8th International Academic Conference on Research in Social Sciences

23 - 25 August 2024

Oxford, United Kingdom

The Making of The Irish Identity: An In-Depth Study of the Works of Sean O'Faoilean

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Abstract

The religious element in early XXth century Ireland is often presented as a monolithic reality. The image of the dark, oppressive clerical island has become a trope which, while not entirely false, hides a much more complex picture of a nation whose identity was very much under construction. In the work of Sean O'Faoilean one can see a very different view of Ireland that may not have won the day among its contemporaries, but which is necessary to understand the massive social changes in Ireland today. This study uses the works of Sean O'Faoilean as a starting point to study the tensions and conflicts during the construction of the Irish identity in the early XXth century. This may shed light on modern dynamics and idiosyncrasies of the understanding of the Irish identity.

Keywords: culture, de Valera, Ireland, literature