LIVING AUTHENTICALLY IN MODERN IRELAND: ANXIETY OVER CAPITALIST PROSPERITY AND VALUE SHIFTS

A Thesis by
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LIVING AUTHENTICALLY IN MODERN IRELAND: ANXIETY OVER CAPITALIST PROSPERITY AND VALUE SHIFTS

The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Anthropology

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Because in knowing the “other” there are no strangers.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The rapid rate of economic and societal change within modern day Ireland raises the question, “How is success changing the Irish core values?” How different is the proverbial portrait of the Ireland of today compared with the Ireland of the early 1990’s? The core values of Irish conversation, hospitality, generosity, joviality and general ‘being mindedness’ are in a state of diminishing proportions. Within the last ten years the face of Ireland has changed radically due primarily to the influx of globalization, capitalistic successes and the internal and societal value shifts which necessitate these concretized changes. An examination of the effects of these changes in the context of the Irish culture leads to the conclusion that the ethical shifts which are necessitated by capitalistic successes within Ireland are the primary mode through which core Irish values are being changed, challenged, and re-aligned. The processes of commodification of Ireland and her people are an extension of the capitalist mindset.

These value shifts take many forms yet they are predominantly evident in the equating of time with money, a rise in materialistic ideals, in competitive, and highly individualistic relationships, a willingness to sacrifice community and equality for efficiency and profit, and the willingness to commodify ‘Irishness’. Globalization and its consequent changes are occurring rapidly worldwide and universal themes in globalization follow four general dimensions of change: challenges to identity and power, changing gender hierarchies, new patterns of migration and mobility, and the effects of economic change and modernization. Ireland is undoubtedly experiencing accelerated transformations in all of these areas.
Contemporary anthropological theory recognizes that cultural reproduction is
never a perfect transmission of culture from one generation to the next because
individuals are continually subject to the flows of information from many directions
simultaneously. Consequently, cultures are by nature dynamic and subject to historical
processes, although culture change is constrained by preexisting cultural understandings
and social structures- which also are subject to change as well. Capitalism is a
transnational force comparable to Christianity in its depth of influence. The spread of
capitalism has at times been equated with the term globalization to denote the increasing
integration of people into one giant economic capitalist system. This spread of world
capitalism also carries with it the spread of Western culture (Spindler and Stockard; 2007,
295).

Globalization is not simply a reference to the movement of capital and the search
for cheap labor. It is also about the movement of people, ideas, movies, images, music,
ideology and a number of forces not fixed by national boundaries (Zhan, 2001 in Spindler
and Stockard; 2007, 296). Culture is always an emergent form of life (Fischer 2003, in
Spindler and Stockard; 2007, 297).

Numerous other variables are certainly forces of change and are also influenced
by, and react to, the capitalist value shifts throughout Ireland. Around this larger narrative
of capitalism are themes of modernization, globalization, multinationalism, racism,
commodification, tourism, pluralism, crystallization of identity, competition, efficiency,
terrorism, materialism and Europeanization, all of which influence and are influenced by
Irish value systems and the influx of capitalist successes. These roles support and
illuminate the dominant theme of capitalism and its forceful role in the envelopment of an
entire society, long secluded from its reformatory processes. I contend the capitalistic ‘successes’ are the predominant transformative process of globalization, which generates migration flow, occurring within Ireland because the value shift that is necessary for successful capitalism directly conflicts with traditional Irish values of equality, generosity, community and hospitality, whereas globalization is not always easy to distinguish from market forces as they oftentimes work together. For the sake of our purposes we will endeavor to clarify that distinction where it is possible and important to do so. The essence of the Irish ethos, value core and temperament has long had a globally conscious slant. But it is the Ireland of today more than the Ireland of any other time that would fit Jonathan Inda and Renato Rosaldo’s (2002) definition of a “world of globalization”:

…a world of motion, of complex interconnection. Here capital traverses frontiers almost effortlessly, drawing more and more places into dense networks of financial interconnections; people readily cut across national boundaries, turning countless territories into spaces where various cultures converge, clash, and struggle with each other; commodities drift briskly from one locality to another, becoming primary mediators in the encounter between culturally distant others; images flicker from screen to screen, providing people with resources from which to fashion new ways of being in the world; and ideologies circulate rapidly through ever-expanding circuits, furnishing fodder for struggles couched in terms of cultural authenticity versus foreign influence. (Quoted in Spindler and Stockard; 2007, 296).

The capitalist values which appear to be “Americanizing” Ireland will likely
experience a unique Irish hybridization in which Irish values, so contradictory to many modes of capitalism, will temper the beastly, consciousless machinery of profit.

The commentaries on modern Irish society and her state of rapid change are legion. They typically fall into three categorical themes, the positive, the dismal and those which reconcile the two perspectives into a narrative of native self-determination. Capitalism and its accompanying changes receive both welcome and retaliation and are viewed largely with ambiguity within the rapidly adjusting Irish populace, whose traditional temperament and values are at present and will undoubtedly continue to be assimilating alongside the influx of capitalistic values. By examining the relationship between Ireland and “the foreigner” and more closely scrutinizing the implications of tourism in Ireland I will endeavor to illuminate some of the processes of capitalism amongst the Irish population and her core values. Around this larger narrative I will add layers of thematically supportive material relating to the Irish people’s history with their land and the commodification processes that have increased due to the branding of the “Irish” identity via the forces of tourism and globalization. These roles support and illuminate the dominant theme of capitalism and its forceful role of in the envelopment of an entire society, long secluded from capitalism’s re-formative processes.
Methodology

My relationship with Ireland has idealistic, whimsical undertones; no matter how academic my analysis of her society, there will always remain a note of belonging, longing and identification with Ireland and the people of whom my first impression in the summer of 2000 left me awestruck. The level of trust, welcome, and generosity with time, resources, and entertainment was unparalleled in my experience. Throughout my travels no other place has stuck to my bones and stirred my senses and restored my faith in humanity in such a way. I returned for a month the following summer with another good friend. Lastly I returned in the summer of 2006 for another month with my two year old daughter, this journey was a world apart from the previous travels for the obvious reasons.

The Ireland of 2000 and 2001 seemed drastically different from that of 2006 although I imagine in large part that can be ascribed to differences in my situation as a young mother of a rambunctious toddler as opposed to what one older Irish gentleman referred to as a “Pretty young girl” traveling with a like kind. In 2006 I visited “Day Care Centers” which are not for children, but for the aging. These are typically places where the elderly are bused to enjoy a prepared lunch and bingo or conversation. The day care center that I frequented several times was in Carrick, which is quite a ways west of Donegal Town and east of the westernmost point of Glencolumbcille in the northwestern region of the Republic of Ireland. My studies are focused on the Republic of Ireland as opposed to the North and the South which are two separate political entities. The more formal interview process that I conjured up within this setting was introduced by the
well-meaning supervisor as, “This is Autumn, and she is interested in the old people of Ireland and would like to ask you a few questions.” After I cringed at my fabulous introduction I began talking to the willing, one on one. This setting seemed to stifle conversation and I felt as though I had to work to disarm several of the women—of whom there were far more than men, and most of whom would talk about very personal issues in a way that communicated pain and heartache so aptly yet in such a way as to make it clear that they did not want pity. The women seemed to feel optimistic for their children and grandchildren’s futures with Ireland’s new found prosperity. I did not find as much of the fear and apprehension for loss of values as I had imagined I would. I found casual, unintended conversations yielded much more insight than these somewhat forced sessions in which the “old people” braced themselves for probing. The happenstance conversations and happenings that contributed greatly to my understanding of modern day Ireland will pepper this writing where they lend insight and provide illustration. I went to Ireland to listen and to engage others in conversation. I attempted to speak with anyone, young and old, male and female, about their concerns, which I knew from previous experience would be far more collectivistic, political and large scale, than the average more self- and immediate family- focused United States citizen’s concerns. The rampant individualism, which oftentimes conversely correlates with a social responsibility ethic, is on the rise in the new prosperous Ireland. I will admit the young were much more elusive than any other group; many would be wearing head phones in their ears, which was quite effective in warding off potential conversation and may be a deliberate elusiveness.
II. IMAGES, VALUES AND TEMPERAMENT: THE MAKING OF A PEOPLE

History of Values

Ireland has long been shaped by the singular and absolute moral authority of the Catholic Church. A moral authority is usually understood as an expert in doing a number of things: identifying values in a given culture which are essential to living; being able to explain why these values are so significant; and providing reasons why certain actions are preferred to others if a certain quality of society is to be achieved. There exists a theological ethic of absolute commands which is predominantly about sex, Delores Dooley argues in her essay, “Expanding an Island Ethic,” asserting that this approach is irrelevant to the needs of twentieth century living. She contends that the Irish people have not been accustomed to thinking that they have a choice about their morality: its content, its authority, or its application. The pervasive assumption has long been that morality is a completed system of divinely authorized and certain beliefs. This promise of certainty, which can be very comforting, has oftentimes been used as more of a consoling refuge than a constructive resource (Dooley in Lee, 1985; 56).

Themes in Irish history and Irish literature are replete with the dominance of the Cleric of the Church over the morality of the people. In John B. Keane’s 1986 historical fiction novel The Bodhran Makers, he paints the scene of an Irish town and hinter region of the 1950’s in which success in the priesthood is achieved by ambitious, power-hungry men who, desiring to escape their own poverty, can manipulate and control the parishioners morally and financially by fear of harm. This antagonist is personified in the Cannon Tett. The priests beneath are well intentioned men of the people, men personified by the characters of Bertie Stanley and Monsignor Gallagan. In Keane’s novel Monsignor
Gallagan accounts for the power of these men as a negative reflection on the people of Ireland who:

    Have never flowered, an abject race of pseudo-moralists who let their priests do their thinking for them. The people of this country are refugees from reality. We are text book neo-colonialists. We swapped our so called independence for the tyranny of the priest rule (75).

This tyranny infringed upon traditional rituals such as the wren day festivities which are relayed in the novel. This character’s comment illuminates a number of important characteristics of Irish values: a collective consciousness which belies an undercurrent of dissenting views. The priest of the people, who upholds the collective consciousness as he simultaneously, disparages it. The Irish may have let the priests do a portion of their thinking for them out of post-colonial subsistence mentality- and the ease which accompanies absolute moral realities is undoubtedly welcomed in an economically depressed area where subsistence occupies a disproportionate amount of energy and moral obedience rewards the compliant when those doling out the benefits are also those doling out the strictures. Precipitating capitalist value shifts in Ireland are evidence of the declining centrality of the Church and her disillusioning loss of connection and authority over the Irish populace. The declining trust of the Irish for the Church that is still pervasive in her influence has been accompanied by resurgence in suspicion toward the foreigner, who is perceived as a threat to the retention of the morality of the Irish populace. The foreigners in Ireland are also unduly burdened by Ireland’s recent shift in prosperity which has led its citizens to not only identify with the economically depressed by also with the economically elite. A disproportionate amount of media attention is
focused on the asylum seekers who are racialized and problematized, as opposed to the migrant workers who are seen as contributing to the expanding economy. Both groups are gathering on Irish shores and remaining to assimilate into Irish society, a society which, although renowned for her compassion and anti-exclusionary mentality globally, has an uneasy and largely unpracticed history of permanently embracing ethnic difference within her own shores.

The history of a people can have a haunting effect. Centuries old traumas continue to be present in subsequent generations. It is evident in the things that are not thought, not said and not imagined. The interpretation of these events shapes the psyches of children and their children’s children, shaping not only values but oftentimes unifying a people with strong culturally inherited qualities of temperament. As Irish American Boston Globe columnist James Carroll relays,

Particularities of the Irish temperament -- the mordant wit that hides a profound emotional reserve, the ingratiation that may disguise resentment, a longing for trust in tension with the fear of it -- are echoes of the famine trauma. If this is little acknowledged, it is because the overwhelming response of survivors and their progeny, even as most of them entered the diaspora, was denial. The Irish are never surprised by setbacks (Carroll, 2005).

The Great Hunger lies at the base and at the heart of modern Ireland. It is the collective mortal wound that, the scene of devastation that collects Ireland as a society and provides the vista for the modern conception of Ireland. It is the great agony which collects the modern Diaspora, recalls the generations of emigrants, and underpins modern Irish religiosi and legitimizes the moral authority of the Catholic Church (Keohane and
Kuhling, 2004; 73). The Great Famine is the nexus from which generations have tried to reconcile, recover and revolt. Sentiments provoked from such profound loss have animated the fight for home rule and the fervent longing for the primal motherland.

Ireland has been metaphorically reduced to a conversation (Gannon, 1994), a collision between traditional and modern lifeways (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004), a drunken, jovial haver-of- a good time, a problem child of the industrialized world, a bewildered child in a state of moral confusion (Schepher-Hughes, 2001), and the romanticized refugee from the ills of modernization. Most famously the metaphor of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ has come to be synonymous with the present day Irish economy and in many ways the society at large. Since the Republic of Ireland was established, Ireland and the Irish have come under an increasing amount of scrutiny, largely from social scientists. Many nationalist historians have exceptionalized the Irish experience (Connolly, 2003). It is argued that few countries spend so much time and intellectual effort on self-definition as Ireland. The art of conversation is employed in endless debates about what it means to be Irish. Conversation flows in Ireland and some sections of the diaspora in Britain and the United States about the things that matter to the Irish people and identity, whether on a regional, national or global scale, is a hot topic. A minor publishing industry exists around the subject. Many nationalist historians have exceptionalized the Irish experience (Connolly, 2003). Many Western writers have abnormalized Ireland’s atypical rate of economic development and prosperity, perhaps most infamously Nancy Schepher-Hughes in her 1979 study of rural Ireland. For her the ‘fault’ ultimately lies with Irish traditions and pathological mindsets. The Irish have long been conceptualized as anomic and in comparative terms the slow development of
‘modern’ Irish society was largely attributed to an exceptional form of traditionalism (Arnesberg, 1937 Connolly, 2003). Irish sociologists Keohane and Kuhling believe that Ireland is in a state of ‘anomie,’ Durkheim’s term for moral confusion that results from the declining influence of a single morality as well as the accompaniment of competing moralities (2004).

The population of the Irish Republic in April 2005 was put at 4.13 million, the highest it has been since 1861, when the post-famine collapse of Ireland was underway. The new population statistic indicates that a century-and-a-half's emigration has effectively ended, a triumphant reversal of the ancient pattern, as the island nation, with its booming economy, is finally able to support the men and women who are born there. From an actuarial point of view, the Irish famine ended only this year (Carroll, 2005; 1).

The temptation can be to view Ireland as the protagonist in an epic story of woe. Our heroine is now in one of her many cathartic scenes, yet this time the princess finds prince capitalism and she finally gets rewarded for her many accomplishments in education, wit and generosity. Where the story goes from here I cannot say. Perhaps in some twist of fate this prince is more of a curse than a blessing; perhaps, as with most things, it is a mixed bag of the good, the bad and the growth inducing. Regardless of the analogy Ireland is in a period of accelerated change due to internal and external forces and their reactions to one another.

It is important to note that the Irish have a long history in which the cultivation of opinions and the art of conversation have been highly valued. The Irish can seldom be lumped into one collectivist paradigm. It is highly possible that the culture’s value core
may be changed irrevocably to accommodate the efficiency minded capitalistic life style that has been welcomed upon her shores. The following analysis is an attempt to understand the variables involved in the value shifts toward a market economy. The twin forces of propulsion away from and pull towards the imbedded core values are both operating. There will likely be revitalization movements that try to reassert authentic “Irishness” but it will most likely be insufficient to dislodge the shift in structural power left open by the decline of the Church and community from the corporate money minded world that has provided an increase in individual freedoms and possessions for many but not necessarily an improvement in their quality of life. Not only has the quality of life not improved, for many but the traditional equality ethic has been overlooked in the pursuit of profit and accumulation of wealth. The youth are growing up in a modern Ireland and are often largely disconnected with its symbols and traditions. The Americanization of Ireland is a term that has been used to embody what is presently wrong with Ireland.

Establishing Irish Core Values

The core values of the Irish are a marvel, especially in the context of a first world nation. The Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, the Right Reverend W. Paul Colton acknowledges the need to affirm the “core values that have brought Ireland to this moment of achievement, and have made us what we are: the value we place on community life, the importance we attach to our open door and the place for the stranger at our table of hospitality; our compassion for the weak and vulnerable.”… “What we have attained is most jeopardized by taking it for granted; by assuming it’s a right; by
greed, by apathy or by unfettered individualism.” (Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, press release, nd)

Community life in Ireland was centered on the common needs and relational ties of rural life. Let us recollect the type of community life that was Ireland for centuries and the Ireland which remains in the public consciousness. Conrad Arnesberg’s 1930’s field work in rural Ireland provides a glimpse into the ‘traditional’ values of Ireland. On community he writes:

Work in the countryside is permeated with give-and-take of reciprocal aids. Co-operation of this sort takes many forms. Men lend tools, or work with tools of their own for ‘friends’ and neighbors, particularly at mowing, spring sowing, harrowing, ploughing. They send along a boy to help whenever the farm needs an extra hand to get its work done quickly. Women pull resources in making up a tub or flirkin of butter or they lend a girl to a short-handed household. ‘Friends’ and neighbors help one another at times of distress, or when a household is short or a crop is delayed. Gifts of cattle, food and labour are made. Or they work together communally, participating at turf-cutting, oats harvest and threshing…Lastly there is a great deal of aid given and received in preparing for ceremonial and social occasions, at christenings, weddings and funerals. (Arnesberg, 1937; 69-70).

Before the time of Arnesberg’s research, this type of cooperation was more widespread, but then the lot of the small farmer was improved by better tools and the increased distribution of them. Cooperating groups are smaller because “resources are
fuller” (Arnesberg, 1937; 70) This co-operation was deeply woven into the countryman’s habit and sentiment. In every case an extended family relationship was involved and no man mowed for all his relatives, that was not necessary. One man had mowed not for a relative but a close companion. The bachelors, whom no one had aided, had themselves been able to aid no one. The two ‘strangers’, who had moved to the townland, in one case fifty years before, in the other thirty, had no relatives ‘on this side’ (Arnesberg, 1937; 72). This alliance of workers explained their behavior in terms of the ‘friendliness’ of the place. They ‘had right to help their friends’, or “country people do be very friendly, they always help one another” (Arnesberg, 1937; 72-3).

Generosity with time and money has long been an Irish trademark. In the summer of 2001 I had the good fortune of making the acquaintance of an older Irish gentleman who had taken me under his wing from the airport to show me all of his favorite pubs and where “Bono grew up” He ordered me a salmon dinner and a brandy upon hearing that I had never partaken of such a beverage. I had learned by this time that when in Ireland I must put my characteristically American suspicion aside and I accepted these tokens of undeserved generosity and good will. I commented to him that I found the Irish to be extremely generous and welcoming, to which he replied, “Ah, well we are just one small island looking out on the rest of the world”. At the time I read into this a humility and a strong sense of the great brotherhood of man, but there was something else that I felt like the Irish always forgot to factor-in: money. In countless exchanges, I received benefits and was either not allowed to reciprocate or was even tricked into believing that I could buy the next meal only to find that sandwiches were being pulled from a cooler upon our stop for that ‘next meal’. I marveled at what seemed to be an ‘other –worldly’ sense of
generosity and hospitality.

The common ‘drunken priest folktale’ illustrates reciprocation and the importance of giving ‘drink’ or money to those in need, for a blessing but also in order to avoid a curse (Lawrence, 2005; 160). Giving to those without is a strong folk ethic that was also legislated against by the First Poor Law Report which institutionalized the poor in workhouses. Local resistance to this law was total, with the exception of town merchants; the citizens testified that it was both right and good to give food at the door of the destitute, to give for “God’s sake” in order to avoid like suffering themselves and because it was right (Lawrence, 2005; 62).

Catholicism within Ireland has affected values as a form of power and meaning. Throughout the nineteenth century profound shifts occurred within Irish nationalism as the Protestant elite were replaced by the Catholic “Irish”. Catholicism and Irishness became equated in the nationalist discourse (Fanning, 2004; 32). The Irish “field of religious experience” denotes a very loosely constituted “reality”, a field like a magnetic field, strong perhaps at the center but not clearly bounded or defined at the edge (Taylor”, 1995; 30). It is important to remember the anthropological truism that religion is oftentimes indistinguishable from political and social relations. In the case of Ireland there have been specific and dynamic relations among these domains, a prominent example would be a nationalist political movement using a certain conception of religion to define itself and consequently contributing to the definition of religion and nationalism within Ireland (Taylor, 1995; 33).
The Changing Core Irish Values

“This moment of achievement” to which the Reverend W. Paul Colton refers is the present state of economic prosperity in Ireland which has been symbolized as the Celtic Tiger. The Celtic Tiger can be a metaphor for Ireland’s capitalistic successes on the global economic market. The metaphor of Ireland as the Celtic Tiger conjures up a collective tradition and continuity with the term “Celtic”, although “Tiger” referring to Ireland’s economy, evokes the rhetoric of competitive individualism. The embracing of this term illustrates the tensions between the collective and the individual nature of Ireland, between the old and the new. The ambivalence of the Irish is evident in these dual and contradictory connotations. In some ways the Celtic Tiger image now marks the advent of conspicuous consumption as the basis for collective identity (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004;106).

The trouble is the achievements have come about parallel to the sacrifice of the core value of community life in particular. The dominant Irish value of family or community is held widely across society. Social values are routinely hidden from view in the everyday routine of economic affairs but become readily visible in times of crisis such as the potato famine in the 1840’s. O’Boyle asserts that one convenient way to characterize the huge changes taking place in the Irish economy is that presently Ireland places much more emphasis on the social value of individual freedom and less on the value of family or community (2001;20).

The greater economic opportunities for women in general have contributed to both the decline in numbers of single Irish women staying home to care for ailing parents. The growing population of elderly men and women who are now living longer lives is
making care of the elderly in Ireland more problematic (O’Shea and Hughes, 1994 in O’Boyle 2001; 20). Another indicator of this change is the shrinkage of commonage (or common agriculture) in western Ireland for which the shift away from the social value of community toward individual freedom is justified on grounds that the natural resources held in common can be utilized more efficiently under a regime of division and privatization (O’Loughlin,1987 in O’Boyle,2001;20). Thus the expansion of individual freedom at the expense of the community is justified in the name of efficiency.

In order to use competition to organize economic affairs there must first be a widespread acceptance of the social value of individual freedom. Competition, cooperation, and intervention are the three organizing economic principles which propel and direct the four main economic processes of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption (O’Boyle, 2001;11). A market economy operates more effectively with the dual engines of competition and cooperation operating in tandem. The Soviet Union, which had been based primarily on co-operation, community intervention and equality, collapsed in the late 1980’s, confirming to the western world that competition and individual freedom were much better able to meet the needs and satisfy the wants of human populations.

For upwards of twenty years, Ireland has been transforming into a society in which individuals are enjoying new or expanded freedoms in the home, in the workplace, in politics, in education and virtually every social and economic institution. A culture which has long been shaped and formed by the doctrines and traditional values of the Church is reconstructing and becoming much more like the cultures of Western Europe and the United States where secular values are dominant. In Becker’s terminology, there
is a close-to-the surface anxiety among the Irish as decisions are being made that shift the center of balance toward the secular and away from the sacral along the axis of tension which connects the two (Becker, 1992; 354). Evidence of this is the emergence and formal recognition of new individual rights and protections for women, for gays and lesbians, for the handicapped, for non-smokers and those in unsatisfactory marriages. The wider berth granted for individual decision making and action throughout Irish society stirs the competitive energies, activating economic affairs and undoubtedly accounts, in large part for the emergence of the Celtic Tiger concept (O’Boyle, 2001).

Some of the effects of this expanded individual freedom and the consequent production and application of these competitive energies are the 37 percent increase in real gross domestic product in Ireland and a low 2.4 percent annual increase in consumer prices between 1990 and 1996 (CSO, 1997:21), not to mention a 50 percent increase in manufacturing output per hour over the 1991-1996 period. Information on car sales and dwellings completed is indicative as to how the Celtic Tiger has benefited the ordinary consumer. Dwellings completed climbed from a total of 19,652 in 1991 to 33,725 in 1997 (CSO, 1997a; 21), and new and used car sales in 1996 alone rose by 23 percent (Central Bank, 1997; 10). Average weekly household income from wage and salary employment improved from 154 pounds in 1987 to 211 pounds in 1994-1995 (CSO, 1997b; CSO, 1989). More recently, per capita income in Ireland has risen above Britain’s (Kuttner, 2000; 33).

Along with the economic success which greatly originates in greater individual freedom, there is observable in Ireland a new sense of self-confidence, especially among the young. This enhanced self-assuredness, in turn, evokes from individuals even more competitive energies which then are channeled into the marketplace and the workplace,
generating even more economic success. In 1994 and 1995, more than 31,000 new companies were registered by the Irish government as incorporated enterprises (DEE, 1996; 12).

The success which the Irish have been experiencing over the past 20 years through their own bootstrapping efforts is fueling a sense that the economy will continue to grow and develop in the years ahead, especially as Ireland becomes more fully integrated into the economies of Western Europe. For the young in particular, heightened expectations mean that they can plan on having a higher standard of living than their parents. At the same time in the United States, in contrast, many of the young expect to have a lower standard of living than their parents. In both countries, these changes in expectations are major reversals of long-term trends.

The erosion of the value of communal ownership and cooperation in the economic arena is most poignantly illustrated in the reduction of land held in common. Between 1982 and 1989 a total of 23,412 hectares [58,530 acres] of commonage in the west of Ireland was divided and privatized. This land has increased in value due to intensification of sheep farming and afforestation (Keary, nd. in O’Boyle, 2001; 22). O’Loughlin reported in 1987 that in the west there was a total of 500,000 hectares [1,250,000 acres] of commonage, mostly in the form of mountains and hill commonage. At the same time, in County Mayo, 20 percent of the farmers had communal grazing rights (O’Loughlin, 1987 in O’Boyle, 2001; 20). Competition, as used herein, is a disposition on the part of the individual to undertake certain tasks individually for a specific individual economic return. Cooperation is a disposition on the part of the individual to undertake certain tasks collectively because the task can be done more efficiently acting collectively or because the task cannot be done at all through individual effort alone. Intervention by a private or public group entails the imposition of limits on competition and cooperation in order to address certain abuses of excessive competition, such as suicidal price wars, or excessive cooperation, such as
collusive price fixing. The equity-efficiency dichotomy is grounded in the one-many dichotomy in that it reduces the question as to whether we should act as many independent individuals for reasons of efficiency or as one interdependent group to help assure the material well-being of everyone in the community. In this analysis, the organizing principle of intervention may be thought of as the control surfaces of the aircraft, guiding it but not powering it in a given direction (O’Boyle, 2001).

The capitalist disposition is perpetuated in childrearing. In the Whitings’ Children of Six Cultures (1975), The Whitings concluded that children in more highly specialized societies tend to seek attention and dominance because they have to be trained for specialized roles for which they will have to compete, whereas. In simpler cultures the children are far more invested in the well-being and welfare of the family group because their chores aid the mutual survival which is highly valued, whereas in more complex societies the chores are usually more arbitrary and in the instance of school work these tasks emphasize again individualistic task performance nature. This increasing complexity in the Irish economy is necessitating that the youth of Ireland, who although they have long been well educated, now face increased challenges on individual levels which do not necessarily require communal connections and therefore do not reinforce family ties as much as individual gains (Barnouw, 1985; 166).

III. COMPARE AND CONTRAST: THE OLD AND THE NEW

Images of Ireland in Literature

Early Irish manuscripts date from the sixth century. The oldest vernacular literature in Western Europe, these works are remarkable for their range: law texts,
genealogies, scholarly treatises, devotional tracts, and especially imaginative literature
entailing thick descriptions of voyages and visions, feasts and forays, battles, burnings,
and matters of the heart. Early Irish poetry laments the sorrow of exile: first the self
imposed exile of monks such as St. Columcille, who left Ireland early in the 6th century,
and also involuntary political, economic and emotional exile. Within this context love’s
thematics are predominantly tragic, unlucky, unrealized and unfulfilled. The Celts “avoid
the obvious and commonplace; the half said thing to them is dearest” (Murphy and
MacKillop; 1987, 3). The importance of landscape, embracing at once nature, place, and
mythology is a common theme in Irish writing that has been passed down from the old
hermit poets and their medieval counterparts. Some of the most extraordinary poems in
the twelfth century, The Madness of Sweeney text, are those in praise of the trees of
Ireland (Murphy and MacKillop; 1987, 4).

The examination of Celtic Tiger Ireland within modern Irish literature illuminates
modern day images and values of an Irish populace navigating, sometimes uneasily,
previously unknown Irish realities, in an attempt to achieve authenticity by reconciling
traditional and modern lifeways. This examination focuses primarily on Anne Haverty’s
novel The Free and Easy in which Ireland is a land of economic prosperity, cell phones,
computers and expensive cars, a land that has taken its place next to the economic giants
of the global economy. It is the Ireland of the Celtic Tiger that is still grappling with its
identity, trying to find its equilibrium somewhere between the concepts of the past and
present (Houston, 2007; 12). The Irish fiction sections in bookshops are filled with books
that are set in Celtic Tiger Ireland, but few are about Celtic Tiger Ireland. For instance,
Paul Howard’s Ross O’Carroll-Kelly series follows the life of a young man coming of
age in the first generation to grow up in this economic prosperity. Any critique of the Celtic Tiger is realized only through the reader’s reactions to Ross’s awareness of his generation’s unearned sense of entitlement. *The Free and Easy* is notable due to the nature of its direct commentary on life in the Celtic Tiger. The Ireland depicted in *The Free and Easy* is that of people who have forgotten the reality of the history in light of the success of the present. One character within the story is a movie director who believes Ireland should focus on the present as opposed to the past:

“The rain, the drunken father…it’s over. It’s over historically, it’s over cinematically. Don’t get me wrong it happened … But I want to look at the real stuff, you know? I want to look at the present, the positive, something we can all relate to. Love, money, multiplicity of choices. We’re global now, we’re multicultural, let’s celebrate. We’re done with [whining], right?” The past is the past and it should remain in the past.

Another character tells the American visitor, “Ireland as we know it –and let’s thank whoever- or whatever—was born some time around nineteen ninety four. Or ninety-six?” She adds, “It must be a bit disappointing to come all this way and find out we’re exactly the same as everyone else.” Some of the characters in the novel try to recreate traditional Ireland, one by making homemade jam like her grandmother, except the berries she used were imported and the recreated custard was considered inadequate because it was made from scratch instead of a Bird’s instant pudding brand popular in Ireland for generations. Bird’s instant pudding is made by an English company. The earnest endeavors of the characters serve to illustrate the paradoxical and precarious nature of defining authentic Ireland (Houston, 2007; 13-14).
The Irish Mind/Temperament: an examination of philosophy

“The world is my country.”
—Janus Junius

(John Toland)

The distinctiveness of the Irish philosophical approach to life and learning is one primarily of inclusivity. An examination of some of Ireland’s influential thinkers will help elucidate the Irish philosophical temperament. Temperament resists quick characterization; some even doubt that there is an Irish philosophical temperament. Thus Irish philosophy, in its tedious tenacity, has some interesting insights into the Irish mind. Thomas Duddy explains this challenge in his synopsis of the Irish intellectual tradition, which includes the philosophical tradition. Many contend that Ireland lacks the requisite historical constancy to support a philosophical tradition.

She has been colonized without colonizing. Her culture has ridden the tides of other cultures. Her intellectuals—if they may even be called ‘hers’—have sought exile abroad; or, having been born abroad, have immigrated to Ireland; or have been born in Ireland, true enough, but of foreign blood... There really is no such thing as Irish thought, at least not in the sense in which there is English, French, or German thought.

(O’Brian, 2006:1)

Duddy responds, “The clue to the serious error in the objector’s position,” “lies in the phrase, ‘at least not in the sense in which there is English, French, or German
The Irish tradition is a different kind of tradition. The Irish tradition arises within the non-imperial rather than within the imperial, among the colonized rather than among the colonizers. Permeable, fluid, it reveals a character formed by invasions, assimilations, and historical accidents (Duddy, 1992 in O’Brian, 2006:1).

The history of Irish thought has its own peculiarity that must not be analyzed in terms of blood and race, or even in terms of native genius, but in terms of the quirks or unforeseen events of history and of the fruitful interactions of accidental individuals with those happenings. A history marked in such a way tends to be characterized most of all by its inclusiveness.

Normally, to characterize a tradition involves showing how that tradition is divergent from others or how it excludes what they include. ‘Tradition’ and ‘exclusion’, semantically, go together. While imperial traditions differentiate themselves from other traditions by excluding the others, the Irish intellectual tradition differentiates itself by excluding exclusiveness. Logically, to exclude exclusiveness is simply to include. Yet this analogy is effective in analysis of Irish philosophical leanings.

It will serve well because of a paradoxical quality that Richard Kearney (1997b) identifies in the Irish mind. The Irish tradition is not a microcosm of western thought but rather a hybrid of sorts within which the Irish tradition of inclusion births an intellectual uniqueness. Richard Kearney finds part of this uniqueness in a detachment from Western logical truisms. “Toland’s, (a founding Irish thinker) complex Irishness … defies a narrow logic of identity; it epitomizes the defiance of an excluded middle.” (Kearney in O’Brian 2006:1).
Perhaps one of the reasons why Toland presented himself as a contradiction … was because the Irish mind was a cleft-mind, not uniform but pluriform and not homogeneous but diverse. Irish identity has long been identified as Anglo and Gaelic, Catholic and Protestant, native and foreigner, regional as well as cosmopolitan (Kearney, 1997; 165).

Irish philosophy resists many logical presumptions, according to Kearney; therein lives its genius. Examples of Irish thought should not be expected to be neat, repetitive, or homogeneous, as Kearney has said:

“… The Irish mind is at its best when differentiated into diverse minds. Its greatest resource is the preference for complexity over uniformity.”

Irish thinkers exhibit a similar “pluriform,” nature in their philosophies which are resistant to any but the most complex interpretations of the law of “identity.” (A can only be A or not A) (O’Brien, 2006;1).

Thomas Duddy suggests, in effect, that the Irish tradition excludes exclusiveness. This tradition differs from the imperial traditions by a capacity to “embrace all that the alien has brought” (Louis MacNeice in O’Brien 2006;1).

Hutcheson, a Scotch-Irish clergyman, maintains optimism about human nature that separates him from those figures in Christianity who focus on original sin. The Scots-Irishman’s readiness to include among the saved all individuals who seek to further human good, irrespective of their confessional commitments to Christianity, recalls an earlier Celtic Christianity, which was far more ecumenical than the Calvinistic
Christianity that Hutcheson rejects. “A mind not uniform but pluriform” assumes specific form in this universalism.

James Joyce’s description of *Finnegan’s Wake* as a narrative hovering ‘between twotwinsome minds’, a double sided story encouraging us to have ‘two thinks at a time” is not an uncommon feat for an Irish intellectual. Duplicity, irony, subterfuge and satire are common tools of Irish intellectuals, notably Swift, Sterne, Burke and Congreve, Wilde and Shaw, Beckett and Joyce (Kearney, 1997; 164).

Thus do Irish philosophers exhibit, in differing ways, the distinctively Irish proclivity for the pluriform, the inclusive, and the contra-logical. As that temperament persists in the 21st century, the Janus stone remains its symbol: One mind formed of cleft perspectives (Kearney1997; 163).

**Generosity versus Materialism**

The Irish had struck me as collectively connected to a wider Irish identity which connected the most humane facets within and outside of Ireland. This was apparent in their open borders and the coin deposit charity cans in the lines at the grocers, from Dingle to Dublin, as well as the world conscious posters in Dublin about ending the American invasion of Iraq, “Hunger is the real injustice of our time.”

The generosity ethic which has been a pervasive part of the Irish ethos expressed in Pastor Reverend W. Paul Colton’s admonishment to retain. “Our compassion for the weak and the vulnerable”, is still prevalent throughout Irish society, indicated by the commonplace practice of taking collections for specific weak and vulnerable populations
worldwide at churches, street corners, the grocer and the corner shop. Throughout Ireland there are constant reminders that the world is in need. I was speaking with a woman on a bus ride and I asked if she thought Ireland's history had a part in the generous nature of the Irish. She replied, "I think we are just the sort of people that can't stand the terrible suffering of the world." To her this knee jerk response to give to those with less resonated within the Irish as an integral part of the character of the people.

There are those Irish that are not characterized by generosity. Outsiders say that those in the town of ‘Inveresk’, live in competitive conditions, and “have never been blessed with a spirit of generosity towards themselves or others” (2001; 67). Yet, upon closer examination, anthropologist Adrian Peace concluded that, internal conflict is condemned if it disregards community interests (2001; 58). The vulnerable (those who have lived in Inveresk for a considerable amount of time) of the community are considered, “Our people” and the residents of Inveresk band together to support and protect them in order to prevent state agencies from “moving in on them”(2001;74).

Modernization versus Traditionalism

As people become free of traditional worlds they also become free to fall in love with them. When freed from the constraints of tradition one is able to fully appreciate the good in it-integrity, solidity, continuity, stability, groundedness. The worldly metropolitans of Dublin escape the ills of modernity with weekends in the rural west of Ireland oftentimes to the contamination of the love object. The authenticity or the “good goes out of it”. The west coast town of Doolin attracted a multitude of city folk in the
1970’s and 1980’s who eventually reconstructed the original cherished object. They brought with them their own culture and created economic demands which locals and non-locals cashed in on. Local characters were elevated to celebrity status, only to be phased out as tastes changed. The brief but intense love affair left Doolin a debauched cultural wasteland. Rural communities all over Ireland feel the pull and push as metropolitans force villagers to “adopt what it calls civilization into their midst”. The character and bones of rural community is altered and even erased by development, only to be rebuilt by lifestyle warriors, who are determined to settle into a “traditional” village community, a “superficial copy of an original that perhaps never existed” (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004;176).

A predominant view is that traditions arise and prosper from relative degrees of cultural isolation. In this paradigm distinct cultural traditions become threatened when isolation is no longer possible—thus the perspective that “traditional” or “authentic” cultures must be protected from the effects of cultural encroachment, including the invasion of tourists. This assumption is problematic in general but particularly so in the case of Ireland as it seems just as likely that distinct, culturally identifying traditions have often developed as a result of processes of differentiation that arise from exchanges between cultures. Thus cultural traditions are constructed more as a recognition of difference than a lack of exposure to other cultures (Chambers; 2000, 98). The Irish are masters at the art of distinctions be it words or cultures.

Irish culture and identity is characterized by the ambiguous and paradoxical ways in which the globalization of the local and the re-localization of the global are played out sometimes in unison, sometimes in conflict, in a social area cross-cut with antagonism.
The experience of living in contemporary Ireland is that of living in an in-between world, in-between cultures and identities, an experience of liminality (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004; 6). Tradition is a substantive reality internal to modernity, an inheritance of pre-modern ideas, institutions and practices that are deeply sedimented and actively reproduced. Modernity tends to rebuild tradition, as it dissolves it. The persistence and recreation of tradition has been central to the legitimization of power. The collusion of modernities and traditions, the co-existence and collision of which animate the contemporary Ireland, hold the keys necessary to understand social action in order to explain it in its cause and its effects. These social actions act as a window through which we discover the unique and peculiar ways in which the Irish adapt and cope with accelerated social change. The large number of automobile collisions in Ireland is used as a metaphor to illustrate the convergence of two cultures coming into contact. The conflict in the meeting arises from the differential paces of life occupying the same time and space. The highest rate of accidents occurs where there has not yet been a modernization of the roads that carry commuter traffic through roads used for rural traffic (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004; 10). Thus the farmer and the commuter collide oftentimes with fatal results.

The extreme jump in ‘crass’ consumerism is feared to be eroding the Irish values of community and family, although Keohane and Kuhling contend that holiday gift-giving frenzies can clearly be seen as a form of balanced reciprocity and thus relationship reinforcement. Many recent texts have emphasized the negative effects of the Irish growth experience in the past decade and have accurately documented how this greater productivity has resulted in benefit for some but has also reinforced poverty and social
exclusion for significant segments of the Irish population (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004; 12). All that is wrong with contemporary Irish culture can be blamed on ‘Americanization,’ yet the panacea for this ailment is more modernization. The ego ideal of the Irish has changed. For the world, Ireland is a reprieve from the modernization machine many are locked into. Yet the Irish are striving for modernization and have in many senses become very different from their global image and are experiencing an accelerated period of growth and modernization. In review of the data from the three waves of the World Values Surveys, which include 65 societies and 75 percent of the world’s population, there is evidence of both massive cultural change and the persistence of distinctive cultural traditions. Economic development is associated with shifts away from absolute norms and values toward values that are increasingly rational, tolerant, trusting, and participatory. The broad cultural heritage of a society-- Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Confucian or Communist-- leaves an imprint on values that endure despite modernization. Moreover, the differences between the values held by members of different religions within given societies are much smaller than are cross-national differences. Once established, such cross-cultural differences become part of a national culture transmitted by educational institutions and mass media (Inglehart and Baker, 2000; 19).
Pluralism versus Monotheism: Disillusionment in authority and Church

O’Toole examines the “birth of a new morality” by exploring “scenes” which were made public and dramatized through television. The scenes were set in the mid nineteen nineties and the players were those in positions of power and the plot involved victimization, scandal and betrayal of trust which was blindly placed in authority figures of church and state. The established trust was the umbrella for great injustices which had no room to be voiced until now. An example among many was the case of Father Brenden Smyth, who was arrested after a 40 year career as a pedophile. Extensive cover-ups from within the Catholic Church did not so much come as a revelation as they put a dark face to a pervasive Irish childhood fear (O’Toole; 1996, 198). As a result of this and many other similar cases coming to light, the Irish public became so alienated from those in authority that it began to believe those in authority were capable of nearly anything (O’Toole, 1996; 202). The Irish public now regarded its loyalties to those in authority as conditioned upon their behavior; the problem for those in power is that they did not perceive this shift. Unaccountable authority became intolerable. In the wake of this is the Irish peace process which was actually strengthened by the way in which these scandals gave new meaning to ideas like trust, accountability and democracy that were essential to a new settlement in Ireland (ibid, 1996; 202-06).

The Irish case is a classic reminder that ideologies are molded as a means of domination and resistance, never simply free to set their own terms but marked by what
they are opposing. Irish Catholicism was molded in the crucible of Anglo Irish politics (Taylor, 1995; 138).

Part of the process of estrangement from tradition is the unfamiliarity of the youth with the images and icons of official Irish culture which are now reconsidered in an oppressive and exclusive light (Taylor, 1995; 176). The national identity of the Irish is presently being defined in opposition to the European community who could in a sense envelope the nation. Most discourses about national identity seek to define Ireland in terms of its Catholicism (Taylor, 1995).

IV. THE NEW GLOBALIZED IRELAND OF PROSPERITY, PRODUCT AND DIFFERENCE

Capitalist Success as an Emergent Value: the challenge to community, equity and cooperation

Karen Brodkin writes that class is an antagonistic relationship at the heart of capitalism. Contemporary social theorists have argued that the market economy thrives on difference and is dependent on the production of desire (Giddens 1991, Turner 1984 in Curtis 2004). I will in no way perpetuate the myth that Ireland is a classless society, only that the extent to which she has experienced social stratification is dramatically different in degree and pervasiveness.

Richard H. Robbins describes the culture of capitalism as “devoted to the production and sale of commodities. For capitalists, the culture encourages the accumulation of profit; for laborers, it encourages the accumulation of wages; for consumers, it encourages the accumulation of goods. In other words, capitalism defines sets of people who, behaving according to a set of learned rules, act as they must act”
Robbins continues by stating that capitalism itself “has reshaped our values…it has largely dictated the direction that every institution in our society would take…It has produced wave after wave of consumer goods…” (1999, 9; cited in Bodley, 2001, 72). Robbins concludes that the culture preys upon the natural inclination of people to consume. In reality, the primary human agents who created capitalism were elites with a vested interest in increasing the scale of consumption in order to disproportionately enhance their own power. Many may have benefited from improved material conditions but the few that produce the cultural system were producing a system that worked best for them, not heading the most advantageous system for humanity or the environment (Bodley, 2003; 73).

In the case of Ireland, as all over the globe, it is no less true that only a capitalist system can produce so much money for so few while failing to meet the real needs of so many. Only a capitalist system can create extensive private wealth and public deprivation. Oftentimes Irish political and social commentators such as Fintan O’Toole cite local corruption for bearing responsibility for the ills that are particular to the larger capitalistic system, not the local particulars of a given area. Yet, these are not the result of some particular corruption of Irish society. Such corruption is only a manifestation of abuse of power and privilege that has much deeper structural roots and foundations. Growing inequality and blatant corruption are not unique to Ireland. The forces of globalization that have hit Ireland are the most dynamic elements of a capitalist system which creates and re-creates inequality and uneven development. A study by economist Paul Krugman, quoted in Craig, 2004, states that countries with greater inequality of income distribution also spent less per person on education, had fewer books per person
in the schools, and had poorer educational performance, including lower reading skills, lower math skills and lower rates of completion of high school. States with greater inequality of income also had a greater proportion of babies born with low birth weight, higher rates of homicide, higher rates of violent crime, a greater proportion of the population unable to work because of disabilities, a higher proportion of the population using tobacco, and a higher proportion of the population being sedentary.

Inequality in the Irish State follows closely that of the US; it is interesting to note Yates' observation that, “It is no accident that the United States has both the weakest labor movement and the most unequal income of any rich country.” A Marxist analysis, which understands that what is bought and sold first has to be produced and that it is production relations that define the structure of the economy, is capable of explaining the inequality of modern society, as a necessary feature of capitalist society and not the contingent or accidental product of particular circumstances (Craig, 2004; 9).

O’Toole’s description is based on the particular corruption of Irish society. While capitalist society is always corrupt, it does not need this corruption to produce the most extreme inequalities. Inequality explains corruption as much as, if not more than, corruption explains inequality. Local greed has been blamed for structural inequalities accelerated by the boom economy; this ignores the wider inequality of the globalizing capitalistic economy (Craig, 2004; 11).

J. K. Gibson-Graham endorses a theoretical move away from a model of monolithic global capitalism and notions of the one-way "penetration" of capitalism. The notion of "economic hybridity" (derived from Bakhtin's writing on linguistic hybridity) is proposed as an alternative to the Marxist concept of "articulation of modes of production"
to account for the coming together of economic logics and practices from different epochs and cultural histories. The ethnography that sustains this discussion addresses the significance of popular religious revival in rural Wenzhou, on the southeast coast of China, and its role in the postsocialist market economy. Borrowing from Georges Bataille's notion of "ritual expenditure" and from early Baudrillard on symbolic economies, the case study shows that rural Wenzhou's ritual economy harbors an archaic economic logic which is subversive of capitalist, state socialist, and developmental-state principles. The older strains of an alternative economic logic in this hybrid are shown not as complementing, adapting to, or serving capitalism's expansion but as contesting it and rechanneling its movement toward other ends. The ethnography that sustains this discussion addresses the significance of popular religious revival in rural Wenzhou, on the southeast coast of China, and its role in the postsocialist market economy. Borrowing from Georges Bataille's notion of "ritual expenditure" and from early Baudrillard on symbolic economies, the case study shows that rural Wenzhou's ritual economy harbors an archaic economic logic which is subversive of capitalist, state socialist, and developmental-state principles. (Mayfair, Mei-hui et al, 2000; 477).

Fintan O’Toole argues that 1996 was the year in which Irish independence lost its provisional character and took on permanence due to a number of occurrences which began to congeal into a pattern. One occurrence was the 75th anniversary of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which O’Toole believes made it very difficult for the Irish to not take responsibility for what they had become. Secondly, in the Dublin summit of the European Union, Ireland played a far more consequential role than Britain. The roles that Britain and Ireland had played for so long seemed to be reversed. A third factor was the
glorification of the formation of the Free State itself; so long perceived as a grudging
surrender of romantic destiny, it was reconceptualized through the Hollywood film
*Micheal Collins* (O’Toole, 1996; 10-12).

Ireland’s economy, prior to the emergence of the ‘Celtic Tiger,’ had been one on
the periphery, defined by her lack of industry, and her marginalization and migration,
which created a “vicious” cycle of continuing underdevelopment. Mjoset, an economist,
asserts that emigration selectively removed the potential entrepreneurs from the national
economy. Had these people chosen to stay, Mjoset believes, it would have resulted in a
social tension and friction that would have acted as a positive force for social and
economic dynamism. Leaving the emergence of dominant social forces and institutions
opposed to change and innovation perpetuated the inclination toward emigration by
which those in control maintained their dominance and prosperity. One of the results is
an Ireland without a framework to support new ways of doing things, as vague as this
may sound this is a characteristic found in most countries that are characterized by
autocentric development (Mjoset in Breathnach in Shirlow, 1995; 23).

Ireland’s far reaching transformations due to the ‘Celtic Tiger’ economic boom
have been accompanied by accelerated modernization and globalization: technologies
and markets of production; distribution and consumption generated by transnational
corporations; administrative systems, governmental strategies and legal-rational
principles developed by post-national and transnational institutions. Local institutions,
communitarian norms and principles of action translate and reconfigure exogenous
processes of globalization, attuning them with local institutions. An example of this is the
way in which the Irish have embraced the “cult of the individual” through elevating Irish celebrities, all the while reinforcing collectivist narratives of these individuals being part of the community (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004; 5, 80).

Modernization theorists from Karl Marx to Daniel Bell have argued that economic development brings pervasive cultural change. But others from Max Weber to Samuel Huntington have claimed that cultural values are an enduring and autonomous influence on society. In their study Inglehart and Baker (2000) found that economic development is associated with shifts away from absolute norms and values toward values that are increasingly rational, tolerant, trusting and participatory. The broader cultural heritage of a society (Roman Catholic) leaves an imprint on values that therefore endure despite modernization. Once established, these value distinctions become a part of national culture and are transmitted by educational institutions and mass media.

Sociologist Peter Gundelach concludes that national value difference is weakened by the theoretically weak variable of nation and that value difference can be determined more accurately by existing institutions within nations (1994). In Ireland the triad powers of church, state and business have exerted considerable control on the values of the population as Chris Eipper illuminates in his case study of the community of Bantry Bay (see below section).

The above and many others have concluded that modernization theory alone is insufficient to adequately describe changes in values (Halman and de Moor 1993).
Consumer Ireland

The illusory qualities of an increasingly consumer culture are legion and warrant an examination of the ideological undertow that accompanies capitalist success and consumer mindedness. One focus of the consumer economy is the focus on the immediate future and a disregard for impacts which are beyond twenty years in the future. Belief in a perpetual economic growth with a denial of limited environmental reserves is a cornerstone in consumer cultures. Sociologist Leslie Sklair (1991; 42 in Bodley; 2001; 78) calls the culture-ideology of consumerism “The fuel that powers the motor of global capitalism.” In his view the global system is driven by a powerful, commercially generated ideology that convinces people that perpetual economic growth will benefit everyone. Social science theorist Immanuel Wallerstein (1990; In Bodley, 2001; 78) refers to this as the “myth of the rising standard of living” because it distorts the realities of poverty and the unequal economic relationship between rich and poor countries not to mention the impossibility of a perpetual expansion of consumption. Leslie Sklair (1991) identifies consumerism as it is promoted by the transnational media and advertising as the dominant element in the ideology of the global system. He observes: “The culture-ideology of consumerism proclaims, literally, that the meaning of life is to be found in the things that we possess. To consume, therefore is to be fully alive, and to remain fully alive we must continuously consume. (Sklair; 1991, 41 in Bodley; 2001, 79).

Commercial scale cultures, lack the instant response to depleted resources that characterize domestic scale cultures [because of their complexity and specialization]. The illusory quality of consumer culture is shown by such measures as the Physical Quality of
Life Index (PQLI) developed by David M. Morris (1979). The PQLI is considered a simple, comprehensive, and relatively nonethnocentric measure of overall quality of life for literate societies. The PQLI demonstrates that there is no absolute relationship between quality of life and GNP. Societies such as Cuba, Sri Lanka and Western Samoa with a very low GNP rated very highly in quality of life measures and other nations with low life quality and high GNP such as Saudi Arabia and Libya disprove the common assumption of consumer ideology. Cross-national surveys suggest that only up to a certain point do increases in energy use correspond with rises in commonly accepted measures of quality of life in industrial countries, such as health care, education, and “cultural” activities. There are even indicators that very high energy consumption rates are related to negative qualities such as high suicide and divorce rates (Bodley; 2001, 80-1).

In 1996, Ireland produced more wealth per capita than the United Kingdom, a figure that it had never before approached. With this new found wealth Irish spending habits changed drastically over the last twenty years. The last five years alone have seen new levels of prosperity reach farcical levels as the children who grew up during the boom of the Celtic Tiger splash their cash. This has been highlighted by the changes made to the typical Irish shopping basket by the Central Statistics Office. As the National Consumer Agency points out, it ‘reflects our changing spending habits in modern Ireland’:

Streaky rashers, shoe polish brushes and wallpaper borders are now off the list. But shellfish, fake tan and coffee makers have all been included for the first time. Technology has also had an impact on the index, with the
addition to the basket of plasma screen TVs, home cinema systems, digital printing costs and MP3 players (http://edelmandublin.com/blog/2007105).

The vacation or “holiday” expenditures reflect the increase in expendable income. The Central Statistics Office reported that Irish people spent nearly €1.5 billion on international trips in the last three months of 2006 - a figure 25 per cent higher than the amount spent during the same period the previous year. However to get a true picture of consumer spending you have to look back to the CSO’s previous figures on holidays abroad by Irish people which showed that they took 5.3 million trips between January and September last year. That’s a rise of almost 40% from 2003, when Irish people made 3.8 million for the same period (http://edelmandublin.com/blog/2007105).

2006 was a landmark year for Irish car consumption. Not because it was a bumper sales year; instead, more supercars (Porsches, Ferraris, Aston Martins, etc) were sold in the first three months of the year than in all of 2005. Now, one does not have to drive around Dublin for long to pass a Bentley, and since the reopening of the Shelbourne Hotel an exotic vehicle in some shape or form seems to be permanently parked outside. A Food Futures study (pdf) carried out by Amarch Research for Campbell Catering in 2005 is quite insightful despite being two years old at this stage. The report points out:

As Ireland has become more affluent, our eating habits have changed to reflect cultural influences arising from increased travel abroad, changing work patterns and increased discretionary spending. For the first time in our history, we spend more on food to eat outside the home than in the home, which illustrates the transformation that has happened in Ireland in the past decade. If eating out was
once the preserve of the ‘well to do’ in Ireland, it is certainly no longer the case. If there’s anything that shows how spending habits have changed it’s Irish eating habits. The potato which was once the core of the Irish diet is now second place to pasta and rice (http://edelmandublin.com/blog/2007105).

Ireland has one of the highest levels of consumer debt in Europe. On top of that the majority of consumers are unaware of the interest rates they are being charged on the amount of money that they owe. Due to a few moments of uncertainty in the economy there is a voice that is beginning to grow louder and is raising concerns about debt levels - mortgages in particular. Sunday Business Post journalist Richard Curran has a program on RTE at the moment that is getting a lot of talk. Futureshock aims to examine whether Ireland’s property bubble is about to burst. In the program Richard Curran assesses the chances of a significant readjustment to Irish property prices, and examines who will feel the most burden if the market crashes. Despite rising concerns, it is interesting to note that 62% of housing in Ireland currently has no mortgage associated with it. Furthermore 25% of houses purchased since 1996 have no mortgage associated with them. This brings new meaning to the popular Irish phrase, ‘Do you take cash?’ These figures may allay some concerns about the property market (http://edelmandublin.com/blog/2007105).

Less than perfect prosperity

There is already an observable downside to the surging Irish economy. The rate of unemployment which stood at 13.0 percent in 1985 dropped only marginally to 11.5 percent by 1997 (Central Bank, 1997). Since then, however, the jobless rate has fallen below 5
percent (Capell et al.). Even so, major segments of the Irish population are not sharing in the benefits of the Celtic Tiger, as evidenced by the extent of poverty measured in relative terms. For example, when the poverty threshold is defined as household income below one-half of the average disposable income for all Irish households, an estimated 21-23 percent of Irish households in 1994 were classified as poor (Callan, 1996). Significantly, seven years earlier and prior to the recent surge in the economy of Ireland, the poverty rate was 17-19 percent; in 1980 the rate for Irish households was 16-17 percent (cf. Callan, 1989).

The negative effects of economic growth and development are also reflected in the number of business failures. A total of 14,718 companies were dissolved in 1995, up by nearly 10,000 from the number of dissolutions reported in 1994. Companies in liquidation climbed steadily from 1,263 at the end of 1975 to 3,232 at the end of 1985 and 5,605 by the end of 1995 (DEE, 1996). Among Irish start-up companies, 54-57 percent fail usually sometime in the first five years (Government of Ireland, 1994).

With the closing of these enterprises, the economic security of many of the persons associated with them as owners, workers, or suppliers has disintegrated. The harsh reality of a highly competitive, highly individualistic economy is that successful new enterprises replace old established ones in the process. Economic growth and development in a market economy such as Ireland’s spells failure and less economic security for some at the same time it brings success and more economic security to others. Rapid economic growth and development frequently mean a severe strain on the infrastructure -- schools, highways, parking, water and sewage treatment, parks, and so on -- which does not expand sufficiently and in time to accommodate the emerging private-sector demand. This strain is clearly visible even to the inexperienced user of the inter-city road system in Ireland which is barely adequate to carry the large trucks which use it today. It is instructive to see the infrastructure
as a modern commons – a resource open to use by everyone and subject to certain restraints such as speed limits -- a commons is a reminder that economic growth and development in a market economy depend on coordinated individual and group decision making.

Further, the more intense, competitive economic environment means that in everyday workplace interactions ordinary people will tend to see one another more as rivals and adversaries and less as friends or colleagues. This transformation is observable across the business cycle. In economic expansion, humans are pitted against one another for a piece of an expanding economy and the new opportunities which emerge from it. In contraction, they are pitted against one another to determine whose job or business will shoulder the burden of a compromised economy.

For the twelve-month period ending August 1997, the rate of inflation in Ireland was 0.6 percent - lowest among the fifteen-member states of the European Union and less than one-half the rate of inflation of the member state with the second lowest rate for that period (Eurostat, 1997). There have been major improvements to roads in Ireland over the past 20 years, funded by monies made available by the European Union. Additionally, for several years in the 1990s the Irish government paid a tax refund of 1,000 pounds for anyone scrapping a car which was at least ten years old in exchange for a new car (Seekamp, 1997). These developments are reflected in a drop in motor vehicle fatalities in Ireland from 646 in 1981 to 383 in 1995 (CSO, 1996; CSO, 1993). This common-sense observation is necessary because too often financial institutions are pre-occupied with protecting themselves from the failure of their commercial loan customers by carefully securing loans in assets which can be liquidated in the event of failure rather than by helping their commercial customers to be successful in putting in place a business plan which avoids or minimizes the factors which are known to make for economic decline (O’Boyle, 2001; 20).
The price for driving economic affairs more aggressively on the basis of competition is a heightened sense of one’s own worth and rights as an isolated individual and diminished perception of one’s role and duty as a part of a community. In other words, along the axis of tension connecting the individual at one end and the community at the other end there has been a shift in the center of balance toward the individual. This shift, in turn, is undermining the stability of the social and economic institutions built upon the social value of community, and creating additional personal anxieties. Time will tell if the friendly and helpful Irish people who have been essential to the country’s thriving hospitality business will become more like the hostile and distant people so often associated with highly developed economies.

Toward an Ethical Economy

Ireland has found herself among the world’s economic elite and with that comes more responsibility as well as power. Terrorism is primarily an attack against the economic elite. I had several conversations in which Irish people had commented on the effects of September 11, 2001. I repeatedly asked, “Really?” I had not realized the strength of their association with what I had interpreted less as a global and more of a U.S event. The primary response I received was that it had shaped the Irish into a more guarded people. A taxi driver commented, “It used to be that we would welcome anyone into our home, but “Not after that, not any more”. One gentleman commented that he was taking a risk in talking to me or any stranger for that matter; after all, he asserted, “You could be crazy, I could be crazy”. He went on to note that he would never expect someone in New York to spend five minutes of his or her time talking on the street to a stranger; in fact that would likely never happen (May 23, 06 travel journal). One Irishman felt that this strong identification with the U.S. belonged
more to the older generation, however, and that I should be very careful to talk to a large
demographic, being particularly careful to include the young. The young in Ireland were the
most allusive demographic. When not in an obvious rush, they were oftentimes engaged in
the stream of information or music coming from their headphones. The dual identification of
the Irish population with the economic elite as well as the economically destitute is one more
signifier of the complexity and depth of the Irish philosophy. It would be interesting to
evaluate changes in the strength of identification with each of these segments and their
fluctuations and implications. The history of the economic elite protecting its privilege world
wide is undeniable, yet the living history of the Irish serves as a strong reminder of the
victimization of greed and conquest.

Much has been learned already from the more than 200 years’ experience with
market economies since the first industrial revolution. Private-group decision making
provides opportunities for addressing such values-laden issues as the place of justice and
charity in economic affairs, the role of property rights versus personal rights, the meaning of
having more versus being more, the difference between need and want especially as regards
the poor, the scope of equality, freedom, and community in the workplace and the
marketplace, and then the implementations of whatever agreements are forthcoming in a
specific workplace, union, trade association, civic group, or neighborhood. At times, private
groups face decisions for which they are not adequately prepared and for which they do not
have all of the relevant information. Under those circumstances, they may turn to such
organizations as the Economic and Social Research Institute or the Conference of Religious
of Ireland, or to such individuals as university professors or solicitors for assistance. Their
special responsibility is to help the parties involved to function more effectively, to maintain
control over the decisions which affect their well-being by means of collective action based
on voluntary agreement. They serve this end by doing their professional homework diligently
and by stating as clearly and explicitly as possible any premises or presuppositions which may undergird that homework. They have no business usurping the functions of a private group by methods of professional elitism or expertise which have the effect if not the actual intent of cajoling or leading the group members to a pre-determined position. To do so is to cleverly substitute their will for the will of the members of the group.

It is essential that the benefits of economic growth and development in Ireland are shared more widely, by providing better for the retirement and care of the elderly, and making sure that those who otherwise have no access to economic decision making have a forum where their values are respected. Whether these values reflect the old ways or the new ways an examination would undoubtedly be helpful in determining which companies best serve those values and merit the investment of funds.

New Economy and Immigration

The new wave of immigrants to Ireland’s shores is quite different from the former alien protestant invaders who once enjoyed the power and privilege of the British Crown. These new immigrants usually fill positions below what they are qualified for as the Irish nationals take full advantage of the economic prosperity these non-nationals help to sustain. Sustaining a place of privilege can entail adopting an ideology that supports such structural stratification.

It is Ireland's high standard of living, high wage economy and EU membership that attract many migrants from the newest of the European Union countries: Ireland has had a significant number of Romanian immigrants since the 1990s. In recent years, mainland
Chinese have been migrating to Ireland in significant numbers. Nigerians, along with people from other African countries, have accounted for a large proportion of the non-European Union migrants to Ireland.

It is important to note that the urban populations of Ireland’s cities are substantially lower than some might expect. After Dublin (1,661,185 in Greater Dublin), Ireland's largest cities are, Cork (~380,000 in Greater Cork), Limerick (93,321 incl. suburbs), Galway (71,983), Waterford (45,775 excluding near suburbs), Kilkenny (23,967 incl. suburbs) and (Culture Grams, 2006; 30).

The new economy of Ireland means new jobs, more than the Irish populace alone can carry. A total of 76,800 new jobs were created in Ireland in the 12 months to February this year (2007), according to the latest official numbers from the Central Statistics Office. This represented an increase in employment of 3.8%. The figures also show that unemployment rose by 3,600 over the same period. Foreign nationals accounted for almost 60% of the increase in employment and for a third of the increase in unemployment. “With almost 1,500 net new jobs per week being created in Ireland over the past 12 months, today's numbers from the CSO represent more good news about the economy The pace of jobs expansion may have eased back from the highs of last year but with almost 77 new jobs added, Ireland is still creating jobs proportionately twice as fast as the EU average The new jobs went in equal measure to men and to women, although a closer examination confirms a very high concentration in just broad sectors. Specifically a whopping 73% of all the new jobs for men were in the
construction sector, while 60% of the new jobs for women were in the public sector dominated areas of health, education, public administration, and defense. Non-Irish nationals filled 45,000 of the new jobs overall, or 60% of the total, and they now account for 30% of workers in hotels and restaurants, 13.5% of workers in construction, and 13.4% of factory workers. The figures also show that over one fifth of the increase in employment over the past year was accounted for by a growth in self employment. (http://direct.rte.ie/pda/news/2007/0515/1141049.html)

In the intersections of everyday living and competition for resources the Irish are facing the challenge of how to define and redefine themselves in conjunction with ingrained Irish values such as generosity, not only in the context of a globalizing Ireland but also in the face of an increasingly multinational Ireland.

The “Troubles” of 1969 to 1997 offer interesting insight into the Irish history of crystallizing and contesting ethnic and religious difference. Since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement the violence in Northern Ireland has been dissipating and in its wake the culture war on the highly contested border lands of Northern Ireland has escalated, with each side trying to ethnicize the contested border space in which they live and with which they strongly identify (Doonan, 2005).

Currently foreigners are staying and working in Ireland in previously unprecedented numbers. The blurring divide between outsider or tourist and Irish citizen or inhabitant is the impetus for a collective inward look and a preservation of Irishness in the face of an array of outside infiltrations. The equality value is once again being
stretched by the influx of asylum seekers. The Irish welcomed the persecuted Catholic Hungarians into their borders in the 1950’s only to push them out months later (Fanning, 2002; 91). The present policy in locating refugees from Africa is to locate them in a rural town in Ireland where they tend to be viewed as “Not one of Us” and therefore attempts to assimilate them into the community are problematic.

Ireland: from an emigrant nation to an immigrant nation

Despite the fundamental role migration and settlement have played in our modern genetic make up, history and consciousness, the process itself is replete with issues for not only the migrants but those they encounter (Spindler and Stockard; 2007, 286). The contemporary movement of people across national boundaries is a highly charged occurrence due to the profound effects felt by those migrating, those around the newly migrated and those the migrated may have left behind whether it be imagined community or those between whom constant communication flows (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994). About 150 million people live outside the country of their birth (Stalker 2001 in Spindler and Stockard; 2007, 286). Immigration and emigration are often dominant symbols for a society, (Ortner 1973 in Spindler and Stockard; 2007, 286) They are central concepts to how a population understands its identity. Ireland as well as Italy and Spain have historically considered themselves “emigrant nations”. Recently the Irish have had to reconceptualize themselves along with the United States, Canada and Australia as an immigrant nation. Immigrants, however needed and desired, pose challenges to the dominant notions of what constitutes the nation or the people. Immigrants are often the
focal point amidst heated controversies over self and cultural definition and value. Even in historically immigrant countries like the United States many residents view their national identity as under attack. Many have expressed concerns about the large numbers of immigrants in the United States endangering the common values that define the American way of life by bringing their plurality of differences, languages and histories (Brimlow; 1992, Geyer, 1996; Huntington 2004; Kadetsky 1994; Lamm and Imhoff 1985; Maharidge 1996; Tatalovich 1997 in Spindler and Stockard; 2007, 290).

In the mid- to late 1990s Ireland experienced a significant upsurge in immigration, although much of it was initially from neighboring EU member States. The country is therefore now one of net immigration. While this emerging trend was foreseen by experts some years beforehand, it has only recently begun to make an impact in terms of popular perceptions and, in particular, in media coverage and debate. Moreover, insofar as the issue of immigration has been featured at all, this has mainly been related to the arrival of asylum seekers. Although the year of 2001 witnessed some change, labor immigration and related long-term issues of integration did not feature to any significant extent in media reports. When analyzing the social, cultural and political issues linked to the phenomenon of immigration, the way in which the subject is covered in the media provides important indicators not only of the relevance of the phenomenon in a country, but also of how the issue is understood by politicians and presented to the public.

The construction of immigration as a problem of state policy, national cohesion, racial consciousness, and academic study has repeated itself with renewed vigor at each historical moment, following each geopolitical realignment, and with each shift in the organization of capital. Contemporary nation-states fret over the seemingly ceaseless
flows of postcolonial migrants whose ongoing transnational ties to homelands and nationalizing projects abroad call into question local national integration and unity. W.E.B. DuBois’ famous opening self-query, “How does it feel to be a problem?” (1989; 4 quoted in Silverstein, 2005; 2) provides a point of departure for populations struggling with “double consciousness” and structural inequality (Silverstein, 2005; 2). Silverstein concludes that regardless of the repeated critiques of race as scientific concept and analytic model, race remains viable as a social reality in the everyday lives of immigrants in Europe and this concept is inescapable and growing in vitality and volatility. Such an increase is due in part to racialized discourses in which immigrants are categorized along the “color line” (Ong, 1996 in Silverstein, 2005; 2). This racial categorization amounts to the construction of a new “savage slot” (Trouillot, 1991 in Silverstein, 2005; 2).

Foreigners in the Media

Asylum seekers and refugees have received a disproportionate amount of media coverage, compared to the larger numbers of foreign workers who are contributing to the economy. *The Irish Times*, Ireland’s unofficial national newspaper of reference and its website, www.ireland.com, which is consistently in the top three most visited Irish websites, has undertaken analysis on its references to foreigners in the 2000 year. A total of 490 significant items on immigration and related topics appeared during the course of the year. The six most common themes were first, asylum seekers; second racism, and neck and neck are themes of immigration, refugee integration and foreigners. The discourse illustrates the newness of and preoccupation with immigration, diversity and
the fears of racism in society. The coverage by the media tends to be reactionary and primarily concerned with short term issues. The official discourses promote multiculturalism but the positive values of diversity may be perceived by many as elitist and irrelevant unless they are within a broader, grounded, long-sited discourse (http://migration.ucc.ie/section2.htm, 2007; 8).

Even if one bears in mind the recent nature of net immigration flows into Ireland, it is legitimate to ask why they have not received greater attention in the media. A number of reasons may tentatively be put forward.

First, most labor migrants have been from other EU countries and have in general encountered relatively few difficulties. Secondly, while it is true that Ireland has no strong tradition of diversity, it is also true that the economic and social climate in recent years has not been unfavorable to the arrival of immigrant workers. The third and possibly most important reason is geopolitical. Ireland is a relatively isolated island off the north-west coast of the European continent, where the nature and scale of the changing nature of world migration has until recently appeared to be very remote (Fanning, 2002; 48).

None of this is to deny the reality of xenophobia and racism in Ireland – and still less is it suggested that such xenophobia and racism might not now become much stronger. But the historical conditions, until recently, did not provide the conditions for any significant popular awareness of such issues.

The analysis presented in Irish media therefore reflects a strong bias towards asylum and refugee issues. These were the first occasions for many Irish people to encounter foreigners in any number. The famous welcome of the Irish may not be
forthcoming for those who are not ‘white’. Throughout Ireland, people have contended that “we cannot be racist” because “there aren’t any black people here” (the black person’s presence is the cause of racism). Migrants, especially those of color, are perceived as a threat to the moral and political fabric of society. Racist attacks are on the rise in Ireland. There is pervasive denial that there are race problems in Ireland; they are simply not discussed. Now the opportunity presents itself (Wilson and Doonan, 2006).

On a bus ride through the town of Gort in western Ireland, I noted to the woman I was chatting with, “This doesn’t look like Ireland, with all the brown skin.” She replied “Ah, yes there are about 2,000 Brazilians living and working here now.” A week later, I spoke with a German who had attended school for a year in Ireland. She said that everyone is quite nice until you stay on a while and then comes the uneasiness of overstaying a welcome, and the sense that they want to ask, “You’re still here?” I met an older woman on O’Connell street in Limerick. She needed assistance crossing the street because, “my balance is not so good”. Once she established that I was not Polish but American we engaged in a ten minute conversation which mostly consisted of her asking questions and lamenting the nature of her changing Ireland. “There are so many nationalities in Ireland now which is okay if you are young, but if you are old like me, it is difficult, hard to get used to.” I had stated that I was from the U.S. but I would very much love to live in Ireland she quickly replied, “Oh it is good to stay where you are planted.” None of these examples are conclusive, but they hint at an underlying uneasiness with a foreign infiltration, especially among the older generation to whom change alters a world in which there remains the illusion of “one way”.

53
Globalization versus Unique Identity

“In an age seeking spiritual values Irishness has been cast as the hedonistic opposition of British rationalism, its official: ‘being green is the new black’ (Nagle, 2005; 566). Brendan O’Neil, a second generation Irish-Londoner, contends that the mere visibility of aspects of Irish popular culture such as theme bars, pop records and films in contemporary British society bears testimony to how much “they love us. They love us so much it almost makes you sick” (Nagle, 2005; 578).

Irishness has attained the form of a cultural capital. The commodified Celtic strain of Irishness persists in a form of primitivism. Global capitalism works not through the homogenization of “world cultures” but in the fetishization of ethnic difference. The Irish are imagined as young, eloquent, romantic, tuneful, mystical, funny and expert havers-of-a-good time. Irishness has in many ways become de-territorialized; all of us can be Irish if we put our minds to it. Irishness has become an ontological category (Nagle, 2005; 568).

Tony O’Reilly is a character in Irish history that Fintan O’Toole introduces as the ultimate symbol of the new Global Ireland; the Heinz chairman president and chief who is a global business tycoon and media mogul. O’Reilly was once was quoted as turning down political office because, “Politicians have too little power to satisfy” (O’Toole, 1996; 54-5). O’Toole gives him credit for branding Ireland, among other things. O’Reilly concluded that Waterford Crystal no longer had to be intricately associated with the place of Waterford, Ireland and thus what had once been interlinked with the history and scenery of a place had instead become a brand name freed from history and thus able to
be reproduced cheaply anywhere in the world (1996; 56).

Keohane and Kuhling contend that the culture industry as it currently exists on a
global level may suffocate Ireland’s particular cultural heritage. The Irish may be able to
succeed at globalization not simply by imitating its formulas of celebrity, quantity and
money value but by making a lasting contribution to the collective global cultural
heritage (2004).

In dialogue with Irish archaeologist Caimin O’Brien, after his presentation on Iron
Age Ireland and sacred landscapes, he emphasized to me the importance of Ireland’s
continual exposure and adaptation to outside influences. I believe he was weary of the
entrenched but often assumed traditional purity of the “Irish race”. He asserted that
perhaps Ireland is the most European of European nations for its inclusive past and
present.

Contemporary conceptualizations stress that cultures are constantly changing and
constantly contested (Hall, 1995; Crang, 1998). One could argue that globalization is not
new, and even the most remote places have long been subject to global influences and
connections; and Ireland is undoubtedly no exception. As Smyth (1997) indicates, the
fortunes of the West of Ireland have been connected with those of America’s east coast
cities since the late sixteenth century. Tourism, change and continuity is a theme which
recognizes that tourism can be a powerful tool in the re-assertion and re-negotiation of
local identity in the face of external pressures (Black, 1996, Cohen, 1988 and Kneafsey,
1995).

Anthropologist Adrian Peace is aware that the anthropology of Ireland may
already be difficult to distinguish from anthropology of the global system in which
transnational corporations exercise power (2001; 132). This interface of global and local opens up two major prospects. Firstly the global has an impact on the local and some indications of scale – commencing with the economic framework in which all social and political action must be situated. Some commodities become resources in this construction of identity, elaboration of domain difference, and/or celebration of community (2001; 133). Second, and most important is the deployment of findings of local studies to foil the pronouncements of macro-theorists on the power of the global system, as ‘Inveresk’s’ locality remains entirely and impressively suffused with meanings, as opposed to having lost them (2001;135.). The residents pride themselves on their ability to keep the political and economic forces out which undermine difference and impose sameness on small communities (2001; 3). Geographical isolation is no longer a protective factor in the globalization of the world in which the local becomes global and the global becomes local.

Oftentimes in Irish media one detects themes of reconciling contradictions between the global and the local by acknowledging an adherence and preference to the local, through the values of family, work community, and friendship. Keohane and Kuhling use the pop band Westlife and their press coverage in the Irish media to illustrate this tendency. The interviews reiterate that the boys miss their mammy’s and are tireless workers who, although they party in Hollywood, relocalize it in terms of being “a good laugh” or “good craic” but no substitute for going to the pub with my friends. There is nothing distinctly Irish about this band which in their estimation serves for an exact description of what it means to be Irish today (2004; 92).
Bantry Bay: an illustration of an Irish town commodified and stratified by a global corporation

Chris Eipper’s ethnography of Bantry Bay is a valuable illustration of the interplay between the local and the global in an Irish town. Few community studies have considered the importance of the localized interventions of transnational corporations; in this case specifically the impact of Gulf Oil’s transshipment terminal on local life in Bantry. The village of Bantry is located in southern Ireland, in County Cork, on Bantry Bay. The study illustrates the triad relationship of the Church, state and business sector as well as the degree to which the local ‘level’ cannot be analyzed in isolation from ‘national’ or ‘international’ ‘levels’, nor can it be treated as a microsystem within a macrosystem (Eipper, 1986; 8). The community is defined and redefined in relation to specific conflicts as well as perennial antagonisms, i.e. the way in which people become conscious of their conflicts and the process of resolution. Gulf oil began operations in Bantry Bay in 1966 and ceased operations in 1979 with the tragic explosion of a tanker. It was in 1966 that the population of Bantry passed 2500 in population. This was the first rise in population since the famine and was largely the result of the new found prosperity that Gulf Oil’s presence had brought (Eipper, 1986; 7).

The argument Eipper presents is that the contemporary nexus among Church, state, and business is in large measure an outcome of the reconstruction of power in the postcolonial period. This process, among other things, depended upon and helped foster the consciousness of all classes and ideologies concerned with a) economic development and the provision of a better standard of living, b) the nationalist heritage and electoral
representation through the dispensation of patronage, and c) an integralist Catholicism preoccupied with hierocratically safeguarding the spiritual and secular welfare of the nation. The main feature of this discussion is the way it serves to demonstrate the correspondence of the spheres of interest and influence in local affairs with the tripartite structure of national power, the Church, the state and business. The autonomy of these three were indicative of ruling class strength due to the harmonious relations among them in times of instability and transition (Eipper, 1986; 8).

One way to grasp processes of continuity and change as a unity- albeit a contradictory one- is to regard duplicative and transformative social processes as twin aspects of social reproduction in that the very mechanisms which work to duplicate existing reality in fact transform it. Class derives economically from material conditions, but it is also embedded culturally in a social habitat which provides the forms and emblems out of which the political finds ideological expression (Eipper, 1986;10).

Ireland became increasingly dependent upon investments by transnational corporations and upon transnational management of the nations economy through its membership in the European Economic Community. Gulf Oil was quite capable of subordinating all other objectives to its pursuit of profit. Class power and class consciousness were reinforced through the impersonally instituted authority of corporate property, of capital accumulation and monopolistic organization on an international scale. After the partitioning of Ireland, local business people tried to secure industry for the district. Consequently local prosperity became linked to an increasing control of the economy by foreign capital. When Ireland joined the European Economic Community in 1973, the push for modernization equated development with capitalism. In the case of the
farmer it meant drastic commercial development if he wanted his farming to remain viable (Eipper, 1986; 8).

Those in a position to benefit from corporatist solutions in the pursuit of state policy were those in a position to convert their strength in the market into influence over others within the state apparatus. This period witnessed the growth of the shopkeeper as creditor. Retailing had long been the main form of debt bondage. Some debts were paid off in land. Delivery of goods and messages imbued these patrons with a moral prestige and authority in the consciousnesses of the country people. These shop owners usually became big brokers because they had been small patrons. The people were subject to price inflation and wage deflation and they consequently became more and more indebted to the shop owners. Gulf Oil freed a large portion of the population from indirect or direct dependence upon the merchants for employment.

Class is the ever present friction of interests which characterize the structure of society and its institutions. It is a delineation of modes of social relationship; it possesses a fluency which evades analyses if not approached from a historical perspective. Class and power relations cannot be empirically defined one without the other, class relations can be characterized as a societal field of force. Class processes are constituted simultaneously and indivisibly as relations of power and consciousness (Eipper, 1986; 11).

The political and economic initiatives of the state had been designed to replace landlordism with a capital based on indigenous trade and manufacture. That program was compatible with the Catholic petty bourgeois becoming renters themselves. With extreme poverty came extreme willingness to compete for industrialists. The elites were able to
marshal business, government and popular support for their interests under the banner of
development, presenting their specific interests as general ones. The whole community
turned into a commodity to be purchased by incoming industrialists at their own price.
Bantry’s capitalists badly needed to consolidate and augment the foundations of the local
economy and the profit-making potential of their own businesses.

The weight of state capital funding was increasingly employed not to directly
assist indigenous enterprises but to lure big business, organized on a transcontinental
basis, to make their profits in areas drained of their own wealth-creating potential.

The changing nature of political parties and their relation to the state was an
important corollary of the growing power of capital. The business people, the politicians
and the clergy formed a power bloc tied by patronage to the mass of the population.
These three forces of patron exercised an enveloping but fragile hegemony over the rural
masses based upon personalistic bonds which linked material dependence to ideological
compliance. The rural folk would approach politicians even for things to which they were
rightfully entitled because it would most often speed up the process as well as bring them
to the attention of the man with pull. People were cynical about the impartiality of the
governmental system (Eipper, 1986; 83).

The Catholic Church managed to position itself above party politics. The Church
was viewed as guarantors of the Catholicity of the nation. All governments were
beholden to it but it remained untainted by unpopular policies. Politicians assiduously
sought to harmonize state policy with social teaching. The proper Catholic education was
essential not so much to inculcate particular secular ideologies as to mould character
structures and create ideological predispositions which were susceptible to clerical
influence. The growth of sexual permissiveness was correlated with the emergence of pluralism. This new found diversity of thought could have insidious, deleterious effects. It also weakened the Church’s authority to speak on secular issues. The traditional character of Irish Catholicism was also being eroded by economic forces. As religious practices were subtly pried from their roots in popular culture, for example the wake, unquestioning obedience to the Church declined. Ideological compliance was both a condition for and a creation of institutional domination. The Church’s relationship to the state reflected its stance toward capitalism: it was decidedly ambivalent, even contradictory. Unregulated capitalism was viewed as potentially harmful due to its potential for unnecessary exploitation and excessive profits. Yet the Church championed the spirit of enterprise. It lamented the decline of traditional values but urged industrial development. The Church provided the state with independent legitimization and cast itself as the guardian of the common interests and values of both the rulers and the ruled. The state in turn protected the church’s position and pursued policies compatible with its social teaching (Eipper, 1986; 95-6).

The Tourism Dynamic: a product approach toward Ireland

Anthropology has been recalcitrant in taking an interest in tourism. Anthropologists have long been focused on the discrete nature of particular “cultures”; therefore the phenomenon of tourism was out of place among their studies; the tourist was an occasional intruder upon the seeming isolation of Ireland’s subjects. Tourism is undoubtedly amiable to cultural interpretation as an endeavor of both international and
local significance; it is one of the most culturally intimate of modern industries. As consumers we have become accustomed to a detached relationship with the people who supply our products. Tourism, however, evokes intimate encounters between customers and the producers of their products. Few other occasions of human encounter provide such a rich gamut of opportunities of exchange between people of oftentimes strikingly different backgrounds. Besides a few early contributions, such as Valene Smith’s (1989) Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism, first published in 1977, major work in the Anthropology of Tourism has occurred only in the last decade.

James Clifford (1997) approached travel and tourism as subjects of serious anthropological inquiry. He views tourism as one manifestation of a global trend toward ever-expanding modes of human displacement. The boundaries between host and guest, often expressed in terms of a variety of privileges that are normally associated with having opportunity to travel, become blurred in this larger context of displacement, in which becoming unsettled in one way or another seems to have become commonplace. Erve Chambers expounds upon travel as a fundamental part of the human condition concluding that displacement is not unique to modernity. Mary Helms (1988) argues for a multifactorial motivation for travel which is dominated by a quest for knowledge rather than wealth (Chambers; 2000, 3-5). Josiah Tucker’s 1757 publication Instructions for Travellers reports that the most noble motivation for travel, though not the most prevailing, is the acquisition of an “enlarged and impartial view of men and things which no single country can afford” (cited in Chambers; 2000, vii). The Irish people have been a people of migration and the enlarging of their perspectives has borne witness in their openness to travel and their maintained correspondence with loved ones elsewhere.
Tourism within Ireland’s borders has undoubtedly enriched her people’s understanding of the other and the appreciation for the other is a mutually agreeable one. The relationship between tourist and host can be a particularly intimate one, especially in countries such as Ireland that embrace their tourists.

Ireland has opened her arms to tourists and utilized her resources to ensure that this remains a thriving industry. "Nobody is underestimating the value of the EU Objective 1 funding which the Irish received. But they've also done an amazing job in retaining that funding. The key point is, though, that the Irish government recognizes that tourism is a major employer, and has invested in it for the last 20 years. The Minister for Tourism is in the Irish Cabinet, and their marketing budget is three times the size of Scotland's.

The centrality of Dublin for employment is a magnet for Irish youth, and this results in a capital with a predominantly youthful profile that reinforces its fashionability and vibrancy in areas such as music and style. The international growth in Irish pubs has undoubtedly acted as a very effective "soft sell" for the whole country, as have the catalogue of films located for production in Ireland because of tax incentives offered (Copyright CMP Information Ltd. Jan 20, 2003 TTG reporters).

Ireland, in pursuit of retaining and generating tourists’ dollars, has approached itself as a product to be consumed. Ireland's struggling operators have been warned not to ignore tourists' complaints about value for money. Eamonn McKeon, chairman of the CERT (tourism based) training agency, said: "We would be foolish to ignore visitors' requests for more variety and value for money."

Ireland has been fighting an uphill battle to win back the tourists lost after
September 11 and the foot-and-mouth crisis. Tourism bosses do not expect a return this year to the record earnings and numbers achieved in 2000. But despite gripes about the food, most tourists were happy with their holiday experience, with 97 per cent saying they would recommend Ireland as a destination. But industry leaders fear that selling point could be eroded as the euro gains in strength. "It is expensive and will remain expensive," he said. "Ireland made the choice to be an up market destination. “We pay our staff well and jobs are mostly permanent - you can't have that and cheap tourism (Copyright CMP Information Ltd. Jan 20, 2003 TTG reporters).”

Concerns have also been raised regarding Ireland’s cost competitiveness as a tourism destination. The price transparency afforded by the euro has shown Ireland to be the second most expensive country in the euro-zone, after Finland. Strong dollar and sterling exchange rates have undoubtedly helped to limit the potential negative impact on revenue from overseas visitors, but this is unlikely to continue in the long term (Copyright CMP Information Ltd. Jan 20, 2003 TTG reporters).

The archetypal Ireland is the scenery of the rugged west coast. These archetypal dwellings became the point of origin of an independent Irish State. The west coast is still deemed a place of myth and magic, where the old verities remain true (O'Toole, 1996; 111). The independence movement idealized this way of rugged, bare bones existence and despised the towns of Ireland as mean and perverse. The difficulty of the Irish to imagine urban life, which they found to be closely associated with the English way of life, subsequently robbed the Irish of much of their capacity to embrace urban dwelling emigrants (1996; 165). In the nineteen sixties dichotomous views existed of Ireland being a place of stasis and perhaps claustrophobia and America a place of terrible anonymity
and impermanence (O’Toole, 1996; 172).

According to O’Toole, tourism has completed and commodified the process of Romanticism and Celticism that began in the nineteenth century (1996; 159). In many parts of Ireland the Irish have thrived on the tourist dollar and have been famously hospitable. The reality of Ireland today is one of economic expansion and alteration which has in reality been a process of estrangement in which home has become as unfamiliar as abroad. The rapid changes have induced a sense of internal exile in which the Irish feel less and less at home, or perhaps as though home has become less real or authentic (1996;173).

Tourism is a major industry in the Republic of Ireland; the number of visitors rose from 2.5 million in 1990 to 5 million in 1996. European Union funds and public and private sector investments, totaling 388.84 million ECU during the period 1989-1993, have gone to improve infrastructure, roads, and accommodations and have raised the number of visitor attractions. Preliminary results for 2006 suggest that 8.8 million visitors will have come, an increase of 8.5% over 2005, according to Tourism Ireland. In 2007 Tourism Ireland aims to attract over nine million visitors to Ireland and gain a significant share of the world and European market (Tourism Ireland).

A recent development in Irish tourism has been the explosion in cultural or heritage tourism (Duffy, 1994; Mullane, 1994, McManus, 1997 in Kneafsey, nd). This is part of a broader European trend towards the conversion of former production spaces into spaces of consumption. Cultural tourism in Ireland is by no means restricted to the ‘high culture’ artifacts. Coalmines are transformed into museums, factories become visitor centers and the Irish countryside becomes leisure landscape (Cloke, 1993 in Kneafsey,
nd). In Ireland, heritage attractions such as historic houses, interpretive centers and parks and monuments are only a few of the focuses of cultural tourism. The people of Ireland and their lifestyles are promoted as a vital component of the tourism product. Ireland’s foremost air carrier Aer Lingus (1998) claims that “Irish hospitality begins in the air”, and Irish Ferries (1998) emphasize the warmth of their staff: “Have you heard the one about the unfriendly Irishman? Neither have we.” Travel articles emphasize the Irish friendly nature; they always make time to “chat on a street corner” or “meet new friends over a pint” (Geographical, 1998 in Kneafsey, nd.). The expected participation of the people of Ireland in these bottom up development schemes to promote tourism has been viewed as a means of regenerating crumbling senses of place identity and providing communities with “the occasion for a new self-reflection: a cultural examination of conscience (Feehan, 1992 in Kneafsey, nd). The people who live in tourist destinations themselves become part of the tourist product, and the people themselves become ingrained with tourist expectations.

I will assert that Ireland’s tourist appeal may be compromised given the likelihood that some of the most other-worldly and appealing aspects of Irish character and values are changing or diminishing. It is essential to note that from the historical perspective tourism is only one relatively recent aspect of globalization and thus, only one of the main processes which may potentially contribute to the homogenization of unique place identities (Kneafsey, nd) As proposed by Oaks (1995), tourism should, therefore, be considered just another process through which localized identities are continually reconstructed. Tourism can be viewed as a tool for the re-assertion and re-assessment of local identities in the face of external pressure. Diversity and difference can be
maintained in the process of negotiating the unique ways in which global-local relations are negotiated within particular places (Cohen, 1988 and Black, 1996). Ireland has long experienced a commodification process or an essentialization process of what it means to be Irish. The heritage industry is experiencing what some would call an unholy alliance with the tourism industry. The complex experience of what it means to be Irish yesterday and today can be successfully expressed in the form of a tourist attraction, but the second measure of success will be its effect upon the community at large and the sense of mutual place identity and benefit that it reinforces or disintegrates. I will assert that the predominant threat to the tourism industry is the accelerated process of capitalistic, materialistic pursuits within the realm of tourism and the society at large and most specifically as a result of the inequitable access to the benefits of this commodification process which will inextricably alter and redefine local inhabitants’ relations to one another.

The pursuit of profit, the commodification of Irish hospitality which has traditionally been so freely given, may instead became an exchange of the tourist dollar for a piece of the Irish experience and tourist trinkets in place of an authentic connection with the people and their connection with the land. Thus, the heightened sense of capitalist value will likely prompt the Irish concern for equity in exchange with the outside world. The value of generosity and hospitality will likely diminish and the value of equity with ones neighbors will be seriously damaged as those with capital and means will continue to profit more than their neighbor. The result of this success will further accelerate the remolding process of the traditional Irish value of egalitarianism into an increasingly stratified society.
Tourism images of Mayo draw upon the romanticism associated with the west of Ireland to claim that this county is the most Irish in Ireland. A French language brochure asks, “Which is the only region of Ireland which is more Irish than Ireland?” The answer, “Mayo, naturally.” A visit to Mayo is described as a “journey into an historic past”, to “the final frontier of beauty and hospitality”. One of the county’s chief attractions is the “spontaneous hospitality of a caring people” who are “renowned the world over for their warm and hospitable nature” and who will offer the visitor a “warm welcome”. In the words of the then minister for tourism, a resident and political representative for County Mayo, “the magic of Mayo lies chiefly in the people you will meet during your stay” (‘aMayozing brochure’, 1995). The Moy valley brochure similarly reflects the idea that “it is the warmth of the people that make Moy Valley the Emerald that is Ireland.”

Upholding Core Tourist Values: the Internalized Branding of Ireland

Ireland has been a country that has successfully created an image as spirited rough and tumble fighters, the lovable underdog whose strong brand identity has flourished in the face of a persistent, oppressive enemy. The branding of products internally as “Irish”, or “traditional Irish” contributes to the strength of this brand identity despite the tenuous nature of authenticity involved in some of these claims. The “made in Ireland” label is a reinforcement of a material manifestation of a positive branding image and oftentimes makes goods more readily accepted in distant markets (www.brandchannel.com/images/papers/country_Branding.pdf).

Increasing product parity and substitutability of tourism destinations has
underscored the need for destinations to create a unique identity in order to differentiate themselves from competitors. In this regard, branding is thought to be one of the most effective tools available to marketers. Ireland is widely acknowledged in branding literature as a successfully branded destination and, critically, is thought to possess high emotional pull and celebrity value. Ireland's international appeal as a tourism destination has since Victorian times been based on its beautiful scenery and welcoming people since. Heritage and culture, and the fact that Ireland’s relaxed pace is seen as a world apart from modern society, also form an important part of Ireland's attraction. Ireland has had the same basic campaigns for decades and while marketing directors and executives change the message remains constant. The steady increase in visitor numbers from France to Ireland between the 1970s and the latter half of the 1990s is but one measure of the appeal of this approach and points to a considerable understanding of the target market among those responsible for selling Ireland as a destination (Kneafsey, nd).

Ireland’s appeal has long been her capacity to return the urban visitor to a simple, rural, unspoiled land where the people are so welcoming that they account for a great deal of the pleasure to be had in this escape destination. In many ways this is no longer consistent with the Ireland of today. This is a challenge which has been encountered by many destinations which have depended on old-fashioned, rural imagery in order to promote tourism while simultaneously attempting to attract investment from abroad. Nevertheless, it is recognized that such inconsistencies “for the very reason that they exist in the real world, can be resolved, harmonized and believably communicated in a country's branding programme” (Kneafsey, nd.; 30). The answer may lie in the clever manipulation of existing stereotypes whereby the clichéd identity is given greater
complexity and depth through efficient branding. This might also prove to be an effective method of “internal” branding; that is, getting the general public to support and “live” the brand. For example, the Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC) has responded to growing concerns over the erosion of Ireland's core values (welcoming people and magnificent scenery) by launching the 'People and Place' program. The objective of this initiative is to make people (directly or indirectly) connected with tourism more aware of what differentiates Ireland from competing destinations and to encourage them to be more proactive in protecting those core values (Kneafsey, nd.; 30).

Moya Kneafsey explores the changes that the tourist industry is making to the rural landscape of Ireland, changes which entail commodifying and altering the local place identity. The greatest impact is felt not in the landscape but in the changing relations of the inhabitants who have differential access to the wealth, identity and sense of ownership of local projects. These inhabitants sometimes unwillingly become a part of the tourist product. O’Connor (1993; 73) asserts that one of the implications of this process is that the “Irish people become inscribed within tourist expectations. Tourists expect a certain type of behavior and are disappointed if these expectations are not met.” However, as Bouissevain (1996) relays, communities are capable of utilizing their cultural resources while simultaneously preserving spaces of cultural autonomy which remain inaccessible to tourist expectations. Nevertheless the tourist industry may seek to promote un-complicated, readily consumable images of Ireland. Yet, these types of constructions can co-exist alongside deeply rooted expressions of place identity without being trivialized by them. It is broadly agreed that tourism has an impact on place identities. What is in dispute is the nature of that impact. Some subscribe to the notion
that tourism constructs or reconstructs place identities and plays a significant role in providing a native self image (O’Connor, 1993 Urry, 1990; 1995). A second theme is that tourism destroys unique place identities. MacCannell (1992) writes that commodification leads to the death of third-world and ethnic cultures and the destruction of authenticity. Similarly, authors such as Greenwood (1989) and Mason (1996) argue that tourism results in the ‘destruction’ or ‘prostitution’ of once unique cultures. Byrne et al. (1993) express the feeling that in adapting to tourism, hosts in Connemara conform to the expectations of visitors from more politically and economically powerful cultures. In the process unique cultural identities are eroded: “When indigenous inhabitants of places like the West of Ireland gradually abandon local criteria regulating forms of reasonable thought and feeling, they will have become much more similar to people everywhere else.” Critics of the rapidly developed heritage industry in Ireland have accused it, among other things, of creating ‘twee’ (McDonald, Irish Times, 22/9/92 in Kneafsey), ‘jumbled’, ‘folksy’(Busted, 1992 in Kneafsey) ‘stereotypical’, ‘nostalgic’ and ‘biased’ (Mullane, 1994) images of Ireland and the Irish. A dominant theme in the criticisms of heritage centers is that they contribute to the “trinketisation”, commercialization and trivialization of culture. These criticisms of the heritage industry can be viewed as a part of the broader vision of tourism as a symptom of the homogenizing onslaught of global capitalism. The indigenous lose their distinctive local flavor in an increasingly bland world of MacDonald’s and Coca-Cola consumption.

In 2006 I visited the GlencolumbCille visitor’s center which used to be the heart of a small community and a stop along a popular pilgrimage or “station” in the far reaches of the Northwest of the Republic of Ireland. Being there and reading about its history and
soaking in the feeling of the place was certainly an authentic glimpse into Ireland’s past and present day pilgrimages. The visitor center was rooted in a strong pre-existing sense of place and connection with the land that was minimally invasive to the landscape and predominantly consisted of preserved or reconstructed period dwellings, appropriately furnished. Today this modest heritage center is the primary means of economy for this remote Irish town.

On May 23, 2006 I met a man on the street corner, in Dingle Town, Ireland; he was waiting for the All-Ireland bike tour to pass through town. He had wind weathered, reddened skin, a robust nose, a quick jovial demeanor and was wearing a tee shirt when I hoped to be wearing much more than the fleece jacket and woolen scarf I had on. It was not his custom to ‘engage in a chat with a foreigner’; after experiences of the past 35 years he had “failed to see the point”; “Millions of people come through and you’ll never see them again”; “I wouldn’t normally be waiting on the street corner, and I won’t be waiting long.” “It was certainly not my intention to be on the street corner chatting up the ladies, but that is just what I am doing.”

There were times I felt as though I had very little control over the direction and flow of the conversation. Perhaps he had determined, as had I, that he was by far the more interesting of the two of us. I was conversation starved. I felt as though when I entered Ireland I had entered a less than human liminal sort of mommy vortex. I felt ambiguous and perhaps this total stranger was so frank and honest not only because he was Irish but also because I was one so easily slotted into a preconceived notion of “foreigner.” Perhaps this ambiguous, traveling with a toddler disposition that had so far left me feeling quite invisible except during awkward stroller maneuverings or tantrums
also made me a non-threatening, inconsequential entity. I sensed in him uneasiness about his role or business with the tourist. As a folk musician he encountered so many and I wonder now how he identified himself at present; I wonder how the years had changed his perception of himself with the foreigner. Had he once felt responsible for hosting and now more responsible for meeting his own needs?

If the weather had not been a return to winter perhaps I would not have felt so downcast. The conversation with this gentleman, which I greatly enjoyed, lasted a good fifteen minutes. He relayed that even a small town like Dingle, with so many tourists coming through, was quite “time is money minded”. Twenty five or fifteen years ago he would have engaged the foreigner in conversation and being a traditional folk singer he says, “I’m sure I would have ample opportunity but now I would not have any part of their ‘offers.’” He refused to clarify and said he would leave me to my imagination. He had once accepted an offer to live with a German woman and earn his keep by playing music, an offer that felt “right-ish,” a phrase he must have felt sounded fitting as he kept repeating it. The German experience had turned out to be a fairly good one, but one he would not repeat.

After our conversation, I felt quite sad; had Irish identity with mass tourism crystallized into this guarded thing with rigid lines and borders? Was my overarching feeling of isolation in a place I had touted just a week earlier as “a place where I would find it impossible to feel alone” partially due to a fluctuation in the collective Irish Identity as the seat of hospitality? Or perhaps traveling with a young child completely altered the experience altogether.
Did the jovial Dingle gentleman live with the pervasive sense that he was somewhat of a tourist commodity, entertainment, hospitality and a connection for countless tourists who simply would never be back? I have little doubt that he gave considerably in his encounters. The conversation that he provided for me was something that I will cherish for as long as I can remember it, long after Gaia has outgrown the boots I bought her in the corner store in front of which we spoke. It is the Irish themselves and their honest conviviality which most tourists seek to consume. The Irish are no longer as dependent on the tourist dollar as they once were and the constant tourist gaze and tourist desire for connection is perhaps transformed as a time burden when time is money and economic opportunities are plentiful. The Irish have plentiful resources to share and more than would be entrusted in the random encounter. But as he himself had said, it was contingent upon trust, a trust the Irish have toward the world that may very well be perilously compromised.

Tourism and Contested Spaces

Adrian Peace’s examination of the heavily contested heritage sight at the base of Mount Mullaghmore is an excellent example of two paradigms crystallized in opposition to one another. The proposed construction of a heritage center highlighted the Irish diversity within a single region. The Irish avoid neat categorization and can seldom be identified as one type with one clear purpose. One must account for the remnants of a capitalist fueled bourgeois good ole boy system in which those few with capital view land as capital and also for those who view particular land as aesthetic and sacred space, off-
limits to tourist comodification and consumption. The concept of contested spaces has analytic potential because it directly addresses social conflicts that are specifically located. Low and Lawrence-Zuniga have defined contested spaces as “geographical locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power” (Peace, 2005; 495). While anthropologists most often study populations which have little power in the Marxist sense, they have avenues and fields of power to which they respond, often in unique and ingenious ways. To claim place or appropriate space requires a fundamental recognition of power distribution and subsequent ingenuity in “mobilizing all available economic and social capital to contest it” (Peace, 2005; 495). More is usually at stake in these conflicts than economic and political resources. This type of conflict usually brings cultural and ideological forces which are determinant of social workings but which may have previously been hidden or unarticulated (Peace, 2005; 496). Spaces are contested because they concretize these fundamental yet unexamined ideological and social frameworks that structure practice. This is why in the instance of contested space conflict lasts much longer than what seems warranted and why when the issue has been “settled” there can be no return to the status quo when unity was assumed and unquestioned.

Ireland is a hotbed for this form of transformative social change where major disputes over iconic places and symbolic spaces are met with appeals for development and economic improvements. The Irish countryside has thus been in many ways a perennial site of struggle. Opinions that were previously determined to be of little consequence have developed momentum and captivated many who became bound up
with the fate of places and spaces. These development proposals have largely been without precedent by virtue of being products of the global economy (Peace, 2005; 496).

Those in opposition to the Mount Mullaghmore proposal (initially the Burren Action Group (BAG) were residents from different parts of County Clare) were well endowed with middle-class cultural capital which they mobilized to detail in technical and scientific terms the likely damage to the local ecology that the center would create. Since the major capital investment was to come from the EU (which Ireland joined in 1974 and which had long participated in attempts to develop the west of Ireland), they sought to create international pressure on the proposal. BAG’s core members were mostly locally born but well-traveled and internationally minded. This group was very heterogeneous; some were former tourists who had decided to settle in the pristine region, some were returning to Ireland after the pursuit of a career abroad to raise their children in this new, safer, and less polluted environment. BAG’s chief claims focused on the aesthetic, intangible, and sensuous qualities that made Mullaghmore an exceptional and fragile landscape, a place of history, mystery, spirituality and magic (2005; 501). The commodification of Mullaghmore for the masses would constitute “a desecration” (2005; 502).

In the case of Mullaghmore the Irish state proposed to commodify Mullaghmore Mountain in the hopes of transforming it from its stark, natural beauty to a place for mass tourism. Quickly, open conflict and enmity raged between families, neighbors and friends. All the residents became quickly aware of the critical part played in their conflict by the unequal access to power in Irish society (2005; 497).

Roughly two decades prior to the announcement of the proposed development
plan the political economy and the political culture of the West had dramatically changed. The self-employed petit bourgeoisie who previously dominated the rural order were surrounded by newcomers who were characterized by their spatial and social mobility, a broad cultural awareness and heightened political consciousness, especially in contrast to those who had never been away. These ‘blow-ins’ are characterized by their lack of social cohesion, diversity and fragmentation (2005; 506). What united them was their distinctly modern “structure of feeling”. It was these groups’ shared concern about environmental pollution, environmental degradation, and lack of respect shown for the environment elsewhere which compelled them to come back to the west or out of environmentally degraded contexts (2005; 506).

Those in favor of the proposal were a network of local farmers and businessmen who were well connected to regional branches of the Irish Farmers Association, the Gaelic Athletic Association and Fianna Fail. These institutions are pillars of conservative petit bourgeois mentality throughout Ireland and connections among them are very strong. All are committed to the conservative capitalist dogma in which the state aids the most favorable economic and political conditions for the independent owners of small to medium-sized property. The proponents viewed Mullaghmore as land, as opposed to a landscape. The land should be turned to economic advantage, just as they had labored daily on their land to exact maximum profits. The land had no inherent worth: it acquired value from the labor and capital that people invested in it (Peace, 2005; 499).

A respondent to Kneafsey’s study of the Foxford Mill tourism center, in County Mayo, analyzed the involvement of the community with the heritage center in terms of power relations, “I think what has happened is this sense of ‘we’ve got to get it all’. No,
you can’t. A community thing – you can’t – you’ve got to spread it around… and everyone is struggling for power and it doesn’t work.” The rivalries and economic tension of Foxford are intensified by the personal nature of the relationships given the small size of the community. The process of commodification in this instance was strongly hindered by the “begrudger”. Local people in this region have had a great deal of resistance to developments. The chief executive of the Western Development Partnership Board wrote that “no other single factor impedes the bottom up development and expression of communities more than the national pastime of begrudgery.” This supports the explanation of why it has predominantly been newcomers, unhindered by previous antagonisms or expectations, who are involved in the commodification efforts in Foxford (Kneafsey, nd.; 195).

Commodification versus connection with the land, lore and symbol

The interpretation of the Irish landscape has undergone considerable revision by various segments of the population. In the 1980’s Irish young people found themselves in constant motion, in and out of Ireland as the world economy made them in demand and then surplus. Irish writers of this time began to reflect quite directly that Ireland was a set of questions and contests as opposed to the past when she was a landscape to be read (O’Toole, 1996; 178).

The landscape has always struck me as a character in its own right. The weather is moody and temperamental, the cliff-laden shores are dramatic and inspire reflection.

The importance and connection with the land, lore and symbol of the past is
undergoing challenges from a capitalistic appraisal of land which commodifies the land and in doing so may lend its self to perpetuating an estrangement or disconnection. The capitalistic mindset is producing unease that Ireland is becoming infiltrated and at the same time being over-consumed. Thus in the process of commodification the landscape becomes less enjoyable and stripped of her authenticity. In the construction and buying up of land for bungalows, the landscape becomes altered and the non-local inhabitants are often are perceived as less connected with the land, every rock and hillock nameless as opposed to named and lore-inspiring (Taylor, 1995; 6). The folk stories of a region express themes of Irishness, or local identity defined in terms of a proper relation to the landscape. Historically local evil could be sweepingly attributed to a disruption of the local relation to the land.

The unifying themes of language and landscape and the value of both are particularly sharp in Ireland. Memories of both a personal and collective nature are attached to nearly every rock and hillock. The Irish monk/pilgrim/saint is indissolubly associated with the landscape; sharing its ambivalence and bouts of temper he is a representation of not only goodness but also power (Taylor, 1995; 34). He is the shaman of a pastoral folk who themselves moved and left indelible impressions on the landscape. The sixth century saint Columcille is one holy man among many who is memorialized by his lasting association with numerous features of the landscape. In 1607 the Gaelic chieftaincy ended as power over the land went to the British. In 1703 penal legislation was focused on folk religion and by the mid seventeenth century folk religious gatherings known as “patterns” incurred a fine. Patterns at the wells continued even when the Catholic Bishops began to oppose holy well pilgrimages with the late 1700’s war on
superstition. The assemblies at the wells declined with the massive death and emigration rates caused by the famine and the strengthening presence and power of the bourgeoisie-connected clergy who encouraged a civilizing Catholicism that moved the sacred landscape to the church doors and encouraged the transfer of powerful healing cures from the landscape to material, church sanctioned items, primarily the sacrament. It was the 1840’s famine that secured the breaking up of the small hamlets of related households that formed the basic element of the social fabric. The primary landlord in the area of Connolly was persuaded that this arrangement of land was responsible for every Irish vice. Thus he sectioned up the land into squares and the locals were forced to comply. Folk stories describe a land that is under attack, yet resists disenchantment and retaliates at those who seek to alter or defile it; the antagonist in these stories is always the foreigner/protestant/ \textit{an Ghall}. Unfortunately this attitude is found all over the world today and Ireland is no exception. I asked a Sligo man what he thought about all the foreigners. “Oh we hate them”, he spat out before I could even finish asking properly, “Like the Scots Protestants, you can’t reason with them, they are like a more primitive sort of man”.

V. CONCLUSION

Authenticity

Authenticity has been defined by anthropologist Erve Chambers as being determined primarily by a people’s ability to choose for themselves those elements of stability and change which make their lives meaningful. He argues that authenticity is possible under the conditions of modernity. The authentic is no less attainable than it was
in the past and the present is no less real than the past. Authenticity, Chambers argues, is contingent upon people having significant control over their affairs, to the extent that they actively participate in determining how changes occur in their social settings (2000, 99). That is, authenticity is directly correlated with a community’s desires and the unfettered ability to bring those desires to fruition even if the desires result in what might appear to be a destruction of traditional culture or a reinvention of culture that exploits a community’s image in a stereotypical manner for profit.

The rise of capitalist economies has been leading to an ever broadening of commodification— a process whereby goods and services that were once considered to be outside the realm of direct economic value and exchange are transformed into commodities that can be bought and sold. Modern tourism provides a multitude of examples of this process. Parks and restrooms in highly touristed areas now require a fee for admission. Local performances and festivals, places and sites associated with a people’s heritage and culture have become a major proportion of the tourism industry.

Dean MacCannell (1989) has noted that tourism not only serves as a product of modernity but also conversely performs as a contrast to the values of “modern” life, particularly in its devotion to ideals of tradition and authenticity. MacCannell contends that tourism has come to embody a protest against the constraints and ideologies of the modern condition; it is a leisured search for other traditions that are untouched by modern influences and a longing for a sense of authenticity through which the tourist might briefly escape the alienation of the industrial age. People whose reality is perceived as traditional, such as those in some areas of western Ireland, do not always view themselves in these terms, at least not until the experience of tourism catches up with
them and encourages them to do so. Anthropological accounts exist of cultural expressions bolstering feelings of authenticity in the local community (see Regina Bendix’s 1989 account of a Swiss village) as well as deteriorating or falsifying it (see Davydd Greenwood’s 1989 account of a Basque festival in Spain).

Most Marxist interpretations, such as MacCannell’s, presuppose that capitalist ideologies have deprived modern and modernizing peoples of any true claim to authenticity, to realness, and ultimately to control over the modes of production that provide them with at least the possibility of autonomous social action. This approach assumes greater claims to authenticity for precapitalist societies (Chambers; 2000, 96). Examples of invented traditions associated with tourism abound. Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (1983) argue that traditions are always and continually being reinvented; thus, agency informs the construction of traditions.

Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin (1984) have contended that our tendency to judge authenticity in terms of the faithfulness or accuracy by which traditions are passed down from one generation to another fails to account for the ways in which traditions serve human communities. Traditions are invariably defined in the present and reinterpreted to meet the ideological needs of the living. They argue that the invention, appropriation, and reconstruction of tradition are not a consequence of modernity, but a necessary condition for the construction of all human culture. Modernity and capitalism are not responsible for creating these mechanisms, only speeding them up and consequently making them more transparent. Handler argues that this transparency renders previously implicit cultural traditions more explicit, making it increasingly difficult to perceive modern tourist images as being authentic. Handler joins MacCannell
in asserting the virtual impossibility of achieving a sense of authenticity in modern times.

The search for authenticity via proper relationship with the land is a strong current in the psyche of the Irish throughout history to this present day. It was and remains the case that contestations of the sacred spaces and places have divided and identified the people of Ireland. The current infiltration of foreigners seems to echo age-old fears of the degradation of authenticity and right relationship with the land that is richly imbibed with history and magic that the foreigner will not fully comprehend. The commodification of this sacred space in an attempt to appeal to the tourist masses can be done in a way that harms or degrades the space, as in the case of Mullaghmore; or the community itself which may feel degraded as it is sold to the highest bidder whose concern is solely for profit, as in Bantry Bay. The town of Gort has become known as “little Brazil” as the small community grapples with ways to integrate a large proportion of economically contributing foreigners into their community. The foreigner is becoming more and more common and the curiosity of the Irish toward the other is diminishing from constant exposure and perhaps at times infiltration. Remote regions with little industry such as Glencollumbcille exploit their natural beauty and historic culture to sustain a meager population with tourism. Tourism in Foxford is dividing the residents who have differential access to the monetary benefits and ownership over the cultural monuments of their region. Dublin is becoming busier and more impersonal. Dingle Town, which would once roll out the welcome wagon to the tourist, can now hardly be bothered: “time is money”. In many parts of Ireland now, yes, time is money, and investing in tourists who may never return and never reciprocate is not after all a very wise investment of time or money. The value shift in five years’ time is enough to slap the visitor in the face. It
feels so much like home and the famous “failte” or welcome may soon be omitted from tourist brochures altogether. Soon the rugged pristine west coast of Ireland may stand alone as the boasted remarkable aspect of Ireland. Ireland comprises thousands of sites of anthropological interest and numerous communities deal locally with globalization in their back yards. The rapid nature of change presents many and varied faces, but what is common to all are the changes that leave hardly a stone of this beautiful land unturned.

Some religious segments become very progressive and consequently well respected by large subgroups of the population. The admonitions of the Reverend W. Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross and others like him may assist in directing the Irish away from exclusionary tendencies through tenacious creed of inclusion for the weak and vulnerable segments of the population. “More than the vagaries of economic fluctuations or political stability or even international factors over which we have no control, I believe the greatest danger to what has been achieved comes from within, from ourselves. What we have attained is most jeopardized by taking it for granted; by assuming it’s a right; by greed, by apathy or by unfettered individualism” (Sermons, Speeches and Press Release Statements). The internalizing of capitalistic values is dramatically altering the values of the Irish populace, her embodiment of community and equality in poverty, and her exclusivity of exclusivity. Furthermore, the commodification of Ireland has dramatically altered the perception of an authentic Ireland and the famous welcome once integral to the tourist experience in Ireland. In a time of accelerated globalization-related change, Ireland is undergoing what to many feels like overnight transformation. Although immigration may become the scapegoat for the ills of modern Ireland, Ireland will rise to the challenges of becoming a pluralistic society, having the
strengths necessary, not only in philosophical temperament, but also in her cornerstone values of equality and generosity. This can only be achieved by an acknowledgement of the xenophobia and racial profiling of immigrants that so easily slots them into “other” status. It is time for the famous Irish art of conversation to be employed to embrace modern Ireland and this hybridization of lifeways that at first glance may induce feelings of estrangement in one’s own land. This estrangement cannot be blamed on one of the many consequences of the real agent. Economic success in capitalism will bring external changes. Ireland may look a little less like previous images of Ireland and undoubtedly the internalization of capitalistic values is the driving force behind the real danger of all this change, - that Ireland is feeling and acting like someplace else. This ‘someplace else’ is a hybridization of Ireland and her influences. Nonetheless, I am looking to Ireland for her ability to connect meaningfully to all these agents of change and to converse about multinationals but more importantly to converse about capitalism and the values that are oftentimes traded for efficiency mindedness. The dialogue in Ireland can most effectively be steered in this direction if this hybridization of capitalism is to be a capitalism whose indifference to inequality, irreverence for generosity, neglect of community and exploitation of the weak is molded into a conscionable system. This is the real determinant for the future quality of Irish life. No matter what the fluctuations of the market are, it is the values that capitalism brings that will remain whether prosperity comes or goes.
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