

The Hermeneutics of Place: A Structuralist Reading of William Trevor's *The Silence in the Garden*

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Abstract:

Focusing on 'Carriglas' in William Trevor's novel, The Silence in the Garden (1988), the research aims at investigating the role of 'place' as a hermeneutical tool of literary analysis. It works within a structuralist framework to trace 'Carriglas' as a place which gathers all the characters and from which spring all the events in the novel. It, thus, serves as a structuralist link around which all the novel is centered. The research gets from discussing the hermeneutics of place in the novel heading a step forward to prove place as a hermeneutical means in itself. This brings into discussion the theme of the 'Big House' in Irish literature as a predominant distinctive Irish element in the novel. Attempting at centralizing 'place', the research branches into two levels. The first level goes into proving the text to be place-oriented. The second level works through assigning 'place' the characteristics of a 'text', showing how 'place' is itself textualized in the novel. The narrative structure is also brought under spot in a way that highlights the literary significance of 'Carriglas' as a haunting element in the text. Bringing the two levels together, place is clearly shown to be both a theme as well a literary tool used by Trevor to address the long strife between the Irish and the English. Rolling down the two levels, upon which the discussion of 'place' in Trevor's novel is based, one finds that place proves to have a hermeneutical literary function that is rendered crucial for understanding the novel itself.

Key Words:

Hermeneutics of place- Big House- William Trevor- Silence in the Garden- structuralism- Textualizing Place- silence

This research is held to investigate the role that place plays in William Trevor's novel *The Silence in the Garden* (1988). Within the framework of structuralism, the research works on two main levels. The first level is directly concerned with how the text is proved place-oriented while the second level is related to investigate how the place is textualized. The first level works on finding the significance of the place for the structural unity of the text. 'Carriglas', the Rollestons' house in the novel, is brought under spot for literary analysis to prove how much it serves as a structural tie that links all the characters and events of the novel together. This necessitates approaching the theme of the Big House as a recurrent theme that characterizes Irish literature in general and Trevor's novels in particular. This Big House theme lends the novel a distinguished sense of

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Irishness since it throws light on the long historical strife between Ireland and England. Within this framework, the idea of the place answering back an inherited sin is thoroughly considered. The second level works on tracing the literary features in which the place in the novel is introduced; how it is narrated and converted by Trevor into a literary text. Again, tracing the narrative structure is another tool used to prove how 'Carriglas' unifies the novel serving as an external link that gets everything tight together. Through the two levels, the research ends in proving the Rollestons' house to be a hermeneutical tool of analysis since it is presented by Trevor to represent the core from which springs the readers' understanding of the characters and events of the novel.

William Trevor (1928-2016) is an Irish writer who wrote novels, plays and short stories. He is most renowned for his *Fools of Fortune* (1983), *Felicia's Journey* (1994) and his last novel, *Love and Summer* (2009). He is one of the classical literary spokesmen of Irish literature. Generally speaking, Trevor is interested in the marginalized and oppressed dragging them to the center to speak through. Although most of his works received rewards, *The Silence in the Garden* was never nominated for any, and it has not yet taken its deserved place within the domain of Trevor's literary production. Reading *The Silence in the Garden*, one could not escape this sense of place haunting the whole novel in a way that is never forgettable. In William Trevor's *The Silence in the Garden*, the garden is that of 'Carriglas', the big house of the Rollestons. 'Carriglas' lies at the center of the structural core of the novel since it springs as a spatial point where all characters and events in the novel both converge and diverge. The novel is about the silence that is going to be distracted by the arrival of Sarah Pollexfen to Carriglas, an Irish estate island inhabited by the Rollestons. Also, along the novel, there is the news of constructing a bridge that would link the island to the mainland and thereby breaches the sacred state of solitude that the Rollestons used to enjoy. Throughout the novel, the garden binds all characters and events together, however separate they are, acting as an external link that keeps intact the artistic structural unity of the novel. Actually, the lives of all the characters in the novel seem to be haunted by 'Carriglas' and the secrets it holds. Along the novel, the readers discover that there is one secret from which springs the misfortune of the characters in the novel. This secret unravels to be the act of tantalizing a farmer's child on the hands of the Rollestons' grandchildren. This is delineated later on to be like an original sin from which all miseries arise.

Introducing ‘Carriglas’ as a vital point of departure for any explanation of the novel, one could find that it functions as an external tie that holds tight the whole structure of *The Silence in the Garden*, calling upon structuralism as a ruling approach for analysis. In its core meaning, structuralism describes “the structure of a single literary work to discover how its composition demonstrates the underlying principles of a given structural system” (L. Tyson 209). Since structuralism denotes the existence of a certain recurring structure due to the presence of a specific link, the research works in an attempt to prove ‘Carriglas’ to be such a link. It traces the way the estate island is introduced to constitute a key spacious spot around which all the thematic threads are knotted. It serves to prove that “there is a sense in which the geographical is being used to provide a secure grounding in the increasingly uncertain world of social and cultural theory” (S. Pile 6). Though Carriglas itself does not change, it speaks through the changes it witnesses in the life of the characters it is inhabited by. It does not have a single individual interpretation but a multiple representation through the eyes of all characters involved.

From the very beginning, and starting from the title of the novel i.e. *The Silence in the Garden*, there is a support of the main proposition held in the research. There is an echo, in both nouns of the title ‘silence’ and ‘garden’, of the two important thematic threads that run powerfully in the novel. On one hand, the word ‘silence’ corresponds to the act of telling that is implied in the term ‘hermeneutics’. On the other hand, the word ‘garden’ corresponds to the idea of ‘place’ that extends here to enroll an individualized as well as a national sense. Consequently, the silence in the garden is taken metaphorically to speak out all about the garden itself.

Hermeneutics is a term that is meant to address the act of interpretation. Generally defined, it refers to “any systematic approach to the questions of interpretation as those questions might arise in some particular domain – so one can speak of Talmudic or Biblical hermeneutics or of the hermeneutics of literature or the hermeneutics of social discourse (J. Malpas 1). Hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word ‘hermeneus’ which means ‘translator’ or ‘interpreter’. It is also related to ‘Hermes’, the Greek ‘messenger of the gods’, who used to deliver the orders of gods to humans. The term passed through a long history from the Greeks, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment up to the modern age. In each age, hermeneutics acquired different natures, whether philosophical, religious or literary. Depending on its affiliation, it came to have different rules of application. Hermeneutics, as Peter Szondi puts it, “was once exclusively a system of rules, while today it is exclusively a

theory of understanding” (2). In his essay, “The Development of Hermeneutics”, Dilthey mainly focused on searching for the rules that would govern interpretation as a process in itself. In the modern age, hermeneutics develops to cover both verbal and non-verbal communication, including written language. It proposes that interpretation does not change along ages; what changes is the angle from which people look at the same things depending on their personal perspectives.

Many figures have contributed to shaping the term, but Friedrich Schleiermacher always comes in the forefront since he is referred to by Richard Palmer as “the father of modern hermeneutics as a general study” (97). Schleiermacher was the first to deal with hermeneutics outside the restrictive biblical context to cover any text, in general. He delivered many lectures that were published later (*Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 1838). Together with Friedrich Ast, he contributed to the epoch of romantic hermeneutics. Other figures are: Heidegger (*Being and Time*, 1962) and Wilhelm Dilthey (“The Development of Hermeneutics”, 1900) who introduced hermeneutic phenomenology; Paul Ricoeur (*The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, 1969), Hans-Georg Gadamer (*Truth and Method*, 1989) and Jacques Derrida, who contributed to radical hermeneutics; and Fredric Jameson who contributed to Marxist hermeneutics.

In its core meaning, hermeneutics, as a theory, depends on the concept of the ‘hermeneutic circle’. This concept mainly suggests that the process of interpreting, explaining or even understanding does not stop; it keeps on beginning once it ends, and keeps on changing once it starts. Actually, the word ‘circle’ does not mean that meaning is to be enclosed within one closed curve of interpretation. Instead, it depends on the holistic theory that proposes that meaning comes from regarding a whole more than focusing on parts isolated from each other. In other words, one starts by understanding the parts separately before s/he reaches an understanding of the whole. However, the first meaning of separate parts comes to change after formulating a general meaning of the whole. In such a way, meaning goes continuously in one circle that is never closed but always changing and modified. In this regard, Heidegger writes, “What is decisive is not to get out of the circle, but to get into it in the right way” (195). Going from the parts to the whole, and then from the whole back to the parts is what really builds the paradigm of meaning.

The idea of ‘Carriglas’, being read as place, applies well to a hermeneutic reading since understanding it depends on understanding separate characters and events. In a second step, relating these characters and events back to ‘Carriglas’ brings new meaning that changes the first impression or understanding that readers have first formed. This brings forth what Ast introduced when he proposed that “with the knowledge of one single element the complete whole may be divined and this intuition can, by stepping from element to element, be transformed to understanding and cognition of the whole” (G. Scholtz 65). In a word, ‘Carriglas’ is both the point of departure and the destination for meaning. It serves to guide the readers through their attempt at reaching meaning, thus linking all details together achieving coherence and harmony.

Applying hermeneutics here is mainly concerned with ‘place’, which is centered, in the novel, on the Rollestons’ house, serving to embody Ireland itself. It is a metonym of the peaceful Ireland shaken by the continual Anglo-Irish conflicts. Trevor introduced his readers to a place-oriented novel because “since so much of the best and most deeply felt writing which has come out of Ireland is firmly rooted in one particular locality, it was wise of William Trevor to make his book an anthology of prose and poetry of place, linked by a commentary of his own.” (M. Craig 60). In the novel, history has a lead role to play since in the Rollestons’ house are knotted all threads that may link one to his/her past. In ‘Carriglas’, one feels the nostalgic tendency towards peace, love and stability together with the ringing resonances of self-rule and independence. On the other hand, one cannot resist this feeling of regret and hostility that is implied in the presence of the Rollestons’ house as an Anglo-Irish legacy in such a time when there was a conflict between those who wanted to keep this Anglo-Irish legacy, and those who wanted to set Ireland free from it. This duality enriches the novel and deepens its influence. In other words, ‘Carriglas’ is both a place that satisfies a national and psychological pursuit for belonging and at the same time one that reminds of the hatred and strife between Ireland and England being a representation of the Big House in Ireland. This duality becomes more a feature than just a passing-by description. It changes to be an inherent genetic component within the organic texture of Irish national and literary history.

In the first paragraph of the novel, the readers are introduced to the Big House theme that starts to dominate the novel up to the end. Trevor is keen on presenting in one paragraph the main characters simultaneously together with the temporal and spatial setting of the novel. He introduces

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them, inserting 'Carriglas' as an indispensable part of their personalities. He writes, "It is 1971, and the home that has been provided for Sarah Pollexfen for so long is still a provision that is necessary. She and a one-time maid, Patty, and Tom- illegitimate son of the Rollestons' last butler- are left at Carriglas" (9). The novel, thus, begins with a clear indication of the type of place the readers are going to encounter along its course; a place that acts as a character without which the presentation of every character and event misses something. 'Carriglas' serves to present an image of the Big House theme that is recurrent in Irish literature. *The Silence in the Garden* lies, along with Trevor's other two novels *The Fools of the Fortune* (1983) and *The Story of Lucy Gault* (2002), within the arena of "Trevor's Big House Ireland ...all three of which center on the revolutionary period of 1916–1923" (L. Harte. 130).

The Big House is a prevalent theme in Irish literature. In *The Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House*, Vera Kreilkamps assigns the Big House novel a great literary importance in the history of Ireland. She asserts that such an importance is not to be reduced into the mere context of nostalgia for the Big House as a representative of the British colonialism. She separates the Big House theme from the history of the Anglo-Irish struggle in the historical studies of Whelan (1996), Foster (1989), and Cullen (1987). In 2005, *The Irish Novel in the Nineteenth Century* was published to defy those attempts to naturalize Irish literature as just part of the English one by searching for influences of the English novelists on Irish writers. In this book, Kelleher attacks the "search for an Irish *Middlemarch*" (195). Again, in 2006, *The Cambridge Companion to the Irish Novel*, assigns the third chapter to the article, "The Novel of The Big House" by Kreilkamps; something that proves the legitimacy of the genre as a genuine Irish literary genre.

Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800) is generally regarded the first Big House novel in Irish Literature, passing by Somerville's and Ross's *An Irish Cousin* (1889), Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1928), Aidan Higgins's *Langrishe, Go Down* (1966), Molly Keane's *Good Behaviour* (1981), John Banville's *The Newton Letter* (1982), William Trevor's *Fools of Fortune* (1983), and Jennifer Johnston's *Fools Sanctuary* (1987). However, the Big House or the Country House novel cannot be a genre as much as a denotation of the spatial framework that a certain novel takes as a thematic backdrop. In this regard, it is important to note that the Big House/ Country House novels "show different generic

profiles such as national tale, gothic novel, social and/or political realism, travel writing” (Y. Yoshino 51). Such novels can be Romances, thrillers, autobiographies, etc.; consequently, the Big House becomes more of a setting-oriented theme that supports and is supported by the other literary elements of the texts in question.

Trevor’s *The Silence in the Garden* proves to be a typical Big House novel because like all the Big House novels, it “is cursed with infertility in marriage, failure to marry, sexual transgression, and illegitimate children; each of these factors endangers the continuation of the lineage, echoing the decline of the Ascendancy class.” (T. Nakamura 4). Villana tells her fiancé that she does not object not having babies. Hugh and Villana break up their engagement though they deeply love each other, Bridgid carries Linchy’s son without marriage, and Tom remains all his life suffering from the stain of being an illegitimate son. Only Hugh marries and gets children mainly because he is not one of the Rollestons in addition to the fact that he leaves the island and goes to England. Again, it is to be noted that in ‘Carriglas’, the Rollestons’ Big House is a typical one because the children go to English school, elderly people read the Irish Times, and they join the British army.

In *The Silence in the Garden*, Trevor succeeds in transforming ‘Carriglas’ from a space that “connotes geometrical or topographical abstraction” (L. Buell 63) to a place that is populated with significant references to events and characters. Here, ‘Carriglas’ is employed to introduce more a representational than a textualized plot. The true story lies in how the readers are able to link everything together in relation to the place; in relation to ‘Carriglas’. This is actually done through a thoroughly artistic manipulation of details that truly help in creating a place that is artistically visualized. Reading the novel, one could easily feel that s/he is not reading about the characters as much as s/he is immersed in the story of the house; of ‘Carriglas’. The house always appears in the center suggesting “that space cannot be dealt with as if it were merely a passive, abstract arena on which things happen.” (Pile 2). Instead, it seems as if ‘Carriglas’ helps each of the characters involved to find a crucial part of his/her identity. It is not introduced as just a space, but is presented as a landscape that stands differently for each character as a unique spatial identity which satisfies his/her need for completion.

The house here is delineated to be a therapeutic refuge for those people who would once lose their sense of belonging; even if it is lost as a space, it remains to be a place from which one could reform her/his identity.

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Here, it shows clearly as a true version of the Big House that “continues to live because it continues to play out conflicting versions not just of Irishness but of identity itself.” (A. Roche 344). ‘Carriglas’ turns to be nothing but the narrative of its inhabitants’ failures and disappointment. Sarah feels this when she writes in her diaries after a life time in Carriglas, “I feel more than ever that I live in a cobweb of other people’s lives and do not understand the cobweb’s nature” (Trevor 116). She leaves her life to dissolve and disappear in her attempt to take care and serve the others in ‘Carriglas’, the place she feels “trapped” in. Sarah “was a woman who went about the house; her story, of duty and unrequired love, was shaped by other people’s greater claims. They never saw her angry or emotional” (Trevor 194). She dies silently and remains part of the place that has gone deeper to be part of her identity.

‘Carriglas’ determines the relevance of the characters in the novel. For example, when Hugh leaves the island and goes to England, where he marries a girl from Essex, he becomes irrelevant; his existence comes to an end because it lacks the most important thing that ties him up to the lives of the other characters i.e. ‘Carriglas’. Readers never meet him again except in the thoughts of the characters still inhabiting Carriglas i.e. Villana and Sarah. He is never really back to their lives unless he is back to ‘Carriglas’ itself. When Villana needs to feel his presence, she goes to their place and without words, “she closed her eyes and saw him on the avenue with his leather suitcase, returning to Carriglas” (Trevor 92). Here, words disappear and the effort is left to the place to speak out, both to Villana and the reader at the same time. Through an interaction between the language of the characters and the language of ‘place’ is held a discourse that always brings the characters back. Again, this discourse bestows on the garden of ‘Carriglas’ a fully rounded character-oriented feature of communication. It changes in the characters’ vision and attracts them all the time to a contextualized existence in which it lies in the center. Actually, it shifts its role from a frame to an empowering entity that helps in pushing the other literary elements forward towards a more comprehensive social awareness within which is carved a re-formulated concept of the self. Assuming that ‘Carriglas’, as place, is given a language, one should refer to silence, that, though mute, remains a powerful mode of non-verbal narration.

Since hermeneutics depends on verbal as well as non-verbal communication, ‘silence’ evolves here as a significant literary tool of

analysis. In the novel, silence is more than just a status since it is an entity introduced differently with the introduction of each and every character in the novel. Silence transgresses its limited non-verbal nature to the extensive spatial arena of Carriglas itself; a place that is presented in such a way that visualizes the term 'silence' through unfolding the secrets each character contributes to reveal. All characters keep silent about a certain secret that is told only by and through 'Carriglas'; the greatest secret, here, is that of Mrs. Rolleston's grandchildren "hunting" a child. After their father is back to the regiment, Lionel, Tom Jones and Hugh, Sarah's brother, used to take the shotgun hanging on the wall and go to 'play' what turned to be a very cruel game with the boy of one of the tenants. Mrs. Rolleston tells Sarah, "they terrified him... Day after day, all summer long, they hunted that child as an animal is hunted" (Trevor 183). In revenge, a bomb was set at the house intended for the children, but only the family's butler, Linchy, pays the price and is killed just one week before his marriage. What appears in public is that Linchy was killed in the "troubles", a period of civil war in Ireland between the Irish Nationalists, mainly Catholics, who called for Northern Ireland not to be part of the United Kingdom, and the Unionists, mainly Protestants, who wanted Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom. One issue involved was attacking the Blacks and Tans. Corny Dowley, the grown-up revolutionist, who bombs the Rollestons' house, turns to be the same little boy the Rollestons' grandchildren used to abuse.

The feeling of regret makes the children penitent all their lives, converting the novel, generally speaking, to be the story of four children: Lionel, Tom Jones, Hugh and Villana, leading a life of self-punishment. Lionel is leading a mean relationship with a widower on the mainland; Tom Jones becomes just a farmer in a way to confess the mistake he did before with a farmer's boy; Hugh and Villana's engagement is broken because, as Mrs. Rolleston asks, "how could their children [Hugh and Villana's] play in that same garden and not ever be told of what had festered so horribly in a wound?" (Trevor 187). Though Villana did not take part in the cruel game, she knew all about it, and consequently, she has to take her share. She accepts to marry Fynamore Balt, the lawyer who is much older than she is. Her only condition is to remain in 'Carriglas'. Even Tom, the illegitimate son, pays the price of past atrocities though he has nothing to do with it. Stained "in Catholic Ireland by his illegitimacy, that silent and innocent gate-lodge child grows up, like the Rolleston children, to become an emotionally crippled survivor of past atrocities." (Kreilkamp 231). He carries part of the legacy of the Rollestons' Anglo-Irish ascendancy. Even after being obliged by Mrs.

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Rolleston to bequeath the whole house as an act of redemption, he never gets away with his sinful stain.

Again, there is the secret Sarah herself keeps, but is only told within her story about 'Carriglas'. Describing one of her afternoons with the Rollestons, Sarah confesses, "I was in love myself that afternoon" (82). Narrating 'Carriglas', Sarah tells about her love for Lionel. Sarah, the governess loves Lionel, the landlord's son; something that goes against the rules of the Big House. She is the poor far relative who is never permitted to enjoy the love of Lionel, even after he becomes a farmer himself. Another example of the secrets kept hidden and is told only through the garden of 'Carriglas' is the fact that Fynamore, Villana's fiancé, turns to be concerned with the estate more than with Villana herself. His thoughts were only "involved with...four fields to which the Rollestons, beyond all possible doubt, had clear title." (Trevor 95). He dreams only of the moment he would be walking with Villana along all these massive fields and restored property, the property he was mainly summoned on to 'Carriglas' to help restore. Another secret is concerned with John James and the mistress he keeps away from 'Carriglas'.

Consequently, the silence in the novel is all the time introduced as an accepted method of resolution for what cannot be solved or repaired. Carrying the stain of adultery, Brigid, never finds anyone outside the Rolleston's house ready to talk to her. Her presence outside the house is always accompanied by silence. On the ferry, she is the only passenger, and even the ferryman "didn't begin a conversation" (Trevor 110). The punishment for her sin was silence, and even with her own mother, silence is domineering. Another facet of silence is the money Mrs. Rolleston used to send to the abused child's mother just to keep the secret of the cruel game her own grandchildren once played untold. She does not want people to know "that a childhood cruelty has turned around and damned a household." (Trevor 186). She succeeds in keeping the woman silent, but has persistently kept herself in continuous state of remembering and never-ending pain. Silence has its own price. Silence is presented in the novel as an evidence that the "symbolic reenactment of the primal sin of Irish history haunt[s] the children's grandmother and condemn[s] all participants to lives of violence or desolation." (Kreilkamp 231). Silence is linked to something that people want to hide or are ashamed to show.

The characters themselves lack the tendency to speak out; they know that everything on the island is going to be missed. The Anglo-Irish ascendancy, which the Rollestons represent, is coming to an end. Even the name of the new bridge is not going to have anything related to their names. It is supposed to hold the name of the man who is thought responsible for the bombing of the Rolleston's house and the killing of their butler during the troubles. The Rollestons' legacy in 'Carriglas' is going to be obliterated with the death of "three men ... all of them connected to Carriglas" (Trevor 84). Everything is going to be silenced forever. Even for the remaining ones, it seems like they have nothing left to keep. For them, it is always "difficult to know what to say. It was difficult to voice any comment whatsoever" (Trevor 100). For that reason, the only hope left has been in Sarah's hand i.e. to narrate 'Carriglas' and speak out the silence that has been kept inherited in the garden of 'Carriglas'. This silence is much more related to the sin that the Rollestons inherited, being a representative of the Anglo-Irish excellency. This is the sin of the colonizer, and how it affected the colonized. Actually, the novel delineates a panoramic vision of what Vera Kreilkamp calls "Anglo-Irish culpability. It searches to depict the power of past injustice rather than to suggest resolution or solution.... that the Big House is shadowed by its past, that its inhabitants act and then reenact the original sins of colonialism, and thus find no peace" (230). Carriglas has changed by the sins of its inhabitants and become an old place, and "[A]ny old place is a burden" (99); such a burden that only Sarah carries and keeps safe through narration.

Telling of and about characters is not the only subject of narration 'Carriglas' imposes on the readers as it speaks out a lot about the Anglo-Irish history, either literally or metaphorically. The state of deterioration 'Carriglas' silently witnesses, on the physical level, is symbolic of the state of decline Anglo-Ireland is held in. This negligence of the place tells more of such a declining state than Trevor would ever put in direct words. The current place "where sheep nibbled the grass between the stones that had fallen from the walls" (Trevor 90), used to be a place where the lords of the main island met, monks peacefully settled, bees kept and fish brought from the river and the sea. Now, "the shattering of this tranquility had come; the monks ... disappeared, the walls had fallen down" (Trevor 90), and the abbey is nothing but just ruins.

Everything in Carriglas remains a "gothic window" (Trevor 90), overlooking the gothic past that remains to haunt it with its sinful disposition. The novel ends in Patty and Tom inhabiting the house

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accompanied by none of the Rollestons; the house that is now populated with past memories and historical hues of punishment. Carriglas will remain, as Sarah puts it, “a place to stroll to on a summer’s afternoon, the tidy script asserts, as [its inhabitants] have strolled to the fallen abbey and the burial mound. Absence has gathered in the rooms, and silence in the garden. They have returned Carriglas to its clay” (Trevor 204). The smell of death that permeates the house by the end of the novel, together with “the aura of desolation and the memories of secret brutality surrounding Big House life suggest the price a colonial heritage exacts from colonizers and colonized alike” (Kreilkamp 230). Both the Rollestons, who represent the protestant Anglo-Irish ascendancy, and Corny Dowley, the catholic farmer’s boy, pay their shares.

Sarah is the female narrator who is always kept in the background telling the story of how the wealth and prestige of ‘Carriglas’ all go the illegitimate son, Tom, who remains for life stained with the killing of his father and mother just one “week off getting married” (Trevor 79). As Sarah is incompetent to take the whole mission of narrating ‘Carriglas’, the perspective keeps on changing from the first-person narrative voice to the third person omniscient narrator, in a direct indication of the significance of all what ‘Carriglas’ holds to tell. Along the narrative, the readers are, sometimes, permitted to see closely through the characters themselves; their perceptions of their lives, together with their experience inside and outside ‘Carriglas’. However, it does not take long before Trevor gets his readers back to ‘Carriglas’ through the omniscient narrator. Actually, it is this narrative structure that makes clear how the place is converted into a text in Trevor’s *Silence in the Garden*.

With the first person narration, ‘Carriglas’ is a place that differs from that same place with the omniscient narrator, but both perspectives complement each other to show how place in Trevor’s *Silence in the Garden* helps in formulating and shaping one’s identity. From the very beginning, the readers know that ‘Carriglas’ is the place that “once was magical for her [Sarah]” (Trevor 9). Sarah comes from ‘Dunadry Rectory’ to ‘Carriglas’ mainly to be a baby-sitter for the Colonel’s children, after the death of their mother. She helps Mrs. Rolleston in bringing them up, but she leaves ‘Carriglas’ and is back to ‘Dunadry’. She goes to work at a school for girls before she returns back to ‘Carriglas’ for the second time after the children had grown up. There is a long interval of time between these two temporal points i.e. leaving and returning to ‘Carriglas’. Leaving ‘Carriglas’ and working at ‘Misses

Goodbody's School for Protestant Girls', Sarah is never satisfied as "the city suburb oppresses Sarah Pollexfen, its terraces dull and similar, its hall-doors tightly closed, the blank stare of its windows seeming like eyes gone blind" (Trevor 20). She does not feel the freedom she once felt in 'Carriglas'. In other words, 'Carriglas' "does not let go of Sarah" (Trevor 20). The place has its spell on her, and 'Carriglas' seems to be haunting Sarah all over. After the death of her mother and father, Sarah returns after 23 years of her first journey to 'Carriglas'. Everything has changed and one of these changes is the plan to build a bridge "across the strait of water that separated the island from the mainland" (Trevor 25).

Here, it is worth noting that whenever Sarah is narrating, the text is italicized. However, when the third person narrator gets on, the text is not italicized any more. Trevor keeps the distance clear between what the female narrator is 'saying' and what the place is 'telling' about people and about Ireland. It extends to seem that the omniscient narrator is the place itself, i.e. 'Carriglas'. In the novel, Trevor centralizes the garden to the extent that there is a shift from the garden as an object to the garden as a partner in the relationship among the characters in the novel. The novel portrays a state when the occupation 'of' a place moves to be the occupation 'by' a place. Here, the place is employed to explain much about the characters. Consequently, 'Carriglas' is an example to "show how place itself can be used as a methodological framework of understanding, thus, as a hermeneutical tool." (A. Olivier 9), since it helps in analyzing the characters' feelings and points of view. The characters' sense of belonging to 'Carriglas' shapes their identities and saves the place intact even if it is lost or destroyed. This is shown clearly by the shift that is artistically manipulated from the first-person narration of Sarah to the third-person omniscient narration that reflects much about the secrets Sarah does not know or is unqualified to introduce. Again, it is worth noting that at the moment Sarah feels immersed in her past memories ; "the time when the memories which govern [her] most persistently tug at [her] consciousness" (Trevor 37), she unconsciously shifts her memories to tell about the place in Carriglas. Conscious of how the past could control her, Sarah manages to manipulate by carrying her thoughts to the house. She tries "not to think about the past, and urge [herself] to write instead that the daffodils bloomed a month ago" (Trevor 37).

The novel is made up of ten sections, the first of which is entitled "Sarah Arrives", and it is dedicated to introduce the main narrator, together with the other main characters in 'Carriglas'. The novel then proceeds till it

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ends with the last section, "Sarah Departs", as if the novel is nothing but a documentation of Sarah's stay in Carriglas. Within the framework of Sarah's stay there, Carriglas is narrated and textualized through the voice of the omniscient narrator to tell more about the characters even before Sarah's arrival. The readers meet Sarah in the first section just to be shocked that Sarah is already dead and that all what is coming is nothing but her diaries about Carriglas. She is so immersed in the place to the extent that she writes her diaries about Carriglas and keeps them intact instructing her last companions saying, "I would wish you to read them [diaries] when I have gone" (Trevor 10). The point here is that people die, but places do not, just because they are saturated with their inhabitants' memories. Sarah dies, and before her Mrs. Rolleston does, and Carriglas remains as a legacy that Sarah promised never to betray. Consequently, it is not surprising that the novel starts in 1971, but the diaries that make up the real novel start in 1908. Again, it is worth noting here that the departure of Sarah in the last section of the novel, "Sarah Departs", does not mean that Sarah leaves Carriglas. Sarah simply departs because she dies in Carriglas; she never leaves because no one there could ever "escape from the shadows of their abandoned lives." (132).

The meticulous description of Carriglas leaves in the minds of the readers a lively photographic representation of the island's "pervading greenness" (Trevor 11). The big huge gates "stood open at the head of a sunless avenue" and the "strawberry trees had long ago been planted to form a grove" (11). This description makes up the scene and creates in the minds of the readers a visualized place that they are going to complete the novel within its spatial as well as its temporal boundaries. In Sarah's diaries, one finds an accurate description of the house with its entries, staircase, halls, arched passages, furniture, rooms, etc. as if giving a map for the readers to move freely in the house, knowing where each character is going and how. Even "penetrating deeper into the house" (Trevor 14), Sarah introduces the servants' place, and then goes to write about her "own little place" (Trevor 14) i.e. her part of 'Carriglas'.

Losing 'Carriglas' as a space, due to the establishment of a bridge, does not mean losing a place. A 'space' simply shifts to be a 'place' only when it succeeds in being part of the identity of a person and of a nation. In other words, every place starts by being a space until it is filled with one's memories and events, so that it becomes a 'place'. Here, Carriglas remains to denote a long personal and national history that will never end

by changing its demographic features since “places are always imbued with cultural meanings and cannot be reduced to mere geographical facts” (A. Schlitte 45). Consequently, narrating such a place helps in textualizing it in the sense that it converts the place to a text that remains to hold a continual dialogue between past and present, and between the individual and the collective. Such a text creates a visualized representation that is taken in one shot, yet remains pregnant with many memories and events that shape the identity of a whole nation. In the *Silence in the Garden*, one could see a place that transgresses its demographic nature to be a text.

In his essay “What is a Text”, Adrian Wilson states five main propositions for identifying a text. The first implies that a text “is not a neutral description of written and printed materials, but on the contrary is a particular way of positioning them.” (346). In other words, a text is not necessarily the written corpse in a printed form as much as it is what the writer is able to deliver to the mind of the reader as a message. This is much more related to how certain content is presented. Here, ‘Carriglas’, the non-printed object is a text itself. It helps in situating the characters and the actions of the novel in such a way that writes the message Trevor wants to deliver. ‘Carriglas’ becomes a text written by the history and memories of this group of characters to speak out the fact that the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, though decaying, will never die.

The second proposition deals with the idea that a text is content more that shape i.e. analyzing a text mainly works on “abstracting verbal content from its material embodiment” (Wilson 347). For example, the text of a phone bill can be analyzed the same as that of a medical ad. Such a process of ‘abstracting’ comes from the fact that Trevor is keen on setting actions in a puzzle form that his readers are always kept busy getting everything together. Most of the important incidents that shape the main action of the novel are not introduced all in one time. For example, the readers first know about the death of Linchy, the butler, in one of the letters Sarah receives while away from Carriglas. Then, they are introduced to the illegitimacy of Tom, Linchy’s son, in the indirect insult often directed to the child keeping him always alone. This ranges from the character of Holy Mullihan, who always reminds him of the importance of one’s repenting his sins to Father Pierce, who tells him that he, Tom, has “more prayers to say than the others” and even “the girls on the ferryboat [who] looked at him as if he’d done something wrong” (Trevor 79). Then the readers figure it out that Linchy’s death was a

result of a mistake that Lionel, John James and Hugh had once committed.

The third proposition is related to assigning the text “the quality of reality” that it reflects on the object it represents. The reality of the text, in all its details, makes it project realism on all what it involves. Actually, the detailed description of ‘Carriglas’ satisfies this feature of a text. Trevor leaves his readers with a full oriented descriptive picture of ‘Carriglas’, an island just off the coast of County Cork in Ireland with its bays, harbors, rivers and mountains. The fourth proposition for identifying a text lies in the fact that a text “entails the actual presence of the past” (347). All the objects in a text come from the present or from the past. What the text does is that it endows them with a ‘present-ness’. Even if a certain object is dead, a text revives it and introduces it anew within the temporal domain of the present moment. After the death of Linchy and Colonel Rolleston, and the departure of Hugh, Lionel and John James, ‘Carriglas’ is empty and unpopulated. However, after “[i]t was ages since so many visitors’ rooms had been prepared” (Trevor 91), ‘Carriglas’ is re-populated again at the wedding of Villana. The same rooms, which used to be prepared for the annual summer visits of the Viceroy to ‘Carriglas’, are now prepared to have the guests coming to attend the wedding. The fifth proposition is that a text “is given a material embodiment” (347) through the act of publishing, so that it keeps in its material form the past that has gone. However, it is very important to note that “the past that is present is not the same as the past that has passed”. (347). In other words, ‘Carriglas’, for example, is not the same after 23 years. The past, which has come to be replaced by the ‘present’, is the coming to end of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy epitomized in ‘Carriglas’, being inherited by the illegitimate son of the butler. Of course, this present is completely different from the past that has passed i.e. ‘Carriglas’ as representing a typical Big Irish House.

On the demographic plane of ‘Carriglas’ is written the history of an Irish people, who were colonized by the English crown. The country falls into the English territory and is stolen from its people the same like ‘Carriglas’. ‘Carriglas’ represents this Ireland in a significant way. Back in history, it is mentioned that the ancient Rollestons, living in the seventh century, drove the original landowners to the wild stony peripheries of Mayo, settling themselves in the center. It is the same ‘Carriglas’ that now speaks back against the Rollestons’ assumption of

being all the time generous and nice to the people of ‘Carriglas’. Seemingly, the Rollestons are the “island family. They had been humane at the time of the potato blight; they had given generously, seeking no reward.” (Trevor 74). They are very upset because the bridge is not going to carry a “memorial to one of them” (Trevor 74), but is going to be named after Corny Dowley, the Catholic hero that was assassinated by the Blacks and Tans. They forget and want the others to forget what they had did back in the far past i.e. usurping ‘Carriglas’.

Within any hermeneutical framework of investigating the nature of place in one’s life, “We question places, and they question us, in a hermeneutical exchange that may seem dialectical” (Janz 25). Consequently, approaching ‘Carriglas’, both a place whose presence dominates the novel on one hand, and itself being textualized, on the other, one could reach a special reading of Trevor’s novel. In other words, without fully understanding the literary significance of ‘Carriglas’ in the novel, the readers would miss a lot in their understanding of Trevor’s message. This idea of place reacting with and affecting its inhabitants’ modes is clear when Sarah feels “misfortune, drawn into a mood of hopelessness that often seems to pervade the very landscape of Carriglas” (Trevor 97). After meeting Lionel, whom she once fell in love with, in the field, Sarah’s hand touches Lionel’s hand in an accidental move for which he says ‘sorry’, “relegating to clumsiness on his part this precious moment”, for her. (Trevor 97). The point held here is that ‘Carriglas’, in Trevor’s *The Silence in the Garden*, proves to a tool of expressing the relationship that can be drawn between a person and the place s/he lives with. Place itself turns to be a tool of analyzing and reflecting upon people’s nature and psyche.

In the novel, Trevor is keen on making the place part of lying out his characters’ personalities. This appears, for example, when places and their meanings come to the forefront, being discussed in one of the conversations between Colonel Rolleston and his son, John James. It is relevant here to point to the fact that Sarah comes from ‘Dunadry Rectory’, which means “the place of the middle fort”, to stay in ‘Carriglas’, the “green rock, which was what the island in certain lights resembled when seen from the mainland” (Trevor 15). Though it is green, ‘Carriglas’ is still a rock, i.e. it is not a fertile land. Inherently, the Big House, appears to be a place of gathering for the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, but appears later to be not really what it shows. Like the Big House is ‘Carriglas’, which seems to be a fertile productive place far away from the mainland, but turns to be really a solid rock covered with a seemingly

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green land. Through 'Carriglas', Trevor wants to assure that though it appears to be a sort of reconciliation between the Irish people and their colonizers i.e. the English people, deep inside, there is nothing but vagueness and dislocation in Big Houses. 'Carrigals' will remain forever to tell the tale of the damage England had brought onto Ireland.

In Trevor's *The Silence in the Garden*, 'Carriglas', assigned the attributes of the Big House, proves to have a hermeneutical function that supports its structural significance in the novel. This hermeneutical function of place in the novel shows clearly as it approaches the characters and main events, serving in explaining and analyzing them. Such a function is directly related to the relationship between place and narrative in the novel. Throughout the research, place and narrative have worked together to enrich each other. Place, on one hand, enriches the text with standpoints from which meaning is derived and characters are better delineated. It ranges in the novel from just a 'space' where people live to a sign that tells of some historical and national identity that comes to be intermingled thoroughly within the characters and events. The narrative, on the other hand, succeeds in converting the mere 'space' into explicitly identified 'place'. As a result, 'place' and 'narrative' are both held within a dialogic relationship that works on showing something that cannot be shown explicitly except by means of another. 'Place' would not show clearly without being introduced into 'narrative', and the 'narrative' would not show clearly except by being formulated and molded into 'place'.

This circular relationship held between place and narrative serves in the shift of the main concern of the research from tracing the hermeneutics of 'place' to investigating 'place' as a hermeneutical tool of analysis. Employing the term of the 'hermeneutics circle', one finds it relevant to explain how the circle of traditionally understanding place only as a negative receptive literary entity of any work of art should be broken open. This is done in order to be able to delve deeper and to see into the real role of place as a methodological means of perceiving the message of the writer and as a technical tool of speaking out the unspoken. If the hermeneutical circle is kept closed, no new meanings are brought onto the scene, and interpretation will be restricted to a fixed matrix of rules. 'Carriglas', in Trevor's *The Silence in the Garden*, proves to be a perfect hermeneutical literary tool of analysis ranging from a geographical space

to an individualized entity that addresses an Irish national as well as a historical representation.

The research has brought into light a potential for a post-colonial reading of Trevor's *Silence in the Garden* from a post-colonial perspective, giving due right to the approach in addressing the issue of English colonization of Ireland. Again, regarding the persistent presence of the woman characters in the novel, there shows another potential for a feminist reading of the novel within the framework of post-colonial feminism. In addition, the notion of the unreliable narrator springs as another potential for a literary critical reading of the novel.

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