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Diplomová práce

Northern Irish Civil War (1968-1998)
and its Representation in Selected
Novels by Bernard MacLaverty and
Brian Moore

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the Troubles, i.e., the Civil War in Northern Ireland (1968-1998) and its representation in the novels of Bernard MacLaverty and Brian Moore. The analysis focuses on the role of the individual and how a single person could be influenced by the chain of events one is not responsible for, but has to somehow deal with them. The emphasis is put on the absurdity that sectarian violence creates and how it tears apart the already divided island.

Keywords: the Troubles, Lamb, Cal, Lies of Silence, Bernard MacLaverty, Brian Moore

Anotace

Tato práce se zabývá problematikou „Troubles“ neboli občanské války v Severním Irsku (1968-1998) a její interpretací v románech Bernarda MacLavertyho a Briana Moora. Analýza se zaměřuje na roli jedince a na to, jak může být jedinec ovlivněn souhrnem událostí, za které není zodpovědný, ale musí se s nimi nějakým způsobem vyrovnat. Důraz je kladen na absurdity, kterou sektářské násilí vytváří a na to, jak ještě více rozděluje již tak rozdělený ostrov.

Klíčová slova: the Troubles, Lamb, Cal, Lies of Silence, Bernard MacLaverty, Brian Moore

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Introduction

The thesis deals with problem of sectarian violence and its representation in selected Northern Ireland fiction. The first novel *Lamb* is more philosophical, so I have focused more interpretation on symbols. In *Cal* the protagonist is directly involved in sectarian violence and suffers guilt in most of the novel. However, *Lies of Silence* perfectly illustrates the image of ordinary persons who does not personally care about the conflict at all, but despite of not caring, the conflict still finds its way into lives changing everything drastically.

From all three novels the message of striving for peace is absolutely clear, which is an idea that needs to be highlighted again and again. Despite the fact, that Good Friday Agreement is officially considered marking the end the violence. Peace is so fragile which on one hand fascinate and other hand scares me. The fate of the ordinary people, who are in the end the victims of every war, is what fiction needs to highlight as a point for stopping any kind of the violence on the planet.

A short note to my non-standard quotation system as this thesis has been written in the “Pandemic times” so I had to work with e-books, thus *Lamb* and *Lies of Silence* do not include the standard paging reference, but instead include location reference, which is even more exact than standard paging.

The Troubles

The conflict in Northern Ireland has its roots deep in history. From Saint Patrick, who had brought Christianity to Ireland, to the Battle of Boyne in 1690 and the conflicts in the beginning of the 20th century. The Northern Ireland has been a place of political, religious or ethnical unrest for 800 years.

The axis of the conflict in the 20th century lies in between Protestants, who want Northern Ireland to stay under the rule of the British Crown and Catholics, who would like to see unified Catholic Ireland as one island, one nation, and one state. Those two side were represented by their paramilitary groups. For Catholics it was Irish Republican Army (IRA) and for Protestants it was Ulster Defence Association (UDA).

The starting point of “the Troubles” era is usually interpreted as the march in Derry in 1968, which started the Northern Irish civil war. Before the march, the government had forbidden all demonstrations. However, Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) decided to march anyway against discrimination and later they clashed with the police.¹

“The Troubles” throughout the seventies mean bombing, kidnapping, torture and all kind of violence on both sides. The high percentage of the casualties were civilians. One of the most infamous events of the Troubles also well-known because of the U2’s hit song „Sunday Bloody Sunday“ happened in Derry in 1972, where British soldiers killed several Catholic civil rights demonstrators.

In the second half of the seventies the UK government opened the Maze prison for the convinced IRA members. which became famous by the fasting against Margaret Thatcher, because the IRA were imprisoned with criminals instead of being imprisoned as PoW (prisoners of war) according international law. Thatcher proved infamously unyielding. There was even a bomb attacks on Margaret

¹ RTE ARCHIVES. *Civil Rights in Northern WAR AN: 04: Derry 5 October 1968* [online]. [accessed2020-06-28]. Available : <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1031-civil-rights-movement-1968-9/1034-derry-5-october-1968/>

Thatcher in 1984, which she survived and commented with the words “*The conference will go on, usual.*”²

IRA had tried to regularly move the war to England in 1996. However the violence became so exhausting for the both sides so in 1998 the Good Friday Agreement had been signed, which meant the end of the most of the violence. However, despite some incidents after signing it, the Good Friday agreement is seen as the official end of the Troubles. After that the main contrasting side did not disappear. They properly moved from the military field to the political one as *Sinn Fein* representing Catholics and DUP led by Ian Paisley representing unionists.

The main victim of violence during the Troubles always were ordinary people. That is something the fiction interpreted in this thesis is trying to highlight.³⁴

² MARGARETH THATCHER FOUNDATION. *TV Interview for BBC (immediate reaction to Brighton Bomb) [“The conference will go on, as usual”]* [online]. [accessed2020-06-28]. Available : <https://www.margareththatcher.org/document/105574>

³ COOGAN, Tim Pat. *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Ssearch for peace*. Paperback. London: Arrow Books. ISBN 978009465713.

⁴ WALLENFELDT, Jeff. The Good Friday Agreement, The Omagh Bombing, Peace, And Power Sharing. *Britannica* [online]. [accessed2020-06-28]. Available : <https://www.britannica.com/event/The-Troubles-Northern-Ireland-history/The-Good-Friday-Agreement-the-Omagh-bombing-peace-and-power-sharing>

1. *Lamb*

1.1. Plot Summary

Lamb tells the story of two protagonists Michael Lamb (aka Brother Sebastian) and a boy Owen Kane. Brother Sebastian is one of the monks taking care of boys with problematic behaviour in an asylum called the Home.

In the first chapter, we observe Brother Sebastian having an interview with his superior Brother Benedict – the director of the Home. Brother Sebastian's father has just passed away. A debate is a clash of opinions between imperious Brother Benedict and Brother Sebastian, whose approach towards the education of the boys may be called modern and empathic.⁵

In the second chapter introduces Owen Kane, a boy detained in the Home, his problematic relationship with his father, who beat him. The only family member who behaved to Owen's benefit was his grandmother. Furthermore, the building of the Home and Owen's contempt for the institution is described. Brother Sebastian offers to take Owen away. In the last part of the chapter Brother Sebastian goes to withdraw money, he inherited from his father. He uses his secular name Michael Lamb for the first time.⁶

The third chapter begins by the conversation between Brother Benedict and Brother Sebastian. Brother Benedict is talking about obedience while Brother Sebastian has already made different plans. Michael Lamb (Brother Sebastian) and Owen Kane sail together to Scotland, pretending to be a father and a son. Michael buys a wedding ring in order to look like he is a married father with his son and also buys a watch for Owen.⁷

The fourth chapter catches Michael and Owen traveling on the train. When Michael catches Owen smoking on the toilet. Michael chastises him. The second part of the chapter takes place back in the Home, where Brother Benedict uses his power

⁵ MacLavery, Bernard. *Lamb*. Random House. Kindle Edition. the first chapter

⁶ *Lamb* – the second chapter

⁷ *Lamb* – the third chapter

to force one of the boys to say that the tracks that one boy sees, are eagle tracks despite the fact, that everyone participating in the situation knows, it is not true.⁸

Their story continues in London. The first thing they are about to do is to do some clothes shopping to better blend with the crowd. Then they decide to stay in a hotel, but they are successful only after some time because some hotels are booked full. The important passage focuses on the partial silence between them and Michael's fear of not being able to break it and have a conversation. A conflict arises when it comes to obeying the rules. Michael is trying to make clear, that „*the captain of the ship has the power of life and death over his crew.*“⁹ (Owen).¹⁰

Then, there is a flashback back to the first encounter between Michael (Brother Sebastian at the time) and Owen Kane, who is brought to the Home by his mother. After some time, Owen is truck in the Home with his first attack of epilepsy. The horrible story of how Owen's mother wanted to kill him is revealed. Michael goes to a bar and realizes that the boy could be only really happy when he sleeps.^{11 12}

This chapter catches Michael and Owen during a trough in London. There are two personal clashes, that appear here. The first one when Owen almost gets lost and the second one, when Owen steals a present for Michael in a shop. Michael also buys a radio to be able to listen to *Radio Eireann*. By the end of the chapter – he finds out from the radio, that he is a wanted man by the Irish police for kidnapping.¹³

The eighth chapter starts calmly with Michael and Owen building a balsa airplane model. Later they get robbed in a “find the lady” game. Then there is a flashback about Owen being unjustly punished by Brother Benedict for a song *Benny dies. O.K*, grafitti that he had not written even though Brother Benedict in the Home knows the truth. As Home director, Brother Benedict uses this occasion just to strengthen his power over the boys. At the end of the chapter, they decide to leave their current hotel.¹⁴

⁸ *Lamb* – the fourth chapter

⁹ *Lamb* – Loc. 658

¹⁰ *Lamb* – the fifth chapter

¹¹ *Lamb* – the sixth chapter

¹² *Lamb* – Loc. 798

¹³ *Lamb* – the seventh chapter

¹⁴ *Lamb* – the eight chapter

At the beginning of the next chapter, they accommodate themselves in a hotel under the surname O'Leary. They meet a cleaning lady, who is interested in them because she is also Irish. Michael is trying to lie about the place about them. Later Michael pushes Owen into reading. They read together the story of Icarus.¹⁵

The eleventh chapter is divided into two parts. During the first part many experiences Michael and Owen have together in London are described: printing their faces on each others' t-shirts, visiting the zoo and so on. In the second part of the chapter, Michael's background is revealed, about the injury of his mother, about his memories of his father and his experience of becoming a church monk.¹⁶

Michael takes Owen to the football match, where Owen gets suddenly an epileptic attack. Michael is scared of the fact, that he might encounter police while Owen being potentially hospitalized since police are everywhere at the game for crowd-control and watching hooligans. In the end, they escape without meeting them. Michael decides he needs to find out more about epilepsy.¹⁷

Then they keep staying in their Hotel. However, the cleaning lady seems to find out their true identity. That is why they decide to leave the hotel.¹⁸ After they leave their hotel, they go to church. Michael is thinking about the final shocking solution to this situation. He decides to fly back to Ireland together with Owen.¹⁹

They accommodate themselves in a hotel for their presumable last night in London. However, Michael goes out and meets Haddock, who offers them to stay in "his" squat. Michael takes the opportunity.²⁰

When staying in the squat, Michael finds a job on a building site, while Owen stays in the squat the whole day through. At first, Michael is trying to give him some "school" work, but in the end, he has a bad feeling about leaving Owen all alone with Haddock. One day, when Michael returns from construction, he finds Owen and Haddock smoking a joint of marihuana together. Michael decides to

¹⁵ *Lamb* – the ninth chapter

¹⁶ *Lamb* – the tenth chapter

¹⁷ *Lamb* – the eleventh chapter

¹⁸ *Lamb* – the twelfth chapter

¹⁹ *Lamb* – the thirteenth chapter

²⁰ *Lamb* – the fourteenth chapter

leave and prepares for the final and shocking solution.²¹ They fly back to Ireland. They rent a car and head over up to the North.²²

When they reach the sea, Michael finally does a thing he has been preparing for a long time. He deceives Owen and drowns him in the sea to put him out of his misery.²³

1.2. Characteristics

1.2.1. Characteristics: Michael Lamb (aka Brother Sebastian)

As for the physical appearance of Michael Lamb alias, Brother Sebastian is in the first chapter of the novel described as *tall and broad-shouldered. His hair was slightly longer than Brother Benedict would have preferred it to be.*²⁴

One of the reasons why Michael decides to leave the church is the death of his very church devoted father, because *“his father could no longer be hurt by it.”*²⁵ As it is possible to find out in later in the plot. Michael *had never been a great reader.*²⁶ An interesting topic is Michael’s faith in God. Sometime after he had left the priesthood he assesses his time in the priesthood as *wasted.*²⁷

*„His life had been governed by a series of prohibitions and, while God existed for him, this was acceptable. But once he ceased to believe in the God of the Brothers, all he was left with was a handful of negatives.”*²⁸

Here the question arises what Michael Lamb really believes in? The quote above shows that, the typical institutionalized Catholic faith in God is nothing he could later stick to. Despite this fact, he behaves, during most of the story in concord, with the widely expected *Christian values*. Mainly he takes care of Owen, as if he were his father.

An important point of his development might be his constant deception about true his identity. Several times he lies about his name,²⁹ he made up his past and he thinks up a nonexistent dead wife.³⁰ He is definitely convinced, that he does all of

²¹ *Lamb* – the fifteenth chapter

²² *Lamb* – the sixteenth chapter

²³ *Lamb* – the seventeenth chapter

²⁴ *Lamb* Loc. 38

²⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 128

²⁶ *Lamb* Loc. 1297

²⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 1303

²⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 1303

²⁹ E.g.: *Lamb* Loc. 631 or 1045

³⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 1496

this for a greater good. In the end, however it is clear that the road to hell is paved with his good intentions.

1.2.2. Characteristics: Brother Benedict

When making his first appearance in the novel, Brother Benedict's clothes are described as a *soutane and white collar (he wore) a plastic apron with a large bottle of Guinness on it.*³¹ Furthermore, Brother Benedict is described as a smoker³² and as a priest, who time to time drinks Power's whiskey.³³ That makes from Brother Benedict not an ideal person for the leadership of the school for boys with problematic behavior.

From the mental point of view it is absolutely obvious, that Brother Benedict does not support any full rehabilitation of the problematic boys. By his own words:

*“We teach them to conform, how to make their beds, how to hold a knife and fork, and the three Rs. We shoehorn them back into society at an age when, if they commit another offence, they go to the grown-up prison.”*³⁴

Even from the used language it is totally clear, that Brother Benedict is far from the modern ideas of respecting a child as an independent being, with its own needs and feelings. The colocation speaking about “*Shoehorning “them” back into society*” illustrates his violently manipulative approach perfectly. This argument is supported by another quotation directed towards boys “*We teach them (the boys) a little of God and a lot of fear.*”³⁵ Among his other statements that directly show Benedict's real attitude towards the boys is his method of behaviour modification ‘*If they do not conform we thrash them.*’³⁶

When the debate between Brother Benedict and Brother Sebastian touches precisely young Owen Cane, it is Brother Sebastian who discourages Brother Sebastian from focusing more on the boy with the saying, that ‘*I admire your textbook idealism, Brother Sebastian, but I have rarely seen it work.*’³⁷

³¹ Lamb Loc. 50

³² Lamb Loc. 61

³³ Lamb Loc. 46

³⁴ Lamb Loc. 157

³⁵ Lamb Loc. 158

³⁶ Lamb Loc. 158

³⁷ Lamb Loc. 148

Brother Benedict speaks metaphorically about his foreign language skills, which consist in Latin, Greek and Gaelic³⁸ as eyes.³⁹ One of the novel's most famous quotations comes specially from Brother Benedict's mouth: „*a man with one language is like a man with one eye.*“⁴⁰ However, from the context of Brother Benedict's behavior it is possible to see this quotation as less than motivational for others, but more likely as pure boasting. Another example of his boasting and misunderstanding his role as an educator may be found in the third chapter, where brother Benedict says that: *'They teach you young men nothing nowadays,'* (...) *'Too much useless psychology.'*⁴¹ This indicates how he, as a leader of the Home, a sanctuary for boys with behavioural problems, despises psychology, the field of study which takes every single person as an individual and not as some material to be changed, humiliated and maybe irretrievably broken during the learning process.

Based on the previously-mentioned behavior, brother Benedict's character could be described as someone who likes the current *status quo* and does not feel the need to really assist the children. It is more focused on his benefit and easy living in his high position, including smoking and drinking behaviour forbidden for the boys and there not a model for boys to emulate.

Brother Benedict's inner feeling of intellectual superiority can also be illustrated in the dialogue between him and Brother Sebastian about the death of Brother Sebastian's father. Brother Benedict uses word '*intestate,*' which is not understood by Brother Sebastian, that is glossed by Brother Benedict by saying that '(he is) surrounded by the Educationally Sub-Normal.'⁴²

When focused more on the dialogue concerning Brother Sebastian's father's death Brother Benedict offers to Brother Sebastian whiskey.⁴³ To create a friendly atmosphere, however, from Brother's Benedict's behavior it is clear, that this act of solidarity is one of the many acts in his manipulative and abusive behavior, that is in the end directed not only at the boys but at almost everyone. However, Brother

³⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 53

³⁹ *Lamb* Loc. 53

⁴⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 54

⁴¹ *Lamb* Loc. 319

⁴² *Lamb* Loc. 90

⁴³ *Lamb* Loc. 43

Sebastian notices the sudden difference in Brother Benedict's behavior, because 'He had never been treated like this before by Benedict. He (Brother Benedict) was after something.'⁴⁴

He senses like a very manipulative person when one of the reasons why he had invited Brother Sebastian for a talk is to persuade him to give the money he had inherited to the Home.⁴⁵ He often uses the word 'church'⁴⁶ in order to downplay his personal interest by some higher and bigger entity.

At the end of the first chapter, Brother Benedict shows that he is not even afraid of using threats or blackmail. When he threatens Sebastian, saying that 'And remember, if you do leave in hurried circumstances we can make it difficult for you to get a job. The Church in Ireland, Brother, has as many fingers as there are pies. Remember that.'⁴⁷

The personal figure of Brother Benedict could be seen as a personification of a critical approach towards the church, which is therefore described as a place where belief and the word church is only a religious cover for personal interests of power and position.

1.2.3. Characteristics: Owen Kane

Owen Kane is a boy with problematic behavior, who 'had continually mitched school and had run away from home frequently.'⁴⁸ Even after being detained in the Home, "He had twice absconded."⁴⁹ He was often beaten by his father, at home which, since he worked as a driver was on the road often not regular.⁵⁰ This abuse ended when his father one simply day went to England and never returned, abandoning the family altogether.⁵¹

An absolutely essential role in the plot is Owen suffering from epilepsy, not only for the main plot but also for Owen's relationship with his mother Mrs. Cane. Owen was cruelly called "Kane the Stain" by other boys of the Home.⁵² This nickname

⁴⁴ *Lamb* Loc. 47

⁴⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 122

⁴⁶ *Lamb* Loc. 149

⁴⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 165

⁴⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 186

⁴⁹ *Lamb* Loc. 186

⁵⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 192

⁵¹ *Lamb* Loc. 198

⁵² *Lamb* Loc. 220

definitely came because of Owen's problem with enuresis. Furthermore, Owen is described as a "loner" who has made few friends.⁵³ It is, therefore, no surprise, that Owen loathed the Home and the system that was maintained in this school.⁵⁴ Surprisingly while he did not fear Brother Benedict almost "*as much as his (Owen's) father.*"⁵⁵

Owen is described as someone with the qualities of openness and resilience,⁵⁶ which might be precisely the qualities that in the insincere and hypocritical environment of the Home caught Brother Sebastian's empathetic attention.

There are two prominent words in Owen's vocabulary- ,*Smashin*' and ,*Dunno*.' This greatly illustrates the stilted children of his kind who very often tend to choose a few words, which they overuse.

1.2.4. Characteristics: Haddock

A former member of the Army,⁵⁷ Haddock turns out to be living in a squat⁵⁸ and having no proper employment to be on welfare and doing a "*few things besides.*"⁵⁹ He offers to Michael a possibility to stay in "his" squat. Haddock is gay⁶⁰ and as arises later he is also involved with drugs.⁶¹

1.3. In the name of love⁶² -Michael Lamb and Owen Kane relationship

'*Some day, Brother Sebastian, I'm going to kill you.*'⁶³ Exactly with this sentence the observation of the essential relationship starts that goes throughout the whole novel. The most significant relationship of this novel, which starts as a mutual distrust⁶⁴ evolves into a mutual escape from the Home. When on the ship Owen for

⁵³ *Lamb* Loc. 221

⁵⁴ *Lamb* Loc. 217

⁵⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 218

⁵⁶ *Lamb* Loc. 189

⁵⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 1758

⁵⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 1754

⁵⁹ *Lamb* Loc. 1754

⁶⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 1897

⁶¹ *Lamb* Loc. 1923

⁶² U2: *Pride (In The Name of Love)*, *The Unforgettable Fire*, 1984

⁶³ *Lamb* Loc. 173

⁶⁴ *Lamb* Loc. 172

the first time answers on Michael's replica 'Yes, dad.'⁶⁵ it marks the slowly developing start of the kind of relationship that none of them knew about before.

The ages-old ethical legitimacy versus legality problem is directly present here when Michael finds that '*the whole system was totally unjust.*'⁶⁶ And even though '*he had been all his life on the right side of the law.*'⁶⁷ Michael comes to the conviction that '*the saving of an individual was more important than the law.*'⁶⁸

As the novel progresses, the relationship between Michael and Owen starts to perceive themselves among society persons as a father-son relationship, omitting the fact, that they present themselves as a father and son.⁶⁹ Michael starts to look after Owen in multiple ways, e.g he practices reading with him – as if Owen were in school.⁷⁰

Another example of them getting more and more together appears in the situation when they bump into the place, where it is possible to make T-shirts with photos of each other's faces.⁷¹ They created them. Something that began as a mutual escape from hell of the Home slowly evolves into an attempt to create a positive family type "*father-son*" relationship that Owen had never experienced before.

When they start to get short of money, Michael is again thinking about the possibility of buying a flat "*a flat, settle down with the boy, call him (Owen) his son.*"⁷² When he is eating along in one of the hotels, while Owen is sleeping after experiencing an epileptic attack, he finds that "*an odd experience and he missed the boy sitting opposite him.*"⁷³ Another sign of a more familiar relationship came in at the moment when Michael decides to return to Ireland, he, for the first time calls him "*Owney.*"⁷⁴

Owen is quite logically totally dependent on Michael. Michael says to Owen, in the situation when Owen thinks Michael left him at the hotel for good. "*Look, Owen,*

⁶⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 376

⁶⁶ *Lamb* Loc. 456

⁶⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 450

⁶⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 453

⁶⁹ E.g.: *Lamb* Loc. 1060

⁷⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 1105

⁷¹ *Lamb* Loc. 1193

⁷² *Lamb* Loc. 1411

⁷³ *Lamb* Loc. 1406

⁷⁴ *Lamb* Loc. 1683

I love you. I will not run away from you because I love you."⁷⁵ These words could not be interpreted as a lie, the other way they are the proof of Michael's role of something like a savior, who is about taking the life Owen in his own hands, this time with no metaphor.

However, even despite the situation of being in the squat, Michael is, in the beginning, trying to give Owen tasks such as he would get in school.⁷⁶ When they are returning back to Ireland, Michael is tries to make Owen happy, *happier than he had ever been in his life before.*⁷⁷

Their father-son-like relationship reaches its top when they fly back to Ireland. Owen calls Michael *Mick*⁷⁸ and when they arrive Michael fills papers for Owen as Owen Lamb.⁷⁹ Then, when passing security, they hold their hands⁸⁰ just like ordinary fathers and sons. Like someone who they never were, but maybe wholeheartedly wished they were.

1.4. Michael's relationship with his father

Michael's relationship is definitely shaped by his own experience with his father, whom he saw as a role model. His father was taking care of his injured wife, Sebastian's mother. Michael felt that his father "*sacrificed his life for her.*"⁸¹

Michael's father had respect for "*every living thing,*"⁸² but he killed ill rabbits and other animals. He also brought Michael to a football match, just as Michael later takes Owen. The sentence that summarizes all the previous characteristics says that Michael: "*wanted to be to Owen what his father had been to him.*"⁸³

1.5. The picture of the Irish Republican Army in *Lamb*

One of Owen's brothers joined the Free State Army.⁸⁴ Brother Sebastian calls Free State Army as "*angry men with vision*"⁸⁵ and he does not stop just by this replica. This following statement by Brother Benedict is even more shocking. "*and*

⁷⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 1824

⁷⁶ *Lamb* Loc. 1870

⁷⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 1965

⁷⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 1976

⁷⁹ *Lamb* Loc. 1993

⁸⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 2017

⁸¹ *Lamb* Loc. 1240

⁸² *Lamb* Loc. 1241

⁸³ *Lamb* Loc. 1294

⁸⁴ *Lamb* Loc. 192

⁸⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 64

by God their anger is justified. Ireland has not much longer to suffer. Her misery will soon be over and we'll be a united country again."⁸⁶ Brother Benedict clearly supports the reunification of the whole Irish Island. Furthermore, the most shocking thing is the fact, that someone, who is a representative of the church, who should definitely condemn violence, or at least should not directly support it, directly shows his support to the violent activities.

Brother Sebastian's opposition to this idea consists of disagreement with the methods the Free State Army is using.⁸⁷

1.6. The Home description of the oppressive setting

In Brother Sebastian's eyes the institution itself is immoral. His opinion may be shown by his questioning of the Home's priorities during the initial interview with Brother Benedict. *A place that can treat a twelve-year-old boy as a criminal for mitching school and running away from home. That can't be right?*"⁸⁸

When it comes to the location of the Home itself, the description does not contain much detail. However, it is fully sufficient for the image of the Home's completely isolated atmosphere:

"It was miles from nowhere on a promontory jutting its forehead into the Atlantic wind. If a boy absconded he had to walk about ten miles of peat bog, if he wanted to avoid being picked up on the road, before he reached another route."⁸⁹

The Home is described as *"a big house from the days of the British Occupation.*⁹⁰ *with the stable made into a chapel.*⁹¹ *On the surroundings of the house prefabs were built and used for classrooms.*"⁹²

The place is described as *"clean and dead – 'like a corpse'*⁹³ *with the weather, where "it seemed to rain continually.*"⁹⁴ The atmosphere inside the building of the

⁸⁶ Lamb Loc. 65

⁸⁷ Lamb Loc. 66

⁸⁸ Lamb Loc. 135

⁸⁹ Lamb Loc. 205

⁹⁰ Lamb Loc. 205

⁹¹ Lamb Loc. 212

⁹² Lamb Loc. 212

⁹³ Lamb Loc. 212

⁹⁴ Lamb Loc. 212

Home was no different from the outside “*Brothers, always on the alert, walked the corridors. In the grounds they moved like crows, their black soutanes flapping.*”⁹⁵

The author's intention was to describe a place that was not made to cure bad behavior, but simply to add more scars on the already troubled souls of the boys who were kept there. Another sign of strict and brutal approach towards the boys could be found in one of Brother Benedict's speeches: ‘*Kill and cure is my method, Mrs Kane. You can rest assured that if anything can be done to put this young man on the right path then it is we who will do it.*’⁹⁶

This clearly illustrates both brother Benedict's dreadful character as well as the mindset of the Home as an institution. A most hypocritical expression indicates that they will do *anything that can be done to* (boys) to go *on the right path*. But the one, who does not believe in his own words and drunken by the power, is definitely Brother Benedict.

Nice sunny weather is definitely not something connected with the Home: it is possible to find from an awful mental flashback the storm which outside which reminds them of the storm inside the Home as well.⁹⁷

The picture of the Home as an institution goes straight against the Catholic ideas of peace, love and understanding. It is definitely one of the sources of the whole tragedy. Because if the Home would be treating boys, who are forced to live there with empathy and understanding then the idea of running away with Owen would never have arisen in Michael's head and all the following events would not have happened.

1.7. Who is the Lamb in *Lamb*?

According to the author the name of the novel *Lamb* refers to the Biblical sacrifice of Abraham.⁹⁸ However, MacLaverty's approach is different from a biblical one. In the Bible, in the beginning Abraham asked to sacrifice his son and when the angel of the Lord stops the upcoming sacrifice, then God says, that:

⁹⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 212

⁹⁶ *Lamb* Loc. 693

⁹⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 1451

⁹⁸ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Laverty: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> P7

“your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”⁹⁹

A look for the similarities between the Biblical and MacLaverty’s characters, shows the motif of sacrifice or planned sacrifice. However, the killing itself happens just in the novel *Lamb*. With this act, the novel ends. There are no hints of a possible reward or even obedience to God. The reader is left alone to think about the possible consequences of such an action and is not even given a clue, whether, everything that happened was, in the end, positive, or was just a set of unpredictable actions which had been somehow coped with by Michael Lamb.

Another interpretation is that despite the name Michael Lamb, the true lamb is Owen Kane. *The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* sees Lamb in the collocation „*like a lamb to the slaughter*,“¹⁰⁰ which is exactly the situation for Owen Kane. He trusts Michael just as Isaac trusted Abraham, but Michael decides to kill him and brings Owen to sea, where he kills him. Until the last seconds of his life Owen does not know what is going to happen and even then does not understand the reason for it.

Owen was even called Lamb before he met Michael, and it was by his grandmother from the mother’s side.¹⁰¹ Grandmother might see in him another meaning of the word lamb, which is purity and innocence.¹⁰² When it comes to sacrifice, Owen is sacrificed by the multiple characters. First he is sacrificed by his mother By his mother, who puts him into the Home,¹⁰³ then by Brother Benedict, who knows, that the signs „*Benny dies*“ was not written by Owen but punishes him anyway.¹⁰⁴ Finally “*Owen is sacrificed*” by Michael Lamb and his act of mercy killing.¹⁰⁵

Another piece of the puzzle that leads the reader towards the final revelation takes place during Michael’s check-in into their first London Hotel. When Michael

⁹⁹ BIBLE: Genesis 22 (17-18) [online]. [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+22&version=NIV>

¹⁰⁰ SIEFRING, Judith, ed. *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms: Second edition* [online]. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from https://www.academia.edu/4912920/Oxford_Dictionary_of_Idioms p.166

¹⁰¹ Lamb Loc. 201

¹⁰² UNKNOWN. *Lamb* [online]. [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://umich.edu/~umfandsf/symbolismproject/symbolism.html/L/lamb.html>

¹⁰³ Lamb Loc. 685

¹⁰⁴ Lamb Loc. 1018

¹⁰⁵ Lamb Loc. 2238

does not know what fake name he should use, suddenly he sees a novel called “*An Act of Love*” by Garth Abrahams.¹⁰⁶ Michael decides use a cover name M. Abraham. Here is another biblical reference, by using the name Abraham, who loved God more than his own son and prepared to kill his own son Isaac out of perceived obedience to God

In the plot naturally appears the collocation *Lamb of God*.¹⁰⁷ The history of the Lamb as a sacred symbol comes from the Old Testament. In times when the People of Israel were enslaved in Egypt, God decided to bring ten plagues over their Egyptian rulers. Before the final plague, the People of Israel were instructed to slaughter a lamb to paint their doorposts with its blood. When they did it, the final plague- the killing of the firstborn- passed over them.¹⁰⁸

Here the parallel with being enslaved arises. Like Moses lead the people of Israel out of the Egypt, so Michael Lamb led Owen Kane out of the Home and they also crossed the sea, though not to the promised land, unless heaven is understood – which the novel surely does not indicate.

Finally, the most well-known parallel comes from the new testament the book of John 1:29: “*On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!*”¹⁰⁹

It is Jesus, who is called the Lamb of God, and he was crucified. Owen Kane is killed, but Owen was not a *tabula rasa*, he smoked and sometimes misbehaved. However, he still represents childish purity and innocence in the story. He was just formed by his environment. As Michael asks himself: “*How different Owen would have been if he had had a father like mine.*”¹¹⁰ In other words, Michael’s way of thinking supports the behaviourist’s point of view, which says, that a human being is in the beginning *tabula rasa* so only thing that matters is the environment around him.

¹⁰⁶ *Lamb* Loc. 630

¹⁰⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 1665

¹⁰⁸ POSNER, Menachem. Passover in the Bible. *Wwww.chabad.org/* [online]. [qoute2020-05-04]. Available from https://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/3970297/jewish/Passover-in-the-Bible.htm

¹⁰⁹ *BIBLE: John 1.29* [online]. [qoute2020-05-04].

¹¹⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 1647

An interesting notion of Owen's purity comes in the situation when he is asked by Michel, whether he will go to communion and Owen answers: *'I've done nothing.'*¹¹¹ Therefore, he is not only seen as someone who has never injured anyone but also comprehends his own purity in himself.

Owen's maternal grandmother used to call Owen *'Lamb.'* At the end of the plot, it is revealed, that Owen means Lamb in Irish Gaelic.¹¹²

1.8. Mercy killing in MacLaverty's *Lamb* and in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

Lamb is definitely not the only novel, where the motif of mercy killing is examined. As one for all examples, it is good to mention John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.¹¹³ Lennie is also killed out of mercy there, to be saved from the public lynching. As the motif remains the same in both novels, there are also other similarities. The United States of America during the Great Depression are used as a background in *Of Mice and Men*. In *Lamb* the background is combination of being in the run and the Troubles in Ireland.

There are also other similarities. Lennie being slightly mentally retarded, Owen suffering from an attack of epilepsy and slowly running out of pills and the impossibility of getting a new prescription. In the end both authors constructed plots, where there is only one denouement left.

However, there is one crucial difference. In *Of Mice and Men* Steinbeck is talking about two protagonists who have nothing in common regarding the idea of an institutionalized concept of faith or a church. Their common aspect is struggling with dreams of a decent life. Michael Lamb even though he is struggling with a partial loss of faith, has not abandoned Catholic faith completely. The fifth commandment says that "Thou shalt not kill."

Michael Lamb had to be familiar with the Catholic policy of a sacred and untouchable life. Despite all of the faith of his church, Michael not only deceives

¹¹¹ *Lamb* Loc. 1598

¹¹² *Lamb* Loc. 2094

¹¹³ STEINBECK, John. *Of mice and men*. London: Penguin Books, 2000. Penguin modern classics. ISBN 978-0-141-18510-1.

Owen Kane, but kills him and when doing it he prays to God to help him with the process of killing.¹¹⁴

Owen Kane is understood as an element of purity. In the end against all church's fundamental doctrines the former Catholic monk, Michael Lamb, kills innocent Owen Kane. The Catholic Church has the same approach as towards abortion and contraception towards euthanasia. Taken from the perspective of the Catholic faith, nothing, that Michael Lamb had done has support in the faith. Constant lying to others and changing their names looks in the light of Owen's killing as not even worth the attention and even this is against the Ninth Commandment. ("Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour").

1.9. The Motif of Being on the Run

MacLaverty brilliantly works with the motif of being on the run. A comparison to Cormac MacCarthy's "*The Road*" arises. Despite the fact that Michael and Owen do not travel in a post-apocalyptic world, they still experience similar problems, since they must hide from the authorities and it is impossible for them to find help or hope. Protagonists of *The Road* are driven by hope in the south, whereas in *Lamb* all hope is slowly lost and Michael and Owen end, where they started. As Michael thinks of

*"He knew, too, and he could not give a reason for it, that they would have to return to Ireland. In this country among strangers, the act would have no meaning for him."*¹¹⁵

From the excerpt, Michael realizes the almost mystical purpose for coming home, to die at home rather than in a strange foreign land.

1.10. The Myth of Icarus

The myth is directly present in the ninth chapter: Owen is trying to read it as a part of his "school" preparation. The presence of this myth in the novel is intertextual. Michael represents Daedalus, who builds the labyrinth for the king in the ancient myth and¹¹⁶ subsequently is imprisoned in his own labyrinth. This pattern is seen in Michael Lamb's character, where he first sticks to the institution of the Home, then decides to leave it with Owen, with whom they have to build

¹¹⁴ *Lamb* Loc. 2213

¹¹⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 1538

¹¹⁶ *Icarus and Daedalus: MYTHS* [online]. [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://www.auburn.edu/allynbaconanthology/documents/Icarus%20and%20Daedalus.pdf> p1

father and son like relationship. In the end Michael ends without his „son“ figure as a result of a huge tragedy. Another similarity is the wish: “*One of Owen’s wishes had been to fly.*”¹¹⁷ Michael decides to fulfil Owen’s wish to fly when returning to Ireland.¹¹⁸ Owen’s wish to fly is represented in the plot by the toy plane, which he builds during his stay in London.¹¹⁹

In the plot of the *Lamb*, epilepsy plays the role of the Labyrinth. Even though, neither Michael nor Owen are responsible for the illness. However, Owen is caught in the Labyrinth of epilepsy. The way out of it means death just like Icarus, through his death, unlike Icarus, is not his fault at all, where the parallel applies to Michael. The motif of flight is present in a novel once again in the situation when they are returning back to Ireland. They fly back, to where they come from

1.11. The Image of Water in *Lamb*

Water plays a fatal role in the plot. There is actually present even a part of a prayer, which indicates the further importance of water.

Blood of My Saviour

Bathe me in thy tide,

Wash me in waters

*Streaming from His side*¹²⁰

The name of this prayer is *Soul of my Saviour, sanctify my breast.*¹²¹ Water one of the most commonly used symbols in Christianity, is connected with God in way of purification – water can cleanse the sins.¹²² The parallel with the new start could be understood as an example of a new beginning. The water took away everything negative and only chosen “clean” ones survived and may start all over again. Another example could be found in the New Testament, where Christ turns water into wine.¹²³ Moreover, holy water is used during baptism and last rites.

¹¹⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 1543

¹¹⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 1695

¹¹⁹ *Lamb* Loc. 908

¹²⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 1634

¹²¹ Soul of my Savior, sanctify my breast. *Hymnary* [online]. [accessed2020-05-04]. Available from https://hymnary.org/text/soul_of_my_savior_sanctify_my_breast

¹²² POKHILKO, Alexander. The Meaning of Water in Christianity. *OrthodoxyToday.org*. [online]. 2004 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles4/PokhiloWater.php>

¹²³ BIBLE: (*John 2:1-11*) [online]. [quote2020-05-04].

In addition to that, a water connected sign, which is mentioned in the novel is a sign of *Icthus*¹²⁴ which means fish and was used when Christians *were persecuted and had to form secret societies*.¹²⁵ Michael and Owen had also formed a kind of a secret society, while when caught, they would be persecuted.

Another water connected sign comes in the prayer read by a priest during a sermon in London, shortly after Michael decides to return with Owen to Ireland, “*for the waters threaten my life. I am sunk in the abysmal swamp where there is no foothold; I have reached the watery depths; the flood overwhelms me*”¹²⁶

The parallel between Michael’s situation and being *sunk in the abysmal swamp where there is no foothold* is quite straight forward: they cannot remain as fugitives in England in self/exile.

1.12. Epilepsy

Epilepsy is key to the whole tragedy. Michael Lamb knows, that Owen Kane suffers from it before they decide to leave. Michael gets to know this information when first meeting young Owen Kane. He is told by Brother Benedict.¹²⁷ Michael also witnesses Owen’s first „public“ attack of epilepsy during a basketball game at the Home.¹²⁸ When they are on the run, at first, nothing happens, but Owen sometimes forgets to take Epilim – a pill against epileptic attack.¹²⁹ The first huge epileptic problem happens when they are on the run during the football match.¹³⁰

Epilepsy in this story plays a role of inevitable force, that causes the fall of the two protagonists as well as the shortage of money. However, money could be earned. Whereas Michael is not able to get other pills without a doctor’s prescription, which would result in being caught by the police. Michael behaves quite autocratically, because he decides that the boy will not obtain any new pills. Michael, does not want to get caught and even if he does it, it will be with the best intentions. In the end he is ultimately responsible for the death of Owen Kane, not just physically, but also metaphorically.

¹²⁴ *Lamb* Loc. 1614

¹²⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 1614

¹²⁶ *Lamb* Loc. 1606

¹²⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 717

¹²⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 718

¹²⁹ *Lamb* Loc. 1986

¹³⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 1345

An interesting parallel between a person suffering from epilepsy and Michael's behavior appears in the middle of the story in one of the books Michael reads.

'A typical symptom associated with epilepsy is the fugue. The sufferer may leave home, travel for several days or weeks without seeming to have full realization of what he is doing. Although not fully conscious, he is able to abide by the rules of society, e.g. respecting traffic regulations.'

Michael's helplessness at the moment when he is hit by reality a Michael, in the beginning, had no plan. He was just driven by the feeling that the escape he was about to do was morally right, but he did not or more likely was not able to think of possible problems, that might arise on the road.

1.13. If God ceased to exist tomorrow¹³¹...the loss of faith in *Lamb*

„If God ceased to exist tomorrow there would be enough love in every individual to keep the whole thing going, to make it worthwhile.“¹³²

This is one of the ideas, that goes through Michael's head. It could be explained, as his faith in humanity. In accordance with this faith, human beings do not need any higher entity to bring the „good“ among them. However, most of the plot he behaves like a proper father in terms of Catholic values, omitting the fact, that never deceives the boy and kills him in the end.

Michael is trying to deal with his past because *„All his life he had been doing negative things, obedient things under pressure of religion and human respect.“¹³³* Therefore, he questions not only the institution of the Home, which he actually does from the beginning¹³⁴ but moreover the Church and as well as the socially accepted moral itself.

As emerges from the full wording of the psalm, part of which Michael heard in the church in London:¹³⁵ *I have become a stranger to my brothers.*¹³⁶ This

¹³¹ *Lamb* Loc. 1658

¹³² *Lamb* Loc. 1658

¹³³ *Lamb* Loc. 1545

¹³⁴ E.g.: *Lamb* Loc. 135

¹³⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 1606

¹³⁶ *Psalm 69:8* [online]. [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <https://biblehub.com/psalms/69-8.htm> V G REV FR RICHARD A EGE. *Finding My Way to Salvation* [online]. Friesenpress, 2013 [quote2020-05-04]. ISBN 1460212924. Available from <https://books.google.cz/books?id=I09uH8n8huIC&pg=PA349&lpg=PA349&dq=for+the+waters+threaten+my+life.+I+am+sunk+in+the+abysmal+swamp+where+there+is+no+foothold;+I+have+reached+the+watery+depths;+the+flood+overwhelms+me&source=bl&ots=uJ097->

estrangement comes not only on the interpersonal level, but also on the level of faith and becoming the illegal renegade standing against the laws not only of the church but also the state.

Michael is trying to „force Owen to accept what he no longer believed in.“¹³⁷ In the beginning, Michael was very keen on his Catholic belief, but by the end of novitiate Michael already struggled with his faith.¹³⁸

The final divorce with the initialized faith comes when they discover their photo printed in *Irish Weekly* magazines.¹³⁹ Michael with his response sort of confirming his complete abandonment of institutionalized faith - *‘That means we’ll have to stop being Catholics,’*¹⁴⁰ Despite privately giving up on his faith. Michael Lamb still maintains some kind of a spiritual relationship with God. Proof of that may be found in the situation where Michael and Owen are leaving squat and Michaels speaks to himself: *God knows, he had tried every way to avoid it. It was the only answer left.*¹⁴¹

When Michael is drowning Owen he prays to God with the words: *“Dear Jesus, make it now.”*¹⁴² Which is one of the strangest situations to pray. Michael is praying to God to help him kill quickly the person he loves the most. Before that Michael also prays for help from Jesus.¹⁴³

It is obvious that Michael Lamb has not completely abandoned his faith. He has abandoned the institutionalized idea of faith in the form of priesthood, but despite realizing the hopeless situation he believes in the fact, that the act he does is right and in harmony with his own image of God.

1.14. Social determinism in *Lamb*

Social determinism could be understood as „a rather unfortunate designation for the absolute conditioning of human character by the aggregate of biologic and

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¹³⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 1626

¹³⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 1640

¹³⁹ *Lamb* Loc. 1674

¹⁴⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 1679

¹⁴¹ *Lamb* Loc. 1955

¹⁴² *Lamb* Loc. 2213

¹⁴³ *Lamb* Loc. 2204

social influences. ¹⁴⁴ Michael Lamb is thinking about as he starts to get into a more and more hopeless situation.

„If Owen had been born into a family which had not had to live on the borders of poverty for most of the time, then the situation would not have arisen.“¹⁴⁵ Or another example: “How different Owen would have been if he had had a father like mine.“¹⁴⁶

As an author Bernard MacLaverty is realistic in his social criticism of social injustice, the hypocrisy of the Home as well as the Catholic church. The question is not if Michael Lamb is the savior of young Owen Kane, but whether there could be any savior in the situation to which Owen had been born and later dragged into. Could there be any win-win solution or is the fate of both of them bound to tragedy, not by their active behavior, but by the fact, that there was no good way out?

Another remark on the brutal social reality, shows a returning Owen Kane to the Home would not be a good long – term solution given the regime of Brother Benedict.

“But the alternative was too awful to consider. That the boy should return to the Home and then after, maybe, years go back to his totally inadequate and snivelling mother and live with her in some Dublin slum”¹⁴⁷

The situation is more helpless, as Owen is described as *without a future*.¹⁴⁸ None of the conditions came about Owen’s fault and every situation Owen and Michael get into only confirms their feeling of hopelessness. There is undoubtedly no bright period in Owen’s life. Starting with his mother, who tried to kill him,¹⁴⁹ being left between older boys and the groundless wrath of Brother Benedict and being in the naive hands of Michael, Michael Lamb decides about Owen’s final end. Social determinism is expressed when in the passage when Michael is killing Owen.

„He had no luck. No faith. And now, no love. He had started with a pure loving simple ideal but it had gone foul on him, turned inevitably into something evil.“¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ BRADFORD, Arthur Lenox. *The concept of social determinism as a motivating influence in some modern tragedy: Master Thesis* [online]. 1929 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from https://scholarmine.mst.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5697&context=masters_theses p 2

¹⁴⁵ Lamb Loc. 1582

¹⁴⁶ Lamb Loc. 1647

¹⁴⁷ Lamb Loc. 1911

¹⁴⁸ Lamb Loc. 1914

¹⁴⁹ Lamb Loc. 1916

¹⁵⁰ Lamb Loc. 2235

1.15. Who is responsible for the tragedy?

When dealing with moral responsibility, there are more sources for interpretation. First of all, it is the institution of the Home. The official intention should be taking care of boys with problematic behaviour and helping them restart their lives in an intelligent and nurturing way. In fact “Kill and cure”¹⁵¹ is the method preferred by Brother Benedict, who becomes quite the opposite of the ideal director of the institution. He has no interest in helping the boys “back on their feet.” He is obsessed with the power he was given. In the Home there is no one, who could oppose him. He is therefore in the position of the ultimate power and he misuses it as much as he can. Brother Benedict is additionally the pure antagonist for an ideal Catholic person with strong altruistic values as it should be widely understood.

The role of epilepsy is described in its own chapter. Overall, the story indicates that hope is nowhere to be found or moreover, the hope never really existed for Owen Kane and because of Michael’s decision, he never experienced any chance of a future.

1.16. The Iceberg Method: The Troubles

Although no actual sectarian fighting is present among the protagonists in the novel, MacLaverty uses Hemingway’s approach background of violence that is happening in Ireland is disturbing. MacLaverty shows the reality, in the background for example, when Michael buys a radio and listens to it he finds out that “*In Northern Ireland a girl of five had been shot dead in crossfire.*”¹⁵²

With no further comment on this information, it is unimportant for the details of the main plot; however it brutally sets the plot within the context of the Civil War between Catholics and Protestants in the setting of Northern Ireland, so the reality of the situation on the island is not so far even when Owen and Michael are residing in London. Another reference comes from the cleaning lady, who is Irish and says that she would like to *keep up with what’s happening at home*¹⁵³ and that *this trouble in the North is terrible.*¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Lamb Loc. 564

¹⁵² Lamb Loc. 871

¹⁵³ Lamb Loc. 1504

¹⁵⁴ Lamb Loc. 1504

Another occasion when MacLavery recalls the reality of the civil war appears is when Michael and Haddock meet for the first time. Michael is asked what part of Ireland is he from and answers Dublin, Haddock replies, that ‘*Christ, they’re in some mess over there.*’¹⁵⁵ Michael calls the situation *tragic*.¹⁵⁶ Michael actually loathes all factions involved in the conflict.¹⁵⁷ This is more “*Christian*” approach a shown by Brother Benedict, who supports the Army.¹⁵⁸ Haddock, however, had been in the Army.¹⁵⁹ This small dialogue is a perfect example of MacLavery’s art of reminding the reader, that the conflict even though geographically far away, is still present in daily reality.

With the protagonists’ final return to the Irish island, MacLavery describes the situation all around as they are just passing in a car. At first *towns they had passed through had shown little signs of the Troubles – an occasional burnt-out shop or boarded-up windows.*¹⁶⁰ However later they arrive in the town called Strabane, where the destruction is seen everywhere:

*But in Strabane, the evidence was everywhere. Tall terraces of shops with charred rafters for roofs, crumbling gables, slogans sprayed everywhere, men with nothing to do standing sheltering from the rain in doorways.(...) A town bent on self-destruction. Cutting off its nose to spite the British Government’s face.*¹⁶¹

1.17. *Lamb* in the reviews

Lamb scored very well in the reviews of the time. As John Sinclair highlights in his 1980 review for the magazine *Fortnight: (MacLavery) portraits something rare, a pure, an in a sense, undemanding love.*¹⁶² He describes the result of the novel as *genuinely moving.*¹⁶³ In another review for *Library Journal* Janet Weihe highlights a *powerful conclusion.*¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁵ *Lamb* Loc. 1735

¹⁵⁶ *Lamb* Loc. 1738

¹⁵⁷ *Lamb* Loc. 1758

¹⁵⁸ *Lamb* Loc. 64

¹⁵⁹ *Lamb* Loc. 1759

¹⁶⁰ *Lamb* Loc. 2047

¹⁶¹ *Lamb* Loc. 2049

¹⁶² Sinclair, John. *Fortnight*, no. 177 (1980): 16-17. Accessed March 28, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/25546819.

¹⁶³ Sinclair, John. *Fortnight*, no. 177 (1980): 16-17. Accessed March 28, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/25546819.

¹⁶⁴ WIEHE, Janet. *Lamb* (Book). *Library Journal* [online]. 1980, **105**(14), 1661-1661 [quote2020-03-28]. ISSN 03630277.

However, there is a slightly critical point towards the novel saying that Michael's motivation is described positively and are: "*motivated by philanthropy, Darker and more selfish reasons – Lamb's need for boy's love (...) are satisfactorily left to the reader's imagination.*"¹⁶⁵

Despite this criticism Sinclair evaluates the novel as a '*very good novel, simply told yet complex, sparely written yet rich in resonance, generally not straining after effect, yet finally moving and memorable.*'¹⁶⁶ Whereas Wiehne speaks about: '*an artful work for large fiction collections*'¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Sinclair, John. *Fortnight*, no. 177 (1980): 16-17. Accessed March 28, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/25546819.

¹⁶⁶ Sinclair, John. *Fortnight*, no. 177 (1980): 16-17. Accessed March 28, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/25546819.

¹⁶⁷ WIEHE, Janet. Lamb (Book). *Library Journal* [online]. 1980, **105**(14), 1661-1661 [quote2020-03-28]. ISSN 03630277

2. *Cal*

2.1. Plot summary

Cal is set in Ulster¹⁶⁸ during the Troubles and tells a story of a main protagonist Cal Mc Cluskey a Roman Catholic protagonist. In the beginning Cal works at the abattoir,¹⁶⁹ despite the fact, that he does not feel well. He smokes heavily, because after a cigarette he can feel “*the muscles of his stomach relax.*”¹⁷⁰ At home Cal listens to music, plays the guitar and of course smokes. Cal visits the post office¹⁷¹ to collect his money since he is on state support.¹⁷² Then he visits the local library, when he for the first time meets Marcella an Italian Catholic immigrant who just started working there.¹⁷³ Cal is absolutely stunned by her appearance and even a few times returns to the library just to be around her.¹⁷⁴ During dinner Cal and Shamie are talking about possible offers of work. There are some in Belfast, however Shamie ends the conversation with the words: “*You’re safer away from the city.*”¹⁷⁵

The plot goes back to school years, where it focuses on Cal and Crilly’s relationship, how they for instance have together beaten up a person at the toilet.¹⁷⁶

Then the plot returns to the present time, when Crilly is trying to persuade Cal to join the IRA and to be their driver in a prepared hit and Cal in the end agrees.¹⁷⁷ On the one side Cal is beginning to be active in the process of the civil war. On the other hand he falls more and more in love with Marcella. He even waits for her in front of the library after closing time to have a chance to “accidentally” meet her and help her with the things she is carrying.¹⁷⁸

When returning home Cal finds a threatening message saying, that he and his father should move out, because they are Catholic residing in a Protestant section

¹⁶⁹ MacLaverty, Bernard. *Cal* (p. 156). Random House. Kindle Edition. p1

¹⁷⁰ *Cal* p 2

¹⁷¹ *Cal* p 5

¹⁷² *Cal* p 27

¹⁷³ *Cal* p 6

¹⁷⁴ E.g. *Cal* p 8

¹⁷⁵ *Cal* p 9

¹⁷⁶ E.g. *Cal* p 14

¹⁷⁷ *Cal* p 20

¹⁷⁸ *Cal* p 21

of Belfast.¹⁷⁹ As time went by Cal becomes a driver for Crilly and Mc Cluskey's house becomes a safe house for Crilly's activities.¹⁸⁰

After an interview with Shamie, Cal is thinking about his mother, who died early. Cal attends a sermon, where he accidentally meets with Marcella. He has fallen deeply in love with her. She is however already married to Robert Morton a Protestant.¹⁸¹ Then Cal visits a sport match, where he meets his friends. They talk about sports and also about the war.¹⁸² Cal starts to work with his friends as a lumberjack and they sell the wood to Mrs. Morton. When returning home, Cal is harassed by the group of boys, who call him "*Fenian bastard*" and ask him when is he and his father "*getting out*."¹⁸³

Later Cal is involved in a robbery as driver. After the robbery Cal is unsure whether he wants to continue Crilly is persuading him, that "*Not to act – you know – is to act*."¹⁸⁴ Cal begins to work at Morton's farm. He is still the visiting library just to maintain some contact with Marcella. One day, when Cal returns, he finds his house on fire, luckily he finds Shamie outside of it crying.¹⁸⁵

After the house is burnt down, Cal returns to the house to take a gun with him, that was in the house, so the police that would not find it.¹⁸⁶ In a sudden flashback to a year ago, Cal meets Crilly at the disco. Crilly tells Cal that they have a business to do. Cal is a driver and Crilly kills a man. The man screams his last words – a woman's name: „*Mar-cell-a*."¹⁸⁷ They drive away from the murder scene. They return to the disco to dance. Cal is after a girl, who tells him her name – Marcella.¹⁸⁸

Cal works at Morton's farm now, trying to use every possible occasion just to see Marcella. It is THE Marcella „*he had helped kill her husband*."¹⁸⁹ Once at night he approaches the farm and spies Marcella in the bathroom. He is ambushed by soldiers and has to explain why is he around the farm at night.¹⁹⁰ Cal says his house

¹⁷⁹ *Cal* p 22

¹⁸⁰ *Cal* p 25

¹⁸¹ *Cal* p 33

¹⁸² Eg *Cal* p 36

¹⁸³ *Cal* p 42

¹⁸⁴ *Cal* p 64

¹⁸⁵ *Cal* p 74

¹⁸⁶ *Cal* p 76

¹⁸⁷ *Cal* p 86

¹⁸⁸ *Cal* p 89

¹⁸⁹ *Cal* p 92

¹⁹⁰ *Cal* p 94

had been burned down.¹⁹¹ After this episode, despite his strong dislike of Marcella's mother-in-law, he is permitted to live on the farm.¹⁹²

Cal slowly starts to build a closer relationship with Marcella. After some time, he meets Shamie, who has mentally a break down. Cal insists on Shamie visiting the doctor and after an initial disagreement Shamie agrees.¹⁹³

Cal keeps getting more familiar with Marcella and he is informed that Marcella's mother-in-law will be away from the farm because of an impending operation.¹⁹⁴ Cal reads Marcella's diary.¹⁹⁵ Marcella and Cal have a romantic dinner at the end of it, Cal kisses Marcella. However, Marcella says, that she'd rather do the dishes and it seems like the magic of the situation is gone.¹⁹⁶ After some time Marcella returns and apologizes.¹⁹⁷ After that they spend a night together.

Cal goes to the town centre to do Christmas shopping. He meets Crilly. Then Cal is persuaded to go to the IRA meeting, where the pressure is put on him to help with other actions, mainly the blowing-up of the library building. Cal says, that he is really "*not interested any more.*"¹⁹⁸ Suddenly there the police appears.¹⁹⁹ Cal luckily escapes and anonymously informs authorities about the possibility of bombing the public library.²⁰⁰

Then Cal returns to Marcella and they make love again. "*The next morning, Christmas Eve, almost as if he expected it, the police arrived to arrest him and he stood in a dead man's Y-fronts listening to the charge...*"²⁰¹

2.2. Characteristics

2.2.1. Cal Mc Cluskey

Cal Mc Cluskey is the main protagonist. In the beginning of the plot he is just nineteen years old.²⁰² His self-confidence is not very high. Sometimes he swears to

¹⁹¹ *Cal* p 94

¹⁹² *Cal* p 97

¹⁹³ *Cal* p 114

¹⁹⁴ *Cal* p 124

¹⁹⁵ *Cal* p 127

¹⁹⁶ *Cal* p 135

¹⁹⁷ *Cal* p 137

¹⁹⁸ *Cal* p 147

¹⁹⁹ *Cal* p 152

²⁰⁰ *Cal* p 153

²⁰¹ *Cal* p 156

²⁰² *Cal* p 3

himself in French,²⁰³ while sometimes he “*wished that he knew more languages to curse himself more thoroughly.*”²⁰⁴ When it comes to languages Cal tries to learn some Gaelic “*for the sake of the Movement,*”²⁰⁵ however he was fairly unsuccessful. His mother died when he was just eight.²⁰⁶ Cal’s relationship with his father has always been a problematic one.²⁰⁷

Cal perspective, when it comes to the problem of war is clear. He feels for the „*real Ireland,*”²⁰⁸ which in his perspective is a Catholic Ireland. Cal simply wants to get out of the “*weight and darkness of Protestant Ulster.*”²⁰⁹

The question of faith so much discussed in *Lamb* comes to the spotlight in Cal’s case. However, he in the middle of the madness unsurprisingly “*was (...), deprived of God. He had ceased to believe in the one thing that dignified his suffering.*”²¹⁰ After moving in to the Morton’s farm, things start to appear better for Cal. Nevertheless, because he is near to Marcella, his nightmares start to be more frequent.²¹¹

2.2.2. Shamie Mc Cluskey

Shamie Mc Cluskey is Cal’s father. He despises England at the highest possible level.²¹² However, he thinks about moving, when Cal is blackmailed. Shamie is destroyed internally after his and Cal’s house is burned down.²¹³

Shamie becomes totally labile after the house is burnt down. He says, that “*he never knew how much I loved that house, that garden.*”²¹⁴ He is persuaded by Cal to visit the doctor. By the end of the novel Shamie is kept in a psychiatric asylum and is cured by using electrical shock therapy.²¹⁵

²⁰³ *Cal* p 4

²⁰⁴ *Cal* p 4

²⁰⁵ *Cal* p 4

²⁰⁶ *Cal* p 27

²⁰⁷ *Cal* p 29

²⁰⁸ *Cal* p 36

²⁰⁹ *Cal* p 35

²¹⁰ *Cal* p 83

²¹¹ *Cal* p 106

²¹² *Cal* p 27

²¹³ *Cal* p 74

²¹⁴ *Cal* p 112

²¹⁵ *Cal* p 145

2.2.3. Marcella D'Agostino(Morton)

Marcella just started working for the local library, where she meets with Cal for the first time. As for her physical appearance she is described as “*small and dark-haired with very brown eyes*” furthermore “*she looked foreign*” because of the “*sallowness of skin.*”²¹⁶ She is an Italian born Catholic. In Ireland she certainly must have looked exotic since Irish are famously pale.

In the beginning of the story she is married to Robert Morton, a Protestant, and member of the Ulster constables who investigate and attack the Irish Republican Army.²¹⁷ Marcella has a child with him. When her husband is murdered by Crilly with some help from Cal, she starts working in a library to get more out of the house. Macella is truly a person, who hates the Troubles as one of the few protagonists not involved in violence or even its planning nor in believing in one side or another since she is a new immigrant foreigner with no historical connections.

2.2.4. Crilly

Crilly is Jamie's friend, who works at the abattoir. He actually gets the job after Cal, who “*hadn't a strong enough stomach.*”²¹⁸ Crilly is portrayed as a ruthless boy, who borrows money, never repays it back, and when he asked by the one, who he owes, when he will return it, threatens them back.²¹⁹ He is also an aggressor in the school years,²²⁰ Crilly is Catholic.²²¹ Crilly is heavily involved with the IRA and he is the personality, that manipulates drives Cal into being active as a driver for him.

2.3. The Portrait of the Troubles

MacLaverty shows, that war brings no good or just solution. He portrays ordinary people as the ones who suffer the most. For example, in the beginning of the plot Cal and Shamie are watching TV and two pieces of news are on broadcasted. The first one is dealing with IRA killing a deaf mute, because they were afraid, that he is carrying a weapon with himself. That message is immediately

²¹⁶ Cal p 6

²¹⁷ Cal p 33

²¹⁸ Cal p 12

²¹⁹ Cal p 12-13

²²⁰ E.g: Cal p 14

²²¹ Cal p 27

followed another one speaking about stabbing to death of a Catholic father.²²² Another one piece of news speaks about “*three robberies at post offices throughout the province.*”²²³

The news keep appearing again and again throughout the novel. In the beginning of the third chapter comes the following:

*“Two hooded bodies had been found on the outskirts of Belfast; bombs had gone off in Strabane and Derry and Newry but no one had been hurt. there was another rise in coal prices; and finally there was the elephant in Belle Vue Zoo that had to have his teeth filed”*²²⁴

It is again MacLaverty’s brilliant writing almost subconsciously reminding, that despite the problems of individuals, which might or might not be connected to war. The violence is still going on.

The information about the Troubles usually appears after a situation when protagonists are dealing with their ordinary problems, such as Cal’s finding a job. It helps to create a link between the history and the fictional novel. It may be difficult to imagine how it really is like to live in the state of Civil War, but almost every reader has his or her experience with finding the job and exactly at the moment when reader identifies with the character, MacLaverty steps in and shows, that things might be much worse than just being unemployed.

Another important point is the chain of headlines. It is illustrated how the Troubles became a part of ordinary life. Finding dead people and explosions are nothing special: they actually take place in the daily order. The birth of an elephant is in the described reality more important, because it is more extraordinary than repeated acts of war.

It makes no difference, whether you are actively fighting or not. When living in Ulster during the Troubles, you are simply at war, whether you like it or not.

The first sign of trouble comes when Cal is for the first time persuaded to join the war.²²⁵ He is urged to join by Crilly by such arguments as “*think of an Ireland free of the Brits. Would we ever achieve it through the politicians?*”²²⁶ or just by

²²² Cal p 9

²²³ Cal p 11

²²⁴ Cal p 55

²²⁵ E.g Cal p 18

²²⁶ Cal p 19

simple emphasizing that *“this is war.”*²²⁷ However, the most interesting argument is the one relativizing the cost of war in human lives: *“But compared with conventional war the numbers are small. I know that sounds callous but it’s true. In Cyprus the dead hardly ran to three figures. That’s cheap for freedom.”*²²⁸ It actually says, that the amount of the dead during the Troubles is not noticeable and it is actually worth the ultimate goal: United Ireland without the Brits.

Other point of view is presented in the plot after Cal’s house is burned down.:

*“To suffer for something which didn’t exist, that was like Ireland. People were dying every day, men and women were being crippled and turned into vegetables in the name of Ireland. An Ireland which never was and never would be. It was the people of Ulster who were heroic, caught between the jaws of two opposing ideals trying to grind each other out of existence.”*²²⁹

This is the message of Bernard MacLaverty’s Cal in a nutshell.

MacLaverty also does not forget about the mental effect of war, which are personified by Shamie after his house is burnt down. Cal *“wondered how many people had cracked up like Shamie as a result of the Troubles. Shaking remnants of themselves.”*²³⁰ On Shamie’s example is the transformation from the opinion, at first with great firmness he does not want to move anywhere but he turns into completely broken and ill personality as result of the loss of certainty in his life, which was represented by his house.

Another view on the Troubles is presented by Marcella saying: *“when somebody kills your husband you’re involved whether you like it or not.”*²³¹ Earlier she took no sides As the plot continues it starts to be clear, that the Troubles effected either actively or passively every single character: there is no way to get out of this situation physically or mentally unhurt. MacLaverty shows how deeply the Troubles are rotten for every single human being.

Violence appears not so far from the Morton’s farm where a mine explodes.²³² Cal finds another sign of violence in Marcella’s diary.

“Last night 19 people died and 200 were injured in Birmingham. A slaying of total innocents – not even the callous excuse of a pub frequented by soldiers.

²²⁷ Cal p 18

²²⁸ Cal p 18

²²⁹ Cal p 83

²³⁰ Cal p 114

²³¹ Cal p 119

²³² Cal p 121

I thought we would never reach the day of atrocities equivalent to the Arab/Israeli unpleasantness. I am deeply ashamed of my country. From now on I think I will say I am an Italian. Violence is a bit like antibodies. Small doses build up until you can reject and be immune to the most horrific events. As yet the people of Birmingham have no antibodies and it must be terrible for them to bear."²³³

Marcella really despises all the violence and is not involved, but she is also an example of Catholic, and perhaps only as a foreigner she can overcome religious differences (and be happily married to a Protestant).

2.4. Cal, Cathal...the name and its significance

The name *Cahal* appears in the novel for the first time, when Crilly is trying to persuade Cal, to be their driver in a planned action.²³⁴ Actually, the name Cal is an abbreviated form from Cahal, which is again "a slightly Anglicized version of the Gaelic name "Cathal,"²³⁵ which means a ruler of the battle. Piwinski furthermore highlights the fact, that Cal "cannot even rule his own fate."²³⁶

In contradiction to Piwinski that Cal is definitely not able to see the consequences of his actions. However he decides, to be a driver for Crilly. The irony is that Cal is truly active only twice, when he decides to drive. However, results of these actions will hunt him his entire life.

2.5. "No Loyalist bastard is going to force me out of my home"²³⁷...Catholic vs. Loyalists

The McCluskeys are the only Catholic family left around the neighborhood in one section of Belfast.²³⁸ Cal's strong opinion against Loyalist's is manifested, when he returns home from the abattoir. Cal sees Union Jacks flying. "He could

²³³ *Cal* p 127

²³⁴ *Cal* p 16 and further

²³⁵ Piwinski, DJ. 2020. "Names in Bernard MacLaverty's 'Cal': Etymology, Onomastics, and Irony." *ANQ-A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SHORT ARTICLES NOTES AND REVIEWS* 15 (4): 41–45. Accessed May 19. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edswah&AN=000179324400009&lang=c&site=eds-live>. p42

²³⁶ Piwinski, DJ. 2020. "Names in Bernard MacLaverty's 'Cal': Etymology, Onomastics, and Irony." *ANQ-A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SHORT ARTICLES NOTES AND REVIEWS* 15 (4): 41–45. Accessed May 19. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edswah&AN=000179324400009&lang=c&site=eds-live>. p42

²³⁷ *Cal* p 3

²³⁸ *Cal* p 3

not bear to look up and see the flutter of Union Jacks, and now the red and white cross of the Ulster flag with its red hand. ²³⁹

Cal felt that those Union Jacks flags are focused on his family, since they were the last Catholic family around the neighbourhood.²⁴⁰ However, his father Shamie refused to move anywhere, with the saying, that: „*No Loyalist bastard is going to force me out of my home. They can kill me first.*“²⁴¹ From the preceding words the tension is absolutely obvious. Religious intolerance comes as a threat, which arrives to the McCluskey’s house which reads as follows:

*„GET OUT YOU FENYAN SCUM OR WE’LL BURN YOU OUT. THIS IS YOUR 2ND WARNING, THERE WILL BE NO OTHER. UVF“*²⁴²

UVF is a abbreviation for Ulster Volunteer Force, one of the the loyalist paramilitary terrorist organizations standing directly against IRA.²⁴³ When Cal is thinking about the threat, he feels strange about “*the idea of people whose faces he did not know hating him that made his skin crawl. To be hated not for yourself but for what you were.*”²⁴⁴ Shamie comments with the words, that “*Isn’t it a terrible thing, (...)that those bastards have us whispering in our own house.*”²⁴⁵

The preceding episode indicates, how the value of a single human life was derived in Northern Ireland from belonging or not belonging one or another Christian faith, completely forgetting about human qualities of an individual.

The pressure rises could be clearly illustrated on the blackmailing of Cal and threatening him if he as a Catholic is not about to leave a Protestant area.²⁴⁶ After this episode, even Shamie would stubbornly like to stay at almost any cost, suggesting the impossibility of moving.²⁴⁷

All the threats become real, when Cal’s and Shamie’s house is burnt down. In the scene when Cal and Shamie are in front of their recently burned house, they

²³⁹ Cal p 3

²⁴⁰ Cal p 3

²⁴¹ Cal p 3

²⁴² Cal p 22

²⁴³ ARTHUR, Paul a Kimberly COWELL- MEYERS. Ulster Volunteer Force. *Britannica* [online]. [accessed 2020-06-28]. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ulster-Volunteer-Force-Northern-Ireland-1966>

²⁴⁴ Cal p 22

²⁴⁵ Cal p 23

²⁴⁶ Cal p 42

²⁴⁷ Cal p 44

appear to hear “*Fenian bastards*” again from somewhere out of the crowd.²⁴⁸ This again shows the division of the community, which goes beyond the personal level. Shamie and Cal are called “*Fenian bastards*” the Protestant crowd excludes and when them from last pieces of something, that could be called community. They are simply Catholic, who appeared in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

The exact same story could happen to Protestant people living in the majority Catholic area. *Cal* is not the story about the oppression of Catholics by Protestants, Rather, it is the story of fanatical belief inspiring violence and what it does to ordinary people under the mask of some religion.

What originally appeared just under the headlines became now reality for Cal. As he was waiting, he was thinking, that „*every day Catholics were being shot dead for no apparent reason, as the police said.*”²⁴⁹ One of the Cal’s fears is directly dedicated to the conflict.:

„It wasn’t the thought of being killed that frightened him, it was the fear that he would lose his dignity if they tortured him. Men had been castrated before they were killed – one bloke had had his head put between the jaws of a vice and the vice tightened until his skull cracked; and a Catholic butcher was murdered and hung up on a meat hook in his own shop like a side of beef. They were the actions of men with sick minds.”²⁵⁰

It does not matter on which side one stands: no one could commit that to anyone, who really believes in Christian ideas. Regardless if a Protestant or a Catholic the Ten Commandments should apply for both ways of belief in Jesus Christ.

Cal later on doubts the importance of having a gun by himself. “*If somebody wanted to get you they would get you. Having a gun was no help.*”²⁵¹ This again describes the hopelessness and the uncertainty of the situation in which the whole island appeared to be.

2.6. ‘Cal, there’s bad bastards on both sides.’²⁵²

This sentence is said by Cyril, while meeting Cal working on Morton’s farm. Cyril is a Protestant.²⁵³ He shows support to Cal. The house of Cal and Shamie is

²⁴⁸ *Cal* p 74

²⁴⁹ *Cal* p 79

²⁵⁰ *Cal* p 79

²⁵¹ *Cal* p 79

²⁵² *Cal* p 80

²⁵³ *Cal* p 80

burnt down by Protestants, who probably did not know them much. Cyril, who should in accordance with the Protestants agree such an act, shows sympathy to Cal. Shamie even informed Cal that “*That Cyril Dunlop was in every Orange march that ever there was.*”²⁵⁴ One would therefore expect that Cyril would strongly support an attempt to evict the Mc Cluskey family out of Ulster. Yet he shows sympathy to Shamie as an individual. MacLaverty shows that being afraid of things one does not know might be one of the explanations for the recklessness and brutality on both sides.

“*A staunch Orangeman and a Republican with a gun in the same car.*”²⁵⁵ That was exactly the situation, when both of them were driving in a car Cal had a gun by himself. Cal was utterly happy that they were not stopped by the Catholic patrol. “*It was funny. Cal thought, how Protestants were ‘staunch’ and Catholics were ‘fervent.’*”²⁵⁶

MacLaverty shows the real relativity of the whole situation through relatively small things like Cal with a gun and driving with Cyril in a car, afraid to be stopped by a Catholic patrol, ordinarily Cal should be glad to see them. Now he is not. The narration of a world that is not black and white is something Bernard MacLaverty and later Brian Moore have in common.

2.7. Marcela and Robert Morton

Marcela’s and Robert’s relationship plays a symbolic role in the plot. As the whole novel is talking about intolerance between two branches of Christianity, Robert and Marcella were in an exotic While it was nearly impossible to find Irish Protestants and Catholics married together, by bringing an Italian into the plot, it is still plausible and realistic and MacLaverty creates an otherwise impossible marriage work. They had a child together called Lucy. Marcella is looking after the child as a widow.²⁵⁷

By the words of Mrs. Morton about Robert Morton: „*He was such a kind boy – and very popular. Even though she’s a different religion, he and Marcella were*

²⁵⁴ Cal p 47

²⁵⁵ Cal p 80

²⁵⁶ Cal p 80

²⁵⁷ Cal p 104

*well suited.*²⁵⁸ However, as the plot continues Marcella reveals to Cal the background of the reactions of her family, when she and Robert decided to marry. The reaction was “*Why for in Catholic Ireland you want to marry a Protestant boy?*”²⁵⁹ The plot takes another paradox. The marriage as a symbol of unity between a Protestant and a Catholic is ended partially by Cal.

When Cal is reading in Marcella’s diary he starts to find out that the marriage of Robert and Marcella was not so bright as it is was presented.²⁶⁰ Cal finds out completely after spending a night with Marcella, after which Marcella opens herself about the marriage up.

Marcella talks about Robert: “*We had stopped making love for a long time before he was killed. We had occasional sex but he didn’t make me realize I was me. He was having it off with some creature of his imagination. God forgive me, I shouldn’t speak ill of the dead.*”²⁶¹ Furthermore, she describes Robert as a person, who “*was one of those people whose company you love for an hour or so but you’re glad you’re not married to them. But I was.*”²⁶² From the preceding lines it is obvious, that Marcella’s and Robert’s marriage was actually far from ideal. He thought of her as forbidden fruit (as a Catholic)

2.8. Marcela’s and Cal’s relationship

The relationship began between a widow and a murder of her husband, both Catholic. Bernard MacLavery challenges the stereotypical view on religion another time.

Cal meets Marcella the same night he helps Shamie to kill her husband Cal however did not plan to kill anyone. He is madly in love with Marcella ever since she started working in a library. The coincidence of all this makes the main plot paradoxical. After Cal moves to the Morton’s farm the true interaction between them begins. Until that time Cal online visited the library as much as he could just to be near Marcella. Another paradox happens, when Cal is offered by Marcella a second hand clothes, which he accepts. However, the clothes belonged to the man

²⁵⁸ *Cal* p 98

²⁵⁹ *Cal* p 115

²⁶⁰ *Cal* p 127

²⁶¹ *Cal* p 142

²⁶² *Cal* p 143

he helped to murder – Robert Morton.²⁶³ Marcella start to tell Cal, that she decided to start working in the library to get out of house.²⁶⁴ She also appreciates that fact that she finally has someone to openly talk to.²⁶⁵ When Marcella’s mother-in-law is away for the operation, Marcella and Cal have a romantic dinner at the end Cal kisses Marcella.²⁶⁶ Marcella is trying to get away from the situation and says, she better do dishes.²⁶⁷ After some time Marcella apologizes and they spend the night together.²⁶⁸ After intercourse Cal asks Marcella, whether she loves him, while telling her, that he does.²⁶⁹

Cal’s feelings towards Marcella could be at best described by the following quote. „*She was what he wanted most and if he couldn’t be near her he might as well be in prison,*”²⁷⁰ which comes true.

2.9. “Ulstermen would die rather than live under the yoke of Roman Catholicism.”²⁷¹

The views of Cyril Dunlop, a protestant working on the Morton’s farm together with Cal. Expressed the feeling of being sorry for Cal’s house being burnt down. However, when it comes to the question of IRA and being “ruled by Rome,” he is stubborn in his opinion:

*“This whole bloody business would be cleared up overnight if they brought back hanging. If only they would give the Army a bit of freedom. But no, they can’t do this or they can’t do that or they’ll find themselves up in court. Even a rat, Cal, will suck eggs in the presence of a chain dog. Let the chain off. Beat the shite out of the bastards.”*²⁷²

Here Cyril Dunlop criticizes the role of the government. Despite using strong language, it is obvious, that he feels hopeless in the situation with where he feels not even government could solve the situation in the way he would like. He adds to his opinion on the IRA, that: “*every time a policeman or soldier is shot I would put two of those bastards up against the wall and blow their brains out.*”²⁷³ In the

²⁶³ Cal p 102

²⁶⁴ Cal p 109

²⁶⁵ Cal p 109

²⁶⁶ Cal p 134

²⁶⁷ Cal p 134

²⁶⁸ Cal p 137

²⁶⁹ Cal p 139

²⁷⁰ Cal p 156

²⁷¹ Cal p 112

²⁷² Cal p 110

²⁷³ Cal p 111

moment Dunlop adds even more shocking quote: “*Sometimes I think Hitler had the right idea. He had the wrong cause, mind you, but he knew how to fight a war.*”²⁷⁴ The blindness of person, who had been caught in the middle of the long conflict respects a man notorious for evil and its lowest. Dunlop also highlights the fact that “*(...)be ruled from Rome? A state told what to do by priests and nuns. Sheer voodoo, Cal. Mumbo-jumbo. Ulstermen would die rather than live under the yoke of Roman Catholicism. Not an inch. It’s a good saying.*”²⁷⁵ The crucial thing is, that from his mouth the preceding statement does not sound exaggerated at all

Another interesting paradox arises in the novel is that all these opinions are told to Cal, who had been helping Crilly in IRA activities such as robberies and murdering Robert Morton.

2.10. From the town to the countryside – the importance of environment in *Cal*

Apart from the Troubles, there is one more layer that is worth explaining. It is city versus countryside contract. In *Cal* things connected to the city are negative. Cal does not know what to do with his time and has no motivation to do anything. He just sits, smokes and tries to play the guitar. As J. Cameron Moore states: “*Cal’s existence is characterized by inactivity and sleeplessness.*”²⁷⁶

One the other hand, working and simply being on the Morton’s farm is a kind of „*mental exile.*”²⁷⁷ Because from doing nothing Cal starts to work manually on the farm and it is a widely excepted opinion, that a physical work helps mental health. Obviously Cal is outside of Belfast conflicts. Moreover, “*the work not only provides him temporary employment, but also gives him a reason to go the Morton farm.*”²⁷⁸ A passive character Cal is motivated by the possibility of being closer to the woman he loves.

²⁷⁴ *Cal* p 111

²⁷⁵ *Cal* p 112

²⁷⁶ Moore, J. Cameron. 2012. “‘Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water, Right Enough’: The Rural Landscape in Bernard MacLaverty’s *Cal*.” *ANQ-A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SHORT ARTICLES NOTES AND REVIEWS* 25 (1): 31–36. doi:10.1080/0895769X.2012.640263. p32

²⁷⁷ Fahmy, Nazek. “*Cal: A Contemporary Irish Exile.*” *Encounters in Language and Literature*. Ed. Hoda Gindi. Cairo: Jami’at al-Qahirah, 1993. 397–405.

²⁷⁸ Moore, J. Cameron. 2012. “‘Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water, Right Enough’: The Rural Landscape in Bernard MacLaverty’s *Cal*.” *ANQ-A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SHORT ARTICLES NOTES AND REVIEWS* 25 (1): 31–36. doi:10.1080/0895769X.2012.640263. p32

Overall, the town plays the role of danger connected with the image of sectarian danger working as a butcher and Cal's passivity. The countryside offers the view activity and even a notion of a new work and activities.

2.11. "Cal" as the "Passage to India" of the Troubles²⁷⁹

Cal was largely successful among the critics. For example, Michael Gorra in his review for *New York Times* states, that Bernard MacLavertry's „viewpoint is Christian without being either Catholic or Protestant. "Cal" begins in the conscience, where ideology ends, and its meditation on human suffering and responsibility carries the complexity and amplitude of the very finest novels.“²⁸⁰

Janet Wiehe's review for *Library Journal* comments on Cal „A sad, ironic, and beautifully written novel about a divided Ireland.“²⁸¹

„A brief, slightly unbelievable book--nonetheless made rich, affecting, and tangible by the quiet determination of its characters. . . and its storytelling.“

These words are used by another 1983 review.²⁸² Overall, the most of the reviews agree on MacLavertry being a brilliant storytelling and a great realist, with which he portraits the problem of the Troubles from another perspective.

²⁷⁹ GORRA, Michael. No Headline. *The New York Times* [online]. 1983, 21.8.1983 [accessed 2020-06-28]. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/21/books/no-headline-104711.html>

²⁸⁰ GORRA, Michael. No Headline. *The New York Times* [online]. 1983, 21.8.1983 [accessed 2020-06-28]. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/21/books/no-headline-104711.html>

²⁸¹ WIEHE, Janet. MacLavertry Bernard. Cal. *Library Journal*. 1983, **108**(12).

²⁸² AUTHOR UNKNOWN. CAL BY BERNARD MACLAVERTY. *Kirkusreviews.com* [online]. Braziller, 19.8.1983 [accessed 2020-06-28]. Available at: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/a/bernard-maclavertry-4/cal/>

3. Bernard MacLavery

3.1. Introduction

Born in Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, in 1942,²⁸³ Bernard MacLavery established himself as one of the most prominent authors dealing with issues of the society living on the Irish Island. His life itself has been worth attention. He moved from being a Medical Laboratory Technician²⁸⁴ for ten years²⁸⁵ to studying at Queen's University at Belfast, which led him to becoming an English teacher²⁸⁶ up to the role of a famous and respected author.

During his journey MacLavery also taught English in Edinburg, Scotland between 1975 – 1978. Then he continued his teaching career at the Isle of Islay.²⁸⁷

This thesis focuses on his first two novels. Before his first novel *Lamb* (1980), MacLavery already had published a collection of short stories named *Secrets and Others Stories* (1979). This thesis focuses on *Lamb and Cal* (1983). When it comes to short stories collections, he has published five of them up to now. The before mentioned *Secrets and Other Stories* (1979), *A Time to Dance and Other Short Stories* (1982), *The Great Profundo and Other Stories* (1987), *Walking Dog and Other Stories* (1994) and *Matters of Life and Death* (2006).²⁸⁸ However, one should not forget about MacLavery's beginning with his very first book written for children: *Man in Search of a Pet* (1978)

²⁸³ Biography. *Bernardmaclavery.com* [online]. [quote2020-05-04]. Available from www.bernardmaclavery.com/biography

²⁸⁴ Bernard MacLavery. *www.rcwlitagency.com* [online]. [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <https://www.rcwlitagency.com/authors/maclavery-bernard/>

²⁸⁵ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Lavery: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> p1

²⁸⁶ Bernard MacLavery. *Literature.britishcouncil.org* [online]. [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/bernard-maclavery>

²⁸⁷ Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLavery." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020.

²⁸⁸ Bernard MacLavery. *Literature.britishcouncil.org* [online]. [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/bernard-maclavery>

3.2. MacLavery and film

MacLavery has been not only active in publishing, but also in writing and directing films. His short film *Bye-Child*²⁸⁹²⁹⁰ was nominated for BAFTA and even won the category BAFTA Scotland for the best first director award²⁹¹ in 2004.²⁹² The fact this award is not just a success for critics is supported by the fact, that on the on the IMDb.com this short movie has 8.1 out of possible 10 points.²⁹³ *The Bye-Child* was screened at many international movie festivals including Palm Springs.²⁹⁴

MacLavery, however, acknowledges the difference in approach between writing a novel and working on the film as they are both totally different media when it comes to perception. He states, that „*the film is a different way of telling the story, that was first seen inside the reader's head.*“²⁹⁵ He also states, that „*comparing a novel to a film is like comparing an apple to an orange.*“²⁹⁶

When it comes to different forms of art such as painting, music, writing. MacLavery says that „*ways of seeing and reflecting the world are what make us human now.*“²⁹⁷ His successful connection to movies is seen with this perspective

²⁸⁹ Bernard MacLavery. *Literature.britishcouncil.org* [online]. [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/bernard-maclavery>

²⁹⁰ Bye-Child: 2003. *IMDb.com* [online]. [quote2020-05-05]. Available from <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0371592/>

²⁹¹ BAFTA [online]. [quote2020-05-05]. Available from <http://www.bafta.org/>

²⁹² Bye-Child: Bernard MacLavery's first steps in film-making. *Culturenorthernireland.org* [online]. [quote2020-05-05]. Available from <https://www.culturenorthernireland.org/features/film/bye-child>

²⁹³ Bye-Child: 2003. *IMDb.com* [online]. [quote2020-05-05]. Available from <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0371592/>

²⁹⁴ Bye-Child: Bernard MacLavery's first steps in film-making. *Culturenorthernireland.org* [online]. [quote2020-05-05]. Available from <https://www.culturenorthernireland.org/features/film/bye-child>

²⁹⁵ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Lavery: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> p4

²⁹⁶ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Lavery: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> p3

²⁹⁷ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Lavery: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> p5

as no surprise. His interest in visual form of art is even represented in his book *The Anatomy School*,²⁹⁸ which deals with an aspiring photographer.

3.3. MacLavery out of prose

Bernard MacLavery has been trying to write poetry at the beginning of his life. However, as he claims himself "*It was incredibly awful. But then I stopped, thank God.*"²⁹⁹ As he is definitely not satisfied with the poetry he was writing when he was seventeen. He also wrote a short play called "*Phonefun limited*,"³⁰⁰ which was written for the Tron Theatre in Glasgow³⁰¹ and has been turned into TV movie produced by the BBC Northern Ireland.³⁰² MacLavery acknowledges, that he has been creating for TV and radio, but only for TV and radio versions of his short stories.³⁰³

3.4. Inspiration: where all the tension and darkness came from

His literary heroes include Brian Moore and the local writer, his namesake Michael MacLavery, whose work he admired so much,³⁰⁴ The work of literary art, that has influenced him the most and that states in the first instance is Shakespeare's *Macbeth*... "*The way that Macbeth was put together with that imagery, that images of birds, of ill-fitting clothing, of darkness and light, of*

²⁹⁸ MACLAVERTY, Bernard. *The anatomy school*. London: Vintage, 2002. ISBN 0099428466.

²⁹⁹ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Lavery: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> p3

³⁰⁰ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Lavery: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> p3

³⁰¹ Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLavery." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020.p 3

³⁰² Phonefun Limited: (1982).: (1982) [online]. [quote2020-05-05]. Available from <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0338344/>

³⁰³ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Lavery: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> p3

³⁰⁴ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Lavery: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> pp1-3

light."³⁰⁵ Those are direct quotations of MacLavery's impression of *Macbeth*. Therefore, it is no accident, that the tension, that MacLavery describes in *Macbeth* is something that he brought from Shakespeare to his own writing. It is present for example more or less in the whole plot of the novel *Lamb*. Nevertheless, as Bernard MacLavery states „*It seems ludicrous, to say that Shakespeare influenced you.*“³⁰⁶

Among another inspiration in his own words belongs a Victorian-era Catholic English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. MacLavery notices two poems “*As kingfishers catch fire*”³⁰⁷ and “*I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day*”³⁰⁸ The two mentioned poems to trace hopelessness and kind of urgent pressure which are present in *Lamb*. MacLavery's point of view of pressure and hopelessness could be supported by his quotation that „*there is not harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it.*“³⁰⁹ Another source of MacLavery's inspiration is Ernest Hemingway, that „*charlatan and trickster*“³¹⁰ as MacLavery called him at first sight, turned after some time in his mind into the author of „*smashing stories.*“³¹¹

However, the privilege of MacLavery's first non-compulsory read book belonged to Fyodor Dostoyevsky and his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. MacLavery, of course, honors the giant of modernist fiction and the most famous Irish author of all „James Joyce. MacLavery also praises the Southern U.S writer

³⁰⁵ Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLavery." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020. pp1-2

³⁰⁶ Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLavery." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020. p2

³⁰⁷ The full text could be found here: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44389/as-kingfishers-catch-fire>

³⁰⁸ The full text could be found here: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44396/i-wake-and-feel-the-fell-of-dark-not-day>

³⁰⁹ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Lavery: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [quote2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> p1

³¹⁰ Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLavery." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020. p2

³¹¹ Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLavery." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020. p2

Flannery O'Connor for her short stories.³¹² Other authors that influenced MacLaverty include Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka and William Faulkner.

When MacLaverty was asked why almost all his characters fail to live in happy relationships, he replied, that it is “*easier to create something defective than something good.*”³¹³ He adds, that for reading the perfect optimistic situations are not interesting and sees as his main goal to build up a credible relationship “*out of tiny bricks, tiny mosaic files, to make a huge and important picture or statement.*”³¹⁴

3.5. Achievements and personal life

Apart from writing and being overall artistically active, MacLaverty has been teaching³¹⁵ creative writing at the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen.³¹⁶ He is also a member of a group called *Aosdána*,³¹⁷ which is an organization established in the 1980s and which “*honours artists whose work has made an outstanding contribution to the creative arts in Ireland*”³¹⁸

3.6. „Gentlemen, we can't go on living like this”³¹⁹ – MacLaverty on the Troubles

In the interview³²⁰ conducted during MacLaverty's cultural tour through Spain, the discussion came to the topic of the Troubles, which is an essential topic dealt with in *Cal* and *Lamb* above all. „*If you are not confused, you fully don't*

³¹² Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLaverty." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020.p2

³¹³ Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLaverty." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020.p9

³¹⁴ Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLaverty." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020.p 9

³¹⁵ DE LA IGLESIA, Tamara Benito. Interview with Bernard Mac Laverty: There is no harm in being bleak if you are reflecting the world as you see it. *ODISEA* [online]. 2002, (2), 199-206 [qoute2020-05-04]. Available from <http://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/ODISEA/article/viewFile/45/40> P7 p1

³¹⁶ Bye-Child: Bernard MacLaverty's first steps in film-making. *Culturenorthernireland.org* [online]. [qoute2020-05-05]. Available from <https://www.culturenorthernireland.org/features/film/bye-child>

³¹⁷ Bernard MacLaverty. *Literature.britishcouncil.org* [online]. [qoute2020-05-04]. Available from <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/bernard-maclaverty>

³¹⁸ <http://aosdana.artscouncil.ie/>

³¹⁹ Morales Ladron, Marisol. "Writing is a state of mind not an achievement': an interview with Bernard MacLaverty." *Atlantis, revista de la Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2001, p. 201+. Accessed 4 May 2020.p 5

³²⁰ Writing is a state of mind... p1

understand the situation.” He states and adds that “*it is an absurd situation – except that people die*”³²¹ With the quotation from Chekhov (the a title of this sub-chapter) MacLaverty is trying to say, that killing one another should not continue.

As MacLaverty states himself: “*Lamb and Cal reflect the negativity, the disappointment, the gloom of the situation in Northern Ireland*”³²² When it comes to *Lamb* MacLaverty sees the parallel between the “*destruction of a boy by someone who claimed to love him*”³²³ and the “*Irish situation with violent Republicans.*”³²⁴

This parallel is definitely strong. However, the story that MacLaverty created is not straightforward. It is inspired by the true events except for the semi-archetypical relationship between a boy and a “father.” Like many others authors from Ireland before him, MacLaverty brings the topic of the loss of faith in the church. The reader is set to a typical post-modern situation with no certainty or safe spots, where it is almost impossible to tell what is good.

When it comes to the personal view MacLaverty does not regret leaving the Irish island and moving to Scotland (like Patrick McCabe) and admits that it was good for him, that he did not have to witness “*the fear, the hate and the threats*” in Northern Ireland³²⁵ despite the fact, that he deals with these topics in his works.

³²¹ *Writing is a state of mind...* p 5-6

³²² *Writing is a state of mind...* p 6

³²³ *Writing is a state of mind...*p 8

³²⁴ *Writing is a state of mind...*p 8

³²⁵ *Writing is a state of mind...* p10

4. Broken reality and the tragedy in Lamb and Cal

The both novels work with the motif of breaking the standard relationships under the pressure of a tight situation. The situation they are facing is Cal Mc Cluskey as well as for Michael Lamb is not a situation, which they would be fully responsible for. Both of them just find themselves in the bad time, on the bad spot.

MacLaverty brilliantly works with the motif of guilt. For Michael guilt is only knowing the fact that he decides to kill Owen Kane, whereas for Cal Mc Cluskey at first it might seem that he profits from the situation of killing a random person, who turns out to be Marcella's husband. Despite the fact, that Cal Mc Cluskey appears by the series of accidents and his own will in Marcella's bed, his conscience keeps haunting him. And it should since one should not really be sleeping with the woman you helped make into a widow.

For the both Michael Lamb and Cal Mc Cluskey, the endings of the plot constitute a kind of salvation, because the drama itself is not so much happening during the final actions of their plot (killing and being arrested) but by the process of deciding inside their heads, whether Michael will kill Owen or Cal will tell the truth to Marcella. The murder in Michael Lamb's case and being arrested in Cal Mc Cluskey's one play the role of catharsis for both protagonists. Because the time of rethinking the possible options and uncertainty ends, the circle is closed. The father as father and son relationship is broken, built on deception. The love story between a Catholic young man and a Catholic widow with a child ends in the terrible way.

Both endings are open, because the plots indicate what is about to follow after the ending of the both plots. Their precise form is left up to reader's imagination. However, the setting leaves no option for imaginary follow-up to be positive in any way.

The idea of the original cause for all that went wrong remains unanswered. There is no option for Michael to behave morally good and not to harm anyone as well as for Cal to not be touched by the Troubles. By the open ending and not answering the question of the protagonists' initial fault, Bernard MacLaverty created hopeless, disturbing and yet perfectly plausible stories, which forces the reader to contemplate the ethical ramifications.

5. *Lies of Silence*

5.1. Plot Summary

The story covers the main protagonist Michael Dillon who manages the hotel in Belfast. Michael is married, however he has also a relationship with a Canadian called Andrea Baxter. Michael and Andrea have decided to leave all behind and move to London. Michael returns home and should tell her wife Moira that he wants to divorce her. However, he is not capable of it so he postpones revealing it until the morning.³²⁶

At night, Michael and Moira are ambushed in their house by the IRA. Michael does not know what IRA people want to do with them. First, he thinks that the ambush is just an IRA error. He believes that they have mistaken them for some real target. Moira unsuccessfully tries to escape and Michael sees the face of one of the IRA men called “Kev” in the mirror.³²⁷

Michael is subsequently forced to drive with the bomb inside his car to his hotel. Because IRA wants to kill the Protestant Reverend Pottinger, who will have a meeting with his Canadian supporters in the morning at the hotel. IRA says to Michael, that if he does not follow their instructions exactly, they will kill Moira. Michael parks his car in accordance with the instructions. He goes to a shop where he is instructed to go, but there he asks if he may make a call. He calls the police and reports the bomb inside his car. Police save the situation. After the bomb explodes, Michael talks to the inspector who advises him to keep everything that has happened to him in secret for his own safety. Michael returns home where he finds Moira. He surprisingly finds out, that the IRA left his house shortly after driving away left with a bomb in his car.³²⁸

Michael returns to the hotel to inform a supervisor from London about the damages. He meets with Andrea and tells her what happened in the morning and the night before. Then he is approached by a member of Reverend Pottinger radical

³²⁶ Moore, Brian. *Lies of Silence: A Novel*. Open Road Media. Kindle Edition. the first chapter

³²⁷ *Lies of Silence* - the second chapter

³²⁸ *Lies of Silence* - the third chapter

anti-Catholic group and is asked whether he wants to be mentioned at a press conference Pottinger is about to give. Michael refuses.³²⁹

Michael heads to the countryside to Moira and her parents. They discuss what happened and what they think about it. Moira does not want to go into hiding abroad. She says that “*This is my country. I’m not going to let those bastards push me out of it.*”³³⁰ She also thinks that she should publicly state what had happened to both of them.³³¹

Michael returns to the hotel where he spends the night with Andrea in the rooftop apartment. In the morning Andrea and Moira for the first time accidentally meet. Moira asks about Andrea, but Michael is called to the telephone. Moira in the meantime leaves and after a while so does Andrea.³³²

Michael returns home and packs his things. Then he goes to Peg’s shop where he meets Peg who tells him that Moira has just been on TV and was speaking about what happened to them the night, when they were ambushed by the IRA at home. At the entrance to the hotel Michael is surrounded by many Irish journalists. He decides to meet Moira, who is preparing to give another TV interview. They have an argument about whether it is wise to go to TV and put themselves at risk. Michael tells Moira that he is leaving Belfast to London for a new job the next day. Michael then meets his father in a hotel. Then he goes to meet Moira at a cafe. Michael thinks he is being tracked by a young boy in a U2 t-shirt and tells it to Moira. They definitely break up and Moira leaves.³³³

Two detectives are waiting at the hotel for Michael. They ask him if he would be able to identify the IRA member, whose face he had seen. Michael agrees. Then he spends a night with Andrea in her flat. During a telephone call with Moira he discusses about her plans to speak out against IRA and their divorce. Then Michael attended a farewell party made for him by the staff of the hotel. All the time Michael is afraid that the information that he had seen the face of one of the IRA members will be published and he will therefore be in extreme danger.³³⁴

³²⁹ *Lies of Silence* – the fourth chapter

³³⁰ *Lies of Silence* loc.1548

³³¹ *Lies of Silence* - the fifth chapter

³³² *Lies of Silence* – the sixth chapter

³³³ *Lies of Silence* – seventh chapter

³³⁴ *Lies of Silence* – the eighth chapter

Michael is contacted by a Father Connolly who somehow knows that Michael is able to identify one of the IRA members called “Kev.” Father Connolly is trying to persuade Michael not to identify him. Michael however refuses. Then Michael and Andrea go to the airport from where Michael calls his parents and tells them, that he has a new love in his life. They safely arrive in London, where they enjoy the weekend. After a welcome party they make love. Michael “*did not want this day to end.*”³³⁵

Michael is contacted by Moira who told him that she had been contacted by Father Connolly and that “Kev” is Father Connolly’s nephew. Michael later again meets Father Connolly in London and again refuses not to identify Kev. However, after consultation with Andrea, Michael decides not to testify. He tries reaching the inspector over the telephone to tell him that he has changed his mind and he will not testify. He misses a call from him in the office, but he is informed, that the inspector will call him at his new home at five o’clock. He goes home, sending Andrea away by saying that he has a feeling, he has to do it alone. In front of his house two men ask him, whether he is Mr. Dillon. He says yes. They „*raised their revolvers. They were not wearing masks. This time, there would be no witness.*”³³⁶
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5.2. Characteristics

5.2.1. Michael Dillon

The main protagonist, who works at a Belfast hotel as a manager. Michael is “*a failed poet in a business suit.*”³³⁸ He is in love with Andrea Baxter. He values his books, which are a collection of classic literature.³³⁹ “*He did not believe in God, in religion, or in any order or meaning to this world.*”³⁴⁰ Michael was never involved in any aspect of the Troubles. As an ordinary person, Michael is thrown into the Troubles against his will, because of the job he was doing made it possible to target a Protestant leader. However, he is officially Catholic but he does not practice the

³³⁵ *Lies of Silence* Loc. 687

³³⁶ *Lies of Silence* Loc. 3075

³³⁷ *Lies of Silence* the tenth chapter

³³⁸ *Lies of Silence* Loc.121

³³⁹ *Lies of Silence* Loc.315

³⁴⁰ *Lies of Silence* Loc.527

faith devotedly.³⁴¹ He may be characterized as a “lapsed Catholic” since he does not attend Mass except Communion.

5.2.2. Andrea Baxter

Andrea is the Canadian lover of Michael Dillon. She gets a job in London and Andrea and Michael leave together to start a new life. She will work in London for the BBC.³⁴² Andrea is in love with Michael and she is seriously afraid for his safety when they move to London

5.2.3. Moira Kenaan

Moira Kenaan is Michael Dillon’s wife who used to be attractive, but as the time went by, she starts show feel the signs of getting older. She has a proper education to be a teacher. She however dislikes the job and would like to start working in a shop of her friend Peg. She suffers from bulimia,³⁴³ which might be a sing of her psyche to somehow cope with getting older. When ambushed by IRA, she tries to escape and speaks her negative opinions about them out loud.

Moira is slowly destroyed by knowing that her husband is unfaithful to her Nevertheless she gets motivated in a courageous way after surviving the IRA ambush to speak publicly and openly to the media with a goal of fighting against both the IRA and UDA terrorists.

5.3. The Image of the Troubles in *Lies of Silence*

“Graffit-fouled barricaded slums where the city’s Protestant and Catholic poor confronted each other, year in and year out, in a stasis of hatred, fear and mistrust.”³⁴⁴

The preceding text is a description of a part of Belfast which illustrates the feeling of hopelessness and the static feeling of the Troubles situation, Moore shows that people have no way out of it. As Moira Dillon puts it.

“If there was a vote tomorrow among the Catholics in Northern Ireland you wouldn’t get five per cent of it. You’re just a bunch of crooks, IRA or UDA, Protestants or Catholics, you’re all in the same business. Racketeers, the bunch of you.”³⁴⁵

³⁴¹ *Lies of Silence* Loc.1444

³⁴² *Lies of Silence* Loc.2710

³⁴³ *Lies of Silence* Loc.298

³⁴⁴ *Lies of Silence* Loc.173

³⁴⁵ *Lies of Silence* Loc.676

Never afraid of getting into the conflict with the kidnappers who held her and Michael in their house during the night, Moira represents the point of view of an ordinary Belfast person who is not keen on violence based on religion. She does not speak against one side of the conflict while supporting the other side, Rather she speaks against the conflict itself. She adds, that *“if the Catholics here stopped hating the Prods, where would the IRA be?”*³⁴⁶ She hereby implies, that peace might not be the IRA’s ultimate goal, because the only thing that could defeat both the IRA and UDA is simply religious understanding of the other’s point of view on Christianity.

*„If Moira and I are killed now it will be for nothing. We will die and be part of that endless mindless chain of killings.”*³⁴⁷ Michael’s thought shows nonpartisan and non-sectarian point of view on the situation, the point of view of those being trapped in the middle of religious fanatics, who is able to see the futility of the current situation.

The characters impersonating the moderate protestant is Mr. Harbinson. *“Mr. Harbinson would never fight a civil war to prevent Ulster from becoming a part of the Irish Republic, or take up arms to affirm his status as a citizen of the United Kingdom. Mr. Harbinson, like ninety percent of the people of Ulster, Catholic and Protestant, just wanted to get on with his life without any interference from men in woolen masks.”*³⁴⁸ Brian Moore shows that Protestants and Catholics do not directly mean that he would approve of the violent attack of people believing in the “other” religion.

When Michael visits Moira and her parents, there a notion of the Long Kesh prison while talking about *“a place where the false martyrdom of IRA hunger strikers had come to world attention”*³⁴⁹ Brian Moore here brilliantly highlights the fact, that members of IRA were able to starve themselves and suffer to the death for their cause.

Another ordinary person, a TV staff member accompanying Michael agrees with Moira and says: *“She’s dead right, you know. Somebody has to speak up. I mean*

³⁴⁶ *Lies of Silence* Loc.685

³⁴⁷ *Lies of Silence* Loc.717

³⁴⁸ *Lies of Silence* Loc.772

³⁴⁹ *Lies of Silence* Loc.1485

against both sides—the UDA as well. Them and the IRA, there’s no difference if you ask me.”³⁵⁰

Ordinary Belfast residents are described by the end of a novel agreeing with Michael’s mother’s opinion: to all of them Ulster

„was a separate place, a place left behind when Ireland formed itself into a small nation-state with its own flag, its own currency, its government, police and army, its delegates to international councils, its peacekeeping forces in the Middle East, its street signs and official documents in a language few people understood. In fifty years of separation, North and South had become alien to each other as never in the centuries of English rule. The Southern Irish did not brood on Ulster’s troubles. They had troubles of their own. The North was another country, ruled by Britain.”³⁵¹

5.4. Till death do us part - Responsibility for the woman he no longer loves?

An interesting situation arises when Michael decides to report a bomb to police by telephone. He thinks that the IRA is holding his wife, who he is about to leave her for a younger woman. The act of calling police might be motivated by two factors. The first one is to save the lives of people in a hotel. However, the second point of view is much darker. Would he be capable of doing the same thing if Andrea, the woman he really loves was being held by the IRA? It is of course a hypothetical question, but the whole situation could be read that he was able to sacrifice his older wife, whom he was about to leave anyways, in order to save a lot of innocent people in the hotel.

The non-existent love of Michael’s for Moira is described later in the plot: *„His love for Moira, he now knew, had not been love but a form of self-deceit.*”³⁵² It therefore must have been more than Moira getting older.

However, Moira is also conscious of the idea, that Michael wanted to use to situation to untie himself from her by calling the police, while thinking that the IRA might kill her. She says it directly when she sees Michael eye to eye for the last time.: *“You’re a liar. You wanted me dead.*”³⁵³ Michael replies that he did not.

³⁵⁰ *Lies of Silence* Loc.1967

³⁵¹ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2540

³⁵² *Lies of Silence* Loc.1733

³⁵³ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2185

There is however no direct clue saying, that Michael called primarily to kill his wife: it is intentionally left open by Brian Moore.

5.5. Saving Reverend Pottinger

By reporting the bomb Michael saves the life of Reverend Alun Pottinger and his audience. The irony is an that he is a violent man himself “*the Reverend Alun Pottinger, the “mad dog of Protestant Ulster,” as his enemies called him, going in to a breakfast for his overseas supporters, a breakfast at which he would deliver his usual sermon of religious hatred.*”³⁵⁴

By saving other innocent people he helped to save a radical from the other side of the conflict. What would be the scenario of the Troubles if Pottinger had died was really just a matter of speculation. Michael saves the Protestant radical not because of his own belief but because of the many other innocent people and Pottinger could be just happy that so many innocent people such as staff of the hotel appeared around him.

5.6. Lies of Silence

*“the lies of silence from those in Westminster who did not want to face the injustices of Ulster’s status quo.”*³⁵⁵

Brian Moore criticizes the approach of the British government. The Irish island is far away from the concerns of the government in London! Its inactivity regarding the ordinary Ulster inhabitants left in the middle of two murdering groups. The British government shows little interest in the Irish fight for “higher” reasons, while ordinary human beings pay the highest price – price of their lives.

5.7. “The penalty we pay for doing the Lord’s work”³⁵⁶

Even though it might seem, that the IRA is playing the role of the “evil one” throughout the plot, Moore nicely shows the UDA and Protestant side in the same light as the IRA. In the dialogue between Michael and a supporter of Reverend Pottinger. When Michael is asked about his opinion on IRA: “*I gather you have no*

³⁵⁴ *Lies of Silence* Loc.994

³⁵⁵ *Lies of Silence* Loc.778

³⁵⁶ *Lies of Silence* Loc.1454

high opinion of the IRA, Mr. Dillon?"³⁵⁷ He answers: "No. Nor of Dr. Pottinger either."³⁵⁸

The Protestant's fanaticism is same like the Catholic one. "Mr. Dillon, we have many enemies. That is the penalty we pay for doing the Lord's work and speaking up for the people of Ulster."³⁵⁹ This quote indicates the blindness and the feeling that they are morally right to be violent, and the quote could just as easily be inserted into the mouth of an IRA member and would not seem inappropriate at all, despite IRA and UDA having direct goals for their methods and the way of thinking are quite the same.

5.8. Moira Kenaan –a voice for the silent majority?

Moira plays the role of someone silent majority of society with one difference – she refuses to be silent. She finds a self-fulfilment in contesting the IRA probably because she lost her own husband and the risky but brave behaviour projects her frustrations. Brian Moore however does make a moralistically positive action out of what she is doing with the media. He brilliantly highlights the fear of Michael, who is afraid for himself, because he saw Kev without the mask. Michael is playing mirror to their actions, when he asks her whether she wants to be a martyr.³⁶⁰ She answers: "I thought you were the one who wanted to make a martyr of me?"³⁶¹ and by this again directs the attention to the question about whether Michael wanted to intentionally hurt her when he called the police when she might have been murdered by the IRA as a consequence.

Moira proclaims that "it's time for ordinary people to stand up to the IRA and get rid of them."³⁶² and she becomes more and more entrapped by the idea of directly fighting the IRA.³⁶³ Michael tries to change her mind over the telephone by saying: "For goodness sake, you can't make a career out of that. Besides, you're not political, you never were."³⁶⁴ However, Moira senses the huge support from the Irish people, who are really sick and tired of the violence. Michael brings the last

³⁵⁷ *Lies of Silence* Loc.1452

³⁵⁸ *Lies of Silence* Loc.1452

³⁵⁹ *Lies of Silence* Loc.1454

³⁶⁰ *Lies of Silence* Loc.1997

³⁶¹ *Lies of Silence* Loc.1998

³⁶² *Lies of Silence* Loc.2269

³⁶³ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2368

³⁶⁴ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2369

argument into the discussion saying, that “*Getting rid of the IRA—even if you could do it—won’t solve the problem. The Protestants here are never going to share jobs and power with the Catholics unless they’re forced into it.*”³⁶⁵ Michael shows another point of view, that IRA is not something artificially made, but the product of complicated cohabitation, that has been burning inside people’s minds for quite some time. Furthermore, he is pessimistic about any positive outcome for the Catholic minority, regardless of the stupid actions of the IRA.

5.9. “I have a feeling you don’t remember me”³⁶⁶

This chapter focuses on the characteristics of Father Connolly and the arguments he uses to persuade Michael not to identify Kev.

Father Connolly introduces himself as someone Michael should remember, however he does not. Michael is shocked, that Father Connolly knows, that he is able to identify Kev that is why Michael logically asks the question how he got to this information. Father Connolly replies: “*I don’t know,*” *the priest said. “Maybe not. Anyway, I heard it somewhere. Or maybe it was the police that said it, when they came to see her.*”³⁶⁷ The fact is that the police informed the IRA that Michael could identify Kev and IRA uses the Catholic Church to protect its members from any successful court prosecution. He starts to talk about Kev’s mother. Furthermore, Father Connolly states, that “*There is injustice here. Discrimination against Catholics is a terrible thing. These kids see that.*”³⁶⁸ Michael responds, that injustice against Catholics does not justify entering someone’s house and planting bombs in the hotels to kill innocent people. Father Connolly continues his argumentation: “*He’s not a murderer or a criminal. Maybe he’s misguided, I’ll grant you that.*”³⁶⁹ By the end of the conversation Father Connolly threatens Michael with the words: “*But, considering the—political climate here ... well, sometimes it’s not a good idea to get too involved. You know what I mean.*”³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2372

³⁶⁶ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2448

³⁶⁷ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2471

³⁶⁸ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2484

³⁶⁹ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2490

³⁷⁰ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2502

Father Connolly is sympathising and defending the criminal IRA actions. However, that question he had risen is also important. How easy is it to manipulate a young Catholic person, when they are told in Catholic schools to “*die for Ireland.*”³⁷¹ During the interview Michael reminds Father Connolly the Fifth Commandment – “*Thou shalt not kill,*”³⁷² something the Catholic Church supporting the IRA had forgotten about within their own Christian faith. Likewise it was just as the Protestants support the violent actions of the UDA, of course.

Father Connolly says, that he would not like to see Michael killed.³⁷³ Father Connolly meets Michael once again in London. Father Connolly tries to make an argument: “*Let’s not have any more killing, Mike.*”³⁷⁴ However Michael replies, that “*if I don’t testify against your nephew and his friends, I’ll be letting them free to do more killing, won’t I?*”³⁷⁵ In the end Father Connolly again leaves with Michael’s conviction, that he will testify in court against his nephew Kev and that Kev will be imprisoned.

5.10. “It’s the right thing to do.”³⁷⁶

In deciding whether to testify or not Brian Moore shows Michael’s dilemma of ordinary persons between doing the morally good thing and being careful because of the real danger of being attacked by violent the extremist groups from both sides of the conflict.

After the final meeting with Father Connolly, it seems like Michael might decide to testify, for he even justifies it: „*He had stopped them blowing up the Clarence and killing innocent people. Now, he was going to stop them again.*”³⁷⁷ and about the moral sensibility that he must, because “*it’s the right thing to do.*”³⁷⁸

In the end he is convinced by Andrea not to testify. Moore’s irony is that shortly after he has decided not to testify, he is murdered by IRA killers because they knew that he had seen Kev’s face and was a treat to their organization.

³⁷¹ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2481

³⁷² *Lies of Silence* Loc.2485

³⁷³ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2834

³⁷⁴ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2986

³⁷⁵ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2988

³⁷⁶ *Lies of Silence* Loc.3012

³⁷⁷ *Lies of Silence* Loc.2998

³⁷⁸ *Lies of Silence* Loc.3012

6. *Brian Moore*

6.1. Biography

Brian Moore (1921 – 1999) was Belfast born, who left Ireland to serve in British Intelligence Service during WWII. He died in Malibu, California with triple citizenship including Canadian and U.S American.³⁷⁹ He lived in Canada and become a news reported and prominent and respected writer. He has been critical to politics, religion and other hot topic of social life.³⁸⁰ Interesting is also his name which connects Protestant name Moore and a Catholic surname Brian.³⁸¹ He was fluent in Irish, English and French. He was raised a strict Catholic and had priests and nuns in his immediate family.

*“In adulthood, neither a Catholic nor Protestant, Nationalist nor Unionist, Gaelic nor anglophile”*³⁸² Moore spent some time over a decade in Canada. Moore the author of more than 20 novels, some of which he has written under a pseudonyms of Bernard Mara or Michael Bryan.³⁸³ *Lies of Silence* belongs to his later mature novels.

*“I wanted to write a book, that people who weren’t interested in Northern Ireland would read”*³⁸⁴ Brian Moore wrote about the novel *Lies of Silence*. *“...because most of the books being written about Northern Ireland are now being written by specialists, because most of the world is tired of it”*³⁸⁵. He

³⁷⁹ CRAIG, Patricia. *Brian Moore A biography*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002. ISBN 0747560048. Introduction

³⁸⁰ CRAIG, Patricia. *Brian Moore A biography*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002. ISBN 0747560048. Introduction

³⁸¹ SAMPSON, Denis. *Brian Moore The Chameleon Novelist*. Dublin: Marino Books, 1998. ISBN 1-86023-078-4. P 9

³⁸² SAMPSON, Denis. *Brian Moore The Chameleon Novelist*. Dublin: Marino Books, 1998. ISBN 1-86023-078-4. 9

³⁸³ SAMPSON, Denis. *Brian Moore The Chameleon Novelist*. Dublin: Marino Books, 1998. ISBN 1-86023-078-4. – the novels of Brian Moore.

³⁸⁴ SAMPSON, Denis. *Brian Moore The Chameleon Novelist*. Dublin: Marino Books, 1998. ISBN 1-86023-078-4. 276

³⁸⁵ SAMPSON, Denis. *Brian Moore The Chameleon Novelist*. Dublin: Marino Books, 1998. ISBN 1-86023-078-4. 276

simply wanted to write an easy readable yet deep novel about a single incident during the Troubles. In which he brilliantly succeeded.

The history behind the idea of the novel's plot could be traced back to July 1987, when Moore had experienced a bomb alarm in the middle of the night in Belfast. He was watching the tourist bus and thinking how would it be, if the bomb really exploded, but the tourist did not know who killed them.³⁸⁶

The connection with reality continues as the person of the Reverend Pottinger is an Ian Paisley looklike.³⁸⁷ The inspiration is clear. To the main idea of the novel Brian Moore states: "*I'm just trying to make a small point – the point that in Ireland the extremist have taken over, on both sides, and the middle has completely fallen apart – and the great silent majority, the middle people, have got to rally themselves and once again have a voice.*"³⁸⁸

6.2. Lies of Silence in reviews

A same review worth quoting and that reflect the common view of the critics is – "*A good, quick, thought – provoking novel recommended for general readers,*"³⁸⁹ which supports Moore's intention quoted in the previous chapter about writing „*a book, that people who weren't interested in Northern Ireland would read.*"³⁹⁰ Another review highlights that the plot of the novel takes place in only four days.³⁹¹ The famous Catholic English author Graham Greene wrote, that he was very moved by the novel.³⁹²

³⁸⁶ SAMPSON, Denis. *Brian Moore The Chameleon Novelist*. Dublin: Marino Books, 1998. ISBN 1-86023-078-4. 276

³⁸⁷ CRAIG, Patricia. *Brian Moore A biography*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002. ISBN 0747560048. p 248

³⁸⁸ CRAIG, Patricia. *Brian Moore A biography*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002. ISBN 0747560048. p 249

³⁸⁹ Thompson, L. 1990. "Book Reviews: Fiction." *Library Journal* 115 (14): 258. <http://search.ebscohost.com.arl.cbvk.cz:8080/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=9010010895&lang=cs&site=ehost-live>.

³⁹⁰ Modra 276

³⁹¹ Rawlinson, Nora, and Barbara Hoffert. 1990. "Prepub Alert." *Library Journal* 115 (7): 74–77. <http://search.ebscohost.com.arl.cbvk.cz:8080/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=14856359&lang=cs&site=ehost-live>.

³⁹² CRAIG, Patricia. *Brian Moore A biography*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002. ISBN 0747560048. p 249250

However, there are also some reviews, which are not as positive. It criticizes the novel for being too much about the victim of “*northern reticence*.”³⁹³ On the other hand Peter S. Prescott in his review states that Moore’s „*business is to turn the screws, and this he does most effectively*”³⁹⁴ he adds that “*Moore's plots may involve murder, madness, even torture, but the dilemmas on which they turn are always ethical*.”³⁹⁵ Prescott even compares Moore to Graham Greene.

³⁹³ Gromer, C. 1991. “A Land of Password.” *Commonweal* 118 (1): 24. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=9102041023&lang=cs&site=eds-live>.

³⁹⁴ Prescott, P.S. 1990. “Unbearable Choices.” *Newsweek* 116 (12): 59. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=9009171976&lang=cs&site=eds-live>.

³⁹⁵ Prescott, P.S. 1990. “Unbearable Choices.” *Newsweek* 116 (12): 59. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=9009171976&lang=cs&site=eds-live>.

7. Bernard MacLaverty and Brian Moore

Comparing two authors of the novels on which is this thesis focused, both of them despite the different writing style and point of view on the Troubles are carrying similar themes including a message of peace.

Bernard MacLaverty is a Northern Irish specialist. *Cal* requires from the reader a higher level of understanding of the situation because only for such a reader are the paradoxes visible and clear. On the other hand, *Lamb* is a story full of Christian symbols and paradoxes showing where “true faith and love” can lead.

On the other side, Brian Moore’s up-to-date, easy to read and hard to contemplate thriller is more accessible for an average reader who might be a bit stuck with MacLaverty’s assumption that he or she perfectly understood the background history behind the conflict represented in the novel. Moore is not a specialist on Northern Ireland: his novel take place also in Poland, France, North Africa, Canada, the Caribbean and U.S.A.

The authors chose different ways and maybe targeted different types of reader, nevertheless all three novels offer the message for less fanaticism and more peace.

8. Conclusion

The three novels under examination deal from different perspectives with Northern Irish problematics. *Lamb* which focuses on the Catholic Church being corrupt and plays with many symbols of Christianity and generally symbolisms of Western society standing on Christian antique roots. *Cal* deals with the problematics of personal involvement in the Troubles and all the unpredictable consequences arising from that involvement. *Lies of Silence* focuses on the occupation of the main protagonist whose wife indirectly causing his death, when ironically she accused him of possibility indirectly causing her death.

The question that appears is what would the life of all the protagonists be like, if they were living in the country, that is not torn apart by the sectarian violence over the course of thirty years.

What both MacLaverty and Moore do is personalize the Troubles. In *Lamb* the Troubles are playing a background role. However, they play a part of the identity of the both protagonists.

In *Cal* the main protagonist is a coward, who is easily manipulated because of his own weak will and thereby dragged into the war activities. He assists in killing the husband of a woman he later sleeps with. Ten years older than Cal, Marcella is an Italian Catholic and Cal is also a Catholic. Cal actually hides at Morton's farm from the violent world before his arrest for murder.

In *Lies of Silence* Michael pays the highest price for the risky actions of his wife, whom he no longer loves. Moira decides to speak out against the sectarian violence, directly putting Michael into grave danger. She finds a new sense of life, after being left by her husband for a younger woman. Unlike Cal, Michael stays away from participating in the Troubles directly. However, Michael's work at the hotel drives him into the stream of actions he can no longer control. Ironically, who indirectly kills Michael is his wife, because she speaks out publicly on TV against the sectarian violence.

All three novels are also based on absurd personal situations: from an artificial father-son relationship (Michael and Owen are not a father and a son) in *Lamb* to the relationship between an Italian Catholic widow and much younger Irish Catholic in *Cal*, and the husband, who is about to divorce his wife and escape with his younger love to London in *Lies of Silence*. London, however, cannot protect Michael Dillon from being hunted down by the IRA, his wife, whom he left speaks out against the violence thereby and indirectly causes his death which she had ironically accused him of doing.

Personalization of the Troubles and absurdity are the approaches by which authors of all three novels attract their readers' attention in order to individualize how the island was being torn apart in the Civil War in Northern Ireland.

Stories are only interesting when they contain drama. All the three novels completely fulfil this criterion. Of course, the world would be a better place if there had never been any Troubles. However, the Northern Irish Civil War a part of Irish identity. The three novels successfully portrait the hopelessness of the reality and its possible implications for the different kinds of characters.

This thesis tries to portrait how the sectarian violence of Civil War can make the worst out of life for ordinary people and how their future is uncertain while the violence goes on and on. This thesis should be dedicated to everyone who takes an action towards peace.

9. Resumé

Cílem práce bylo zachytit bezmoc, které jsou „obyčejní“ lidé vystaveni denně. Ať už se jedná o protagonistu knihy *Lamb*, který spolu s Owenem Kanem utíká před nespravedlností a lepší budoucností a zjišťuje, že vinou okolností nic jako lepší budoucnost neexistuje. Nebo o Cala, který se, ač sám je zbabělec, stane součástí konfliktu a z nezamýšlených důsledků svých činů po většinu děje profituje. Naopak protagonista posledního analyzovaného románu žije zdánlivě mimo konflikt, ale díky shodě náhod před ním nemá šanci utéci, a nakonec se mu stane osudným.

Mezi metody, které oba dva autoři využívají, patří „zosobnění“ konfliktu na jednotlivé postavy a rovněž absurdita, kdy Cal vybuduje vztah se starší vdovou od muže, kterého pomáhal zavraždit. Michael Lamb se v románu *Lamb* snaží směrem k Owenu Kaneovi vybudovat vztah jako otec a se synem, i když nejsou biologicky příbuzní. Celý pokus skončí tím, že Michael Owena zabije. V románu *Lies of Silence* se Michael Dillon dostane do ohrožení, protože zná totožnost člena IRA. Je obětí toho, že jeho manželka, kterou opouští, se rozhodne veřejně vystoupit proti násilí v Severním Irsku a nepřímo ho tak zavraždí. Smrt si Michaela najde i v Londýně, kam odešel za svojí mladší milenkou.

Ve své práci jsem se snažil zachytit to, jak konflikt postupně ničí osoby v něm zapojené, nebo jen ty, kteří se nacházejí na místě, kde zrovna probíhá a ve výsledku nepřináší nic jiného než zničené životy, slzy a utrpení.

To co je pro mne absolutně nepochopitelné je fakt, jak se mohou dvě odnože křesťanství navzájem vraždit, protože přikázání zakazující zabití přece platí jak pro protestanty, tak pro katolíky. Zejména román *Lamb* ukazuje, jak je cesta do pekla dlážděna dobrými úmysly. Všechny tři romány rovněž pracují s motivem nemožnosti předvídat své vlastní činy a už vůbec ne reakce okolí na ně.

Co se vzniku práce týká, tak proces aktivního psaní probíhal z velké části během krize kolem pandemie covid-19, který si vyžádal uzavření jak univerzit a vysokých škol, tak všech ostatních vzdělávacích institucí. Rozhodl jsem se tedy tuto neplánovanou pauzu věnovat intenzivnější přípravě diplomové práce. Pracoval jsem tedy kromě knih, které jsem měl již doma zakoupeny hlavně s elektronickým zdroji.

Práce s elektronickými verzemi knih byla pro mě výzvou. Nicméně kromě jiného způsobu odkazování na konkrétní stránky části textu jsem si na ni rychle zvykl, přesto jsem se ale velmi těšil na možnost opět fyzicky vstoupit do knihovny a mít opět v ruce papírovou knihu.

Jsem velmi rád, že jsem na své práci mohl spolupracovat s PhDr. Christopherem Koyem M.A., Ph.D., se kterým jsem i v době „koronakrize“ díky moderním technologiím intenzivně konzultovali. Díky tomu nenastala přestávka v tvůrčím procesu. Chtěl bych mu proto touto cestou ještě jednou poděkovat.

Jestli bych měl svoji práci někomu věnovat, tak - stejně jako autoři knih, jimiž se zabývám - všem, kteří se nejenom v Severním Irsku, ale všude na světě aktivně zasazují o mír a pochopení mezi lidmi místo rozsévání nenávisti.

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