

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the researcher explains about theories that uses for analyzing the novel *The Magdalen* by Marita Conlon-McKenna. The researcher of the thesis attempts to describe what the cause of fallen sent to Holy Saint Magdalen Home and how the function and dysfunction of religion to the fallen woman for redemption their sins in Holy Saint Magdalen Home. In describing these subject, the researcher uses post-structuralism as the main device.

##### 2.1.1 Post-structuralism Theory

The broad term poststructuralism denotes a range of critical approaches emerging after the 1960s, which took from structuralism its insights into language as a system of signs, and the construction of identity, subjects, and objects through language ( Habib 230).

Poststructuralism is a style of critical reasoning that focuses on the moment of the systems of meaning as a way to identify and sometimes it is ambiguous. The ethical choices that we make, whether in our writings or in everyday life, when we overcome the ambiguity and move from indeterminacy to certainty of belief in an effort to understand, interpret, or

shape our social environment. Poststructuralism concentrates on the moment when we impose meaning in a space that is no longer characterized by shared social agreement over the structure of meaning. It attempts to explain how it comes about that we fill those gaps in our knowledge and come to hold as true what we do believe and at what distributive cost to society and the contemporary subject (Harcourt 1).

Post-structuralism is a product of that blend of euphoria and disillusionment, liberation and dissipation, carnival and catastrophe, which was 1968. Unable to break the structures of state power, post-structuralism found it possible instead to subvert the structures of language. Nobody, at least, was likely to beat you over the head for doing so. The student movement was flushed off the streets and driven underground into discourse. For many post-structuralists, the worst error was to believe that such local projects and particular engagements should be brought together within an overall understanding of the working of monopoly capitalism, which could only be as oppressively, total as the very system it opposed. Power was everywhere, a fluid, quicksilver force which seeped through every pore of society, but it did not have a centre any more than did the literary text. With post-structuralism, we have brought the story of modern literary theory up to the present time. Within post-structuralism as a whole, real conflicts and differences exist whose future history cannot be predicted. There are forms of post-structuralism which represent a hedonist



deconstruct themselves rather than to provide a stable identifiable meaning (377). In addition to looking at the etymology of specific words, the researcher can look at the interrelationship between words, how they create contradictions or inconsistencies that cannot be resolved.

- Textual stage

The textual stage focuses on the relationship between common binary oppositions in the work like male/female, good/evil and etc, in which one term seems to be privileged or more highly valued over the other. Deconstruction involves taking apart any meaning to reveal contradictory structures hidden within. Neither meaning nor the text that seeks to express it has any privilege over the other, and this extends to critical statements about the text (377). Post-structuralism reading might try to look closely at the hierarchy in order to show how it is not sustained throughout the work, or how the two terms are not oppositional at all but interrelated and interdependent.

- Linguistic stage

The linguistic stage involves looking for moments when the adequacy of language itself as a medium of communication is called into question. Such moments occur when there is implicit or explicit reference to the unreliability or untrustworthiness of language, juxtapositions of speech and silence, or an awareness of







The first review is reviewed by Denise Fleming in [www.clarelibrary.ie.com](http://www.clarelibrary.ie.com). The book is called *The Magdalen* and is written by Marita Conlon-McKenna. The story is set in Conemara about 1944. Denise thought this was one of the best books she had read in a long time. It shows how the girls in the 1940s were treated if they got pregnant. It was one of those books that could not be put down. Every page had something that we think would never happen. Until she reads the book she does not realize the mental torment suffered by women with unexpected pregnancies. It shows how the times have changed. If a girl like Eshter got pregnant in today's society she would not be sent away, but it was a good thing that there was a place for her to go in her time it was a way of avoiding the neighbors gossip and such.

Denise loved this book because of the author very clear images and descriptions. The author is very talented and because of her excellent writing skills he was able to get a good mental picture of what was being portrayed. He would recommend this book to anyone who loves a dramatic novel and teenagers especially because it shows what it would be like to be pregnant and what it would be like to go through. By reading this book we really sympathize with Eshter and really appreciate the tolerance an unexpected pregnancy brings.

In other sources there is a review from over name Homeschoolmama in [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com). She said that this is the second book she has read by Marita Conlon-McKenna. Marita has a very engaging story telling



style, and as someone who prefers nonfiction, she is impressed. Marita story here is a hard one of an unwed pregnant young woman in 1950's Ireland who has few options but to enter a home for unwed mothers. The Magdalen homes are run by nuns who are often harsh and punitive. Some of parts of the story were painful to read, but there were also enjoyable parts, with great character development and interesting dialogue. Marita Conlon-McKenna bases her story lines on history.

