



THE PROBLEM OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN MARTİN MCDONAGH'S  
*THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE*

Martin Mcdonagh'in *Leenane*'in *Güzellik Kraliçesi* Oyununda Millî Kimlik Sorunu

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THE PROBLEM OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN MARTIN MCDONAGH'S *THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE*

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Abstract

The end of the nineteenth century was a turning point for Irish theatre with the establishment of the Irish Literary Theatre as playwrights attempted to write national plays disengaging from the British theatre. This period is known as the Celtic Revival, a period of building a national identity both by political and cultural action, during which the playwrights contributed to the rejuvenation of the old Irish myths and traditions. However, at the end of the twentieth century when Ireland became a multicultural country with multiple identities, and opened to the outer world politically and economically, the Irish theatre, too, started to change its outlook by problematizing the nationalistic elements of Irishness instead of glorifying the national and cultural values. The Irish playwright, Martin McDonagh has also maintained a pluralist approach challenging the traditional and national elements in his plays. Instead of adhering to a national identity, McDonagh believes in cultural pluralism to adapt to the new century. McDonagh's pluralist approach will be discussed with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'nomadic identity' and 'rhizome'. Thus, this paper aims to analyze how McDonagh problematizes the national identity in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* by portraying characters, who are incarcerated by meaningless national values and norms.

**Key Words:** Irish theatre, national identity, Martin Mcdonagh, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, nomadic identity

Öz

İrlanda Edebî Tiyatrosunun kurulması ve oyun yazarlarının İngiliz tiyatrosu etkisinden kurtularak millî oyunlar yazmaya başlamasından dolayı on dokuzuncu yüzyılın sonu İrlanda tiyatrosu için bir dönüm noktasıdır. Kültürel ve siyasal faaliyetlerle millî bir kimliğin oluşturulduğu Kelt Uyanışı olarak da bilinen bu dönemde oyun yazarları eski İrlanda mit ve geleneklerinin canlandırılmasına katkı sağlamışlardır. Ancak, yirminci yüzyılın sonlarında İrlanda'nın çok kültürlü bir ülke olması, siyasi ve ekonomik olarak dış dünyaya açılması ile İrlanda tiyatrosu da perspektifini değiştirmiş, millî ve kültürel değerleri yüceltmek yerine milliyetçi İrlanda unsurlarını sorgulamaya başlamıştır. İrlandalı oyun yazarı Martin McDonagh da çoğulcu bir yaklaşım edinerek oyunlarında geleneksel ve millî unsurlara meydan okur. McDonagh yeni yüzyıla uyum sağlayabilmek için, millî bir kimliğe bağlı kalmak yerine kültürel çoğulculuğa inanır. McDonagh'ın çoğulcu yaklaşımı Deleuze ve Guattari'nin 'göçebe kimlik' ve 'köksap' kavramları ile alınacaktır. Bu sebeple

bu makale, McDonagh'ın *Leenane'in Güzellik Kraliçesi* oyununda anlamsız millî değerler ve normlar yüzünden hapsolmuş karakterler tasvir ederek millî kimliği nasıl sorunsallaştırdığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İrlanda tiyatrosu, millî kimlik, Martin McDonagh, *Leenane'in Güzellik Kraliçesi*, göçebe kimlik

### **Introduction**

In *the Beauty Queen of Leenane*, which is the first play of *The Leenane Trilogy* consisting of *the Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996), *A Skull in Connemara* (1997), and *The Lonesome West* (1997), Martin McDonagh turns the Irish nation's values upside down in order to reveal that they are no longer important to construct a national identity in the twenty first century. The national values of Ireland are not at the core of people's lives, and they cannot go beyond just being hollow symbols in their lives. In *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, it is blindingly obvious that Martin McDonagh attacks nostalgia by reversing the ideals and institutions like religion and family, which actually entrap and limit individuals. The reason behind his rejection of nostalgia is to emphasize the fact that a country should break with its national myths to adapt to the twenty-first century:

A country... can only prepare for the twenty-first century by breaking with the cultural myths of its past. To do so, it is not enough to shrug off the whimsy of nostalgia; you have to pummel the past. As surely as Mick Dowd pulverizes the bones to skitter in *A Skull in Connemara*, McDonagh attacks the cultural images of a quaint 'old country' (Sierz, 2001, p.225).

Instead of adhering to a national identity, McDonagh believes in cultural pluralism to adapt to the new century. As an Irishman who grew up in London, he adopts a multicultural identity. Because of his upbringing in the two countries, he himself does not feel like having any settled national identity:

I always felt somewhere kind of in-between ... I felt half-and-half and neither, which is good...I'm not into any kind of definition, politically, socially, religiously. It is not that I don't think about those things, but I've come to a place where the ambiguities are more interesting than choosing a strict path and following it (O'Toole, 1997, para. 17).

McDonagh's statement about identity, as noted above, coincides with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of nomadic identity. Inspired by the literal meaning of nomad; that is, "a member of a group of people who move from one place to another rather than living in one place

all of the time” (Cambridge Dictionary), Deleuze and Guattari created the philosophical term of nomad to refer to people, who choose to be rootless like a ‘rhizome’, a plant stem which has a horizontal network without a centre or root as opposed to a trunk or tree, which has a centre and a body. Deleuze and Guattari thus use the metaphor of the horizontal ‘rhizome’ to describe non-hierarchy and rootlessness without social ties. By creating the concept of the ‘rhizome’ that stands for a pluralistic and heterogeneous society, Deleuze and Guattari deconstruct the superiority of the hierarchical and phallogocentric Western civilization (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.21).

In this sense, McDonagh’s thought on identity, which he describes as ‘in-betweenness’ corresponds to the concept of the ‘rhizome’ and ‘nomadic identity’. He rejects national identity, which resists changes and does not tolerate plurality. Thus, in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, McDonagh presents the problematic national identity by portraying characters, who are incarcerated by national values and norms.

*The Beauty Queen of Leenane* is set in Leenane, a small town of Connemara, which is located in the west of Ireland. The play not only represents the isolated peasant life, but also portrays the characters, who are struggling to adjust to the global world through media and the immigrants who left the town for England and America. Thus, McDonagh implicates that it is not possible to get stuck into the past anymore, but the Irish nation must adapt itself to the global world. In *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, he depicts a life full of meaningless cultural values that suffocate and repress the individuals.

In this paper, it will be argued how McDonagh subverts national identity deconstructing the beauty of landscape, religion and family, which are the national values of Irish identity.

### **Irish National Theatre**

Before analyzing McDonagh’s impact on Irish theatre, it is worth alluding to the history of Irish nationalism and Irish national theatre. The nineteenth century was a turning point for Irish theatre. Until this century, there was not a distinctive theatre of the country, but it was under the effect of British theatre. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, with the establishment of the Irish Literary Theatre, playwrights attempted to create national plays. Irish Literary Theatre was turned into the Abbey Theatre, which was founded by W. B. Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory, John M. Synge, and Sean O’Casey in 1904. This period is known as the Celtic Revival

during which the playwrights contributed to the rejuvenation of the old Irish myths and traditions. It was a period of building a national identity both by political and cultural action (Leerssen, 2004, p.47-60). The playwrights of the Abbey Theatre appreciated and praised the peasant life and the beautiful landscape of Ireland idealizing and romanticizing the rural life. However, there were some different approaches to the portrayal of the peasantry. While Yeats portrayed more idealized and spiritual peasant life, Synge, on the other hand, depicted a much more realistic rural life. In his play *The Playboy of the Western World*, he portrays peasants in a harsh way depicting them as rude people even murderers. In addition to the representation of the rural life, Synge assumed a realistic approach recreating the Irish myths. While reinterpreting the tragic Irish love story of Deirdre and Naoise in his play *Deirdre of Sorrows*, he brought them back them as real human beings giving them free will and making them individuals with feelings (Lončar-Vujnović and Andrejević, 2013, p.187-188).

Fintan O'Toole, a drama critic, explains how the nationalistic movement in Ireland started in the nineteenth century as follows:

It followed the nationalism developed largely in early-19th-century Germany, the idea that the “people” was a single unit defined by its cultural and linguistic distinctiveness and entitled to its God-given “natural” territory. It also followed the common habit of defining itself by what it was not – in the case of Irish nationalism, not English (2018, para.14).

However, at the end of the twentieth century, nationalism ended in Ireland because it became a multicultural country with multiple identities and opened to the outer world politically and economically. Also, the Catholic Church, which has always been associated with Irish identity, began to lose its power over the country. Hence the values, which constituted the nineteenth century Ireland, came to an end (O'Toole, 2018, para.2-5).

Moreover, at the end of the twentieth century, the Irish theatre started to change its outlook by problematizing the nationalistic elements of Irishness instead of glorifying the national and cultural values. With the rise of postmodernism, the world has assumed a multicultural approach giving voice to all individuals instead of supporting a sense of unity in society. As such, the Irish playwrights have also maintained a pluralist approach challenging the traditional elements.

Martin McDonagh challenges traditional and national elements by using *in-yer-face* theatre tactics such as shocking and disturbing the audience with violence and aggressive language. *In-yer-face* theatre emerged at the end of twentieth century to depict the dark side of the world and to portray the traumatized individual of the age because of horrible events and wars of the century. Sarah Kane, Martin McDonagh, Philip Ridley and Mark Ravenhill are the key playwrights of *in-yer-face*. Alex Sierz, a theatre scholar, defines this movement as,

The widest definition of *in-yer-face* theatre is any drama that takes the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message. It is a theatre of sensation: it jolts both actors and spectators out of conventional responses, touching nerves and provoking alarm. Often such drama employs shock tactics, or is shocking because it is new in tone or structure, or because it is bolder or more experimental than what audiences are used to. Questioning moral norms, it affronts the ruling ideas of what can or should be shown on stage; it also taps into more primitive feelings, smashing taboos, mentioning the forbidden, creating discomfort. Crucially, it tells us more about who we really are. Unlike the type of the theatre that allows us to sit back and contemplate what we see in detachment, the best *in-yer-face* theatre takes us on an emotional journey, getting under our skin. In other words, it is experiential, not speculative (Sierz, 2001, p.4).

McDonagh, as an important representative of *in-yer-face* theatre questions norms by using the elements of this theatre movement. He mixes traditional and modern features to confuse the audience. At first, the audience encounters a traditional setting, but it turns out to be a disturbing play portraying the traumatized lonely individual. The *in-yer-face* elements in the play will be analyzed in the next section through examples from the text.

### **The Beauty Queen of Leenane**

In his *Leenane Trilogy*, McDonagh subverts the foundational elements of Irish nation, such as religion, family, and peasantry life. In this sense, the setting of *The Leenane Trilogy* should be brought into the foreground. It is set in Leenane, Connemara, located in the west of Galway. The west coast of Ireland was important for the nationalist playwrights of the nineteenth century because it was a place belonging only to Irish nation, the

Gaelic speaking people with old-fashioned lifestyles. Thus, it was a place for them to escape from the Anglicized east part. To put differently, “[i]n this way, an idealized west was created by cultural nationalism: as the preserver of the Gaelic language and culture, the west represents the Irish national identity, characterized by a timelessly noble peasantry and an idyllic country” (He, 2014, p.1). Hence, the playwrights of the Abbey Theatre, especially Yeats, visited the west coast and presented the vast landscape in a romanticized way. Synge also travelled to the Aran Islands and learnt the Gaelic language there. Synge “clearly idealized the islanders' lives as simple, integrated, and pristine, contrasting sharply with the vulgar life in mainland cities and towns” (He, 2014, p. 2).

On the other hand, Martin McDonagh does not romanticize the beauty of the west coast, but he dismantles the beauty of the landscape representing it in a gloomy way. He does not illustrate the national importance of the scenery or commend the Irishness of it. On the contrary, he creates a landscape, which is dark, rainy, and grotesque that is reflective of the characters' depressing and dull life. In the beginning of *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, McDonagh presents the tedious and gloomy climate of the town:

Mag. Wet, Maureen?

Maureen. Of Course wet (p.5).

It is obvious from the dialogue that it is always rainy and dark affecting the psychology of the people badly. Later, when Ray comes to invite Maureen and Mag to the party at their house, he and Mag talk about the muddy hill, which makes their walks around the town harder:

Ray. Well, I am not wading through all that skitter just to tell her.

I've done enough wading. Coming up that oul hill.

Mag. It's a big oul hill.

Ray. It is a big oul hill.

Mag. Steep.

Ray. Steep is right and if not steep then muddy.

Mag. Muddy and rocky (p.13).

As it is clearly seen the landscape is not peaceful, serene, or soothing. Conversely, it is a land with harsh conditions that give their lives trouble. The weather reflects the suffocating atmosphere of the characters' family life:

The gloomy and dark atmosphere of the nature outside the house is emblematic of the Folan house that incarcerates both the body and the mind of the characters. Nature in the West of Ireland with its



beauty and order was the main source of setting in traditional Irish Theatre. Nevertheless, it is portrayed as dull and gloomy with its steep muddy slopes and heavy rains in the play (Mızıkyan, 2019, p.115)<sup>1</sup>.

McDonagh presents the land with all its difficulties in a realistic way instead of portraying an idyllic landscape like the nineteenth century playwrights.

In the play, the audience encounters a traditional setting at the very first sight. It can misdirect the audience to the idea that this is a traditional play that could belong to the Abbey Theatre. The very first sentence of the play can take us back to the beginning of the 1900s: “The living room/ kitchen of a rural cottage in the west of Ireland” (p.5). There is a crucifix hanging on the wall, farm tools, and a rocking chair that are the typical objects of peasantry symbolizing the rural life in traditional Irish plays. However, McDonagh confuses the audience by placing some modern objects, such as a television, radio, and some photos of Kennedys’ into the setting. Thus, Leenane is not an isolated and unspoiled Irish place of the west coast anymore, but it is now a part of globalized world. Media has an important place in the play because it is a way of connecting Leenane to the outside world. There are many references to Australian soap operas such as “The Sullivans” and “Sons and Daughters.” Ray says, “Everything is Australian nowadays” (p.13). Then, he states that he likes “Sons and Daughters” because “everybody is always killing each other and a lot of the girls do have swimsuits” (p.42). This statement proves people’s inclination to violence in this society. Violent television programs give pleasure to people. Moreover, as the town does not provide Roy with any sense of enjoyment and meaning, the television occupies a great part of his life because there is nothing to do in Leenane for him.

McDonagh delineates his purpose of creating an unorthodox play through a mixture of old and new, global, and traditional. The picture of John and Robert Kennedy refers to Ireland’s being an emigrant country as Kennedys are the Irish descendant presidents of the USA; they were also assassinated. In a similar vein, it may also be a foreshadowing for the murder of Mag at the end of the play. The intermingling of the traditional and modern symbols can be a shocking tactic. As an example of an *in-yer-face* play, it may aim to shock the audience with the setting. While the audience

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<sup>1</sup> The translation from Turkish into English is made by the writer of the present paper.

is waiting for a conventional play, McDonagh increases the tension gradually disturbing the audience and showing that this is not a safe and peaceful household as well as a society at large.

Apart from the climate and confusing setting, McDonagh also problematizes the economic situation of the town. Connemara does not offer any economic opportunities for the characters. Especially for the younger generation, the town does not proffer anything, but suffocates them with its dullness. Ray, the younger brother of Pato who wants to migrate to London, states that Connemara is even more dangerous than drugs. Maureen emphasizes the town's being an emigrant county stating, "That's Ireland, anyways. There is always someone leaving" (p. 26). Even though the life in England or in the USA is also difficult for the characters, there are better choices there than in Leenane. Pato, an immigrant working in London, is an in-between character like McDonagh himself. He does not want to stay in London, but he is also sure that he cannot live in Leenane. Maureen is eager to leave Leenane, and Pato in a way appears to be her only savior, who can take her out of this unpleasant and tormenting life. In the past, Maureen also worked in England to earn money but had to come back because of a nervous breakdown. Thus, it is obvious that she is a vulnerable character and cannot leave her house for a new life on her own again. From the portrayals of Ray, Maureen, and Pato, we can understand that they do not have any emotional connections with Leenane. They do not feel that they belong to this town, which is unable to satisfy their wishes and demands. Furthermore, it cannot provide them with promising chances in life. On the contrary, it sucks their blood and makes them feel entrapped. The gloomy atmosphere reflects this isolated society's effect on the individuals; they want to leave the town, but they lack the necessary energy and desire. The traditional society forces individuals to repress their desire because desire has always been considered as a negative aspect like a dark side of the human being. However, Deleuze and Guattari consider desire as a positive part of life and individual:

We enslave life to some overriding (or transcendent) value—such as the value of the good social individual who has abandoned their desires to be just like the 'common man'. Antioedipal desire, by contrast, is positive and immanent. Desire is not something we repress to become civilised. Societies, cultures, images of the individual, and 'man' are all effects and productions of desire. Ideas do not come from outside to order and repress life; they are part of (or immanent to) life. Life is desire (Colebrook, 2002, p.xvi).

Yet, in this traditional town, where everything is static and not promising, it is not possible for younger generation to fulfill their desires. Thus, Maureen, Ray, and Pato dream to leave.

Apart from attacking the idealized notion of the land, by portraying it in a gloomy atmosphere, McDonagh also deconstructs the religious beliefs of Irish nation and illustrates that religion cannot go beyond being a symbol in the characters' lives without any eternal truths and meanings. There are two religious objects in the kitchen of the Folan women; a crucifix and a towel with a religious saying on it: "May you be half an hour in Heaven afore the Devil knows you are dead" (p. 5). These items refer to the religious culture of the Irish nation. Catholicism and Ireland have always been inseparable. However, these items do not represent the characters' way of life because religious rules do not function properly in their lives anymore. The towel is only a souvenir to attract the tourists. Irish people have turned the traditional religious sayings into a commodity embroidering them on towels. There are murders, tortures, and stealing in both *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* and *A Skull in Connemara* that are the biggest sins in Catholicism. However, the characters do not feel any disturbance for their actions. When Ray hands in a letter from Pato for Maureen to Mag and asks her not to open it and give it to Maureen as soon as possible, Mag says, "God strike me dead if I do open it, only he will have no need to strike me dead because I won't be opening it" (p. 47). However, her godly words do not mean anything for her as she immediately breaks her word and destroys the letter after reading it.

Closely interwoven with the hollow symbols of religion, there is the portrayal of a priest even though he does not appear on stage until the last play of the trilogy, which is *the Lonesome West*. In the first two plays, the reader only learns about the priest from the conversations of the characters. It is clearly obvious that the priest, Father Welsh, does not have any authority in the town, and he is not depicted as strong and not respected by his parishioners. People do not even remember his name. As in one instance, Ray and Mag call his name mispronouncing Father Welsh- Walsh, which indicates that they do not care about him. In addition to mocking the priest and thereby belittling him, Mag and Ray also put forward a very serious criticism about the priests in the town, which was also a real problem of Ireland in the 90s:

Mag. There was a priest the news Wednesday had a baby with a Yank!

Ray. That's no news at all. That's everyday. It'd be hard to find a priest who hasn't had a baby with a Yank. If he'd punched the baby in the head, that'd be news (p. 14).

One of the reasons why the society has lost respect for the Catholic Church is the crime of the Church since the priests have violated one of the biggest rules, that is adultery. Because of this violation and child abuse, people have realized that the institution of the Church could not be assumed any longer. Thus, to show that religion is also a meaningless value, McDonagh refers to the crime of the priests. In his interview with Fintan O'Toole, he states, "All the things that have been going on in Ireland in the last few years, the revelations about child abuse by priests, were at the back of my mind while I was writing." (1998, para. 13)

Mag and Ray do not consciously attack the church and criticize the priests. They just talk about Welsh and other priests as if they were ordinary people because McDonagh does not want to differentiate Welsh from the rest of the society; like the other characters, he is weak and pathetic, too. In *Lonesome West*, he kills himself because he cannot stand the murders and crimes in Leenane, his hometown. McDonagh describes the personality of Welsh:

...he is actually seen as an ordinary man. I guess maybe I don't see him as a priest. I see him as a bloke, a decent man. He's probably more a representation of my idea, or my faith in the Christ I was taught about as a kid. I guess it's a suicidal Christ figure, which is a figure I've always been interested in. Somebody who kills himself for the sake of others (O'Toole, 1998, para.15).

Lastly, McDonagh deconstructs the value of family institution for society in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. As it is aforementioned, at very first sight, the setting seems as a traditional household, thus it may be expected that it would be about traditional peasantry life. However, McDonagh does not follow the path of the Abbey Theatre playwrights who represented the peasantry with chastity and dignity. Accordingly, the cult of domesticity with its values of fidelity and affection is shown to be a myth. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud describes the idea of family as a secure place for people:

The dwelling house was a substitute for the mother's womb, the first lodging, for which in all likelihood man still longs, and in which he was safe and felt at ease (1989, p.43).

On the other hand, McDonagh reveals that the traditional perception of the sanctity of the house and family does not work in the new century. In

the play, the relationship between the mother and daughter is a troubled one as Maureen and Mag torture each other both physically and psychologically. They do not demonstrate civilized behavior, and interestingly, they construct a communication only through violence and cruelty. McDonagh's perception of family is dangerous and cruel as he "...built up the seething resentments and sly, poisonous humanity of the household" (Sierz, 2001, p. 222). Every object in the house turns into a means of torture; Maureen uses Complian, Kimberley biscuits, and hot oil to torment her mother. When her mother hides the invitation of the party, she forces her to eat lumpy Complian. Later, she tells Pato that even though she hates the taste of Kimberley biscuits, she buys them so that Mag experiences severe physical suffering. The most important tool of violence is the poker, the use of which culminates in the death of Mag. In the setting of Scene One, "a heavy black poker" blinks at the audience and foreshadows the murder.

Mag seems to be the victim of her daughter, and as such she evokes sympathy in the audience. However, she is also a persecutor since she torments Maureen psychologically. Thus, victim and torturer are in an intermingled situation as it is a common point of *in-yer-face* theatre. Mag represses her daughter and humiliates her, and she turns the house into a prison for Maureen because Maureen cannot leave her mother even though she hates her. In the play, there are many occasions when Mag prevents Maureen's freedom or does not let her take pleasure from anything. First, she does not want her to have a nice time at Pato's party. To do so, she does not tell her the invitation. Later, she burns the letter of Pato that offers Maureen a life in the USA with him. That could have been the chance of a lifetime for Maureen, but selfishly Mag confines her to her house. As mentioned before, traditional society represses the individual's desire, and as a representative of tradition Mag does not let her daughter fulfill her desires or have her own life. She cannot even stand the possibility of Maureen's having sexual relationship with Pato. To stop their relation, she humiliates Maureen in front of Pato and reveals her past when she had a nervous breakdown. Mag does not treat Maureen as her daughter, but she behaves as if she were her servant. When Maureen learns that her mother destroyed the letter, Mag selfishly states her reason for burning the letter: "But how could you go with him. You do still have me to look after." (p.54). The humiliation and repression of Mag turns Maureen into a criminal because her hatred for her mother has reached to such an excessive point that she cannot control her mind anymore. Losing her mind, Maureen kills her mother with the poker

and thinks that she is free to go with Pato. However, Pato decides to marry his cousin as he has not received a reply from her, so the violence does not bring any hope to Maureen's life. Despite the fact that she gets rid of her mother, her great hindrance in life, she unfortunately cannot free herself from the life they have had together but turns into her mother, which is further suggested by her rocking in her mother's chair. Even though she leaves the house at the end, we know that she is mentally out of control, and as such she will not be able to control her life outside.

### **Conclusion**

With the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century, Irish Theatre focused on creating national plays that praised Ireland's rural life and beautiful landscape and also recreated the national myths. However, at the end of twentieth century, Ireland opened to the outer world becoming a multicultural country. Thus, with the advent of postmodernism, Irish playwrights also took a multicultural approach. Martin McDonagh, who believes in cultural pluralism, also subverts national values and norms such as the Irish landscape, religion and family. While Irish nation glorifies the beauty of landscape of Ireland, McDonagh portrays it in a gloomy way to illustrate the depression of the people. As for religion, the Catholic Church is very important to the Irish nation. However, McDonagh deconstructs its power over the people by depicting its decay. Moreover, he deconstructs the sanctity of the traditional family by showing that it is no longer the safe place. Since it is a postmodern life, all the beliefs and values of the past century have lost their meaning, and these values only imprison the individual as in the example of Maureen.

### **Ethical Aspect of Research**

In this study, no data were collected from people using any questionnaire, interview, focus group, observation, experiment, or other interview techniques. No human or animal experiments were conducted, and the law on the protection of personal data was not violated. For these reasons, we declare that our study does not require ethics committee permission.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

We declare that there is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

### **Contribution Rate Statement**

Meryem Senem Başcı contributed 60% and Arpine Mızıkıyan contributed 40% to this study.

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## Martin McDonagh'in *Leenane*'in *Güzellik Kraliçesi* Oyununda Millî Kimlik Sorunu

### Genişletilmiş Özet

On dokuzuncu yüzyılda Avrupa'da başlayan milliyetçilik akımından etkilenen İrlanda, İngiltere etkisinden kurtulmaya çalışarak milli bir benlik oluşturma çabasına girmiştir. Bu dönem, İngiliz tiyatrosu etkisinden kurtulan İrlanda tiyatrosu için de bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. Kültürel ve siyasal faaliyetlerle milli bir kimliğin oluşturulduğu Kelt Uyanışı olarak da bilinen bu dönemde oyun yazarları eski İrlanda mit ve geleneklerinin canlandırılmasına katkı sağlamışlardır. Ancak, yirminci yüzyılın sonlarında İrlanda'nın çok kültürlü bir ülke olması ve siyasi ve ekonomik olarak dış dünyaya açılması ile İrlanda tiyatrosu perspektifini değiştirmiş ve milli ve kültürel değerleri yüceltmek yerine milliyetçi İrlanda unsurlarını sorgulamaya başlamıştır.

Yirminci yüzyıl İrlanda tiyatrosunun önemli oyun yazarlarından Martin McDonagh da çoğulcu bir yaklaşım edinerek oyunlarında geleneksel ve milli unsurlara meydan okur. *Leenane Üçlemesi*'nin ilk oyunu olan *Leenane'nin Güzellik Kraliçesi*'nde, McDonagh İrlanda milli değerlerini ve ideallerini altüst ederek bu değerlerin yirmi birinci yüzyılda bireyleri kısıtlamaktan ve belli kalıplara sokmaktan öteye götürmediğini gösterir. McDonagh yeni yüzyıla uyum sağlayabilmek için, milli bir kimliğe bağlı kalmak yerine kültürel çoğulculuğa inanır. Londra'da büyüyen bir İrlandalı olarak kendisi çok kültürlü bir kimliğe sahiptir ve tek bir milli kimliğe aidiyet hissetmez. McDonagh'ın çoğulcu yaklaşımı Deleuze ve Guattari'nin 'göçebe kimlik' ve 'köksap' kavramları ile örtüşür. Deleuze ve Guattari, göçebenin kelime anlamından, yani "sürekli bir yerde yaşamak yerine bir yerden başka bir yere hareket eden bir grup insan" (Cambridge Sözlüğü) ifadesinden esinlenerek, bir merkezi ve gövdesi olan bir gövde ya da ağacın aksine, bir merkezi ya da kökü olmayan yatay bir ağa sahip bir bitki gövdesi olan 'rizom' gibi köksüz olmayı seçen insanlara atıfta bulunmak için felsefi göçebe terimini yaratmışlardır. Deleuze ve Guattari köksüzlük ve hiyerarşik olmayı tanımlamak için 'rizom' metaforunu kullanır. Bu bağlamda, McDonagh'ın arada kalmışlık olarak tanımladığı kimlik üzerine düşünceleri 'rizom' ve 'göçebe kimlik' kavramlarına tekabül eder.

*Leenane*'in *Güzellik Kraliçesi* oyununda McDonagh milli değerler ve normlar tarafından hapsedilmiş karakterleri resmederek problemlili milli kimliği ortaya koyar. Bu makalede, McDonagh'ın İrlanda kimliğinin ulusal değerleri olan İrlanda tabiat güzelliği, din ve aile yapılarını eleştirerek ulusal kimliği nasıl altüst ettiği tartışılacaktır. Martin McDonagh, saldırgan bir dil ve şiddet unsurlarıyla seyirciyi rahatsız ve şoke etmek gibi *suratına tiyatro* (*in-yer-face*) taktiklerini kullanarak geleneksel ve ulusal unsurlara meydan okur. *Suratına tiyatro*, yirminci yüzyılın sonunda dünyanın karanlık yüzünü tasvir etmek ve yüzyılın korkunç olayları ve savaşları nedeniyle çağın travmatize olmuş bireyini tasvir etmek için



ortaya ıkmıŐtır. Aleks Sierz *suratına tiyatroyu* en geniŐ anlamda, seyirciyi ensesinden tutup mesajı alana kadar sarsan herhangi bir drama olarak tanımlamıŐtır (Sierz, 2001, p.4). *Suratına* tiyatronun nemli bir temsilcisi olan McDonagh, *Leenane'nin Gzellik Kraliesi oyununda* bu tiyatro akımının unsurlarını kullanarak normları sorgular. Seyircinin kafasını karıŐtırmak iin geleneksel ve modern zellikleri harmanlar. Seyirci ilk baŐta geleneksel bir dekorla karŐılaŐır, ancak travmatize olmuŐ yalnız bireyi tasvir eden rahatsız edici bir oyun olduĐu ortaya ıkar.

*Leenane'nin Gzellik Kraliesi'nde* İrlanda milli unsurları eleŐtirildiĐi iin oyunun getiĐi mekanı n plana ıkarmak gerekir. Oyun, Galway'in batısında yer alan Leenane'de gemektedir. İrlanda'nın batı kıyısı, on dokuzuncu yzyılın milliyeti oyun yazarları iin nemliydi nk burası sadece İrlanda ulusuna, eski yaŐam tarzlarına sahip Galce konuŐan insanlara ait bir yerdi. Dolayısıyla burası onlar iin İngilizleŐtirilmiŐ doĐu blgesinden kaabilecekleri bir yerdi. On dokuzuncu yzyıl yazarları İrlanda tabiatının gzelliĐini yceltirken, McDonagh halkın bunalımını gstermek iin Leenane'i kasvetli bir Őekilde tasvir eder. Manzara huzurlu ya da rahatlatıcı deĐil, tam tersine, karakterlerin hayatlarını zorlaŐıran sert koŐullara sahip bir diyardır. Tabiat ve iklim koŐulları dıŐında, McDonagh İrlanda ulusu iin ok nemli olan Katolik Kilisesi'nin rmŐlĐn de tasvir ederek dinin halk zerindeki gcn kaybettiĐini gsterir. Son olarak McDonagh, oyunda aile kurumunun toplum iin taŐıdıĐı deĐeri tersyz eder. Oyunun dekoru ilk bakıŐta geleneksel bir ev ortamı gibi grnmektedir, dolayısıyla geleneksel kyl yaŐamını konu alması beklenebilir. Ancak McDonagh, kyllĐ iffet ve haysiyetle temsil eden Abbey Tiyatrosu oyun yazarlarının yolundan gitmez. Aksine, ailenin kutsallıĐını artık gvenli bir yer olmadıĐını gstererek yapıskme uĐratır. Oyunda, anne-kız arasındaki iliŐki sorunludur; Maureen ve Mag birbirlerine hem fiziksel hem de psikolojik olarak iŐkence ederler. Medeni davranıŐlar sergilemek yerine sadece Őiddet zerinden bir iletiŐim kurarlar. Mag, kızının kurbanı gibi grnmektedir ve bu nedenle seyircide sempati uyandırmaktadır. Ancak, Maureen'e psikolojik olarak eziyet ettiĐi iin aynı zamanda bir iŐkencecidir. Bylece, oyunda, *suratına tiyatronun* bir zelliĐi olarak, kurban ve iŐkenceci i ie gemiŐ bir durumdadır. Postmodern bir yaŐam sz konusu olduĐundan, gemiŐ yzyıla ait tm inan ve deĐerler anlamını yitirmiŐtir ve bu deĐerler Maureen rneĐinde olduĐu gibi sadece bireyi hapsetmektedir.