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# The Transatlantic Journey of a Dream in Brian Friel's *Philadelphia Here I Come* !

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## Résumé

Since the Great Plague in Ireland, migration has become a crucial factor in defining Irish culture. The Irish immigrants who left their country and set sail for new horizons usually turned back to Ireland for short or long terms. While they were turning back to Ireland, they also brought some new influences to the island and they contributed to the change of the island's culture.

During 1950s thousands of Irish citizens migrated from Ireland to the other countries. Particularly America was the country that the Irish immigrants chose to continue their lives and that was the Irish version of the American dream. Brian Friel, the famous Irish playwright, observed how the American culture influenced Irish people and how the immigrants transported the idea of American dream to Ireland.

Friel examined the relationship between the immigrants and the local residents, and he successfully portrayed the results of this contact in the play *Philadelphia, Here I Come* (1964). The protagonist of the play Gareth O'Donnell stands for the young generation that is tired of the Irish country life. His aunt Lizzy Sweeney is an Irish immigrant who lives in America, and being affected from his aunt, Gareth decides to migrate to America.

In this respect, Friel's play can be deeply analysed to expose the American influence on the Irish identity and culture. Particularly the Irish American characters that transfer the American dream to Ireland demonstrate that in the first half of the 20th century the Irish and the American cultures interacted. Therefore, in my paper the relationship between America and Ireland and its reflections in Friel's play will be examined and the part of the American culture in the Irish culture will be highlighted.

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