Anna Burns: *Milkman* (2018)

Anna Burns:

* Born in Belfast in 1962.
* Raised in working-class Catholic district. It is important the fact as the protagonist also lives in working-class Catholic district.
* Moved to London in 1987. This was the case of many authors in Northern Ireland. Anna leaves before the ‘The Peace Agreement’ or ‘The Good Friday Agreement’ of 1998.
* Since 2014 she has lived in East Sussex (England).
* Novels: *No Bones* (2001), *Little Constructions* (2007), *Milkman* (2018).
* Novella: *Mostly Hero* (2014). Novella is the term for a short novela.
* *Milkman*: 2018 Man Booker Prize

She ran out of money while writing the book and she had to go to social assistant.

From 1968 to 1998.

Milkman:

* Subgenre: historical fiction (The ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland 1968-1998); psychological fiction; coming-of-age novel.
* Time of the narrated: the novel alludes to the 1970s. 19**79**: Sigourney Weaver in *Alien*.
* Time of the narration: story told 20 years later after the events (19**99**). One year after the Peace Agreement, when the troubles came to an end.
* Spatial setting: Northern Ireland (a city like the author’s hometown, Belfast), but references are oblique.
* Themes: memory vs forgetting (*jamais vu*); US vs Them; surveillance; violence; sexual harassment; strategies for coping and survival. The protagonist admits that she forgets things, this is because of the trauma. This is the reason why the story is written in order not to be forgotten.
* Plot: round structure (the first sentence anticipates the end. A spoiler?). Conflict between the protagonist and her community in the context of a broader political context. Milkman’s stalking of the protagonist.
* Narrator: 38-year-old woman telling about her experience 20 years earlier, when she was 18; tragicomic voice (wry humour); conversational tone (Northern Ireland colloquial expressions) vs sophisticated, bookish lexicon; repetitions and accumulation of similar phrases; digressions; detailed pondering on the conflicts around. There are many digressions, flashbacks… Specially while the running.
* Characters: referred to by their alias (expressing the relation they have with other characters); ‘middle sister’ (narrating protagonist), milkman (41-year-old paramilitary officer; milk containers used for explosives. He is from IRA ‘Irish ‘Republic Army’), maybe-boyfriend (uncertain couple relationship) …

All the people were controlled, even by their own people.

Bizarre: the protagonist reading while walking and she prefers the books from the 19th century that the 20th century.

Northern Ireland at this time is pat of the United Kingdom.

Historical context: catholic vs Protestants.

The protagonist has problems with her own community, with her own mother who want her to get married. Her mother had 10 children.

Belfast is very close from Scotland, that is why so many protestants.

Reading in class:   
Who is speaking? Who is the narrator? It is a first-person narrator.

At the beginning of the story, at the moment of the narrated event, she is threatened to be shot by a gun. Celtic country.

Cat: was bad for a Christian environment. The cat is associated with women, and it is not positive. In the area of the protagonist, the cats have been killed and mutilated. There is the association between women and animal. In the future, we will see what is happening to the animals. She will go with the head of the cat on her hand looking for someone to help her.

“Milkman died. He had been shot by one of the state hit squads” → the state of the United Kingdom, this is before the New Friday Agreement.

Rumours are going to be very important is this story. When there are rumours about a person is because someone is watching you, so it is talking about the surveillance. Milkman, for example, know everything about her, her daily movement (when she takes the bus, where, which bus…) … Rumour are very often, wrong assumptions. The rumour about the milkman was started by her first brother-in-law.

First brother-in-law → is known as a sexual harasser. The flashback from where she was 12 and he was making sexual jokes. He actual marriage the oldest sister.

We can feel the anger of the first-person narration, even though she is 18 and a mature person. She is clever, she as a very good intuition, especially with the first brother-in-law: “much more frightening, much more dangerous”.

Political problem in Norther Ireland: “I did not speak”, the silence, the oppression, they are afraid of denouncing a situation of harassment. “Whatever you say, say nothing”: induction of silence.

Definition of violence: “In those days, in that place, violence was everybody’s main gauge for judging those around them and I could see at once he didn’t have it”

Through the novel we are going to see many attempts of defining the violence…

She reads ‘Ivanhoe’, an historical novel, showing us that she is not disconnected from history. She does not like the 20th century. ‘Don’t read while walking, it is dangerous’: you are reading and you are disconnecting from your surroundings, but the other people could see her, and, by doing that you are grabbing the attention of others… She knows that people will have that habit against her. She is very perspicacious for many things, but extremely naïve, for others.

She not only remains in silence but also has a problem of denial, sometimes she denies things happened.

The city is divided into 2 areas, and some areas are unsafe, because of who is in charge.

The public transport was not very safe nor reliable (atentados). In Northern Ireland there were shared taxis: a neighbour with a car.

Temporal gaps from the time of the narration and the time of narrated.

Nobody trusted her. Her word was nothing (this is related to the silence).

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CLASE 24 – 10:

The division of the island: Ireland and Northern Ireland, took place in 1921. Northern Ireland just has 6 of the 9 counties. Do not confuse Oldster with Norther Ireland. Norther Ireland: it is a monarchy, as it belongs to United Kingdom.

**The Troubles**

The original name comes from --. Depending of you are a nationalist or an unionists you will find complete different information.

While the majority of Catholic (nationalists) and Protestants (unionists) did not support the use of violence, the terrorist campaign fought by republics and loyalist and the State’s campaign of counterterrorism by the use of the British army and the police, meant that the Northern Ireland conflict became defined by widespread violence.

3500 were killed. Thousands more were injured. Thousands were traumatized by violence. Thousands were sent to prison.

1998: Britain, the Republic of Ireland, and most Northern Irish political parties signed the Good Friday Agreement, which established a power-sharing system of government and made Northern Ireland a developed state that, while part of the UK, would have its own legislature and executive.

The narrator says that it was a tendency of the conflict around her era: she uses the term: the sorrows.

If there is a referendum, the people of all Ireland (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) would vote.

**Social conflicts and their impact on individuals: recurrent themes**

**Patriarchal pattern**: “for being the wee wife, for doing always exactly what he told her to” (4); “for I couldn’t be fitter than this man, could not be more knowledgeable about my own regime than this man, because the conditioning of males and females here would never allowed me that. This was the ‘I’m male and you’re female territory” (7-8). Control of women’s mobility: “’Not sure,’ he said, about this arunning, about all that awalking, Too much arunning and awalking’” (9).[A-prefixing is a dialectal phenomenon where a prefix, a-, attaches to a verbal form with the suffix -ing].

Spatial division: clearly

**Characters: some introductory features**

Protagonist: 18 years old (narrator of the story when 38); read while walking: “as I was walking along reading *Ivanhoe*” (2), (1819 historical novel about medieval England): “to be added as further proof against me” (3); reads Gogol’s ‘The Overcoat’ (1842: destitution), talks about novels such as *The Brother Karamarov*, *Tristam Shandy* (18th century), *Vanity Fair*, *Madame Bovary* (20).

Milkman: 41 years old; married; “his pursuing and attempting an affair with me” (1); “much more frightening, much more dangerous” (1); “he drove cars… often flash cars… there was that van –small, white, nondescript, shapeshifting” (2-3); careful not look like

Third sister: “” (15).

Maybe-boyfriend: “” (18);

Chef: “” (31).

Wee sister: “precocity, uncontained curiosity” (37); “age 7, 8 and 9” (45).

Ma:

Second sister

Da:

‘Punishment’ marring out (marring someone from the other side).

**Protagonist**

Strategies to get out of undesirable situations: Impropriety

Perceptive

Immature

Mistaken decisions

Angry: “” (4).

Memory loss:

Untruthful: “because I was lapsing in attention, because” (10).

Interiorizes homophobic regulations: “I had a worry that maybe-boyfriend might not be a proper man” (44).

**Narrator**

The whole novel is a retrospection

Fragmentary narrative flow: “that of all the men to take up with – But that was enough” (4).

Quotations of what others say to her or what she says to others but no real dialogue: “you’d better listen to me,’ she said. But I wouldn’t listen” (4).

Urge to explain the actual meaning of the enduring, euphemism used at the time: “…because of the milkman and his involvement, and by ‘involvement’ **I mean** connected, and by ‘connected’ **I mean** active rebellion, and by ‘active rebellion’ **I mean** state-enemy renouncer owing to the political problems that existed in this place.” (7). Words do not match meaning.

Coinages:

Repetitions, accumulation: “it was an emotional word ” ‘marvellous!’, ‘tremendous!’, ‘stupendous!’, ‘stunning!’, ‘sensational!’, ‘topper!’, ‘super!’, ‘crikey!’, ‘let’s!’, ‘smashing!’, ‘diamondiferous!’, ‘bizarre!’, ‘exceedingly!’

Digressions: “One of the best ways to describe these unspoken rules and regulations would be to home in **for a second** on the subject of names…” (2 pages 22-24)

Colloquial expressions: “a wee photo of your ma” (28).

Non-standard English: “I did use to run with him” (13).

Bookish/formal discourse: “opprobrium” (13), “heavily reliant upon” (13).

Over the water THE REPUBLIC.

Foreign-language expressions: “en masse” (12), “ jamais vu” (43).

Characters’ unrealistic conversational discourse (tinged by the narrator?): “… that anyone from “our side of the road” would let their proclivity for car bits override what should be an instinctual recoil from the other side’s symbolism and badges” (29).

Protagonist’s ‘over the water’ language: “however, indeed” (20).

Irony: “The couple (…) were referred to in the community as **Nigel and Jason** (are British names from the forbidden list) a joke not lost upon the **good-natured** pair themselves” (23); “ruthless, to-the-death, ballroom-dancing competitions” (38).

Humour: “because the name of a girl – unless it should be Pomp and Circumstance – wasn’t politically contentious” [Edward Elgar’s music for military marches] (24).

**Plot (complication of conflicts): Chapter 1**

Beginning: not with an introduction/exposition or even *in media res*, but with an anticipation of the end (the milkman is killed).

Rumour of an affair between protagonist and the milkman.

Family conflicts: protagonist vs. first brother-in-law, eldest sister.

1st meeting: milkman informs her that he knows her family and offers her a lift in his car.

2nd meeting: milkman joins her in running in the park, informs her that he knows all her daily habits, and objects to her running and walking.

Violence in 1979 does not include the same offenses as in 1999 (example: encroachment).

Drug addictions from 70s to the 90s.

(UK) State forces’ surveillance: photographing renouncers-of-the-state and their associates (republicans).

Patriarchal society: “This was the ‘I’m male and you’re female’ territory” (8), “defer to males” (8).

Animalization of women (cf.cat) and violence against both.

Uncertain couple relationship with maybe-boyfriend. Difficulty to commit emotionally.

**Plot Chapter 2**

The protagonist begins to change her habits as a result of the milkman’s stalking.

Spatial boundaries: “a curtailed route owing to religious geography” (11).

Women’s power for communal actions: “Local women en masse (…) presented a surprising formidable force of which other forces, usually considered more formidable, had no choice but to take note” (12).

Military patrol vehicles: enemy state policeman; enemy soldier from across the water (Britain); enemy state-defending paramilitaries from over the wat (loyalists) safe houses for protection of paramilitaries.

Maybe-boyfriend’s conflict with nationalist friends about the flag on the supercharger of a Blower Bentley (racing car): “flags were invented to be instinctive and emotional often pathologically, narcissistically emotional” (25).

‘Our lexicon’ (‘Fuck’) vs ‘Over the water’ language (‘extraordinary, quintessential (20-21)).

Us (our side, our religion, renouncers-of-the-state) vs Them (their side, their religion, defenders-of-the-state, the state) conflict (22). “’Us’ and ‘Them’ was second nature” (22).

Permissions/and prohibitions, “unspoken rules and regulations”: “All ordinary people also understood the basics of what was allowed and not allowed, of what was neutral…” (22); “this psycho-political atmosphere, with its rules of allegiance, of **tribal** identification” (24) [cf. Heaney: “tribal, intimate revenge” in “Punishment”].

Colonialism and anti-colonialism: (On the topic of people’s banned names) “the power of history, the age-old conflict, enjoinments and resisted impositions” (23). State repression and torture (26).

Spatial boundaries: “**over the road**” (unionist city neighbourhoods), “**over the water**” (Britain), “**over the border**” (Republic of Ireland) (24); “**this side of the road**” (25); “Over the road” was viewed in our community as more ‘over the water’ than actual ‘over the water’” (26); the **ten minute area** (36); the **red-light street**” [not for prostitution, but where unmarried couples lived, mixed-religion couples] (41); “Marriage, after **territorial boundaries**, is the foundation of the state” (42); **downtown**: “**inter-communal** bars and clubs” (45).

Social division along religious-political lines [as a result of colonization and the Ulster Plantation (1610 onwards): mass media (television programmes); professions; consumer products: “The right butter. The wrong butter. The tea of allegiance. The tea of betrayal” (25); placenames; [Derry vs Londonderry]; prayers; hymns; pronunciation:

Enemies within the community: informers, “those who marry-out” [cf. Heaney’s ‘Punishment’] (26); dealt with in ‘kangaroo courts’ [illegal judgement and punishment of people by their own community] (32).

The Troubles and mental health: “these were paranoid times” (27). Nuclear boy (61-62). Protagonist’s da (55-56).

Characters’ disclaimers and euphemistic language: “far be it from me” (30).

Hypermaculinity and homophobia: [On Chef] “being a woman of fastidious over-refinement”.

Male friendship -----------

Protagonist’s interiorization of homophobic discourse: “…lent food books (which freaked me out) to maybe-boyfriend who (also freaking out) read them” (32).

Silence-denial:

Orphanhood (literal and metaphorical):

Concealment, self-depression, memory loss [cf. **Mermaid poems**]:

Language conflict [cf. **O’Donnell’s poem**]:

Protagonist’s confrontation with her mother

Conversation with third brother-in-law on the problem of the reading-while-walking, as he does not find it safe:

Narrator’s cue about the year of the narrated events: “the political problems of eleven years” (19**68** - 19**79**).

Narrator’s dissection of society (classification):

Totalitarian society: the society that actually controls the society.

**Chapter 3: complications of the plot**

Watching the sunset with maybe boyfriend and the French class

Ma’s denigration

**Third meeting with the milkman: he insinuates killing maybe-boyfriend** ()

Argument with ma over the protagonist’s relationship with the milkman, because ma thinks her daughter in one of the groupies (paramilitaries’ girlfriends [False Helpers]); “the prized position of becoming the woman of the man” (121) [the eroticism of power]. Ma’s opinion of the paramilitaries: “those sociopaths, even maybe psychopaths” (122); groupies’ configurations of femininity and female roles; “Honour him. Do him proud” (125).

Vladimir: he classified the character. All the Russian Tales shared the same types of characters.

Introduction of a new character: the **real milkman** [V. Propp: Helper vs. paramilitary milkman: Villain].

Arrival of an internationalist brand of **feminism** in the area (**the issue women**) [False Opponent]. **Traditional women vs issue women** (162-163). **Nationalism** (**and Catholic Church) vs feminism**: women’s needs and interests to be subordinated to the nation’s interests (155), **double-colonization** (by the colonizer and by the indigenous patriarchal interests). The Drab Aunt: women who helped other women to practise abortion.

**Chapter 3: thematic issues**

**The Troubles and mental health**

Refusal to accept mental health trouble: [euphemism]

Concealment:

Mental health and gender: how mental problems could be acceptable for the women but not for the men of the community.

Suicide [nuclear boy]:

Da’s depression:

Depressing social atmosphere: People that ‘shiny people’.

The idea that you get used to the darkness (referindose ao u)

**Chapter 3: partisan geographies**

Downtown

The interface road

Protagonist’s landmarks that

Pious women were simple housewives that prayed a lot ≠ holy women that were nuns.

Ten-minute area

Mary Celeste: there was a boat that appeared empty.

**Protagonist**

**The real Milkman**

**Chapter 4**

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***Interactive class 19/10/2022***

Is this a Postcolonial novel?

1979 is a colonial period during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The present of the novel is 1999. After the Good Friday Agreement.

This novel is a post-Agreement novel. The speaker is speaking 1 year after the agreement.

Post colonization covers countries that are already independent. Postcolonial studies. Period before the colonization, period of colonization, the problem against the colonizers, the period of decolonization. Term: postcolonial. Another term: post Agreement literature.

The novel covers the period of the Agreement but also looks back at that.

Is Northern Ireland a colony?

Is part of the UK. Slight majority of Catholics. Does the North want to go with the South? Does the South want to go with the North? Look at the problem they have with the Brexit and the border with Ireland. The problem with the border? With the peace agreement there was 1 condition: there would be no border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. That border is against the Peace Agreement.

Themes of the novel:

Important: Temporal gap between the narration and the time of the narration.

Sometimes we confused narrator and protagonist.

Presence of the 18-year-old narrator.

Violence: everyday conditions of life. Political conflict. Surveillance by the state and by their own community. The division between the ‘us’ and ‘them’.

How the protagonist reacts to the impositions and the problems. One reaction is denial.

*“I then shouted out the window after her that if that coward had anything to say to me then he was to come round and say it to me himself. That was a mistake: to have been emotional, to have been seen and heard to be emotional, shouting out the window, over the street, allowing myself to be pulled into the momentum. Usually I managed not to fall into that. But I was angry. I had just so much anger – at her, for being the wee wife, for doing always exactly what he told her to, and at him, for trying to put his own contemptibleness over onto me”.*

Who is this coward? The first brother-in-law. He is a coward because he sent his wife. Who else they would send.

It was a mistake because she did not want to show her emotions. Related to the reading-while-walking. She was under surveillance. “Allowing me”: she has to control herself. She has to exercise the control on herself. Narrator ≠ focalizer (18-year-old women): the difference is that the narrator speaks from her present life, and the focalizer feels, she feels the anger. The anger is the anger of the 18-year-old woman. She is also criticizing the subordination.

Wee: used in Ireland and Scotland. little women ‘la mujercita’. Critic of the patriarchy.

*“Already I could feel my stubbornness, my ‘mind your own business’ arising. Unfortunately whenever that happened, I’d pretty much turn perverse, refuse to learn from experience and cut off my nose to spite my face. As for the rumour of me and the milkman, I dismissed it without considering it. Intense nosiness about everybody had always existed in the area. Gossip washed in, washed out, came, went, moved on to the next target. So I didn’t pay attention to this love affair with the milkman. Then he appeared again – this time on foot as I was running in the parks with the lower and upper waterworks”.*

“*Whenever that happened*…”: the 35-year-old narrator is speaking.

“*I dismissed it without considering it*”: she preferred ignoring the situation. She did not want to confront her mother. Example of DENIAL (mistaken decision). ‘I do not have a problem’. But later, she will have to confronted, when he appeared again.

*“I was alone and not reading this time, for I never read while running. And there he was, again out of nowhere, this time falling into step beside me where he’d never been before. Instantly we were running together and* ***it looked as if*** *always we were running together and again I was startled, as I would be startled by every encounter, except the last, I was to have with this man” →* He informs her about her life. “***It looked as if***”: surveillance, as people would think that they were a couple. The rumours would start in the base of running together. She feels intimidated on every encounter except the last. Spoiler of what would happened later. ENIGMA. Why won’t she’ll be startled on the last encounter? The protagonist does not know, the narrator knows ir.

“*At first he didn’t speak, and I could not speak. Then he did and his talk was mid-conversation* ***as if too, always we were mid-conversation****. His words were brief and a little strained because of my pace of running, and it was of my place of work that he spoke. He knew my work – where it was, what I did there, the hours, the days and the twenty-past-eight bus I caught every morning when it wasn’t being hijacked to get me into town to it. Also he made the pronouncement that I never caught this bus home. This was true. Every weekday, rain or shine, gunplay or bombs, stand-off or riots, I preferred to walk home reading my latest book.* ***This would be a nineteenth-century book because I did not like twentieth-century books because I did not like the twentieth century****. I suppose now, looking back, this milkman knew all of that as well*”.

*I could not speak →* the incapacity of talking to him. She was silenced.

The topic of the surveillance. SCAPISM.

‘Looking back’: this is a comment from the 35-year-old narrator.

Despite of the situation of the riots (…) she prefers to read. This is because at the time, in Ireland, many people ignored the actual situation and decided to scape to their fantasies.

“*Why could I just not stop this running and tell this man to leave me alone? Apart from ‘where did he come from?’ I didn’t have those other thoughts until later, and I don’t mean an hour later. I mean* ***twenty years later***”. → In 20 years, she would be more mature. Trauma and the time that it takes to the victim to speak. The narrator is the one speaking. There is also a change in the political situation.

“*At the time, age eighteen, having been brought up in a hair-trigger society where the ground rules were – if no physically violent touch was being laid upon you, and no outright verbal insults were being levelled at you, and no taunting looks in the vicinity either, then nothing was happening, so how could you be under attack from something that wasn’t there? At eighteen I had no proper understanding of the ways that constituted encroachment. I had a feeling for them, an intuition, a sense of repugnance for some situations and some people, but I did not know intuition and repugnance counted, did not know I had a right not to like, not to have to put up with, anybody and everybody coming near*”. → contrast between the past and the present regarding the definition of violence. Which is the contrast?

***Interactive class 26/10/2022***

Do not start a paragraph with a pronoun, instead say: “the protagonist”.

Between the last sentence and the first sentence (chapter 2-3) there is a big contrast. In chapter 2 the protagonist is relieved, but in the 3 chapter the milkman appears.

What are the differences between the narrator and the focalizer? The narrator verbalises what the focalizer feels. This narrator is being used by the writer to create some effects, like this effect of surprise.

What happened in the French class and the debate about the blue? It is a metaphor that represent the society. In this class they have the experience of questioning the conventional knowledge. What are we taught to think? The teacher is encouraging them to critic the knowledge.

“*Of course we knew really that the sky could be more than blue, two more, but why should any of us admit to that? I myself have never admitted it. Not even the week before when I experienced my first sunset with maybe-boyfriend did I admit it. Even then, even though there were more colours than the acceptable three in the sky – blue (the day sky), black (the night sky) and white (clouds) – that evening still I kept my mouth shut. And now the others in this class – all older than me, some as old as thirty – also weren’t admitting it. It was the convention not to admit it, not to accept detail for this type of detail would mean choice and choice would mean responsibility and what if we failed in our responsibility? Failed too, in the interrogation of the consequence of seeing more than we could cope with? Worse, what if it was nice, whatever it was, and we liked it, got used to it, were cheered up by it, came to rely upon it, only for it to go away, or be wrenched away, never to come back again? Better not to have had it in the first place was the prevailing feeling, and that was why blue was the colour for our sky to be. Teacher though, wasn’t leaving it at that*”.

Why do they not want to admit that there were more colours than blue? Because of the political context the people do not want to question the knowledge.

“*This type of detail would mean choice and* ***choice*** *would mean responsibility and what if we failed in our responsibility?*” → Resisting to challenge. There is a big issue about choice: the teacher is very irresponsible saying them that they have a choice, because they do not really have that choice. It is a matter of survival. Not to choose is easy and not irresponsible.

“*Worse, what if it was nice, whatever it was, and we liked it, got used to it, were cheered up by it, came to rely upon it, only for it to go away, or be wrenched away, never to come back again?*” → When we like choice, and we like challenging thinks, the, they go away. As 18 years old, she decides that is better not to have it. The protagonist father believes that ‘there is no point’.

The fact that what they are talking about is the sky. Why? The idea of nature. What is the people idea of nature? Cats are killed, and they believed that dogs were better, as they could advised them for the British soldiers. Dogs are trained to advised them about the arrival of the British soldiers.

The choice of the sky is related with maybe-boyfriend, as he likes the sunset: he has a different notion of nature. In general, people from that district have a problem with nature, as they do not even look at the sky. They do not make the effort of looking at nature. But then, other people, like maybe-boyfriend sees the different colours, and enjoy it.

*“‘Testicles!’ cried some ladies and gentlemen and a frisson – the only French of the evening apart from ‘le ciel est bleu’ and that literary guff the guy in the book had been posturing – went through us. It seemed to our minds that no, what she was saying could not ever be true. If what she was saying was true, that the sky – out there – not out there – whatever – could be any colour, that meant anything could be any colour, that anything could be anything, that anything could happen, at any time, in any place, in the whole of the world, and to anybody – probably had too, only we just hadn’t noticed. So no. After generation upon generation, fathers upon forefathers, mothers upon foremothers, centuries and millennia of being one colour officially and three colours unofficially, a colourful sky, just like that, could not be allowed to be*”.

“*After generation upon generation, fathers upon forefathers, mothers upon foremothers, centuries and millennia of being one colour* ***officially*** *and three colours unofficially, a colourful sky, just like that, could not be* ***allowed*** *to be*” → Received knowledge that has been happening through generations. You cannot question tradition, you cannot question conventions.

“T*he guy in the book had been* ***posturing***” → The teacher was living a different perspective. Comparison with the students from the next class that was ‘littérateurs’ classroom’. Does not go directly to the point. Posturing: using colourful language, for the students is posturing, as they just want to learn French. No reflexion, as how writers represent the world. Representation and reality, for the student is not real, the writer is posturing.

Who is right: the student or the literary writer? The literary writers as nothing is just black or white. How language is used to represent the world. Impressionist painters: ‘that is not realistic’. Impressionist painter would represent their reality, their different colours.

Metafiction: is a novel talking about other novel and telling how literature works, literature representation of reality.

“‘*Come,’ she persisted. ‘Why have you turned your backs?’ For we had turned our backs; it had been instinctive and protective. But she made us turn round to face the sky once more. This time she proceeded to point through various panes at sections of sky that were not blue but instead lilac, purple, patches of pink – differing pinks – with one patch of green that had a yellow gold extending along it. And green? How come green was up there? Then, as the sunset was not most visible from this window, she marched us out of our classroom and along the corridor into the littérateurs’ classroom. That evening their room was empty because they had gone to the theatre with pens, flashlights and little notebooks to watch and critique Playboy of the Western World. Here teacher bade us look at the sky from this brand new perspective, where the sun – enormous and of the most gigantic orange-red colour – in a sky too, with no blue in it – was going down behind buildings in a section of windowpane*”

Why she makes a reference to “Playboy of the Western World”? This was translated to Galician and represent in Galicia. Representation of Irish identity. Founders of the Irish national theatre. This play was furiously attacked, as the Ireland bourgeoisie did not believe it as Ireland, as it represented Irish rural people. Translation: ‘O home que chegou de lonxe’.

“*Into the littérateurs’ classroom*” → the students from the littérateurs’ classroom went to the theatre.

What are doing in the theatre? The went with pens to critic the play. “*That evening their room was empty because they had gone to the theatre with pens, flashlights and little notebooks to watch and critique Playboy of the Western World*”.

How do you compare this to what the French teacher is doing? It is similar as teacher, in different ways. Teachers are trying to make students critic the society, to not just accept the received knowledge, to experience for themselves… There are several ways of criticizing knowledge.

“So I nodded at the sunset, at this horizon, which made no sense, all the while taken up with these contradictory sentiments, with maybe-boyfriend beside me, with all these odd people, also gazing upon the sunset, around me, and it was at that moment, just as I was thinking, what the fuck are they— that something out there – or something in me – then changed. It fell into place because now, instead of blue, blue and more blue – the official blue everyone understood and thought was up there – the truth hit my senses. It became clear as I gazed that there was no blue out there at all. For the first time I saw colours, just as a week later in this French class also was I seeing colours. On both occasions, these colours were blending and mixing, sliding and extending, new colours arriving, all colours combining, colours going on forever, except one which was missing, which was blue. Maybe-boyfriend had taken this in his stride, as had all those others standing about us. I said nothing, just as I said nothing a week later in this French class, but two sunsets in one week when before that there hadn’t been any sunsets – that must mean something. Question was, was it a safe something or a threatening something? What was it, really, I was responding to here?”

She is watching a couple.

***Interactive class 02/11/2022***

“*A bit eerie, a bit creepy, they decided, adding that they hadn’t noticed before but it was that I resembled in my open-but closed perspective the ten-minute area. It was as if there was nothing there when there was something there, while at the same time, as if there was something there when there was nothing there. I was a condition athwart, they said, transverse, not social, though they did mitigate this with, ‘But perhaps that’s only one side of her.’ However, as they didn’t believe there was any other side, that just brought them back to the beginning, to me having only the one*”.

Full of constant contrast. Full of short PARADOXES. When the paradox is very short is called OXYMORON. The passage is comparing the protagonist with what? With the ten-minute area. Why? Because “*there was something there when there was nothing there*”.

Why do they say that in the ten-minute area “*there was something there when there was nothing there”*? An area that there is nothing while there is something. What is in the ten-minute area? Everybody avoids it. There is a bus stop, but nobody uses it. The wee sisters did an experiment with the card box, to see if someone went there. So, we know that there are two things that are crucial for the plot (they have a complication on the protagonist): the cat head and the bomb.

How is the bomb relevant? The bomb should not be put there by the defender of the state. Why would they put a bomb in a place like that one where nobody was there?

The bomb did not exploded and then, it only exploded accidentally.

IMPORTANT: The motif of the cat head and the protagonist. (She said think it for the exam).

What the word “eerie” means? It is a feeling you get when you arrive to a place, and you feel that there is something wrong with it. This word is usually used in Gothic novel, so the ten-minute area is a Gothic place.

There are references to the Gothic fiction in the novel (the thrillers…).

“My distrust had been phenomenal to the point where I could not see that probably there had existed individuals who could have helped, who might have supported and comforted me – friends I could have made, a support network I might have been part of – only I lost that opportunity through having no faith in them and no faith or sense of entitlement in myself. However, at the time, given my intention had been to keep the nerve and to hold it together in a place where everybody in their own way was also trying to keep the nerve and hold it together, impossible it would have been for me to have glimpsed, to have understood any concept of help or comfort then. Certain individuals did continue to approach me, however, and some of them might have been trustworthy, might have intended good offices. But I continued to withhold, even if not always from my usual fear and stubbornness. There was still my lack of certainty as to whether or not there was anything to tell”.

The voice that speaks here: who’s ideas are been expresed in here?

Its ambivalent: narrator vs. focaliser. It’s the 38-years-old, as she is putting into words what happened, and the 18 years old would not be able to explain it. The tenses that are marked, confirm us that the one that is speaking is the 38 years old.

In this passage we see that the protagonist does not trust anybody.

They are psychological, physical, and behave, as it changes her behaviour.

Do you think that there could be a support network? The 38 years old, suggest that it could be a support network, even though at the moment of the story we even see that she could not trust her best friend. There was the “issue women” that in one of the chapters before, the real milkman recommends her that if she did not want to speak with him, he could speak with that group.

“Double colonization” regarding women, which also present in the story. On one hand they are oppressed by the colonizers, but also by their own patriarchal society.

What does this say about the protagonist “There was still my lack of certainty as to whether or not there was anything to tell”? The lack of self-assurance. Not only the community does not believe her, it is that also herself do not believe her. Lack of entitlement.

“**Entitlement**” is a very important word. There is a moment in the novel when she admires the shiny girl from the tablet’s girls. She was a little bit jealous that she could out herself first. In her mind, she has no right to complain.

“That was the way it worked. Hard to define, this stalking, this predation, because it was piecemeal. A bit here, a bit there, maybe, maybe not, perhaps, don’t know. It was constant hints, symbolisms, representations, metaphors. He could have meant what I thought he’d meant, but equally, he might not have meant anything. Taken on their own, or to describe each incident separately, particularly while in the middle of it, might not seem, once relayed, to be all that much at all. If I’d said, ‘He offered me a lift as I was walking along the interface road reading Ivanhoe,’ it would have been, ‘Why were you walking along that dangerous interface road and why were you reading Ivanhoe?’ If I’d said, ‘I was running in the parks & reservoirs and he appeared also running in the parks & reservoirs,’ it would have been, ‘What were you doing, running in such a dangerous, questionable place and what were you doing, choosing to run?’ If I’d said, ‘He was parked in his wee white van up the entry opposite the college while I was with my French class looking at the sky enduring sunsets’ it would have been, ‘You left the safety of our insular area to go downtown to a mixed area to study foreign languages and view life as a figured representation?’ If I’d said, ‘He expressed condolences on my sister’s loss of her murdered man while at the same time linking my almost-maybe-boyfriend to a constantly recurring carbomb,’ they’d have said, ‘How come you’re not married and why do you go out with maybe-boyfriends in the first place?’”.

The passage: if a verbalized my thoughts and feeling they would answer and respond like this.

No matter what she say, they will always judge her. **Victim blaming**. This is the reason why there was so much silence, because as a victim, she would also be blamed. It does not help to verbalize the problem that she has.

“Apart from the gossip – and even if there’d been no gossip – my belief from the outset was that not really would I have been heard or believed. If I’d gone to the authorities to have it officially recorded that he was stalking me, that he was threatening me, that he was making preparations for me, then to seek redress from these authorities as in, what were they going to do about it, our renouncers would have replied – well, I didn’t know what they would have replied because he too, was a renouncer so why ever would I have gone to them? In a practical sense too, in what way would I go to them? Although I’d lived in this area which was run by the paramilitaries, which was policed by the paramilitaries, I didn’t know how to approach these guys. I’d have had to enquire as to proper procedure from a community which, in its turn, was also stalking me and about which I would be putting in a complaint als”.

Who are these authorities she is referring to? The renouncer or the paramilitaries. How is she going to go to the renouncers to complain about a renouncer’ They control the area. Totalitarians.

The novel attacks British colonialism and also Irish nationalism because of the totalitarian attitudes.

There is something that she does not know, what is it? She does not know the procedure of how to approach them, the renouncers.

How could she know who to approach, how to speak…? The community. She does not know. She is accused all the time about not knowing. She has this limitation. The community is not a help for as the community is also staking her. How? With all their rumours, blaming her because of everything, surveillance…

There are also a way of how to behave. It is a imposition.

In the novel there is an idiom, that is also a metonym? The great wine: it is a rumour only. The gossiping community is the ‘great vine’.

Then she says that she is actually going to the police:

“As for the actual police, the statelet’s police, going to them didn’t rate consideration because one, they were the enemy, and two, of all things crying out to have you killed as an informer in a renouncer-run, no-go area, approaching what was viewed as a highly partisan police force to complain about a renouncer in your area would have been, without doubt, highest on that list.”

Who are the actual police here? The British police.

Stateless police’ – little state. What little state is she talking about? Northern Ireland. This is not politically accurate because the is just one state.

Why does she think that is dangerous? Because if she goes to the police, she would be seen as an informer for the renouncer. Informer is someone from your own community who goes to the British police.

Who is doing the medical people? Prairs women: people that is praying all the time. They help people who cannot go to the hospital as they would have to give them information.

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There is an ellipsis between chapter 6 and chapter 7.

In chapter 7 there are some relationships that flowered, which one? The mother from the protagonist. All the women going to the hospital to give the real milkman attention, even stopping praying.

What more happy things/signals of hope? The protagonist going back to running. The little girls dancing everywhere. Last chapter, children recuperating their childish.

Women were the ones beginning the change. There are examples about women helping one another. Sorority. We see this in the toilets when the protagonist was being attacked. Somebody McSomedy was attacked because he was in the women’s toilet.

In the last chapter, there is also reference to something that happened 12 years ago? When real milkman took out the weapons from his garden. All women camps in front of the court where the renouncers were going to kill him. But women demanded him to continue alive. The renouncers accepted.

**Colonialism in the novel (general statement with examples, no focusing on examples):**

At the exam we need to introduce: this is Northern Ireland, with the periods of the Troubles. The confrontation is because of the colonization. The conflict is that Ireland was divided. With that agreement the north of Ireland was divided and the North still was part of the Uk. Religion, political (unionist and --) confrontation.

General assessment first + examples. Choose the best examples.

**Anticolonialism in the novel** **(general statement with examples, no focusing on examples):**

‘The struggle between…’. During the Troubles. Renouncers, rejection of anything that from the institutions. Role of institutions, like the hospitals. Hospitals are used by the state forcer to take information.

**Colonial discourse, how we see it represented in the novel:**

Colonial discourse is by the renouncers and not by the British. Having to marry, the names, the raping (Somebody McSomedy. In other countries there is “rape or not rape” but there, there is also quarter rape). There is more renouncers domination than the Brith: photograph…

The flag: getting to a place and putting a flag. What the state forcer thinks of the natives. They believe they are all terrorists. Anybody in the neighbourhood could be a terrorist. There is a poem that was related: John Kelly ‘the boy with the sport bag’.

““*Also, in the French class, the different types of knowledges. In the French class the teacher is trying to give an alternative to their knowledge impose, how is associated with the colonial discourse? There are mixed students, but all have the same reaction. The colonial situation has forced people to have that close mind. Colonial discourse had that effect*.””

**Colonialism and feminism:**

The oppression by the colonizer and men is the double-colonization. Homogenious. Colonialism forces the population to be monolithic, having to obey the paramilitaries. British + patriarchy.

Milkman as an oppressor on both sides, leader of the paramilitaries. Somebody McSomedy with the love letter, that the mother likes that much. Issue women, that are part but not part at the same part.

**Hegemony: is there any? Illustration in the novel:**

Hegemony is related to the colonial discourse. More about the renouncer that the British as well. More domination by consent by their own people.

Domination by consent.

* Food that the little girls ate?
* French class: the received knowledge did not let them think of themselves
* Proper nouns: not to determine their political position.
* Hospital?
* Male actors?
* The book that the protagonist read?
* Os bailes dos pais de maybe-boyfriend?
* O coche the maybe-boyfriend
* The dance parents

Hibridity:

Rejection of hybridity. Language: over-the-water… The novel is written in English.

Mimicry: