

Thirteen years ago, in 1997, the theatrical community around the world was for the first time amazed by the new emerging persona of European drama, Martin McDonagh (1970), who made a spectacular debut by his play *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* in 1996. This work was followed by three more pieces in quick succession, further confirming McDonagh's status as a rising star. The author has to date publicly produced seven plays which quickly found their way from Great Britain and Ireland into the whole world and enjoyed tremendous success everywhere they were performed. The appearance of a new persona naturally invited a large amount of attention and sometimes very heated criticism; the core debate focuses mainly on the most prominent and shocking aspects of McDonagh's plays – namely violence, emotional vacuum, authenticity and alleged misrepresentation of Irishness.

In its introductory contextual part, this thesis would like to illuminate McDonagh's status as an Irish writer, try to place him within the Irish dramatic tradition and provide a comparison with some of his predecessors, namely J. M. Synge and his *Playboy of the Western World*. This chapter of the thesis will equally concentrate on major themes and means of representing Irishness in the plays and on features connecting McDonagh to other Irish playwrights. Furthermore, the following chapter will attempt to touch upon the (un)necessity or even redundancy of the afore-mentioned clichéd Irish stereotypes in translating McDonagh into various cultures of the contemporary world. However, it cannot be argued that the undisputable Irishness of his plays is curiously blended with contemporary influences, events and pop-culture. This work is also aiming to analyze the contrast and pulsating mixture created while merging the once-traditional image of western Ireland with these modern allusions in three of McDonagh's plays, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (BQ), *The Lonesome West* (LW)¹ and *The Cripple of Inishmaan*² (CI). Therefore, last, but not least, the final body chapter will bring to light various elements by which the modern world, pop-culture and events are projected into the dramas. All in all, this thesis wishes to explore the blend of old and new in McDonagh and what statement this mixture makes about (presumably not only) Ireland.