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Irish Landscape and National Identity in 20th-century Literature

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Zásady pro vypracování

Autorka se ve své bakalářské práci zaměří na vyobrazení krajiny ve vybraných dílech irské literatury. V úvodu nastíní problematiku budování irské národní identity v období konce devatenáctého a začátku dvacátého století. Druhou část práce bude tvořit detailní rozbor konkrétních textů, např. Tomás O’Crohan: *The Islandman*, Maurice O’Sullivan: *Twenty Years a-Growing*, John Millington Synge: *The Playboy of the Western World*. Autorka se bude soustředit na znázornění života a krajiny Irska, nejen západního, jako prostředků k posilování národní identity. Pokud to povaha textů umožní, zmapuje i způsob, jakým je v těchto textech akcentován kontrast mezi Irskem a Anglií. Celou práci uzavře kapitola, která z předchozích zjištění vyvodí obecnější závěr.

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TITLE

Irish Landscape and National Identity in 20th-century Literature

ANNOTATION

This thesis focuses on portrayal of landscape as a tool for strengthening the Irish national identity. The goal of the theoretical part is to introduce general terms such as landscape and national identity. The practical part is divided into two chapters with the analysis of particularly chosen Irish books. The main aim of the paper is to analyse the texts by Tomás O’Crohan, Maurice O’Sullivan and J. M. Synge.

KEYWORDS

landscape, national identity, nationalism, patriotism

NÁZEV

Irská krajina a národní identita v literatuře 20. století

ANOTACE

Tato práce se zabývá vyobrazením krajiny jako nástroje k posilování irské národní identity. Teoretická část má za cíl představit obecné pojmy, jako jsou krajina a národní identita. Praktická část je rozdělena na dvě kapitoly, které analyzují vybraná díla irské literatury. Cílem práce je analýza textů Tomáše O’Crohana, Maurice O’Sullivana a J. M. Synge.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

krajina, národní identita, nacionalismus, patriotismus

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Introduction

The portrayal of the landscape is an inherent part of forming the national identity and this applies in particular to the Irish one. When it comes to expressing the nation's identity, Ireland's representation appears as one of the most prominent with a significant number of symbols which are commonly known and typical for the Irish culture. This urge of expressing nation's uniqueness with an aim to distinguish itself primarily from the British imperial power increased in the period of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

The first part of the thesis clarifies the term landscape and deals with its depiction. It outlines the various meanings of this broad concept and delivers a number of diverse theories and opinions from different authors and scholars. Along with different theories, the symbols such as nature, folklore, rural terrain, spirituality, impression, perspective and individual viewpoints are mentioned. This part consequently introduces the terms such as national identity, national heritage and patriotism. Moreover, it highlights the connection between the symbols of the landscape portrayed which result in strengthening national identity.

The practical part deals with analyse of primary sources used, such as *Twenty Years a-Growing* by Maurice O'Sullivan, *The Islandman* by Tomás O'Crohan and *The Playboy of the Western World* by John Millington Synge. The practical part is divided into two chapters and it applies the theories and is based on the statements referred to in the theoretical part.

The first analytical chapter focuses on depicting the Irish landscape in particularly chosen books. The main aim is to analyse the portrayal of the landscape created by different authors during the nineteenth and twentieth century period. It demonstrates the differences and similarities of the impression of the landscape and exemplifies them on the concrete extracts. It also introduces the term "Irishness", an umbrella term used for summarising the symbols which are distinctive for the identity of the Irish. Moreover, the importance of "Irishness" stands for opposing the dominance of the English culture since the Irish culture was feared to become extinct. This chapter examines the authors' turning to the West of Ireland for inspiration of a de-Anglicised "original Irish" culture, making a pilgrimage to the West and the Blasket Islands.

The second analytical chapter focuses on the symbols of the national identity. Besides the portrayal of the landscape, which is one of the patterns for strengthening national identity, this chapter of the paper pays attention more to the symbols of nationalism than the physical surroundings of the landscape. It points out the differences and similarities between the English and Irish culture and the attitude towards England, along with the nationalistic attitude projected

into characters. The common traits of behaviour amongst the peasantry of the West of Ireland are highlighted along with the usage of the Irish dialect. The sense of pride and power of being Irish is also examined in the particular extracts, as the authors rediscover the past, referring to the Gaelic myths and folklore. The chapter also focuses on the outcome of the chosen works during the nationalist movement period.

To conclude, the main purpose of this thesis is to highlight the patterns used for building and strengthening the Irish national identity. It focuses on the portrayal of the untouched Irish landscape of the West coast and the livelihood of its people. The analytical part is followed by a chapter delivering a more general conclusion.

Note on the text:

Some of the texts are cited in the original spelling respecting the Irish dialect.

1. Landscape and National Identity

The main aim of this chapter is to introduce the term landscape and to outline the various meanings of this broad concept. Consequently, the term national identity will be explained along with the connection between these two concepts. Nowadays, the term landscape is considered as a part and parcel of art such as literature, paintings and music with a significant role in building the national identity.

Human geographer and professor Yi-Fu Tuan explains that the term landscape evolved from the Dutch word “landschap”, at the time, referring to the real world, not to be used in the sense of art.¹ However, Stephen Siddall argues that the term was first used in painting, where landscape was portrayed “for the sake of something else,” generally as accessory or background. The general definition by the Macmillan Dictionary refers to the landscape as “an area of land that is beautiful to look at or that has a particular type of appearance.”² At the same time, the Macmillan Dictionary explains the term in the field of art as “a painting of an area or land.”³ In other words, the term landscape as it is known today usually contains/captures elements of land, including nature with the purpose of making an impression/appearance. Nowadays the portrayal of landscape is more often associated with constructionism, and therefore with the tendency to distort and use the qualities of the physical landscape through the objectivity of the observer, in order to make a certain impression. Stephen Bending points out the importance of distinguishing between the physicality of “terrain” and the experience, or representation, of a “landscape”, which may in turn be associated with such heavily freighted terms as nature, country, or wilderness.⁴ Landscape is most frequently associated with the portrayal of untamed rural terrain. According to Bending, “landscape is the commodification of nature, that nature itself is always already a cultural construct, that it is produced in contingent ways at different moments in different societies.”⁵ This may be supported by Siddall, arguing that the land becomes landscape when being “consumed” by humans. For instance, when a farmer utilizes the land for their purposes, they “cultivate” it, so the landscape becomes a product.⁶ Bending explains, that “landscape is to be understood as representational (and

¹ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1990), 133.

² Michael Rundell, *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners of American English* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 2002), 787.

³ Rundell, *Macmillan English Dictionary*, 787.

⁴ Stephen Bending, “Literature and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Oxford Handbooks Online*, (Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

⁵ Bending, “Literature and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century,” 2.

⁶ Stephen Siddall, *Landscape and Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9.

therefore mediated) while still apparently being capable of offering access to (an unmediated) ‘nature’— that most mediated of all accounts of a world outside of the human.”⁷ This idea is also summarised by Neal Alexander, saying that the concept of “nature” might be said to comprehend and include that of “landscape.”⁸ As with the visual arts, so with literature. According to Stephen Siddall, early literature did not picture nature for its beauty, but more for the impression of quiet secluded life.⁹ In other words, it was the appreciation of the atmosphere of the quiet and isolated places, rather than of the nature itself.

The impression of staying in nature gained from the particular piece of art provides the spectator with the sense of escape from the real world to another, depending on their imagination and perception. This can be compared to a common saying: “Beauty is in the eye of beholder.” Explained by Siddall, the outcome of the impression can vary as the scene is being rather presented than represented, which creates a subjective viewpoint of the receiver. Since nobody perceives art in the same way, both painters and writers do not necessarily attempt to capture the landscape as it is. More likely they are adjusting and rearranging the landscape for their own purposes.¹⁰ As Siddall states,

this rearranging of nature may perhaps provide a setting for a myth, or idealise a lost world. It may demonstrate nature’s power or delicacy, or create shock or wonder. It may give contextual meaning to the characters in the foreground of the story. It may help readers to step aside from the modern world, to slow down their lives, to observe detail and to connect with the sources of life.¹¹

In the nineteenth century, portraying nature also found its significant role in other fields of art, such as escapism. Examined by Yi-Fu Tuan, rearranging the reality in order to escape to another place through our imagination gives, in his words, the ability to “resort to imagination, which is the most readily available means of transporting the self, momentarily, out of its body.”¹² As he states, people aspire to flee away not only from the vibrant conditions of urban spaces but from humanised land in general. People have tended to escape to nature, longing for sentiment and relief, at least since “nature came to stand for wisdom, spiritual comfort, and holiness; from

⁷ Bending, “Literature and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century,” 2.

⁸ Neal Alexander, “Theologies of the Wild: Contemporary Landscape Writing,” *Journal of Modern Literature* 38, no. 4 (Summer 2015): 3.

⁹ Siddall, *Landscape and literature*, 7.

¹⁰ Siddall, *Landscape and literature*, 8–9.

¹¹ Siddall, *Landscape and literature*, 9.

¹² Yi-Fu Tuan, *Escapism*, (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 9–10.

it people were supposed to derive religious enthusiasm, moral goodness and a mystical understanding of man and God.”¹³ This idea of escaping is one of the impressions provided by rearranging the reality of a landscape.

It is argued by many geographers, that landscape is an ideological concept. Relying on Denis Cosgrove, Neil Alexander presents the term “landscape” as a “way of seeing the world,” describing it as “a construction, a composition of that world.” Furthermore, he also points out, that the idea of landscape “refers less to actual pictorial representations than to a particular way of seeing.”¹⁴ As he quotes W. J. T. Mitchell, “landscape is inescapably ideological, ‘an instrument of cultural power,’ seeking to naturalize certain ways of imagining the relationship between people and place whilst rendering others invisible.”¹⁵ Another view is presented by Angela Miller, referring to landscape as a “construct of the mind and of feeling.”¹⁶ In Miller’s words, the impression of nature is a product of the individual’s mind, formed by their imagination. This also depends on personal relationship and experience, which creates the whole picture. Nonetheless, she describes landscape as an “uncolonized place of freedom.”¹⁷ However, Alexander indicates that the role of landscape in writing might be acknowledged in a dual sense: “as the material environments inhabited by humans and non-humans; and as a way of seeing spaces and places that are closely linked to pictorial or textual representation.”¹⁸ This theory is also supported by David Matless, who argues that “the relational hybridity of the term ‘landscape’ has the virtue of possessing a singular ‘deconstructive force,’” revealing that landscapes are always “already both natural and cultural, deep and superficial”¹⁹ But not all thinkers share the same viewpoint. Cultural geographer Tim Cresswell, in contrast, admits to not being keen on using the term landscape as it became overused in many fields. He criticizes geographers for noticing landscape as a way of seeing, leaving out the “accounts of distinctive regional material.”²⁰ The approach to landscape as a visual representation is also criticised by archaeologist Christopher Tilley, stating that

landscape has ontological import because it is lived in and through,
mediated, worked on and altered, replete with cultural meaning and

¹³ Tuan, *Escapism*, 9–10.

¹⁴ Alexander, “Theologies of the Wild,” 5.

¹⁵ Alexander, “Theologies of the Wild”, 5.

¹⁶ Angela Miller, “Everywhere and Nowhere: The Making of the National Landscape,” *American Literary History* 4, no. 2 (1992): 207.

¹⁷ Miller, “Everywhere and Nowhere”, 221.

¹⁸ Alexander, “Theologies of the Wild”, 1.

¹⁹ Alexander, “Theologies of the Wild”, 4.

²⁰ Tim Cresswell, “Landscape and the Obliteration of Practice,” in *Handbook of Cultural Geography*, ed. Kay Anderson, Mona Domosh, Steve Pile, and Nigel Thrift (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2003), 4.

symbolism — and not just something looked at or thought about, an object merely for contemplation, depiction, representation and aestheticization.²¹

Portraying landscape in a dual sense, regarding it as ambiguous, gives the impression which may vary for each individual, depending on their senses. Summarised by Denis Cosgrove, the observer reacts to the portrayed landscape in a personal way, determined by the relationship between the individual and the external world.²² This modification process is an essential psychological activity in the human brain. According to Yi-Fu Tuan, there are four key aspects playing a role in human observation: perception, attitude, value and world view. He describes perception as “both the response of the senses to external stimuli and purposeful activity,” attitude being “primarily a cultural stance” which “has greater stability than perception and is formed by a long succession of perceptions, that is, of experience” and a world view as a “conceptualized experience,” which is “partly personal, largely social.”²³ This concept happens to be supported by many theoreticians.

As already mentioned above, psychological decoding of the individual is the central principle of interaction between a person and landscapes, which entails a unique impression. Even though these impressions and gained emotions differ for each person, there are few aspects classifying two groups of the observer’s approach. Distinguished by Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph, the way an outsider (visitor or tourist) experiences a landscape differs from the way an insider (native) experiences the same area of land. To summarize their theory, outsider’s impression of a scenery is simpler, more aesthetic and more conscious as well as easily affected by outer sources. On the other hand, the native’s point of view is more salient, complex and modified by their memories, experience or local traditions.²⁴ Another concept studied by Derk Jan Stobbelaar & Bas Pedroli is “The Landscape Identity Circle” by Stobbelaar and Hendriks. This model differentiates four main viewpoints on landscape identity, namely personal (the associations and memories attached to sites within it), spatial (home, town and region, often factors that makes one region dissimilar to another, commonly studied by geographers, planners and natural scientists), existential (various types and strengths of attachment between people and the different spatial dimensions in their environment, commonly studied by philosophers)

²¹ Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford, U.K.: Berg, 1994), 26.

²² Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 18.

²³ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 4.

²⁴ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 63.

and cultural (not an aggregation of personally perceived landscape qualities, but rather a matter of human consensus, may be characterised by signs in the landscape, care for the landscape, or a common memory of events, victories and religious features, often because they refer to historical events).²⁵ This concept not only helps to distinguish between the diverse identities of landscapes, but it also entitles many policy makers in considering its value. To be specific, one of the aims is increasing the efficiency of landscape evaluation in terms of politics and protecting landscape as it might be considered as a part of the national heritage.

Additionally, Yi-Fu Tuan reports that there are three more motifs appearing in landscape writing, playing a significant role in human imagination, specifically “the seashore, the valley and the island.”²⁶ These themes can also perform as a tool for a symbolic representation of a hidden deeper meaning. The island symbolization, in keeping with Tuan, functions not only as a great place for creating legends, but it also delivers a feeling of being “quarantined by the sea from the ills of the continent.”²⁷ Tuan indicates, that valley carries the impression of security. For a human being it is crucial to be provided with water and to have easy access to food supplies.²⁸ The sense of safety is also, in accordance with Tuan, “identified with the womb and shelter”²⁹ which induces “physical and psychological security of the cave.”³⁰ Tuan indicates, that seashore, on the other hand, evokes a sense of adventure, such as deserted place surrounded by the sea and open horizon. He also adds, that the seashore gained its popularity thanks to a growing number of tourists and holiday-makers.³¹ To conclude, since the course of the eighteenth century, landscape was welcomed not only in art, such as literature, but also in tourism as it became more popular. Tuan alludes to more and more wealthy members of the leisured class finding fondness in nature, where travelling and “observing nature became a fashionable pastime.”³² This statement is also supported by Siddall, adding that thanks to travellers as well, landscape was perceived on the scope of aesthetic, starting to consider the view as a picturesque landscape.³³

Landscape in literature not only brings tourists to a presented place, but furthermore, landscape is one of the symbols creating and strengthening national identity. In contrast with

²⁵ Derk Jan Stobbelaar & Bas Pedroli, “Perspectives on Landscape Identity: A Conceptual Challenge,” *Landscape Research* 36, no. 3 (April 2011): 325.

²⁶ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 115.

²⁷ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 118.

²⁸ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 117–118.

²⁹ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 118.

³⁰ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 118.

³¹ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 115–117.

³² Tuan, *Topophilia*, 125.

³³ Siddall, *Landscape and Literature*, 8.

the cultural landscape, identified by Stobbelaar and Hendriks, Kenneth R. Olwig introduces another theme – the natural landscape. According to Olwig, it is commonly believed that “nature” means the opposite of “culture”. This can be summarised by his statement, that “national identity can thereby be seen to be a heritage of nature, rather than culture, and this, in turn, lends legitimacy to national identity by suggesting that it is natural, rather than artificial or unnatural.”³⁴ In other words, natural landscape is unlike the cultural one, ‘untouched’ or affected by human influence. Olwig also mentions, that the concept of natural landscape contains “central themes in representations of national identity.”³⁵ The terms national identity, nationalism and nature, including landscape, are closely related. To specify their meaning, Olwig argues, that the meaning of the term “identity” has its roots in Latin, meaning “the same,” being closely connected with “unity and persistence of personality.”³⁶ On the other hand, the article by Isabel Loupa Ramos, Fátima Bernardo, Sónia Carvalho Ribeiro and Veerle Van Eetvelde delivers another statement made by Shelley Egoz, who defines the “‘landscape and identity’ as the ‘relation between landscape and the identity of humans engaged with the landscape, represents the formative role of landscape in building identity, both collective and individual, in response to the basic human need to belong.’”³⁷ He also demonstrates, that

by using the concept of identity, people define themselves as an individual, but also as a member of a group that shares some common characteristics. But identity is also a way to distinguish “myself” from others or other groups that do not share these characteristics and that are thereby different. This process both strengthens the identity, but can also exacerbate into a source of discrimination and social conflict.³⁸

Moreover, landscape which might be recognised as a part of national heritage does not only arouse the feeling of locals belonging to somewhere, but also, as specified by Benjamin W. Porter, it provides outsiders and tourists with the consciousness of the historical past.³⁹ Sara McDowell interprets the meaning of heritage as “an aggregation of myths, values and

³⁴ Kenneth R. Olwig, “‘Natural’ Landscapes in the Representation of National Identity,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2008), 86.

³⁵ Olwig, “Natural Landscapes,” 86.

³⁶ Olwig, “Natural Landscapes,” 94.

³⁷ Isabel L. Ramos, Fátima Bernardo, Sónia C. Riberio, and Veerle Van Eetvelde, “Landscape identity: Implications for policy making,” *Land Use Policy*, 53 (May 2016): 37.

³⁸ Ramos et al., “Landscape identity: Implications for policy making,” 37.

³⁹ Benjamin W. Porter, “Heritage Tourism: Conflicting Identities in the Modern World,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2008), 270.

inheritances determined and defined by the needs of societies in the present.”⁴⁰ She unravels that

these collective beliefs play a fundamental role in securing a sense of togetherness and cultural solidarity which is vital in the formation and legitimization of any national identity (Lowenthal, 1985, 44). National cohesion, in other words, requires a sense of collective awareness and identity endorsed through common historical experience.⁴¹

As reported by Sara McDowell, remembering the past and historical events is crucial for shaping the nation’s identity, as memory makes up an essential part of heritage and culture.⁴² Ascensión Hernández Martínez adds, that in the nineteenth century

the concept [of heritage] was gradually extended to include urban centres (the ‘old towns’ that are of such importance to many European cities), intangible assets (folklore, music customs and rites) and ‘natural heritage’ (from historic gardens to untouched virgin landscapes).⁴³

This idea can be summarised by Yi-Fu Tuan, claiming that “awareness of the past is an important element in the love of place.”⁴⁴

In addition to that, national identity is also being associated with nationalism. Examined by Anthony Smith, “nationalism, the ideology and the movement, must be closely related to national identity, a multidimensional concept, and extended to include a specific language, sentiment and symbolism.”⁴⁵ He also defines the fundamental features of national identity, such as: “an historic territory or homeland, common myths and historical memories; a common, mass public culture; common legal rights and duties; and a common economy with territorial mobility for its members.”⁴⁶ Smith points out, that some German Romantics agree on the idea that “nationalism signifies the awakening of the nation and its members to its true collective ‘self, so that it, and they, obey only the ‘inner voice’ of the purified community.”⁴⁷ In contrast,

⁴⁰ Sara McDowell, “Heritage, Memory and Identity,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2008), 41.

⁴¹ McDowell, “Heritage, Memory and Identity,” 41.

⁴² McDowell, “Heritage, Memory and Identity,” 42.

⁴³ Ascensión Hernández Martínez, “Conservation and Restoration in Built Heritage: A Western European Perspective,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2008), 245.

⁴⁴ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 99.

⁴⁵ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 7.

⁴⁶ Smith, *National Identity*, 24.

⁴⁷ Smith, *National Identity*, 87.

this statement is opposed by philosopher Ernest Gellner, arguing that “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.”⁴⁸ It can be said, that national identity contains a unique relationship between the individual and land. There are many features concurring with the ideology of nationalism, such as the human need to belong somewhere, being a part of something. But not only to embrace the togetherness between individuals sharing the same national identity, but also to differentiate one nation from another. The tools for strengthening and remembering the unique identity and a relationship with it may be, in accordance with Anthony D. Smith, “re-enactments of resistance events, or symbols of landscape and historical monuments or of local products, crafts or sports.”⁴⁹ As Smith examines the idea of nationalism, it

operates at the social level by prescribing the mobilization of the ‘people’, their legal equality as citizens and their participation in public life for the ‘national good’. Seeing the nation as a family writ large, it seeks to inspire a spirit of national solidarity and brotherhood in the members of the nation; hence it preaches the social unity of each nation.⁵⁰

A personal relationship with one’s native country may be condensed by the term patriotism. Yi-Fu Tuan describes patriotism as an emotion, which is “rarely tied to any specific locality,” and is “evoked by abstract categories of pride and power, on the one hand, and by certain symbols, such as the flag on the other.” In other words, Tuan notes that patriotism represents “the love of one’s terra patria or natal land.”⁵¹ He distinguishes two kinds of patriotism: local and imperial. As Tuan reveals, “local patriotism rests on the intimate experience of place, and on a sense of the fragility of goodness: that which we love has no guarantee to endure. Imperial patriotism feeds on collective egotism and pride.”⁵² The ideology of patriotism and nationalism tends to be evoked amongst the nation when, as mentioned above, there is a common feeling of need to distinguish itself from others. For instance, when the country is under attack or under imperial ascendancy. To be more specific, this tendency may occur in art, such as literature, while nationalistic movements, which subsequently creates a notion of an independent culture. Portraying landscape as one of the main essentials of national

⁴⁸ Smith, *National Identity*, 81.

⁴⁹ Smith, *National Identity*, 73.

⁵⁰ Smith, *National Identity*, 91.

⁵¹ Tuan, *Topophilia*, 100.

⁵² Tuan, *Topophilia*, 101.

identity and depicting the common traits of its citizens leads to unifying society thanks to the relatability of the impression and emotion gained. Besides that, literature portraying landscape, a measure of national heritage as a tool of strengthening national identity, becomes after all a heritage itself.

On the basis of previous statements, the meaning of the term national identity may be characterised as a relationship between landscape and nationalism. Landscape is one of the main symbols depicted in art in order to strengthen national identity. These common traits and symbols are pointed out by Smith, saying that

they include the obvious attributes of nations — flags, anthems, parades, coinage, capital cities, oaths, folk costumes, museums of folklore, war memorials, ceremonies of remembrance for the national dead, passports, frontiers — as well as more hidden aspects, such as national recreations, the countryside, popular heroes and heroines, fairy tales, forms of etiquette, styles of architecture, arts and crafts, modes of town planning, legal procedures, educational practices and military codes - all those distinctive customs, mores, styles and ways of acting and feeling that are shared by the members of a community of historical culture.⁵³

It is argued by many thinkers, that nationalism is the most globally widespread ideology. As previously mentioned, its beliefs are spread predominantly through art. As Smith mentions,

[n]ationalists, intent on celebrating or commemorating the nation, are drawn to the dramatic and creative possibilities of artistic media and genres in painting, sculpture, architecture, music, opera, ballet and film, as well in the arts and crafts. Through these genres nationalist artists may, directly or evocatively, ‘reconstruct’ the sights, sounds and images of the nation in all its concrete specificity and with ‘archaeological’ verisimilitude.⁵⁴

He also says that

⁵³ Smith, *National Identity*, 77.

⁵⁴ Smith, *National Identity*, 92.

[f]or the language and symbols of nationalism helped to draw artists to seek outlets in motifs, genres and forms different from the traditional and classical in the tone-poem, the historical opera, ethnic dances, historical novels, local landscapes, ballads, dramatic poems, choral drama and the like. These forms, along with nocturnes, poetic fantasies, rhapsodies, ballads, preludes and dances, are characterized by a heightened expressive subjectivity that is well suited to the conceptual language and style of ethnic nationalism and to the rediscovery of the ‘inner self that is one of the chief ends of ethnic historicism.’⁵⁵

To elucidate the term “historicism”, Paul Hamilton delivers the definition, saying that historicism is “a critical movement insisting on the prime importance of historical context to the interpretation of texts of all kinds.”⁵⁶ In other words, artists draw on mythology, presenting the idealised national entities of the past. This might be supported by Smith, stating that “nationalists were interested not in inquiring into ‘their’ past for its own sake, but in the reappropriation of a mythology of the territorialized past of ‘their people.’”⁵⁷ Consequently, this might lead to a cultural revival, empowering the rediscovery of one’s unique heritage and folklore. For composers, artists and writers, as Smith explains, the nationalist rediscovering of the past “evoked powerful sentiments of nostalgia and identification, which they amplified and diffused through their art.”⁵⁸ Each country’s past makes a unique and authentic culture. As an example, Smith demonstrates these notions in the nineteenth-century Irish Gaelic Revival, where nationalists drew their inspiration from “native sports, nature, local crafts and ancient pagan heroes,” spreading nationalism in Ireland.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Smith, *National Identity*, 93.

⁵⁶ Paul Hamilton, *Historicism*, (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005), 2.

⁵⁷ Smith, *National Identity*, 127.

⁵⁸ Smith, *National Identity*, 127.

⁵⁹ Smith, *National Identity*, 73.

2. Irish Landscape in Literature

This chapter focuses on portraying the Irish landscape in particularly chosen books. The main aim is to analyse the impressions of the landscape, which were created by different authors. Since the landscape depicts not only nature but also folklore, the term “Irishness” used as a tool for describing the “true Ireland” is introduced. The following statements demonstrated on the Irish landscape are based on the references introduced in the theoretical part.

As already mentioned, there are many aspects of nationalism, but landscape is one of the more prominent among them. Landscape plays a dominant role in representing the Irish national identity. Not only the unique nature and amazing views, but also the attachment with the land and spiritual connection with local folklore. According to Eugene O’Brien, the term “Irishness” describes the identity of “people of native Irish stock, descended from Gaelic speakers, professing the Catholic religion, and holding some form of the general political opinions held by most people of this origin and religion.”⁶⁰ People, who share the same land, language, history and religion – specifically Catholicism and Celtism. Authors were drawing on a historical past, folklore, celebrating the aspects of “heroism, warrior honour, bravery, loyalty to one’s patria,” trying to revive the ‘true Ireland’ before the English invasion.⁶¹ They focused attention mainly on the rural areas of the West coast of Ireland and its islands, also known as the Gaeltacht (native Irish-speaking area). In agreement with Riona Nic Congáil, this created a form of nostalgia for the “good old days,” whilst the authors romanticised the life in isolated rural areas. Some of the author’s and nationalist leaders’ purpose of that depiction might be considered as creating a utopian version of a de-Anglicised Ireland. In other words, the purpose of the landscape portrayed was to emerge the feeling of ‘a desire to go home.’⁶² As Congáil cites W. B. Yeats, “the island space became synonymous with the possibility of retreat from the modern world at the fin de siècle, [...] which was to serve as a blueprint for the re-Gaelicized Irish nation.”⁶³ The most represented places of the West of Ireland are the Aran Islands, the Blasket Islands, County Mayo, County Kerry and County Galloway.

One of the examples of romanticising life on a remote island is *Twenty Years a-Growing* by Maurice O’Sullivan. This book is an autobiography capturing culture and a way of living on the Great Blasket Island. The book delivers a detailed description of the landscape and people’s

⁶⁰ Eugene O’Brien, *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of W. B. Yeats and James Joyce*, (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 32.

⁶¹ O’Brien, *The Question of Irish Identity*, 27.

⁶² Riona Nic Congáil, “Life and the Dream: Utopian Impulses Within the Irish Language Revival,” *Utopian Studies* 23, no. 2 (2012): 434.

⁶³ Congáil, “Life and the Dream,” 434.

manners. The story provides readers with different points of view; firstly, the point of view of a young O’Sullivan, an outsider of a remote island, secondly, the one of a local accommodated self, and thirdly, the one after leaving the island. The beginning of the story starts when young Maurice O’Sullivan goes back to his homeland – to the Great Blasket Island where he discovers an entirely different life and a way of living. The story is told by young Maurice’s perspective. It starts in 1904, when O’Sullivan is born and after the death of his mother he is forced to move to the mainland. From the beginning, the book is narrated by O’Sullivan as a kid and provides readers with his childish perspective. As becoming older, the narrative of the author changes. O’Sullivan delivers very detailed and picturesque point of view. First, he describes the landscape when returning home to the Great Blasket Island as a kid. His way of seeing the landscape of the island might be described as adventurous, being surprised of something new and discovering the different land and culture.

In the first part of the book, young Maurice travels back to the Blasket Island from an orphanage in the town of Dingle on the mainland. He goes home to the island where he then lives in a traditional family house with his father, his grandfather and his siblings. On his first visit to the island, he discovers an unfamiliar way of life along with a different language. After living in the English-speaking city of Dingle young Maurice has to learn Irish as the English language was not known on the Great Blasket. Being an outsider of the island community, he is scared of the new surroundings and not fond of the island. As expressed in the book, Maurice states: “I did not like the look of it, I think, said I to myself, it is not a good place.”⁶⁴ Maurice, as an outsider of the island expresses an intimidation by his description, saying:

When we got down to the quay, I looked up at the height of the cliff above me, yellow vetchling growing here and there, a terrible noise from the waves breaking below. I saw a big black bird up in the middle of the cliff where it had made its nest. Oh Lord, said I to myself, how do you keep your senses up there at all!

Then I turned my eyes towards the slip and what did I see but one of the big black beetles walking out towards me. My heart leapt. I caught hold of my aunt’s shawl, crying, “Oh, the beetle!”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Maurice O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, trans. Moya Llewelyn Davies and George Thomson, (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1938), 28.

⁶⁵ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 28–29.

After some time, Maurice slowly acclimatizes to the new conditions and also, adapts to the islander's language and manners. The author uses a great number of metaphors and similes, to make readers use their imagination and, therefore, to help them experience the atmosphere. For example, "The sun was now as round as a plate beyond the Tearacht to the west, and a path of glittering golden light stretching as far as the horizon over the sea."⁶⁶ Throughout the book the use of figurative language becomes prominent. The purpose of using this style while describing landscape is to ease and ensure fulfilment of the whole image presented. This might be demonstrated in an extract, when Maurice becomes habituated to the island:

We were only a quarter of a mile from land now, with a fine view of the Island before us. The wind had dropped. There was not a breath in the sky, a dead calm on the sea, a wisp of smoke rising up straight from every chimney on the Island; the sun as yellow as gold shining over the Pass of the Hill-slope from the west; a curragh towards us from the north, and another from the south; an echo in the coves from the barking of the dogs, and, when that ceased, the corncrake crying "Droach, droach, droach," The beauty of the place filled my heart with delight. Soon I saw people running down by every path—two, three, four. At last it was beyond me to count them. They were coming like ants, some of them running, others walking slowly, till they were all together in a crowd above the quay.⁶⁷

As this citation shows, his viewpoint on the landscape changes. He refers to a "fine view" with "the sun as yellow as gold shining," confessing that "the beauty of the place filled my [Maurice's] heart with delight." Consequently, the use of positively connotated words along with metaphors occurs more frequently. The purpose of such a writing style and rearranging of the landscape also leads to presenting the place as being romanticised. As becoming more of an insider of the community, it is noticeable that the author's viewpoint changes due to a more personal relationship with the land. The author delivers a wide illustration of nature, which can be demonstrated in the following extract, when Maurice and Pádrig decide to go fishing, and spend a night in the Inish (island).

⁶⁶ O'Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 44.

⁶⁷ O'Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 30.

I looked west towards the island. The sea was like glass for smoothness, little fish playing on the top of the water, the sun going down behind the Narrow Sound and throwing its golden beams on the Foze Rocks, which looked like a castle of gold on the horizon, shining with a supernatural light.

“Musha, Pádrig,” said I, “isn’t it a beautiful sight that is around and about us”

“I swear,” said he, turning to me with a laugh, “I don’t know is it on myself or not, but as soon as I clear the Horse’s Mouth westward it seems as if a cloud rises from my heart.

Maybe it is because I was born in the Inish.”

“In my opinion,” said Paddy, “even if you were born above on the Muilcheann, you would love it”⁶⁸

This passage displays the consciousness of patriotism.

Thorough the story, Maurice starts attending the local school, makes new friends and explores the way of living on the island. He learns mainly from his family, his father and his grandfather, who tell him stories. Storytelling plays a major part in Irish culture, when, on the islands especially, were stories and myths passed orally from one generation to another, yet no written evidence was present. Young Maurice spends a lot of time listening to these stories and legends which are passed to him from his family. The tradition of storytelling has a significant influence on forming the impression of the landscape. To be concrete, there are apparent references to the old historic myths and legends. For instance, when Maurice and his friend Tomás secretly go to Ventry to attend races, they are discussing the races on the way back home with Tomás saying:

“Do you know what I was thinking when I saw you and the other fellow fighting, especially on Ventry Strand? I was thinking of the duel between Dane Donn and the King of France long ago, for Daire Donn was a big, long fellow and the King of France a sturdy little block of a man like yourself.”⁶⁹

⁶⁸ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 108–109.

⁶⁹ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 65.

Making the reference to an old Irish legend, the Battle of Ventry, strengthens the atmosphere of the mentality and of keeping the oral tradition in the islanders' community. Another reference to the legendary hero can be pointed out in an extract with Maurice saying: "I ran on, very proud to have caught a rabbit without dog or trap, a thing Cos-fe-Chnos could not have done in his prime."⁷⁰ It is not only storytelling, but also singing and reciting old Irish poems that were central entertainment, idealising and romanticising island's landscape and nature with myths, legends and fairies. For example, the nineteenth century poem "The Midnight Court", by a Clare poet Brian Merriman:

'Twas my wont [sic] to wander beside the stream
On the soft green sward in the morning beam,
Where the woods lie thick on the mountain-side,
Without trouble or care what might betide.⁷¹

This is an example of Smith's theory outlined in the theoretical chapter identifying warrior and heroic songs as national symbols.

Thorough the book, Maurice adapts to the conditions on a rural land. He manages to learn new skills, such as farming, fishing for mackerels and lobsters, collecting and searching for eggs and hunting rabbits and birds. These activities were a fundamental part of a routine life on an isolated Blasket. For example, when Maurice and Tomás decided to go "gathering seagulls' eggs in the Scomach."⁷² As it was the first time Maurice's gathering, he was scared, as stated by him, "When I saw the black cliffs standing straight above I began to tremble still more. I looked down, and there was nothing below me but the blue depth of the sea. 'God of Virtues!' I cried, 'isn't it a dangerous place I am in.'"⁷³ Taking courage, Maurice keeps wandering among the screes when he finally draws out three dozen puffins, saying he was "the happiest hunter on the hills of Kerry."⁷⁴

The author captures a personal relationship with the land along with a patriotic attitude, for example when he is referring to himself as "a Blasket man."⁷⁵ He depicts nature and life on the island, putting an emphasis on a picturesque landscape. Furthermore, it can be confidently appointed, that this presentation of landscape is romanticised in comparison with an actual hard

⁷⁰ O'Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 159.

⁷¹ O'Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 115.

⁷² O'Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 42.

⁷³ O'Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 43.

⁷⁴ O'Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 44.

⁷⁵ O'Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 205.

life on the isolated rural island, as stated by Congáil “famines, evictions, and deaths at sea were frequent occurrences.”⁷⁶ Folklore traditions along with a personal attachment to the island and the sea displayed result in an idyllic impression of a traditional Irish way of life. Love and sentiment for the place might be best highlighted in an extract:

I had now spent a month on the sea, as happy as a prince returning home in the evening and setting out with the chirp of the sparrow. But one day when we were out as usual, I noticed a difference. The fine view was not to be seen, there was no gladness in my heart, the birds were not singing nor the seal sunning himself on the ledge, no heron, ring-plover nor sea-pie was at the water’s edge picking the limpets, no path of gold in the Bay of Dingle nor ripples glittering in the sunshine, no sultry haze in the bosom of the hills, no rabbits to be seen seated with ears cocked on the clumps of thrift. A gale was blowing from the south, and where the water lapped before, the waves were now hurling themselves with a roar against the rocks, not a bird’s cry to be heard but all of them cowering in their holes, big clouds sweeping across the sky ready to burst with the weight of the ram, the wind howling through the coves, the bright flowers above me twisted together in the storm, and no delight in my heart but cold and distress.⁷⁷

At the end of the story, Maurice leaves the Great Blasket to join the police force in Dublin and returns back to the island after few years.

Another key figure of the western Irish literature is Tomás O’Crohan with his book *The Islandman*. As a matter of fact, many scholars regard O’Crohan as a Godfather of the Western Irish literature. This autobiography, *The Islandman*, similarly as Maurice O’Sullivan’s *Twenty Years a-Growing* captures the author’s life on the Great Blasket Island. Concretely, O’Sullivan took the book as an example for his further island writing. Written originally in Irish language in 1923, Tomás O’Crohan provides readers with a detailed description of a daily life on the Great Blasket Island. In accordance with Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph’s theory, O’Crohan narrates the story solely from the perspective of an insider since he had never left the islands and lived there till his death in 1937.

⁷⁶ Congáil, “Life and the Dream,” 438.

⁷⁷ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 159–160.

In comparison with the *Twenty Years a-Growing*, there might be many differences noticed. For example, most of the book of *The Islandman* is not enriched by the personal attachment to the land with expressive descriptions. According to Tuan, the two books both contain the sea and the island, which are enhancing the atmosphere of isolation. As Eamon Maher compares the two books in his article “Island Culture: The Role of the Blasket Autobiographies in the Preservation of a Traditional Way of Life”, he indicates that “The tone of Ó Criomhain’s [O’Crohan’s] *The Islandman* is more elegiac than that of Ó Súilleabháin’s [O’Sullivan’s] account, but this is largely as a result of its being written at a stage when its author was already well into his twilight years.”⁷⁸ As previously mentioned, *Twenty Years a-Growing* was represented by a child’s point of view with a picturesque description of the landscape. In contrast, O’Crohan’s way of telling the story is being focused on the daily activities, working, lore, death and delivers a truthful portrayal of the daily life on the island together with fishing and building houses. Along with the challenging living conditions on the remote island Tomás O’Crohan led a very hard life as a craftsman. The lack of emotion, including the features of patriotism is present. Summarised by John McGahern, “the absence of personal feeling and the acceptance of whatever happens are a natural part of a life seen with a stable and inherited view of reality.”⁷⁹ As opposed to O’Sullivan, O’Crohan is not trying to create an idealised/romanticised version of reality. He captures the realistic picture with no intentions to affect the reader’s perception. Supported by McGahern, his “style itself is the outcome of a view of reality.”⁸⁰ He also identifies O’Crohan’s style as “the persistent way of seeing”, with

no description of local scenery, no reflection on personal feeling or motivation. People are represented by their actions, and places are inseparable from these actions, fishing, turfcutting, etc.⁸¹

It can be argued that the book is a form of a chronicle or a record of the islanders’ activities, where, expressed by McGahern, “people, too, are presented only in their essential outline, and that is only insofar as their striking identities are visible to the eyes of those around them.”⁸²

⁷⁸ Eamon Maher, “Island Culture: The Role of the Blasket Autobiographies in the Preservation of a Traditional Way of Life,” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 97, no. 387 (Autumn 2008): 265.

⁷⁹ John McGahern, “An t Oileanach/The Islandman,” *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 13, no. 1 (Jun. 1987): 8.

⁸⁰ McGahern, “An t Oileanach/The Islandman,” 8.

⁸¹ McGahern, “An t Oileanach/The Islandman,” 8.

⁸² McGahern, “An t Oileanach/The Islandman,” 15.

Another supporting statement has been made by Maher, claiming that the O’Crohan’s depiction of the life in the book was affected by the hardship of working and securing the necessities, resulting in him not being able to have “the luxury of ‘seeing’ the beauty that surrounded him.”⁸³ Additionally, in comparison with *Twenty Years a-Growing*, he recounts the O’Sullivan’s writing as “more prone to lyrical outburst”, being

far more buoyant in its celebration of the joys associated with living in close proximity to nature, the excitement of hunting animals and collecting birds’ eggs, the joys of music and conversation, the solidarity among neighbours.⁸⁴

In contrast, *The Playboy of the Western World* by J. M. Synge delivers another point of view. *The Playboy* is a play, which is set in the west coast of Ireland, County Mayo. Although many authors focus primary on the actual physical surroundings, Synge in his play focuses more on the life and social interactions in the western rural community. Even though the play was written in English, J. M. Synge is one of the authors who travelled to the West coast to learn the Irish language and to gain more authentic impression. As reported by O’Brien, “the islands off the west coast, the Blaskets and the Aran islands were places ‘of pilgrimage for students of the ancient tongue.’”⁸⁵ However, Synge with many other authors of that time were writing in English with a purpose of a gaining wider audience as the play was, in fact, first played in Anglicised Dublin. Despite the fact that the authors wanted to attract an English-speaking audience which was dominant, they were, at the same time, as revealed by O’Brien, “undermining a seminal aspect of Irish-Ireland’s identificatory matrix – the language.”⁸⁶ Synge in his play *The Playboy of the Western World* focuses on capturing peoples’ mindset and conduct more than their physical surroundings. Even though the play is written in English, Synge keeps the dialect of the community. As Synge mentions in the preface of the play, he emphasizes that the words and phrases used in the play were authentic, learnt from people on the coast from Kerry to Mayo, with only one or two words added by himself.⁸⁷

The plot of the play is set in a pub in County Mayo, owned by Michael James Flaherty, where he lives with his daughter Pegeen. One day, a man called Christy Mahon comes to the

⁸³ Maher, “The Role of the Blasket Autobiographies,” 271.

⁸⁴ Maher, “The Role of the Blasket Autobiographies,” 265.

⁸⁵ O’Brien, *The Question of Irish Identity*, 118.

⁸⁶ O’Brien, *The Question of Irish Identity*, 112.

⁸⁷ John Millington Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World and Riders to the Sea* (1907, London and New York: Routledge, 2003) 11.

pub, claiming he killed his father. As being on a run, Pegeen with her father accommodate Christy and he is being celebrated and admired for his “brave deed.”

Unlike many other authors of his time, Synge was not trying to create a utopian version of the Irish. Especially as were the authors who were members of the nationalistic Gaelic League. This might be, indeed, the reason why the play is perceived in a different way today, than in the early twentieth century. The usage of the Irish slang along with the evocative language of the Irish peasantry provoked the Irish public in a sense of “demoralising” or ruining the image of the Irish which nationalists tried to create. This consequently led to the audience starting riots. As Synge defends the language and the controversy of the play, he argues that

Anyone who has lived in real intimacy with the Irish peasantry will know that the wildest sayings and ideas in this play are tame indeed, compared with the fancies one may hear in any little hillside cabin in Geesala, or Carraroe, or Dingle Bay.”⁸⁸

As the plot continues, Christy’s father Old Mahon shows up in the Flaherty’s pub, turning out that he had not been killed by his son, but only harmed. After revealing the truth, Christy loses the admiration of Pegeen and local women. The loss of the brave and “heroic” perception of Christy encourages him to try to kill his father once again. But even this time, he is not successful. Firstly, being perceived as a courageous hero turned out to being perceived as a murderer with the locals trying to hang him.

To conclude, all the works examined depict the landscape of the West of Ireland. *The Islandman* and *Twenty Years a-Growing* portray the life on the remote islands from the authors personal point of view. These both autobiographies create different impressions of the same place, rearranging one reality into the utopian version of the place. *The Playboy of the Western World* together with *The Islandman* and *Twenty Years* capture the manners of locals and local folklore, as well as the story-telling, expressive language, the Irish dialect, heroic references, relationships and daily routine. All the stories take place in the remote areas in the West of Ireland, recording mainly the locals’ surroundings.

⁸⁸ Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*, 11.

3. National Identity in Literature

This chapter focuses on symbols of the Irish national identity in particularly chosen books. It analyses the cultural and social traits in the western Irish society. Another aim of this chapter is to point out the similarities and differences between the Irish and English culture, which are demonstrated through the usage of the national symbols. Furthermore, this chapter emphasises the nationalistic attitude in each book. The following statements are based on the references mentioned in the theoretical part.

As already mentioned, the landscape is not the only one symbol for creating the national identity. Besides landscape, including nature and folklore, the identity of the nation contains the common traits of behaviour and ways of acting and feeling. The feeling, such as the one of patriotism is not being evoked just by the symbols and typical physical surroundings, but also by the pride and power. The Irish nationalist authors put the emphasis on the rural “peasant life.” The isolated way of life on the remote islands and the west coast functioned as a pattern for the “original Ireland,” which happened to represent the whole culture of the Irish during the revival period. One of the intentions of the Irish nationalists, namely the Gaelic League, was to differentiate the Irish culture/identity from the English one, as the theory was previously highlighted by Egoz.

Maurice O’Sullivan’s book *Twenty Years a-Growing* presents the life on the remote Great Blasket Island as a romanticised and idealised picture. He highlights the beauty of the life on the island with a very detailed description of the landscape, such as nature, sea, animals, but also the traditions and local folklore. Although the translated English version of the book keeps many Gaelic terms, the different way of story-telling may still occur to be apparent. The book contains the combination of the Gaelic expressions with the Catholic symbols, which is a characteristic portrayal of religion in Irish culture. For instance, the characters are very often referring to God, Lord, or the devil, such as “in the devil’s name”, “oh Lord”, “God save you” and “your soul to the devil” are the most common expressions.

Another example might be demonstrated on an extract, where said:

He was taking an echo out of the coves, and when the dogs on the Island heard his voice they raised their own. You would swear by the book, in

the strangeness of the night with forty dogs or more raising an olagón,
that living and dead were gathered on the shore.⁸⁹

The author is using the term “swear by the book”, where the “book” represents the Bible. But the very next moment the author uses the term “olagón”, which is, according to Richard Mc Sweeney a term from the Irish language, “meaning to lament most pitifully.”⁹⁰ This is an example of the combination of the Pagan native expressions along with the Christian references which are an essential characteristic of the Irish culture.

The eight chapter of the book depicts the islanders celebrating Halloween, a Christian holiday for remembering the dead. Celebration of this holiday of Celtic origins is another element demonstrating the Irish culture. People gathered together and played games, as pointed out in a following extract:

How happy we were waiting for Hallowe'en, and playing the old Gaelic games—the Ring, the Blind Man, Knucklestones, Trom-Trom and Hide-and-Seek; a fine red fire sending warmth into every corner, bright silver sand from the White Strand on the floor glittering in the lamplight, two boys and two girls going partners at a game of knucklestones in one corner of the house, four more in another corner.⁹¹

Another Catholic references, such as “the holy oil”, “for the sake of God and the Virgin Mary” and sending for “the priest” can be demonstrated on a following extract:

Well, when her last sickness struck her down she sent for the priest. He came and put the holy oil on her. As he was leaving the house she called him back: ‘Musha, father, for the sake of God and the Virgin Mary, would you give me a few pence to wet my heart? ’The priest gave her sixpence and departed.⁹²

⁸⁹ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 69.

⁹⁰ Richard Mc Sweeney, *Innkeeper’s Fire: Sightings of a sacred hearth, Vol. 1* (London, UK: Lulu Enterprises, UK Ltd, 2008), 35.

⁹¹ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 81.

⁹² O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 100.

Nonetheless, the appearance of death is still present, with its circumstances being reflected without any further affection. This attitude appears quite commonly, presented on the following extract:

The old woman died that very same night, and on the morrow, when the neighbour women were preparing the corpse, one of them found a hard twisted lump in her hair behind her head. It was a purse with five pounds in it.⁹³

Another example of portraying the death on the isolated island can be highlighted in the “War” chapter. At the beginning of the First World War many shipwrecks start to appear in Dingle Bay. What might appear as surprising is the fact that the islanders are appraising the wreckage left on the ashore, stating that “war is good.”⁹⁴ The islanders lived in poor conditions and led a primitive way of life, so they benefited from the goods carried on wrecked ships.

There was good living in the Island now. Money was piled up. There was no spending. Nothing was bought. There was no need. It was to be had on the top of the water—flour, meat, lard, petrol, wax, margarine, wine in plenty, even shoes, stockings and clothes.⁹⁵

The author, as young Maurice also expresses his amusement of shipwrecks by saying “Great King of Virtues, it was a marvellous sight”⁹⁶, adding “Away we ran leaping for delight.”⁹⁷ As the war continues, one day the islanders find the dead body of a man. Maurice delivers an accurate description, saying that “It was a terrible sight, the eyes plucked out by the gulls, the face swollen, and the clothes ready to burst with the swelling of the body.”⁹⁸ This also indicates the trait of behavior of the islanders who are comfortable with rough conditions on the island.

Needles to say, from the rough living conditions derive the entire attitude and perspective of the islanders. One of the purposes of the nationalistic movement was remembering the past, as previously mentioned by Smith, concretely the races are mentioned in the book. When Maurice and his friend Tomás attend the races in Ventry, they are looking forward to take part in competition and consequently to win some money. Maurice joins the

⁹³ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 100.

⁹⁴ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 123.

⁹⁵ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 123.

⁹⁶ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 133.

⁹⁷ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 133.

⁹⁸ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 125.

one with the main purpose of the trick being to shoot a man with a rock while the man sticks his head up from the barrel and points his tongue out. Maurice is successful in the race with the man streaming blood. Inasmuch as Maurice is triumphant, the crowd starts embracing him, saying “Musha, my love for your hand for ever!” cried one. “Oh, musha, may God save you! Isn’t he the sprightly lad?” said another.”⁹⁹ The aggressively competitive undertone is apparent throughout the book, which might be as well considered as one of the representative symbols of the Irish culture, as pointed out in the theoretical chapter. Another example might be demonstrated on an extract, where Tomás wins in a race, but does not get his prize:

Tomás’s blood was up now and I behind him cheering him on in the name of his ancestors. That was enough. Tomás struck him in the chest and sent him staggering, his legs shaking beneath him. Then the lanky fellow made for him again, but Tomás put his head down and dived into him.¹⁰⁰

Fighting and referring to the island ancestors of Tomás can be also illustrated in the following extract by Maurice:

A tremble came into my blood: “Your soul to the devil, Tomas, don’t spend the day with that scarecrow! Make one effort and strike him down beneath you! Think of all who are looking on! Play your strength on him! Bring the victory to the west, man!” I cried, my blood boiling.¹⁰¹

Referring to the past is one of the main aspects while strengthening national identity. Especially, the Gaelic ancestors and Gaelic folklore. As the nationalists intended to restore the original de-Anglicised Gaelic Ireland, a number of Gaelic references are present. Besides the references to old Gaelic myths and legends, there are concrete references appraising the Gaelic nation. For example, when preparing for a funeral, Maurice’s grandfather refers to his coat as the “old Gaelic fashion”, which got passed to him by his father. Maurice then compares grandfather’s clothing to a “great peer from city of London.”¹⁰² When Maurice joins the civic guard, he meets a man who is also from the west, speaking Irish. He then calls him “my Gaelic

⁹⁹ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 59.

¹⁰⁰ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 64.

¹⁰¹ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 64.

¹⁰² O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 105.

companion.”¹⁰³ This also supports the statements about the role of togetherness. Maurice as well as his Gaelic companion receive the “Irish fáinne”, “a badge worn by Irish-speakers.”¹⁰⁴ Consequently, the author stresses the importance of the Irish language, which is an essential symbol of the Irish national identity.

As previously pronounced, the nationalists also intended to distinguish the Irish national identity from the English one. Thus, in the book there are a number of references against the English, expressing the attitude towards them. For instance, when a London foreigner travels to the Island, Maurice says to himself: “The laugh of an Englishman, said I to myself, isn’t it often I was told to beware of it!”¹⁰⁵ These differences are appointing the relationship between the nations, but to be concrete, not only the attitude towards the English, but also of the English towards the Irish. Since the Irish were perceived as a poor nation of peasants, it might be demonstrated on the extract where Maurice travels to Dublin. The boys are talking in Irish, hoping that the police officer does not understand them whereat one of them says: “How would he? Who has Irish but the wretches of the world?”¹⁰⁶ This example shows the perception of the Irish as a primitive nation. Nonetheless, the difference is also apparent when comparing people from the Anglicised Dublin and people living in the west or on the islands. One day, when Maurice is walking around Dingle City, a young boy shouts at him “Hello! Country cauboons!” with Maurice responding in anger “‘Musha, it is to the devil I give you if I haven’t the slant on you, you dregs of the city,’ said I aloud in Irish.”¹⁰⁷ After that, the girl from London, who is with them, states:

“Sure, anyone would know,” said the girl, “that the two of you come from the country with the stoop on you walking.”

“‘Musha, long stoop on yourself,” said I, “there is a fine hump on your own back if you could see it.” I looked at O’Connor. “I swear on my oath, O’Connor, there is a great stoop on the two of us, the way the people of the city know we are countrymen. Raise your head, man,” said I, stretching myself up and walking as light as a bird.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 233.

¹⁰⁴ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 231.

¹⁰⁵ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 186.

¹⁰⁶ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 241.

¹⁰⁷ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 219.

¹⁰⁸ O’Sullivan, *Twenty Years a-Growing*, 220.

Another book, which is being considered by many theorists as one of the most significant literary works is *The Islandman* by Tomás O’Crohan. The book is appraised as both cultural and national heritage of the Irish nation. As mentioned above, the nationalists very often drew their inspiration from the past. The Irish nationalists, concretely the Gaelic League, envisaged the Irish identity as a peasant nation located in rural areas, recalling the re-Gaelicized Irish nation. However, Tomás O’Crohan lived on the isolated island untouched by the, at the time, current nationalistic movements on the mainland. The principal purpose of O’Crohan’s writing was to capture the community of the Great Blasket Island and the way of life that was going extinct, since the young generation of the islanders was leaving or emigrating to America. Due to harsh living conditions and new government restrictions were people later on forced to leave the islands entirely. This can be illustrated in a following extract of O’Crohan’s famous concluding epilogue:

I have written minutely of much that we did, for it was my wish that somewhere there should be a memorial of it all, and I have done my best to set down the character of the people about me so that some record of us might live after us, for the like of us will never be again.¹⁰⁹

As pointed out by McGahern, *The Islandman* is a record of a society dealing with the daily life activities, where there is no sense of national pride captured. He also says, that the “distant rumblings of a new Ireland are brushed aside.”¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, the author’s love for the place might be still noticeable.

Since Tomás O’Crohan had never travelled away from the islands and the close West coast of Ireland, the Great Blasket Island was the only place he had known. Not having the opportunity of comparison of the livelihood on the island with another one, the lack of patriotism is present. Unlike O’Sullivan’s *Twenty Years a-Growing*, where Mourice got to learn about life outside of the island, the life on the Great Blasket was O’Crohan’s only reality. Despite this, he delivers a depiction of locals’ morals, such as the importance of a family unit and good relationships with the neighbours. This might be presented as an example of Tuan’s theory of local patriotism, which, in his words, “rests on the intimate experience of place, and on a sense of the fragility of goodness: that which we love has no guarantee to endure.” Clarified by Maher, O’Crohan along with persisting in the description of locals’ responsibilities, even

¹⁰⁹ Tomás O’Crohan, *The Islandman*, trans. Robin Flower, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1978) 244.

¹¹⁰ McGahern, “An t Oileanach/The Islandman,” 10.

points out the high moral standards while maintaining sexual properties.¹¹¹ As Maher cites O’Crohan,

[t]here was a special house in the village that the young folk, boys and girls, used to gather in and stay till midnight. To give some account of that house and the young people that used to gather in it, I am proud to be able to say that nothing wrong ever happened among them for the sixty-seven years that I’ve known it.¹¹²

Another notable aspect regarded as a marker of identity is language. Whereas the book was originally written in Irish, the English translated version does not keep the original words unlike *Twenty Years a-Growing*, however, a few terms is kept, such as ‘peelers’ or ‘yerra.’ The book contains no vulgarities or a significant number of slang terms, howbeit there are still many Christian expressions occurring. The terms are particularly interjections untranslatable in exact meaning. For example, “My soul from the devil!”, “Pon my soul”, “May their souls inherit the Kingdom of the Saints!”, “The Devil!”, “Alas!”, “Holy Mary!”, “Yerra”, “Wisha!”, “Devil, carry me!”, “In Mary’s name!”, “Your soul to the Big Fellow!” and “In the name of the Virgin!” This can be demonstrated on a following extract,

‘O,’ said he, ‘after swearing that oath!’
‘Yerra, there’s no meaning in that salmon, you fool,’ said I. ‘It’s only an expression people use.’
‘Wisha, by the Virgin, I fancy you’re right,’ says he, and tossed it off.¹¹³

This way of telling can be elucidated by Daniel A. Binchy’s statement, summarising that the reader’s perception of the translated version might proceed as “‘highly coloured,’ but it has not the colour of ‘the English language commonly spoken in Ireland’ which the translators profess to reproduce.”¹¹⁴ Furthermore, O’Crohan mentions the meeting with the author of the English translated version, Robin Flower.

Not only is the interaction between O’Crohan and Flower being mentioned, but also the nationalistic Gaelic League. O’Crohan’s cooperation with Flower and the Gaelic League

¹¹¹ Maher, “The Role of the Blasket Autobiographies,” 270.

¹¹² Maher, “The Role of the Blasket Autobiographies,” 270.

¹¹³ O’Crohan, *The Islandman*, 127.

¹¹⁴ Daniel A. Binchy, “Two Blasket Autobiographies,” review of *The Islandman*, by Tomás O’Crohan and Robin Flower and *Twenty Years A-Growing*, by Maurice O’Sullivan, Moya Llewelyn Davies and George Thomson, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, December, 1934.

originated from the wave of nationalists and scholars travelling to the islands due to the rapidly declining number of the Irish speakers. As O’Crohan puts in his words, he kept working harder and harder “for the sake of the language of our [his] country.”¹¹⁵ As the story continues, O’Crohan summarizes his life and the message of the legacy of the people living in the Great Blasket Island.

At the end of the book the indication of the sense of patriotism is perceptible. Nonetheless, the sense of patriotism is perceivable not only from the emphasizing the people’s morals, but moreover from the stressed importance of the native tongue. O’Crohan states: “I hear many an idle fellow saying that there’s no use in our native tongue; but that hasn’t been my experience. Only for it I should have been begging my bread!”¹¹⁶ This might be the example of Smith’s theory, stating that the language is one of the essential elements of the national identity. Furthermore, restoring of the native Irish language was one of the main intentions of the nationalistic Gaelic League.

Another aspect which might be appraised as the author’s love for the place is the reference to “the life the Blessed Master made for us [the islanders]”¹¹⁷, whilst admitting “I haven’t told all the hardships and the agonies that befell us from time to time when our only resource was to go right on.”¹¹⁸ The sense of pride and a nationalistic interpretation can be also revealed in the following extract:

One day there will be none left in the Blasket of all I have mentioned in this book-and none to remember them. I am thankful to God, who has given me the chance to preserve from forgetfulness those days that I have seen with my own eyes and have borne their burden, and that when I am gone men will know what life was like in my time and the neighbours that lived with me.¹¹⁹

Besides this, he expresses the pride by saying “I am proud to set down my story and the story of my neighbours. This writing will tell how the Islanders lived in the old days.”¹²⁰ The islanders

¹¹⁵ O’Crohan, *The Islandman*, 240.

¹¹⁶ O’Crohan, *The Islandman*, 241.

¹¹⁷ O’Crohan, *The Islandman*, 242.

¹¹⁸ O’Crohan, *The Islandman*, 242.

¹¹⁹ O’Crohan, *The Islandman*, 244.

¹²⁰ O’Crohan, *The Islandman*, 245.

also celebrated the Christian holidays, such as Christmas, New Year's Eve and they were baptised. Also, the similar approach to dealing with death might be noticed.

It is argued by many critics, that Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* is likewise one of the Irish nation's cultural treasures. As previously mentioned, Synge's intentions while writing this play were not to depict any utopian version of the Irish landscape. Nor were the responses of the Irish audience pleasant to the play. As stated by Fintan O'Toole,

Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory were quick to see Irish life as the life of the peasants. They had, they wrote, "taken their types and scenes direct from Irish life itself. This life is rich in dramatic materials while the Irish peasantry of the hills and coast speak an exuberant language and have a primitive grace and wildness due to the wild country they live in, which gives their most ordinary life a vividness and colour unknown in more civilised places." Irish life equals the peasant, and the peasant equals the landscape.¹²¹

During the twentieth century nationalistic movement in Ireland, most of the nationalist authors intended to distinguish the Irish culture from the English one, since the Irish were being perceived as a nation of peasants commanded by the rule of the English crown. As a consequence of the Synge's usage of the language, portrayal of the Western society and the plot itself, the play at that time angered the audience, starting riots. Instead of the idyllic portrayal of the Irish landscape the audience found the play offensive and viewed the characters of the play as primitive. As previously explained by Tuan, this was opposing to the idea of the movement to show the Irish national and cultural independence by means of the high-quality literature.

At the beginning of the play, the young man Christy Mahon comes to a pub, claiming he is on the run from the police. One of the aspects commonly featuring is the quarrelsome attitude. Just as much as in the Maurice O'Sullivan's *Twenty Years a-Growing*, where young Maurice referred to their ancestors during a fight, this attitude of pride is also noticeable in *The Playboy*. After Christy enters the pub, he is being asked why is he on the run and what he had done. Not being keen to tell the locals the truth, Pegeen (Michael's daughter) starts teasing Christy, saying:

¹²¹ Fintan O'Toole, "Going West: The Country versus the City in Irish Writing," *The Crane Bag*, 9, no.2 (1985): 111.

He's done nothing, so. (To Christy.) If you didn't commit murder or a bad, nasty thing, or false coining, or robbery, or butchery, or the like of them, there isn't anything that would be worth your troubling for to run from now. You did nothing at all.¹²²

After feeling offended by Pegeen's statement, Christy later confesses to the locals, that he had killed his father. What might appear as unexpected fact is the reaction of the locals in the pub to Christy's act. They are impressed by his courage to kill his father, considering it as a brave deed, trying to rationalize it, instead of judging or fearing Christy. Their reaction can be expressed in the following extract:

JIMMY. Oh, glory be to God!

MICHAEL (*with great respect*). That was a hanging crime, mister honey. You should have had good reason for doing the like of that.¹²³

With learning the truth, the locals start calling Christy "a mister" or "a mister honey", instead of "a lad", showing their respect for his act. Pegeen consequently wants to accommodate Christy in the pub, which is demonstrated in a following statement:

PHILLY. The peelers is fearing him, and if you'd that lad in the house there isn't one of them would come smelling around if the dogs itself were lapping poteen from the dungpit of the yard.

JIMMY. Bravery's a treasure in a lonesome place, and a lad would kill his father, I'm thinking, would face a foxy divil with a pitchpike on the flags of hell.

PEGEEN. It's the truth they're saying, and if I'd that lad in the house, I wouldn't be fearing the loosed kharki cut-throats, or the walking dead.

CHRISTY (*swelling with surprise and triumph*). Well, glory be to God!¹²⁴

Another of the many typical significant aspects is that Christy is being protected by the locals. They are appraising him and they do not report him to the police. As Synge explains in Greene's article,

¹²² Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*, 24.

¹²³ Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*, 24.

¹²⁴ Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*, 25–26.

[t]his impulse to protect the criminal is universal in the west. It seems partly due to the association between justice and the hated English jurisdiction, but more directly to the primitive feeling of these people, who are never criminals yet always capable of crime, that a man will not do wrong unless he is under the influence of a passion which is as irresponsible as a storm on the sea. If a man has killed his father, and is already sick and broken with remorse, they can see no reason why he should be dragged away and killed by the law.¹²⁵

Christy then stays living on the countryside, remaining protected by the locals.

Nonetheless, there is also a number of Christian references, for instance “the devil”, “hell”, “Lord”, “glory be to God” and “Providence and Mercy, spare us all!” Several of these Christian references can be demonstrated in the following extract:

WIDOW QUIN. When you see me contriving in my little gardens, Christy Mahon, you'll swear the Lord God formed me to be living lone, and that there isn't my match in Mayo for thatching, or mowing, or shearing a sheep.

PEGEEN (*with noisy scorn*). It's true the Lord God formed you to contrive indeed. Doesn't the world know you reared a black lamb at your own breast, so that the Lord Bishop of Connaught felt the elements of a Christian, and he eating it after in a kidney stew? Doesn't the world know you've been seen shaving the foxy skipper from France for a threepenny bit and a sop of grass tobacco would wring the liver from a mountain goat you'd meet leaping the hills?¹²⁶

As already stated by Synge, the play depicts the typical language used in the West of Ireland, with the dialect occasionally including vulgarities. The speech pattern of people living in the western countryside is one of the characteristics of the locals' identity. This identity is consequently referred to as a representation of a whole nation by many nationalists. The Irish dialect of the play might be presented in a following extract:

¹²⁵ David H. Greene, “The ‘Playboy’ and Irish Nationalism,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 46, no. 2 (April 1947): 200.

¹²⁶ Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*, 33.

SARA (*going over to dresser and counter very quickly, and getting two glasses and porter*). You're heroes surely, and let you drink a supeen with your arms linked like the outlandish lovers in the sailor's song. (*She links their arms and gives them the glasses.*) There now. Drink a health to the wonders of the western world, the pirates, preachers, poteen-makers, with the jobbing jockies; parching peelers, and the juries fill their stomachs selling judgments of the English law. *Brandishing the bottle.*¹²⁷

The author uses many Irish terms, for example “supeen” meaning “a small drink”, “poteen” meaning “an illegal home distilled spirit”, “jobbing jockies” and “peelers” meaning the police.¹²⁸ But not only the representation of a unique dialect and language, but also the references to the symbols of the Irish identity itself. To be concrete, Sara in her speech makes a reference to a sailor’s song, appealing to drink a health to the wonders of the western world, the pirates and the preachers. The author uses such attributes, which are typical for the western folk to appraise the patriotic attitude.

Since one of the main aims of the Irish nationalists, especially the Gaelic League was to renew the de-Anglicised Ireland, the anti-English attitude appears in the play. The attitude can be demonstrated by Sara’s pronunciation “the juries fill their stomachs selling judgments of the English law.” As previously explained by Synge in Greene’s article, this refers to the negative viewpoint towards the English and the English jurisdiction.¹²⁹ Also, according to earlier report by Egoz, this approach is likely to appear during the period of a social conflict or a discrimination of one nation by another.

To conclude, besides the portrayal of the landscape, there are several elements symbolising the national identity. For example, common traits of behaviour or the attitude towards specific aspects, which are shared thorough the community. All the works analysed play a significant role in the search for nationalistic and patriotic recall for an identity as they capture intangible heritage of the Irish culture.

¹²⁷ Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*, 41.

¹²⁸ “Playboy of the Western World,” <https://www.dialectsarchive.com/playboy-of-the-western-world>

¹²⁹ Greene, “The ‘Playboy’ and Irish Nationalism,” 200.

Conclusion

This thesis dealt with the portrayal of the landscape in the selected literature of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The reason for examining the landscape depiction was its implementation in building the national identity during the period which happened to be the most significant for Irish nationalism. The thesis was divided into several chapters, the theoretical one and the two analytical parts bearing on the hypotheses presented.

The main aim of the theoretical part of the thesis was to generally introduce the term landscape with its various meanings and usage in different fields. The theoretical part delivers a number of theories and concepts of the landscape by many different thinkers agreeing on associating the portrayal of the landscape most frequently with the untamed rural terrain. This process of the portrayal might be considered as a rearranging of the land for the authors' own purposes resulting in the different outcomes of the chosen audience. This impression of the landscape varies for each individual evoking a different scale of emotions. The thinkers such as Yi-Fu Tuan presented the concept of patriotism being a feeling of love and pride for the homeland. Another point was made, explaining that depicting the untamed terrain being perceived as the original gave rise to remembering and rediscovering the historical past. These findings apply to the fact of the Irish portraying the landscape of the West of Ireland with a purpose to distinguish its culture from the English one.

The analytical part was divided into two chapters with its purpose of applying the theories on the selected literature. To be concrete, the statements were demonstrated on the portrayal of the Irish landscape in *Twenty Years a-Growing* by Maurice O'Sullivan (1933), *The Islandman* by Tomás O'Crohan (1926), and *The Playboy of the Western World* by John Millington Synge (1907).

The first chapter of the analytical part focused on the way the authors pictured and described the landscape. Since being under the rule of the British Empire, the British influence in art was predominant. With subsequent efforts of the Irish to self-determine the Irish identity and culture, the artists began to question "What is the Irish identity and what is the typical Irish landscape that represents the nation?" The authors turned their attention to the West of Ireland. All of the three plots of the analysed books take place in the West, specifically the Great Blasket Island, County Mayo and other villages of the Gaeltacht. Since the life on the remote western islands was extremely hard, the authors utilised the portrayal for their own purposes. To be specific, with the landscape considered as an ideological concept, some of the authors often

ended up romanticising the land, creating a utopian version of the livelihood in the West. The authors, however, differentiated in the outcome and the depiction of life in the West. For instance, Maurice O’Sullivan in his autobiography *Twenty Years a-Growing* created a romanticised picture of that livelihood. On the other hand, the J. M. Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World* caused riots amongst the Irish public. Tomás O’Crohan’s memoir called *The Islandman* with the *Twenty Years a-Growing* by O’Sullivan happened to contain particular aspects of the landscape, for example the seashore, the weather, the animals living on the island, conditions on the sea and the physical surroundings of the place. The depiction of a simple and primitive peasant life evoked the sense of differing from the Anglicised parts of Ireland, such as Dublin, and from England itself. Moreover, the point of ‘a part representing the whole’ of the nation was demonstrated as the West came to represent the identity of Ireland as a whole. Moreover, as stated in the theoretical part, the portrayal of the landscape emerged not only in literature, but also in other fields of art, such as painting. This was one of the many ideas of the nationalistic movements evoking a sense of patriotic emotion.

The second chapter of the analytical part detailed further elements of representing the national identity. The emphasis was placed more on the attitude and common traits of behaviour amongst the community. Since Ireland’s intentions to separate from British rule had been ongoing for centuries, the period between the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century happened to be the most significant. The crucial events which engendered the Irish population’s demands for self-determination were the Act of Union (1800) and mainly the Great Potato Famine (1845–49) along with a number of famines preceding. In a response to the Act of Union (1800) with Ireland being governed directly from London a part of the Irish society, especially the Catholic population became disadvantaged and it would be fairly to say discriminated against. For example, the English language started spreading across Ireland along with the population of Protestants. Also, the punishments for speaking Irish or singing Irish songs or playing Irish sports were ongoing. With the rise of nationalistic groups such as the Gaelic League and its calls for independence the art depicted the attitude towards the English through many references made by the characters in the analysed books. One of the prior intentions of the Gaelic League was to restore the Irish language, so the majority of the literature was written in Irish and translated to English later on. Due to not having the ability to keep the exact same meaning of the translation, the texts frequently kept the original terms. Another point demonstrated in this chapter was the observation of the Gaelic folklore, crafts, customs and sports, which was another of the priorities for the Gaelic League to restore. The authors

promoted traditional Gaelic games, story-telling, singing songs and dancing. Furthermore, all of the three works embraced the religion, to be concrete there were numerous Catholic references reoccurring along with the mythological ones. The role of *The Islandman* by Tomás O’Crohan in the Irish nation’s heritage is appraised as one of the most essential and authentic records of the community living on the Great Blasket Island which is now lost to us. Similarly, the *Twenty Years a-Growing* by Maurice O’Sullivan found well deserved positive responses on this joyful story depicting the life on the Great Blasket. On the contrary, the responses to *The Playboy of the Western World* by John Millington Synge were, at the time, not positive at all. During the period of Irish demands for, both cultural and political independence, the play caused riots and met with the disapproval of the Irish public. One of the main reasons why the play enraged the public was Synge’s portrayal of the people living in the West, depicting them as ignorant peasants and with no intentions of romanticising anything at all. Nowadays, the play together with the two Blasket autobiographies considered as one of Ireland’s cultural treasures.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá problematikou vyobrazování krajiny, jakožto nástroje k posilování a budování národní identity. Hlavním cílem je především definovat základní pojmy, jako jsou krajina a národní identita, a následná analýza textů vybrané irské literatury. Analytická část se zabývá díly jako jsou *The Islandman* od Tomáše O’Crohana, *Twenty Years a-Growing* od Maurice O’Sullivanova a *The Playboy of the Western World* od Johna Millingtona Synge. Jsou v ní demonstrovány zjištění teoretické části a opírá se o sekundární zdroje, které jsou publikovány odborníky, zabývajícími se tímto tématem.

V první části teoretické kapitoly je představen pojem krajina spolu se škálou odvětví, v nichž je tento termín využíván. Jsou zde prezentovány definice krajiny a jejího vyobrazování nejen v literatuře, ale také například v malířství. Další zmíněné termíny jsou například dojem, vnímání zachycené kompozice a různé úhly pohledu na dílo. Autoři mnohdy zachycovali krajinu dle své potřeby, čímž vytvářeli její romantickou až utopickou verzi. Práce vychází převážně ze zjištění čínsko-amerického geografa Yi-Fu Tuana, který společně s ostatními odborníky definuje zachycení krajiny jako způsob nahlížení, kdy finální kompozice krajiny vytváří individuální dojem pro pozorovatele.

Druhá část teoretické kapitoly představuje termín národní identita a navazuje tím na teorie znázorňování krajiny k posilování národní identity. Tato část vychází převážně z teorií Anthonyho D. Smithe, který tvrdí, že koncept národní identity úzce souvisí s nacionalismem. Dle Smithe je tato nacionalistická ideologie či hnutí charakterizována jako soubor symbolů, jako jsou např. jazyk, území, historie a folklor, ale také vlajka, hymna, krajina a jiné znaky, které jsou společné pro určitou skupinu či národ. Tato kolektivně sdílená jednotvárnost napomáhá k umocňování pocitu jedinečnosti a zároveň povzbuzuje pocit odlišnosti od jiné charakteristické skupiny. Jinými slovy, vyobrazování těchto symbolů typických pro irskou identitu mělo za cíl sjednotit irský národ a zároveň demonstrovat rozdíl vůči národnosti anglické ve snaze oddělení Irska od nadvlády Anglie. Dále jsou v této části zmíněny pojmy jako patriotismus a kulturní a národní dědictví.

První kapitola analytické části se zabývá vyobrazením krajiny v dílech *The Islandman* od Tomáše O’Crohana, *Twenty Years a-Growing* od Maurice O’Sullivanova a *The Playboy of the Western World* od J. M. Synge. Tato kapitola zkoumá rozdílné způsoby zachycení krajiny západního Irska. Děj obou autobiografií, *The Islandman* a *Twenty Years a-Growing* se odehrává na západním ostrově Great Blasket. Ačkoli je popisované prostředí stejné, způsob popisu autorů

se zcela liší. Maurice O'Sullivan představuje romantizovanou verzi Great Blasketu a života na něm a opomíjí těžké podmínky a práci na ostrově. Autor prezentuje život ostrovanů z dětského úhlu pohledu a vytváří tím radostný příběh obohacený o každodenní aktivity, jako je tradiční vyprávění povídek, zpívání a tanec. Současně O'Sullivan detailně popisuje krajinu ostrova s použitím mnoha expresiv, celý text tak působí jako pozitivně naladěný. Zaměřuje se na přírodu, moře, slunce, zvířata a aktivity s ostatními ostrovany, čímž tak prezentuje idylickou verzi života na Great Blasketu. Na druhé straně, Tomás O'Crohan ve svých pamětech *The Islandman* zaznamenává život ostrovanů takový, jaký je, bez snahy vytvořit romantizovanou verzi ostrova. Popisuje každodenní aktivity a zabývá se spíše životem z praktického hlediska, např. popisem domů, počtem místností, nástroji užívaných k práci atp. O'Crohan tím tak poskytuje autentický záznam života, dnes již neexistující komunity. Divadelní hra *The Playboy of the Western World* od J. M. Synge se zaměřuje více na zvyky než fyzické prostředí krajiny. Děj se odehrává taktéž na západě Irska, konkrétně v hrabství Mayo. Hra se setkala s nechvalnými ohlasy, především kvůli Syngeovu vyobrazení místních jako primitivních venkovanů. Jelikož cílem Synge bylo zaznamenat prostředí bez úmyslu vytvoření jakékoliv iluze, ponechává jeho hra původní dialekt a vulgarismy pro zachování autentičnosti. Všechna tato díla obsahují opakující se prvky, konkrétně moře, útesy, pobřeží a poskytují čtenáři představu života západního Irska.

Druhá kapitola analytické části se více zabývá nehmotnými symboly posilování národní identity, jako jsou původní gaelské výrazy, zvyky, vzorce chování, a zvláště kolektivní postoj vůči Anglii. Konkrétní aspekty jsou analyzovány v jednotlivých dílech, konkrétně *The Islandman* od Tomáše O'Crohana, *Twenty Years a-Growing* od Maurice O'Sullivan a *The Playboy of the Western World* od J. M. Synge. Především negativní postoje proti Anglii jsou zasazeny do historického kontextu a politické situace dvacátého století, jež je definováno jako období nacionalistických hnutí se snahou prosadit samostatnost a suverenitu Irska. Kapitola se také zabývá významem těchto děl, který měly a dodnes mají při definování irské národní identity. Dvě autobiografie, původně psané v irštině, *The Islandman* a *Twenty Years a-Growing*, se setkaly s pozitivními ohlasy, a to zejména od nacionalistického hnutí The Gaelic League. Snahou hnutí byla obnova irského jazyka a navrácení tradičních zvyků a sportu do každodenního života. Autoři tak velmi často navštěvovali západ a ostrovy jako místo nedotčené anglickým vlivem, jazykem a zvyky. Nacionalisté dále ve snaze posilovat tuto jedinečnou vizi tzv. původního Irska se obraceli na západní literaturu, kdy tyto dvě autobiografie poskytují autentický záznam života, již neexistující komunity. Přeložené verze těchto děl zachovávají nejen irský dialekt, ale také původní slova v irštině. Ačkoli pro některé tyto výrazy mnohdy

neexistuje anglický ekvivalent, jsou ponechány především z důvodu vytvoření věrohodného dojmu života a mluvy místních. J. M. Synge, píšící hru *The Playboy of the Western World* v angličtině s cílem oslovit co nejširší veřejnost taktéž přizpůsobuje jazyk a ponechává původní, až poetický irský dialekt. Syngeův způsob ztvárnění postav spolu se zachováním vulgarismů zapříčinil vnímání irské identity jako národ primitivních rolníků. To vedlo k pohoršení, urážce a protestům nejen Irů, ale také si získalo negativní pozornost ve Spojených Státech.

Výsledkem této analýzy je souhrn aspektů, charakteristických pro irskou národní identitu, které je možno nalézt ve všech analyzovaných dílech této práce. Ta předkládá typický obraz irské krajiny z fyzického hlediska, jako je např. příroda. Vedle krajiny jsou zde uvedeny i jiné, nehmotné symboly, jako např. jazyk, folklor, zvyky a postoje. Analýza již zmíněných děl dochází k závěru, že autoři tohoto nacionalistického období kladou důraz na vyobrazení těchto symbolů, které se zároveň ve všech dílech opakují. Lze tedy potvrdit, že autoři, ve snaze posílit irskou národní identitu, ve svých dílech zobrazovali západní krajinu, která je považována za nedotčenou anglickými vlivy. Zaměřováním pozornosti na původní a nedotčený západ autoři s nacionalisty vytvářeli identitu, již pomocí svých děl předávali do podvědomí společnosti.

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