 13, 20, 36, 37, 38, 45, 46, 53, 54, 56, 58, 65, 66, 67, 75, 90, 91, 96, 100, 111, 114
 homesickness 15, 27, 34, 35, 51, 53, 54, 56, 59, 64, 69
 homosexuality 13, 91
 Huber 20
 hurling 36, 41, 104, 108, 109, 110, 119
 hybrid identity 26, 27, 28, 74

I

identity 21, 26, 27, 28, 74
 immediate effect 23, 81, 106
 immigration 20, 21, 44, 47, 55, 56, 58
 Immigration and Nationality Act 21, 44
 impressionistic story 7
 indirect speech 23, 73
 individual work 3, 11, 87, 90, 99
 information-gap activity 10
 intensive listening 55
 intensive reading 112
 interactive 10
 inter-cultural 1, 58, 91, 111, 123, 124
 intercultural communication 9, 91
 intercultural communicative competence 3
 intercultural exchange 3
 intercultural experience 4
 interculturality 3
 interdisciplinary 4
 interkulturelles Lernen 4
 internal perspective 80, 105
 interpretation 8, 55
 interview 9, 11, 12, 13, 55, 91
 Ireland 1, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28, 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 65, 71, 73, 74, 75, 80, 86, 87, 90, 91, 96, 97, 99, 100, 108, 109, 110, 111, 116, 123
 Irish 1, 2, 13, 14, 15, 21, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 52, 58, 64, 65, 67, 68, 72, 82, 83, 84, 86, 87, 90, 96, 99, 109, 110, 111, 114, 115, 118, 123
 Irish community 21, 42
Irish Times 82, 83, 86, 109
 Irishness 1, 40, 42, 86, 109, 110, 111

Italian 1, 15, 23, 32, 34, 36, 37, 40, 44, 45, 46, 48, 64, 65, 68, 71, 72, 123
 Italianness 1, 44, 45
 Italy 32, 44

J

Jackie Robinson 19
 Jewish 37, 40, 44, 48
 Jim 15, 16, 20, 23, 27, 28, 29, 38, 39, 43, 52, 54, 57, 60, 64, 75, 109, 118
 John 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122
 journey 10, 13, 14, 18, 22, 24, 29, 31, 43, 47, 53, 56, 59, 61

K

Kelly 6, 16, 18, 23, 24, 40, 43, 104, 105, 107, 110, 121
 Kenny 21
 Kilmore Quay 36, 104
 Klarer 22
 Korean War 48

L

lad-lit 5
 Lady Captain's Day 41
 language 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 55, 56, 91, 94, 96
 Lazar 7
 learning 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 40, 55, 56, 58, 88, 90, 91, 96, 111, 123, 124
 Lehrmethoden 56
 Lernstrategien 56, 57
 letter 22, 24, 31, 37, 38, 53, 54, 57, 69, 73, 87, 101, 112, 119
 letter writing 24, 54
 limited knowledge 23, 80, 105
 listening 8, 9, 32, 55, 56, 59, 81
 literature 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
 Liverpool 16, 17, 18, 53, 66
 Loehmann's 17
 log 11, 58, 112
 loneliness 15, 31, 51, 53, 73, 85, 88, 89
 Long 3, 17, 33, 34, 37, 48, 51
 Long Island 17, 33, 34, 37, 47, 48, 51
 love 15, 25, 28, 33, 50, 51, 52, 56, 62, 74, 113
 lying out 110, 114

M

macho man 45
 magazine story 7
 management of grief 50
 Manhattan 17, 49
 Margaret 78, 79, 85
 Market Square 16, 39
 marriage 20, 23, 27, 28, 33, 43, 51, 52, 54, 56, 58, 75

McArdle 80
 meta story 7
 methods and strategies 56
 Mill Park Road 16
 Miller 21, 47
 Miss Delano 19, 35, 44, 70
 Miss Fortini 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 32, 34, 44, 45, 46, 49, 59, 70, 71
 Mitchell 44
 Molly 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 96, 99, 100, 103
 mother and son relationship 14
 motherhood 14, 43
Mothers and Sons 1, 4, 13, 14
 motif 1, 6, 14, 40, 51, 52, 54, 56, 123
 motivation 7, 20, 57
 Mrs Kehoe 17, 23, 28, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41, 48, 49, 63, 68, 70
 Mrs Lacey 31, 35, 41, 43, 50, 51, 52, 57, 62, 66
 Mullins 89
 multicultural 5, 48
 multiple-choice 55

N

Nancy 16, 19, 22, 27, 28, 29, 38, 39, 52, 78, 81, 82, 84, 86, 88
 narrative 1, 7, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 31, 38, 52, 57, 73, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 105, 106, 123
 narrative technique 1, 7, 14, 123
 narrator 22, 81, 82, 105, 106
 national curriculum 2, 4, 56, 111, 112, 123
 national quota system 21
 native speakers 3
 nature 74, 89
 New York 18, 19, 21, 37, 38, 49
 newspaper article 12
 Niall of the Nine Hostages 86
 non-fiction 13
 non-native speakers 3
 novel 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 64, 67, 69, 74, 75, 110, 111, 123
 nylon stockings 20, 70

O

omniscient narrator 22
 open ending 7
 Osbourne Road 16

P

Paddy's Paradox 47
 pair work 90
 parish hall 15, 17, 18, 19, 26, 32, 37, 42, 45, 49, 69
 Patty 18, 24, 25, 26, 36, 37, 38, 46, 49, 64, 68, 69, 70

Pee Wee Reese 19
 plot 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 22, 58, 79, 105, 123
 plot story 7
 plurilingual 3
 portfolio 58
 post-colonial story 7
 post-reading 2, 7, 8, 12, 55, 57, 90, 111, 112, 123
 post-war 46
 Preacher Roe 19
 prediction 111
 prejudice 4, 9
 pre-listening 55
 pre-marital sex 51
 pre-reading 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 55, 56, 57, 90, 91, 111, 123
 presentation 9, 22, 81, 106
 priest 35, 36, 78, 81, 84, 87, 97, 98, 99, 116
 priesthood 87
 protagonist 9, 13, 24, 64, 81
 psychological novels 23, 81
 psychological short stories 81, 83
 psychological story 7

Q

questionnaire 10, 124

R

racial segregation 19
 racism 91
 Rafter Street 16
 reading 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 50, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 82, 83, 90, 91, 92, 111, 112, 117
 reading diary 92, 112
 reading for specific information 112
 reading process 3, 8, 10, 58, 91, 111, 112
 reflector figure 22, 106
 relationship 6, 14, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 37, 50, 51, 52, 71, 73, 74, 104, 106, 107, 108, 112, 113, 118, 119
 religion 41, 86, 87, 91, 99, 107, 115, 116
 retrospective view 79, 82
 review 12, 60, 111, 113
 Ringwood 16
 River Slaney 16
 role play 12
 Rooney 48
 rosary 41, 50, 80, 85, 87, 99, 115, 116
 Rose 14, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 34, 40, 41, 43, 50, 51, 54, 57, 62, 64, 66, 69, 73
 Rosslare Harbour 16
 Rosslare Strand 36, 104, 105, 110
 RTE 86

S

Samuels 5
 San Francisco 20
 Scanlan 80
 Scarpaci 44

scenic presentation 23, 24, 81, 106
 school canon 5
 science fiction 5
 Séan Lemass 21
 season 18, 23, 35, 46, 79, 89
 Second World War 21
 secularisation 87, 99
 setting 1, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 45, 123
 short story 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20, 78, 79, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 92, 96, 97, 99, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 117, 118, 119, 122, 123
 short story collection 1, 13, 14
 Showalter 8
 simplicity 7
 Singin' in the Rain 19
 sitting 17, 81, 110, 117
 Skerries 37
 Slater 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12
 slice of life story 7
 Smith 26, 27
 social format 90
 Solly 45, 46
 South America 13
 Sowell 45
 speaking 10, 55, 59, 81, 88, 96, 108, 110, 116
 sport 32, 41, 49, 110
 spring 18, 105
 St. Peter's College 80
 Stanzel 22, 80, 105
 star-crossed lovers 51, 52
 stereotype 4, 9, 12, 32, 58, 64, 70, 71, 72
 stout 42, 115
 Stover 5, 9, 11, 12
 strawberry factory 104, 105, 108, 112, 117, 119
 Stringer 13
 subgenre 5
 summer 6, 17, 18, 30, 46, 61, 81, 82, 84, 89, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 117, 119, 121
 Summerhill 16

T

taboo 51, 91, 111, 123
 Talbot Hotel 16
 tea 16, 31, 36, 41, 73, 82, 86, 110, 116
 teacher 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 42, 44, 55, 56, 57, 58, 90, 91, 92, 111, 123
 teaching 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 40, 55, 56, 58, 85, 90, 100, 123, 124
 text type 90, 112
 Thaler 5, 6, 7
 Thanksgiving 18
The Master 13, 98
 The Siege of Ennis 42
 theme 1, 4, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 40, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 88, 90, 110, 113, 123
 Thesande 20

time 7, 8, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 41, 42, 45, 48, 49, 52, 55, 59, 61, 62, 71, 79, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 99, 100, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 115, 116, 119
 time span 15, 21, 22, 79, 105
 timeline 12, 20, 58
 title 8, 10, 12, 56, 79, 94, 101, 111
 Tony 15, 17, 18, 19, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, 43, 45, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 60, 63, 71, 72, 74, 75
 tourism 110
 town 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27, 29, 30, 36, 42, 46, 54, 61, 75, 78, 79, 86, 88, 90, 96, 98, 103, 104, 108, 110, 112, 117, 119
 transitional 5
 Tway 5, 9, 11, 12

U

unified plot 14
 Unites States of America 1
 University College Dublin 13
 USA 19, 20, 21, 30, 31, 40, 64, 65
 utopian 5

V

variety 4, 6, 7, 12, 56, 57, 58, 111
 Vinegar Hill 16
 virtue in distress 51, 52
 visual input 10, 90
 vocabulary 10, 12, 111, 112, 118

W

wake 39, 43, 54, 84, 89, 103, 110, 111, 114, 115, 116
 washing 44, 110, 116
 weather 12, 18, 50, 83, 89, 90, 110, 116
 wedding 19, 33, 42, 52
 Wexford 13, 16, 36, 41, 80, 98
 while-reading 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 55, 56, 57, 90, 91, 92, 111, 112, 123
 whiskey 42
 Wicklow 79
 Williamstown 104, 105, 107, 110, 117, 118
 Williamstown's church 104
 winter 46, 79, 84, 89, 103, 104, 105, 114
 woman between two men 51, 52
 woman's story 7
 World's Fair 20
 writing 2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 28, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 67, 88, 92, 111, 112

9. Abstract

In this thesis, Colm Tóibín's novel *Brooklyn* and short stories *A Priest in the Family* and *A Summer Job* are analysed according to the literary aspects of the plot, the setting and background, the narrative technique, the characters and characterisation and the themes and motifs. This detailed literary analysis acts as an essential part for the teaching and learning process in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom later on.

Cross-cultural teaching and learning is an essential part of the EFL classroom. In general, the literary genres such as the novel and the short story reflect inter-cultural and cross-cultural teaching and learning aspects as they contain a large number of themes and motifs, features of 'Irishness', 'Americanness' and 'Italianness'. Therefore, the reading process involves much more than only reading. As reflected in the Common European Framework of Reference (CERF) and the national curriculum, inter-cultural and cross-cultural learning should be supported in the EFL context in a way to build up an intercultural communicative competence.

When taking a closer look at the collection of designed activities for the EFL context, the reader can observe that not only the Common European Framework of Reference, but also the national curriculum were taken into consideration. First, it has to be said that a large number of activities were designed in relation to the inter-cultural and cross-cultural teaching and learning aspect. However, it has to be added that the primary texts offer a large number of opportunities for general teaching ideas as well. I am of the opinion that students will feel encouraged to carry out the activities as inter-cultural and cross-cultural learning is always connected to the student's own cultural background. Therefore, the outcome on the learners' side can be connected to a certain understanding and interest as they can already bring in some background information on their own culture.

10. Zusammenfassung

In der Diplomarbeit werden Colm Tóibíns Roman *Brooklyn* und Kurzgeschichten *A Priest in the Family* und *A Summer Job* aus der Kurzgeschichtensammlung *Mothers and Sons* nach literarischen Aspekten wie dem Plot, den Schauplätzen und dem Hintergrundwissen, der Erzählweise, den Charakteren und den Hauptthemen analysiert. Diese nähere Auseinandersetzung ist ein wichtiger Teil der Vorarbeit, die von der Lehrperson geleistet werden muss, um das Lehren und Lernen im EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Kontext zu fördern.

Interkulturelles Lehren und Lernen ist ein essentieller Teil des EFL Unterrichts und mit dem Genre Roman oder Kurzgeschichte kann dieser Aspekt im Unterricht aufgegriffen werden. Nach einer präzisen Analyse von Colm Tóibíns zuvor erwähnten Werken, die auch Themen und Schwerpunkte beinhalten, die mit der irischen, der amerikanischen und der italienischen Kultur verbunden werden können, kann in die Praxis übergeleitet werden. In diesem Kontext reflektieren sowohl der Gemeinsame Europäische Referenzrahmen für Sprachen (GERS) als auch der Lehrplan die Notwendigkeit des interkulturellen Lernens im EFL Kontext mit dem Ziel der interkulturellen kommunikativen Kompetenz.

Bei näherem Betrachten der entworfenen Übungen für den EFL Unterricht kann der Leser oder die Leserin sehen, dass sowohl der Gemeinsame Europäische Referenzrahmen für Sprachen als auch der Lehrplan dafür herangezogen wurden. Es wurden sowohl globale Übungen, die im Zusammenhang mit Colm Tóibíns Werken stehen, als auch Aufgaben, die den Schwerpunkt des interkulturellen Lernens beinhalten, entworfen. Vor allem bei den interkulturellen Übungen werden Schüler und Schülerinnen Verständnis und Interesse zeigen, da sie ihr eigenes kulturelles Hintergrundwissen einbringen können.

11. Curriculum Vitae

Personal Details

Name	Julia Christine Schwaninger
Address	Dreihausgasse 14/ 6, 1150 Vienna, Austria
E-mail	j.schwaninger@gmx.net
Date of birth	15/08/1989
Marital status	Single
Nationality	Austria
Religion	Roman Catholic

Languages

German (mother-tongue), English (fluent), French (fluent), Greek (basic)

Work experience

04/07/2005-29/07/2005	Industrial internship at the corporation "Concisa"
03/07/2006-31/07/2006	(retirement arrangements and management)
02/07/2007-31/07/2007	Concisa Vorsorgeberatung und Management AG 1030 Vienna, Traungasse 14-16, Austria
10/2005-10/2007	Job working at the bakery, confectionary and café "Raab" 1140 Vienna, Hauptstraße 104, Austria
Since 15/12/2007	Job working at the bakery and confectionary "Groissböck" 1140 Vienna, Albert Schweitzergasse 6, Austria
04/08/2008-29/08/2008	Industrial internship at the old people's home "Seniorenpflegeresidenz Hoffmanpark" 3002 Purkersdorf, Wienerstraße 64, Austria
17/08/2009-21/08/2009	Study camp "study&fun"
24/08/2009-28/08/2009	Sacré Coeur Pressbaum, Schulstiftung der Erzdiözese
30/08/2009-05/09/2009	Wien

16/08/2010-20/08/2010	3021 Pressbaum, Klostergasse 12, Austria
02/08/2009-15/08/2009	Job as an aupair at Bellossy, France
07/02/2010-23/02/2010	
18/07/2010-13/08/2010	
17/07/2011-05/09/2011	

Education and Qualification

1995-1999	Elementary school 1140 Vienna, Hauptstraße 70, Austria
1999-2002	International school 8060 Paphos, 22- 26 Ellados Avenue, P.O. Box 62018, Cyprus
2002-2007	Gymnasium (grammar school) Sacré Coeur Pressbaum, Schulstiftung der Erzdiözese Wien 3021 Pressbaum, Klostergasse 12, Austria
09/05/2006	Certificate DELF B1 “French Embassy in Austria”
25/07/2007	Matura (school leaving examinations) Sacré Coeur Pressbaum, Schulstiftung der Erzdiözese Wien 3021 Pressbaum, Klostergasse 12, Austria
Since 01/10/2007	Studies in teacher training in English and French University of Vienna 1010 Vienna, Doktor Karl Lueger Ring 1, Austria
03/09/2008-26/09/2008	Language-learning stay Wormhout, France
22/08/2010-18/09/2010	Language-learning stay USA (East Coast)
02/07/2011-16/07/2011	Language-learning stay Dublin, Ireland

Personal Interests

Sport (volley ball, aerobic, endurance sports), literature, dancing