



"Fearful ... and Fearless": Edna O'Brien's "The Little Red Chairs" and "Girl" [

2020

text (article)

Analítica

Edna O'Brien's last published novels, "The Little Red Chairs" (2015) and "Girl" (2019), have been unanimously praised by criticism. "The Little Red Chairs" has been acclaimed as her masterpiece by Philip Roth in the book jacket cover, and as her most ambitious novel by Éilís Ní Dhuibhne at the moment of its publication (2015), which is a lot to say about an author who has been a referent in Irish literature since the 1960s. Girl has been also praised by influential figures such as Christina Patterson (2019) and Anne Enright (2019), among many other reviewers. "The Little Red Chairs" has been inspired by the historical episode of the Balkans War and the siege of Sarajevo. Divided in three parts, the novel takes its readers from the west of Ireland to the Balkans through London and The Hague Tribunal in a series of movements that serve the author to deploy the wide canvas of migratory exchanges in our current society which involve political exiles, refugees, expatriates and economic emigrants. "Girl", has been described by O'Brien herself as "the hardest and the most painful" novel that she has ever written. On this occasion, the narrative is based on the kidnapping of more than two hundred schoolgirls by the Boko Haram Jihadist sect, after the author's journey to Nigeria, where she interviewed many of the people involved in the tragic episode. My study of these two novels focuses on Edna O'Brien's ethical compromise, giving voice to the most traumatic episodes and traumatized victims of our contemporary society, as well as on her brilliant use of the genre of the novel for recording the chaos, complexity, dislocation and fragmentation caused by radicalisms, political violence and terrorism

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Editorial: 2020

Tipo Audiovisual: history ethics aesthetics migrations violence The Little Red Chairs Girl historia ética estética migraciones violencia The Little Red Chairs Girl

Documento fuente: Oceánide, ISSN 1989-6328, N°. 13, 2020 (Ejemplar dedicado a: Oceánide 13-2020), pags. 78-84

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Lengua: English

Enlace a fuente de información: Oceánide, ISSN 1989-6328, N°. 13, 2020 (Ejemplar dedicado a: Oceánide 13-2020), pags. 78-84

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