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*Keywords:* *exile, abandonment, motherhood, cultural and social discrimination.*

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# The Sense of Exile and Abandonment in William Trevor's Novel, Felicia's Journey

Navid Salehi Babamiri[α] & Rozhin Asadyan[σ]

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## I. Introduction

During the history cultural and social discrimination has made lots of problems for women. Also lack of a good mother can make this problem double. Mothers as good supporters, especially for girls, can impede any disasters that come to their children. One of the biggest problems that children suffer is the sense of exile. It causes as the child has no mother to make him familiar with values of life, thus, she feels dislocated and she thinks that she has no sense of belonging.

The present study sheds lights on the characters that how they have been afflicted with lots of the problems and how they try to solve or at least deal with them. Although Felicia, as the main character, tries hard but she fails as she has no on as her supporter. She is alone and till the end of the novel she suffers from her sense of exile.

## II. Statement of the Problem

William Trevor's novel, Felicia's journey, acts as a justification for loneliness of members. The members that cannot accustom themselves to their environment and the people who are around and if they try to fix themselves up with them, they will fail The term is commonly but negatively used to associate with race. It means that the novel focuses on Trevor's special concern with characters, specially, the Irish women and exile that she receives both in hands of her family and her people who are around and somehow they try to bash her life. The clime that she was born and the clime she wants to be also provide her the disastrous loneliness that make her life as a hell.

Therefore, the present study conducts an investigation into the influence of people and environment on the characters, especially, the young girl whose life, identity and her reputation as a girl has been smirched. And although in the course of novel her progress is vividly shown in different spaces that she wants to adjust, it comes to nothing as it leads only to her marginalization in both Irish and England society.

## III. Review of Literature

Michael Parker (2013), believes that the novel shows a period of momentous change in the relationships between Ireland and Britain. It reflects the individuals' bad fate in the political, economic, and cultural narratives and histories of their places of origin. He also assumes that the novel depicts character's lack of prospects and quality of her life stand as an indictment of successive Irish governments since Independence, all of which failed to provide adequate employment and hope for generations of their young. He, furthermore, goes on and believes that in Trevor's novels, as in as in Dickens's fictions, it is frequently the young that have borne most, the traumatic experiences in childhood scarring the rest of their lives (p. 98-99). Clearly, these great shocks are shown in the character of the young girl that she is depicted as a place which is alone and also refers to her character that she cannot accustom herself to any conditions since they are her enemies and to her final decision, she must take the life of loneliness.

Much in the same way Constanza Del Río-Álvaro (2007), has cited in his work that Dolores Mackenna says that the writer of the novel is from Ireland which "is a rural and small town, a bleak place where people endure life rather than live it; a place of loneliness, frustration and undramatic suffering. Timeless, except in its details, its moral climate remains constant whether its people live in the 1940s or the 1990s" (p. 2). Constanza believes that Trevor in his work uses naturalistic and realistic external detail as a tool to illuminate psychological and ethical scenarios and write "of human situations, in which characters move towards a revelation or epiphany which is moral, spiritual or social"(p. 3), and to a great extent, he pinpoints on

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keywords in his work as "silence," "exile," and "cunning" that build his authorial strategies.

According to Denis Sampson Since so many of Trevor's characters are consciously or unconsciously engaged in "cover up," in preserving "secrets," it would seem that the artist's gaze is fixed on that parental state of endurance and painful honesty. The circumstances, in which that marriage survived, during Trevor's formation, were the bleak economic and cultural conditions of provincial Ireland in the thirties and forties; the joyless truth of the marriage mirrored the repressed, unadorned life of the time. He goes on and recapitulates the Trevor's characters by revealing their inner lives in a plain, endlessly nuanced and ambiguous style, and this may also reflect an aspect of the wider culture absorbed in childhood.

Ellen McWilliams (2010), draws on historical and social scientific studies of Irish women and emigration as a means of properly situating Trevor's novel in relation to larger discourses of migration in an Irish context. He believes that the novel demonstrates a keen sensitivity to the very real social and cultural conditions that underpinned the migration of Irish women from Ireland to England in the 1980s and early 1990s. Furthermore, he believes that the novel draws on feminist theoretical and historical work on domestic space, and examine the interaction of space and history in two key sites of experience in the novel: Felicia's father's house – a mausoleum of the Irish political past – and the 'Englishman's castle' of the murderous Mr Hilditch who, after a chance encounter, plots to ensnare Felicia. It will look, in detail, at how domestic interiors in the novel reflect larger political and historical discourses and provide a frame of reference for the dilemmas faced by Felicia as an Irish woman at home and in England.

In this way he cites from Mary Fitzgerald-Hoyt, "Throughout his career, William Trevor has written sympathetically of women who, despite their varied national and economic backgrounds, suffer the injustice of living in male dominated societies. Women's names provide the titles for several of his novels and many of his short stories; women characters function as the central intelligence in many other works.

## IV. Outline

Novelist and short-story writer William Trevor was born in Mitchels town, County Cork, in the Republic of Ireland on 24 May 1928. During his early life due to his father's work, he moved to different places and as a result of that he attended variety of schools as St. Columba's College. While he was spending his time there, he became familiar with Oisin Kelly who, later, learnt him about art and the way of becoming an artist. In 1954 he migrated to England, and this sense of migration changed his mood and made him prepared for what would have to come over him. During this time his ability in writing bloomed that he published lots of books. By publishing these books he got not only awards and high prizes but also he found this capability to amaze his critics by mastering a kind of form which was uncanny. Thus through his special techniques hecould penetrate in to the mind of his characters and understood their motivations and their fears.

Although many of Trevor's early works were set in rundown, post-second-world-war London, his other works during the mid-1970s focus on his native Ireland, particularly the tensions between the Anglo-Irish gentry and the Catholic population. He was a moralist, as a result he possessed a dry wit and a sense of macabre and he always felt sorry and sympathy for the suffering that he had created in his characters. In all of his works he divides the people in to two groups, the predators and prey. He also showed that the human condition is marked by secrecy, shame, deceit, blindness and cruelty, and that evil not only exists but also can be understood. Two important subjects in his mind, which are also shown in his books and involves around the lives of women, are "*sexuality," and "loneliness."* He believes that women are victimized and they must live in dour conditions. In his new novel, "Felicia's Journey," which won the 1994 Sunday Express Book of the Year Award in Britain, he plays a deceptively simple variation on these themes. In the process he creates a subtle, plausible and infinitely pathetic portrait of a monster.

"Felicia's Journey" is about an unmarried Irish girl, adrift and friendless in the industrial English Midlands. Felicia has crossed the Irish Sea to search for the young man who made her pregnant before he disappeared. With her possessions stuffed into two shopping bags and her heart filled with naive confidence in the empty promises of the rogue who seduced her, she presents an enticing prospect both for those who would save her and those who would destroy her. With every passing day her tiny store of money diminishes, and the fetus grows in her womb. She trudges about a landscape of grim industrial parks, knowing only that the man she loves works in the storeroom of a lawn mower factory. As her hopes die, she becomes increasingly vulnerable. She is a weakling, limping lamely behind the herd; it must be only a matter of time before some She encounters Mr. Hilditch. Mr. Hilditch is a large, genial, unmarried middle-aged man who hungry creature picks her off thinks and talks in platitudes and takes great satisfaction in his job as catering manager of a factory. Mr. Hilditch is a man of stultifying banality, respectability and mediocrity who spends his Sunday afternoons visiting stately homes and engaging strangers in the sort of mindless chat.

He is a kind of guy who directs his attention on the hapless and miserable Felicia. Mr. Hilditch has obviously done this sort of thing before, since he doesn't try to befriend the girl; he is much too cautious to risk frightening her off. Instead he allows her to glimpse the



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possibility that he might help her, and then, secure in the knowledge that sooner or later she will come to him, he waits. What she's unaware of, and the reader is, is that Hilditch's kindness comes with an enormous cost. It is not clear what the cost will be, but it's fairly certain that it will be awful. The truth is that Hilditch has created what he calls his "memory Lane," a collection of dead girls that were once as dependent on him as Felicia. When one of his dependents wants to leave him, he kills her to keep he rwith him. By figuring him out before he realizes, Felicia manages to escape Hilditch. During her time with him, she also befriended people at the local Salvation Army who know that Hilditch was a friend of hers. He is so terrified of being discovered, that he kills himself. Because she manages to escape Hilditch, this feels like it might be kind of an upbeat ending for Felicia, but it's really not. Out of necessity, her escape means she has nothing but the clothes on her back. Because she has no money, she winds up living on the streets and begging for a living.

## V. Analysis

The novel Felicia's journey by Trevor, which is considered as the most significant among his other ones, forebodes the injustice and loneliness that women in every society must tolerate.

Furthermore, the writer of the book goes on and tries to reveal that the women's condition also results from both cultural and social condition, which gives the reader awareness about the women, especially Felicia, who has afflicted in a bad condition even during her own time.

The first element which has to be elucidated on is the *"lost motherhood"*. As it has been quoted in Babamiri's article (2014), Morrison, the black writer, believes that the mother should provide preservation, nurturance, cultural bearing, and healing which are figured out as mother's duty all are essential for the empowerment of children. The challenge for Morrison's mothers therefore, is not how to combine motherhood and work, but rather how, in the face of racism and sexism, to best provide the "*Motherwork"* both in and outside the home. Morrison believes that what a mother can do is to provide a Homeplace for her children, because it heals many of the wounds inflicted by racist domination. However, since the mothers are absent, because they have some social problems as divorce, death, and incarceration they cannot nurture their children as possible as they can.

From the beginning of the novel it has been clear that Felecia lives in her own world. She has the sense of reclusiveness and loneliness, since she has no mother to teach her the way of life. In other words, her mother is absent so she is deprived of knowing about the value of life. Her father is also not so useful in bringing her up. Thus during the time that she was at home, the environment of the house was not so warm to her so it provided another step for her failure. As Bell Hooks believes, "home place is the one site where on faces humanization and at the same time resists…" (1). Thus home provides not only individual identity but also the way of behaving with others.

Since she is alone, she needs somebody to comfort her and to her final decision she finds a boyfriend, but unfortunately their relationship ends up in his cheating. She becomes pregnant and now her boyfriend is away. Now as a fallen woman, she wants to go and find him. But during her trip, she again comes across another person, Mr. Hilditch, a man that he has no good relationship with other women. He is a kind of sinister guy who wants to destroy her life more than her boyfriend.

All of the characters of this novel somehow suffer the sense of loneliness. Even Mr. Hilditch is a person who lives alone and he takes pleasure in killing the women. During his childhood his mother didn't pay attention to him and as a grown-up boy, he doesn't know how to behave others. At first he wants to spell over this girl to bring her to his house then decides to kill her but suddenly he repents and wants to find a companion to himself. When he finally knows that she is pregnant, he let her go.

Till the end of the novel she goes on searching her boyfriend but when she knows that she cannot find him, first of all she aborts her child because she knows that if she gives birth to her child, she may not be successful in bringing her up as once her mother couldn't do. Second if she comes to this world, she, like Felecia, has no identity as she has to go from one place to other places to find a calm place for living. Therefore, at the end of the novel she decides to abort her child and spends her life as a beggar.

## VI. Conclusion

The William Trevor's novel, Felicia's journey shows the disastrous life of different characters, especially, the young girl who has no mother and from the beginning of her life she suffers. She lives with her father but because she also doesn't get any support from him she has to deal with lots of problems. One of these problems is the sense of exile and abandonment. She is pregnant, dislocated and has no identity. Finally these problems leave her in the world of isolation which it equals with her failure.

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