

**Irish landscape in the text and on the cover
of Flann O'Brien's satirical novel *An Béal Bocht*
published by An Preas Náisiúnta in 1941**

ANNA CISŁO

*Received 23.02.2026,
received in revised form 3.04.2026,
accepted 15.04.2026.*

Abstract

An Béal Bocht (1941) by Myles na gCopaleen – Brian Ó Nuallain, better known as Flann O'Brien – is considered one of the first novels representing modern trends in Irish literature and a parody of the Irish-language autobiography genre. The article discusses the use of a landscape description found in it, correlating with excerpts from the autobiographical novel *Fiche Bliain ag Fás* (1933) by Muiris Ó Suilleabhain. It also examines the scenery presented on the cover of the first edition of *An Béal Bocht* published by An Preas Náisiúnta in the context of the dustjackets of the first edition of Ó Suilleabhain's autobiography and of Tomás Ó Criomhthain's books: *Allagar na hInise* (1928), *An t-Oileánach* (1929) and the translation of the latter novel into English – *The Islandman* (1934). It shows that the very use of landscape elements demonstrates that O'Brien's novel is far more complex than it is suggested by its description provided in the catalogue of the National Library of Ireland, as a "parody of Tomás O'Crohan's *An t-Oileánach*, with satire on the Gaelic League".

Keywords

Flann O'Brien, *An Béal Bocht*, landscape, Irish revival, Irish-language autobiography

**Krajobraz irlandzki w tekście i na okładce
powieści satyrycznej *An Béal Bocht* Flanna O'Briena
nakładem An Preas Náisiúnta (1941)**

Abstrakt

Powieść *An Béal Bocht* (1941) Myleasa na gCopaleen – Briana Ó Nuallaina, znanego przede wszystkim jako Flann O'Brien – uznawana jest za jedną z pierwszych powieści reprezentujących nurt współczesnej literatury irlandzkiej oraz parodię gatunku autobiografii irlandzkojęzycznej. Artykuł prezentuje zawarty w niej opis krajobrazu w odniesieniu do fragmentów autobiograficznej powieści *Fiche Bliain ag Fás* (1933) autorstwa Muirisa Ó Suilleabhaina. Przedstawia też scenerię widniejącą na okładce pierwszego wydania *An Béal Bocht* nakładem An Preas Naisiunta w kontekście obwolut pierwszego wydania autobiografii Ó Suilleabhaina oraz książek Tomasa Ó Criomhthaina – *Allagar na hInise* (1928), *An tOileánach* (1929) i przekładu tej ostatniej powieści na język angielski, *The Islandman* (1934). Pokazuje, że już samo wykorzystanie elementów krajobrazu świadczy o tym, że powieść O'Briena jest znacznie bardziej złożona, niż sugeruje to jej opis z katalogu Biblioteki Narodowej Irlandii jako „parodii *An tOileánach* i satyry na Ligę Gaelicką”.

Słowa kluczowe

Flann O'Brien, *An Béal Bocht*, krajobraz, odrodzenie irlandzkie, autobiografia irlandzkojęzyczna

1. Introduction

As a result of Anglicising Ireland, which had been part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland since 1801, the decimation of its population by the Great Famine, and the mass emigration of native Irish people, primarily to North America and Great Britain, by the end of the nineteenth century, English had become the common means of oral and written communication in that country. It was the only official language and,

from the 1830s, the only language of instruction in national schools, where children were punished for using Irish. At the end of the century, less than 30% of the population spoke the national language, and these were mainly elderly, often illiterate people from rural, peripheral areas of the island (Ó Murchú and Ó Murchú 1999: 10). For this reason, almost nothing was published in Irish, and so, when hopes for independence arose in society, the strong movement for the revival of national culture sought, among other things, to restore Irish to its position as the language in which modern literature was written and published. This aspiration was difficult to achieve, not only because of the lack of a literary standard for the Irish language, but also because there were no writers who could provide sufficiently good manuscripts. Of course, there were folk artists – storytellers who spun tales by the hearth in the evenings, sometimes recorded and published in print; there were also teachers and translators of Irish who were involved in organisations working for the revival of the language and sometimes attempted creative writing themselves. However, this was still not enough to constitute a revival of Irish-language literature. According to Brian Ó Conchubhair (2005: 215), modern prose in Irish only began with the publication of Flann O'Brien's novel *An Béal Bocht* in 1941. This article discusses one of the marginal but interesting aspects of this publication – the Irish landscape, used by both the author and the creators of the cover of its first edition to refer to the new genre of Irish-language literature parodied by the novel – autobiography, or more precisely, autobiographies written in the first half of the twentieth century by inhabitants of the Irish-speaking periphery.

2. Irish-language autobiographies from the early twentieth century

The Irish revival movement was supported by language organisations, the most influential of which was Conradh na Gaeilge, founded in 1893 and still in existence today, known in English

as the Gaelic League. In its early days, the League was very active in the fields of education and publishing, influencing the standardisation of Irish and popularising it by, among other things, organising language courses (Ó hAilín 1969: 97) and competitions for the best short story written in Irish (Welch 1996: 266). When the Irish Free State was established in 1922, and Irish gained official status, becoming a compulsory subject in schools, it was noticed that the lack of contemporary Irish-language literature posed a serious problem for those learning to read and write in Irish. After an initial period of intense activity, the League's work slowed down considerably as its members became involved in the war of independence. In such circumstances, Irish literature had to be rescued by the government of the new state and its subsidies, which from 1926 were granted as part of a publication scheme called *An Gúm*, implemented under the supervision of the Ministry of Education with the idea to contribute to the Gaelicisation of society (Cisło 2018: 113–130; Uí Laighléis 2007: 199–216).

The state publishing agency *An Gúm*, which from the outset specialised in issuing books in Irish, continues to operate, now mainly as an educational publisher. In the first decades of its existence, however, it published a lot of fiction – Irish-language literature written at that time (cf. Cisło 2018: 216–223), and if there was none, translations of novels and short stories from other languages, mainly from English or via English (cf. Cisło 2018: 224–237). Of course, native literature was of much greater value to the state, provided that its content was morally acceptable. Assessed by both lay and clerical figures, it was primarily intended to support the image of the new Irish state, traditional and modern at the same time, but always Catholic and cultivating native values. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Gaelic League had managed to introduce the national language into some schools. As a consequence, not only did new readers eager for Irish-language literature gradually appear, but also Irish-language writers, and due to the fact that those fluent in Irish were primarily residents of villages in the West of the

island – which since 1926 had formed the Gaeltacht, or Irish-speaking region – many of them came from there. They wrote about themselves and the world they knew, often embellishing their memories and giving them a unique character. Although Seán Ó Tuama (2009: 125) speaks in this context of the emergence of a *sui generis* genre – literary works created in an environment detached not only from the literary world, but also from society at large – it seems that the works that appeared met the expectations of Irish politicians, even though the writers themselves were not necessarily aware of it. They perpetuated the only lifestyle they knew, which was slowly disappearing due to the modernisation of Ireland. They wrote autobiographies in their native dialects, which were later prepared for publication by educated editors, who knew Irish. However, the editors were concerned not only with the correctness of the language, but also with the content. Internal censorship took place, resulting in the removal of inappropriate passages from the texts. Hence, for example, *An t-Oileánach* (1929) by Tomás Ó Criomhthain (1855/1856–1937) from the Great Blasket Island, considered a classic Irish-language autobiography today, was published only after its editor removed from it references to the narrator's sexuality. The autobiographical novel by another author from the same island, Muiris Ó Súilleabháin (1904–1950), *Fiche Blian ag Fás* (1933) – issued in the same year in its English translation as *Twenty Years A-Growing* – was not published under the auspices of An Gúm, but by Clólucht an Talbóidigh (Talbot), partly because both the author and George Derwent Thomson (1903–1987) working on the author's manuscript did not agree to remove a scene depicting the alcohol intoxication of young boys from the Gaeltacht. In An Gúm's opinion, it undermined the ideal of the Irish-speaking rural dweller. According to Edward Hirsch (1991: 1119–1120), one of the first tasks of the Irish literary revival was to replace the unflattering stereotype of the Irish peasant, created in Victorian England (Cislo 2004: 259–268), with an image of a dignified Irish countryman. The belief was spread that a population of natural aristocrats had

survived on the periphery, constituting the bastion of true Irish culture. This type of activity in Ireland stemmed from a desire to realise a utopian project linked to a nostalgic longing to return home, understood metaphorically as the pre-colonial past, when Irish was spoken and where the Irish could find themselves again (Nic Dhiarmada 2007: 368–369). The autobiographies that were being written were intended to prove that this was still possible.

3. O'Brien's satire

Despite the interest in Irish culture among people outside the Gaeltacht and the efforts of the Gaelic League, research conducted in Ireland in the early 1920s showed that the number of Irish speakers in rural areas was declining (Edwards 1984: 483). There was mass emigration from backward, Irish-speaking areas, as most people there lived in poverty and were unaware of the cultural climate of the era. Thirty years later, Brian Ó Nualláin / Brian O'Nolan (1911–1966), commonly known by his pen name Flann O'Brien, wrote a novel exposing the greatest weaknesses of the Irish revival strategy employed after 1922 by successive governments of the Free State. Originally written in Irish in the form of autobiography, *An Béal Bocht*, published under still another pseudonym of Ó Nualláin – Myles na gCopaleen, was an immediate success on the Irish-language book market (Harris 2021: 1); however, it was its translation into English by Patrick C. Power that ensured its widespread popularity. After the first edition of the translation in 1973, *The Poor Mouth* was reprinted several times under the author's pen name Flann O'Brien. The main title of the novel refers to the use of poverty as an excuse and explanation for everything one does or the way one lives. There is also a subtitle: *Nó an milleánach: droch-sgéal ar an droch-shaoghal / A Bad Story about the Hard Life*.

The author of *An Béal Bocht* criticises the condescending attitude of representatives of the Gaelic League and other

researchers of Irish culture towards the inhabitants of Irish-speaking villages as enthusiasts of the Irish language and folklorists often developed their deep interest in Irish culture solely for the sake of their own academic or writing careers. In his novel, O'Brien refers to the revivalist stereotype of the Arcadian, Irish-speaking region, whereas in reality the Gaeltacht was too poor and backward for anyone to want to live there. The autobiographies written in the 1920s and 1930s, like the ones by the Blasket writers, got parodied also, because despite their limited literary value, they were surprisingly well received by critics (Farnon 1997: 90). Thus, familiarity with them – both their content and composition, as well as their formal editorial features is essential to fully appreciate O'Brien's "bookish book," as *An Béal Bocht* was called by John Jordan (1985: 51).

4. Landscape in *An Béal Bocht*

One of the elements that links *An Béal Bocht* to Irish-language autobiographies from the Blasket archipelago is the landscape, although Corkadoragha, where the action is set, is not a village on Great Blasket, as the island is described as looming in the distance, "bare and forbidding as a horrible otherworldly eel" (O'Brien 1988: 21). Looking in other directions, one can also see one of the Aran Islands, the rocks of Connemara, and even Gweedore in County Donegal. In reality, this would not be possible. Corkadoragha is therefore a fictional village, located in the heart of the Gaeltacht and characteristic of it. After reading *An Béal Bocht*, what remains in the memory is damp grass, rocks, mud, dirt, and constant heavy rain.

4.1. Intertextuality in landscape description

Of course, the Gaeltacht landscape painted by O'Brien contrasts with the descriptions in the autobiographies of Ó Criomhthain, Ó Súilleabháin, and even Peig Sayers (1936), although the last author unflatteringly called Blasket a "dreadful rock" (Sayers

1991: 186). By referring to the bleak landscape, O'Brien convinces the reader that only in books do Irish-speaking Irishmen live in green valleys in clean cottages with slate roofs and sit by the hearth in the evenings to listen to storytellers. The fifth chapter of *An Béal Bocht* contains a parody of the description of the Arcadian Irish countryside:

[I]t is a happy countryside even if it is hungry. For the first time since birth, I saw a countryside which was not drenched by the flowing of the rain. In every direction, the variegated colours of the firmament pleased the eye. A soft sweet breeze followed at our heels and helped us while we walked. High up in the skies there was a yellow lamp known as the sun, shedding heat and light upon us. Far away there were tall blue stacks of mountains standing east and west and watching us. A nimble stream accompanied the main road; it was hidden in the bottom of the ditch but we knew of its presence because of the soft murmuring it bestowed on our ears. (O'Brien 1988: 65–66)

The quoted passage corresponds to descriptions from Ó Súilleabháin's prose:

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. [...] Hundreds of birds were flying around, rabbits leaping from one clump of thrift to another, a fragrant smell from the white heather and the fern, big vessels far out on the horizon you would think were on fire in the sunlight, a heat haze here and there in the ravines, and Kerry diamonds lying all around weakening my eyes with their sparkle. (O'Sullivan 2000: 41)

We had a brilliant view before our eyes, southwards over the parish of Ventry and the parish of Maurhan and north to the parish of Kill, green fields covered with flowers on either side of us, a lonely house here and there away at the foot of the mountain, Ventry harbour to the south-east, lying still, three or four sailing-boats at anchor, and a curragh or two creeping like beetles across

the water, the mountains beyond nodding their heads one above the other.

We were leaping for mirth and delight. (O'Sullivan 2000: 231)

There was a wonderful stillness. The mountains were clear before me, nodding their heads above in the sky. Isn't it they that are proud to have power to be higher than the rest, thought I. (O'Sullivan 2000: 49)

Unlike the excerpts from *Twenty Years A-Growing*, which are typical of Ó Súilleabháin's prose, the description in *An Béal Bocht* does not fit in with the rest of the novel. The narrator, who in O'Brien's fictional autobiography is Bonapárt Ó Cúnasa / Bonaparte O'Coonassa (in the English version), is enchanted by the world around him in only one episode, during the journey he takes with the Old-Fellow (grandpa) to the village of Na Rosa/Rosses. Bonapárt then seems to be transported to the pages of another work, idealising the landscape of the Irish countryside. The similarity of the landscape descriptions in the two texts discussed here points to an obvious connection between O'Brien's prose and Ó Súilleabháin's autobiography, and is one of the elements which indirectly allow the reader to place the action of *An Béal Bocht* in the first half of the twentieth century (Cisło 2018: 185), the time when all the autobiographies of the Great Blasket writers were written.

4.2. Landscape on the cover of the first edition

O'Brien's novel was first published by An Preas Náisiúnta in 1941. The cover art was created by Dublin-born Irish painter and graphic artist Seán O'Sullivan (1906–1964). The artist was familiar not only with the setting of the novel – the west coast of Ireland, which was the subject of his colourful oil and watercolour paintings¹ – but also with its inhabitants, including the

¹ Cf. *Girl with pail on West of Ireland laneway, Pathway through a wood, Sligo, Coastal landscape with boy, Donegal, Sunlight and shadows – study in*

authors of the autobiographies, Tomás Ó Criomhthain and Muiris Ó Súilleabháin, whose portraits he drew on paper in charcoal and graphite in 1931 and 1933, respectively.² The portrait of Ó Criomhthain was later used on the cover of his book explaining the names of the places on the Blasket Islands – *Dinnsheanchas na mBlascaodaí*, published by An Gúm in 1935.

The cover art for the first edition of *An Béal Bocht* (Figure 1) corresponds to the world depicted in the novel, where the poor inhabitants of the village of Corkadoragha, are constantly wading through mud or cutting their feet on coastal rocks, “setting their faces towards Siberia in the hope of better weather and relief from the cold and tempest which is natural to them” (O’Brien 1988: 9). In the foreground of the front cover, a pitiful, hunched, half-naked fisherman with bare feet is standing in the grass, rain pouring down on him. In the background, there is an orange patch of the sea and dark blue swirling clouds above. It must be very windy because the rain is falling at an angle and the birds seem to be having trouble maintaining their flight path. The figure of the fisherman, with seagulls hovering above him, is a comical reference to the black-and-white cover of the first English-language edition of Ó Criomhthain’s *An t-Oileánach* – *The Islandman*, published in 1934 by Talbot, used later on the Irish-language edition of this book, which came out in 1967 (cf. Cisło 2018: 190). On the cover of *The Islandman*, a fisherman in heavy boots is striding briskly across the rocks. Given the graphic representations of the timeline (Mitchell 2004: 2), he is boldly marching into the future. Seagulls are soaring above him, and in the distance, a few men are carrying two traditional Irish boats, *naomhóga*, turned upside down. The fisherman on the cover of *An Béal Bocht* is facing left, which makes him seem to be looking back into the past, difficult and oppressive.

Connemara, farmer at work, Currach on the shore, Galway landscape in Autumn, Island off the coast, Co. Kerry, and others.

² It is worth mentioning that in 1940 O’Sullivan also drew O’Brien. The work, done in charcoal and white chalk, depicts the writer with a cigarette sitting at a bar counter.

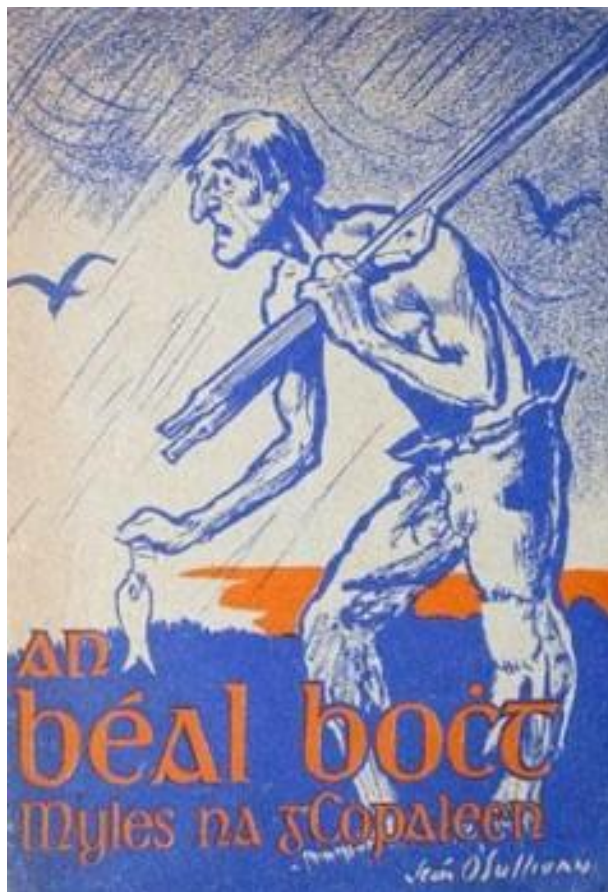


Figure 1. The front cover of *An Béal Bocht* by Flann O'Brien, with cover art by Seán O'Sullivan, as first published by An Preas Náisiúnta in 1941

The back cover shows the same or a similar character hunting seals (Figure 2), or more precisely, aiming at them with an elongated stone or piece of wood, while the animals pay no attention to him. A comical effect, though perhaps unintentional, is created by juxtaposing this image with frames from the film *Man of Aran*, directed by American director Robert J. Flaherty and produced in 1934 at the British film studio Gainsborough Pictures.

Although this pseudo-documentary is not Irish, it shows the beauty and hardships of life for the inhabitants of the Aran archipelago in western Ireland, perpetuating the image of the Gaeltacht created by the state. Hence, it was enthusiastically received in Ireland, and even the head of the Free State government, Éamon de Valera, was present at the premiere (Morash 2010: 158). Most of the film is about the heroic hunt of the inhabitants of one of the islands for a basking shark, from which, as from seals, oil was obtained. Against the backdrop of the fishermen depicted in Flaherty's film, the hunter on the cover of *An Béal Bocht*, in an equally cloudy entourage, is amusing, although it is difficult to prove that this is the result of O'Sullivan's conscious decision to juxtapose the graphic with this particular moving picture.

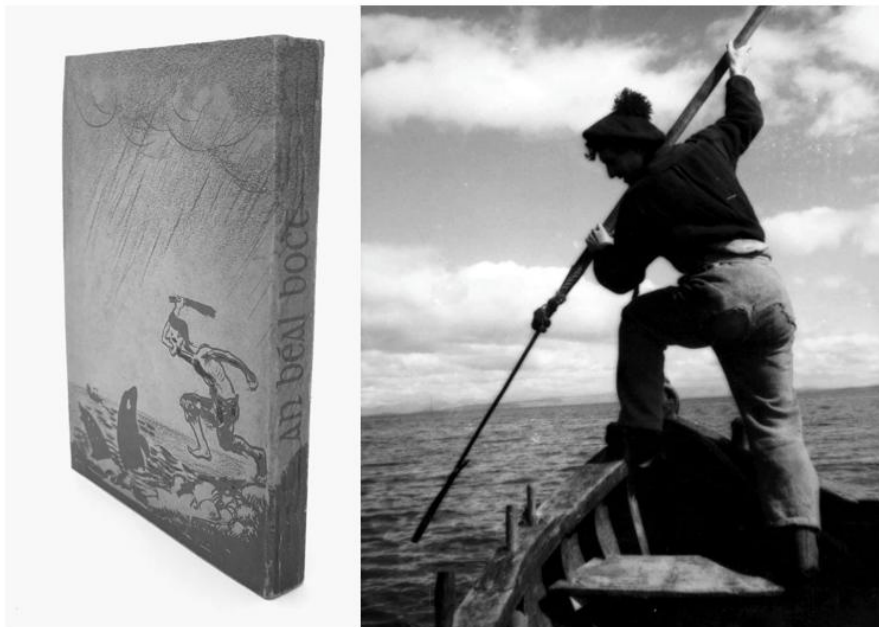


Figure 2. The back cover of Flann O'Brien's *An Béal Bocht* (1941), with cover art by Seán O'Sullivan, and a frame from the *Man of Aran* (1934) directed by Robert J. Flaherty

Due to the colours used, the cover of *An Béal Bocht* refers to the colourful dust jackets of the first editions of Ó Criomhthain's collection of sketches from the island, *Allagar na hInise* (1928) (cf. Cisło 2018: il. V on the interleaves with colourful illustrations), and his *An t-Oileánach* (1929) (cf. Cisło 2018: il. XI on the interleaves with colourful illustrations), both published by An Gúm. Yet, here the colours of the landscape are reversed – on the covers of Ó Criomhthain's works, the sea is blue, and the land (on the jacket of *Allagar na hInise*) and the sky (on the jacket of *An t-Oileánach*; the one of *Allagar na hInise* has a more yellow hue) are orange. The warm, peaceful landscape is a fitting backdrop for the well-built, dignified fishermen of western Ireland. The scenery depicted on the front cover of *An Béal Bocht* is cold, and the orange patch of sea seems out of place. The surroundings of the pitiful figure are the negative of the landscape from the cover of *Allagar na hInise*, designed by Austin Ó Maolaoidh / Austin Molloy (1886–1961), who collaborated with An Gúm and signed his work as AóM. O'Sullivan also did work for An Gúm – there is a well-known criticism of his 1927 cover design for León Ó Broin's *Béal na hUaighe* (cf. Ó Conchubhair 2011: 100), when the publisher considered the woman depicted there to be too scantily clad and O'Sullivan was asked to add more clothing. The artist must have been familiar with the covers of the books published by this agency, including works by Ó Criomhthain, so references to them are not accidental.

It just remains to compare the cover art of *An Béal Bocht* with the painting used on the dust jacket of the first edition of *Fiche Blian ag Fás* (1933) by Ó Súilleabháin (cf. Cisło 2018: il. XII on the leaves with colourful illustrations). Here, there is a contrast, though not necessarily a comical one. The Great Blasket Island, bathed in sunlight and seen from the Dingle Peninsula, the white cottages in the village on the island, the fertile farmland on the peninsula, and the calm sea depicted on the dust jacket of Ó Súilleabháin's novel give the impression of an idyllic paradise. It is an ideal, warm, idyllic world, of which man is and wants to remain a natural part; Ireland, a place to

which one would like to return; the country from the vision of de Valera (1943), whose inhabitants lead the life God desires, devoting themselves to work in the fields and satisfying their modest needs with simple things. The illustration resembles O'Sullivan's paintings, but in the case of the dust jacket of *Fiche Blian ag Fás*, it has not been possible to determine either its author or the technique used to create it, most likely a water-colour.

5. Conclusion

O'Brien's satire is a well-thought-out, dense construction in which almost every element carries meaning. These meanings can be discovered thanks to the reader's competence – familiarity with Irish-language autobiographies from the early twentieth century and the history of the revival movement, as well as knowledge of the economic and social problems of the Irish countryside at the turn of the century and in the Irish Free State (1922–1937). The descriptive and graphic representations of the landscape are amusing parodies of the Arcadian Gaeltacht, contributing to satire on some of the activities of the members of the revival movement and the spread of state utopian propaganda. Although the catalogue description of the National Library of Ireland states that *An Béal Bocht* is “parody of Tomás O’Crohan’s *An t-Oileánach*, with satire on the Gaelic League” (*An Béal Bocht*, National Library of Ireland catalogue), this is too much of an oversimplification. The external editorial features of O'Brien's 1941 edition of the novel do indeed evoke associations with Ó Críomhthain's autobiography but the intertextual references contained in the text point to a much broader context of Irish-language literature from the first half of the twentieth century.

References

- An Béal Bocht*. National Library of Ireland (catalogue). Available at <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000138684>. Accessed 10.07.2025.
- Cisło, Anna (2004). "The Victorian stereotype of an Irishman". In: Victor H. Yngve, Zdzisław Wąsik (eds.). *Hard-science Linguistics*. London – New York: Continuum, 259–268.
- Cisło, Anna (2018). *Odrodzenie książki irlandzkiej i jej rola w kształtowaniu kultury nowego państwa*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego. Available at <https://repozytorium.uni.wroc.pl/dlibra/publication/144129/edition/133638/odrozenie-irlandzkiej-ksiazki-etnicznej-i-jej-rola-w-ksztaltowaniu-kultury-nowego-panstwa-cislo-anna-orcid-0000-0002-7134-7269>. Accessed 19.02.2026.
- De Valera, Éamon (1943). "The Ireland that we dreamed of 1943" [speech on St. Patrick's Day 1943]. RTE Archives. Available at <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/eamon-de-valera/719124-address-by-mr-de-valera/>. Accessed 25.03.2024.
- Edwards, John (1984). "Irish and English in Ireland". In: Peter Trudgill (ed.). *Language in the British Isles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 480–498.
- Farnon, Jane (1997). "Motifs of Gaelic lore and literature in 'An Béal Bocht'". In: Anne Clune, Tess Hurson (eds.). *Conjuring Complexities: Essays on Flann O'Brien*. Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 89–109.
- Harris, Tobias W. (2021). "‘Something entirely new’: A critical history of *An Béal Bocht*, 1941–75". *The Parish Review: Journal of Flann O'Brien Studies* 5/2: 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.16995/pr.3444>. Accessed 25.10.2025.
- Hirsch, Edward (1991). "The imaginary Irish peasant". *PMLA* 106/5: 1116–1133. <https://doi.org/10.2307/462684>. Accessed 6.07.2025.
- Jordan, John (1985). "The saddest book ever to come out of Ireland". In: Imhof Rüdiger (ed.). *Alive-Alive O! Flann O'Brien's At Swim Two Birds*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 50–53.
- Lee, Joseph J. (1989). *Ireland, 1912–1985: Politics and Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Mitchell, Marilyn (2004). "The visual representation of time in timelines, graphs, and charts". Paper presented at Refereed Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the ANZCA, Sydney 2004: Making a Difference. Sydney, 1–12. July 2004. Available at <http://www.anzca.net/documents/2004-conf-papers/300-thevisual-representation-of-time-in-timelines-graphs-and-charts-1/file.html>. Accessed 23.02.2026.
- Morash, Chris (2010). *A History of the Media in Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Na gCopaleen, Myles (O'Brien, Flann) (1941). *An Béal Bocht*. Dublin: An Preas Náisiúnta.
- Nic Dhiarmada, Briona (2007). "Aspects of utopia, anti-utopia, and nostalgia in Irish-language texts". *Utopian Studies* 18/3: 365–378. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20719882>. Accessed 10.07.2025.
- O'Brien, Flann (1973). *The Poor Mouth*. Trans. Patrick C. Power. London: Hart-Davis, Macgibbon.
- O'Brien, Flann (1988). *The Poor Mouth*. Trans. Patrick C. Power. London: Paladin.
- Ó Broin, L. (1927). *Béal na hUaighe agus Sgéalta Eile*. Dublin: The Dundalgan Press.
- Ó Conchubhair, Brian (2011). "An Gúm, the Free State and the politics of the Irish language". In: Linda King, Elaine Sisson (eds.). *Ireland, Design and Visual Culture: Negotiating Modernity, 1922–1992*. Cork: Cork University Press, 93–113.
- Ó Conchubhair, Brian (2005). "The novel in Irish since 1959: From national narrative to counter-narrative". *The Year Book of English Studies*. Vol. 35. *Irish Writing since 1950*, 212–231.
- Ó Criomhthain, Tomás (1928). *Allagar na hInise*. Dublin: Muinntir C.S. Ó Fallamhain i gcomhar le hOifig an tSoláthair [An Gúm].
- Ó Criomhthain, Tomás (1929). *An t-Oileánach*. Dublin: Muinntir C.S. Ó Fallamhain i gcomhar le hOifig an tSoláthair [An Gúm].
- Ó Criomhthain, Tomás (1935). *Dinnsheanchas na mBlascaodaí*. Dublin: Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais [An Gúm].
- O'Crohan, Thomas (Ó Criomhthain, Tomás) (1934). *The Islandman*. Trans. Robin Flower. Dublin – Cork: Talbot Press.
- Ó hAilín, Tomás (1969). "Irish revival movements". In: Brian Ó Cuív (ed.). *A View of the Irish Language*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 91–100.

- Ó Murchú, Helen, Máirtín Ó Murchú (1999). *Irish: Facing the Future*. Dublin: Irish Committee of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages.
- Ó Súilleabháin, Muiris (1933). *Fiche Blian ag Fás*. Dublin: Clólucht an Talbóidigh [Talbot].
- O'Sullivan, Maurice (Ó Súilleabháin, Muiris) (2000). *Twenty Years A-Growing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ó Tuama, Seán (1995). *Repossessions: Selected Essays on the Irish Literary Heritage*. Cork: Cork University Press.
- Sayers, Peig (1936). *Peig .i. A scéal féin*. Dublin: Clólucht an Talbóidigh [Talbot].
- Sayers, Peig (1991). *Peig: The Autobiography of Peig Sayers of the Great Blasket Island*. Trans. Bryan MacMahon. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Uí Laighléis, Geaoróidín (2007). "An Gúm: The early years". In: Séamus Mac Mathúna, Ailbhe Ó Corráin (eds.). *Celtic Literatures in the Twentieth Century*. Moscow: Languages of Slavonic Culture, 199–216.
- Welch, Robert (1996). *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

List of figures

Figure 1. The front cover of *An Béal Bocht* by Flann O'Brien, with cover art by Seán O'Sullivan, as first published by An Preas Náisiúnta in 1941. Source: Wikipedia. Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_B%C3%A9al_Bocht. Accessed 23.02.2026.

Figure 2. The back cover of Flann O'Brien's *An Béal Bocht* (1941), with cover art by Seán O'Sullivan, and a frame from the *Man of Aran* (1934) directed by Robert J. Flaherty. Sources: Internet auction. Available at <https://www.fonsiemealy.ie/catalogue/lot/2b2e1a6a76d5c530389dc8e6fc3537a9/bd96274c72c9a29dd716683412367761/christmas-rare-books-collectors-sale-lot-968/>. Accessed 23.02.2026; You Tube. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Jxn_U0_BFzw. Accessed 23.02.2026.

Anna Cisło
ORCID: 0000-0002-7134-7269
Uniwersytet Wrocławski
Instytut Nauk o Informacji i Mediach
pl. Uniwersytecki 9/13
50-137 Wrocław
Poland
anna.cislo@uwr.edu.pl