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Cornwall in the Work of John Betjeman  
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## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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### Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

John Betjeman patří mezi britské autory první poloviny dvacátého století, jež na sílící tlak kosmopolitních vlivů reagovali upínáním pozornosti na anglickou kulturu a minulost. Pro Betjemana byly tyto jevy nejlépe čitelné z místní architektury a krajiny. Autor se ve své práci zaměří na poezii a prózu tohoto básníka s cílem zmapovat jeho pohled na oblast Cornwallu. Nejprve na základě životopisných dat pojedná o vzniku vazeb, které si Betjeman k těmto místům vytvořil. Na tomto základě se zaměří na jeho tvorbu z pohledu poetiky místa. Pokusí se definovat rysy Betjemanova nahlížení na Cornwall, jeho krajinu, kulturu a minulost. Hlavní důraz bude kladen na tato témata: minulost a přítomnost, venkov a město, kulturní svébytnost a globalizace, tradice a moderní společnost. Práci završí kapitola, která z dílčích zjištění vyvodí obecnější závěry.

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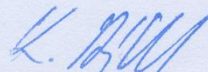
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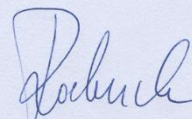
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## **ANNOTATION**

The bachelor thesis is focused on Cornwall described in poems and prose of Sir John Betjeman. It explores author's perception of the local landscape, architecture and elements of topophilia in his works concerning Cornwall. The second half of the paper discovers Betjeman's affective ties to Cornwall, his rejection of modern trends and nostalgia about the past.

## **KEYWORDS**

Betjeman, Cornwall, landscape, nostalgia, topophilia

## **ANOTACE**

Práce se zaměřuje na pojetí Cornwallu v básnické i prozaické tvorbě sira Johna Betjemena. Prozkoumává básníkovo vnímání místní krajiny, architektury a prvky topofilie v jeho pracích týkajících se Cornwallu. Druhá polovina práce se zaměřuje na autorovy citové vazby k hrabství, odmítání moderních trendů a nostalgický vztah k minulosti.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

Betjeman, Cornwall, krajina, nostalgie, topofilie

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## INTRODUCTION

Sir John Betjeman (June 28, 1906, London – May 19, 1984, Trebetherick) is a British poet, “known for his nostalgia for the near past, his exact sense of place, and his precise rendering of social nuance, which made him widely read in England at a time when much of what he wrote about was rapidly vanishing.”<sup>1</sup>

John Betjeman tended to be a poet from his early years, as Bevis Hillier affirms: “Ernest [John’s father] fervently hopes John will follow him into the firm [...], but as a child John shows himself hopelessly unhandy with a chisel. At an early age he is convinced he will be a poet.”<sup>2</sup>

Although John Betjeman was born in London, he experienced significantly more places in England. First, he attended schools in Highgate, London, but then he went to the Dragon School in Oxford. What is important, at the time of his studies at Dragon School, he used to spend holidays in north Cornwall, where his father built a house.<sup>3</sup> However, Cornwall became crucial for Betjeman’s life; Hillier claims it became Betjeman’s second home,<sup>4</sup> and memories from the childhood in Cornwall are visible both in his poems and prose. But Betjeman’s works concerning Cornwall are generally known for the nostalgic features and Betjeman’s incredible sense for depiction. For this incredible sense, he is regarded by another contemporary poet, Wystan Hugh Auden, as a *master of topophilia*.<sup>5</sup> What ‘topophilia’ represents will also be described in this bachelor thesis.

The theoretical part of this bachelor thesis consists of three parts. The first one examines the situation in the first half of the twentieth century – especially the negative effects of consumerism and the architectural changes after World War Two, going hand in hand with destroying English landscape. To give an instance, William Hoskins, who describes demolishing country houses,<sup>6</sup> is mentioned. Then, the terms ‘topophilia’, ‘place’,

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<sup>1</sup> “Sir John Betjeman,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 25, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Betjeman>.

<sup>2</sup> Bevis Hillier, *John Betjeman: New Fame, New Love* (London: John Murray, 2003), xiv.

<sup>3</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, xiv.

<sup>4</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, xiv.

<sup>5</sup> Wystan Hugh Auden, *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue*, edited by Alan Jacobs (New York: Random House, 1947; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), XXIV

<sup>6</sup> William George Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955), 231.

‘placelessness,’ ‘insiderness,’ ‘outsiderness’ and ‘nostalgia,’ which are vital for this bachelor thesis, are identified in terms of their origin and meaning.

The analytical part consists of two chapters. The first one, “The Landscape of Betjeman’s Cornwall,” focuses on the depiction of the landscape, railway and human influence such as architecture of Cornwall in John Betjeman’s poems and prose, mainly from the visual point of view. The Betjeman’s ability to pay attention to detail and his aesthetic appreciation is examined as well, for example his adoration of ordinary. Valentine Cunningham considers Betjeman to be a spokesman of the post-war British ruralism.<sup>7</sup> The signs why Betjeman is considered to be are too discovered. Consequently, Betjeman’s connection to the countryside of Cornwall is investigated; it is also discussed what he shows preference for. Next, as it has been mentioned before, Auden identifies Betjeman as a *master of topophilia*. That is because of “a degree of “visual imagination” that Auden felt he lacked.”<sup>8</sup> And the *topophilic mastery* of John Betjeman is described with examples in the second part of the first analytical chapter.

The second analytical chapter, “Betjeman’s Escapism,” explains the situation after World War Two, for which the *mass culture*, growing tourism and architectural changes are typical. The landscape development with all the negative impacts is also mentioned. Then, it is introduced Betjeman’s reaction on it, which consist mainly of the criticism of the new and longing for the past. In the first part, it is shown what he detests on the modern [50’s] trends and why. His family background, accompanied with the remarks of him becoming old, which caused him discontent as well, is also introduced. The second part of the chapter describes the elements of nostalgia in Betjeman’s works, especially in the post-war ones, but it is also mentioned that particular elements of it are visible even earlier. Furthermore, it is pointed on the fact that Cornwall is the Betjeman’s *home* – even despite the fact he spent holidays there only – he was not living there permanently. It is also presented what he admires on Cornwall in terms of feelings, accompanied with examples of his works recollecting his childhood memories. The chapter is also concerning the terms ‘place’ and ‘placelessness.’ It is identified what Betjeman considers to be a ‘place’ or ‘placeless,’ although he does not use these terms directly.

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<sup>7</sup> Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, unabridged republication (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 231.

<sup>8</sup> Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*, xxiv.



The overall aim of this bachelor thesis is to discover Betjeman's relation and individual feelings to Cornwall, description of his own, subjective vision of the Cornish landscape, to identify elements of topophilia in Betjeman's poems and prose, as well as his nostalgic feelings and escapism caused by the disappointment by the post-war trends.

# 1 THE DECAYING BRITISH LANDSCAPE OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

It is a well-known fact the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought radical changes in society, lifestyle, housing or developing landscape. Raymond Williams claims that “rural Britain was subsidiary, and knew that it was subsidiary, from the late nineteenth century.”<sup>9</sup> As a reason for this situation, he mentions “the tumultuous development of the new industrial system.”<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the problem is not in leaving countryside only, but also in destroying it. Even in the early 1930s, T. S. Eliot pointed out the importance of agriculture and warned against massive urbanization.<sup>11</sup> But the climax came after the World War Two. William G. Hoskins intelligibly illustrates what happened with the landscape between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 1950s:

The industrial revolution and the creation of parks around the country houses have taken us down to the later years of the nineteenth century. [...] Of all the changes in the last two generations, only the great reservoirs of water for the industrial cities of the North and Midlands have added anything to the scene that one can contemplate without pain. It is a distasteful subject, but it must be faced for a few moments.

The country houses decay and fall: [...] The house is seized by demolition contractors, its park invaded and churned up by the tractors and trailers of the timber merchant.<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, the architectural trends have changed. The New Brutalism, “that demanded a functional approach toward architectural design,”<sup>13</sup> is typical for this period. The New Brutalism can also be seen as the revival of functionalism:

The Smithsons, Sir Denys Lasdun, and other New Brutalist architects displayed a willful avoidance of polish and elegance in their buildings, in which such structural elements as steel beams and precast concrete slabs are exposed to view and convey a stark, austere rectilinearity.<sup>14</sup>

However, this is not the only architectural change – there was a need of reconstruction of the British cities devastated by German airstrikes, which resulted, for example, in the Greater

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<sup>9</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 248.

<sup>10</sup> Williams, *The Country and the City*, 182.

<sup>11</sup> Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, unabridged republication (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 231.

<sup>12</sup> William George Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955), 231.

<sup>13</sup> “New Brutalism,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 2, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/art/New-Brutalism>.

<sup>14</sup> “New Brutalism,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 2, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/art/New-Brutalism>.

London Plan.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, it resulted in “largely unplanned growth and consequent urban sprawl,”<sup>16</sup> characterized by the rapid extension of cities in the form of low-density residential housing, which brought more importance of private automobiles because of the need of self-reliance in transport, which correlates with an increased energy use, pollution, traffic congestions and also with a decline in community cohesiveness and the fragmentation of remaining natural areas.<sup>17</sup>

The 20th century is accompanied by massive growth of population. A. L. Rowse describes how it affected Cornwall:

The population in 1800 was about 190,000; in 1860 it was near 370,000. That was about the highest for the century, after the decline of copper but before the long decline of tin-mining, when scores of thousands left home for America, Australia, South Africa. In 1900 the population, in spite of natural increase, was down to about 320,000. Today – with the insane population-explosion of our time – it tops 380,000. Too many for such a small area – while half-a-million come into it in the summer!<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, it is visible that not only the population growth, but mainly tourism brought rather negative influence. It emerged with the railway and at first, it brought prosperity, but also caused building monster hotels and the switch from agriculture to the tourist industry. Later, it is described that the massive tourism after the Second World War, the half-a-million mentioned above, resulted in heavy traffic and building poles and wires, which disfigured the landscape.<sup>19</sup> Although tourism is undoubtedly an important source of income even in the recent years,<sup>20</sup> the concurrent changes of landscape can be considered as unacceptably high price for the prosperity.

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<sup>15</sup> “Urban Planning,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 2, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/urban-planning/Postwar-approaches>.

<sup>16</sup> “Urban Planning,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 2, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/urban-planning/Postwar-approaches>.

<sup>17</sup> “Urban Sprawl,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 2, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/urban-sprawl>, paragraph 1.

<sup>18</sup> John Betjeman and Alfred Leslie Rowse, *Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall from Old Photographs* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1974), 53.

<sup>19</sup> John Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall* (London: John Murray, 1984), 33.

<sup>20</sup> “Cornwall,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 15, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Cornwall-unitary-authorithy-England>, paragraph 6.

## 2 TOPOPHILIA

The term ‘topophilia’ is a neologism invented by an English poet, Wystan Hugh Auden and it was first used in an introduction of John Betjeman’s work “Slick but Not Streamlined,” where Auden shows the uniqueness of Betjeman’s writing, because “it [topophilia] rarely attacks professional poets in this country [England].”<sup>21</sup> The meaning of it is “love of place,” which is a direct translation from Greek, but later, it was broadly defined by Yi-Fu Tuan in his 1974 book *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*, where he claims that ‘topophilia’ is “a neologism, useful in that it can be defined broadly to include all of the human being’s affective ties with the material environment. These differ greatly in intensity, subtlety, and mode of expression.”<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the recognition of topophilia can be blurred and subjective because it is based on feelings and not on any exactly measurable basis. According to Auden, “as an emotion, topophilia differs both from the peasant’s possessive passion for his home soil and the regional novelist’s self-conscious limitation of attention to a chosen area.”<sup>23</sup> Thus the ‘love of place’ cannot be a synonym for ‘topophilia.’

First, topophilia is related to aesthetic appreciation, which is illustrated on an example of Sir Kenneth Clark, an art historian:

“Clark believes that as he remembers the facts of the painter’s life and tries to fit the picture in front of him into its place in the development of the artist, his powers of receptivity are gradually renewing themselves; suddenly they make him see a beautiful passage of drawing or color which he would have overlooked had not an intellectual pretext kept his eye unconsciously engaged.”<sup>24</sup>

Although “topo-” indicates the relation to place, the example of painting clearly illustrates the visual perception followed by approving by human aesthetic feeling. On the other hand, the relation between topophilia and geography is undoubtable: “Geography necessarily provides the content of topophilic sentiment.”<sup>25</sup> But that is only the tip of an iceberg. Tuan further explains that this contact is even deeper when it includes emotions: “The most intense aesthetic experiences of nature are likely to catch by surprise. Beauty is felt as the sudden contact with

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<sup>21</sup> Wystan Hugh Auden, *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose, Vol. 2: 1939-1948*, edited by Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), 304.

<sup>22</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1974), 93.

<sup>23</sup> Wystan Hugh Auden, *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose, Vol. 4: 1956-1962*, edited by Edward Mendelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 219.

<sup>24</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 93.

<sup>25</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 247.

an aspect of reality that one has not known before; it is the antithesis of the acquired taste for certain landscapes or the warm feeling for places that one knows well.”<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, according to Tuan, the ‘topophilic feeling’ can also be stimulated by open and enclosed spaces, because an open space is a sign of freedom, raises the chance of adventure and symbolizes light.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, topophilia is not a matter of open spaces only. Tuan further mentions distinct places that “appealed strongly to the human imagination”<sup>28</sup> such as seashore, valley and island. But man-made places can also make an impression on the human imagination, for example cathedrals.<sup>29</sup> The reason why cathedrals deserve an exceptional place is explained by Christian Norberg-Schulz:

The Gothic cathedral belongs to the romantic Medieval town, but transcends its attachment in the natural environment. [...] The cathedral therefore unifies romantic and cosmic qualities, and through its transparent walls the locally interpreted existential meanings of Christianity were transmitted to the town, whose everyday life-world thereby got a cosmic dimension.<sup>30</sup>

Topophilia covers the area of human perception, psychological structures and values. Furthermore, “a person is a biological organism, [...], perception, attitude, and value reflect all three levels of being.”<sup>31</sup> Tuan also explains that there are differences in perception depending on the age – the perception is different in the case of an infant, young child or an older one.<sup>32</sup> Children are unaware of landscape until approximately six years, then they start to perceive landscape mainly from the aesthetic point of view; they recognize elements of landscape, relations between those elements and evaluate them.<sup>33</sup>

Additionally, topophilia focuses also on the approach of exploring a place. According to Auden, “topophilia, however, cannot survive at velocities greater than that of a somewhat rusty bicycle.”<sup>34</sup> This denotes that it is vital to perceive the surroundings conscientiously; it is not possible to have the topophilic feeling to a place when one is moving so fast, for example when travelling by car.

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<sup>26</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 94.

<sup>27</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 27.

<sup>28</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 115.

<sup>29</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 137.

<sup>30</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979), 73.

<sup>31</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 245.

<sup>32</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 54-57.

<sup>33</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 56.

<sup>34</sup> Auden, *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose, Volume 2: 1939-1948*, 304-305.

## 2.1 PLACE AND PLACELESSNESS

It is vital to denote what a 'place' is. Edward C. Relph in *Place and Placelessness* claims:

Places are fusions of human and natural order and they are the significant centres of our immediate experiences of the world. They are defined less by unique locations, landscape, and communities than by the focusing of experiences and intentions onto particular settings. Places are not abstractions or concepts, but are directly experienced phenomena of the lived-world and hence are full with meanings, with real objects, and with ongoing activities. They are important sources of individual and communal identity, and are often profound centres of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties. Indeed our relationships with places are just as necessary, varied, and sometimes perhaps just as unpleasant, as our relationships with other people.<sup>35</sup>

It is clear that 'place' does not represent just a location, but it examines one's experience and feelings. Norberg-Schulz confirms:

We mean a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and colour. Together these things determine an "environmental character," which is the essence of place. In general a place is given as such a character or "atmosphere". A place is therefore a qualitative, "total" phenomenon, which we cannot reduce to any of its properties, such as spatial relationships, without losing its concrete nature out of sight.<sup>36</sup>

Based on Norberg-Schulz's definition, place is strongly connected with feelings. Tuan mentions that "topophilia connects place with sentiment,"<sup>37</sup> and further informs that the sensory stimuli are potentially infinite.<sup>38</sup> Thus it is possible to claim that place have a strong relation with experience and often subjective feelings. Relph also mentions:

An authentic attitude to place is thus understood to be a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places [...]. It comes from a full awareness of places for what they are as products of man's intentions and the meaningful settings for human activities, or a from a profound and unselfconscious identity with place.<sup>39</sup>

'Place' has just been examined, but it is important to define 'placelessness' as well. About 'placelessness,' Relph claims:

Placelessness describes both an environment without significant places and the underlying attitude which does not acknowledge significance in places. It

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<sup>35</sup> Edward Charles Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 141.

<sup>36</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979), 6-8.

<sup>37</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 113.

<sup>38</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 113.

<sup>39</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 64.

reaches back into the deepest levels of place, cutting roots, eroding symbols, replacing diversity with uniformity and experiential order with conceptual order.<sup>40</sup>

Relph further mentions Stephen Kurtz' statement about Howard Johnson's restaurants: "Nothing calls attention to itself; it is all remarkably unremarkable [...]. You have seen it, heard it, experienced it all before, [...] you have seen and experienced nothing [...]."<sup>41</sup> Another example of placelessness mentioned by Relph is "roads, railways, airports, cutting across the landscape rather than developing it [...]."<sup>42</sup> Therefore, 'placelessness' can be clarified as destruction of uniqueness of a specific *place* and its replacement by a uniform entity.

## 2.2 INSIDENESS AND OUTSIDENESS

The distinction of a place is also a matter of one's relation to the place, if he/she lives there, or is a visitor etc. Edward C. Relph defines the terms 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness': "To be inside a place is to belong with it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place."<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, he claims that "the most fundamental form of insiderness is that in which a place is experienced without deliberate and selfconscious reflection yet is full with significance."<sup>44</sup> He also explains that it is possible to observe a place from the distance as a traveler, but only being inside of the place results in experiencing, when it is possible to become a part of the place.<sup>45</sup>

This distinction can also be compared with the definition by Tuan, who claims that a native perceives the environment from a different perspective than a visitor: "The visitor's evaluation of environment is essentially aesthetic. It is an outsider's view. The outsider judges by appearance, by some formal canon of beauty."<sup>46</sup>

Tuan further explains it on an example of the settling of America – by the colonizers, the wilderness was seen as a place of threat; there were fear of the Indians, predators and demons.<sup>47</sup> Regarding the Relph's definition, it can be stated that colonizers from Tuan's example are the case of outsiderness, while the Indians who are familiar with their environment are *inside*.

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<sup>40</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 143.

<sup>41</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 143.

<sup>42</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 90.

<sup>43</sup> Edward Charles Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 49.

<sup>44</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 55.

<sup>45</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 49.

<sup>46</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 64.

<sup>47</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 63.

To summarize it, to be an insider means to implicitly know that this is the particular *place* where one belongs to, to understand and feel all the meanings of it. On the contrary, outsiders judge a place from an aesthetic point of view, they are usually visitors. However, Relph explains it has a negative impact when an outsider starts to influence a place which he is not familiar with:

The landscapes of tourism are typified by what J. B. Jackson [...] has called 'other-directed architecture' - that is, architecture which is deliberately directed towards outsiders, spectators, passers-by, and above all consumers. The total effect of such architecture is the creation of other-directed places which suggest almost nothing of the people living and working in them [...].<sup>48</sup>

Hence, it is obvious that there is a connection between place or placelessness and insiderness or outsiderness; outsiders in this case make placelessness, because they do not have anything in common with that particular location.

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<sup>48</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 93.



### 3 NOSTALGIA

E. C. Relph explains: “In 1678 the word ‘nostalgia’ was coined by a Swiss medical student, Johannes Hofer, to describe an illness that was characterised by such symptoms as insomnia, anorexia, palpitations, stupor, fever, and especially persistent thinking of home.”<sup>49</sup> Moreover, Santesso provides a definition by J. W. Goethe, for whom it is “reviv[ing] an innocent past with sweet melancholy.”<sup>50</sup> Santesso further states that nostalgia is “not a desire for the past but rather idealization,”<sup>51</sup> and he also mentions Hofer and indicates moderately different year of the invention of the word ‘nostalgia’ – 1688.<sup>52</sup> What both authors have in common in their explanations is the fact that nostalgia is often being referred to as *homesickness*, but Relph explains it is only a weak synonym for nostalgia.<sup>53</sup> In fact, nostalgia is of a broader meaning, for example, it “demonstrates the importance of attachment to the place was once well-recognised.”<sup>54</sup> Santesso also provides a general definition, which is in the context of the eighteenth century, but it shares similarities regardless the time period: “Nostalgia is first and foremost a response to a present lack, need or desire [...]”<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, it can be the longing for childhood pleasures and innocence, sentimental longing or regrets, or for something no longer available.<sup>56</sup> Santesso further mentions Alexander Pope, whose works “strengthened an influential link between nostalgia for lost rural life and a longing for lost childhood.”<sup>57</sup> To found more links between the childhood and nature, Santesso quotes F. Schiller:

It is because nature in us has disappeared from humanity and we rediscover her in her truth only outside it, in the inanimate world. . . . For this reason the feeling by which we are attached to nature is so closely related to the feeling with which we mourn the lost age of childhood and childlike innocence. Our childhood is the only undisfigured nature that we still encounter in civilized mankind, hence it is no wonder if every trace of the nature outside us leads us back to our childhood.<sup>58</sup>

Therefore, the similarity between the childhood and the nature is in the fact that both is genuine, habitual and not civilized, so the civilized adults tend to find contentment in the

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<sup>49</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 41.

<sup>50</sup> Aaron Santesso, *Careful Longing: The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 13.

<sup>51</sup> Santesso, *Careful Longing*, 13.

<sup>52</sup> Santesso, *Careful Longing*, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 41.

<sup>54</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 41.

<sup>55</sup> Santesso, *Careful Longing*, 189.

<sup>56</sup> Santesso, *Careful Longing*, 15.

<sup>57</sup> Santesso, *Careful Longing*, 55.

<sup>58</sup> Santesso, *Careful Longing*, 55.

unaffected environment – which the childhood and the nature is. However, this can be seen as the beginning of the concept of the *noble savage* – “an idealized concept of uncivilized man, who symbolizes the innate goodness of one not exposed to the corrupting influences of civilization.”<sup>59</sup>

However, nostalgia does not require an actual past experience, which Santesso supports by the example of Arcadia and the Golden Age - they do not represent a real time.<sup>60</sup> Thus it is possible to ignite the nostalgic feeling about something never experienced.

In conclusion, nostalgia is longing, desire or need for something which is no longer available, usually in the past. People often miss their childhood because of the lack of innocence. Childhood is also connected to country, because it shares similarities in terms of sincerity and originality; it seems to be pure in comparison with the civilization - that can be seen as a Romantic element. Lastly, nostalgia cannot necessarily be based on real experience, it can be felt to something unreal.

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<sup>59</sup> “Noble Savage,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/art/noble-savage>

<sup>60</sup> Santesso, *Careful Longing*, 54-55.

## 4 THE LANDSCAPE OF BETJEMAN'S CORNWALL

Cornwall is the most south-western part of England, according to John Betjeman, looking like reversed Italy. In fact, the climate makes Cornwall to be Italy of the Great Britain.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the landscape of Cornwall is far from being monotonous. Although it is a small part of England, Betjeman calls Cornwall “a little land on its own,”<sup>62</sup> because in his opinion, through its range of landscape types, Cornwall can remind visiting various countries. The aim of this chapter is to explore how the poet perceives the local rural and urban landscape and to identify signs of *topophilia* in his works.

### 4.1 NATURE

First thing that impresses Betjeman is its separateness and otherness. It is mostly surrounded by sea except the Tamar Valley creating the symbolic borderline between Cornwall and Devon. Although Cornwall is a part of England, for Betjeman it was different because of the feeling that going to Cornwall is like crossing a border between two states: “When I cross into England myself, particularly up-river over the ancient bridge at Gunnislake, I always feel like presenting my passport.”<sup>63</sup>

Betjeman's conviction of Cornwall's otherness was partly the result of his appreciation of lower density of population and more self-contained lifestyle:

When I first came to Cornwall over fifty years ago, as a small boy, we drove the seven miles from the station in a horse-brake; there was only one motor car in the parish and this could not attempt the steeper hills. Roads were only partially metalled and in the lesser lanes the rock showed through on the surface. Everyone in the village had oil lamps and candles. A journey to the nearest town was a day's expedition. There were still many country people who had never been to London...<sup>64</sup>

From this quotation, it is noticeable that Cornwall at the age of Betjeman's childhood was even less developed in terms of fewer opportunities of transport and no electricity, as well as no travel experience of the locals. This excerpt also describes the surface only. Betjeman does not indicate any 'internal' qualities of Cornwall and local people – the description is not based

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<sup>61</sup> John Betjeman and Alfred Leslie Rowse, *Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall from Old Photographs* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1974), VII.

<sup>62</sup> Betjeman and Rowse, *Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall from Old Photographs*, VII.

<sup>63</sup> Betjeman and Rowse, *Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall from Old Photographs*, VII.

<sup>64</sup> John Betjeman, *The Best of Betjeman*, selected by John Guest, unabridged republication (London: John Murray, 1978; London: John Murray, 2006), 194.

on a long-term experience. That is a typical visitor's point of view, which Yi-Fu Tuan describes as "a matter of using his eyes to compose pictures."<sup>65</sup> At this point, Betjeman does not have any deeper experience with Cornwall, thus his point of view is only that of a visitor. It can also be approached through Edward Relph's term 'outsideness,' which denotes looking at the place from an existential 'distance,' not experiencing it nor being a part of it.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, the outsideness of Betjeman is confirmed by his own words, when he calls himself a visitor in "One Man's County."<sup>67</sup>

Another aspect of Betjeman's attribution of the quality of otherness to Cornwall is the local natural landscape. In fact, it is one of the major aspects of Cornwall which impresses Betjeman so glaringly in his writing. The impression can be seen in his poem "Cornish Cliffs," where he regards Cornwall as more natural, unaffected by human:

More than in gardened Surrey, nature spills  
A wealth of heather, kidney-vetch and squills  
Over these long-defended Cornish hills.<sup>68</sup>

This excerpt reveals Betjeman's admiration of Cornish nature. The placement of three plants in one line shows there is a considerable amount of vegetation that grows naturally. Betjeman compares it with Surrey, where people maintain their gardens, yet they are still not as beautiful as raw Cornwall. Furthermore, it is possible to find Betjeman's sensation for such ordinary vegetation of Cornwall throughout his works. For example, he often points out tamarisk<sup>69</sup>, or he even mentions the gentle connection between local buildings and the natural world: "Leads inland to a usual Cornish scene – / Slate cottages with sycamore between, [...]."<sup>70</sup>

There is no doubt Betjeman had a strong inclination to the countryside. Moreover, Betjeman is considered to be one of the spokesmen of post-war British ruralism,<sup>71</sup> and his writings about the Cornish countryside can be one of the reasons why. Yi-Fu Tuan explains that in the eighteenth century during the Industrial Revolution, there appeared attempts to escape from the chaotic city to countryside – the roles of country and city had switched and it was the

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<sup>65</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1974), 63.

<sup>66</sup> Edward Charles Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 49.

<sup>67</sup> John Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall* (London: John Murray, 1984), 20.

<sup>68</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 63.

<sup>69</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 13, 90, 92, 95.

<sup>70</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 65.

<sup>71</sup> Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, 231.

countryside that started to symbolize order; however, this is the emergence of Romanticism.<sup>72</sup> R. Williams, in the context of the times of W. Wordsworth, claims that “a working country, that is to say, was becoming, yet again but in a new way, a place of physical and spiritual regeneration.”<sup>73</sup> Thus it is possible to state that Betjeman had a romantic, antimodern propensity.

It was already mentioned that Betjeman often refers to natural factors and that he explicitly names plants and trees. When describing the Bodmin Moor, he naturally mentions wooded valleys, bluebells and anemones, which supports his admiration of nature. Yet, in his writing about the Bodmin Moor, he goes further. He focuses on the connection between man and landscape, their cohabitation. Cornish moors were, as he describes, full of people.<sup>74</sup> More precisely, he describes Bodmin Moor as more than two hundred kilometers of “that sweet brown home of Celtic saints, that haunted, thrilling land so full of ghosts of ancient peoples whose hut circles, beehive dwellings and burial mounds jut out above the ling and heather.”<sup>75</sup> The granite walls, typical aspect of Bodmin Moor, worked as field boundaries and are dated probably in the Iron Age,<sup>76</sup> which is another sign of the cohabitation between man and landscape. As well as in the case of gentle connection between buildings and nature when describing a typical Cornish scene with sycamore and slate cottages mentioned before, Betjeman shows the relation between human and natural environment, additionally, he also refers to the ancient civilization. William G. Hoskins claims:

“Chysauster is most exciting, even to those whose interest in prehistory is flickering holiday affair, for here we have a village, still substantially intact, of houses built of granite dry-walling still standing to a height of several feet. [...] Other Iron Age village-sites are known in England, but none is so revealing and impressive to the layman as these two sites [Chysauster and Porthmeor] in western Cornwall.”<sup>77</sup>

It can be argued that in the same way as Hoskins, Betjeman was impressed by the historicity of the place, because the ancient settlement of Cornwall is another point in which Cornwall is different – for example, it was Christianized earlier than rest of England.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 248.

<sup>73</sup> Williams, *The City and The Country*, 252.

<sup>74</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 22.

<sup>75</sup> John Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall* (London: John Murray, 1984), 59.

<sup>76</sup> William George Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955), 6.

<sup>77</sup> Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 21.

<sup>78</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 22.

For that reasons, it can be assumed that Betjeman does not celebrate the nature only. He can also reveal the sensitive relation between man and nature – mainly in the past.

## 4.2 RAILWAY

The Betjeman's first journey to Cornwall was done by train.<sup>79</sup> In combination with his sensitivity for landscape, it is possible to presume this had a strong impact on him. He writes about the local railway in exalting terms typical for a topophilic subject: "The five miles beside broadening Camel to Padstow is the most beautiful train journey I know."<sup>80</sup> Tuan confirms that the topophilic feeling can be stimulated by open-spaces, because they tend to be experienced in terms of freedom, adventure and light.<sup>81</sup> In addition to this, Betjeman also knew stations in Launceston, Egloskerry, Otterham, Tresmeer and Camelford by heart.<sup>82</sup> Later, he indicates himself as a railway fanatic<sup>83</sup> and points out the fact that it was possible to get to Padstow from Waterloo Station, London any day.<sup>84</sup> But it would be wrong to connect his fondness for Cornish railway with just enthusiasm for trains. After illustrating his ability to know the stations by heart, he continues with their description where he mentions the slate and granite waiting rooms, oil lamps and veronica bushes.<sup>85</sup> Again, he could find a piece of nature in the presence of slate, granite and veronica bush. The material of the buildings shows the typical local building constituent. Then Betjeman continues with describing the train journey, those the most beautiful five miles:

Then the train goes fast downhill through high cuttings and a wooded valley. We round a bend and there is the flat marsh of the Camel, there are little rows of blackish-green cottages along the river at Egloshayle and we are at Wadebridge, next stop Padstow. [...] See it on a fine evening at high tide with golden lights [...] The smell of fish and seaweed, the crying of gulls and the warm, moist, west country air and valerian growing wild on slate walls.<sup>86</sup>

The quotation is a typical example of Betjeman's topophilia. There are examples of open spaces, which "can also stimulate topophilic feeling,"<sup>87</sup> but it is essential to notice the description of the multi-sensory perception – visual and olfactory - also an essential part of

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<sup>79</sup> John Betjeman, *The Best of Betjeman*, 194.

<sup>80</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 1.

<sup>81</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 27.

<sup>82</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 68.

<sup>83</sup> Bevis Hillier, *John Betjeman: New Fame, New Love* (London: John Murray, 2003), 260.

<sup>84</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 68.

<sup>85</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 68.

<sup>86</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 68.

<sup>87</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 27.

topophilia. On the example of Frank Conroy, Tuan illustrates that children are able to enjoy perceiving such ordinary things as a gas station, and of course, by senses as seeing, hearing and breathing.<sup>88</sup> And that can be compared to the Betjeman's description of the train journey mentioned above, because it shares the same signs. Moreover, according to Tuan's definition, the Betjeman's description seems to be written from a child's point of view, which even underlines the extent to which Betjeman was impressed, when he was young.

### 4.3 ARCHITECTURE, CITIES AND INDUSTRY

It was already mentioned that Betjeman's point of view reveals signs of romantic sensibility. In Encyclopædia Britannica, the most characteristic attitudes are listed:

Among the characteristic attitudes of Romanticism were the following: a deepened appreciation of the beauties of nature; a general exaltation of emotion over reason and of the senses over intellect; a turning in upon the self and a heightened examination of human personality and its moods and mental potentialities; [...] an emphasis upon imagination as a gateway to transcendent experience and spiritual truth; an obsessive interest in folk culture, national and ethnic cultural origins, and the medieval era; and a predilection for the exotic, the remote, the mysterious, the weird, the occult, the monstrous, the diseased, and even the satanic.<sup>89</sup>

It is clear that Betjeman shows particular signs such as the appreciation of nature. On the contrary, he shows his admiration not only for raw nature, as it was shown on the examples of Cornish hills and their vegetation, but also for the connection of nature and cultivated land, and, however, for buildings too. Therefore, it is not possible to classify him as a pure Romantic who escapes into wilderness.

When John Betjeman studied, he also learned about architecture.<sup>90</sup> And the architecture of Cornwall later appeared in Betjeman's works. Cornwall does offer unique architectural sights because of the extensive use of local slate and granite. Betjeman was well aware of this: "Slate... the other chief building material of Cornwall... designed into patterns and graded into shapes."<sup>91</sup> In the 16th century, most of Cornish churches were rebuilt by using granite, the first chief building material, and Betjeman admires the builders with respect:

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<sup>88</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 57.

<sup>89</sup> "Romanticism," Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed January 24, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Romanticism>, paragraph 2.

<sup>90</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, XIV.

<sup>91</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 24.

„Almost every Cornish church was rebuilt... and rebuilt in splendid style, of that hardest and most intractable material, granite. Look at it close, to see how it weathers. Look it in a quarry on Bodmin moor, and see how hard it is to work, even today. Watch how they split it. [...] Remember all the effort when you look at the hard surface of granite. Remember how hard is to make the slightest impression. And after you've been watching that, look at the miracle of Cornish carving.”<sup>92</sup>

From this example, it can be seen not only the beauty of local architecture, but also something about people's characters. As it was mentioned before, Cornwall is perceived as another country. And the inhabitants are also specific. Betjeman describes them as religious, practical and skilled people with a gift for business.<sup>93</sup>

John Betjeman in *Betjeman's Cornwall* also describes towns and cities. The first is Padstow, a town, which is possible to reach from London by train. Betjeman claims there are more popular places in Cornwall, especially among tourists, but he also adds Padstow is “farther in spirit even than Land's End”<sup>94</sup> and shows his admiration for this place. Even in this prosaic work, he does not forget to focus on the sensual perception: “The smell of fish and seaweed, the crying of the gulls and the warm, moist, west country air and valerian growing wild on slate walls.”<sup>95</sup> Tuan in *Topophilia* describes: “The visitor's evaluation of environment is essentially aesthetic. It is an outsider's view. The outsider judges by appearance, by some formal canon of beauty.”<sup>96</sup> Thus Padstow is another example of *outsideness*, because Betjeman evaluates on the base of senses only. Then he further informs about his favorite approach to the town, which is by ferry and he liked it most since he was a child.<sup>97</sup> This is another sign of topophilia, “the locus of memories.”<sup>98</sup>

Besides Padstow, there is a chapter regarding Looe in *Betjeman's Cornwall*. As well as in the chapter “Padstow,” Betjeman describes the local architecture – slate and granite buildings and narrow streets.<sup>99</sup> What is different about Looe is the fact that Betjeman starts the chapter with a description of route to Looe, which is of a rural character; there is a note about farms, fields, unimportant lanes, meadows smelling of mint etc.<sup>100</sup> This shows what Betjeman prefers,

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<sup>92</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 23-24.

<sup>93</sup> Betjeman, *The Best of Betjeman*, 195.

<sup>94</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 68.

<sup>95</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 69.

<sup>96</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 64.

<sup>97</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 69.

<sup>98</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 93.

<sup>99</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 83, also seen 69.

<sup>100</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 83.



although he is not criticizing city in general, he obviously inclines to the preference of countryside. Moreover, his opinion about the first visit of Looe by road is negative; he criticizes consumerism and the appearance of the town, which is full of cars and car parks.<sup>101</sup> Although it is concerning mainly the criticism of new trends in society, it also shows something about the town – and Looe is seen as a not so positive place. In addition to this, Betjeman shows disappointment about modern buildings, he refuses bungalows, especially the red roofs that “look so ugly in the slate and granite of old Cornwall.”<sup>102</sup> However, Betjeman, generally thought as a defender of Victorian period, calls a Victorian church in Looe ugly and consequently, he adds information that “the old parish church of St Martin’s, a splendid building, is more than a mile up among the hills.”<sup>103</sup> This shows Betjeman’s preference for ‘traditional,’ older buildings made of slate and granite, which are typical for Cornwall.

It was mentioned before how Betjeman was impressed by the 16<sup>th</sup> century rebuilding of churches – again, by using granite and requiring undeniable effort. Betjeman admires churches in general, but not only from the architectural point of view, but also from the spiritual, as it is described in the poem “Cornwall in Childhood:”

In the cool shade of interlacing boughs,  
I found St Ervan’s partly ruined church.  
Its bearded Rector, holding in one hand  
A gong-stick, in the other hand a book,  
Struck, while he read, a heavy-sounding bell,  
Hung from an elm bough by the churchyard gate,  
‘Better come in. It’s time for Evensong.’<sup>104</sup>

This excerpt shows that even a partly ruined church can be beautiful. A church can be seen, with an explanation by Relph, as a place with ‘great imageability,’ because it shares the signs such as centrality, remarkable size, exceptional architecture and the association with important events.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, Relph also claims that “people are their place and a place is its people.”<sup>106</sup> Based on these facts, it is possible to allege that Betjeman was influenced by churches,

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<sup>101</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 84.

<sup>102</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 85.

<sup>103</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 85.

<sup>104</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 16.

<sup>105</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 35.

<sup>106</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 34.

including this particular one, mainly by their characteristics connected with people and soul, although the importance of the architectural point of view has also its place.

Another sign of human influence is mining. For Cornwall, tin and china clay mining is typical. In central Cornwall, near St Austell can be found almost a lunar landscape signaling the china-clay industry.<sup>107</sup> And, according to Hoskins, the tin-mining, another important aspect of the local industry, caused equally striking changes to the landscape. He indicates the windowless engine-houses, monolithic chimney stacks, ruined cottages and stony spoil hills.<sup>108</sup> Betjeman's point of view can be seen to agree with Hoskins's one:

“For all its empty open look this desolate country is dangerous to walk on. Underneath it is a honeycomb of hundreds of miles of passages in the hot granite. Some shafts go down 2000 feet. One false step and you might find yourself plunged into black, hot silence. A silence always hangs about St Day. It was one of the chief mining towns in Cornwall.”<sup>109</sup>

In addition, Betjeman is also criticizing the living conditions of miners and their poor families, but besides he adds his opinion that “St Day is now the least spoiled town in Cornwall.”<sup>110</sup> His next point is the china clay industry, which he concludes with a comment: “It's hard to say whether the china clay industry or the tourist trade, we visitors, have done more to the natural beauty of Cornwall.”<sup>111</sup>

#### 4.4 BETJEMAN'S TOPOPHILIA

Wystan Hugh Auden believes that John Betjeman is a ‘master of toponophilia’ for his ‘visual imagination.’<sup>112</sup> He further reveres him as ‘the genuine tophile:’

Though he may often, like Mr Betjeman, know a lot about architecture, the genuine tophile can always be distinguished from an educated tourist or an art historian by the uniquely personal character of his predilections; a branch railroad can be as precious to him as a Roman Camp, a neo-Tudor tea-shop as interesting as a Gothic cathedral.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 26.

<sup>108</sup> Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 177.

<sup>109</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 26.

<sup>110</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 26.

<sup>111</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 26.

<sup>112</sup> Wystan Hugh Auden, *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue*, edited by Alan Jacobs (New York: Random House, 1947; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), XXIV

<sup>113</sup> Wystan Hugh Auden, *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose, Vol. 4: 1956-1962*, edited by Edward Mendelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 219.

From the excerpt, it is visible that Betjeman, although an *outsider*, can perceive surroundings in a significantly more detailed and enthusiastic way than a common tourist. Auden also points out the fact that Betjeman can find beauty in a detail which can be easily overlooked: “[...] when he asked me to meet him at the buffet in Marylebone Station, “the only railway terminus in London,” as he informed me, “where you can hear birds singing.” (It was true. You could.)”<sup>114</sup> It has just been mentioned how Betjeman perceives locations in Cornwall, for example railway, and the result is the indication of the topophilic feeling in his writings. Specifically, Betjeman observes open spaces, one of the stimulants of the topophilic feeling, for example when describing the railway surroundings – it can be seen that when describing railway, Betjeman focuses more on surroundings such as valleys than the railway itself, or he writes about open spaces when describing Cornish cliffs and he further encourages the reader to watch the Atlantic – another open space.<sup>115</sup>

However, Betjeman enjoys not only open natural spaces, but also closed spaces made by human; mostly churches. Before summarizing facts about Betjeman’s enthusiasm for churches, it would be appropriate to mention Bodmin Moor, because it is halfway between natural open spaces and human-made closed spaces; as it was mentioned, Betjeman describes the nature of Bodmin Moor in terms of vegetation, but also points on the ancient civilization that had lived there<sup>116</sup> and whose relicts are, according to Hoskins, visible even today [in the 50’s].<sup>117</sup>

Back to the description of churches, the churches can be seen as an evidence that Betjeman is impressed not only by the natural entities, but also by buildings. Of course, Betjeman describes cities in general, as it was already explained, yet the churches are the most highlighted example. Churches also show the connection between a place and people, as Relph describes,<sup>118</sup> and even more, Betjeman himself sees churches as “even more varied than landscape.”<sup>119</sup> It was also introduced the amount of effort of the workers when rebuilding Cornish churches. Thus, it is possible to affirm that Betjeman’s topophilia is based both on the aesthetic perception as well as on the connection with people and souls.

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<sup>114</sup> Wystan Hugh Auden, *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose, Vol. 4: 1956-1962*, edited by Edward Mendelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 216.

<sup>115</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 20.

<sup>116</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 59, also seen 23.

<sup>117</sup> Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 22.

<sup>118</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 34.

<sup>119</sup> Betjeman, *Best of Betjeman*, 172.

However, one of the reasons of Betjeman's ability to perceive the landscape in detail lies in his favor for explorations on a bicycle. Auden believes that topophilia survives only at velocities of an old rusty bicycle and less, and he mentions the bicycle because of Betjeman's obsession with that vehicle.<sup>120</sup> That means it is necessary to move slowly in order to capture all the features of a particular *place*, and that is exactly the way of Betjeman's explorations. He recalls them for example in *Betjeman's Cornwall*:

I shall never forget that first visit – bicycling to the inland and unvisited parts of Cornwall from my home by sea. The trees at home were few and thin, sliced and leaning away from the fierce Atlantic gales, the walls of the high Cornish hedges were made of slate [...]. On a morning after a storm, blown yellow spume from Atlantic rollers would be trembling on inland fields. Then, as huge hill followed huge hill and I sweated as I pushed my bicycle up and heart-in-mouth went swirling down into the next valley, the hedges became higher, the lanes ran down ravines, the plant seemed lush [...].<sup>121</sup>

On a bicycle, Betjeman was able to fully perceive the landscape that ignited the topophilic feeling in him, also in combination with the physical exertion, it resulted in euphoria that is visible in the excerpt, where he notices the differences between the landscape near the seashore and the landscape of inland, and where admires the steep hills, slate and vegetation.

In conclusion, Betjeman's *topophilic mastery* is a result of several factors. The first one is his sensitivity for landscape, paying attention to details such as plants and visual, auditory and olfactory perception of the surroundings. The next is the fact that he is able to describe the people's characters from the architecture, for example in the case of granite carving when describing the churches. His obsession with bicycle and train causes that he can discern various elements creating the *place* patiently, which would not be probable to realize from a car. It can also be concluded that in a city vs. country question, Betjeman is not biased against city, although countryside is slightly preferred. The ugliness, which was illustrated on the examples of Looe or mines, is caused by consumerism and tourism in the first case and by the industry in the second one; city itself is not seen as ugly. Contrastingly, Betjeman expresses his enthusiasm for Padstow, which deserves his attention for its spirit and for the fact Padstow is his *locus of memories*.

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<sup>120</sup> Auden, *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose, Volume 2: 1939-1948*, 304-305.

<sup>121</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 59.

## 5 BETJEMAN'S ESCAPISM

It is a well-known fact that a significant number of artists refused the changes that the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought. William George Hoskins, although more a geographer than an artist, claims that “especially since the year 1914, every single change in the English landscape has either uglified it or destroyed its meaning, or both.”<sup>122</sup> He notes, for example, decaying country houses, demolition of old hedges or building airfields – in general, damaging the “immemorial landscape of English countryside,”<sup>123</sup> the phenomenon that has been observable from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as it is described in the first chapter. Furthermore, Hoskins is even more radical when describing the post-war situation:

[...] England of the arterial by-pass, treeless and stinking of diesel oil, murderous with lorries; England of the bombing-range wherever was once silence, as on Otmoor or the marshlands of Lincolnshire; England of battle-training areas on the Breckland heaths, and tanks crashing through empty ruined Wiltshire villages; England of high explosive falling upon the prehistoric monuments of Dartmoor. Barbaric England of the scientists, the military men, and the politicians: Let us turn away and contemplate the past before all is lost to the vandals.<sup>124</sup>

Hoskins's criticism of the modern [post-war] society is justifiably comparable with those of John Betjeman's. The aim of this chapter is to describe what Betjeman loathes in the post-war Britain and why, what his reactions look like and to identify his personal background. The next half of the chapter examines Betjeman's nostalgia and discovers it throughout his works.

### 5.1 BETJEMAN AND CONTEMPORANEITY

Although Betjeman is not explicitly criticizing the militarization as Hoskins does, there are similarities such as destroying countryside and the distaste for heavy traffic in his opinions. His disinclination to the heavy traffic can be seen in his description of visiting Looe:

Motor coaches from Manchester, new private cars like sleek sausages [...], there they stretched along the quays in thousands. Wherever there was a space in either Looe for a car park there *was* a car park. And it was full. You could hardly hear the wail of seagulls above the dance music relayed from wireless sets in the new motor-cars.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 231.

<sup>123</sup> Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 231.

<sup>124</sup> Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 232.

<sup>125</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 84.

Additionally, this excerpt shows not only the criticism of the presence of an extreme number of cars, but also the new lifestyle – the transistor radio, which is a typical feature of the post-war consumerism, portable and cheap enough, was introduced in the 1950s.<sup>126</sup> And in this case, the presence of loud music disturbs Betjeman from perceiving the environment. For Betjeman, it is typical to find beauty in a small detail, such as hearing the birds and he was praised for this ability, for example by Auden,<sup>127</sup> as it is mentioned in the previous chapter, and, unfortunately, the loud music negatively affects the whole place.

Another reason why traffic became so massive even in the post-war Cornwall is the tourist industry. Betjeman, however, is not so strictly against tourism. Although the tourist industry, which emerged when the railway to Cornwall was built, caused for example that monster hotels appeared, he sees tourism as positive, because it brought prosperity and security to Cornwall. In his opinion, the most harmful were the spreading of electricity and enlarging the number of motor cars.<sup>128</sup> On the other hand, he explicitly claims that tourism harmed the natural beauty of Cornwall as well as the mining industry did.<sup>129</sup> Thus, it can be assumed that tourism before the World War Two had brought positive influence, but after the war the age of consumerism, guided by phenomenal growth of tourism, increasing number of vehicles, building electric poles, which were “clumsily arranged,”<sup>130</sup> was so striking that it brought tourism for Betjeman to an unbearable limit. Contrastingly, Betjeman was writing *Shell Guides*, which were supporting that tourism he is averse to. The first *Shell Guide* was describing Cornwall, because he knew it well, and it was released in 1934<sup>131</sup> - at the interwar period, before the emergence of consumerism and of course, the unbounded growth of tourism. This is another evidence that he started to dislike tourism after the World War Two.

It is illustrated on the example of bungalows in the previous chapter that Betjeman was also disappointed by modern trends in housing, and not only in Cornwall: “These large areas of semi-detached houses, built by private speculators or councils, have been eating up our agricultural land since 1920.”<sup>132</sup> This is another evidence that Betjeman disapproves the change of landscape, in this case the *urban sprawl* - the seizure of landscape, which was, and should

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<sup>126</sup> “Transistor,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed January 27, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/technology/transistor>, paragraph 16.

<sup>127</sup> Auden, *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose, Vol. 4: 1956-1962*, 216.

<sup>128</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 33.

<sup>129</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 26.

<sup>130</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 33.

<sup>131</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, 71-73.

<sup>132</sup> Betjeman, *Best of Betjeman*, 189.

be used for agricultural purposes. He also criticizes another effect of the *urban sprawl*, which is increasing isolation between the people living in suburbs. Betjeman claims: “People are moving out of the crowded early-Victorian industrial lanes and terraces, into little houses of their own, each with its little patch of garden at the back and front, each isolated from its neighbour by social convention, [...]”.<sup>133</sup> It is clear that Betjeman prefers the Victorian way of housing instead of the modern *urban sprawl*, which is characterized by growing self-reliance and the extensive use of cars,<sup>134</sup> which is the kind of transport he loathes. Furthermore, the urban sprawl was not the only problem. Another negative phenomenon in architecture is caused by the massive tourism and that is building hotels that are inappropriate in a particular landscape:

Tourism is an [sic] homogenizing influence and its effects everywhere seem to be the same – the destruction of the local and regional landscape that very often initiated the tourism, and its replacement by conventional tourist architecture and synthetic landscapes and pseudo-places.<sup>135</sup>

Therefore, it is unambiguous that tourism is a multidimensional problem.

Another sign of consumerism, which John Betjeman shows disfavor about, is pre-packed food. To express his disgust, he uses word ‘synthetic:’ “Wasps gnawed at synthetic cakes in cafés.”<sup>136</sup> Additionally, in “Back from Australia,” Betjeman also focuses on the taste: “The packaged food tastes neutrally of clay.”<sup>137</sup>

Relph in *Place and Placelessness* describes mass culture as uniform:

In “masscult” fashions and designs come from above to the people, that is to say, they are formulated by manufacturers, [...]. They are not developed and formulated by the people themselves. Uniform products and places are created for people of supposedly uniform needs and tastes, or perhaps vice versa.<sup>138</sup>

Although this excerpt discusses mainly fashion and design, the influence of mass production is visible in the ‘synthetic’ food mentioned above as well – those cakes are also made by a manufacturer, they are not developed by people themselves, they are uniform.

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<sup>133</sup> Betjeman, *Best of Betjeman*, 189.

<sup>134</sup> “Urban Sprawl,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 2, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/urban-sprawl>, paragraph 1.

<sup>135</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 93.

<sup>136</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 84.

<sup>137</sup> Betjeman, *Best of Betjeman*, 115.

<sup>138</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 92.

All the aspects of the negatively seen evolution mentioned above are, according to Relph, the aspects of the mass culture, which is also described as a part of *placelessness* because of its inauthentic attitude, uniformity and lack of originality.<sup>139</sup>

In conclusion, the changes after World War Two caused Betjeman a serious disillusionment and this is, in all likelihood, one of the causes why he started finding contentment in the past. However, those years were accompanied by a dispute with his son Paul, who wanted to be “himself and not JB’s son.”<sup>140</sup> On August 28, 1956, the date of John Betjeman’s 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, Paul wrote a letter headed “The 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of a failure,” addressed to Paul’s mother, which is another indication of the dispute.<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, John Betjeman himself started to notice signals of his age such his bald.<sup>142</sup> He also mentions his age in his writings:

The bear who sits above my bed  
More aged [sic] now he is to see,  
His woolen eyes have thinner thread,  
But still he seems to say to me,  
In double-doom notes, like a knell:  
‘You’re half a century nearer Hell.’<sup>143</sup>

Hillier further claims:

In the second of his columns, John wrote defensively: ‘I suppose nearly everything I have written this week [before October 29, 1954] can be called “nostalgic.” It is a scientific word for “sentimental” and sounds like a form of catarrh. [...] I regard “nostalgic” as a term of praise, myself, for it implies reverence and a sense of the past...’<sup>144</sup>

Therefore, there is no doubt that Betjeman in the 1950s started to feel old and sentimental about the past, which is the matter of the following subchapter.

## 5.1 BETJEMAN’S NOSTALGIA

John Betjeman, indubitably dissatisfied not only with the attitudes of the society, but also with his private life, started to find satisfaction in the past. Aaron Santesso in his *A Careful Longing*:

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<sup>139</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 90-93.

<sup>140</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, 473.

<sup>141</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, 473.

<sup>142</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, 540.

<sup>143</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, 475.

<sup>144</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, 540.



*The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia* alleges: “It is atypical, for example, to encounter a depiction of nostalgia for middle age; childhood is the usual object of nostalgia.”<sup>145</sup> Moreover, he mentions Samuel Johnson, who connects childhood to the country, which is seen as “the region of pleasure.”<sup>146</sup>

Childhood as the object of nostalgia and connecting childhood with the country is exactly what happens in Betjeman’s writing. His recollections are visible, for example, in “Cornwall in Childhood”:

Here I would plan a dam and there a sluice  
[...]  
Inland I saw, above the tamarisks,  
From various villas morning breakfast smoke  
Which warned me then of mine; so up the lane  
I wandered home contented, full of plans,  
Pulling a length of pink convolvulus  
Whose blossoms, almost as I picked them, died.  
Bright as the morning sea those early days!<sup>147</sup>

This poem illustrates Betjeman’s childhood memories, such as playing, when he planned his dam, visual perception – smoke and tamarisk, a plant, which is typical for Betjeman’s writing, and, what is of a crucial importance – he expresses his contentment. Next, in the same poem, he also expresses his feelings when observing the sea:

Somehow the freckled cowrie would survive  
And prawns hang waiting in their watery woods;  
Deep in the noise there was a core of peace;  
Deep in my heart a warm security.<sup>148</sup>

It is vital to highlight Betjeman’s emotion. Although the sea is noisy and Betjeman can notice its power,<sup>149</sup> here he finds tranquility in it. And of course, he feels security, because he

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<sup>145</sup> Aaron Santesso, *Careful Longing: The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 15.

<sup>146</sup> Santesso, *Careful Longing*, 44.

<sup>147</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 10.

<sup>148</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 13-14.

<sup>149</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 67.

is *at home*. The same happens in “Trebetherick,” where he also describes the coast and ventures he used to do next to it – picnics and searching for debris from crashed ships (ships were crashing quite commonly on the guile Cornish coastline<sup>150</sup>), but in addition to it, he recalls his childhood friends’ names:

We used to picnic where the thrift  
Grew deep and tufted to the edge;  
[...]  
We waited for the wreckage to come swirling into reach,  
Ralph, Vasey, Alastair, Biddy, John and I.<sup>151</sup>

Typical for nostalgia is especially persistent thinking of home.<sup>152</sup> Norberg-Schulz states: “The places where we have grown up are such “homes”; we know exactly how it feels to walk on that particular pavement, to be between the particular walls, [...].<sup>153</sup> Based on the Norberg-Schulz’s statement, a human being can have more “homes.” Betjeman knew Cornwall mainly from his holidays and Hillier affirms it became Betjeman’s second home,<sup>154</sup> but from Betjeman’s nostalgia for Cornwall, the strong preference is visible, so it is possible to state that Cornwall is Betjeman’s *home* more than any other place is. Tuan adds that people are sentimental about home, because “it is the only place where, for a few hours every night, we indulge in the luxury of oblivion.”<sup>155</sup>

Additionally, the origins of Betjeman’s nostalgia are visible in even earlier works than in those from the 1950s. In his 1940 poem “On a Portrait of a Deaf Man,” where he grieves for his father, it is written that it was his father who exposed John Betjeman to the love of the beauty of the Victorian architecture, countryside, art and, of course, Cornwall:

He liked old [Victorian] city dining rooms,  
[...]  
He took me on long silent walks  
In country lanes when young.

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<sup>150</sup> Betjeman and Rowse, *Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall from Old Photographs*, 36-52.

<sup>151</sup> Betjeman, *Best of Betjeman*, 34.

<sup>152</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 41.

<sup>153</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 50.

<sup>154</sup> Hillier, *John Betjeman*, xiv.

<sup>155</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Romantic Geography in Search of the Sublime Landscape* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 14.

He knew the names of ev'ry bird

But not the song it sung.

[...]

He liked the rain-washed Cornish air

And smell of ploughed-up soil,

He liked a landscape big and bare

And painted it in oil.<sup>156</sup>

John Betjeman inherited the sensitivity for loving Cornwall. It can be seen on an example of Cornish air – in “On a Portrait of a Deaf Man,” there is mentioned John Betjeman’s father “liked the rain-washed Cornish air”<sup>157</sup> and John likes it similarly: “Scented the Camel valley! Cornish air, / Soft Cornish rains, and silence after steam ...”<sup>158</sup>

The way of Betjeman’s depiction of Cornish landscape including countryside was examined in the previous chapter. Thereafter, it is of the utmost importance to examine what he liked about it in terms of the feelings. The post-war era is accompanied by demolishing British countryside.<sup>159</sup> In all likelihood, Betjeman reacted by recollecting his childhood memories from the times *before the storm*,<sup>160</sup> by which he in all probability means the times of his childhood before the World War Two. The war was really a storm in terms of devastating British cities and the following era of materialism and consumerism is another striking change. The recollections are clearly noticeable in “Cornwall in Childhood”:

And beetles waved on bending leagues of grass,

And all the baking countryside was kind

Dear lanes of Cornwall! With a one-inch map,

A bicycle and well-worn *Little Guide*,

Those were the years I used to ride for miles [...].<sup>161</sup>

These lines from “Cornwall in Childhood” indicate that he regards countryside calm and enjoys exploring Cornwall on a bicycle. Tuan claims: “What people in advanced societies lack

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<sup>156</sup> Betjeman, *Best of Betjeman*, 52.

<sup>157</sup> Betjeman, *Best of Betjeman*, 52.

<sup>158</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 9.

<sup>159</sup> Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 231.

<sup>160</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 15.

<sup>161</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 15.

[...] is the gentle, unselfconscious involvement with the physical world that prevailed in the past when the tempo of life was slower, and that young children still enjoy.”<sup>162</sup> This child enjoyment of the contact with the physical world in slower pace is what Betjeman discusses. His paying attention to the surroundings is clearly contrasting with the modern, hurried society.

Furthermore, although the chapter concerning Looe in *Betjeman's Cornwall* is full of critics on that town, it starts with contrastingly positive description of the area around Looe: “I came to Looe by unimportant lanes. No main roads for me. [...] No hill was too steep, no village too remote or too full of witches. Thus I was able to taste the full flavour of the inland country behind Looe.”<sup>163</sup> Therefore, it is possible to state that he enjoys rural area, which is calm without any extremes such as very steep hills more than city. Another reason of his favor in Cornish countryside can be found in architecture:

Perched on the hill above the woods stands Blisland village. It has not one ugly building in it and, which is unusual in Cornwall, the houses are round a green. Between the lichen-crusting trunks of elm and ash that grow on the green, you can see everywhere the beautiful moorland granite. It is used for windows, for chimney stacks, for walls.<sup>164</sup>

Norberg-Schulz connects *place* with feelings and mentions atmosphere.<sup>165</sup> And this place described in the excerpt has an atmosphere and Betjeman notices it clearly. It is evident that he finds modern housing such as bungalows intolerable, on the contrary, he feels deep affection for the traditional Cornish architecture, typical by using granite or slate and which is gently connected with the surroundings. The reason why he rejects modern architecture is because he finds it *placeless* – not original, unremarkable and uniform, as Relph describes.<sup>166</sup> Conversely, the original Cornish architecture is diverse and unique, e.g. in the usage of slate and granite. Hence, Cornwall of Betjeman's childhood is the right *place* to escape when the real world becomes unbearable for him.

*Nostalgia* is rather idealization.<sup>167</sup> In Betjeman's works, his idealization of Cornwall is visible. For example, he is aware of the fact that the mining industry has harmed the landscape,<sup>168</sup> but in his poems, he writes about the positive aspects of Cornwall only. Although

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<sup>162</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 96.

<sup>163</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 83.

<sup>164</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 60.

<sup>165</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 6-8.

<sup>166</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 143.

<sup>167</sup> Santesso, *Careful Longing*, 13.

<sup>168</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman's Cornwall*, 25-26.

he finds industry distasteful, he admires skilled hard-working Cornishmen, especially in architecture.<sup>169</sup> Additionally, he is unable to tolerate the growing tourism after World War Two.<sup>170</sup> There is no doubt it has a negative impact on the environment, but on the other hand, tourism is crucially important for economy,<sup>171</sup> which Betjeman overlooks. Relph mentions *individual images of place*: “Within one person the mixing of experience, emotion, memory, imagination, present situation, and intention can be so variable that he can see a particular place in several quite distinct ways.<sup>172</sup> This confirms that Betjeman has his own experience, which is connected more with the countryside, architecture etc. than with the tourism or industry. He is nostalgic about the past because of his subjectivity – *individual images of place*, thus he cannot take the positive aspects of the post-war tourism into consideration.

In conclusion, the growing mass culture, consumerism, landscape-destroying architectural changes and Betjeman’s discontent with his own life lead him to recollecting his childhood. He recollects Cornwall for multiple reasons. First, it is a monument of local diverse architecture and countryside – Cornwall in his memories is a *place*. Second, it is a monument of pleasant memories from his young years, which he recollects at the time he realizes his age and also the inability to adapt to the modern world. Next, the memories are also connected with the gentle contact with the physical world. In other words, he demonstrates Cornwall as a *place* at the time when the British landscape becomes *placeless*. It is the last stand of *place*, thus he is seriously upset when it comes to “demolishing” the Cornish *uniqueness*.

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<sup>169</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 23.

<sup>170</sup> Betjeman, *Betjeman’s Cornwall*, 33.

<sup>171</sup> “Cornwall,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 15, 2019,

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Cornwall-unitary-authority-England>, paragraph 6.

<sup>172</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 56.

## CONCLUSION

In this bachelor thesis, John Betjeman's vision of Cornwall was examined.

The theoretical chapter gave the basics for the consequent analysis. First, it is explained that in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and especially in the post-World War Two decade, the British landscape has changed radically. Typical is massive urbanization, electrification and replacing original architectural styles by *New Brutalism*. The lifestyle has changed too, typical is the *mass culture*. This description of the post-war situation is necessary to grasp the reactions provided by artists, in this case the rejection of the new lifestyle. Consequently, the meaning of the terms that are vital for the analysis of John Betjeman's works is discussed. *Topophilia*, a neologism by W. H. Auden, describes human's affective ties with the material environment, especially with landscape, aesthetic appreciation and multi-sensory perception. It is subjective, immeasurable and least but not last, it discusses differences in perception dependent on the age. *Place* means location connected with experience and feelings, examines its character or atmosphere. With a combination with sentiment, it is connected with topophilia. *Placelessness* means a *place* without the signs of it, in other words, it is a location without any genuine and remarkable signs, often a uniform location with nothing to experience. *Insideness* and *outsideness* describe the personal relation and experience with the *place*. To be *inside* is understood as to have a deep experience with the place and the feeling of belonging to it; to become a part of the place. On the contrary, *outsider* judges from the aesthetic point of view only – he has no experience with it. Consequently, the last term, *nostalgia*, is defined. First, its origin is examined. Next, it is defined that, mainly on definitions by A. Santesso and E. C. Relph, that nostalgia is longing, missing or desire for something unavailable. It often covers the area of homesickness, longing for lost childhood, and also for rural life (which is vital for exploring Betjeman's works), because country is as undisfigured as a child's mind. However, it was mentioned that nostalgia includes Romantic features.

The first analytical chapter describes that Betjeman's perception of Cornwall is subjective and idealized, because he sees the place from the visitor's (outsider's) point of view. It is mentioned that Betjeman is impressed by the otherness and uniqueness of Cornwall regarding the landscape and the lifestyle of local people. Then, it is proved on an excerpt from "Cornish Cliffs" that he considers plants growing naturally more beautiful than man-maintained gardens. Betjeman also notices the connection between people and nature, and it is described he inclines

to the preference of countryside. However, he is also impressed by historicity of Cornwall, especially by the Bodmin Moor, where the Celtic settlement used to be.

Followingly, there is a subchapter concerning railway. The first journey to Cornwall, which was done by train, left notably strong feelings in Betjeman, which is recognizable from his writings. His perception of railway is tremendously positive; he expresses enjoyment caused by the landscape surrounding the track. In addition to this, he claims he knows the Cornish stations by heart and describes their appearance, which is, however, one of Betjeman's typical skills – the ability to find beauty in ordinary things. Furthermore, the signs of topophilia are also revealed – the multi-sensory perception, childlike enjoyment (which differs significantly from the way the adult perceive) and also the open fields, which are the stimulators of the topophilic feeling.

The next subchapter is focused on the architecture, cities and industry. Before, it was mentioned that Betjeman shows slight signs of Romantic attitudes, but this subchapter proves that he, despite those slight features, is definitely not a Romanticist, because he often describes man-made places in a positive way – although there are signs of his favor for untouched, raw nature, he rather prefers civilized countryside and notices the connection between man and nature. Furthermore, Betjeman, knowledgeable in architecture, describes Cornish churches, for which is typical the usage of slate and granite, the most common local materials – which is important to notice, because slate and granite are also elements of Cornish *uniqueness*. He also describes the cities of Padstow and Looe. Betjeman's opinions on differ significantly. Padstow is perceived as far in spirit, commended for the local architecture and connected with his childhood memories, which is another sign of topophilia – *the locus of memories*. Contrastingly, Looe is seen as full of architecture that does not fit – bungalows with red roofs, full of cars and Betjeman's overall impression is negatively affected by consumerism. The only positive aspect of Looe is the way to the town, which leads through pleasant countryside, which leads to the fact that he prefers country again.

The last part of the first analytical chapter focuses on Betjeman's topophilia. It starts with the fact that Betjeman is able to find beauty in an easily overlookable detail. Hence, the ignitors of topophilia are examined – open spaces, churches and moors. Next, it is shown that Betjeman's topophilia is also connected with physical effort, which is illustrated by an excerpt from *Betjeman's Cornwall*.

The second analytical chapter is divided into two parts. The first one, Betjeman and Contemporaneity describes the changes the 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture and lifestyle brought and how John Betjeman reacts. In fact, he refuses the modern *mass culture* with all its aspects, but he starts to refuse it after World War Two – before the war, he is positive about tourism. Afterward, tourism, due to its massive growth, has become a multidimensional problem. It is also proved that Betjeman finds the spreading of electricity and enlarging number of motor cars the most harmful. Consequently, the negative aspects of the mass culture that Betjeman reacts on are described, for example the pre-packed food and overall uniformity, which he rejects. With a definition by E. C. Relph, it is confirmed that Betjeman finds the modern world *placeless* because of the uniformity and loss of authenticity. Least but not last, it is summarized that the modern world caused him serious disillusionment. These years are also accompanied with Betjeman's dispute with his son Paul, who accused him of failure and also with the realization of his own age – the other reasons why he started to find contentment in his memories.

The following part, Betjeman's Nostalgia examines the elements of nostalgia in Betjeman's writings regarding Cornwall. First, it is stated that childhood is a common object of nostalgia and the existence of connection between childhood and country is mentioned as well. Consequently, the connection is found in "Cornwall in Childhood," where he describes his perception, mainly visual, as well as his feeling – contentment and security. Next, the subchapter focuses on Cornwall as Betjeman's home and it is discovered that Betjeman sees Cornwall as his home, although he was living there only momentarily.

Furthermore, it was revealed that Betjeman's adoration for Cornwall was also ignited by his father, who introduced him to the love of countryside, art and Victorian architecture. The similarities in John Betjeman's and his father's attitudes are shown on the examples from "On a Portrait of a Deaf Man" and "Cornwall in Childhood." However, it was proved on an excerpt from "On a Portrait of a Deaf Man" that Betjeman's nostalgic attitudes appeared earlier than in the 1950s; this poem was released in 1940 – which is because of grieving over his father's death.

There is another link between nostalgia and countryside. In this chapter, it is also claimed that Betjeman's warmth for countryside is even stronger at the times when the countryside is demolished. He recollects his memories from childhood, when he used to ride a bicycle through the Cornish lanes. It is shown that he describes those lanes in country with cordiality. It is further mentioned that this is an element of the contact between a child and a physical world,



which the adults lack. Next, the chapter analyses the feelings of adoration of countryside, which is connected both with nature and architecture – and it contrasts with the modern architecture, which is intolerable for him and which he finds *placeless*. The result is that Betjeman escapes to Cornish placeness he remembers from his childhood, because the real world is unbearable for him.

The last point in this chapter is idealization, because it is an essential part of nostalgia. It was stated before that Betjeman perceives Cornwall from the *outsider's*, mainly aesthetic point of view, which is also a reason for idealization; he realizes limited aspects only. It can be seen on his critics of the mining industry – the industrialization brought prosperity, but because he is an *outsider*, he does not examine the positive aspects of it. Thus it is concluded that Betjeman's vision of Cornwall is subjective and idealized – *individual images of place*, that are based on his experience, emotions, memory, imagination and present situation. Betjeman also sees Cornwall as *place*, while the rest of England becomes *placeless* and he cannot take the positive aspects of tourism, for example, into consideration.

As a result, it can be stated that Betjeman perceives Cornwall with nostalgia and topophilia and with a great portion of subjectivity and idealization, as well as with deep sense for detail and ability to see beautiful in ordinary. His affection for Cornwall has been ignited in his young years, when the *otherness* of Cornwall surprised him and his father introduced him to the aspects of the local beauty – mainly the country, which Betjeman shows preference for. After the post-war changes, accompanied by Betjeman's private issues, Cornwall started to be a symbol of a world which the poet prefers and which is going to perish. This is why he shows disfavor for new buildings in Cornwall as well as for the massive tourism. However, as it was mentioned, Cunningham considers Betjeman to be one of the spokesmen of post-war British ruralism. It was found out that Betjeman's depiction of the Cornish countryside and the defense of it can be one of the reasons why. In the chapter 4.1, it is also mentioned that countryside is a place of physical and spiritual regeneration. It is possible to assume that Betjeman tried to 'regenerate' himself in his poetry. Cornwall of the recent days is different. But in sir Betjeman's poems, as well as in prose, the Cornwall of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century still persists and defies to the *mass culture*.

## RESUMÉ

Cílem této práce bylo analyzovat vnímání Cornwallu v díle básníka Johna Betjemana, pro kterého je typické citlivé vnímání místa – jak v přírodě, tak v urbanizované krajině, dále také vztah k britské kultuře, odmítání moderního životního stylu a nostalgie k časům minulým, zejména pak k viktoriánské a edvardiánské Anglii.

Teoretická část nejprve představuje kontext doby, ve které Betjeman psal. Anglická krajina již od průmyslové revoluce směřovala k urbanizaci, vrchol ovšem nastal po 2. světové válce, kdy bylo nutné rekonstruovat města a kdy přišly ke slovu moderní architektonické styly, v tomto případě brutalismus. Nekontrolovatelný rozmach zažila i předměstí, která zvýšila nutnost osobních automobilů, což vyústilo v dopravní zácpy, znečištění, a také v nutnost budovat nové silnice. Navíc je doloženo tříštění zbývajících zemědělských oblastí a klesající soudržnost obyvatel. Počet obyvatel po druhé světové válce navíc prudce rostl, což je znamenalo vyšší hustotu zalidnění, obzvláště v Cornwallu, který byl oblíbenou turistickou destinací.

Další podkapitola rozebírá termíny *topophilia*, *place* a *placelessness*, *insideness* a *outsideness*. Topophilia je neologismus, vytvořený básníkem W. H. Audenem pro předmluvu u Betjemanovy sbírky básní „Slick but not Streamlined.“ Termín v podstatě znamená „láska k místu,“ avšak zahrnuje daleko více aspektů; ty definoval americký profesor čínského původu Yi-Fu Tuan. Podle něho topofilie zahrnuje lidské citové vazby s materiálním prostředím, které se liší v intenzitě, jemnosti a způsobu vyjádření. Dále je vysvětleno, že topofilie zahrnuje smyslové vnímání a hodnocení z estetického hlediska. Topofilie se, jak Tuan zmiňuje, spojuje s krajinou. Je vyjmenováno několik zásadních druhů krajin, které působí jako stimulanty topofilického citění, především pak otevřené prostory, které značí svobodu a světlo, ale i pobřeží, údolí nebo ostrov. Topofilie se může spojovat i s místy vytvořenými člověkem, tedy i budovami, z nichž pozornost zasluhují zejména katedrály pro jejich spojení duchovna s každodenním životem.

Posledním bodem je pak přístup k prozkoumávání místa. Auden zmiňuje, že topofilie nepřezívá v rychlostech vyšších, než je rychlost jakéhosi starého rezavého bicyklu, což znamená, že pro vznícení topofilického vnímání je nutné vnímat krajinu pozorně.

Následující kapitola je věnována místu. *Place*, tedy *místo*, nepředstavuje pouze zeměpisný bod. V kapitole je popsána definice od E. C. Relpha a C. Norberg-Schulze, kteří udávají, že

místo kromě polohy zkoumá také osobní zkušenosti a pocity. Místo je zároveň propojeno s topofilii; Tuan spojuje místo se sentimentem a dodává, že množství možných stimulantů je nekonečné. Cít k místu je, stejně jako topofilické pocity, subjektivní.

*Placelessness*, neboli *bezmístnost*, je Relphem definována jako prostředí bez významných míst nebo přístup neuznávající význam *místa*. Znamená to zpřetrhání vazeb s místem, nebo nahrazování rozličnosti, jedinečnosti uniformní jednotou, což je doloženo příkladem americké sítě restaurací Howarda Johnsona, kdy každý restaurant vypadá shodně bez ohledu na polohu.

Podkapitola „Insideness and Outsideness“ rozebírá osobní příslušnost k místu. Opět je využita definice E. C. Relpha, který popisuje *insideness* jako osobní náležitost k místu, které je součástí identity. Zmíněna je i Tuanova definice, který používá pojmy *visitor* a *native*. Návštěvník, tedy *outsider* pak soudí prostředí podle vzhledu a nemá s daným prostředím hlubší zkušenost, což je dále ukázáno na příkladu vnímání Indiánů kolonisty. Následně je shrnuto, že být *insider* znamená porozumět všem aspektům daného místa a náležet k němu, zatímco *outsider* soudí jen povrchně. Navíc je zmíněn negativní vliv *outsiderů* na místo, s nímž nemají sounáležitost. Jedná se o architekturu, která nerespektuje *místo*. Je tedy vyznačena spojitost s *místem* a *insiderem*, stejně jako s *bezmístností* a *outsiderem*.

Poslední teoretická kapitola je věnována nostalgii. Je vysvětlen původ slova a definovány „příznaky“, neboť nostalgie byla považována za nemoc. Tématem nostalgie se zabýval i J. W. Goethe, který ji označuje jako ožívání nevinné minulosti se sladkou melancholií. Následně A. Santesso přidává, že nostalgie neznačí touhu po minulém, ale spíše idealizaci. Zmíněn je i Relph, který uvádí, že stesk po domově je jen slabým synonymem pro nostalgii; nostalgie je širšího významu. Znamená například žal, touhu po něčem již nedostupném, jako je nevinné dětství. Je doložena i spojitost mezi touhou po dětství a životem na venkově, o které se zmínili A. Pope a také F. Schiller, který zmiňuje spíše ryzí přírodu. Ona spojitost spočívá v podstatě, že dětství a příroda jsou původní, autentické, nezasažené civilizací – což se, mimochodem, objevuje právě v období romantismu a kultu „vznešeného divocha.“ Závěrem je zmíněno, že nostalgie nevyžaduje skutečnou zkušenost, a je tedy možné cítit nostalgii k něčemu neprožitému.

Třetí kapitola je první kapitolou analytické části. Její první podkapitola se zabývá krajinou Cornwallu a jak ji Betjeman vnímá ve svých dílech. Nejprve je zmíněno podnebí a také oddělenost Cornwallu od zbytku Anglie, což Betjeman popisuje jako překročení pomyslné hranice nacházející se v údolí Tamar na rozhraní s Devonem. Je popsáno, že již od prvních

chvil byl Betjeman fascinován nejen krajinou, ale i životním stylem – Cornwall v té době ještě nebyl elektrifikovaný a ve farnosti se nacházel jediný automobil. Ze způsobu Betjemanova popisu, jenž nemíří příliš do hloubky, je zjištěno, že Betjeman je v tomto případě pouze *návštěvník/outsider*. V „One Man’s County“ dokonce sám sebe návštěvníkem nazývá.

Následně je zmíněna Betjemanova náklonnost k člověkem nenarušené přírodě, často k *obyčejné* vegetaci, ale i k venkovu, kde je vliv člověka nezpochybnitelný, ale v tomto případě dochází k harmonii mezi lidskými stavbami a přírodou. V této části je i viditelné ovlivnění romantismem, kdy venkov značí řád a kontrastuje se zmateným městem. Betjeman zmiňuje i historicitu Cornwallu, příkladem je Bodmin Moor, osídlený už Kelty. Navíc si básník Cornwallu cení i skutečnosti, že christianizace proběhla dříve, než ve zbytku Anglie. Je shrnuto, že Betjeman neoslavuje pouze přírodu, ale i citlivé spojení člověka s ní, a to zejména v časech minulých.

Další podkapitola je věnována železnici. Na Betjemena měla silný dopad díky jeho citu pro krajinu, navíc jeho první cesta do Cornwallu vedla právě po železnici. Díky definici Tuana jsou identifikovány prvky topofilického citění. V případě železnice si Betjeman cení nejen okolní přírody, ale i staničních budov, kde detailně popisuje materiál – čedič a žulu, typický pro Cornwall, a i prvky přírody (keře). Zároveň je podloženo, že dítě, což Betjeman v době první návštěvy Cornwallu byl, má vyvinutý cit i pro tak obyčejné věci, jako může být i zastávka.

Následující řádky jsou věnovány architektuře, městům a průmyslu. Zde je doloženo, že Betjeman sice byl ovlivněn romantismem, ale není romantik jako takový, neboť si cení i civilizace. Je zmíněno, že Betjeman se učil i o architektuře, a té ve svých dílech o Cornwallu věnuje pozornost také. Jako příklad jsou uvedeny místní kostely, jež v 16. století prošly rekonstrukcí. Betjeman nad dělníky, přestavujícími kostely, vyjadřuje hluboký obdiv. Je to důkaz nejen obdivu architektury, ale i povahy místních lidí, které shledává tvrdě pracujícími, zručnými a s talentem pro obchod.

Velice rozdílné je vnímání dvou měst, Padstow a Looe. Padstow je básníkem vnímáno jako s hlubokým duchem, popsáno je i smyslové vnímání onoho města. Navíc je zde další prvek topofilie, a to *místo vzpomínek – locus of memories*. Oproti tomu, Looe je vnímáno negativně, a to už díky rozmáhající se konzumní společnosti. Pozitivní je pouze cesta do Looe vedoucí skrz příjemný venkov – další důkaz Betjemanova upřednostňování venkova.

Následně se kapitola stáčí zpět ke kostelům, kde je popsáno, proč vzbuzují obdiv. Je ukázáno, že Betjeman obdivuje i částečně zbořený kostel jako krásné místo, což je na základě vysvětlení E. C. Relpha dáno tím, že kostel je *místem vysoké představitivosti*, navíc symbolizuje spojení duše a člověka.

Poslední zmínkou podkapitoly je hornictví. Betjeman se k tomuto průmyslu staví kriticky a škody způsobené hornictvím srovnává se škody způsobené turisty.

Druhá analytická kapitola je věnována Betjemanovu úniku do vzpomínek. V první polovině je detailně popsán kontext doby, kdy se básník do vzpomínek začal uchýlovat. Jsou zmíněny prvky, které ho znepokojovaly, jako je například necitlivě zasazená architektura, rozšiřování předměstí, kde se lidé vzájemně oddalují, a v neposlední řadě konzumní společnost. Svoje místo má i popis situace v Betjemanově rodině, kde dochází k rozporu mezi ním a synem. Navíc si Betjeman v té době začíná uvědomovat svoje stáří.

Druhá polovina kapitoly je věnována nostalgii. Prvně je zmíněno spojení dětství, venkova a nostalgie a následně ukázáno v básni „Cornwall in Childhood.“ Během rozboru básně je ukázáno i na emoce, které básník cítí. V tomto případě cítí klid v duši, neboť je doma. Myšlenky na domov jsou dalším tématem kapitoly. Ačkoliv Betjeman v Cornwallu trvale nežil, z jeho přístupu je znatelné, že Cornwall jako domov vnímal – alespoň vysněný.

Následně je představeno, že Betjeman získal cit pro krajinu od svého otce a také je popsáno zalíbení ve venkovské krajině. Na rozdíl od předchozí kapitoly zkoumající povrch je zde rozebrána stránka citová. Dále se kapitola ubírá zkoumáním idealizace v básnickových dílech. Je bezpochyby, že jeho vnímání Cornwallu je silně idealizované a jednostranné, a tudíž je vysvětleno, proč.

V závěru práce je shrnuto, že Betjeman nahlíží na Cornwall s topofilií a nostalgií. Změny po druhé světové válce v kombinaci s jeho osobními problémy přinesly Betjemanovi silné zklamání, navíc se nedokázal přizpůsobit modernímu životnímu stylu. V reakci začal vyhledávat uspokojení ve vzpomínkách na dětství, jelikož Cornwall je shledán jako místo příjemných vzpomínek, rozličné architektury a unikátní přírody, zatímco se zbytek britské krajiny stává *bezmístným*.

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