

## Summary

This thesis comprises historical and critical introduction to contemporary women's poetry in Ireland and close reading of three poets of its two latest generations, Eavan Boland, Medbh McGuckian and Vona Groarke. It focuses on her perception of nature and attitude to the relationship between the human self and natural processes and objects. The contextual background to my reading emphasizes the feminist critique of the traditional false images of the woman's self in Irish poetry and politics, and suggests new opportunities of the most recent female poetic voices.

The culturally rooted simplifying or even harmful connection between femininity and the fertile land or Catholic ideals of virginity has provoked a lot of indignation among contemporary women poets, and caused abundant literary attempts of its re-negotiation. The authentic poetic representation of the woman's sexual and spiritual connection to the land and nature along with women's subjective use of nature imagery belongs to crucial points of this re-negotiation. It is pursued extensively in all of the poetesses discussed in this paper.

My close reading considers the political objectives of the poems and notices different modes of their artistic response to the relevant cultural questions. Nevertheless, it emphasizes also the independence of the art of poetry. The analysis attempts to observe also the new experimentation and aesthetic achievement that the interest in nature in these three authors brings. Each of them performs an extraordinary imaginary connection between the self and the surrounding natural environment, and suggests new spiritual closeness to nature or innovative perception of its elements.

The treatment of nature metaphor in Eavan Boland, Medbh McGuckian and Vona Groarke revisits the traditional nature and feminine imagery and addresses gender issues. On the other hand, it opens new possibilities of poetic illumination of human approach to nature. The thesis pays attention to the political meaning of contemporary women's poetry as well as its 113

contribution within the genre of poetry in general. It tries to reflect upon the broader circumstances of the post-feminist poetic voice in Ireland and include also suggestions of its changes in the very latest decade.