Issues   Irish Marketing Review

2009-01-01

Irish Marketing Review, Vol. 20, no. 2, 2009

Aidan O'Driscoll

Follow this and additional works at: https://arrow.tudublin.ie/jouimriss

Part of the Marketing Commons

IRISH MARKETING REVIEW

Special issue on FINDING AN IRISH VOICE: REFLECTIONS ON CELTIC CONSUMER SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Edited by ALAN BRADSHAW, PIERRE MCDONAGH & DAVID MARSHALL

The Marketing Institute

Marketing House
South County Business Park
Dublin 18

Telephone: +353-1-2952355
Fax: +353-1-2952453
E-mail: info@mii.ie
Website: www.mii.ie

Welcome to this issue of *Irish Marketing Review*, Ireland's major scholarly marketing publication.

The Marketing Institute has been to the fore in championing the professional discipline of marketing in Ireland for over 40 years, and we see this publication as an important contribution to the ongoing development of marketing in Ireland.

The Marketing Institute is the national professional body for marketing people in Ireland, offering membership, qualifications and training.

Established in 1962, the Institute today operates from our own full facilities headquarters in Dublin. Our 3,500 members are located all over the island of Ireland, drawn from all business sectors. We are internationally affiliated with Europe's leading marketing associations through the European Marketing Confederation.

The mission of the Institute is to develop business in Ireland by raising its marketing capability, upholding professional standards, and improving the skills of marketing people so they deliver exceptional business results.

Membership of the Institute may be obtained through presentation of approved academic qualifications and/or appropriate practitioner experience, and full members may use the professional designatory letters MMII.

We heartily recommend *Irish Marketing Review* to all our members.

Tom Trainor
Chief Executive

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

ARTICLES

AFTERWORD

Departments   *Design*   *Cartoons*
             Dermot McGuine   Brendan Beirne

Typesetting & Layout   Sheila Stephenson & Associates

The Marketing Institute
The Marketing Institute is the representative body of the marketing profession in Ireland. Its members, associates and students number over 4000. The Institute's mission is to position marketing as the crucial factor for business success, and through its various activities it provides a lifetime environment of career enhancing opportunities to each member. *Irish Marketing Review* is sent to members and senior students as a membership service. Membership enquiries to: The Marketing Institute, Marketing House, Leopardstown, Dublin 18. Tel: (353 1) 2952355. Fax: (353 1) 2952453.

Dublin Institute of Technology
The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), an autonomous university-level institution since January 1993, has provided technological and business education up to the highest levels for over 100 years. It is organised in six discipline-related faculties: Applied Arts, Built Environment, Business, Engineering, Science, and Tourism and Food. It has a total enrolment of 23,000 students, including 10,000 full-time third level students and over 500 postgraduate and other post-third level students.

Editorial

Finding an Irish Voice: Reflections on Celtic Consumer Society and Social Change

Alan Bradshaw, Pierre McDonagh & David Marshall

Today, the old rural national image is on the wane and the country currently likes to represent itself as a thriving, energetic, cosmopolitan place, a vibrant multicultural hub of postindustrial, information-age entrepreneurial activity. The revels of the comely maidens dancing of the local townland now are ended or linger only as national kitsch; the country prefers instead a corporate quick-step on a global crossroads between Boston, Bermuda and Berlin.

(Cleary and Connolly, 2005, p. xiii)

As this opening quote suggests, much change is afoot in Ireland and not only has the country joined the surge of consumer society in a rush to be Ikeaised and Starbucked but it has done so with its usual display of swagger and style. This special issue of *Irish Marketing Review* arose from 'Finding an Irish Voice: Reflections on Celtic Consumer Society and Social Change', an international workshop organised by the Centre for Consumption Studies (CCS) (www. ccs.dcu.ie) at Dublin City University in October 2007. The event was attended by academics and practitioners with a range of professional interest in consumer society, and forms the backcloth to what you read here. From this exchange it became clear that there remains some degree of ambivalence in looking at cultural identity and simple binary categorisations such as Communist Fascist, Master Slave, Caucasian Black, Male Female, Straight Gay, Apprentice Loser, Croat Serb, Jew Arab, Good Evil, Roman Barbarian or, in our case, Anglo-Saxon Celt fail to capture the essence of contemporary consumer existence. Nowhere is this played out more than in discourses of what it *is* to be a *Celt* and specifically an Irish Celt or *Irish*. It seems compelling now to track how Consumer Society has impacted the 'Celticness' within the Irish Voice or indeed the Irish Voice within 'Celticness'. Scholarship on the Celts has long attested the complexities of developing simplistic labels for our people, as Berr (1992, p. xviii) reminds us:

There are, however, objects, forms of tombs, manners of speech, which allow us to classify the Celts as Indo-Europeans, to place them among the Europeans, to distinguish them from the Graeco-Latins, Germans, and Balto-Slavs, to contrast them with the Iberians and Ligurians, to determine the Celtic world and its boundaries. Hubert clearly brings out the racial unity of the Celts; it may not be anthropological but

'common life produced a kind of unification of physical types in a sort of habitus common to all' (p. 82). he perceives diversity within the unity, but reduces that diversity to a division into four groups – Goidels, Picts, Brythons (including the Gauls) and Belgae ... he (Hubert) reveals the close relations between Germans and Celts, and the influence exerted by Celtic culture on Germanic, extending, indeed, beyond the Germans to the Balto-Slavs and Finns (p. 68). This influence is manifest in linguistic and material borrowings ... 'The Celts seem to have been for long ages the schoolmasters of the Germanic peoples'.

This special edition looks at how consumption and consumer society plays a part in that (re)construction of identity through commercial activities and the consumption and use of goods which serve to convey and transpose meaning from the world of Celtic culture to the world of goods (McCracken, 1990) or through the prism of what Stephen Brown has labelled Celtic Marketing Concepts.

While the recent flurry of economic and political activity characterised by the Celtic Tiger and the peace process in the North has brought a number of profound changes, to what extent has this emerging consumer society lead to greater equality, healed old divisions or created new ones, and brought happiness or distress to the citizens? Not least, how we consume and its consequences (McDonagh, 1995, 1997) has much to contribute to our theory on contemporary consumption. Social change of itself within consumer culture is naturally problematic and fraught with danger, dark choices and contradiction, requiring protagonists to muse of their certain choices in life. This is best reflected in a 1963 interview comment by Malcolm X to Alex Haley, an African American writer best known as the author of the novel *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*:

On my layovers in New York, I'd go to Harlem. That's where I saw in the bars all these men and women with what looked like the easiest life in the world. Plenty of money, big cars, all of it. I could tell they were in rackets and vice. I hung around those bars whenever I came to town, and I kept my ears and eyes open and mouth shut. Finally, one day a numbers man told me that he needed a runner. Right there was when I started my life in crime.

(Haley, 1963, cited by Laity, 2007, p. 13.)

As this interview shows, consumer society presents a multiplicity of challenges to its citizens, all of which are still manifest in media angst of the good and the bad of contemporary Ireland, as well as the under-researched sinister side of consumer culture or, as Fitzgerald (2007) calls it, the 'high cost of wealth', all of which is burgeoning despite the popular obituaries on the Rise and Fall of the Celtic Tiger (see Jamieson, 2008).

This special issue proceeds with Linda Scott's illuminating work on *Subversive Consumption: Nineteenth Century Irish Immigrants in America* which reminds us of the significant contribution that Irish immigrants made to the evolution of American consumer culture and, by implication, the global relevance of this arguably provincial special issue. The issue continues with an account from Irish film studies' Pat Brereton, who explores how branding is shaping 'Irish Cinema inc.' as he contemplates how such nascent cinematic brand identity should secure its future in the global market place. Following this Kathy Hamilton muses on the growing inequalities within consumer culture and the need to reconsider consumer culture in all its forms and not solely from an economic perspective. Likewise Hilary Downey and Miriam Catterall's contribution to the special issue is on the surrogate consumption activities of the home-confined, which asks us to seek redress to their consumption through the domains of social policy, social capital, citizenship and volunteering.

The special issue continues with Maclaran and Stevens exploding masculinity and the crucial aspect of the Magners campaign's success. They argue that this campaign, by drawing on nostalgic, age-old images of the Irish male as being in touch with his deeply romantic self, created a space and restored a sense of the 'intense masculinity' that has become displaced and unfashionable in 21st century representations of masculinity. Anthony Patterson offers a paper on what he terms 'Brand Ireland' and how the romantic mythologies of 'Irishness' inform commercial practice. The special issue concludes with an Afterword by Stephen Brown, who bemoans the Magnus Opus within marketing and has for a number of decades personally led the charge of Celtic revivalism, contributing multifarious works expounding Celtic Marketing Concepts.

Finally, the objective of the Centre for Consumption Studies is to bring about a productive forum for the dissemination of ideas. In that spirit, we are delighted that this special issue includes submissions from such established academics as well as from the emerging talents of scholarship. As Graham (2001) submits in his Preface to *Deconstructing Ireland*, 'Ireland is a future which is always posited and never attained', with Ireland staging its own deconstruction, and at every turn the idea unravels and reforms itself. This issue is another chance to reflect on this process and on that which is Consuming Identity both within and outwith Ireland, that for the moment at least is at the epicentre of Celtic Consumer Society.

<div align="right">
Consuming Identity Research Group
Centre for Consumption Studies
September 2009

Alan Bradshaw
Pierre McDonagh
David Marshall
</div>

Editors

Alan Bradshaw is a senior lecturer of marketing at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Pierre McDonagh is founder and director of the Centre for Consumption Studies. His research interests include marketing's interconnections with nature, music, food and sport within consumer culture. He presently is a senior lecturer in marketing at Dublin City University Business School.

David Marshall is professor of marketing and consumer behaviour at the University of Edinburgh Business School and head of the marketing group. His research interests and activities centre on understanding consumer behaviour as a key component of marketing. This includes research on children's consumption, food availability and access in relation to health. He has collaborated on research into the commodification and consumption of music and the role of the artist, and consumption and quality of life in an institutional context. He edited *Food Choice and the Consumer* (Chapman and Hall, 1995) and has published in a number of academic journals including *Consumption, Markets and Culture, Journal of Macromarketing, Journal of Consumer Behaviour, Advertising and Marketing to Children (Young Consumers), Journal of Marketing Management, The Sociological Review, Public Health Nutrition, Appetite,* and *Journal of Food Quality and Preference.*

The Centre for Consumption Studies (CCS) is primarily associated with Dublin City University (see www.ccs.dcu.ie) but is linked with other colleges including Royal Holloway (University of London), the University of Edinburgh Business School, and the University of Exeter.

Overall, it is a research cluster which aims to bring together people interested in how people consume *identity* such as visual culture via the creative arts, digital education and more broadly how we consume within *consumer culture.*

CCS provides resources for academics, students, government, research councils, NGOs, businesses and/or a person interested in consumption. *Irish Marketing Review* readers can join CCS on Facebook.

References

Berr, Henri (1992), 'Foreword: the expansion of the Celts', in Henri Hubert '*The History of the Celtic People*', Bracken Books, London.

Brown, Stephen (2009), 'Marketing died today. Or perhaps it was yesterday, I don't know', 'Afterword' to this issue.

Cleary, Joe and Claire Connolly (eds.) (2005), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Fitzgerald, Mary (2007), 'A high price of wealth', *New Statesman*, 16 July, p. 18.

Graham, Colin (2001), *Deconstructing Ireland: Identity, Theory, Culture (Tendencies: Identities, Texts, Cultures)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Jamieson, Bill (2008), 'Jungle that even the Celtic Tiger can't survive', *Scotland on Sunday*, 7 Sept.

Laity, Paul (ed.) (2007), 'The interview between Alex Haley and Malcolm X', *Playboy Magazine*, May 1963. *Great Interviews of the 20th Century* (9/14), Guardian News & Media, London.

Hubert, Henri (1992 [1932]). *The History of the Celtic People*, Bracken Books. London.

McCracken, Grant (1990), *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana.

McDonagh, Pierre (1995), 'Q. Is marketing dying of consumption? A. Yes, and the answer is consumption!' Paper presented at the *Marketing Eschatology Retreat*, 23–24 September, University of Ulster, St Clements, Belfast.

McDonagh, Pierre (1997), 'The fable of Joseph the pig farmer', in S. Brown, A.M. Doherty and B. Clarke (eds.), *Marketing Illuminations Spectacular*, University of Ulster, Sept., pp 83–90.

SUBVERSIVE CONSUMPTION: NINETEENTH CENTURY IRISH IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICA

Linda Scott

Irish immigrants to America during the second half of the nineteenth century presented significant challenge to the existing Protestant ruling elite. The provenance, religion and behaviour of the arriving Catholic Irish stood in particular opposition to the morality of the Puritan descendents, an ancient enemy of the Irish, who claimed cultural hegemony over the new United States. The result was a contest of wills over the consumption of goods, public and private, religious and secular. This article seeks to chart historically this clash of religion, politics, gender, race and labour.

In doing so, it approaches several issues of interest today. It reframes questions about whether consumption can be a subversive political behaviour, and calls into question schemas in cultural theory about the role of the 'culture industry'. As the Irish eventually came to participate as fully as their 'oppressors' in the new market economy and its burgeoning consumer culture, the outcome of the narrative challenges us to rethink whether oppressed groups reach mainstream respectability as a total 'sellout' or as the legitimate ends of revolution.

Marketing, as a discipline, seldom cares about history. An article about the consumption behaviours of a long-ago immigrant group, therefore, risks charges of irrelevancy. Yet by examining the past, we can create for ourselves the critical distance to assess struggles over consumption controversies. Often we find that practices seen in their time as obvious and universal moral issues in truth only articulated local prejudices and interests – while also marking the path to power. We may, as a result, examine our own prejudices and purposes in a less interested light.

Irish immigrants to America during the second half of the nineteenth century posed many problems for the population receiving them. The consumer patterns that marked the Irish immigrants – the first major population to emigrate to post-Revolutionary America – not only spoke of their desperately impoverished condition, but also voiced a cultural heritage very different from the traditions of the earlier European immigrant groups who self-righteously proclaimed themselves 'natives'. The Celtic *habitus* stood in particular opposition to the morality of the Puritan descendants, who were an ancient enemy of the Irish but who claimed cultural hegemony over the new United States. The offence Irish behaviours caused among the Protestant ruling class was not lost on the new arrivals– and the result was a contest of wills over the consumption of goods, public and private, religious and secular.

This historical case, therefore, approaches several issues of interest today. First, it reframes questions about whether consumption can be a subversive political behaviour. The particulars of the case call into question schemas in cultural theory about the role of the 'culture industry' and even the nature of the bourgeoisie. The outcome of the narrative challenges us to rethink whether oppressed groups reach mainstream respectability as a total 'sellout' or as the legitimate ends of revolution. The case of Irish immigration puts a different spin on consumer choice by emphasising the exogenous constraints that channel selections and pattern habits. The story upends the idea that reformist efforts to change 'dark side' consumer habits are objectively moral or politically disinterested. Finally, this confrontation between a Puritan Protestant ethos and a Celtic Catholic one illustrates, for a world recently surprised by the crossfire of religious economics, that any clear division drawn between what is 'sacred' and what is 'profane' is merely an ideology.

Backdrop

The population of the 13 colonies that became the United States of America included several European strains, of which the British and Dutch were most prominent. However, the Puritan settlers of New England, who began arriving as Oliver Cromwell was rising to power in Great Britain, had grown to dominate these colonies, as they eventually would the entire continent. (Indeed, as

Figure 1   **Cartoon Depiction of Irish Immigration**

unlikely as it may seem, most Americans today casually view the Puritans as their cultural ancestors, even though the relationship is genealogically impossible for nearly all of them.) The American Puritans, often known as 'the Pilgrims' in popular American history, left England as unsatisfied ascetics, rabid anti-Catholics disappointed in what they saw as an incomplete transformation of their society by the Roundheads who fought the English Civil Wars of the seventeenth century.

As the most radical, secessionary fringe of a sect now known to history for their extreme views and practices, the New England Puritans founded colonies that were rigidly policed, even in everyday particulars, by a combined force of church, state, and commerce. They were a singularly humourless group, fearful of the corrupting power of the simplest pleasures, from storytelling to song to socialising. Their churches and liturgies were austere, symptomatic of a self-conscious distancing from the perceived decadence of elaborate Roman Catholic worship. Through their strong Calvinist roots, they had acquired an irrational fear of images, which, though originally linked to the 'idolatry' typical of Catholic churches, extended to include secular imagery. They assiduously avoided the religious holidays associated with the Catholic or Anglican Church, making it illegal even to celebrate Christmas and allowing festivities only (in their typically morbid fashion) for funerals. They made dance, theatre, and art illegal and also regulated grooming and dress through the courts. In the nineteenth century, their asceticism extended to a fierce opposition to

alcoholic beverages, even though the historical record indicates that the founding Puritans were big drinkers. It is also crucial to understand that the Puritans saw themselves as a people expressly ordained by God, given the divine right to prevail over all others. As a result, they were outrageously arrogant and xenophobic, but their most intense hatred was focused on the Catholic Church, its priests and its adherents (Benes, 1984; Demos, 1982; Earle, 1968; Hennesey, 1981).

As part of the Puritan push to dominate the American colonies during the pre-Revolutionary period, Catholicism had been virtually stamped out: priests and practising Catholics had been run off, forced into hiding or conversion, or put to death. Thus, at the time of the American Revolution, the Catholic population was less than 1 percent of the whole (Hennesey, 1981). So, though the US population of the Atlantic Coast was diverse in ethnic European origin and included blacks and Native Americans, as well as Irish, it was uniformly Protestant. The continental expansions of the nineteenth century would eventually bring in a good number of French and Spanish Catholics. Nevertheless, the immigrations occurring on the Atlantic Coast during the same period were experienced as intensely invasive, not only because new populations radically changed the numbers living in the eastern US, but because the religion and ethnicities of the immigrants were so different from those of the former American colonists: wave after wave of Irish, German, Italian, and Russian arrivals were distinctively Catholic and Jewish (Sowell, 1981; Takaki, 1993).

The Irish Catholics who immigrated to escape the Great Famine of 1845 were the first of these waves and were felt as the most invasive. The 'native' population feared the new arrivals would undermine their institutions, and many even believed the immigration was a Papal conspiracy (Hennesey, 1981). Contemporary observations often reflect a truly vicious xenophobia. For instance, in the Thomas Nast cartoon shown in Figure 1, we see the Irish immigration represented as an invasion of bishops – drawn as menacing crocodiles – while in the background US public schools crumble and the Capitol flies an Irish flag.

Several aspects of the Famine immigration raised anxieties to this point. First, the sheer numbers were overwhelming: before 1840, immigration to the US had been a mere trickle (less than 10,000 a year); by 1859, immigration swelled to nearly half a million each year, with the majority coming from Ireland (Sowell, 1981, p. 34). Given that the 'natives' numbered only about 7 million at the outset, this immigration changed the demographic profile of the US rapidly, dramatically, and forever. The second reason the Irish immigration was so unsettling was their loyalty to the Catholic church, which was well known to be unshakeable (Golway, 1997). American Protestants had kept anti-papist fervour alive through paranoid sermons and inflated folktales for more than 200 years, even though by the mid nineteenth century they had little eye-to-eye experience with Rome's believers (Hennesey, 1981). From the beginning, the Irish were regarded as 'dangerous aliens', an entirely different and unassimilable 'race', their white skin colour notwithstanding (Golway, 1997, p. 7). Further, the immigrants arrived in such poor condition that they immediately posed huge, visible social problems. Finally, the Irish landed with an attitude: they already despised any form of British hegemony with an intensity at least equal to the hatred with which they were welcomed on America's shores.

It is an exquisite historical irony that Irish immigrants, having suffered for 200 years under the particularly oppressive period of British rule begun under Oliver Cromwell, arrived in America only to be dependent on the mercy of the Puritans' most extreme descendants. The Penal Laws enacted by the British Puritans had effectively made Irish Catholics slaves in their own country: not only

were they forbidden to vote, hold public office, or own significant property, it was illegal for them to educate their children or build churches (Sowell, 1981). All Catholics were considered heretics by the Puritans; priests found practising were executed. Gaelic, as a language associated with native Catholicism, was banned (Golway, 1997). The native Irish had been reduced to living on increasingly subdivided plots of land, huddled together in small mud huts and subsisting on a single crop: potatoes. Unlike wheat or other staples, potatoes could sustain a family of five or six on only 1.5 acres of land, could grow on hillsides too steep for growing any other food crop, and needed little tending. But potatoes are also a very unstable crop, easily overcome by disease. The blight that destroyed the Irish potato harvest of 1845 continued for 10 years. A million people died; even more emigrated. During this time, the British did little or nothing to alleviate suffering; indeed, an oft-cited symptom of their cruelty toward Ireland is that food from British-owned land continued to be exported to England throughout the Famine years (Sowell 1981). More 'small' famines punctuated the decades until the end of the century, during which time the Irish continued to emigrate to America in large numbers. By 1914, the population of Ireland had declined by half. It was the second occasion in 200 years the Irish nation had been thus reduced: the first was under the Cromwellian conquest (Sowell, 1981). Everyone remembered (Golway, 1997).

Far from bowing to the depredations of the British, however, the Irish had instead developed a subculture of resistance, led to a large degree by the priests and nuns of their church. Mass had continued even though forbidden, held *sub rosa* in outdoor 'cathedrals'. Similarly, children had been educated in illegal 'hedge schools' (Golway, 1997). Because they were forced to learn their oppressor's language, but had been secretly schooled, they arrived in the US with two advantages that later immigrants would not have: most of them spoke English and about half of them were literate (Birmingham, 1973; Sowell, 1981; Takaki, 1993). They, no less than their new American neighbours, had a well-kept historical hatred and they, too, had a strong sense of solidarity. Thus, though the circumstances of their arrival made them physically and economically weak, their past provided them with the tools not only to survive, but to make the

American Protestants extremely uncomfortable in the process (Sowell, 1981; Takaki, 1993).

Public Goods and Services: Part I

Those who left Ireland during the Great Famine did so as a last, desperate act. Savings were liquidated and belongings sold to purchase passage. 'American wakes' were held to see the emigrants off on what was presumed by all to be a journey from which they would not return. And, indeed, many did not survive even the journey itself. The 'coffin ships' that carried the Irish to America were horribly crowded, cramped, and unclean; they seldom had safe drinking water or medical care available. Many passengers, about 20 percent, died either during the passage or immediately upon arrival (Takaki, 1993). The ships themselves were often unseaworthy; a large number never reached America at all (Golway, 1997; Sowell, 1981; Zinn, 1995)

The Irish who did at last arrive on the American side were, therefore, both penniless and in poor health. Many were immediately quarantined in offshore immigrant hospitals. The conditions in these hospitals were so poor that many more died and others took desperate measures to get into the harbours, thus spreading disease to the cities. Cholera, which had nearly been stamped out in the US, emerged with a fresh vengeance among the Irish immigrants and, through those who broke quarantine, infected the native population. Later, other diseases, including typhoid and smallpox, also erupted among the Irish, leading again to epidemics that rushed through the cities (Birmingham, 1973; Sowell, 1981).

Once ashore, the newcomers were understandably desperate to find lodging and work. As what we would now call 'refugees', rather than 'immigrants', they were extremely vulnerable. Comprising mostly unskilled labourers, this group took the most unpleasant and low-paying jobs – soon prejudice against them closed many avenues of employment, as job notices were often appended, 'No Irish need apply' (Takaki, 1993, p. 149). Their disproportionate representation at the bottom of the economic ladder continued for decades. No other group, even American blacks, were so concentrated among the most difficult, unstable, dangerous, and poorly remunerated jobs (Sowell, 1981; Handlin, 1941).

Without the means to live beyond the merest subsistence, the first arrivals from Ireland congregated, close together, in neighbourhoods quickly overburdened, becoming horrific slums overnight. Insufficient infrastructure resulted in piles of refuse in the streets and sewage backups from privies. Rabid dogs and untamed farm animals – including 'pigs as dangerous as hyenas' – roamed the streets in the Irish slums (Birmingham, 1973, p. 17). Without water or light, whole families crowded into tiny rooms or attics, several people often sharing a single bed. In several cases, Irish families were discovered living under existing buildings: '… windowless hollows carved out of the earth, completely without ventilation, drainage, or any form of plumbing. Families doubled and tripled up to occupy these holes, and it was not surprising to find as many as forty people living in a single tiny cavity' (Birmingham, 1973, p. 42; Sowell, 1981).

These living conditions reflected the onrush of the immigration, as well as the unprepared status of the destination cities, but they also mirrored the squalid conditions the immigrants had already survived in Ireland (Takaki, 1993; Sowell, 1981). Though one should not underplay the hardships that put the Irish into these living conditions – whether in Ireland *or* America – it is important to acknowledge the reinforcing relationship between such physical closeness in material life and the emotional closeness that typified Irish culture: 'Crowding was a part of who they were. The traditional Irish village, or *clachan,* that many came out of bore no resemblance to the classic European model of orderly streets, neat squares, tidy rows of shops and homes. The *clachan* was a clump of cabins that leaned on one another, a physical embodiment of the tight-knit community' (Quinn, 1997, p. 41). *Clachan* culture, in turn, contrasted starkly with the austerity and reserve of the Puritan village ideal: 'Outsiders often remarked on the intense conviviality of the *clachan*, the incessant emphasis on singing, dancing, and storytelling that wasn't merely part of Irish culture but its living heart, the jewel of its survival' (Quinn, 1997, p. 41).

The Irish nearly always arrived first in New York or Boston and often ventured no further. Because Boston, with only 114,366 residents, was so much smaller than New York, the impact of the immi-

gration was more felt there. In more than a decade before the Famine, a total of 33,346 immigrants had arrived in Boston harbour. In 1847 alone, more than 37,000 landed, 75 percent of them Irish (Sowell, 1981). You had to pay a toll even to reach the suburbs of Boston, so these destitute newcomers all crowded into Ward Eight and the North End, areas that had been home to the rich: 'Neighbourhoods were literally ruined as wealthy home-owners fled the invasion and fine old Federal houses were surrounded by jerry-built shanties and lean-tos' (Birmingham 1973, p. 42). Within a few years, Boston's mortality rate was double that of the rest of Massachusetts, even though its population was younger. The difference was due to the high death rate in the Irish neighbourhoods. In 1850, the median age for both male and female Irish immigrants was less than 30 – but life expectancy was only 40, a fact that gave rise to a popular saying, 'You never see a gray-haired Irishman' (Sowell, 1981, p. 17; Takaki, 1993).

Everywhere, however, the Irish were concentrated into urban environments and they remained so even after the initial shocks of the passage were over. Though 80 percent of the population of Ireland had been rural, in the US, the same proportion of Irish immigrants lived in cities. They were furthermore concentrated in four states – Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois – and continued to be concentrated in the urban areas of northern states through the twentieth century (Sowell, 1981). By 1860, 33 percent of them lived in one of only 15 cities (Takaki, 1993).

Nicknamed the 'Bloody Ould Sixth' or 'Hell's Kitchen' or the 'Bloody Third', the Irish sectors of major northern cities were hotbeds. In 1848, capital offences in Boston increased 266 percent over the previous year, and assaults on police officers quadrupled. Other forms of assault increased 465 percent (Birmingham 1973). Reflecting a similar situation, over half the people arrested in New York during the 1850s were Irish (Sowell, 1981). A particular problem was the propensity, especially among the men, to drink heavily, a habit born in Ireland but brought to America. Such behaviour gave rise to another saying: 'It is as natural for a Hibernian to tipple as it is for a pig to grunt' (Takaki, 1993, p. 150). Not only did this consumer practice lead to a higher number of arrests, it also contributed to a pattern of domestic violence and family abandonment. So, the Irish were overrepresented not only in the jails, but also the almshouses, the orphanages, and the asylums. Because of the high rate of death, detention, and desertion among the males, Irish mothers and their children often ended up on the mercy of charities or were reduced to begging in the streets. As late as 1914, 50 percent of the Irish families on the west side of Manhattan were fatherless. Spending for relief of the poor more than doubled in Boston between 1845 and 1855. In New York during the same period about 60 percent of the people in almshouses had been born in Ireland. The willingness to accept charity was an economic behaviour developed in Ireland, but carried to America (Sowell, 1981, pp 26–8).

The initial impact of the Irish immigration was, therefore, a sudden, seemingly insatiable consumption of public goods and services: hospitals, housing, sanitation, plumbing, poor houses, social and charity services, police and prisons, asylums, shelters, and orphanages. Though the conditions under which these goods and services had to be consumed – with insufficient water and sanitary provisions, for instance – led inexorably to disease and despair, local residents consistently blamed the Irish themselves for their squalid conditions and desperate behaviours, as if they had made their own choices and so deserved the outcomes.

Economic Weakness, Political Strength

The Irish did not blame themselves. Instead, they saw the American Protestant power structure as an extension of the British system from which they had recently escaped. Consequently, while they struggled with the material constraints in which they found themselves, they also focused on political solutions. Because of their past history with organising and working underground against Anglo-Saxon institutions – and because they were, for the most part, both English-speaking and literate – they were well-equipped to infiltrate and eventually take over the municipal governments of the cities in which they had landed (Sowell, 1981). Another crucial distinction between the Irish and many of the other immigrant groups coming to America in the nineteenth century was that the Irish had come to stay, while other groups, such as the Italians and Chinese, came intending to return to their native land. With no real option to go

back, Irish immigrants had to make it work in America. Irish commitment was immediately evident in the numbers who became citizens and participated in political process: they had the highest rate of citizenship and the best voting record of any immigrant group (Takaki, 1993). And they were the largest immigrant population. So, since the Irish were congregated in urban spaces and voted as a block, they were quickly able to usurp the power of the Protestant elites at the municipal level. Within decades, the Irish had control over Boston, Chicago, New York, Buffalo, Milwaukee, and San Francisco, as well as other northern American cities (Sowell, 1981).

As a result, American city services took on a new ethos, one that reflected Irish history: 'The Irish brought to America a settled tradition of regarding the formal government as illegitimate, and the informal one as bearing the true impress of popular sovereignty' (Sowell, 1981, p. 31). Though this attitude also created a fertile ground for bribery, fraud, and violence in municipal government, the result was not chaos, but a different kind of system, one based on loyalty and pragmatism – the rule of the quid pro quo exchange – rather than ideology. To this day, many cities in the US are dominated by the descendants of Irish immigrants, and the 'get it done' ethic is still visible: Chicago, for instance, is widely known by its slogan, 'The City that Works'.

A nativist response formed, particularly among the Puritan descendants of the New England elite, whether domiciled in New York or Massachusetts, vowing 'Americans must rule America; and to this end native-born citizens should be selected for all state, federal, and municipal offices of government employment, in preference to all others' (Birmingham, 1973, 28-29). One 'Yankee politico' wrote with regret of the charity Americans had shown the Irish: 'We have warmed to life the torpid viper and the fanged adder to spit their venom upon our dear and blood-bought privileges, our sacred, most cherished institutions ... [Now] Irishmen fresh from the bogs of Ireland are led up to vote like dumb brutes ... to vote down intelligent, honest, native Americans' (quoted in Hennesey, 1981, p. 119). However, the Yankee Protestant political organisations, allied with the Whig-Republicans nationally, were unable to check the rising power of the Irish machine. By

1890, the Irish had captured most of the rival Democratic party in northern cities (Takaki, 1993). By any measure, the Irish takeover of American politics had been a 'spectacular success' (Sowell, 1981, p. 35).

With characteristic fight and bite, the Irish also founded labour unions in their earliest years in America (including the Secret Order of the Knights of St. Crispin, which almost immediately became the largest labour union in the US) (Sowell, 1981). They instigated strikes and allegedly engaged in some very violent actions, particularly in coal mining (Boyer and Morais, 1955; Kenny, 1998). Both men and women engaged in labour action and were often aggressively supported by both the Irish community and the Church (Golway, 1997; Mother Jones, 1969). Many of the actions taken – demonstrations, strikes, publicity stunts, etc. – show a creativity and dramatic flair echoes the cultural ethos of the Irish from its mythic depths to its wry trickery (Mother Jones, 2004). Some of the most famous names and events in American labour history implicate the Irish, from the implacable organiser, Mother Jones, to the McCormick workers whose deaths led to the Haymarket Riots, to the secret Molly Maguires.

The Reform Movement and the Irish Pub

The Protestant elite struggled to keep the Irish in line on the political front with limited success. On the cultural front, the match was more even. The American Protestant community – including especially churches, women, and civic organisations – organised to 'reform' the nation along a list of social and cultural evils. The true intention of the nativist agenda was not moral reform but rather the shoring up of Yankee Protestant aristocratic hegemony against the encroachments of democracy, modernity, and multiculturalism. Not surprisingly, the Irish opposed most of these reforms and, given their rising political power, were often seen as a roadblock to reform initiatives, in addition to being the primary target for them (Sowell, 1981).

In the long run, the most important and successful undertaking of the reform era was the abolition of slavery. There is no question that the movement to end slavery was morally right. Nevertheless, comparisons between the status and living conditions

of the Irish immigrant and the black slave were common at the time and continue even now among historians. Many have argued since that only a technical difference in the definition of slavery separates the African in the American South and the Irishman under the British (Sowell, 1981). The lives of American blacks, even though they were slaves, were often valued more than the lives of the Irish immigrants. Consequently, the most dangerous and brutal jobs in the US were reserved for Hibernians, rather than Africans, who had value as chattel. The two groups were not only the desperate occupants of the lowest rung of the American socioeconomic ladder, both were seen as a different, depraved race – both often described and depicted as 'apelike' – and both, unassimilable, (Takaki, 1993, p. 149). As a consequence of their directly comparable situations, there had been tension between the Irish and the African-Americans since the beginning of the Irish immigration to the US (Sowell, 1981; Takaki, 1003). Furthermore, the American Civil War (an outcome of the abolition movement) was fought largely with Irish conscripts, a strategy that was evident to the immigrants even as the war approached. Indeed, the bloodiest riot in American history (and there are many bloody riots in the American narrative) was in response to a call for military recruits among the Irish at the time of the Civil War. The Irish rioted for days, and more than 1,000 people were killed (Sowell, 1981, p. 26).

Through most of the nineteenth century (and certainly into the twentieth), however, the most prominent and widely supported reform effort was the temperance movement. This movement against drinking, especially against pubs and saloons, which gained fantastic support among Protestants, was also motivated by the desire to control Irish subculture and, especially, to close the establishments that housed their political organising (Gusfeld, 1963).

Indeed, the pubs acted as a kind of community centre that sustained the Irish population and subculture in other ways, as the immigration continued in huge waves for more than 50 years. Peter Quinn observes: 'For the Irish, the saloon was no more restricted to drinking or the business of vote mustering than the parish church was to the worship of God and the salvation of souls. These activities or ambitions weren't entirely absent. But

the power of the saloon and church were as cornerstones of the urban *clachan*; sodalities for the shared performance of the rituals of song, dance and talk; as labour exchanges and community forums; as intimate spaces in the urban vastness that reduced the bewilderment of the immigrants and allowed them to make sense of their surroundings before they attempted to move any farther into the New World' (Quinn, 1997, p. 43).

Popular Culture as Social Uprising

Another plank in the reform movement – the social purity plank – had three subcomponents: censorship, eradicating prostitutions, and 'moral hygiene'. The censorship aspect was an extension of the historical Puritan antipathy towards the arts as well as nonreligious public gatherings. Moral hygiene covered a range of issues, but had a strong concentration on enculturating children in such a way as to protect against 'impure thoughts' (Boyer, 1968; Pivar, 1973). Most elements of social purity were, like temperance, concentrated on changing consumption behaviours as a form of social control.

Censorship efforts were aimed at quashing or closing a broad range of cultural forms and activities that offended the Puritan sensibility and offered competition for power. A key focus among social purists, for instance, was the newly emergent, very popular, 'penny press', which targeted the immigrant and working class. These papers included images to help non-English speakers understand the news, and many of the best-known journalists were Irish. Prior to the birth of these popular papers, the Puritan press had dominated publishing in America and therefore, to a large extent, controlled the flow of information. The Calvinist roots of the reform movement made its proponents particularly fearful of images; consequently, popular newspapers and magazines, as well as art galleries (and, later, films) often felt the force of the reformers' attacks. The infamous 'Comstock Laws', enacted under this censorship initiative, were used for decades to close any gallery showing, stop any publishing activity, and incarcerate any author or artist producing, circulating, or displaying materials the Puritan elite found 'obscene' (Scott, 2005).

Theatre – and anything like it, including circuses – was outlawed in the New England colonies prior

Figure 2   'Ladies' Home Journal', February 1917, p. 66

widely effective means. So, as the new media and its popular culture grew in influence, it became increasingly clear to the former elites that whoever controlled these new forms would have more power than would the old aristocracy or even the church (Scott, 2005). Thus, the consumption of these forms held multiple points of moral offense – from the display of images to public socialising and play – as well as practical points in the protection of power – the flow of information, the allowed points of assembly, the accumulation of capital, and the creation of new leadership.

Even on a local and traditional level, however, the Puritans were scandalised by the cultural expressions of the Irish, which often included all manner of social gatherings and communal celebrations – innocent pleasures from today's viewpoint, but symptomatic of the devil's hand from a nineteenth century American Puritan's vantage (Sowell, 1981; Takaki, 1993). Not the least of the objections, however, was that parades, dances, and picnics were often sponsored by Irish 'county societies' (which, like the pubs, were a support system especially for new immigrants) or Irish militias, who mostly dressed up and carried arms for such parades but whose weapons could be used to defend the community during the rather frequent anti-Catholic violence (Golway, 1997; Handlin, 1941).

Sometimes, instead of outlawing or shutting down competing cultural events, the Protestant elite would instead attempt to maintain control over the timing, venue, and content of those same entertainments. The 'blue laws' outlawing certain pleasurable activities on Sunday were clearly aimed at the immigrant population, for instance (Takaki, 1993). Efforts to regulate and discourage commercial dance halls began at this time and continued into the 1920s (Peiss, 1986); dance halls often catered to the Irish and, indeed, were organised and named by county in order to identify and attract Celtic patrons. The Puritan descendants also pushed forward elite European forms – for instance, Shakespeare and classical music – in an effort to 'educate' the tastes of the populace. Since many of these preferred forms (as well as the actors and performances) were British, the Irish immigrants often saw such attempts at cultural 'uplift' as thinly disguised efforts to quash an emerging democratic, multivocal culture in order to maintain an Anglophilic status quo.

to the Revolution (Benes, 1984; Wright, 1969). But the rising standard of living resulting from the modern economy as well as the influx of new immigrants brought a resurgence of these and other pleasures. It has often been remarked that the Irish found particular success in the popular theatre, and later in film, in America. The list of famous Irish-American actors and actresses is long, as is the list of famous singers and musicians. Songs and plays with Irish characters, such as the indefatigable maid, 'Bridget', and Irish themes were also popular, as in the advertisement in Figure 2, which features popular Peggy O'Neill and her play, 'Peg O' My Heart'.

Importantly, this cultural sector also created new role models, such as popular actresses, and new elites with new sources of capital. These often charismatic leaders could reach the public through

One of the most dramatic confrontations over theatrical loyalties occurred in New York in 1849. The Bowery, a popular theatre, catered to the working class, immigrant community of the notorious Five Points area of Manhattan. The lead actor for the Bowery was Edwin Forrest, beloved as an example of 'American' (as opposed to British) acting style. The elites of Manhattan, in opposition, built another theatre on the corner of Astor Place and Broadway (about a 12-minute walk from the Bowery) and proceeded to charge high prices and impose a dress code (e.g., kid gloves for the men) to keep the immigrant community out. On the night of May 10, a British actor, William Charles Macready, was performing *Macbeth* at the Astor Opera House. That same night, Edwin Forrest was to perform the same play at the Bowery. The juxtaposition of two *Macbeth*s stimulated confrontation in the streets, a march from the Bowery up to the Opera House, and, finally, resulted in a huge brawl – the Astor Place Riot – in which 22 were killed and 38 were injured (Cliff, 2007).

Social purity's 'moral hygiene' programme was based on the notion that a clean outward appearance was a sign of inward grace, but also that upright personal grooming could cure moral deficiencies: 'Thus, uppity common folk and "degraded foreigners" were to be morally uplifted by regular baths and demure manners' (Scott, 2005, p. 42). Considerable effort was made toward instilling better sanitary habits in the slums; however, this movement occurred before knowledge of the link between personal hygiene and epidemics, so was not aimed at controlling disease.

Moral hygiene had an explicit focus on the rearing of children. In this wing of the reform effort, the elite issued directives about what books children should read, what songs they should be taught, how they should dress, what kinds of toys they should be given, how often they should be bathed and groomed, and, of course, how their religious and moral tutelage should be handled. The texts and activities of these groups show unambiguously that the intent was to mould the children of the working class and immigrant groups (Boyer, 1968; Pivar, 1973; Scott, 2005). The children of the Irish, in particular, were seen by Protestants as undisciplined, untutored, and lacking in self-control. They were said to have inherited the 'stupidity of centuries of ignorant ancestors', thus likely

to fall prey to the same 'base instincts' the Protestant elite thought typical of their parents (Takaki, 1993, pp. 149–50). In its most extreme manifestation, this movement produced a 'child-saving' legal mechanism that took Irish children from poor families and shipped them by train to the American Midwest to be raised by 'proper' Protestant families (a phenomenon that became known in popular dialect as 'riding the orphan train') (Fitzgerald, 1997, p. 61).

Irish parents, in contrast, were strongly Gaelic in culture and taught anti-British sentiments through their own stories and songs. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn recalled that her generation 'drew in a burning hatred of British rule with our mother's milk', and that 'the awareness of being Irish came to us as small children, through plaintive song and heroic story' (quoted in Takaki, 1993, p. 164). The impact of such counter-enculturation came home to roost in the labour movements of the early twentieth century: Flynn herself became an early organiser of the International Workers of the World, was a founding member of the American Civil Liberties Union, and, late in life, was president of the American Communist Party.

Revolution Begins at Home: The Irish Maid

The Puritans' other major effort at social control through consumption was the dress reform movement, a phenomenon I have documented extensively in *Fresh Lipstick* (2005). As I have explained there, the clear intention of dress reform was to suppress the social changes brought about by democracy, the modern economy, and immigration. Democracy had made it legally permissible for common people to wear whatever they liked (sumptuary laws and customs had restricted dress by class in the colonies); the modern economy made fashionable clothing both affordable and widely available. The influx of Irish immigrants, as it turns out, created a particularly sharp focal point for dress reformers.

Immigrants from all parts of the world came to the US as much for the material opportunities offered by the new market-based economic system as for the freedoms offered by the democratic political system (Sowell, 1981; Takaki, 1993). It's important to note here, however, that the birth of the modern economy in America did not grow up

Figure 3   **'Life', Front Cover, 19 March 1896**
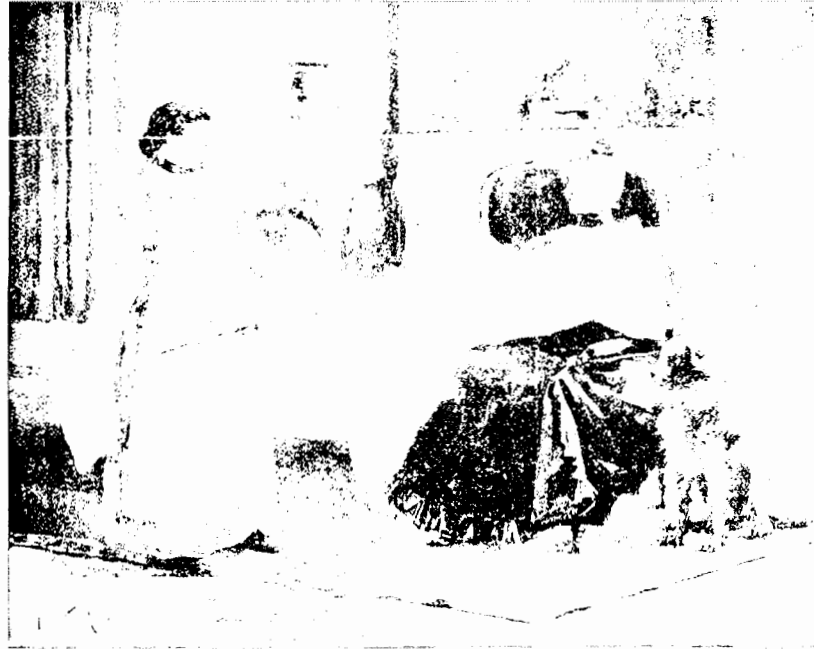
ONE WAY.

"BRIDGET, YOU'VE BROKEN AS MUCH CHINA THIS MONTH AS YOUR WAGES AMOUNT TO. NOW, HOW CAN WE PREVENT THIS OCCURRING AGAIN?"
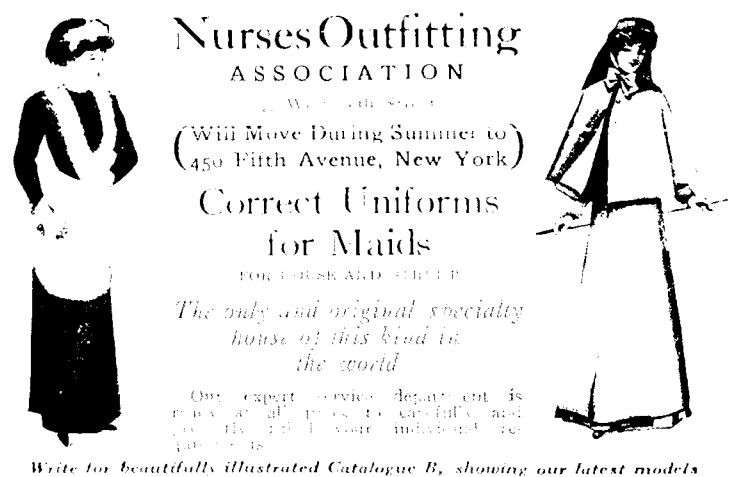
"OI DON'T KNOW, MUM, UNLESS YEZ RAISES ME WAGES."

from railroads and steel (which came much later), but from the production of textiles and garments. Thus, the economic sector that supported the first 50 years of immigration was the fashion industry. Therefore, the dress reform initiative, while it focused on the apparently obvious sins of consuming 'excessive dress', was yet another attempt to disenfranchise the immigrant community, this time through their primary economic base. Furthermore, the Puritan dress restrictions, even in the earliest times of the American settlement, had been enforced only among the commonfolk, never among the elites; so, the motive behind dress reform was, in its origins and in its modern manifestation, to maintain the sartorial distinctions that made the class structure visible and so helped keep it in place (Scott, 2005).

The demographics of the Irish immigrant population differed significantly from all other groups coming *en masse* to the US inasmuch as the Irish were disproportionately young, unmarried, and female. Further, this group arrived with a burning ambition, for themselves and their future children, and was intent on achieving economic autonomy and upward social mobility (Diner, 1983). Many Irish women went to work in the new garment factories and a significant subset became seamstresses, but by far the majority of them took jobs as domestic servants (Diner, 1983; Sowell, 1981; Takaki, 1993). Women in American

history have consistently preferred factory work to domestic service, but newly arrived Irishwomen actually sought out this kind of employment (Diner, 1983). The ability to speak English made it possible for Irishwomen to get this work, where Italian, German, or Russian women would not have been able to communicate with their employers. Further, since the Irish women were mostly single and often immigrated alone, they did not have to contend with the parental or spousal disapproval that kept other immigrant women from taking service jobs. Domestic service did bring indignity and often mistreatment with it, and servants were seldom allowed much free time. However, service paid a good bit more than factory work, in addition to including room and board in the compensation package, which allowed for saving, as well as remittances to be sent to Ireland. Service had the additional advantage of being steady, secure employment, even during the frequent economic downturns of the early modern economy (Diner, 1983).

The steadiness and relatively high pay of domestic service reflected a sorely felt shortage of servant labour among prosperous households. The labour shortage in service work gave Irish maids a certain degree of power over their mistresses, a modicum of leverage that would have been lacking in other types of employment. Knowing they could always leave one job for better conditions or even higher

Nurses Outfitting
ASSOCIATION

(Will Move During Summer to
450 Fifth Avenue, New York)

Correct Uniforms
for Maids

*The only and original specialty
house of this kind in
the world*

wages in another home, Irish maids tended to be somewhat intransigent, certainly less submissive than the ladies of the house preferred. Cartoons, articles, diaries, and letters from the period make frequent reference to the tension that often resulted: dishes were purposely broken, cleaning instructions went blithely unfollowed, conversations held a subtext of disrespect, and so on. The cartoon in Figure 3 encapsulates the spirit of this conflict well. 'Bridget', the name given to this cultural character, was always overweight and always had an apelike upper lip. Bridget is also consistently portrayed as clumsy and clueless, totally lacking acceptable manners, proper taste, or knowledge about the care of objects, such as fine china, in well-to-do homes (Scott 2005). Yet historians insist that this army of Bridgets was learning important lessons in consumer behaviour, even as their employers complained about their sloppiness and carelessness:

> They were able to spend their daily lives among gentle, cultivated people, and they were able to observe at first hand the ways not only of the wealthy but of the polite and well-bred. They learned the touch of fine silver and porcelain and furniture, the feel of good linen and real lace. They also learned, from their mistresses, good manners. These were advantages that these girls would do their best to see that their children would have in the next generation. (Birmingham, 1973, p. 44)

So, though the stereotype of the day emphasised the Irish woman's unfamiliarity with the accoutrements of a genteel life, in fact, her habit of closely observing the consumer behaviours of the elites in order to pass the aesthetic along to children helped result in a social revolution in the next generation.

The alleged insolence of the Irish maid was most publicly visible in her dress. In their limited time off, Irish servants spent considerable effort making clothes in the most fashionable styles, using, in many cases, materials of comparable quality to those used by the upper classes. One man noted, 'I have been amused, on a Sunday morning, to see two Irish girls walking out of my basement door dressed in rich moire antique, with everything to correspond, from elegant bonnets and parasols to gloves and gaiter-boots – an outfit that would not disgrace the neatest carriage in Hyde Park' (quoted in Diner, 1983, pp. 141–2).

The preference of the Puritan employer was usually that the maid instead wear a uniform. The required dress was normally austere and plain, as the advertisement in Figure 4 illustrates. The particular uniform was selected by the mistress, as an expression of her identity, thus wiping out the individuality of the Irish maid in a way not dissimilar to military or prison uniforms. Consistent with the public practice of the dress reform movement, this private practice kept the maids from wearing clothes that were often equal in quality to the mistress's own. It also prevented any blurring of the boundaries between employer and maid (Scott, 2005).

Nevertheless, the Irish women were so well-dressed that their affinity for high style became as much a cultural stereotype as the drinking and brawling was for Irish men: 'Young Irish women, according to a number of observers, seemed to be dressed in fashionable clothes as soon as they stepped off the boats at Castle Garden' (Banner, 1983, p. 25). Puritans had historically associated showy dressing with sexual indiscretion; similarly, their anti-Catholic folklore held that 'Romish believers' were also sexually promiscuous, especially the women. A further peculiarity of American class prejudices included the presumption that working class women were sexually indiscriminate (Scott, 2005). Thus, servant girls in stylish dress (a display equally observable, it should be noted, among the factory girls) caused alarm among middle- and upper-class Protestants, who believed this consumer behaviour to be *prima facie* evidence of a huge prostitution racket.

So, ironically, one of the first large-scale social studies ever conducted in the US was an elaborate inquiry into the dress of working-class girls in Boston (Wright, 1969). The girls, as it turned out,

were completely innocent and were fully exonerated. They did spend $67.76 each year on clothing, the second largest expenditure they had (after food and shelter). They gave a nearly equal amount, $67.33, in support of others, mostly family. Furthermore, they saved more than was spent on clothing, putting away $72.15 each year. The researchers concluded that these young women were creatively using little money to very good effect in their dress. Overall, they were showing far more generosity and propensity to plan for the future than anyone had thought.

This spending behaviour is a microcosm of the economic strategy that legions of Irish working women apparently followed – saving a substantial amount, using a significant portion of their money to assist others, and using the rest for a little personal pleasure (Diner, 1983). Taken as a whole, this pattern in turn led to massive shifts of money, now well documented, from America into Ireland and from private purses into the coffers of the Catholic church. Between 1848 and 1864, Irish immigrants in America (mostly the women because of the different circumstances of the men) were able to send $65 million in remittances back to Ireland (Sowell, 1981). Furthermore, the bulk of the continuing immigration was a chain of females, made up of women who, once established in America, sent cash for passage to girls back home (Diner, 1983). Indeed, historians estimate that as much as 75 percent of the nineteenth century Irish immigration to America was financed by money coming from west of the Atlantic (Sowell, 1981).

While the Irish maids were challenging the dress superiority of Protestant housewives from within the household, a subtle shift took place among those who produced clothing for the prosperous Protestant wife. By 1900, Irish females were nearly 60 percent of the textile industry's labour force and about 30 percent of all dressmakers and seamstresses were Irish as well (Takaki, 1993). Furthermore, by this time, some of the Irishwomen in the dressmaking business had become quite successful, more than a few of them reaching a level we would now call 'designer', rather than 'seamstress'. For instance, Anna White was a widow whose dressmaking business allowed her a gracious home, a salon of artists and literati, and the ability to send her daughters to a posh boarding school. One of those daughters, Carmel

White Snow, eventually became the editor of the elite fashion magazine, *Harper's Bazaar*, a post she held for 27 years and from which she almost unilaterally set the fashion standards for the Protestant ruling class (Scott, 2005).

In fact, across the board, the efforts of the first generation of Irish women resulted in considerable upward mobility among the next cohort, especially girls. Daughters of the Bridget generation were educated and went into white collar jobs, especially nursing, teaching, and office work (Takaki, 1993; Diner, 1983). So, though most of the first generation continued to be servants for a long time, their children won jobs that not only required education, but good grooming, clean habits, nice dress, and genteel manners.

We can see, then, that the reform movement's focus on changing the dress habits of the working and immigrant class would have had a ripple of negative effects on the Irish population. Had it been successful, dress reform would have pulled the economic rug from under the new working class of the modern economy, with particularly disastrous consequences for the Irish (and, actually, the Italians and Russians who followed before the end of the century). This attempt to legislate consumer behaviour would not only have shut down hundreds of factories, but would have displaced innumerable seamstresses and dressmakers, as well as shopgirls, throughout the former British colonies. It would also have taken away the one outlet for expressing identity available to a large segment of the working population, domestic servants, nearly 80 percent of whom were Irish by the 1850s (Takaki, 1993). Perhaps most importantly, it would have handed cultural control of the most visible means of marking class and sectarian identity to the Puritan elite. Though it is now well recognised by American historians that the temperance movement was a cover for the power agenda of the Yankee Protestant ruling class, feminist historians have consistently treated dress reform as an unambiguously positive attempt to save American women from the evils of 'excessive dress' (Gusfeld, 1963; Scott, 2005).

Public Goods and Services: Part II

Irishwomen became the most upwardly mobile group among all immigrant females. The men, however, continued to struggle economically for

Figure 5   **'Life', 18 June 1896**

"Is it correct, Mamma, to call servants 'help'?"
"No, my dear,   That term is obsolete."

many decades. Historian Hasia Diner, however, argues that Irish gender norms supported economic activity for women and political activity for men (1983). If we look further at the outcomes of early Irishmen's political efforts, we see a different kind of success – and a sea change in the manner of distributing and consuming public goods.

The effect of the Irish takeover of municipal politics in America was to dramatically alter the class makeup of the government, putting influence in the hands of working class people, some of whom had risen from urban ghettos (Sowell, 1981). Ronald Takaki remarks on the redistributive impact of these Irish city governments: 'In New York, Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco, Irish political machines functioned like "Robin Hoods", taking taxes from the Yankee middle class and giving revenues to the Irish through the public payrolls' (1993, p. 162). In the cities where the Irish were in control – which, in time, meant most northern cities west to San Francisco – their countrymen made up a third of all municipal employees (Takaki, 1993). These were solid, stable, reasonably well paid jobs, if not hugely prestigious, and so were highly sought after by those who had been confined to unstable, unskilled work. The takeover of police and fire departments was particularly rapid and complete: within 10 years of the appearance of Irish potato blight, 30 percent of New York City policemen were Irish; by the 1890s, the police and fire departments of every major American city were controlled by the Irish (Sowell, 1981). Not surprisingly, the Irish policeman or fireman became a stock cultural figure, much as had the Irish maid, as the cartoon in Figure 5 illustrates.

Irish city governments favoured Irish builders for public works contracts, so the production of goods for public consumption shifted to the second Irish generation (Sowell, 1981). By 1870, a fifth of all building contractors were Irish, possibly reflecting this preferential treatment. The Irish were, in turn, also disproportionately represented in the elite venues of skilled construction labour – plumbers, steamfitters, stonecutters, and so on (Takaki, 1993). This city connection, combined with labour organising activities, probably brought about the measurable increase in the number of skilled workers among the Irish as each first generation gave way to the second. By 1900, 65 percent of Irish

workers were in blue collar trades, including 78 percent skilled. Fully 66 percent of the first generation ended their careers as unskilled or semiskilled labourers, while only 33 percent of the second generation did (Takaki, 1993).

The informal ethos of the Irish political machine made city services more accessible to 'members of the great urban masses who needed help in getting a job, or naturalisation papers, or food or fuel to last through an emergency. The bewildering bureaucracies, regulations and red tape confronting the poor and undereducated could be made responsive or could be circumvented through the episodic interventions of political bosses' (Sowell, 1981, p. 31). These Irish political bosses were an intriguing bunch, including the singing mayor of Boston, 'Honey Fitz' (real name John F. Fitzgerald and grandfather to future President John F. Kennedy) and Richard J. Daley, who controlled Chicago for 20 years during the twentieth century (his son, also named Richard J. Daley, has been mayor of Chicago since 1989).

Though some were charming and often beloved, many were also rogues. James Michael Curley was

mayor of Boston no fewer than four times, but he was also state governor and was elected to the US Congress twice. Somewhere in between all these terms in elected office, Curley also served two terms in prison. 'Big Tim' Sullivan of New York was described as 'a warm-hearted giant' who collected graft from multiple sources but also distributed food and clothes generously to the poor (Sowell, 1981, p. 30). In sum, as Sowell observes, 'The Irish were by no means the originators of corrupt politics. They were simply more successful at it, and performed with a warmer human touch. No small part of their success was due to the insensitivity of their political opponents to the desires and fears of the immigrant masses in the cities' (1981, p. 33). This greater sensitivity to the need to make emergency services and goods for relief available to the urban poor, especially immigrants, was clearly an historical echo of their own experience as the desperate consumers of public charity and institutional services in the first generation.

The city government was not the only institution that came to be dominated by the Irish. The Catholic Church in America also came under Celtic control. But it had to be built first. And the visible construction of a Catholic bureaucracy – complete with its own hospitals, schools, and orphanages, as well as images and celebrations – was probably the most unnerving material impact of the immigration for the Protestant hierarchy.

Building the American Church

Remember that there was no Catholic Church to speak of in the former British colonies. The convents, monasteries, and churches that were built before the Irish immigration had often been targets of arson and anti-Catholic rioting, particularly for the 15 years just prior to the Famine (Hennesey, 1981). Therefore, the cathedrals and parishes in America had to be built from nearly nothing and were constructed under the suspicious eye of a fiercely anti-Catholic majority. Indeed, it is a telling detail that St Patrick's Cathedral in New York, one of the first and most famous, was built with a tall brick wall around it, specifically to protect the site from torches and missiles (Golway, 1997).

St Patrick's, like many other cathedrals, was criticised strongly because it was 'built with the pennies of the poor' (Golway, 1997, p. 45). As we have seen, the Catholic Church in America was indeed built via the scrimping and saving of those who had very little. Yet the ethic of the Irish, particularly after hundreds of years in which the support of the Church had been the only defence against British oppression, was understandably insistent on deploying funds in this way. Furthermore, by building an infrastructure for the Church, the Irish produced yet another parallel institution that could feed the poor, educate children, support widows, care for orphans, minister to the sick, and even support labour unions and counsel criminals (Sowell, 1981; Diner, 1983). In other words, by constructing a Church in the New World, they helped free themselves from dependency on an institutional system that had betrayed them in the past and showed little regard for them in the present.

Once again, the sheer numbers of Catholics 'invading' America was probably a major reason for the upsurge in xenophobia typical of this time. The Catholic population more than doubled in only 10 years (1840–50), and most of these were 'Famine Irish' arriving in the last five years of this window. The religious echo of the immigration followed almost immediately: the number of parishes established in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia all doubled within 20 years of the first arrivals (Golway, 1997).

As with the municipal power structure, the American Church hierarchy was dominated by the Irish – and that continued to be true for many years, even though the Germans and Italians who emigrated during the nineteenth and early twentieth century were also Catholic. By the twentieth century, the Irish represented only 17 percent of American Catholics, but they were 35 percent of the clergy and 50 percent of the total hierarchy. Thirteen of America's first 17 cardinals were Irish. Over half of all the Catholic bishops from 1789 to 1935 were Irish. Between the American Revolution and the Great Depression, 464 American bishops had Irish fathers – and this doesn't count the sons of Irish mothers or of second, third, or fourth generation Irishmen (Golway, 1997; Sowell, 1981).

Diner documents the close collaboration that occurred between Catholic nuns and Irish working women (1983). Savings were deployed in a

conscious and organised fashion to build their own orphanages, deploy their own care for the poor and the sick, and, most especially, to build schools. (By 1885, Irish Catholic schoolchildren outnumbered Protestant students in Boston (Takaki, 1993)). Some of this activity had an interesting feminist twist: the Irish built 296 schools by 1870, of which 209 were for girls (Diner, 1983). Collaboration between the city machines and the Church also resulted in some surprising turns of fate. For instance, by the mid-1870s, Catholics estimated that the reform movement was shipping 10,000 Catholic children out of New York City alone and placing them in Midwestern Protestant homes. After years of struggling to get laws passed that would at least place orphans in homes of their own religious tradition, the nuns of New York benefited from a decision by the city bosses that funnelled huge amounts of municipal money into building Catholic orphanages, making it impractical to put Irish orphans anywhere else (Fitzgerald, 1997).

Many Protestants felt that poor immigrants simply had too many children in the first place. They attributed the fertility of the Irish to an unrestrained sexuality (a prejudice that historical statistics now clearly contradict, as the Irish had very low rates of births out-of-wedlock and tended to marry much later than the Protestants) (Diner, 1983). Once married, however, the Irish did tend to have very large families, therefore giving substance to popular prejudices about their fertility. By the early twentieth century, population growth among the urban poor had become a big issue. Though middle-class Protestants were confidently using birth control themselves, they would not support the distribution of contraceptive information or materials among this lower class, believing that all immigrants were mad with lust and should simply control their passions better (Scott, 2005). An Irish nurse, the daughter of a first generation 'Bridget', championed the emergent American birth control movement. Propelled into the fight by the horrible cycle of unwanted births, poverty, and maternal death she had seen as a child, Margaret Sanger was jailed repeatedly under the insidious Comstock Laws for distributing 'obscene materials' – that is, birth control instructions (Scott, 2005). The founder of Planned Parenthood (now a nationwide network of reproductive services), Sanger's name is practically a synonym for birth control in America.

Irish men and women were still, of course, constrained by their religion in this matter. Though subsequent generations would marry outside their ethnic group, the first generation, and to a lesser degree the second, married each other and so remained solidly in the Catholic Church, where they also raised their children. It is interesting to note that despite the very strong taboos against marriage between blacks and whites that were typical of the US until at least the 1950s, the early Irish immigrants intermarried with other groups at a lower rate than did whites and African-Americans (Sowell, 1981).

Irish church dominance often showed outwardly through Cathedral imagery and annual festivals. St Patrick's Church in Chicago, for instance, has stained glass windows replete with the circles, spirals, and braided crosses that typify Celtic design – not to mention dragons' heads and birds' beaks. Some of the windows depict great saints of Ireland as well as the lives of more secular heroes, both ancient and modern, such as Brian Boru and Terence MacSwiney (Golway, 1997, p. 54). The celebration of Christmas, outlawed under the Puritans in their uncompromising stance against Catholicism, rose to its current prominence in the American calendar as a result of the combined forces of commercialisation and Catholic immigration in the nineteenth century (Nissenbaum, 1997).

Halloween, a holiday with ancient roots as 'Samhain' in Celtic culture, had been syncretised by the Catholic Church as 'All Souls Day' by the eighth century. After the Reformation, however, the English outlawed All Souls Day on doctrinal grounds, though it continued to be celebrated secretly by Catholics for many years. In the era of Cromwell, the celebration of Halloween was emphatically replaced with Guy Fawkes Day (or Gunpowder Plot day) on November 5 to commemorate the narrow escape from a Catholic conspiracy against the British government. Of course, the Irish, being Catholic and anti-British, continued to celebrate Halloween in traditional ways. By the time of the Irish immigration, therefore, celebration of Halloween was yet another of those cultural lines that divided the British Protestants from the Irish Catholics. In America, the Puritans of New England, like their counterparts in Britain, had 'detested the holiday' and banned it,

as they did Christmas, as 'an unnecessary concession to the Antichrist' (Rogers, 2002, p. 49). American almanacs of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century make no mention of Halloween, but highlight the Gunpowder Plot instead. The Irish brought the holiday to America with them, converting the traditional turnip lantern into one made of the more readily available pumpkin, but retaining all the touchpoints with ghosts and witchcraft that still characterise what is now one of America's most popular holidays (Aveni, 2003; Rogers, 2002).

The incursions of Christmas and Halloween into American Protestant consciousness resulted in a crusade to expand the traditional New England commemoration of the Pilgrims' first harvest to a national observance. Articulated by proponents explicitly as an attempt to raise the profile of Yankee Protestant culture under the perceived attack by papist foreignness, Thanksgiving was proclaimed a national holiday by Abraham Lincoln in 1863 and was, in the beginning, explicitly a religious holiday (Aveni, 2003). As a consequence, Americans now feast almost nonstop from the end of October until the New Year – they essentially observe three traditional harvest festivals in a row. Far from being evidence of mere commercial manipulation and unconstrained consumption in the present, this string of feasts is the vestige of America's first multicultural moment.

In the early days of the Irish immigration, all the saints' days, but particularly Halloween, Christmas, and St Patrick's Day, were occasions for proclaiming ethnic solidarity. The various Irish societies held St Patrick's Day celebrations of all sorts, often large and showy (Handlin, 1941). Today, St Patrick's Day is a major – and raucous – event in America, especially where the Irish are still a strong presence. The average American spends about $35 to celebrate the day, mostly on green beer and clothing, but also on Irish specialties like soda bread – adding up to whopping $3 billion in retail sales (Knight, 2007). Yet the holiday retains the most problematic association for the Irish: public house drunkenness is the major behavioural feature of St Patrick's Day celebrations. As a consequence, the negatives of Irish stereotypes continue to echo in public discourse: for example, a 2004 seasonal ad for Miller beer's 'drink responsibly' campaign announced that

'even the Irish don't rely on luck' and showed a set of keys with a shamrock on the ring.

From Jack O'Lanterns to Planned Parenthood, from green beer to stained glass, the Irish have left a permanent imprint on American culture. Yet most of these objects and practices survived intense intracultural struggle, a fact that is now often lost in commentary on the consumer behaviours that have been left behind.

Irish Aristocrats in America

Forced by circumstance into a parallel power structure, the Irish soon produced their own parallel capital and their own wealthy class. Known as the FIFs ('First Irish Families'), an Irish aristocracy was visible by 1900. So, though California has its famous four barons of the gold era (Crocker, Hopkins, Huntington, and Stanford), the Irish had their four 'Silver Kings' (James C. Flood, William S. O'Brien, James Gordon Fair, and John William Mackay). The Protestants had their 'wedding of the century' when Consuelo Vanderbilt married the Duke of Marlborough; the Irish had theirs when Anne McDonnell married Henry Ford II (Birmingham, 1973; Scott, 2005).

Though wealthy and powerful, the Murrays, McDonnells, and Cuddihys, like many others who earned their wealth in the explosion of the modern American economy, were excluded from the company of the established Protestant elites, though with an especially hostile air. The famous Southampton resort – now a playground for American elites of any religious or ethnic background – was originally founded by the FIFs when they were excluded from nearby Newport. The Irish rich were, of course, accused of being flashier with their wealth than their more 'refined' Protestant counterparts (Birmingham, 1973). The Irish aristocrats were also criticised for their delight in publicity, which the Protestants claimed to shun (although a review of the popular press of the day shows extensive coverage of the American Protestant elite's activities) (Birmingham, 1973; Scott, 2005).

The Irish rich themselves exhibited some behaviours that constituted a fairly pointed retort. Many of them built private chapels in their mansions; virtually all continued to support the Church and to send their children to Catholic

schools. Thomas E. Murray, one of the earliest of the FIF group, made any non-Catholic coming for a date with one of his children wait in a special Protestants-only anteroom. When the temperance movement finally enacted Prohibition, Murray, who had never served a drink in his home up until that time, insisted on having cocktails every night (Birmingham, 1973). These actions and attitudes speak of a paradox typical of the Irish population over time. As Andrew Greeley, who has chronicled the American Irish both historically and statistically, observed: 'the Irish came to this country with a history of a thousand years of misery, suffering, oppression, violence, exploitation, atrocity, and genocide ... Like all such people, they were torn between the desire for respectability and savage resentment of their oppressors. If anyone thinks that the twin themes of respectability and resentment are not part of the heritage of the American Irish, he simply does not know the American Irish very well' (1981, p. 68).

Eventually, however, just like the previous nouveau riche in America, the FIFs married into other wealthy families – sometimes named Vanderbilt or Mellon – and thus were absorbed into the very group they had once resented and who resented them (Birmingham, 1973; Scott, 2005). The same was true of their less wealthy compatriots.

Assimilation

Poet Margo Lockwood, who was eight years old in 1947, remembers her home on the second floor of a three-decker house in the Whiskey Point neighborhood of Boston: 'My mother bought a proper frame for the starching and stretch-drying of our lace curtains from the household of a neighbor who had died. It was a long, expandable oak frame propped up on pointed legs, and there were two-inch needles that held up to six lace curtains at a time, one atop the other, so they could dry from morning till night.' As a child, Margo's chore was to take care of the cleaning of these curtains, a prized mark of Irish family status:

> Kneeling on the porch floor and taking the curtains out one by one from the starch water, out from the zinc tub, I would be allowed to place the curtains on the needles. I always slipped and pricked my fingers, and there would be blood on the borders of those curtains. The lace was stiff from the starch,

even when wet. You had to be quick and nimble-fingered. The material would drip on you as you positioned your outstretched arms to flip the curtain up to the top of the frame. Even if one lace curtain didn't have the little bit of red bloodstain on it, another would. To me, the lace curtain was our beauty because I never liked our furniture.

It meant we would suffer to have a nice house.
The lace curtains defined us.

(Lockwood, 1997, pp. 37–8)

The painstaking maintenance described here humanises for us the importance of an attribute that has since become a derisive cliché in American culture, even among Irish descendants. The 'lace curtain Irish' were the rising cohort that aspired to middle-class status among this community – in any generation. The curtains were a badge that claimed not only promise, but dignity, and consequently were of supreme importance, as we can see, to the families who had them. This single material item stood for the intention to rise against economic odds and cultural prejudice, to prosper and to be respected.

The Irish ascent into the middle class can often be tracked by looking at second generation cohorts who moved into skilled subsegments of the working class or who moved into various forms of professional or white collar work. Differences between immediate immigrants and the next generation are often marked: for instance, while only 10 percent of the first generation Irish were in white collar jobs in 1890, 40 percent of the second generation held that level of employment in the same year (Sowell, 1981). By 1900, two-thirds of the Irish in America were citizens by birth, and the second generation had a much better education and more mobility than their parents (Takaki, 1993). By 1910, the Irish were already going to college and choosing managerial and professional careers at a higher rate than that of typical white Americans (Greeley, 1981).

The ascent of the Irish into the middle class appears to have been accomplished by a combination of strategies: the 'gentrification' of children through education and home training in upwardly mobile manners and appearance, the support of the Irish as a class through political favour, alliances with the Catholic Church that went beyond the normal reach of the religious sphere, and active engagement with the American power

structure through organised means, such as labour unionising. The lace curtains of the Irish middle class, therefore, were often the heritage of brave, self-conscious, and insistent challenges to the existing economic, governmental, and religious power structure.

Historians nevertheless often remark that the Irish rose slowly in America, a fact attributed, on the one hand, to their alleged laziness, drunkenness, and absence of educational aspiration, and, on the other hand, to the fantastic prejudice that continued against them for many decades after the first arrival (Greeley, 1981; Sowell, 1981; Takaki, 1993). The true picture, as one might imagine, is somewhat more complex. One complication that arises in assessing the accomplishments of the Irish is that the immigration continued in repeated waves for many years. Since circumstances in Ireland did not improve much during this time, each new wave of 'first generation Irish' was nearly as penniless and pitiful as the Famine Irish had been. Adding these immigrants to a population described merely as 'Irish-American' for statistical analysis would necessarily counterbalance the accomplishments of those who came earlier. The numbers of middle-class, 'lace curtain' Irish did grow during this period, but barely kept pace with the growth in numbers of their incoming compatriots (Greeley, 1981). A second complication is intermarriage. Though the Irish resisted marital mixing for the first generation or so, eventually they began intermarrying with other groups in significant measure. Only 10 percent of the Famine Irish married outside their group, but, by 1960, half of Irishmen married women from other backgrounds (Sowell, 1981). This phenomenon is often taken as the ultimate measure of acceptance into the new environment, but it also has made it very hard to track the trajectory of subsequent generations.

By the second half of the twentieth century, Irish Americans – insofar as they could be identified – were about 8 percent of the population. Roughly 100 years after the famine migrations, Irish incomes were running 5 percent above the American average. Their years of schooling and representation at universities were the same as the total US profile; Irish IQ scores were consistently above average. They still showed a tendency toward alcoholism, but their family size had come down to the national average (Greeley, 1981).

The key here, though, is not the statistic of achievement, but the caveat: 'insofar as they could be identified'. Historians and demographers consistently caution that the Irish have been so completely assimilated into the American population that it is really impossible to say definitively how they have fared. Remember that the Irish were only the first of many large-scale immigrations to reach the US, so they have not been assimilated into a uniformly white Protestant culture, but into the ever-swirling 'melting pot' that became America. Today, between 50 percent and 70 percent of Americans cannot identify the ethnicity of their antecedents – because they simply don't know (Sowell, 1981; Takaki, 1993). Since assimilation and upward mobility have tended to go together in American culture, the presumption is that the Irish descendants who can no longer be identified are the very ones who have been the most successful (though they probably could be just as legitimately labelled 'Italian descendants' or 'German descendants'). So, documenting the achievements of those Americans who still self-identify as 'Irish' probably greatly understates the status of the Irish immigration's progeny (Greeley, 1981).

Discussion and Conclusion

Landmark recognition of the Irish assimilation came with a 1999 postage stamp, jointly issued by the US and Ireland, commemorating the Famine immigration. This ceremonial flourish would have stunned the Protestant population who so reluctantly received the starving Irish in the 1840s. Yet immigration was to become one of the distinctive features of the American narrative and the Irish set the stage for that plot to unfold. They were, in the words of one historian, 'the original huddled masses', a reference to the inscription on the Statue of Liberty (Golway, 1997, p. 7). By the lights of popular American history, then, the Irish immigration is a long, sad story with a Hollywood ending.

What do we make of this tale, however, from the perspective of a cultural theory of markets or of consumer behaviour? The story of the Irish immigrants and their engagement with the modern economy cannot be told from a purely class-based economic perspective, but must be richly couched in a complex history that accounts for religion, political history, race, gender, legal experience,

military past, linguistic roots, and even artistic tradition.

Evaluation of the Irish case must necessarily also confront paradox and contradiction, while still accommodating the pragmatic and singular intent that typified this group's behaviour. The Irish knowingly engaged in an all-out attempt to win at the game of the modern market – to acquire the dominant style in objects and practices, to win respectability, to become 'mainstream', even 'bourgeois' – yet they also exhibited critical consciousness in an unambiguous and easily documented way, whether they were breaking dishes, building churches, sewing dresses, buying votes, or blowing up coal mines. Their consumer behaviour, far from being a compartmentalised set of discrete decisions or an ideologically induced form of submission, was woven into the whole fabric of their struggle, of a piece with their politics and their resistance. Their very spending and saving patterns demonstrate, on the one hand, the desire to triumph over the dominant culture by blending with it and, on the other, the intention to subvert dominance by building parallel power structures – and by simply causing their oppressors to be as materially and spiritually uncomfortable as possible.

One of the ways the Irish eventually came into power was to produce their own capital class and to take over, rather than bring down, the government. Another primary means of subversion at every level was the emergent popular culture and its media. The cultural theories that now strongly influence our own consumer research do not contemplate the possibilities for multiple elites and numerous, sometimes conflicting, bases for power, nor for a culture industry that is, in some ways and at some times, oppositional. Such narrow imagining not only limits our ability to analyse and comprehend this single historical case, but poses a fundamental constraint on understanding the meaning of 'popular culture' in much of the developing world today. In many of those environments, mass culture (e.g. 'capitalist culture') is posed against an entrenched, but declining traditional elite that, like the Protestants of this story, presents itself in religious terms as guardians of the sacred and of a truer, higher, more authentic aesthetic (Zakaria, 2008). Just as the opposition between the consumption morality of the

American Protestants and that of the arriving Irish Catholics spoke of interest and power, rather than directives from God, today's global consumption conflicts are also ideological and should not be overly romanticised in order to protect a more 'natural' or 'authentic' traditional culture.

Paradoxically, the Irish also succeeded often by ignoring the formal American structure and devising their own shadow system. Sometimes these arrangements crossed over into illegality, and sometimes they had negative related consequences in terms of substance abuse, violence, and prostitution. Yet much of this activity was, in a sense, forced on them by exclusion. Indeed, the informal economy of the urban black ghetto in America today has many parallels, from its informal economic structure to its methods of arbitration and order-keeping to the blurred borders between 'respectable' people and those engaged in drug traffic and prostitution (Venkatesh, 2006). A larger social framework adapted from this analogy might have fairly strong implications for those who intend, under the umbrella of transformational consumer research, to affect 'dysfunctional' consumption behaviours.

The circumstances of populations in developing markets around the world often bear a complex relationship to the global market system, one dramatically shaped by fine local variations in colonial history, gender structure, and political ideology – just as was the Irish experience. Dealing critically with globalisation, then, would require that we adapt to local intelligence and circumstance, rather than staying at a meta-level that gives more weight to theory than to local detail.

Indeed, the principles of theory would demand we ask whether the accomplishments of the Irish amount to 'revolution' or whether they merely successfully 'sold out'. There is no question that the efforts of the Irish transformed the American scene in almost every way – from the perspective of religion, politics, gender, race, or labour – yet the outcome was that this group came to participate as fully as their oppressors in the new market economy and its burgeoning consumer culture. There is no significant evidence to suggest the Irish wished to destroy the American system, only to be fully admitted to it. Given the utterly inhospitable attitude that the existing culture held

towards them, I am unwilling to dismiss the Irish-American accomplishment as being anything less than revolutionary just because of its 'mainstreaming' result.

If, however, full inclusion in the market economy, as opposed to forceful exclusion from it, can be admitted as a legitimate end to revolutionary action, then we would have to rethink leading cultural theories of the market in a fairly major way. I have argued elsewhere (2007) that our own field's

body of work inherently challenges the premises of 'critical' theory as it has been practised in other areas of the academy these last 30 years. Internally, the field seems divided over both the ends and the philosophical premises that should guide a 'critical marketing' approach. The case of the Irish immigration to America seems to add further evidence in support of an agenda that rethinks modernist theoretical assumptions while assembling a critical approach that can confront the full range of market politics in the world today.

Author

Linda Scott is professor in marketing at the Saïd Business School, Oxford University, which she joined in 2006 from the University of Illinois where she held appointments in advertising, art, women's studies, and communications. She has written extensively on cultural issues related to advertising and consumption. Her current research interests focus on women's empowerment in emerging markets and changing symbol systems in the globalising consumer culture.

She is on the board of the Advertising Educational Foundation in New York and is the editor of *Advertising & Society Review*. She is also on the advisory boards for G23, Omnicom's women's consultancy, and for the Organisation for Women in International Trade, as well as for the Internationalist's awards for media innovation.

References

Aveni, Anthony (2003), *The Book of the Year: A Brief History of our Seasonal Holidays*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Banner, Lois (1983), *American Beauty*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Benes, Peter (1984), 'Itinerant entertainers in New England and New York, 1687–1830', in Peter Benes (ed.), *Itinerancy in New England and New York*, Boston University Press, Boston.

Birmingham, Stephen (1973), *Real Lace: America's Irish Rich*, Harper & Row, New York.

Boyer, Paul S. (1968), *Purity in Print*, Scribners, New York.

Boyer, Richard O. and Herbert M. Morais (1975), *Labor's Untold Story*, United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America, New York.

Cliff, Nigel (2007), *The Shakespeare Riots*, Random House, New York.

Demos, John Putnam (1982), *Entertaining Satan*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Diner, Hasia (1983), *Erin's Daughters in America*, Johns Hopkins Universiy Press, Baltimore.

Earle, Alice Morse (1968), *Customs and Fashions in Old New England*, Singing Tree, Detroit.

Fitzgerald, Maureen (1997), 'Saving the children', in Michael Coffey (ed.), *The Irish in America*, Hyperion, New York, pp. 60–6.

Golway, Terry (1997), Text of *The Irish in America*, Michael Coffey (ed.), Hyperion, New York.

Greeley, Andrew (1981), *The Irish Americans*, Harper and Row, New York.

Gusfeld, Joseph R. (1963), *Symbolic Crusade: Status, Politics, and the American Temperance Movement*, Urbana, University of Illinois.

Handlin, Oscar (1941), *Boston's Immigrants*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge. MA.

Hennesey, James (1981), *American Catholics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Kenny, K. (1998), *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Knight, Kristina (2007), 'Report: St. Paddy's Day to hold big rewards', *BizReport*, March 13, www.bizreport.com/2007/03/report_st_pattys_day_to_hold_big_rewards.html.

Lockwood, Margo (1997), 'The true meaning of "Lace Curtain"', in Michael Coffey (ed.), *The Irish in America*, Hyperion, New York, pp. 37–8.

Mother Jones (2004), *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*, Dove, New York.

Nissenbaum, Stephen (1997), *The Battle for Christmas*, Vintage, New York.

Peiss, Kathy (1986), *Cheap Amusements*, Temple, Philadelphia.

Pivar, Daniel (1973), *Purity Crusade*, Greenwood, Westport, CT.

Quinn, Peter (1997), 'Farmers no more', in Michael Coffey (ed.), *The Irish in America*, PBS, New York, pp. 41–2.

Rogers, Nicholas (2002), *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Scott, Linda (2005), *Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism*, Palgrave, New York.

— (2007), 'Critical marketing: an armchair report', in Avi Shankar and Pauline Maclaran (eds.), *Critical Marketing*, Elsevier, London.

Sowell, Thomas (1981), *Ethnic America: A History*, Basic Books, New York.

Takaki, Ronald (1993), *A Different Mirror*, Little, Brown & Co., New York.

Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi (2006), *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Wright, Carroll Davidson (1969), *The Working Girls of Boston*, Arno, New York.

Zakaria, Fareed (2008), *The Post-American World*, W.W. Norton, New York.

Zinn, Howard (1995), *A People's History of the United States*, Harper's, New York.

BRANDING IRISH CINEMA: REFLECTIONS UPON CELTIC CONSUMER SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN DUBLIN

Pat Brereton

This article examines various aesthetic strategies used in a number of recent films to represent and help brand [post] Celtic Tiger Ireland. Applying the retro branding analysis developed by Stephen Brown et al. (2003), and using their notion of 'allegory' to describe an Irish brand story, a close reading is provided of films like *The Commitments* (1991) and *Angela's Ashes* (2000) to more contemporary films including *About Adam* (1999), *Adam and Paul* (2004), *The Tiger's Tail (2007)* and *Once* (2007), alongside the recent huge success of *In Bruges* (2008). It contends that the pervasive issue of branding identity, coupled with creating an distinctive Irish brand, remains an abiding preoccupation within Irish cinema.

This paper focuses on various aesthetic strategies used in a number of recent films to represent and help brand [post] Celtic Tiger Ireland. While worrying over the possibility of jettisoning traditional Irish cinematic references as archaic, there is on the other hand a danger of simply embracing a hyper vision of Ireland. Calling on a useful examination of retro branding by Stephen Brown et al. (2003), and applying their notion of 'allegory' to describe an Irish brand story, alongside differentiating the uniqueness of Irish film and the creation of a type of 'aura' by referencing an idealised rural community, which dovetails with much film discussion over the years. The valorising of an Arcadian community has however been overturned in recent films, resulting in difficulties in maintaining a coherent branding strategy for Irish film. Nevertheless, from *The Commitments* (1991) and *Angela's Ashes* (2000) to more contemporary films including *About Adam* (1999), *Adam and Paul* (2004), *The Tiger's Tail* (2007) and *Once* (2007), alongside the recent huge success of *In Bruges* (2008), the pervasive issue of identity, coupled with creating an distinctive Irish brand, remains an abiding preoccupation within Irish cinema.

With intensifying debates around levels of globalisation (see Kilbourne, 2004) there continues to be much confusion around what a brand represents and how it can be appreciated in exploring the mercurial cultural capital evident within a small and often struggling Irish film industry. A national branded film signals to the consumer the origin of the product, providing assurances about the place and methods of production. Ideally a brand signifies authenticity in all aspects of the production, if not necessarily the distribution process that in the case of film remains predominantly controlled by American multinational corporations. While such a clear affirmation of originality was the case with early artisanal and politically driven indigenous Irish cinema up to the end of the 1980s, as the industry moved into a more 'mature phase' with greater production output and much of it at least co-financed from abroad, the intrinsic differential between the dominant competition of Hollywood generic output and Irish film production appeared to narrow so much that for many, home movies became almost indistinguishable from the commercial Hollywood product. In other words, for some commentators, Irish film had lost its unique brand identity. I will test this overall assessment and judgement in the readings to follow.

Both marketing and communications help to flesh out the complex nexus of relations between the creative media industries and the broader marketplace framed across global consumption debates. For instance, Morris Holbrook's Consumer Research studies and Stephen Brown's special issue on Celtic Marketing in the *Journal of Strategic Marketing* (2006), or Daragh O'Reilly's 'Cultural Brands/Branding Cultures' (2005),[1] all help to initiate and

---

1 O'Reilly suggests at the outset that marketing including branding is 'not a natural analytical repertoire for the

frame such a dialogue. Furthermore, Linda Scott's (1994) 'reader response' study of mediated stimuli and several other marketing focused analyses can certainly help to build foundations for both of our respective disciplines to thrive. As a film theorist, I am convinced of the need to engage in such bridge-building exercises to help ensure the Irish film industry can learn from global marketing and consumption models alongside re-articulating aesthetic and other forms of film analysis.[2]

Back in the 1980s the Irish government accepted the need to kick start an indigenous film industry which would, like others in Europe, serve to initiate debate around identity and to a lesser extent promote a marketable brand for Irish film at home and abroad. Many involved wanted to overcome the negative stereotyping perpetuated by American and British filmmakers who colonised Irish screen space and apparently characterised the Irish as a backward, rural community with a propensity for violence and alcoholic excess. Other critics like Luke Gibbons (2002) suggest that such negative attributes were transformed into reflexive and postmodern branding tropes in American-Irish films, especially *The Quiet Man* (1952). In any case, the newly established Film Board sought to promote indigenous filmmaking and hopefully create a successful and uniquely Irish branded film language. But all too quickly the ground rules changed, as Ireland became economically prosperous in the 1990s and sought to ignore, if not positively dismiss, the erstwhile nostalgic Arcadian rural image of the country, as both outmoded and irrelevant to a maturing cosmopolitan new Ireland, while welcoming new influences from around the world. Paradoxically,

however, as already mentioned, it was this very outmoded Arcadian imagery, that was most appealing as a core branding signifier for large Irish American audiences. Consequently it has taken a while to uncover how to reinvent and rediscover Ireland's 'unique' contemporary culture, which can be appealing both at home and abroad.

In the postmodern marketplace it is suggested that mass production churns out virtually indistinguishable commodities whose market value depends on the signs that represent them. In particular Baudrillard's theory of simulated experience in a postmodern age and his well-rehearsed and insightful exploration of the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic texts, is useful in exploring this transformation. Similar debates concerning the intrinsic value and quality of film, as produced and consumed in Ireland and abroad, have been less forthcoming within the academy. Of course, what is at stake in this process of separating use value and sign value is more than the emergence of brands as free-floating global cultural signifiers. Most significant for an Irish cultural industry is the need to secure a uniquely and robustly Irish brand, which at the same time speaks to evolving identity debates for a fast changing Irish population, while continuing to satisfy global demands.[3]

As already suggested, the notion of the brand has become structurally detached from the use value of the branded product as the sign becomes valuable in and of itself. It is frequently suggested that films can be sold through production companies like Disney or DreamWorks that are often virtually indistinguishable from a host of competitors, yet are nonetheless charged with powerful redolent symbolism and brand imagery. While the national film industry may not have been conceived with this primary commercial purpose in mind, nonetheless their success also remains a

---

study of exchange relationships, but is itself a particular kind of cultural brand, namely an ideological myopia which operates in the service of capital' (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 573).

2 While film studies and even reception analysis seldom ventures into what might be considered alien 'business studies' territory, the emergence of such 'new consumer research' in the late 1980s was driven to a very large extent 'by a group of business school-based anthropologists, sociologists, historians and literary critics, who were committed to a much broader, more interdisciplinary approach to consumption behaviour than had previously prevailed'. See Belk (1995) in Brown and Turley, 2007, p. 10. This is good news for a more holistic engagement with film and media studies.

3 Or as Kent Grayson suggests: 'as marketers construct these "authentic" environments are they truly matching consumers' expectations of the culture they are seeking to represent? Does the ethnic environment's authenticity decline the further away it is replicated from the originating country? Can consumers decipher what is a real ethnic environment from that which is recreated? How important is it to the consumer that the environment is "authentic"?' (2002, p. 45).

branding one. Yet how Irish films can ever possibly acquire the cachet of a Hollywood studio brand, much less compete at any level with the economics of production and distribution stacked against them, remains a major dilemma. Consequently Irish production gladly accepts Hollywood part-funding at least, while continuing to create an authentic brand identity. This model is exemplified by *In Bruges* for instance, while the Film Board tries to self-finance more small-scale and indigenous production like *Adam and Paul* and *Once*. (See for instance Paul Grainge's study entitled *Brand Hollywood* from 2008.) In spite of problems around funding and distribution, the ever increasing aura around 'Irishness' as a unique cultural phenomenon in literature and theatre especially – evidenced by its branding success in America of late – helps create the possibility of a robust branding identity which can be applied to recent successful Irish films, including those discussed in this paper.

National Identity and the Commercial Imperative in New Irish Cinema

Commentators continue to point to a recent crisis of representation and a subsequent problem with branding Irish cinema, rather than inferring that poor quality *per se* might be the primary reason why so many recent films – almost 200 made since the 1990s – have been relatively unsuccessful in the marketplace. Before this period, the handful of indigenous Irish film makers were encouraged by the funding agencies to produce more art-house socially reflexive movies which spoke directly to the reality of lived experience in the country, with little or no consideration or accommodation for building outside audiences. More recently however filmmakers are clearly driven by the demands of the marketplace and the need to create viable product, as government and funding agencies demand some tangible return on investment.

Especially in this postmodernist era, with notions of history and national identity producing less consensus for new generations of Irish audiences and film makers – much to the chagrin of nationalist and other critics – new aesthetic strategies are being posited and tested. In this climate it is intimated that the only truly authentic aspect of Irish film production of late is its 'accent'. Certainly, it would appear that less currency is given to the

polemical and political agendas of the past, which regarded film as an important medium to educate and promote a radical agenda, following on from the Literary Revivalist project in a previous age. Irish cultural production had up to recently reflected 'a post-colonial imperative to assert the validity of a distinctive Irish identity' (Barton, 2004, p. 9). While most of the small number of indigenous films made in the 1980s, directed by home grown artists like Joe Comerford, Bob Quinn and Pat Murphy among others, created highly original art-house and politically charged studies of Irish society, of late the branding policy of funding agencies and audience demands have moved on somewhat from this artisanal model of production. Incidentally most of this publically-funded output, while critically influential (see Flynn and Brereton, 2007), unfortunately achieved relatively small audience figures both at home and abroad. Consequently the new film policy has switched gears somewhat to also promote more accessible and commercially driven narratives, some of which are exemplified in this paper and all at least partially funded by Irish tax payers' money.[4]

Now that the economy has been transformed through a 'Celtic Tiger' renaissance, continuing the long-term erosion of population from rural areas and the decimation of erstwhile indigenous occupations like farming, there certainly appears to have been a rejection of long cherished Arcadian values often emanating from the romanticised west of Ireland, together with a form of amnesia towards the traumas of the past, as evidenced by the current preoccupation with contemporary and urban-based generic cinema. Such home-grown narratives appear less interested in valorising a well established touristic landscape and have become preoccupied with emulating a generic Hollywood template which appears less authentic to some critics, serving to undercut the well established Irish brand identity while paradoxically aiming for more global commercial suc-

---

4 As an Irish film academic, I believe new marketing tools and methodologies for research and engagement are needed to understand and explain the more prolific and commercially driven second wave of film production over the past two decades, which is often dismissed as lacking in creative and nationalist branded appeal.

cess. Contemporary filmmakers from the 1990s in many ways 'emulate a universal and materially wealthy, post-colonial, urban environment, which frequently ignores the past and re-purposes landscape for younger audiences, rather than nostalgic, diasporic ones.' I continue in this vein in an overview analysis of Irish cinema by suggesting that we need to excavate and discover new discursive images and a brand identity for Ireland, 'that go beyond the violent historical political "Troubles" and the more recent religious and sexual traumas of the past, which have preoccupied the postcolonial cultural mindset' (Brereton, 2006, p. 416).

On the flip side, branding and marketing specialists frequently assert that the country has been effectively selling itself on its 'warmth and conviviality'. This use of stereotypical attributes, encapsulated by the Tourist Board's long running slogan of 'the land of a thousand welcomes' has also underpinned historical and most especially big budget American film production in Ireland. This legacy, rather than the more ideologically charged and apparently pernicious abuse of Irish character traits, is endorsed by marketing specialists like Chris Hackley who valorise such Celtic stereotypes by characterising them as 'spontaneous, creative, dangerous, mystical' as opposed to the more Anglo-Saxon ones of being 'methodical, rule-seeking, circumspect, rational' (Hackley, 2006, p. 331).[5]

For instance, marketing of Guinness – probably the most instantly recognisable Irish brand – provides an interesting analogy in trying to articulate the difficulties in constituting the uniqueness of Irish film production as a branding template. In spite of being brewed in 50 countries, marketed in some 150 regions and only united by a global brand name, many still believe the 'black stuff' to be quintessentially Irish. Attempting to achieve a unified marketing strategy is always difficult, since different audiences have varying associations with the product. In many ways this is similar to a presumption within film studies that the pay-off for a film achieving global popularity is due to its poly-

semic readings, which in turn provide multiple meanings and pleasures for mass audiences. Consequently the marketing strategy for Irish film needs also to be both subtle and robust enough to incorporate and embrace such conflicting branding difficulties with audiences in different parts of the world reading Irish film differently, as evidenced by John Simmons and his study of the branding of Guinness. Nonetheless, trying to find a 'universal story' or allegory to satisfy and link all constituencies together as a branding exercise remains a difficult task.

Meanwhile cultural critics like historian Roy Foster (2001, p. 33) despair at what they regard as a 'worldwide fashion for theme-park reconstructions and sound bite-sized, digestible history-as-entertainment' and believe Irish culture should not try to market itself under these conditions. The principal culprit Foster cites is the Irish Tourist Board's marketing policy which suggests that Irish history 'is not easily understood by visitors' and 'it is important to help increase visitors' understanding by creating interpretative "gateways" into our heritage' and consequently the creation of clear 'brand images' (Foster, 2001, p. 24). Other cultural critics also dismiss such marketing opportunism and affirm that our landscape and stories are not simply branding fodder to be packaged and sold, without adding 'real value' to our indigenous culture. Nonetheless, even if the Irish film industry was actively adapting this touristic policy it has remained conspicuously unsuccessful at marketing its films at home or abroad, except for some notable successes, that have worked primarily because of their intrinsic commercial qualities. The striving for commercial success – usually the preserve of industrial capitalist enterprise, rather than artistic endeavour – essentially calls upon universalising mythic tropes, as quintessentially exemplified by the Hollywood image factory. 'But critics will quibble; at what cost, citing their multiple reductionism and stereotyping of an authentic sense of Irishness' (see Brereton, 2006).

The film-branding dilemma for Ireland in the new millennium is encapsulated by a culture caught between its nationalist past, its European future and its more dominant American imagination, as evidenced in the recent comic delight of *In Bruges*. 'The Irishness of the original nationalist imagining – an Ireland of thatched cottages and self-sufficient

---

5 Coincidentally cultural historians have also affirmed that Ireland has frequently defined itself as simply 'not English', echoing this rather crude Celtic versus Anglo Saxon divide.

peasantry, a romantic rural Ireland of myth and immemorial antiquity – has been forgotten in Celtic Tiger Ireland of today, except where it is packaged and sold to the gullible and naïve' (McLoone, 2008, p. 6). While questioning the apparently patronising tone towards our American Irish audiences as 'gullible' and 'naive', we must remember that audiences consume a range of touristic images and branded signifiers of Irishness in varying ways, consequently it is important to recognise that it is not just the indigenous Irish constituency that appreciated the 'true' meaning of Irishness and are not taken in by more facile branding strategies. It could even be argued that the 'Celtic Tiger' phenomenon feeds into a successful new Irish form of branding which provides the illusion of a phenomenally successful group identity, which might be regarded as equally suspect as older more stereotypically Arcadian attributes described above. As one advert smugly affirms, 'knowing what it really means to be Irish – priceless'. Quite simply, as McLoone rightly asserts, 'the Irish do not seem to believe in any grand narrative at the moment, other than that of hedonism and consumption'. Tom Inglis characterises this transformation as a 'clash of cultures' – an unresolved tension between a generation (and a mindset) tutored in the culture of self-denial and self-depreciation which were firmly represented especially in pre-1990s films and a younger generation (and mindset) nurtured to expect instant gratification' (in McLoone, 2008, p. 95).

Let us start our broad film survey to tease out some of these branding questions and conjectures with a quick overview of what some critics regard as the 'poverty-chic' preoccupation in Frank McCourt's best-selling novel *Angela's Ashes* and Alan Parker's filmic adaptation, which can be compared to his earlier and highly successful foray into Irish working class culture in *The Commitments*.

City living in *Angela's Ashes* and *The Commitments*

Frank was born in abject poverty; his father (played by the Scottish actor Robert Carlyle) was an unemployable alcoholic. The film revels in presenting the utterly miserable conditions McCourt grew up in, including the high mortality of children through malnutrition. The story engendered much criticism at home, by its negative portrayal of Limerick (one of the rare examples of representing a city other than Dublin, which dominates this paper) where it appears to rain all the time. However, Frank retained the belief and hope throughout his childhood that a better life could be found. Such a narrative arc appealed to a huge American-Irish audience, often forced to emigrate during very hard times and who in turn sought to validate this traumatic memory.[6] All of this evidence of depression appears at odds with the recent wealthy reality and upsets the overwhelming experience of new generations on the island.[7] A very successful Dublin-based musical, *The Commitments*, also encapsulates this tension.

The Commitments is based on the best-selling novel by the Dublin-based author Roddy Doyle. Alan Parker's version includes a cast of young unknown actors enacting the rise and fall of a working-class Dublin soul band. The narrative structure conforms to a classic Hollywood preoccupation around the dream of success with the characters emulating American popular cultural influences. Jimmy Rabitte (Robert Arkins) has a vision to bring soul music to Dublin and ends up managing a most successful young band, importing an aging guru saxophonist, Joe the Lips (Johnny Murphy).

The northern British film director has often been criticised for taking on local indigenous stories and essentially universalising them so that they

---

6 See for instance the Famine memorial site near the World Trade Centre, or Ground Zero as it has been called since 9/11 in New York, situated on probably the most expensive real estate in the city, which affirms the importance of the Irish famine as a defining memory for America as well as Ireland. Transposing native grasses and rebuilding a derelict cottage from the west of Ireland is a strangely paradoxical experience when viewed from the distance of New York. Its erection in 2002 certainly affirms the power of Irish American sentiment and how the force of such a trauma is still relevant as an iconic branding exercise for Irish Americans in the New World.

   Incidentally, Irish film studies is becoming more and more preoccupied with the broader Irish diasporic audiences, as they provide greater opportunities for future commercial success.

7 This paradox around a 'new Ireland' is encapsulated through populist characterisation by the television-friendly Irish economist David McWilliams. *The Pope's Children*, dramatised on RTE television alongside his more recent series *The Generation Game*, in many ways, albeit glibly, captures this new Irish consumer driven and cultural mindset.

can appeal to mass audiences. This is signalled by the oft-repeated tag line in the film: 'They had nothing, but they were willing to risk it all', which in turn legitimates the band's domestication of black American blues, by styling working class youths from the northside of Dublin as the 'blacks of Ireland'. The oft-quoted paraphrase from the film is much more radical and divisive in the original novel, as the band – including Outspan (played by Glen Hansard, who also plays the busker in *Once* discussed later) – is informed 'the Irish are the niggers of Europe, lads'. It is even suggested that the deep schism between Dublin's working-class and the huge hinterland and rural community, as dramatised in Doyle's novel, is carefully avoided to maintain a universal branded audience. The British director instinctively knew how to brand the generic story in both these films of 'rags to riches' to appeal to an international audience, while *The Commitments*' study of working class injustice using racist signifiers also satisfied indigenous audiences as an allegorical story speaking to specifically Irish social problems.

At the same time, this very successful 'feel-good' movie of struggle in adversity remains a contemporary version of the same drive to succeed addressed in the historical biography of *Angela's Ashes*. Utilising Doyle's effective adaptation of the vernacular, the story has helped put Irish working-class argot and characterisations on a world stage, which most recently has Colin Farrell becoming our most successful exponent in marketing contemporary urban Irish cinema, as discussed in a reading of *In Bruges*.

Michael Cronin in his study of accent goes so far as to suggest that the film can 'be seen in its totality as an ambitious attempt to bring together different modes of representation to capture the hybrid complexity of the new urban spaces in Ireland' so that, in the words of Martin McLoone, 'the most consistent vision of urban Ireland' can be seen 'in the adaptations of Roddy Doyle's work' (2006, p. 4), while Declan Kiberd and others speak of how Doyle and his working class protagonists 'turned linguistic subjection to their own advantage' (2006, p. 7).

Dublin, as both symbolic and spatial centre for the Celtic Tiger – unlike Limerick, incidentally, which has a more contemporary bad press – has

historically been nicknamed *Strumpet City*, echoing the dominant image and use of the city as colonial centre for prostitution. Kieran Keohane has argued that the metropolis was to the British Army in the 1890s what Saigon was to American troops in the 1960s (2002, p. 33 in Cronin, p. 209) During our recent economic miracle, the city has been re-imagined, according to many, along the lines of a neoliberal economic space. The global aesthetics of Celtic Tiger cinema have also gradually appeared, apparently replacing the low-budget, radical, and oppositional cinema of the 1970s and 1980s. Some speak of the development of a kind of trans-global 'cool' encapsulated by a city of conspicuous consumption conducted in contemporary art galleries. This branded and imagined Dublin of promiscuous sexual abandon is effectively exemplified in films like *About Adam*, to be discussed presently. While all the time avoiding the more suspect colonial and imperialist manifestations of prostitution, such films effectively present the final affront of the 'new cinema' to the values of the old Ireland (McIlroy, 2007, p. 212)

Raymond Williams' classic literary study of the country versus the city, speaks of 'the pull of the idea of the country towards old ways, human ways, natural ways'. The pull of the idea of the city on the other hand is 'towards progress, modernisation, development' (1973, p. 297). McLoone speaks of the relative lack of cinematic imagery up to recently around Ireland's capital city, reflecting the dominance of rural imagery in the cinematic representations of Ireland as captured by foreign directors (in McIlroy, 2007, p. 207). Yet even in this duality, McLoone suggests that Williams underestimates the force of the negatives of each 'pull'. Thus the 'old ways' and the 'natural ways' can be as restrictive and oppressive as the city's progress can be alienating and disabling. The heterotopia, therefore, implies that the new ways of the city represent progress, modernity, education, culture and opportunity and, at the same time, represent disharmony, individualism, materialism, alienation and conflict (McIlroy, 2007, p. 215).

More recent films, which I now turn to, appear less concerned with history and the past, much less Arcadia. and speak to a more opaque Irish contemporary branded identity. While *About Adam* tries to make Dublin a universal city, like anywhere else,

Adam and Paul captures the psychological angst of those unfortunates left behind by the Irish success story and *The Tiger's Tail* excavates the economic structural problems inherent within the Celtic Tiger bubble. Most recently the hugely popular *Once* is read as a nostalgic evocation of an idealised community which also happens to be urban.

About Adam

Directed by Gerry Stembridge, the Hollywood-style romantic comedy *About Adam* introduces the eponymous hero (played by Stuart Townsend) as a dark but spirited young man capable of casting a spell over any woman (or indeed man) he encounters. Having become engaged to Lucy Owens (Kate Hudson), he then proceeds to bed most of her family; a rake's progress which – unusually – the film views not from a post-Catholic or moralistic perspective but rather as a series of comic interludes. What is most striking about the film, however, according to my colleague Roddy Flynn, is not the story or even the casting (Kate Hudson's presence is clearly the result of the international branding influence of Miramax, one of the film's producers) but the uncredited star of the movie: Dublin city itself as seductive site of global conspicuous consumption. The *Variety* review of the film noted somewhat enigmatically that the film conveyed 'a very different impression of contemporary Dublin from that imparted in most Irish films' (Flynn and Brereton, 2007, p. 3). Stembridge goes out of his way to portray Dublin not as a seedy, grime- or crime-filled dystopia – as alluded to, if somewhat nostalgically critiqued in *The Commitments* – but a modern, urbane cosmopolitan European capital, peopled by middle class characters living in an upper-middle class bohemian milieu of classic cars and expensive apartments.

About Adam certainly represents for the first time, a more contemporary focused and wealthy cultural elite in the capital. This trajectory has moved a long way away from the ur-romantic classics of *The Quiet Man* and *Ryan's Daughter* (1970), where Irish peasants simply hung around with no apparent work ethic, hoping for some excitement, while providing a 'Greek chorus' for the extraneous narrative. Of late a new and more confident Irish agency is activated, compared with the poverty-ridden explication, even endorsement, of struggle, misery and victimhood in films like *Angela's Ashes*.

In effect then, *About Adam* constitutes an example of attempts to provide a positive Celtic Tiger branded cinema, set as it is in breezy, self-confident and prosperous Ireland. This in turn has been the subject of some academic criticism for its alleged 'non-Irishness' and lack of identifiable place marks, together with its very open attitude to sexuality that seems a long way from the religious intolerance of previous decades. The film's light tone and casting helped the film receive extremely wide distribution, at least by Irish standards, as Flynn (2007) discovered. It was released in – among other locations – the United States, Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Australia, and Spain. However, although the film performed well in Ireland, taking 660,000 euro, it disappointed elsewhere. In the United States, for example, it was limited to an 11-print release, which ended after three weeks with just $160,000 earned. Hence it can be suggested that while the materialist residue of the Celtic Tiger remains a preoccupation of much economic consideration, the screen identity and fictional agency of the country still expects or at least prefers the more defined, if now dated branded uniqueness, of a rural idyll with pre-modern social structures, as parodied in *The Quiet Man* from the 1950s.

In a crushing ideological reading McLoone contends that, for all their imaginative and seductive style, films like *About Adam* could be accused of smug complacency: the social problems that global consumerism throws up cannot simply be imagined out of existence. The ugliness of the real world cannot be digitally enhanced or removed, like a postproduction video image. Driven by a branding agenda which seeks to promote a spurious utopian 'New Ireland', no space is left for counter discourses, which might illuminate the underbelly of Irish society as witnessed in earlier films. So it is not all that surprising that McLoone can conclude: 'not everyone is a winner in Celtic Tiger Ireland, but in the films that have attempted to reconfigure the cinematic image of the city in Irish culture, the camera seems to have had time only for the conspicuous winners' (McIlroy, 2007, p. 216). Other recent narratives like *Adam and Paul* have adapted varying other strategies to reflect and even critique the materialist preoccupations of Celtic Tiger Ireland as cited by McLoone and others.

Adam and Paul

The more downbeat *Adam and Paul* takes a very different position to the upbeat trajectory of the so-called Celtic Tiger phenomenon. Directed by Lenny Abrahamson, the film is structured around a day in the life of two heroin addicts, constantly teetering on the edge of oblivion. The film makes much of the language of the doped-up junkie, which is by turns pathetic and blackly comic, and strongly reminiscent of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. This is augmented by the filmmakers' visual humour, which is also perversely reminiscent of the classic comic film duo *Laurel and Hardy*. Yet, at the same time, the serious subject matter is not made light of and its success is ensured by the powerful acting of Mark O'Halloran (who also wrote the screenplay) as Adam, who is more grounded, older and better resourced than his sidekick Paul, played by the late Tom Jordan Murphy, who is more naive, spaced-out and hopelessly accident prone.

The narrative follows the two (anti-)flâneurs as they find themselves in various parts of Dublin, capturing their colloquial syntax and portraying their bleak existence for a mainstream viewing public, while maintaining a tight balance between alienating voyeurism and sentimental identification. This strategy is reinforced by regular use of wide shots filmed with great skill by lighting cameraman James Mather, which take in the magnitude of the Dublin scenery and strengthen the portrayal of their fruitless existence – a long way from the touristic celebrations of Ireland, characterised by a predominantly rural landscape in earlier films. On separate occasions the two anti-heroes are dwarfed by the Dollymount Strand chimneys, the Ballymun flats, statues on O'Connell Street and the Liffey Bridge, which are not in themselves valorised as identifiable markers of the city. As their story follows various engaging comic and other gags and incidental meetings, their journey's pain and ecstasy ends as it began.

The film performed extremely well on the European festival circuit. Belatedly following the short and critically acclaimed silent calling card *3 Joes* (1991), the director has served his time well in the advertising industry and shows great promise for the future with this film. Meanwhile this art house exposé of the underbelly of the Celtic Tiger can be contrasted with the more overt and politi-

cally charged critique of excessive development in *The Tiger's Tail*.

The Tiger's Tail

By foregrounding the newfound wealth and opulence of the capital in trying to critique the faulty foundations and ethical flaws in the branding of the Celtic Tiger, *The Tiger's Tail* seeks to uncover the prospect of an impending property crash, alongside various personal crises. This highly flawed film, as I reviewed recently (Brereton, 2007b), remains more sombre and pessimistic at the outset compared with the other films discussed in this paper.

This study of contemporary Irish culture and social politics unfortunately falls flat in comparison with John Boorman's more accomplished portrait of Dublin and its gangsters in *The General* back in 1998: primarily, I suggest, on account of a poorly developed script, which remains a recurring weakness within much Irish cinema, along with an overly intrusive music soundtrack that is unsuited to the tone the story. Furthermore, the sometimes preacherly tone of Boorman's social-realist tale does not sit well with the contrasting hyper-realism, even surrealism and Bacchanalian excesses of Dublin's heavily branded iconic 'Left Bank' area, as represented in the film.

Having received the accolade of 'Developer of the Year', Liam, played with confident aplomb by Liam Gleeson, again spies his double (a trope much beloved in cinema history) having first seen him through his car window in the perennial Dublin traffic jam. Consequently the main character has to make a journey of self-knowledge, down home to his old, pre-Celtic Tiger world in the country.

The 'feel good' happy ending in the film ostensibly relieves the pervasive pessimism and criticism of the flip side of Celtic Tiger materialism, when Liam brings his son onto his boat to instigate an escape from reality, recalling his dreams of fish as a child. Are we supposed to empathise with the possibility of the erstwhile ruthless capitalist transforming into a benevolent fun-loving socialist; having seen the light, with the help of his twin, while at the same time leaving his wife and his wealthy lifestyle? This rather forced and didactic critique of the Celtic Tiger ostensibly tries to spoil a much hyped branding story, which can be con-

trasted with the more nostalgic and uplifting feel good musical *Once* that became the surprising international success story of 2007.

Once

While *The Commitments* certainly captured the very latent hopefulness and zeitgeist of the depression-ridden period, directed by John Carney, *Once* fully acknowledges and embraces the shift in Irish culture with the arrival of mass immigration. At the outset critics wonder has the arrival of large numbers of immigrants challenged the soulful authenticity of indigenous Irish [working class] characters, as embodied in *The Commitments* for instance. Maybe, but I would suggest the personification of a female immigrant in *Once* can be read as a new and even more effective branded face and voice for contemporary Irish film.

The film can be described as a small-scale, even sentimental, 'feel good' story or extended music video, from a director who has cut his teeth on numerous low budget and well regarded art house films. Carney became more mainstream as a director with the very successful television series *Bachelors Walk*, while *Once* pushes this communal and utopian agenda again into the mainstream of popular culture. The phenomenal and unexpected success of this very small budget film in America – aided by Steven Spielberg's endorsement which no doubt assisted the marketing publicity machine – helps to signal how a new, more all-encompassing fictional branding and re-articulating of identity can be forged in our transformed multicultural island.

The opening of the film paints a very different image of a city than one endorsed by a touristic-marketing validation of unconditional friendliness and bacchanalian excess, with the Frames singer Glen Hansard (Outspan in *The Commitments*) busking in the street and having money stolen from him by a suspected drug addict. Singing of unrequited love and loss, the film fleshes out and counterpoints a real life fairy tale and love story. We are introduced to the busker's father who is a very proud (vacuum cleaner) repairman with a little shop beside his house in the older suburbs. Unlike the disposable culture and property-obsessed inhabitants of Celtic Tiger Dublin evidenced in *About Adam*, the father in this film takes pride in his craft, like his son, with his work-

manlike approach and creative engagement with his music. Apparently there is still a market for repairing household machinery at least for our immigrants, in spite of our otherwise disposable consumer society.

The magic of the film is encapsulated by the female Czech migrant; 19-year-old Marketa Irglova who has the most stoic and enigmatic face, who is non-threatening and not conventionally beautiful, yet remaining mysterious. She might almost embody one of the most stand-out 'Irish' branded faces since Maureen O'Hara became the seminal figure of Irish cinema, with her sultry yet feisty colleen look in *The Quiet Man*. Marketa initiates the relationship and chats up the musician, but not in an overtly seductive or aggressive manner. Eventually her amour together with the audience get to witness her authentic voice, playing classic Mendelssohn on a piano in a local music store.

On their first date, she drags a broken hoover behind her – reminiscent of the emigrant Irish father from *In America* (2002), who pulls an old air conditioner up a New York street – like a stigma of her foreignness and otherness, as they walk towards her home; an old run-down Georgian house where she lives with her daughter. Her family situation is a revelation to him as a prospective lover, especially on meeting her mother who speaks very little English. This micro community extends to three other immigrants living downstairs, who regularly come up to 'experience Irish culture' first hand, through their favourite soap *Fair City* from which they perfect their 'Dublin slang' that they believe will help them assimilate in the future. This is a long way away from the pervasive sense of alienation in *Adam and Paul*. Instead in this uplifting narrative, we witness a more inclusive form of 'otherness' and experience how immigrants learn to ingratiate themselves into the 'majority culture', which I suggest is a universal multicultural branding dream.

Generic resolutions don't often seem to come that easily in Irish films or when they do, they sit awkwardly. This is evident in the closure of *About Adam* and most particularly the musical *The Commitments*, which refuses the payoff of a happy-ever-after couple, or any form of triumphant curtain-closer. Rather than the valorisation of mediocrity or even failure or escape from

our traumatic past, as expressed in earlier depression-ridden films like *Eat the Peach* (1986), or alternatively its opposite, the utopian celebration of conspicuous consumption, *Once* treads the boundary of a realist aesthetic, yet celebrates a more optimist vision, while embracing the uplifting musical trajectory.

One scene, which really stands out for me, is when Marketa is trying to write some lyrics to his song, while her family are asleep. Running out of batteries for his personal music recorder, she walks in her pyjamas to the local shop to purchase more. The camera lovingly tracks her - reminding me of Coutard's cinematography in the anti-Catholic/Establishment documentary *Rocky Road to Dublin* (1967), with the schoolchildren running towards the moving car and the camera in the final scene. Finding her voice and allowing the music to discover its rhythm remains one of the best examples of music video making in Irish film since *The Commitments*. The scene ends with her walking back into her house to continue the creative process. Nostalgically, like the idealised Arcadian communal solidarity of yore, she displays no fear of being attacked and is totally at one in *her* city space. She is also most importantly creatively at one with her music. In fact Dublin by night – when it is most cinematically resonant – feels almost parish-like; safe and magnificent, a true community and ideal for creative productivity and thereby pushing our still not outdated tourist board's branding of 'Ireland of the Welcomes' to a new international and generational audience.

The intersection of commerciality and globalisation mean that a new generation of filmmakers felt that they could produce allegorical stories about Ireland that spoke to a global audience without having to worry about their local authenticity. As Brian McIlroy suggests in an Irish genre reader, contemporary film can ostensibly interrogate, subvert, or rewrite generic narratives including musicals even as it uses it (McIlroy 2007, p. 37). Furthermore, Irish comedy can also be appropriated as another authentic branded marker of Irish identity on film, as evidenced by the recent success of *In Bruges*, which is the only film examined in this paper not even set in the country and instead serving as an effective tourist advert for the Belgian city. Nonetheless, I would strongly affirm that the story could be clearly branded as Irish with its authentic director, cast and theme.[8]

In Bruges

Roger Ebert's glowing review of Martin McDonagh's debut feature in the *Chicago Sun-Times* (7 February 2008) captures the enigmatic nature of this postmodern, noir, comic travelogue and character driven gangster movie, when he summarises how Brendan Gleeson (Ken), a killer for hire is hiding out with his unwilling roommate Ray (Colin Farrell), who 'successfully whacked a priest in a Dublin confessional' for being a paedophile – pushing recent anti-Catholic representations of priests to another level – but tragically also killing a little boy in the process. Looking at the notes the boy made for his own confession: 'you don't know whether to laugh or cry.' This ambiguity carries on throughout the film as we are treated to the breathtaking beauty of the old city architecture of Bruges – a place that is coincidentally mentioned in another art-house success from this year, *Garage* (2008), as an exotic destination for a local lorry driver and his consignment of chickens. Reminiscent of *Don't Look Now* (1967) (which also foregrounds midgets/dwarfs as they are described in this overtly non-PC and comic representation) and Venice, or *The Third Man* (1949) and Vienna, or even *Odd Man Out* (1947) and Belfast, *In Bruges* also uses a European city to develop characterisation and frame a sense of place for the action. One cannot forget the view from the top of the old tower – like the famous Ferris-wheel scene in *The Third Man* – which serves as a provocative objective correlative of changing attitudes, values and ethical norms, as the film reaches its denouement, with the older gangster deciding to save his young apprentice. The catalyst for the story emanates from their worried looking boss, when he eventually materialises. Ralph Fiennes embodies the old values of an early Godfather persona, who has clear ethical values and rules of engagement, which in the end have tragic-comic consequences for all involved.

---

8 Ruth Barton defines an Irish national cinema as 'a body of film made inside and outside of Ireland that addresses both the local and the diasporic cultures' (2004, p. 5).

What I'm interested in teasing out in this reading, however, is how and why this tour-de-force ensemble character piece that draws on generic playfulness has been so successful in the box office, as signalled by the Mojo website which confirms that since being released on 8 February 2008 total receipts to 13 April were over 7 million in America and 4 million in foreign sales. One wonders whether the film can also be read as another marketing and branding marker for Irish film to emulate, as the industry attempts to corner a niche audience for indigenous filmmaking, within an increasingly competitive globalised market place.

The so-called 'Boston versus Berlin' debate in Ireland has become a recurrent tension within cultural discourses, with most agreeing that Irish culture and identity are closer to America than the rest of Europe. This Irish preoccupation is evidenced at the outset in the film with the script littered with anti-American jokes, which are far from subtle, including the targeting of obese tourists and their loud verbiage. Yet at the same time, the script also sends-up the small-time, historically fixated inward looking and stiff upper lip mentality of European culture that strives also for the protection of local film – as exemplified by the GATT debates against the onslaught and dominance of Hollywood. Within the script, for instance, there are many references to such debates around the definitions of Europeaness, encapsulated by how many jokes can be extracted from the mere mention of Bruges itself and/or Belgium in general.

These broad national and cultural tensions are played out by the character of Ken, being the more reflective and historically minded agent who is constantly given to embracing the authentic role of the tourist within European culture. Meanwhile the young Ray remains boorish in his inability to read and connect with such touristic subtexts, preferring instead the low cultural pleasures and a-historical prejudices apparently evident within Hollywood and America.

The internationally branded Irish star Colin Farrell performs particularly well in this later role – probably because he can 'be himself' while playing a Dublin gangster using a well-honed accent from the wrong side of the tracks. This specifically serves to anchor the film as an Irish narrative, which just happens to be filmed in Bruges. As with endless debates over definitions of Irish cinema (see the introduction to Flynn and Brereton's 2007 study), one hopes this film might also become a useful brand marker for Irish cinema to latch onto as it creatively weaves between a European art market and a more established Hollywood generic structure.

Concluding Remarks

But what makes *Adam and Paul*, *Once* and *In Bruges* particularly Irish and markers for a future successful national industry? Are such films capable of speaking to or signalling a more contemporary postmodern, post Celtic Tiger exposition and branding of Irish identity? I would suggest that these three small generic films discussed in this paper are more capable of squaring this circle, between the cinematic dominance of the Hollywood style and method and attempts to create an authentic indigenous national cinema, ostensibly aided by their deeply felt literary and theatrical antecedents, while not slavishly adapting formulaic generic tropes for easy audience identification. Form follows content and the recognition of a new form of branded 'Irishness' is signalled in various ways through these films. Furthermore, these films can be recognised as an ambitious attempt to bring together different modes of representation to capture the hybrid complexity of new urban spaces in Ireland, which can appeal to a more global brand influenced international audience.

Gauging the actual or inferred pleasures audiences receive continues to be challenging for national and other mainstream cinema, particularly as signalled by the response of new generations to films like *When Brendan Met Trudy* (2000), *Disco Pigs* (2002), *Intermission* (2003), and many others including those discussed in this paper. While it is relatively easy to critique existing paradigms of engagement, it is much harder to produce fresh and insightful avenues for examining film as it is being produced and consumed in this century. Nevertheless, to avoid such a challenge would result in a failure to capture the creative and academic energy of students who often speak a different language and sometimes harbour contrasting pleasure principles to the established academy. Consequently, there is a continuing need for criti-

cal dialogue with new generations of students and audiences to reinvigorate the study of film and its consumption practices. How this 'New Ireland' is branded on film is a primary starting point for such an investigation and a broad marketing approach to appreciating the fragile and often fickle nature of such cultural artefacts helps to frame this investigation. Meanwhile it is less clearly defined how the audience view such tales of identity and alienation, much less how they affect the way we see ourselves and by extension how we can measure the effectiveness of national branding.

The relationship between the growth of audience and reception studies in media and film disciplines and their connection with more explicit marketing and consumption discourses ought to be appreciated head on. Up to recently, film analysis has been particularly remiss in appreciating the complexity of audience reception, remaining locked into more esoteric theorising around the film-as-text. Nonetheless, this is changing slowly with prominent film specialists like Paul Grainge and others foregrounding the need for marketing expertise in this case to underpin tex-

tual analysis. Janet Wasko, a prominent American academic, for instance, recently confirmed at an SCMS film conference (March 2008) that an average American film now has $35 million spent on it to ensure coverage on the home market, while $50 million is spent on marketing for overseas. Such astronomical figures speak to the need to understand the contemporary film industry and audiences as global customers, by incorporating broad marketing and consumption studies discourses.

The brand-owning corporations of Hollywood, like all multinational companies, continue to keep looking for the 'magic bullet' that will keep competition at bay and retain their brands' highly prized status; with this aim in mind they also strive to appropriate any opposition, by embracing the *avant garde* alongside national cinemas of all hues. In response 'Irish Cinema Inc.' with her nascent brand identity must, I believe, strategise to secure its future in the global marketplace. The disciplines of marketing and consumption studies can help appreciate these various tensions and assist in providing effective solutions in the difficult years ahead.

Author
Dr Pat Brereton is the associate dean for research in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science at Dublin City University. His books include *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema* (2005); *Continuum Guide to Media Education* (2001) and the *Historical Dictionary of Irish Cinema* (2007) with Roddy Flynn. He has edited special issues for the new media journal *Convergence*, and has published widely, most recently with chapters in *EcoSee: Image, Rhetoric, Nature* (SUNY Press, 2009) and *Screening Irish-America: Representing Irish-America in Film and Television* (Irish Academic Press, 2009).

References
Barton, Ruth (2004), *Irish National Cinema*, Routledge, London.

Brereton, Pat (2005), *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*, Intellect Press, Bristol.

— (2006), 'Nature tourism and Irish film' in *Irish Studies Review*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 407–20.

— (2007a), 'Characteristics of contemporary Irish film', in John Horgan et al. (eds.), *Mapping Irish Media: Critical Explorations*, UCD Press, Dublin.

— (2007b), Review of *The Tiger's Tail* in www.estudiosirlandeses.org, Issue 2.

Brown, Stephen (2006) 'Tiocfaidh ár lá: introduction to the special issue', in *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 14, March, pp. 1–9.

Brown, Stephen, Robert V. Kozinets and John F. Sherry Jr. (2003), 'Teaching old brands new tricks: retro branding and the revival of brand meaning', in *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 67, July, pp. 19–33.

Brown, Stephen and Darach Turley (eds.) (2007), *Consumer Research*, Routledge, London.

Cronin, Michael (2006), *The Barrytown Trilogy*, Ireland-into-Film, Cork University Press, Cork.

Flynn, Roddy and Pat Brereton (2007), *Historical Dictionary of Irish Cinema*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland.

Foster, Roy (2001), *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making it Up in Ireland*, Penguin, London.

Gibbons, Luke (2002), *The Quiet Man*, Cork University Press, Cork.

Grainge, Paul (2008), *Brand Hollywood: Selling Entertainment in a Global Age*, Routledge, London.

Grayson, Kent (2002), 'Telling the difference: consumer evaluations of authentic and inauthentic market offerings', in Special Issue Summary of *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 29, pp. 44–5.

Hackley, Chris (2006), 'A Celtic crossing: a personal, bio-graphical exploration of the subjective meaning of the Celtic brand and its role in social identity formation', in *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 14, March, pp. 69–76.

Holbrook, Morris (1995) *Consumer Research: Introspective Essays on the Study of Consumption*, Sage, London.

Kerr, Aphra, Julian Kuchlich and Pat Brereton (2006), 'New media – new pleasure?', in *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1.

Kerrigan, Finola and Mustafa Ozbilgin (0000), 'Film mar-keting in Europe: bridging the gap between policy and practice', in *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 229–37.

Kilbourne, William E. (2004), 'Globalisation and development: an expanded macromarketing view', in *Journal of Macromarketing*, vol. 24, no. 2, Dec., pp. 122–35.

McIlroy, Brian (ed.) (2007), *Genre and Cinema: Ireland and Transnationalism*, Routledge, London (see chaprer by Martin McLoone 'Cinema, city, and imaginative space').

McLoone, Martin (2008), *Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland. Cityscapes, Landscapes, Soundscapes*, Irish Academic Press, Dublin.

O'Reilly, Daragh (2005) 'Cultural brands/branding cultures', in *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol. 21, pp. 573–88.

Scott, Linda (1994), 'The bridge from text to mind: adapting reader response theory to consumer research', in *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 21, pp. 464–80

Simmons, John (2006), 'Guinness and the role of strategic storytelling', in *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 14, March, pp. 11–18.

Williams, Raymond (1973), *The City and the Country*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

THOSE LEFT BEHIND: INEQUALITY IN CONSUMER CULTURE

Kathy Hamilton

Economic growth in Northern Ireland has undoubtedly raised the standard of living for many consumers and contributed to a growing culture of consumption. However, this heroic discourse masks the various social problems associated with economic growth, in particular, the deepening of inequality. This article aims to demonstrate the lived experience of poverty against the backdrop of a society that is increasingly dominated by consumption. Findings suggest that limited financial resources and the resulting consumption constraints are a source of stress and dissatisfaction. Such dissatisfaction stems from feelings of exclusion from the 'normal' consumption patterns that these consumers see around them. It is only by highlighting their stories that we can really understand the full consequences of what it means to live in a consumer culture. The importance of social support to counteract marketplace exclusion is also highlighted, reinforcing the need to consider capital in all its forms and not only from an economic perspective.

In recent years, Northern Ireland has witnessed the same frenzied emphasis on consumerism that has been evident in other western economies. The scale and pace of economic recovery since the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 has been dramatic, driven by an increase in employment, improved consumer confidence, the increased presence of large multiple retailers and the enhanced property market (Simpson, 2008). However, while economic growth has undoubtedly raised the standard of living for many, there are also concerns that income gaps between the rich and the poor have widened and inequality is deepening (Hillyard et al., 2003).

This article aims to demonstrate the lived experience of poverty against the backdrop of a society that is increasingly dominated by consumption. In a consumer culture it has become a societal expectation that consumers should respond to the temptations of the marketplace. As Bauman (2005, p. 38) suggests, 'a "normal life" is the life of consumers, preoccupied with making their choices among the panoply of publicly displayed opportunities for pleasurable sensations and lively experiences.' In this paper the spotlight is on low-income consumers who lack the financial resources needed to participate in this so-called 'normal' lifestyle. As a result of their inability to obtain the goods and services that are required for an 'adequate' and 'socially acceptable' standard of living (Darley and Johnson, 1985, p. 206), they have been described as 'inadequate,' 'unwanted' 'abnormal,' 'blemished, defective, faulty and deficient', 'flawed consumers' and 'non-consumers' (Bauman, 2005, pp. 38, 112–13).

Darley and Johnson (1985) suggest that to really understand the low-income consumer, one has to understand the individual's external situation. Given that the consumer culture is at times a reified construct, details of what this entails are presented to contextualise the study. This is followed by a discussion of previous research on low-income consumers and then the methodological approach adopted for the study. Next, findings are presented in two sections, first is a discussion of experiences of poverty in a consumer culture and second, the role of social support for low-income families is considered. The paper closes with a discussion of the conclusions arising from the research.

Consumer Culture

It has been suggested that the following four conditions are necessary for a consumer culture: a substantial portion of a population consume at a level substantially above subsistence; exchange dominates self-production of objects of consumption; consuming is accepted as an appropriate and desirable activity and people judge others and themselves in terms of their consuming lifestyles (Rassuli and Hollander, 1986). Additionally, Lury (1996) suggests that modern consumption is characterised by an increase in consumer choice, the expansion of shopping as a leisure pursuit, the

pervasiveness of advertising in everyday life, changing attitudes towards consumer debt, the political organisation by and of consumers and the increased visibility of consumer illnesses. Within such a society, consumers are often gripped by insatiable desire (Fullerton and Punj, 2004). Any joy in realising a desire is short-lived as consumers quickly shift attention to another desired possession and the cycle continues incessantly (Belk et al., 2003).

In a consumer culture, the marketplace acts as a framework for consumer action (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Baudrillard (1998, p. 29) goes so far as to suggest that consumption has a homogenising effect and is responsible for the 'total organisation of everyday life'. Indeed, Campbell (2004) argues that we live not only in a consumer society, but in a consumer civilisation. In this regard, consumption is even deemed to be a sign of good citizenship in response to a crisis situation. For example, after World War II, consumption was viewed as a civic responsibility to improve the living standards of all Americans (Cohen, 2004). Similarly after the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001, people were encouraged to increase consumption (Hill, 2002).

Consumption exhibits a strong ideological hold on consumers and it has been argued that people are motivated to buy because of the belief that the meaning of life can be found in the marketplace (Ger, 1997). The desire to participate in consumer culture is not promoted by material need; rather it is promoted by the belief that to find happiness one must be richer (Hamilton, 2004). Interaction with the marketplace provides consumers with resources for the construction of identity and emphasis is often placed on the portrayal of a socially acceptable image. Since the introduction of conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899), it has been recognised that social identity centres on the visibility of consumer goods and possessions. It has been suggested that consumers can either buy their identity – 'to have is to be' (Dittmar, 2008) – or discover their identity by monitoring reactions to goods and services (Campbell, 2004), both approaches identifying the central role of consumption. As well as a process of signification and communication, consumption can equally be analysed as a process of classification and social differentiation as consumers use goods as signs of affiliation with either their own reference group or a group of higher status to which they wish to belong (Baudrillard, 1998). Therefore within a consumer culture, marketplace structures and ideologies are central in shaping sociocultural consumption practices (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Positive discourse heralds the benefits of a consumer society, suggesting that choice can be seen as 'the consumer's friend' (Gabriel and Lang, 2006, p. 1) and that consumers feel empowered when they are able to enjoy the consumption process (Wright et al., 2006). From this perspective, consumption has come to represent a moral doctrine in the pursuit of the good life (Gabriel and Lang, 2006).

There has also been some negative discourse surrounding the consumer culture. First, it can become a 'cage within' as unrealistic ideals of the material good life may lead to identity deficits and negative emotions, which in turn perpetuate further futile consumption (Dittmar, 2008, p. 199). Second, Fullerton and Punj (2004) suggest that as well as stimulating legitimate consumption behaviour, the consumer culture can also stimulate consumer misbehaviour. Previous research suggests that the poor may be particularly prone to consumer misbehaviour as their financial resources may not be sufficient to satisfy desires. To illustrate, Ozanne, Hill and Wright (1998) report that impoverished juvenile delinquents turn to crimes such as stealing cars in order to affirm their membership and status within their social groups. Likewise, Goldman and Papson (1998) indicate that poor youths may resort to crime in order to obtain their Nike trainers. This is in line with O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2002) who suggest that the consumer society is characterised by narrow hedonism, that is, the quest for pleasure without regard for the full consequences of action. Finally, it must be remembered that while consumer culture may be advantageous to some, these benefits are not open to all consumers as the key barrier to consumer choice is money (Gabriel and Lang, 2006). The following section considers those consumers who are constrained in consumption opportunities due to limited financial resources.

Consumer Poverty
There has long been debate about the way in which poverty should be defined and measured. Absolute poverty occurs when and where people

have insufficient resources to provide the minimum necessary for physical survival and is therefore equated with extreme need such as starvation and destitution (Becker, 1997). The absolute measure of poverty is often criticised for being an abstract and formal statistical exercise that ignores social and psychological needs by focusing only on physical subsistence (Ringen, 1988; Bauman, 2005). In contrast, a relative approach to poverty recognises that people's needs vary depending on the society to which they belong and as such, poor consumers are those who are at a disadvantage in comparison to other members of their society (Townsend, 1979). This study considers those who encounter relative poverty within the context of a consumer culture.

Within a consumer culture, non-participation in consumption norms is a key feature of social exclusion (Burchardt et al., 1999). Research indicates that the public holds ideas about the necessities of life that are more wide-ranging, or multi-dimensional, than is ordinarily represented in expert or political assessments (Gordon et al., 2000; Hillyard et al., 2003). Consequently, as the standard of living rises, the gap between a subsistence income, that is, the income level needed to guarantee physical survival, and a social inclusion income will continue to widen (Bowring, 2000).

The current research was conducted in Northern Ireland and a large scale study by Hillyard et al. (2003) provides some useful information on the extent of poverty in this location. This study involved a two stage approach: first, a representative sample of the population were asked what items or activities they considered to be necessities of life. Second, another representative sample were asked which of those items and activities defined as necessary by more than 50 per cent of respondents they did not have but would like to access. This information was then used to determine a consensual measure of poverty. Results indicate that 29.6 per cent of households are poor with a further 12.1 per cent vulnerable to poverty. Less than two-thirds of all children in Northern Ireland have a lifestyle and living standard regarded by a representative sample of all people as an acceptable basic norm. Findings also reveal that Northern Ireland experiences marginally higher poverty rates than the Republic of Ireland.

Despite their large number, from a marketing perspective low-income consumers are often low priority (Curtis, 2000). Within marketing and consumer research, the academic interest in the low-income consumer began in the 1960s with the pioneering work of Caplovitz (1967) and his influential book *The Poor Pay More*. Caplovitz (1967) explored the experiences of poor consumers who used credit in order to purchase major durable goods and found that they encountered very high interest rates and low quality products, thus receiving a low return on their money. Many of the early investigations followed this example by concentrating on marketers' inability to provide low-income consumers with good value goods and services (for example, Williams, 1977). Much of this stream of research concentrated on the food industry, debating whether or not the purchasing patterns and preferences of poor consumers resulted in higher food prices (Goodman, 1968; Coe, 1971). One of the main conclusions from this early research is that low-income consumers encounter significant marketplace disadvantages.

In recent years Ronald Paul Hill, along with various co-authors, has helped to place this disadvantaged and often neglected subpopulation back on the theoretical agenda. Hill exhibits a strong sense of social justice and, as a result, his papers are effective in highlighting the plight of low-income consumers and the difficulties that this group face when confronted with the consumer society. Hill's research on poverty has been based on several poverty subpopulations within the United States. These include the hidden homeless, that is a poverty subgroup that lives outside the social welfare system (Hill and Stamey, 1990), the sheltered homeless and homeless families (Hill, 1991), welfare mothers and their families (Hill and Stephens, 1997), the rural poor (Lee, Ozanne and Hill, 1999) and poor children and juvenile delinquency (Hill, 2002). This categorisation of poor consumers into sub-populations represents an awareness of the heterogeneity associated with poverty that was often missing from early research. However, the bulk of research on the low-income consumer remains North American in origin and consumer research in this area has been much neglected in other parts of the world.

Marketing activities and practices often exacerbate aspects of social exclusion. Relationship marketing

theory and, more recently, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), encourages companies to target their most profitable customers and ignore their least profitable ones (Winnett and Thomas, 2003). Customer valuation techniques (Boyce, 2000), as well as the increased use of databases (Curtis, 2000), have made it easier for marketers to identify their most and least desirable customers. The trend towards market segmentation has resulted in the poor being viewed as a separate market segment who are often considered to be unprofitable and risky (Alwitt and Donley, 1996). More targeted marketing strategies can lead to this segment being excluded by marketers, because they believe it makes more economic sense to provide only for more affluent consumers. Boyce (2000) states that the application of customer valuation techniques is fundamentally about denying certain groups of people access to essential services, resulting in not only the devaluation of the consumer as a person, but an increase in the gap between the rich and the poor. Thus, as Edwards (2000, p. 124) suggests, for impoverished consumers, 'shopping is experienced as a window through which they are invited to look and a door through which they cannot enter.'

The consequences of such exclusion and separation from the primary consumer culture are typically negative. Bauman (2005) suggests that poverty is a social and psychological condition that can lead to feelings of distress, agony and self-mortification. Psychological impacts may therefore relate to the negative opinion the poor have of themselves. Andreasen (1975) points out that the poor see themselves as relatively deprived, manipulated externally, powerless and alienated. Additionally poor people suffer worse physical health outcomes throughout their lives, including increased risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers (General Consumer Council, 2001b). Daly and Leonard (2002) found that in three-quarters of low-income households studied, at least one family member experienced poor health. This can be partly attributed to poor dietary habits such as low dietary variety and inadequate nutrient intakes (Kempson, 1996). For example, Hill (2001) highlights the case of welfare mothers who, even with government aid, face difficulties in meeting the family's food needs. Health problems may also be caused by fuel poverty and it is estimated that approximately six

hundred people die each year in Northern Ireland from cold-related illnesses (General Consumer Council, 2002). Additionally, although poorer people are less likely to own cars, it has been found that they are disproportionately disadvantaged by the high level of car ownership in society as a whole (General Consumer Council, 2001a). This is because low-income consumers have less choice in housing so are more likely to live near busy roads, leading to more noise and air pollution. The General Consumer Council (2001b) also provides some information concerning the growing health gap between the rich and the poor in Northern Ireland. Those living in deprived areas have higher death rates and it is estimated that approximately two thousand lives could be saved each year if people living in areas with the highest death rates had the same health as those living in areas with the lowest death rates. Men in more affluent areas tend to live seven years longer than those in deprived areas, while women live four years longer. It is suggested that the effects of poverty are cumulative so health in adulthood will reflect circumstances throughout life.

Thus, while some consumers enjoy the benefits created by economic growth, a significant portion remain left behind. Inequalities are rife and for some, economic growth merely exacerbates their exclusion. Findings illustrate the lived experience of those consumers who struggle to match the consumption norms they see around them. Before the findings are presented, the methodological approach is discussed.

Method

This paper is based on qualitative analysis of 30 in-depth interviews with low-income families who encounter consumption constraints in the marketplace. The study involved 25 lone parent families (24 lone mothers) and five two-parent families. More lone parents were recruited because lone parenthood is the main cause of family poverty and in Northern Ireland, 62 per cent of lone parent families live in poverty (Gingerbread, 2003). In line with the feminisation of poverty, female-headed families account for the majority of this group. As Alwitt and Donley (1996, p. 52) suggest, 'Not only are families headed by women the dominant family type in the poverty population, they also are most deeply in poverty and have the highest poverty deficits.' Purposeful sam-

pling was used for this project, which involved the selection of information-rich cases. Families were selected from urban areas of Northern Ireland; the majority of respondents were unemployed although a small number were working in low-paid jobs. The income level of the families averaged £150 per week.

As poverty can affect the whole family unit, a family approach was adopted in that all households included at least one child under the age of 18. In 16 families, a parent (normally the mother) was interviewed alone and in 14 families it was possible to arrange an interview with the main consumer decision maker along with their partner and/or children (aged 11 to 18). The interviewing of multiple family members permitted a deeper understanding of the family dynamics in terms of each person's role and influence in consumption decisions. Interview topics included everyday life (evaluation of circumstances relative to other families and friends, feelings about shortage of money and its effect on children), budgetary strategies (management of the household budget, acquisition sites for goods and services), hopes for the future, family background information and financial circumstances (sources of income, attitudes to credit). The respondents were encouraged to provide details about their daily lives and the emphasis was on obtaining the subjective perspectives of the respondents at the level of lived experience. A guide of interview topics was prepared but rather than being locked into one set of questions, a flexible approach allowed questions to be adapted to suit the direction of each interview. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and with respondents' permission were audio-recorded and later transcribed.

Given the sensitive nature of the research topic and the focus on a vulnerable consumer group, certain aspects of the research design demanded careful consideration. Data collection methods emphasised and supported the informants' empowerment when the presence of the researcher (i.e. an outsider) might enhance vulnerability. Interviews were conducted in respondents' homes to ensure a familiar and comfortable environment. The creation of a relaxed environment can aid researchers to confront issues which are deep, personally threatening and potentially painful (Lee, 1993). In most cases respondents were keen to share their personal experiences. Many participants, especially lone mothers, were limited in opportunities for social interaction, because of employment status and an inability to participate in the leisure lifestyle. As such, many respondents suffered feelings of isolation and consequently welcomed the opportunity to talk to someone. Given this isolation and the researcher's empathetic response, the danger of raising respondents' expectations of ongoing contact and friendship was evident. The researcher had to make it clear that contact would be over a short time scale.

In relation to vulnerable consumers, Hill (1995) emphasises the importance of respondents' rights to confidentiality and privacy. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of informants and communities are described by characteristics rather than name. There was a need to ensure that the aim of obtaining a deep insight into the lives of informants did not result in unwanted intrusion. Additionally the disclosure of personal stories created an added dilemma in relation to power asymmetries. Despite hearing stories of hardship, the researcher avoided engaging in any discussions that involved offering personal advice. As an alternative, a list of potential organisations where consumers could seek advice and support (e.g. debt counselling) was prepared in advance. Thus careful management of the researcher–respondent relationship was required to ensure that respondents were not further victimised or romanticised (Edwards, 1990) in terms of their poverty.

It should also be noted that research on sensitive topics poses threats not only to respondents but also to the researcher (Lee and Renzetti, 1993). Whilst the protection of vulnerable research subjects has attracted much debate across all disciplines, little attention is given to the impact of such research on the researchers. For a full discussion of this issue see Hamilton, Downey and Catterall (2006).

Hermeneutics was used to interpret the data. This is an iterative process, 'in which a "part" of the qualitative data (or text) is interpreted and reinterpreted in relation to the developing sense of the "whole"' (Thompson et al., 1994, p. 433). These iterations allow a holistic understanding to develop over time, as initial understandings are

modified as new information emerges. First, each individual interview was interpreted. Secondly, separate interviews were related to each other and common patterns identified.

Findings

The findings are presented in two sections, first details of experiences of poverty in a consumer culture are discussed and second, the role of social support for low-income consumers is considered.

Experiences of Poverty in a Consumer Culture

Findings reveal that within a consumer culture, thoughts of money are central to the lives of low-income consumers. Some respondents in the study appear to link emotional well-being with their level of financial resources and indeed there was clear evidence of dissatisfaction created by budget restrictions:

> I think it's a lie that money doesn't buy you happiness. Whenever you get paid or whenever you have money you feel better, you feel great going into town, you feel great if you have something in your purse, you know what I mean. Whereas if you're sitting and you have nothing you're saying to yourself ahh, you get depressed, I don't care what anybody says, nobody's going to bring you out of it. I know money doesn't buy you your health, you can't buy that like, but if you've got money you feel better, you do. (Emma, 36, lone parent, 2 children)

> Money makes so much difference. If I don't have money I feel like crap, if I go down that road and I don't have a pound or £2 or a fiver in my pocket I feel like crap, it's hard but there is so much emphasis on it.   (Melissa, 31, lone parent, 5 children)

These two lone mothers are plagued by financial difficulties with both providing stories outlining the stress that this creates. For example, Emma describes how she is trapped in a never-ending cycle of looking ahead to the next payday and then 'after the first few days it'll be back to square one again' while Melissa's situation became so severe that it resulted in personal bankruptcy. As a result, it is perhaps unsurprising that they experience negative reactions to lack of income. Although previous work has suggested a challenge to the consumer culture by highlighting a low correlation between income and subjective well-being and consumer happiness (Hamilton, 2004; Ahuvia and Friedman Douglas, 1998), for some

consumers in this study, limited financial resources and the resulting consumption constraints remain a source of stress and dissatisfaction.

Such dissatisfaction stems from feelings of exclusion from the 'normal' consumption patterns of a consumer culture. These normal consumption patterns are often beyond the means of low-income consumers; as Julie (24, lone parent, 1 child) described, 'there is a lot of emphasis on money but that's because of the way we are all brought up. Society is just geared to getting that job... you are expected to have the house and the car so you are pretty much judged.' In some consumer society discourse, participation in shopping is seen as a way of attaining the good life (Gabriel and Lang, 2006). However for respondents, shopping was rarely considered an enjoyable activity and indeed was described by some as a 'nightmare', 'hateful', 'struggle' and 'stressful'. These consumers are forced to search for 'value for money' and need to be 'good at economising.' Tedious financial planning is a necessity for many of the families in the study and impulse spending is rarely an option. Instead respondents follow a variety of financial management strategies in line with smart budgeting such as making lists, shopping in discount stores and searching for bargains. Many respondents did everything possible to avoid credit out of fear that debt would spiral out of control. However, some were forced to make use of credit, for example, at the time of the interview Nina had three credit cards which were 'all maxed out.' This money was not spent on luxuries but rather on essentials such as food – 'I wouldn't use it for going out or clothes ... that's what keeps me going, that's what keeps me afloat.' Much of the budget for respondents is allocated to necessities such as food, heating and electricity and money spent outside this domain demands careful consideration. Given the inflexibility of respondents' budgets, even clothes shopping becomes an infrequent and significant activity:

> [I would buy clothes] about twice a year if I'm lucky, shoes would be twice a year and clothes would probably be twice a year, I wouldn't go into all the shops ... but it would take me an all day event to make up my mind, and I would be trying on about 6 times just to make sure
> (Zoe, 43, lone parent, 2 children).

Others concur with the view that clothes shopping is something conducted only 'out of necessity for me, if something wears out'. Therefore, while choice is a central feature in discourse on consumer culture, it is not something that is available to all and, as Gabriel and Lang (2006) suggest, the key barrier to consumer choice is money. Although marketers promote a lifestyle of overindulgence and the continual accumulation of consumer goods, the majority of respondents in this study were reliant solely on welfare for financial resources and consequently encountered many constraints in their consumption practices. Thus for these consumers the ideology of free choice is difficult to realise. As a result, the shopping experience for low-income consumers is largely utilitarian and task-related and such consumers have few opportunities to act on hedonic shopping motivations.

Despite budget restraints, the consumer culture remains as significant to low-income consumers as it is for more affluent consumers. The quest for 'newness' was a common theme amongst respondents, with many expressing reluctance to turn to the second-hand sector as this not only had a negative impact on self-esteem but also potentially discloses their meagre financial status to others.

> I don't buy new clothes for myself unless I really need something. Before I had kids I loved my fashion, I loved clothes, I was just normal, now I can't. I feel bad sometimes because my friends would say to me, 'here's a pair of jeans I was going to throw out, do you want them?' And I have to say yes and it's horrible, it's not nice.   (Melissa)

While Melissa used to be a 'normal' consumer, her transition to motherhood (5 children under 7 years old) and the increased financial pressures that this entails have dramatically reduced her opportunities for personal consumption. Given that marketplace interactions are central to identity construction (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), this raises important concerns about those who cannot afford to buy their identities. It is clear that many respondents suffer identity deficits (Dittmar, 2008) due to their inability to access products that would aid the portrayal of a socially acceptable image.

Such extreme budget restraints also mean there are few possibilities for entertainment and leisure activities:

> It's really rare [that I go out], if there's a special occasion coming up I would have to save and if I wanted to go out with my friends I would have to start saving about 2 months before just so that I have enough money to go out.
> (Amy, 23, lone parent, 1 child).

Lack of spontaneity in terms of accessing entertainment opportunities results in many respondents becoming excluded from the leisure lifestyle. According to Hillyard et al.'s (2003) study, social activities such as family day trips, a hobby or leisure activity and visiting friends and family are viewed as necessities by the majority of the Northern Ireland population. As this research demonstrates, an inability to partake in such activities can result in feelings of isolation and exclusion. This exclusion is exacerbated for those respondents who are unemployed as they are often reduced to a monotonous lifestyle. For some consumers this prevents any forward planning and results in a 'day to day existence.' As Philip suggests, 'I've come to the attitude now that you let tomorrow worry about itself because you can't do anything about tomorrow … it's the only way you're going to sleep or you just end up in the depths of depression and it's not good.' This corresponds to Andreasen (1975), who suggests that the poor often adopt a present orientation. More importance is placed on daily survival and respondents attempt to avoid becoming overwhelmed at the thought of a bleak future.

It has long been established that individuals are driven to evaluate themselves in relation to others (Festinger, 1954). Feelings of dissatisfaction experienced by low-income consumers over their consumption opportunities are augmented due to upward comparisons with more affluent consumers, often creating envy for the possessions of others:

> I look at other people and wish that I could have what they have, but I've two kids to raise and a house to run and I'm not getting that much money so I can't really get everything I want.
> (Rebecca, 23, two parent family, 2 children)

> It is really hard at the minute like, you see everybody else's house and they have this and they have that and I'm sitting with my wallpaper off.
> (Hannah, 25, lone parent, 3 children).

> My friends back home all have jobs and houses and cars. My mum has a big house, my brother who is four years younger than me has his own house and car, and I feel like I'm stuck on the outside.
> (Janice, 23, lone parent, 2 children)

Richins (1995) suggests that people use comparisons first to determine whether they are 'normal' and secondly, to determine their relative standing in terms of abilities and circumstances. The importance of consumption in today's society has resulted in many consumers judging themselves based on their ability to consume (Bauman, 2005). It is evident that upward social comparison contributes to the aspirations of low-income consumers and as such, a lack of resources results in discontentment with their own circumstances. This perceived marginalisation from consumer culture often leads to low self-esteem and feelings of powerlessness.

In addition to comparisons with the possessions of family, friends and acquaintances, findings suggest that advertising also raises aspirations. Some parents commented on the impact of advertising on children and in particular the way in which branding sways children's demands. Interviews involving teenage children revealed that this age group are highly motivated by brand name clothing, with many refusing to shop in discount stores; 'what if someone sees me?' and others commenting that friends would ridicule any non-branded items. Thus, it appears that through a variety of socialisation agents such as the media and peer groups, children are often quick to internalise the ideologies of the consumer culture. Eva comments on the ways these attitudes have resulted in societal changes:

> Kids are always in the town now, you don't see kids out playing any more, every Saturday, they're all in the town. Always buying … they just seem to be buying non-stop … It's just trying to keep up with everyone else, trying to keep the kids up with the other kids. It's changed now with people, everybody wants holidays and they want cars, before you just got on with it and made do instead of wanting more and more. (Eva, 45, lone parent, 3 children)

Exposure to the consumer culture in this way can negatively impact the well-being of young consumers (Schor, 2004). Equally, for parents this creates added difficulties as limited financial resources present a barrier to the 'always buying' and 'wanting more' culture. Although all families struggled in this regard, the lone mothers in the study found this particularly problematic. This is especially challenging at special times of the year such as Christmas:

> It's stressful because the kids make such demands, they definitely do. I don't know what it's going to be like this year. Louise would be the type that would demand you buy her a new car because her mate's mummy bought her a new car, that type of thing, but they do expect so much. I mean you wouldn't get away spending less than, at least £300 per child at Christmas. That would be the same for my friends as well, it doesn't matter if you have one kid or 7 kids, they would expect at least £300 worth of presents. (Zoe, 43, lone parent, 2 children)

This indicates the importance of the social environment in which the individual operates to the social comparison process. As Wood (1989) suggests, the social environment may impose comparisons on the individual. In the consumer culture where images of material possessions dominate, escaping upward comparison is extremely difficult for low-income families and it is evident that some consumers use the standard of living promoted by the consumer society as their ideal. However, it should not automatically be assumed that all consumers aim for the norms of consumer culture. As Bowring's (2000, pp. 313–14) discussion of the 'tyranny of normality' suggests, the happiness and self-esteem of everyone cannot possibly be achieved by conforming to the mainstream society and assuming people are ashamed of being poor is a 'scandalous attribution to make'. Normative definitions of poverty preclude the possibility of meeting needs in unconventional ways or reformulating needs that differ from social expectations (Bowring, 2000). Indeed many of the consumers in this study do employ a variety of resilient coping strategies in response to consumption constraints (Hamilton and Catterall, 2008). The following section concentrates specifically on the role of social support as an important coping resource for respondents.

Social Support

It is often implied that within a consumer culture, community bonds disappear and individualisation comes to the forefront (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2002). However, this section of

the findings will demonstrate that the traditional neighbourhood community can remain an important source of social support and cohesion for low-income families.

The extended family accounts for an important part of many respondents' social networks. For example, Catherine (40, lone parent, 3 children) lives in close proximity to three subgroups of extended family members; her two sisters, a niece and their respective families. As a result she feels that there is a supportive atmosphere in her neighbourhood suggesting that 'The people on this road are really good, if you need anything or if anything happens they would come out and support you at anytime.' Likewise, Barry and Denise (husband and wife) live close to family members and they provided more specific examples of the benefits that this offers:

> If I had no bread left I could go to my sisters or in next door to my ma and get a loaf to do me until the next day because in the local shop it's £1.20, that's the way you live.   (Denise)

> I'm in her ma's more than she is. I was doing something for her at the back garden, she wants decking done and to get someone to do it would cost her a fortune and she doesn't have it.
>   (Barry, 40, two parent family, two children).

This is suggestive of the reciprocal nature of social support that was mentioned by many of the families in the study. The closeness of inter-familial relationships is also evidenced by their frequent contact. Interview notes record that during the interview (1 hour), Catherine received two telephone calls from family members and her niece arrived at the house to visit. Similarly, during the interview with Denise and Barry, Denise's mother brought Barry a drink from her house next door. Thus it can be suggested that many families adopt a 'familistic orientation' to coping with poverty that is associated with 'collectivist values such as sharing, cooperation, unity, loyalty, respect, and restraint, as well as behavioral norms pertaining to mutual assistance, family obligations, subordination of individual needs to family needs, and preservation of family honor or dignity' (Sillars, 1995, p. 377). In this way exclusion within the marketplace can be countered by the inclusive effects of the family unit which is made into a back-up institution to fill the gaps created by the

failures of the market and the insufficient safety nets of the welfare state (Kochuyt, 2004).

Families gain great benefits from belonging to a 'close knit community' where 'everybody knows everybody.' For Catherine, such close relationships are central to coping with special events, for example, 'We share Christmas, we have Christmas dinner together so it's all bought and paid for together. That makes one aspect of it easier, then you can spend a bit more on them [the children].' This is reflective of the way in which the protection of children is one of the central concerns for parents in the study, with great effort to ensure that they were not disadvantaged by the family's financial circumstances. In this way, the family can act as 'a protective capsule for its young' (Goffman, 1963, p. 46). Parents also enjoyed benefits through the sharing of special events. As well as reducing the financial burden, this provides emotional benefits such as feelings of togetherness. Catherine's reflection on the subsidised trips offered by the local community centre demonstrates how social activities are made more enjoyable if others are involved:

> There's times you go and you go with everybody and you have a ball, if you go by yourself it wouldn't be half as good. It's the company you need to keep you going.

Likewise, the importance of the neighbourhood community is highlighted by Erin and John, who described how they moved house in order to benefit from social support:

> We moved out of this area for about five years and we couldn't wait to get back again. You know, not having everybody call to your door ...
>   (John, aged 30)

> ... or not talking to everybody as you walk up the street, we could have walked a mile and not seen anybody we knew.
>   (Erin, 29, two parent family, two children)

This social integration, or network support reduces isolation and promotes a sense of belonging, a hugely important resource for these consumers due to the exclusion they experience on other levels.

Other examples of social support reported in the interviews include childminding, transportation,

paying for holidays, cooking meals, helping with shopping for household provisions and completing household DIY tasks. Some respondents benefited from an extended family network through receiving tangible aid in the form of financial support. This style of informal borrowing is preferred to more formal methods because of the flexibility it allows: 'you can give it back when you have it, they don't push you for it'. Others felt that borrowing from family members was an incentive to repay the debt quickly and avoid long periods of indebtedness: 'borrowing from family is OK because I know I'm going to have to pay it back because I know that they need it as much as I need it so I can't not pay it back.' Additionally, family borrowing often involved a two way process in that any borrowing is reciprocated if the need arises. This is further evidence of the way in which the family can offer an alternative to the marketplace.

Thus the multidimensional nature of social support is evident. Duhachek (2005) identified three ways in which social support can be used as a coping strategy, all of which are employed by respondents in the study. First, emotional support involves using others to improve one's mental or emotional state. Second, instrumental support involves obtaining the assistance of others to directly improve the stressful situation and third, emotional venting involves attempts to recognise and express emotions. Whereas previous research has suggested that money problems can lead to stressful personal relationships (Kempson, 1996), in this study there was little evidence of any conflict and co-operation was a more common theme as families employed a variety of conflict-avoidance strategies (Hamilton and Catterall, 2007). Overall those families that have access to strong support networks cope much better than those that do not benefit from their local communities. Philip (48, lone parent, 1 child) sums this up: 'If I didn't have good neighbours I would really have struggled over these last few months.'

Conclusions

This paper has highlighted what it means to be poor within the context of a consumer culture. One danger of research involving vulnerable consumers is that readers may consider only what is learned about the unique context/population and not more general contributions to knowledge

(Baker et al., 2005). Equally, discussions of the consumer society often have a tendency to focus on 'abstract statements that obliterate real world consumers' (Wood, 2005). In response to these shortcomings, the conclusions focus on both context-specific and wider theoretical contributions that are clearly drawn from the empirical research.

By exploring the lives of low-income consumers in Northern Ireland, fresh understandings about what it means to live in a consumer culture are illuminated. The powerful ideological influence of consumption surrounds consumers on a daily basis and the consumer culture is as significant to low-income consumers as to more affluent consumers who have the resources to enjoy its benefits. Thus the preoccupation with middle and upper class consumers often evident within marketing and consumer research circles must be regarded as rather short-sighted. Equally, adopting only a heroic discourse masks the various social problems associated with economic growth.

Economic growth intensifies what Hirsch (1977, p. 52) refers to as positional competition, that is, competition aimed at achieving a higher place in a hierarchy. Such competition acts as a 'filtering device' and in a sense helps to distinguish between the haves and the have-nots. In this positional economy 'individuals chase each others' tails' (Hirsch, 1977, p. 67). Empirically based observations of low-income consumers have highlighted this hierarchical nature of the consumer culture in relation to the ways in which these consumers struggle to match 'normal' and socially acceptable consumption patterns. Baudrillard (1998, p. 62) suggests that the field of consumption is a 'structured social field' where both goods and needs pass from the leading group to groups further down the social ladder. In this way, luxuries are turned into necessities. It could be argued that it is consumers' desire that drives the consumer society, desire to possess what others possess and desire to possess what others desire. This highlights the importance of the social context to the understanding of consumer behaviour as satisfaction that individuals derive from goods and services depends not only on their own consumption, but also on the consumption of others (Hirsch, 1977). Indeed, findings clearly highlight the importance of social comparison to low-income consumers. It is necessary to direct some

critique towards marketing activities that enhance the disadvantage experienced by low-income consumers. Szmigin (2003) notes that marketing has been criticised for being responsible for the increase in social comparison, competitive consumption and the need to keep up with the latest and the best consumer goods. Equally, the use of idealised images of better-off others in advertising increases expectations of what ought to be and may result in a continual desire for more (Richins, 1995). Marketing activities can therefore contribute to the creation of consumer desire, leading to feelings of exclusion and shame for those consumers who cannot make these desires a reality (Bowring, 2000). Evidence suggests that social change in Northern Ireland has increased emphasis on consumerism and shopping has become an important leisure activity. As a result, consumers are increasingly judging themselves based on their ability to consume. It has been suggested that a similar trend is evident in the Republic of Ireland as the unprecedented economic boom during the second half of the 1990s resulted in various changes in society and public life; in particular, the move towards a more materialistic society as evidenced through an increase in consumption patterns and levels of indebtedness (O'Sullivan, 2006). As Inglis (2007) suggests, Ireland has moved from a society dominated by the Catholic Church to a consumer society that is dominated by the market. However, participation in this consumption lifestyle is not equally available to all.

Some of the findings from this study could be extended to consumers at large, as within a consumer culture there is always something to desire (Belk et al., 2003). In the same way that low-income consumers may feel inferior to the better-off, those better-off may feel deprived in light of the best-off (Kochuyt, 2001). Thus it could be argued that the very nature of the consumer culture is that it installs a kind of experience of poverty in the majority of consumers as there will always be objects of desire that one is lacking. Indeed, research in the United States, one of the most advanced consumer societies in the world, demonstrates that despite rising incomes, Americans do not feel any better off and even those with high incomes report that they cannot afford to buy everything they need (Schor, 1999). Given the recent economic downturn, such feel-

ings are likely to increase. Increases in gas, electricity and transport costs, rising interest rates and rising levels of missed mortgage payments suggest that individuals' finances have become extremely tight. Concern over pension deficits, the increased use of credit cards, people spending more than they earn and the increased demand for debt counselling all highlight the extent of the problem. Thus consumption practices that were once restricted to the domain of low-income consumers may become applicable to more general consumption theory. While the first section of the findings clearly illustrates the difficulties low-income consumers encounter in a consumer culture, the second section is more positive, highlighting how they benefit from resource assets in the form of social support. This is line with Bourdieu (1986), who argues that power resources can be manifested in a variety of forms. Rather than concentrating exclusively on monetary resources, Bourdieu (1986, p. 242) states that, 'it is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognised by economic theory.' Social capital and cultural capital have equal status with economic capital in Bourdieu's theory.

Social capital is defined as, 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). Thus, whereas economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships (Portes, 1998). From the findings, it is clear that some respondents benefit greatly from belonging to social networks and to a certain extent, social capital may compensate for the lack of economic capital. While Lee, Ozanne and Hill (1999) demonstrate the importance of social support in a rural Appalachian coal mining community within the context of health care delivery, this study demonstrates that social support is equally important within an urban environment and has a broad remit. Social capital has evolved into something of a cure-all for the maladies affecting society at home and abroad (Portes, 1998). This study by no means suggests that social support solves the problems of low-income consumers. Indeed, not all of the respondents in the

study benefited from community spirit. Previous research also acknowledges that people living in disadvantaged housing estates can encounter crime in their surrounding areas (Daly and Leonard, 2002). However, for those who do benefit from social capital, life becomes more bearable. Indeed, it is interesting to consider this within the context of a consumer culture as the growth of materialistic desires is said to be connected to the loss of community (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). It is argued that economic growth may result in a decline in sociability, and specifically friendliness through a reduction in community ties (Hirsch, 1977). Simmel suggests that modern life in a metropolis is associated with anonymity (Bouchet, 1998) and Beck (1992, p. 97) states that one of the negative effects of individualisation processes is the separation of the individual from traditional support networks such as the family and neighbourhood networks. From this perspective, existing neighbourhoods are 'shattered' as social relations are much more loosely organised. Given this disintegration of neighbourhood communities, participation in consumerism is said to offer a replacement community and a way of achieving inclusion in mainstream society (Hamilton, 2004). However, it appears that despite economic growth in Northern Ireland and the transition to a consumer society, community bonds remain strong for some consumers, indicating that a

materialistic society does not have to automatically sever links between people. Recent consumer research focuses on new types of community that are not geographically bound, such as brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001) or virtual communities (Kozinets, 1999). However, this research indicates that the traditional neighbourhood community can still hold importance for consumers and highlights the potential oversights that may arise if geographic communities are overlooked in favour of non-geographic communities. In the Republic of Ireland, Inglis (2007) argues that there is the possibility of combining a commitment to traditional ways of bonding with freedom through the marketplace. Findings from this study suggest that there is a similar situation in Northern Ireland, where new social trends can coexist with more traditional values.

In conclusion, despite outward signs of economic growth and affluence in society, there remains a significant percentage of the population who struggle to meet their daily needs and who are unable to meet the standards considered as normal by the majority. The experiences of these consumers often remain unheard among the positive discourse of economic growth. It is only by highlighting their stories that we can really understand the full consequences of what it means to live in a consumer culture.

Author

Kathy Hamilton is a lecturer in the marketing department, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. Her research interests lie in contemporary consumer culture. This article is based on her doctoral research which was completed at Queen's University, Belfast, in 2005 and explored aspects of consumer disadvantage, social exclusion and stigma management. Her current research addresses tribal consumption, celebrity and dance cultures, and nostalgic consumption.

References

Ahuvia, Aaron C. and C. Friedman Douglas (1998), 'Income, consumption and subjective well-being: toward a composite macromarketing model,' *Journal of Macromarketing*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 153–68.

Alwitt, Linda F. and Thomas D. Donley (1996), *The Low-Income Consumer, Adjusting the Balance of Exchange*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Andreasen, Alan R. (1975), *The Disadvantaged Consumer*, The Free Press, New York.

Arnould, Eric J. and Craig J. Thompson (2005), 'Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): twenty years of research,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 868–82.

Baker, S.M., J.W. Gentry and T.L. Rittenburg (2005), 'Building understanding in the domain of consumer vulnerability,' *Journal of Macromarketing*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 128–39.

Baudrillard, Jean (1998), *The Consumer Society*, Sage, London.

Bauman, Zygmunt (2005), *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*, 2nd edn., Open University Press, Buckingham.

Beck, Ulrich (1992), *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, translated by Mark Ritter, Sage, London.

Becker, Saul (1997), *Responding to Poverty: The Politics of Cash and Care*, Longman, London.

Belk, R.W., G. Ger and S. Askegaard (2003), 'The fire of desire: a multisited enquiry into consumer passion', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 326–51.

Bouchet, Dominique (1998), 'Information technology, the social bond and the city: Georg Simmel updated. About the changing relationships between idenriry and the city,' *Built Environment*, vol. 24, pp. 104–33.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1986), 'The forms of capital', in John G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood Press, New York, pp. 241–58.

Bowring, Finn (2000), 'Social exclusion: limitations of the debate', *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 307–30.

Boyce, Gordon (2000), 'Valuing customers and loyalty: the rhetoric of customer focus versus the reality of alienation and exclusion of (*de*valued) customers', *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, vol. 11, no. 6, pp. 649–89.

Burchardt, Tania, Julian Le Grand and David Piachaud (1999), 'Social exclusion in Britain 1991–1995', *Social Policy and Administration*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 227–44.

Campbell, Colin (2004), 'I shop therefore I know that I am: the metaphysical basis of modern consumerism', in Karin Ekstrom and Helene Brembeck (eds.), *Elusive Consumption*, Berg, Oxford, pp. 27–44.

Caplovitz, David (1967), *The Poor Pay More, Consumer Practices of Low-Income Families*, The Free Press, New York.

Coe, Barbara Davis (1971), 'Private versus national preference among lower and middle income consumers', *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 61–72.

Cohen, Lizabeth (2004), 'A consumers' republic: the politics of mass consumption in postwar America', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 236–9.

Curtis, James (2000), 'Low income, low priority', *Marketing*, Oct., pp. 36–7.

Daly, Mary and Leonard, Madeleine (2002), *Against All Odds: Family Life on a Low Income in Ireland*, Combat Poverty Agency, Dublin.

Darley, William K. and Denise M. Johnson (1985), 'A contemporary analysis of the low income consumer: an international perspective', in C.T. Tan and J.N. Sheth (eds.), *Historical Perspectives in Consumer Research: National and International Perspectives*, Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT, pp. 206–10.

Dittmar, Helga (2008), *Consumer Culture, Identity and Well-Being: The Search for the 'Good Life' and the 'Body Perfect'*, Psychology Press, Hove, UK.

Duhachek, Adam (2005), 'Coping: a multidimensional, hier-archical framework of responses to stressful consumption episodes', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 41–53.

Edwards R. (1990), 'Connecting method and epistemology: a white woman interviewing black women', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 13, pp. 477–90.

Edwards, Tim (2000), *Contradictions of Consumption: Concepts, Practices and Politics in Consumer Society*, Open University Press, Buckingham, UK.

Festinger, Leon (1954), 'A theory of social comparison processes', *Human Relations*, vol. 7, May, pp. 117–40.

Fullerron, R.A. and G. Punj (2004), 'Repercussions of promoting an ideology of consumption: consumer misbehavior', *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 57, pp. 1239–49.

Gabriel, Y. and T. Lang (2006), *The Unmanageable Consumer: Contemporary Consumption and its Fragmentation*, 2nd edn., Sage, London.

General Consumer Council, Northern Ireland (2001a), 'The transport trap – how transport disadvantages poorer people', *The Price of Being Poor*, Paper 2.

General Consumer Council, Northern Ireland (2001b), 'In poor health (Northern Ireland: the health gap between rich and poor)', *The Price of Being Poor*, Paper 3.

General Consumer Council, Northern Ireland (2002), 'Frozen out – tackling fuel poverty in Northern Ireland', *The Price of Being Poor*, Paper 4.

Ger, Guliz (1997), 'Human development and humane consumption: well-being and the "good life"', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 110–25.

Gingerbread (2003), 'Annual Review', London.

Goffman, Erving (1963), *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Penguin Books, London.

Goldman, Robert and Stephen Papson (1998), *Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh*, Sage, London.

Goodman, Charles S. (1968), 'Do the Poor Pay More?', *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 32, Jan., pp. 18–24.

Gordon, David, Laura Adelman, Karl Ashworth, Jonathan Bradshaw, Ruth Levitas, Sue Middleton, Christina Pantazis, Demi Patsios, Sarah Payne, Peter Townsend and Julie Williams (2000), *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

Hamilton, Clive (2004), *Growth Fetish*, Pluto Press, London.

Hamilton, Kathy and Miriam Catterall (2007), 'Cooperation and conflict in family decision making', in Stefania Borghini, Mary Ann McGrath and Cele Otnes (eds.), *European Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 8, Association for Consumer Research, Milan, Italy.

Hamilton, Kathy and Miriam Catterall (2008), '"I can do it!" Consumer coping and poverty', in Angela Y. Lee and Dilip Soman (eds.), *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 35, Association for Consumer Research, Duluth, MN.

Hamilton, Kathy, Hilary Downey and Miriam Catterall (2006), 'A sheep in wolf's clothing: exploring researcher

vulnerability', in Connie Pechmann and Linda Price (eds.), *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 33, Association for Consumer Research, Duluth, MN, pp. 672–7.

Hill, Ronald Paul (1991), 'Homeless women, special possessions, and the meaning of "home": an ethnographic case study', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 18, Dec., pp. 298–310.

Hill, Ronald Paul (1995), 'Researching sensitive topics in marketing: the special case of vulnerable populations', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 143–8.

Hill, Ronald Paul (2001), *Surviving in a Material World, The Lived Experience of Poverty*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN.

Hill, Ronald Paul (2002), 'Consumer culture and the culture of poverty: implications for marketing theory and practice', *Marketing Theory*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 273–93.

Hill, Ronald Paul and Mark Stamey (1990), 'The homeless in America: an examination of possessions and consumption behaviors,' *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 17, Dec., pp. 303–21.

Hill, Ronald Paul and Debra Lynn Stephens (1997), 'Impoverished consumers and consumer behavior: the case of AFDC mothers', *Journal of Macromarketing*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 32–48.

Hillyard, Paddy, Grace Kelly, Eithne McLaughlin, Demi Patsios and Mike Tominson (2003), *Bare Necessities, Poverty and Social Exclusion in Northern Ireland: Key Findings*, Democratic Dialogue, Belfast.

Hirsch, Fred (1977), *Social Limits to Growth*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.

Inglis, Tom (2007), *Global Ireland: Same Difference*, Routledge, London.

Kempson, Elaine (1996), *Life on a Low Income*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

Kochuyt, Thierry (2001), 'Quality in the balance: on the adaptive and mimetic nature of subjective well-being', *European Journal of Social Quality*, vol. 3, nos. 1–2, pp. 90–117.

Kochuyt, Thierry (2004), 'Giving away one's poverty: on the consumption of scarce resources within the family', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 139–61.

Kozinets, Robert (1999), 'E-tribalised marketing?: the strategic implications of virtual communities of consumption,' *European Management Journal*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 252–63.

Lee, Raymond M. (1993), *Doing Research on Sensitive Topics*, Sage, London.

Lee, Raymond M. and Claire M. Renzetti (1993), 'The problems of researching sensitive topics,' in Claire M. Renzetti and Raymond M. Lee (eds.), *Researching Sensitive Topics*, Sage, London, pp. 3–13.

Lee, Renee Gravois, Julie L. Ozanne and Ronald Paul Hill (1999), 'Improving service encounters through resource sensitivity: the case of health care delivery in an Appalachian community', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 230–48.

Lury, Celia (1996), *Consumer Culture*, Polity Press, Oxford.

Muniz, Albert M. and Thomas C. O'Guinn (2001), 'Brand community', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 412–32.

O'Shaugnessy, John and Nicholas Jackson O'Shaughnessy (2002), 'Marketing, the consumer society and hedonism', *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 36, nos. 5–6, pp. 524–47.

O'Sullivan, Michael J. (2006), *Ireland and the Global Question*, Cork University Press, Cork.

Ozanne, Julie L., Ronald Paul Hill and Newell D. Wright (1998), 'Juvenile delinquents' use of consumption as cultural resistance: implications for juvenile reform programs and public policy', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 185–96.

Portes, Alejandro (1998), Social capital: its origins and applications in modern sociology, *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 24, pp. 1–24.

Rassuli, K.M. and S.C. Hollander (1986), 'Desire – induced, innate, insatiable?', *Journal of Macromarketing*, vol. 6, Fall, pp. 4–24.

Richins, Marsha L. (1995), 'Social comparison, advertising and consumer discontent', *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 38, no. 4, pp. 593–607.

Ringen, Stein (1988), 'Direct and indirect measures of poverty', *Journal of Social Policy*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 351–65.

Schor, Juliet B. (1999), *The Overspent American: Why We Want What We Don't Need*, Harper, New York.

Schor, Juliet B. (2004), *Born to Buy: The Commercialised Child and the New Consumer Culture*, Scribner, New York.

Sillars, Alan L. (1995), 'Communication and family culture', in Mary Anne Fitzpatrick and Anita L. Vangelisti (eds.), *Explaining Family Interactions*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 375–99.

Simpson, John (2008), *Ten Years of NI's Economic Growth*, BBC News, 18th March, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/7290414.stm.

Szmigin, Isabelle (2003), *Understanding the Consumer*, Sage, London.

Thompson, Craig J., Howard R. Pollio and William B. Locander (1994), 'The spoken and the unspoken: a hermeneutic approach to understanding the cultural viewpoints that underlie consumers' expressed meanings', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 432–52.

Townsend, Peter (1979), *Poverty in the United Kingdom: A Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK.

Veblen, Thorstein (1899), *Theory of the Leisure Class*, Penguin Books, London, 1994.

Williams, Frances (1977), *Why the Poor Pay More*, The Macmillan Press for The National Consumer Council, London.

Winnett, Robert and Thomas, Zoe (2003), 'Are you a second class consumer?', *Sunday Times*, 19th October.

Wood, Joanne V. (1989), 'Theory and research concerning social comparisons of personal attitudes', *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 106, no. 2, pp. 231–48.

Wood, Michael (2005), 'Discretionary unplanned buying in consumer society', *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 268–81.

Wright, Len Tiu, Andrew Newman and Charles Dennis (2006), 'Enhancing consumer empowerment', *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 40, nos. 9–10, pp. 925–35.

HOME CONFINED CONSUMERS' FREEDOM THROUGH SURROGATE ACTIVITIES: THE ROLE OF PERSONAL COMMUNITIES

Hilary Downey & Miriam Catterall

This article explores the nature of surrogate consumption activity with three cases of non-institutionalised home confined consumers. The role played by personal communities in their daily lives is explored from the constrained rural contexts in which they consume. Despite the barriers to achieving normalcy in the marketplace, home confined consumers are able to realise freedom and agency, and express identity through engagement in surrogate consumption activity. Surrogate consumption activity also provides home confined consumers with opportunities to reinforce and challenge traditional family practices (discourses of care) through the ability for relationship culture development and social capital creation. Findings in this study show that home confined consumers, labeled as 'limited-choice' (Gabel, 2005) have the ability to display power, make choices, and find their voice despite non-interaction in the marketplace.

Introduction

As economic growth impacts strongly on the quality of a society and its environment, the health of a society's social capital increases in significance due to its connection with matters of social exclusion, better health and wellbeing (Halpern, 1999). Indeed such social and environmental factors can also influence the economy's strength and resilience, for example the rise of services has major implications for human capital as it makes 'soft' or people handling skills increasingly important alongside social policies that are seen to protect people while rewarding change. Therefore social capital and community emerge as key contemporary concerns; as the National Economic and Social Council has acknowledged, 'In a globalised world, the strength of Ireland's economy and the attractiveness of its society will rest on the same foundation, the human qualities of the people who participate in them' (NESC, 2008, p. xxiii). Notably the former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, established a Taskforce on Active Citizenship in April 2006 to advise Government on policy measures which could be undertaken to support, encourage and promote citizenship and community values in a changing Ireland. Meanwhile the NESC (2008) has identified disabled consumers as one of the fastest growing segments of social welfare recipients; these vulnerable consumers are reliant on social networks and voluntary organisations for meeting their citizenship goals. Given the importance of social capital to

individual and community alike it is understandable that such activity be understood and located within consumer culture.

The purpose of this paper is to extend understanding of existing surrogate consumption theory and provide a fuller theoretical picture of the phenomenon. The consideration of surrogate consumption activity in relation to disabled consumers presents different circumstances to those typically discussed in the disciplinary literature. As Gabel (2005) notes, surrogate consumption often involves the most disenfranchised, but these consumers have been unaccounted for in surrogate literature. This Irish study focuses on three cases of home confinement, the nature of their surrogate consumption activity, and their ability for freedom and agency in absence of marketplace interaction is explored through the micro-practices of everyday life.

Freedom to choose, realisation of free will, sets the scene of consumer society. 'The more freedom of choice one has, and above all the more choice one freely exercises, the higher up one is placed in the social hierarchy' (Bauman, 1998, p. 31). Baumeister et al. (2008, p. 12) link free will to self-regulation in the context of human evolution, culture, and consumer behaviour. They conclude that the 'miracle of the marketplace' is constituted by the action control of millions of consumers who exercise their free wills in the course of choosing prod-

ucts and brands according to personal self-interests. As Mick (2008, p. 19) suggests, 'free will should pay greater attention to consumer unruliness, self-reliance, and creativity'. Baumeister et al. (2008) maintain that evolution has endowed humans with the ability to consider their needs and desires, develop relevant plans, and generally make appropriate choices. The rhetoric of freedom and choice is so interwoven into the ideas of the market system and the workings of a free market 'that it is thoroughly inconceivable ... to express anything otherwise' (Firat, 1987, p. 262).

In a society of consumers, it is the inadequacy of the person as a consumer that leads to feeling excluded or constrained 'from the social feast to which others gained entry' (Bauman, 1998, p. 38). Human existence is measured by the standards of decent life practised in any given society; the inability to abide by such standards is itself a cause of distress and self-mortification, '... a "normal life" is the life of consumers, preoccupied with making their choices among ... publicly displayed opportunities' (Bauman, 1998, p. 37). In other words, when the freedom to act or consume in the interests of self is removed, then choicelessness best describes that consumption context, and those choiceless consumers are, as Bauman (1998, p. 28) suggests, 'inadequate-consumers'. People with disabilities who have imposed assistance from the marketplace are not always in a position to obtain the independence they desire, and their inability to control their environment inevitably defines their inadequacy (Baker et al., 2001). The ability to participate, to act and consume in the interests of self (Pavia and Mason, 2004; Miller, 1987) is key to combating exclusion. The hegemony of the market in contemporary socio-cultural life means that those who are excluded have less control over their life choices, their ability to express and form identities, and the influence they can have on society.

Without free will the consumer would not be accountable for the outcomes of his or her choices. The experience of free will has had limited examination in consumer research. One exception is an interpretive study conducted by Thompson, Locander, and Pollio (1990), which discusses how consumers from different life contexts can experience free will in ways that both conform to and deviate from theoretical thought. Consumers with

uncertain futures use consumption decisions to help them through their crises, 'often appearing to use control over their consumption as a surrogate for their loss of control in other dimensions of their lives' (Pavia and Mason, 2004, p. 452). Consumption experiences that offer vulnerable persons ability to demonstrate control should be actively pursued. Freedom to consume is critical to managing life-changing situations, and it is these consumption activities that will play an important role in leading individuals through the crisis and into resolution (Bauman, 1996).

In the context of this paper the loss of freedom of action comes about as a result of barriers to consumption experienced by home confined consumers (defined as homebound by Wachtel and Gifford, 1998). Perceived as experience poor, or as 'limited-choice' consumers (Gabel, 2005) (those who lack the opportunity and/or the ability to engage in consumption acts on their own behalf), this study of home confined consumers explores their capability for freedom and agency in absence of direct marketplace interaction. The often negative associations of disability that perpetuate the marketplace offer such consumers limited opportunities for freedom and expression of autonomy. Limited-choice consumers, 'sheltered (and predominantly female) homeless' studied by Hill (1991), were heavily dependent upon consumption surrogates (workers at the shelters they live in and at soup kitchens) and this study reflects such dependence. Gabel (2005) suggests that a more precise explanation of the nature of the surrogate consumer, and the nature of the services, will provide a better understanding of these issues and expand Solomon's (1986) understanding of surrogate consumer utilisation. Surrogate consumption activity (Solomon, 1986; Hollander and Rassuli, 1999) is often recognised, as a one-way activity flow (provider to user). However, this study recognises that surrogate consumption activity can be understood as a two-way activity flow, where opportunities for sharing in consumption experiences for the continuance of interpersonal and self-development activities (Kaufman-Scarborough and Baker, 2005) can be realised by home confined consumers and their personal communities.

We begin with a review of the literature on surrogate consumption activity and discuss 'limited-

Table 1   Disabled Population Figures (UK, USA, and Ireland; 2005/2003/2002)

	Population (m)	Disabled Population	
UK	29,710,306	6,941,935	(19.0%)
USA	257,200,000	49,700,000	(19.3%)
Ireland	3,924,140	323,707	(08.3%)

Sources: Labour Force Survey, 2005 (UK); Disability Status, 2003 (USA); Central Statistics Office, 2002 (Ireland)

choice consumers' (Gabel, 2005) as an important and growing population of end users of such services. There will follow a review of the disability literature, and the concepts of consumer power (discursive model) and personal communities (implications for identity) will be discussed. Then we explain the methods of data collection and the research context. Next, we describe and summarise the findings in themes that highlight the nature of surrogate consumption activity by homebound consumers. We discuss (1) the ability to express freedom (make choices, have power) through surrogate consumption activity, (2) the ability for agency (action in their self-interest) as a consideration of surrogate provision, and (3) the ability for homebound consumers to retain a self-identity through surrogate consumption activity. A short discussion will follow. We conclude with a summary of the key points and implications for social capital.

Theoretical Background

Hollander (1971) and Solomon (1986) provide the most comprehensive theoretical treatments of modern surrogate consumption activity. Hollander suggests that consumer researcher attention began to turn to the issue of surrogate consumption in the mid 1960s due to recognition of the need for some consumers to employ the services of 'professional buyers' in order to help them cope with increasing marketplace complexity. Solomon (1986, p. 208) defines a surrogate consumer as 'an agent retained by a consumer to guide, direct, and/or transact market activities' and surrogates, according to Solomon, 'play a wide range of roles'. Solomon suggests that surrogate consumption involves a choice, on the part of the surrogate user, to employ expert agents to help guide their personal lives for both functional (time and place utility-based) and, increasingly, expressive (image and self-concept management-based) purposes.

Other surrogate consumption studies in consumer research (Forsythe et al., 1990; Fuller and Blackwell, 1992; Solomon, 1987; Solomon and Douglas, 1985) examine the role of the surrogate consumer as wardrobe consultant or personal shopper in retail settings. These studies however do not address the nature of surrogate consumption beyond those parameters identified by Hollander (1971) and Solomon (1986). Two key issues emerge from the surrogate consumption literature: surrogate usage is viewed as a (voluntary) matter of choice for privileged consumers faced with an overwhelming abundance of choice, and surrogate usage entails a formal economic exchange. Gabel (2005) suggests that this restricted theoretical perspective on only privileged consumers eclipses other populations of surrogate consumers.

Indeed, Gabel (2005) suggests that these neglected, 'limited-choice' surrogate users may lack the motivation, the opportunity (access to retail shopping environments), and/or the ability (physically or financially) to consume within the normal exchange-based marketplace in which surrogate consumption studies are typically conducted. A study by Cornwell and Gabel (1996) identified a gap in surrogate consumption theory. Friends and family members of institutionalised persons, as well as employees of both institutions and community-service organisations, may act as surrogate consumers for persons unable to consume certain goods on their own behalf. Those consumers experiencing economic, physical, or social-support constraints offer a wealth of potential insight into the nature of surrogate consumption. The surrogate consumption activities of those institutionalised, physically disabled, impoverished, food insecure and homeless remain unaccounted for.

Gabel (2005) indicates that disabled persons (non-institutionalised) account for some 49,746,248 persons (US Bureau of the Census, 2000) and those considered home-confined represent around five per cent of this overall figure (Waldrop and Stern, 2003). The United States Bureau of the Census (2000) reports that 3.18 million instances of 'self-care' disability (difficulties associated with dressing, bathing, or moving about inside the home), and 6.8 million instances of 'go-outside-home' disability (problems with going out to shop or visiting a doctor) are represented within this

overall figure of disabled persons. In Ireland similar figures emerge: the Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2003) reports that there are 323,707 persons classified disabled and this represents 8.3 per cent of the total population. The Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA, 2005) reflects an increasing trend in disability and invalidity benefit figures. The total uptake of 241,657 persons includes 24,970 carer's allowances. This data collectively suggests a need for at least occasional surrogate intervention by community-based volunteers, nursing home employees, and/or family and friends. Arguably more important among the disabled elderly are the projections of future growth. The number of persons aged 65 and over is expected to roughly double to 71.5 million by the year 2030 (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). Globally, this trend in surrogate usage by the disabled elderly is likely to increase significantly over the coming years.

Surrogate Consumption Activity (SCA)

As Solomon (1986) states, full-choice consumers may choose to use surrogates for a variety of consumer-centred or environmental factors. Full-choice consumers may elect to employ surrogates as a result of having little desire to personally engage in acquisition activities, or to enhance self-worth and social mobility (via possession and display of role-appropriate status symbols). On the environmental side, full-choice consumers may elect to employ surrogates as a result of time constraints, lacking informal referral networks, and role conflict. According to Hollander and Rassuli's (1999, p. 108) framework of surrogate-mediated decision-making, the key condition of consumers' delegation of decision-making authority is the presence of an actual or perceived impediment to a goal.

According to Gabel (2005) the locus of surrogate use for limited-choice (collective of restricted and severely restricted) consumers is far more environmentally based. Most institutionalised persons, for example, are often so constrained by objective environmental factors (limited product availability and inadequate access to retailers) that their personal preferences are virtually irrelevant with regard to the use of surrogate services (Cornwell and Gabel, 1996). Surrogates engage

in most, if not all, acquisition and other consumption-related activities (with at most minimal consumer input). The findings in this paper provide a different perspective to the non-engagement found by the limited-choice consumers of Gabel's (2005) study. Surrogates in the home confined context contribute to the surrogate consumption process, but do not suppress action in the interest of self or the ability to demonstrate freedom of choice.

Theoretical Importance

The works of Hollander (1971), Solomon (1986, 1987) and Solomon and Douglas (1985) have significantly advanced surrogate consumption understanding from a marketing and consumer behaviour perspective. The previous focus on full-choice consumers demonstrates the failure to take account of 50 million disabled consumers (US Bureau of the Census, 2000). Gabel (2005) holds that each segment is significant in its own right and should be accounted for in surrogate consumption theory. Hill, Hirschman, and Bauman (1996) called for policy makers to pay more careful attention to the consequences of laws, which may further restrict consumer choice. Hill et al. (1996, p. 274) in their examination of modern entitlement programmes in the United States, suggest that the 'Contract with America ... might be responsible for thrusting many persons into a "consumer environment" that is "greatly constrained".' Hill et al. (1996, p. 275) suggest that 'welfare reform measures passed by Congress ... may diminish further the quality of life of these citizens and erode their self-esteem.'

Disability

Disability research has charted a break between earlier models that are driven by religious and superstitious notions of human perfectibility and a medical model that still retains a privileged place in contemporary mainstream culture. More recently, the social model of disability, where environmental and social factors are taken to construct the conditions of disability, have been instrumental in replacing the notion of the medicalised individual. Against the standards of normalcy (Baker, 2006) physical differences are perceived 'as a failing, incomplete and inferior' (Shildrick, 2005, p. 756). Disability is given meaning through an endless set of cultural, historical, political and mythological parameters that define disabled people, 'as

contaminatory, as at once malign and helpless' (Mitchell and Snyder, 1997, pp. 2–3; Shildrick, 2002). As such, disability is always the object of institutionalised discourses of control and containment. Given the demands of the able-bodied subject, 'as one of wholeness, independence and integrity' (Shildrick, 2005, p. 757) disability is seen to threaten normalcy. The ethics and politics of equality, and more recently diversity, position disability as that 'other' which not only disturbs normal expectations, but also destabilises self-identity.

Stiker (1999, p. 40) offers an explanation of why disability is historically disturbing; differences in individual morphology signify a more threatening disorder. As he puts it, 'an aberrancy within the corporeal order is an aberrancy in the social order' and the disabled 'are the tear in our being' (1999, p. 10). The disabled body is deeply disruptive to both the social body and the normal self, 'because it remains undecidable, neither self nor other' (Shildrick, 2005, p. 759). The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), the Disability Discrimination Act 1996 (UK), and the Disability Act (2005) in Ireland, which respond in part to the social model, attempt to smooth away the uncertainty of disability by encompassing the view that everyone, including the disabled, can be productive workers. Seeking to break the boundaries and barriers of disability is seen by some as what Cruikshank (1999, p. 1) refers to as, 'making individuals politically active and capable of self government'. These debates conceive of disabling spaces as increasingly part of a discourse about social exclusion (Room, 1995).

For many (Cruikshank, 1999; Imrie, 2001) empowerment is reliant on often-elusive networks of social contacts, or trying to find shelter in a world that refuses to accommodate irregularities. As Cruikshank (1999, p. 20) noted in her study, 'Being "dependent" is not the antithesis of being an active citizen.' The possibilities for citizenship stem from the ability for interaction and the ability to perform capabilities associated with normalcy (Baker, 2006). In the words of Kaufman-Scarborough and Baker (2005, p. 26), inability to interact in the marketplace is only superseded by an inability to participate 'in a variety of interpersonal and self-development activities'.

Consumer Power

The critical position generally assumes that marketing is a powerful economic, social, and cultural institution designed to control consumers; as such it rejects any real possibility for free choice and consumer agency on the consumer's part. The marketing and consumer research literature provides a limited number of discussions of consumer power (Desmond, 2003; Holt, 2002; Merlo et al., 2004; more often than not the term is loosely used in discussions of resistance and agency (Kozinets, 2002; Thompson, 2004). Postmodern consumer researchers tend to theorise consumption as a site of resistance and emancipation (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Fiske, 1989; Peñaloza and Price, 1993). Desmond (2003) suggests consumers appear as empowered champions of the marketplace and Holt (2002) shows discourses of resistance as creative consumer practices of empowered consumers; both provide the most advanced theoretical accounts for understanding consumer power and resistance.

The discursive model of power (Denegri-Knott, Zwick, and Schroeder, 2006) suggests that behaviour is moderated not by internal standards but by an internalisation of an external discourse of normalcy and conduct. Hence, individuals are simultaneously objectivised by institutional discourses and disciplinary power, and subjectivised by the practices of the self. Therefore, 'an individual is never just a passive, docile automaton subjected and discursively totalised by the practices of disciplinary, institutional (market) power' (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006, p. 961). Studying consumers' practices of self reveals the type of 'self-regulating work' that consumers do when deciding whether or not to consume. Barnett et al. (2005) and Orlie (2002) show how consumption is constructed as a site for the care of the self, where consumers' capacity for autonomous action is through 'the self-fashioning of relationships between selves and others' (Barnett et al., 2005, p. 6). Similar approaches would enrich our understanding of the desires and conflicts that home confined consumers experience when navigating freedom and agency from a constrained marketspace. Empowerment in the discursive model is conceptualised as the ability of the consumer to mobilise strategies that will determine what choices can be undertaken in any particular field of action (i.e. consuming outside of the marketplace). Con-

sumer power is subjective and depends on the conceptual perspective adopted to identify and understand it. Denegri-Knott et al's. (2006, p. 966) discursive power model draws from political and social theory and consumer research and marketing literature. This model focuses on how consumers co-create markets, power, and knowledge and is the model that best describes home confined consumers' capacity for action.

Personal Communities

Consumer researchers have recognised the importance of such communities in care giving (Kates, 2001) and to self-identity through sustained social interaction (Delanty, 2003). Wellman (2001, p. 227) suggests that personal communities provide 'information, a sense of belonging and social identity'. Personal communities are the closest we can get to postmodern community life; as Delanty (2003, p. 187) suggests, 'it is an open-ended system of communication about belonging'. Home confined consumers are active in constructing their personal communities, which are managed in such a way so as to facilitate consumption opportunities, realise freedom and agency, and maintain a sense of identity. At some point in all our lives we will require or give care: 'Caring expresses ethically significant ways in which we matter to each other' (Bowden, 1997, p. 1). These 'families of choice' offer home confined consumers the opportunity to develop a relationship culture (Budgeon and Roseneil, 2004; Kellerhals et al., 2002) formed through surrogate consumption activity between home confined consumer and personal community member. Given the subjective nature of discursive power and the context of consumption of this study (home confined) it was important that the lived experiences of those consumers, deemed vulnerable and marginalised, were understood from their perspective.

Method

This study employed an interpretative approach seeking to add to the debate on individuality and surrogate consumption activity by exploring the nature of such activity from the perspectives of the respondents (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). As the study of home confined consumers entailed intensive fieldwork over a long period, the number of cases selected was relatively small. Examples of case studies in consumer research include Holt's (2002) study that sought numerous

consumption stories via loosely structured conversations with five informants. Fournier's (1998) study on consumer–brand relationships involved three female cases in different life situations. The size restriction on the informant pool allowed depth concerning individual life worlds, necessary for thick description (Erlandson et al., 1993; Mick and Buhl, 1992). Giving voice to the disabled through research is a key issue in disability studies (Burchardt, 2004). In disability studies the single case method can transform individual issues into societal or structural issues, developed from consideration of the individual story (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003). In Park's (1967) study, 'The Siege', the author walks the reader through her daughter Jessy's first eight years as an autistic child. This publication has been credited as a watershed event in the history of autism.

It was important to allow the research participants to discuss important consumption experiences in terms that reflected their everyday lives. Giving conversational partners (Rubin and Rubin, 1995) the freedom to raise and talk about the topics and issues that they feel are important produces valuable and interesting data. There are two advantages of this; first, responses are provided in respondents' own language and from their frames of reference and secondly, unexpected digressions often turn out to be very productive (Johnson, 2000). The avoidance of a rigid structure indicates awareness that individuals have 'unique way(s) of defining the world' (Denzin, 1970, p. 353). Giving informants a central and valued role in the research relationship helps to counter their exclusion from society (Susinos, 2007).

Access to and Selection of Cases

The key sampling issues were the criteria used to select case respondents and access to respondents. The following selection criteria were adopted. (1) Informants have no direct interaction in the marketplace, either in person or by remote shopping (Burton, 2002); (2) the years homebound are greater than three years, Brownlie and Horne's (1999) study of prison inmates suggests that no aspects of self-extension are exhibited before this time; (3) 'homebound', is as a result of illness or physical disability, but not solely as a consequence of age, (4) informants are living independently in their own homes as opposed to an institutionalised setting (hospital, care home, institution, or

fold). This allows consumption activity to be explored in a particular living condition; (5) informants are living independently in the sense that they are not living with family, friends, or full time carers.

A key issue in this research was access to suitable informants, and having gained access, that respondents would be willing to give consent for the study. Home confined consumers can be embarrassed about their situation and find it extremely difficult to let strangers into their home. This study was dependent on access and consent being given by the home confined consumer and not through a third party (carer or family member). It was only made possible through prior knowledge of, and friendship with, the home confined consumers involved in the study. Despite the challenges, the literature in disability studies illustrates the importance of such case studies for giving voice to the disabled. A decision not to research vulnerable individuals could actually increase their vulnerability because people will remain in ignorance about their circumstances and treatment, and areas such as 'health, education, welfare and quality of life' may remain underresearched (Owens, 2007, p. 307).

Data Collection

Entering their homes as a 'researcher' who was also a friend was an issue in this research. All respondents were willing to participate in the research study. However, conditions were placed on participation: respondents' concerns centred on the study being handled as an already established relationship. In other words, having given consent, they did not wish to be subjected to formal or direct questioning. Spradley (1979) and Harkness and Warren (1993) have discussed the problems that can arise when interviewing friends and acquaintances: 'question and answer format, perceived as appropriate for strangers, is considered intrusive amongst friends' (p. 332). It was never intended that this study would be of a formal question and answer format. The opportunity for multiple conversations more than made up for an inability to tape conversations. Although conversations were not recorded, they were written up in a living diary by the researchers after returning from respondents' homes. This living diary provided an additional source of reference and played an important part in coming to know

and understand the experiences of home confined consumers. It was understandable that homebound consumers' conversations would naturally turn to important issues, given the vulnerability of their situation. As the researchers had prior knowledge of the homebound consumers it made it easier to initially draw up a series of themes that would reflect everyday life concerns. Health and welfare were major themes (food, medical care, independence); family, friends (personal community) were important sources of emotional support and advice. Other themes emerged as the study progressed (rituals/regimes of care, special possessions). Themes were noted in a diary for each case and similar themes across cases provided a richer understanding of home confined living. Diaries were written up after each visit; informants' words were recorded at this time. These diaries provided narrative texts of the lived experiences of home confined consumers (Thompson, 1997) and serve as the primary evidence in developing an understanding of their surrogate consumption activity.

Findings and Discussion

As indicated by Gabel (2005), reliance on family, friends, and carers usually constitutes the main form of surrogate provision by limited-choice consumers; the heavy dependence on others to perform everyday tasks is implicit. It should be noted the researchers were an integral part of the personal communities of the home confined consumers and as such were privy to specific details of and, at times, very private consumption experiences. We discuss (1) the ability to express freedom (make choices, have power) through surrogate consumption activity, (2) the ability for agency (action in their self-interest) as a consideration of surrogate provision, and (3) the ability for homebound consumers to retain a self-identity through surrogate consumption activity. Table 2, provides a brief profile of the homebound consumers (three cases and four respondents, Jay, David, Barbara and Gloria) and their personal community members from a non-institutionalised context.

(1) Freedom (Making Choices, Discursive Power)

The more choice one can freely exercise (Bauman, 1998) the better able one is to demonstrate free will and capacity for self-action (Mick, 2008). Freedom and choice are about being part of the marketplace (Firat, 1987); if consumers are unable

Table 2   **Profile of Informants**

NAME	GENDER	AGE	HOMEBOUND (YRS)
Jay	male	50s	26

Description: Single; quadriplegic after automobile accident; lives independently in own home. Only had 2 outside visits to hospital (emergencies) over homebound period. All other health visits (doctor, dentist, medical procedures) are in-house affairs. Financially secure, own private means of support.

Personal community: 3 sisters, 1 brother; 1 female/1 male friend; 8 carers; 6 nurses; 1 doctor; 1 dentist; 1 priest; nieces and nephews (16) via the Internet. Jay is able to keep up to date with extended family members through his ability to purchase computer equipment and Dragon Dictate. Jay has had to negotiate a high tech product (a possum) that essentially replaces the need for people to carry out everyday practices (e.g. switching on and off lights, putting on music, TV, recording, opening and closing curtains and doors). Jay is the only recipient of such an aid in his location. Dependency is extremely high on this particular piece of equipment and any faults require experts from another location to come and fix it. All Jay's electrical products are tuned into this system. The ability for independent dependence is tied into this innovative system.

David	male	40s	3

Description: Single; voluntary withdrawal into home; lives independently in former family home (both parents deceased). Will attend doctor only if the problem is something he cannot attend to himself. A friend (Jim) takes him in the car to the doctor's surgery and waits to bring him home again. David finds walking any distance very difficult (lifetime of cartilage problems in his knees and current inactive lifestyle have compounded these problems). Financially insecure, reliant on welfare payments, subsidised through illegal activities to make ends meet.

Personal community: 5 male (boyhood) friends; 2 female (long-term) friends; there are a constant stream of acquaintances joining or leaving the personal community (new friends of long-term friends). David has no Internet access in the home although he previously attended an IT class before becoming housebound. He has never been in a secure financial position to be able to purchase one. All of his interactions are face to face.

*Barbara	female	60s	5

Description: Single; health concerns (allergies) led to voluntary withdrawal into the home environment. Barbara lives with her sister, Gloria in their former family home (parents deceased). Allergies to the external environment (smell of smoke, perfume, after shave, certain foods) irritate her nasal passages and cause constant severe headaches and sleepless nights. Barbara cannot control the external environment but she can control the internal one (acting as gatekeeper) to all unwanted intrusions. Visits to hospital and doctor's surgery are given high priority (by taxi or ambulance). As active churchgoers throughout their lives this particular activity is now addressed in the home (daily prayers and reading bible) even though a church minibus is available to take them. The church itself is deemed an uncontrollable environment where germs and viruses could be contacted.

Personal community: 2 female friends and neighbours (over a 15 year period); 4 church going friends (attended same place of worship), all female; John, the local pharmacist (male in his thirties) who delivers the sisters' medication to the home and offers advice in person and over the telephone on medical complaints. The family doctor (Dr. Jones) would be a frequent visitor to the home and is a trusted member of their community. A male gardener (Pat), who formerly was the next-door neighbour's gardener, has been helping out in the garden since the sisters became homebound. Pat is known and he is familiar with how things should be done.

*Gloria	female	60s	5

Description: Single; concerns for sister's health (Barbara) and her own allergies to particular foods (history of stomach trouble, ulcers) has been instrumental in Gloria also retreating into the home. Gloria is the elder of the two sisters (by 2 years) and as such assumes responsibilities as organiser of daily chores (bread baking, jam making, organic food cooking). These regimes are essentially to minimise allergies from processed food and Gloria's specific needs. Visits to the doctor and hospital are welcomed. Both sisters are financially secure, private means of support.

Personal community: Members are exactly the same as Barbara's. These sisters have been constant companions throughout their lives and are highly dependent on each other for their independent living. No Internet access.

*Barbara and Gloria are considered as one homebound case in this study given their dependence on each other; as sisters they have lived together since childhood in the family home. They have the same friends and personal community members and rely heavily on each other for support and care. Pseudonyms are used to protect individuals.

to express such ability they are perceived as power-less. Discussions of consumer power tend to address consumer resistance (Kozinets, 2002) but the discursive model of power (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006) suggests that practices of self can result in the subject being known as a free and empowered agent (Barnett et al., 2005). These home confined consumers express such discursive power through making empowered choices.

Jay, as the most constrained of the cases of home confinement, has had to be very committed and determined to exercise his free will to realise independent living. Given the severity of Jay's injuries, his dependence on others is very high. His ability to make life changing choices and secure personal freedom against a tide of negativity displayed great strength and capability to realise empowerment:

> I wanted to more than anything else have my own place where I wouldn't be put here and there when someone needed to go on holiday (sister and her family). The same at Christmas, I don't have any say where I want to be. It's not the same being shoved around like a parcel, I feel I am a burden and want my own space. (Jay)

This was a long process for Jay to realise (2 years) and his family were concerned that it would not be achievable. To be able to have some control over his life Jay knew he would have to take on this daunting task. Having freedom and ability to make choices in his everyday life about even the most mundane things was everything to Jay. Being seen to be in control and feeling in control (Pavia and Mason, 2004) were important:

> I was really nervous about the whole thing; I wanted it to work out so much. No one else in my position had ever lived by themselves but I was determined to stick it out. It was so good to be able to put on music, switch over the TV, put lights off and on, close my curtains, I was in control of my space, I had a voice again. (Jay)

David by contrast voluntarily opted to retreat into the home. Loss of employment had created a time of anxiety and uncertainty for David; his inability to find suitable employment over a period of time (2 years) led to him making choices that would allow him to exercise control and free will. In his home he was able to take control over day-to-day issues:

> It was the best decision I ever made, I can lie in bed as long as I like, watch as much TV as I like and just do what I please. (David)

David has created a home environment that is relatively carefree and laidback. He lives a basically undisciplined lifestyle and he feels empowered by the choices he has made for his own self-preservation. David's management of his personal community appears to be quite haphazard, but it is the very freedom that he affords these friends that keeps a cohesive bond between them. The absence of rules and regulations of behaviour in David's home space encourages a high level of socialisation and evolving relationships:

> You wouldn't know who would arrive at your door at any time of the night, bringing gifts of wine and fancy biscuits and chocolates, all the things I love. (David)

David has a small garden but is unable to maintain it. Fritz, a close personal community member, has now taken over this task without being asked to do so. When he is attending to his own garden he pops round to David's:

> Fritz just appears with all the stuff and has the garden all tidied up in no time at all, he has a van so he takes all the cuttings away with him. I wouldn't be able to stand for that amount of time and I never was good at gardening anyway. I grow a few plants as you can see in the house; I have green fingers for some types. Fritz brings some pots for the porch; he enjoys doing it so I just let him get on with it. (David)

David's willingness to allow personal community members access in his private space and to be involved in daily practices in and around his home are not a result of his inability to address these concerns but rather demonstrate his capability to make choices in all areas of his life. By creating an 'open house' David has made his personal community feel involved in its day-to-day running. In contrast to the other two cases of home confinement, David does not need to assert his position of power in the home. His members become actively involved in activities without being asked to, David's self practices are equally effective in generating surrogate consumption activity and realising self goals:

I really don't have to worry about anything, food is brought by Noel [friend], fancy cakes and biscuits by Claire from Marks & Spencers, Snipe and Lou [friends] would bring me coal for the fire. What else do you need and I get my rent paid and my benefits so I'm happy enough.   (David)

Barbara and Gloria voluntarily withdrew from the marketplace when health concerns became an issue. The external environment was considered 'the enemy' in terms of their inability to have control over their social interactions,

Going out to the shops was a nightmare, you came in contact with that many germs, people coughing and sneezing all over the place ... people stopping to talk who had been smoking the fumes were all over me and my nose wasn't right for days.
                (Barbara)

Gloria echoes these sentiments:

Barbara was in agony for days, up half the night and I have that many allergies myself. Barbara and I have to take tablets all the time and these are making us feel bad as well.   (Gloria)

Barbara and Gloria's need to retain control over everyday consumption experiences could only be realised through making life changing choices; opting out of being in the marketplace (Baker, 2006) was an expression of their free will to determine their life course:

We have been in the home now for about five years and it was the best decision we made. Gloria and I feel better than we did. We still attend the doctor and go to the hospital for tests but our health is very important to us and if that's what it takes to be well then we'll manage.   (Barbara)

Their level of dependency on each other is high; they have each other for support in their home confinement context. They are highly disciplined individuals in most aspects of their lives, keeping the home environment scrupulously clean, determining who gains entry into their home, and the roles they will play,

We know how much things cost and where they should be bought. Our neighbour gets what we need, I ring her to call on her way past to the shops. She knows what we like, other people bring the wrong things but we make sure they take them

back and get the money back. We check the receipts so we know the prices of the things we always use.   (Gloria)

The personal community is heavily managed and controlled in terms of its membership: it is only at their request that personal members can visit; indeed they can be abrupt and dogmatic in the overly rigid and disciplined approach they maintain. All three cases have demonstrated free will and taken measures to ensure that they have control over life choices and consumption experiences. The discursive power realised through their self-care practices has been instrumental in securing freedom and agency in the individual contexts of consumption.

(2) Agency (Action for Self-Interest)

If agency is defined as a person's capacity for action in their interests (Peñaloza, 2004), then the action displayed by the home confined consumers in this study can be interpreted as acts of agency in terms of realising self-goals. Firat and Venkatesh (1995) focused on micro-emancipatory projects of agency: each act of consumer choice, even if practised within the context of daily life, helps consumers to construct both private and public spaces.

Barbara and Gloria's overriding anxiety in relation to food consumption is very apparent; they try to ensure where possible that only high quality whole-foods and organic products are consumed. Their concern with eating healthily is not solely the result of home confinement. For many years, the sisters cared for their elderly parents. Barbara states that:

Gloria and I have always had to be concerned with good nutrition; our parents needed the best to keep them healthy. If it hadn't been for us making sure they got the best they never would have lived so long, or been able to stay in their own home.
                (Barbara)

In their pre-home confinement years, Barbara and Gloria had built up a small community of 'organically' minded individuals. This small community would meet regularly in the local park and exchange produce that had either been home cooked or acquired from a reliable (organic) source:

We had been taking our parents out for air every day in their wheelchairs and we got talking to a few people who were sitting on the park benches. Over time we got to know each other pretty well and we discussed issues of health and everybody had some piece of knowledge to pass on. We had always baked our own bread and pastries so we could ensure we were not eating anything that might upset us. Our little group all made something, jams, pickles, soups or had access to real free range eggs and sometimes a little bit of country butter. I guess that's how it all started, we all shared our foodstuffs and it became part of the day out.

(Gloria)

The ability to share consumption experiences and exchange gifts of food kept this small community thriving. The personal community gave each other help, support and advice and as such were important links to Barbara and Gloria (Budgeon and Roseneil, 2004). Given the importance of these everyday interactions in the marketplace not only to realising specific food related goals, but also to feelings of self-worth and ability for communal ties, it was surprising that such activities were relinquished (Pahl and Spencer, 2005). Retreating into the home demonstrates ability for action in their self-interest; the pursuit of an independent, healthy, lifestyle was only tenable through taking what most would consider extreme action. The highly disciplined regimes they put in place to remain empowered and in control of their life are sustainable only through the roles played by their personal community.

Barbara and Gloria feel secure in the knowledge that personal community members will 'rush to their aid' as they are perceived as vulnerable and, as such, open to exploitation. Members are expected to 'drop everything' and sort out their concerns. The continuance of a highly private, independent lifestyle can only be fully realised in conjunction with those self-chosen members who can deliver a level of care that is both intermittent and at the same time highly involved:

Heather will pop round anytime; she just lives round the corner. If there is anybody we don't like the look of at the door we ring her up and she comes immediately. (Gloria)

Self-survival is the catalyst for this highly disciplined regime: Barbara and Gloria experience a level of freedom as a result of the restrictive regimes that they have created:

We have to be careful who we let into our home, even friends. Gloria and I have that many allergies to smells and to certain foods that we need to check if anyone has been smoking or wearing perfume or aftershaves that might set me off. (Barbara)
Everyone knows that calls to the house but you have to keep checking, our health depends on it.

(Barbara)

The ability to demonstrate self-choice, self-discipline, decision-making qualities, power, and controll emanates from surrogate consumption activities afforded by a personal community. In direct contrast, David's personal community is not so heavily disciplined; friends are able to visit his home freely without restriction. Living in a small rural setting, David's personal community are all known to one another and interact socially; they are also permitted, and even encouraged, to visit his home in groups. Indeed, David in his home encourages parties and musical evenings and this brings him into contact with new people:

At least once a week I have a load of people back after the bar. Snipe and Lou just bring anyone along that wants to come. I don't mind, I'll get up if I'm in bed and after a Chinese [meal] I will be ready to party. We have some good nights and lots of music blasting. The party could go on all night and I've seen me only getting back to bed about nine o'clock the next morning. (David)

David's ability for new friendships and social interaction is heightened by such activity. Some of these 'new' community members come to be close personal members of choice (Pahl and Spencer, 2005) after ongoing interaction:

Lou's friend Clare has started calling round during the week to see if there is anything I need. She is really thoughtful and always brings me something nice back from her shopping trips or from her holidays. Clare travels a good bit and it's good to talk to someone about different places. She is lively and bubbly and I always feel better after she has been round. I think she likes to ask my advice on things.

(David)

David is open to new consumption experiences and is flexible in his daily routine. This is reflective of the way that David has always addressed living;

open to new consumption opportunities and a highly laid back approach. David is instrumental in organising 'get togethers' if he is feeling a bit down:

> I invite my close friends round when Noel [friend] brings stuff for the freezer, you don't have to ask them twice when there is pheasant curry on offer. Noel makes the best curry in Ireland; there is always plenty to go round. Noel's fame is spreading every day.   (David)

David runs a 'shop' from his home for friends and acquaintances; it is the only one operating in the rural town. David sells cannabis at all times of the day and night to a diverse range of customers:

> All the boys come to me for their blow [cannabis] I'm the only one who is reliable and they know they'll get a good deal here. I have a couple of people come every week to collect a ready rolled order; they're for a man and a woman from the town who have multiple sclerosis. They get someone to call for them; I don't mind doing them up for them if it's helping them.   (David)

David feels value from operating such activities; he keeps social ties strong and important in his social community. David's self-interest in running such an operation stems from his own heavy dependence on cannabis. He is paid in cannabis in return for selling; this suits David very well,

> I get to use whatever I need to keep me going through the week; I don't have to worry about that. I couldn't afford to buy it and it works out pretty well. Everybody has to come to me so I don't need to leave the house.   (David)

For Jay, the need to keep personal members apart as much as possible is conducive to sustaining his self-value. The knowledge that members could be openly discussing his affairs and his lifestyle creates a lot of anxiety for him. His actions may appear to others as strange, (Baker, 2006) but in this subjective context they are normal for Jay (Pavia and Mason, 2004):

> When you [first author] answer the phone, just pick it up and don't ask who is it, Maud [Jay's sister] will be ringing to check what time the dentist is coming at. I don't want her to know you're here and then you will only have to talk and say something I don't want you to say. You can go into the kitchen when I get the speaker set up.   (Jay)

This was usual practice and I, like many other members, did not wish to upset Jay. Nurses' notes, kept in another room in the house, were often requested so Jay could keep abreast of entries on particular days concerning his wellbeing and welfare. This highly disciplined course of action allowed Jay to feel in control of his environment and of the people who came in and out:

> Would you bring in the notes from next door, I want to see what they have written down for Monday. I know what should be down and I need to see how she [a particular nurse] has worded it. I can't say I have read it but at least I will know what I'm dealing with and which nurses are OK.   (Jay)

These forms of self-action originate from an over-riding desire to maintain independence and realise a sense of control over a highly invasive lifestyle. Jay assigns particular tasks to members of his community that he feels will address them consistently (e.g. Maud [sister] attends to all financial concerns, Heather [close friend since university] keeps his long hair tangle free, and beard trimmed and plaited, Paul [nephew] makes new tapes of music for playing on Jay's equipment). All members have designated tasks but you would only be aware of this should you decide to do something (e.g. lifting a dead fish out of the tank):

> Leave that alone, Jane [sister] sees to that every Wednesday, there's no point in you doing it, everybody will get confused and she knows what she's doing and how to clean it   (Jay)

(3) Identity (Keeping a Sense Of)

Throughout their lives, people strive to resolve identity conflicts (Burroughs and Rindfleisch, 2002; McAdams, 1993; Mick and Fournier, 1998; Murray, 2002). Consumption and possessions, as extensions of self (Belk, 1988), play a central role in defining and communicating identity. Weeks (1990, p. 88) states that, 'Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some other people.' The ability to perform capabilities synonymous with normalcy (Baker, 2006) better defines those consumers perceived as being in possession of an identity. Opportunities for engagement in former consumption experiences are important to securing an identity; past, present and future selves are tied up in an identity project (Belk, 1988). The sharing, caring consumption experiences, indicative of a culture rich in rela-

tionships (Budgeon and Roseneil, 2004; Kellerhals et al., 2002) best describe the ability of home confined consumers to shape an identity through social exchanges and surrogate consumption activity with their personal community. The view that interaction in the marketplace is fundamental to realising an identity is challenged in this study. Homebound consumers in this study worked hard to retain an identity and consumption experiences indicative of being in the marketplace.

Wallace has been a long-time member of Jay's medical care group, but he is considered a valued and trusted member of Jay's personal community. This relationship evolved through their common interest in football and a love of the same hometown team.

> Wallace goes to all the home matches and he is able to bring me a flavour of what really happened. Sometimes you see clips on the TV but you are never going to get the whole match on. Wallace always brings a programme back with him and when he comes on Sunday night we have a chance to read through it and savour the glory. It's great when someone feels as passionate as you about their team; I have followed and supported my home town since I was nine. (Jay)

Jay's genuine love of football, especially his local hometown team, presents him with lots of opportunities to chat with other family and non-family members about the local football scene. Jay has a very close friend, Paul, who calls in every week to give him the 'low down' on his son, Con, who plays for a rival local team. As Jay says,

> Many a great debate takes place about who is the better team, Paul and I can go back and recall all the high points in the team's career. We always get around to our time on the pitch playing for a lesser-known local town side. They were the days; we thought we were George Best and just as good-looking too. Paul and I were never short of fans but he will tell you I was the main man as I had both the talent and good looks to carry it off. (Jay)

Jay's love of football has certainly been instrumental in his ability to encourage relationships and bonds with personal community members. Extended family members will telephone him,

> Three rings after the team have been out, just to let me know they have been watching with me. My

brother John and brother-in law Sam are first on the phone to celebrate if my team has won. We have a whole code worked out, so I don't have to answer the phone and disturb my viewing if they ring during the match. It's great knowing all your friends are cheering on your side and sharing in the victories, which are many. (Jay)

The local football scene has always been a very important aspect of Jay's growing up and one he feels he can still participate in, and support through sponsorships of new talent and articles for the club magazine,

> I have been a supporter all my life, well since the age of nine. I haven't missed a match until my accident, I tried going to a couple of games after the accident but the effort was too much. My friends go for me and bring back all the details, I read about it in the paper and there might be a few minutes on the TV. I catch them on the radio on Saturday afternoons; they still mean everything to me. (Jay)

Football was not the only consumption experience important to Jay; his childhood had been one of high involvement with animals, especially dogs. Indeed his first memories as a young child on his grandfather's farm were of a sheepdog called Tim (these thoughts were taken from Jay's life history).

> I've always loved having my dogs with me and on these types of breakaways I could bring my own dog Tim. He [the dog] enjoyed that certain injection of freedom which farm life seemed to produce. (Jay)

Jay has remained a firm animal lover all his life and it is of particular sadness that his current situation presents barriers to realising this consumption. Jay's long held desire to be able to keep a companion animal has been met to some extent by one of his medical carers, Wallace, who installed a tropical fish tank in Jay's room and even bought the first fish occupants after many consultations with Jay as to what species would be kept. Jay can spend time watching the behaviour of the fish and reporting to Wallace on progress within the tank. Jay's brother, John, never visits without bringing a new fish to replace any that have died during the week (after ringing Jay to get up to date reports). Jay finds it quite comical that John would be travelling by train clasping a plastic bag with a fish swimming round:

Couldn't you just see John swaying from side to side in the train, holding a whiskey in one hand and a fish in the other? Let's hope he never gets the two drinks mixed up or I'll be getting a bag with nothing in it. (Jay)

Surrogate consumption activity provides a two-way flow of care and strong relational bonds are created between Jay and his personal community members. Helga (a close friend of Jay's for 25 years) has played an important role, providing opportunities for Jay to rekindle former companion animal experiences. Helga, a high involvement owner with cats recalled tales of her felines to Jay; this was the catalyst for Jay to initiate former consumption experiences. Helga was able to bring Baby (her cat) for weekly visits. Given Jay's inability to move (quadriplegic) the cat was an ideal companion, being able to lie beside him (on the bed),

I really love it when Baby visits, he is such a gentle cat, I never had any experience of cats but he certainly is a wondrous animal. I tell Maud and Jane [sisters] about him and Lola [carer]. They would love to see him but a photograph will have to suffice them. There will be no chance of them all meeting. (Jay)

Jay got Helga to display photographs of Baby around his room; some of his medical carers now bring Jay 'family' photographs and tales of their pets. Companion animal owners enjoy tales about pets and Jay has been able to forge new links and relationships with medical carers. The ability to share in these surrogate consumption experiences heightens Jay's feelings of self-worth and self-value. Jay's identity is not diminished as a result of his confinement, his ability to retain former experiences considered so much a part of self is the result of surrogate consumption activities with members who have been socialised with companion animals (Downey and Ellis, 2008). David, like Jay, enjoyed the companionship of a dog during his formative years. As an only child David found comfort and friendship in caring for his canine companion. At the age of twelve, David's father died suddenly and his dog Rebel was a constant companion through these difficult times. David recalls Rebel and the companionship they shared:

I will never forget Rebel, he was my constant companion and friend who was always there for me when I got home from school. He didn't mind what we did, stay in or go out he just loved being beside me all the time. Rebel slept with me and he was such a comfort through a lot of lonely and bad times in my growing up. (David)

The knowledge that he is physically incapable of caring for a canine companion on a full time basis has led to David feeling a diminished sense of self and self-worth:

I can bear just about all the other things in life that I used to enjoy doing being taken away from me, but my deepest regret is not being able to care for a dog again in the proper way. I really miss the fun of having a pet around and someone to care for and look out for. (David)

Lewis and Trevor (David's childhood friends) are dog lovers; Lewis's 'The Dude' (dog) and Trevor's 'Toys' (dog) are welcome in David's home and integrate well into this personal community. David offered to dog sit for short periods of time when it was necessary for Lewis and Trevor to attend events where dogs were not encouraged. These opportunities gave David periods of individual interaction with the dogs, these experiences evolved over time and all parties (David, dog owners and dogs) benefited from the shared surrogate consumption experiences. Lewis and Trevor were not happy putting their dogs into kennels and stronger bonds have developed as a result of David's canine care. Lewis and Trevor enjoy the freedom of taking a short break at virtually a moment's notice. David makes it known he is available to look after the dogs and views such consumption experiences with enthusiasm:

I love it when The Dude or Toys come unexpectedly, it really gives me a lift and puts in a weekend for me that probably would have been the same boring thing. The dogs are small and don't need a lot of walking so I can let them into my garden for a run around and I sit at the back door and watch them running for sticks and balls I throw for them. (David)

These socio-historic consumption experiences are important aspects of identity for these home confined consumers. It is the ability for continuing personal experiences rather than the nature of the experiences that renders these consumers normal, not vulnerable (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005). Barbara and Gloria have always been active

gardeners. When nursing their ailing parents, they considered it important to have an aesthetically pleasing landscape for their parents to enjoy. As Dunnett and Qasim (2000, p. 44) suggest 'Gardens were viewed as [having] ... religious or spiritual associations.' Given Barbara and Gloria's religious upbringing (father a pastor), it is not surprising that gardening is held in such deep regard. As children, the sisters grew flowers for 'the Lord's table'. A childhood duty was to provide flowers for the weekly church service:

> Our father liked everything to be clean and tidy and he specially loved fresh flowers every week, we grew the flowers for the church in the garden. I think he thought that made them more special as we worked and tended the garden after school. It was Gloria and my responsibility to look after that end of things. We enjoyed doing it and all the parishioners knew we grew and arranged them. My daddy always made some nice comment about them every week. Gloria and I always felt proud.
> (Barbara)

Religion plays a central role in Barbara and Gloria's life and in respect of their identity (Belk, 1988). They grew up in a deeply religious household and these experiences form part of everyday life (praying, bible reading). Prior to becoming home confined, the sisters spent much time devoted to gardening. Chevalier (1998, p. 49) explains that, 'The "back" garden ... expresses the individual and familial identity of the owner.' By contrast the, 'front garden acts as ... an identity marker in absence of any other sign.' Barbara and Gloria have distinctive 'front' and 'back' gardens; the front garden is kept very simple (paved, with only pots and plants lining the porch), it is kept:

> Free from germs and dirt, we liked to keep it all bleached down at least once a week and all the bits of litter and leaves out of the way. We hate to see untidy, ill-kempt gardens; it lowers the tone of the whole neighbourhood. (Gloria)

The 'back' garden, by contrast, is filled with flowers, shrubs, trees and grass. It is completely walled in and free from prying eyes. Indeed it is a 'secret' garden where entrance is by invitation only. The ability to continue consumption experiences in this area of the garden gives Barbara and Gloria an ongoing source of pleasure and well being. For those personal community members who are

allowed into this part of the garden, gifts of 'slips' of plants are always part of the visit. All the plants are well cared for, fed regularly and the floral display is outstanding:

> Barbara and I love to sit at the window while we are eating our evening meal and just look at all the colour and, if it is warm enough, we open the window and let the delicate smells waft in. (Gloria)

Home confinement has changed the way in which gardening activities are undertaken, Barbara and Gloria have been innovative and creative, taking control by bringing elements of the garden inside. They have 'mini-greenhouses' installed in the sunnier rooms of the house and, when these seedlings are ready to go outside, they enlist the help and support of next door's gardener (Pat) to attend to their needs. Barbara and Gloria can retain a level of control over certain gardening experiences; wellbeing is still realisable through shared surrogate consumption activities. Hewer (2003, p. 331) points out, 'activities such as gardening have become ... arenas through which "escape attempts" may be imagined'. The garden as an extension of self (Belk, 1988) accentuates creativity and self-expression; the ability inherent in such activity provides Barbara and Gloria with the means to maintain their identities.

Discussion

Home confined consumers lack a level of physicality and ableism necessary to participate fully in consumer society and can easily become marginalised and voiceless. Interruptions in special possession consumption can lead to a diminished sense of self (Belk, 1988) and a reduction in ability to express freedom and agency. The ability to retain a sense of wellbeing and of identity, even in periods of uncertainty and major transition, are highlighted through engagement in surrogate consumption activity. The need to consume and experience socio-historical aspects of self can become amplified in contexts where barriers to consumption exist and vulnerability is assumed. Home confined consumers have been able to re-experience former consumption experiences in spite of their diminished physicality and perceived limited choice attributes (Gabel, 2005). Freedom to choose and action for self interest were only viable through the integrated efforts of both home confined consumers and their personal communi-

ties. Jay, David, Barbara and Gloria were able to overcome barriers and realise socio-historic consumption experiences through surrogate activity with personal community members (Budgeon and Roseneil, 2004).

Caring in Surrogate Consumption Activity

Disabled recipients of care, be they male or female, live 'tragic' lives (Oliver, 1990), ontologically doomed to a reduction of agency. Care is associated with institutional confinement, limited social engagement, partial citizenship, disempowerment and exclusion. To be cared for is to be in deficit and to have one's competence as a social actor denied or questioned. Notions of care and caring have been the subjects of criticism in feminism and disability studies (Hanson, 2002) because of the potential for exploitation and disempowerment in how caring activities are carried out. Aside from this debate with regard to terminology, 'whole areas of disability experience are eclipsed because they are located in the private domain of life' (Thomas, 2001, p. 55). Individual contexts and practices of self (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006) demand a sense of freedom to enable choices for those seeking to determine citizenship and empowerment.

The three cases of home confinement discussed have shown that surrogate consumption activity can be experienced as a two-way flow of care. The ability to shift positions in terms of receiving or giving of care highlights the ability of home confined consumers to share in the surrogate consumption experience. Particular experiences of surrogate consumption reinforce self-worth and self-value, which lead to positive episodes of well-being being realised. The forms of communality that emerge from these surrogate consumption activities reveal the potential for long lasting, significant ties. In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000, p. 19) notes that social capital refers to connections among individuals and the social networks and the norms of reciprocity that arise from them. Putnam (2000) also suggests that the more people work together the more social capital is produced. Bonding (exclusive) social capital refers to relations amongst relatively homogenous groups such as family members and close friends and is similar to the notion of strong ties experienced by the home confined consumers in this study. Bridging

(inclusive) social capital refers to relations with distant friends, associates and colleagues; these ties tend to be weaker and more diverse but more important in 'getting ahead'. For Jay both types of social capital (bonding and bridging) play significant and diverse roles in his life. Budgeon and Roseneil (2004, p. 130) argue that 'Central to the emergence of these ties is the institutionalised (quasi-communes) of friendship through a shared domesticity.' Home confined consumers' surrogate activities offer rich opportunities to explore freedom, agency and social capital.

Identity Maintenance

Identity is shaped through relationships of intimacy and frequent exchanges and, is, as Kellerhals et al. (2002, p. 224) suggest, '... a specific mode of identity'. These systems in which identities are formed are personal and intimate; the home confined consumers' 'family' (personal community) is responsible for displaying their distinctiveness and uniqueness. However, inherent in these types of relationships is the tendency for dependency creation. The interests at stake in identity transmission and in helping to construct a social identity are ultimately confined to the domestic, private sphere. As Kellerhals et al. (2002: 225) state, 'the management of a private space [is where] the processes of identity construction take place.'

Personal communities can provide home confined consumers' with the means to satisfy psychological needs such as self-concept, self-identity, and individuality (Belk, 1988; Kleine et al., 1995). It should be noted that the development and creation of these personal communities are self-originated and context specific, and as a consequence of such action, home confined consumers are both enabled and constrained in aspects of their social structure (Giddens, 1990). Relationship cultures formed through discourses of care are an important part of a home confined consumer's ability to realise an identity project. Surrogate consumption activities offer home confined consumers opportunities to exhibit freedom and perform capabilities (autonomy and agency) considered essential to the realisation of an identity. Personal communities as a form of surrogate consumption activity can help empower individuals (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006) especially in constrained, uncertain, and vulnerable times through the provision of a supporting framework for ongoing construction of

self and of identity. 'The personal community reflects ability for self-choice, creativity, individuality' (Downey and Catterall, 2007, p. 185). A diminished sense of self and of self-worth is more likely to gain credence in an environment punctuated with constraints and barriers to consumption.

In the absence of direct marketplace socialisation, agency can be a tenable outcome through the mutual exchange processes of intimacy and care inherent in the dynamics of a personal community. The sheer efforts that home confined consumers make to maintain their visibility and their links with past lives (Belk, 1988) reveal that as consumers they are far from damaged, passive and dependent as is often assumed (Murphy, 1990; Phillips, 1990; Shildrick, 2005). Indeed, it could be argued that these largely hidden consumers work harder and more purposively than other consumers at making themselves visible. The legacy of the medical model perceives disabled people as 'disempowered victims' with 'resource deficits' (Lee et al., 1999, p. 230). Contemporary consumer culture makes few allowances for disabled consumers and includes a largely '"unconscious" aversion to people and bodies that remind us that the able-bodied norm is an ideal' (Chouinard, 1997, p. 380). However, if agency is defined as a person's capacity for action in their interests (Peñaloza, 2004), then the action evidenced by the home confined consumers in this study can be interpreted as the ability to perform capabilities associated with normalcy (Baker, 2006).

It is unlikely that these micro acts of agency will radically challenge the dominance of the medical model that haunts the disabled perspective (Mitchell and Snyder, 1997; Stiker, 1999). Home confined consumers act based on what they perceive appropriate to their needs, they can secure normalcy (Baker, 2006) in their terms, and maintain an identity despite non-interaction in the marketplace. The importance of these acts of agency for individual 'families' (home confined consumer and personal community) should not be understated. The private space in which the concept of care is expended is perceived as one in which limited social engagement, partial citizenship, disempowerment and exclusion flourish (Imrie, 2001). However, the findings in this research suggest that recipients of care can develop

within their private spaces and, more importantly, that discourses of care can foster relationships and communal ties (Budgeon and Roseneil, 2004; Putnam, 2000).

Consumer Agency

Discussions on consumer agency tend to consider how consumer agency impacts on, or influences, the marketing system at large (for example, Holt, 2002). If agency is carried out in the interests of the individual, its impact on that person and their personal space should not be neglected. In the case of the home confined consumer, agency can have significant impact; the motives driving surrogate consumption activity lie in securing independence, realising normalcy to reduce negative perceptions of disability and reducing marginalisation. Home confined consumers employ a variety of surrogate consumption practices, discursive power (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006) to realise self-goals that suppress negative associations. As such, the most obvious impact of their agency may be evident within the private sphere.

Some previous research has been pessimistic regarding the affects of agency in the private space. Willis's (1977) study on how working class kids end up with working class jobs demonstrated how cultural processes lead to the maintenance and reproduction of the social order. Conversely, the argument put forward here is that agency in the private space can have a positive influence on people's lives; the impact of their action, however, will be more evident on community, family and individual levels. As such there is scope for transformative action within more narrowly defined spheres.

Public Agency, Private Agency

The aim of surrogate consumption behaviour is not to alter or challenge the marketing system and its dominance; rather, these consumers simply want to alleviate the hardships they endure given their inadequate status in the marketplace. There has been a blurring of the distinction between public and private spheres; the expansion of the market has resulted in its increased contribution to tasks that were once confined to the private domain (Firat, 1987). To illustrate, the shift in provision of care to non-kin and friends has increased; the growing numbers of health trusts and other institutions evidences the marketisation

of care. This shift has brought care into the public domain where it is regarded as a natural development and one that can be addressed by the hegemony of the marketplace.

The interaction between structure and agency is evident in the surrogate consumption activities engaged in by home confined consumers, the marketplace providing many of the resources that are used to frame such strategies (Giddens, 1984). Many activities realised by the home confined consumers would not have been feasible without the presence of marketplace members (personal community). The personal community directly operates in the marketer's domain; however, this does not mean that the market should be regarded in a deterministic way. As Burr (2002: 122) noted, given the right circumstances human agents are capable of critically analysing the discourses that frame their lives, depending on the changes they want to bring about. Home confined consumers can benefit from surrogate consumption activity in ways that best suit their self-interests, indicating the duality between marketplace structure and consumer agency. For home confined consumers, the largest impact of agency is found within the context of their daily lives, making it a valid area of research interest.

Surrogate Consumption Activities

Although they are removed from the external marketplace (Dobscha, 1998), home confined consumers seek inclusion within the marketing system (Peñaloza and Price, 1993) in terms of normalcy (Baker, 2006). The findings suggest that they actively strive to achieve social recognition and acceptance as full-functioning consumers in their own right. The consumption strategies they put in place are instrumental in their ability to realise freedom, agency, and normalcy, considered an essential prerequisite to, 'a 'normal life' (Bauman, 1998, p. 37). In a society of consumers, it is the inadequacy of the person as a consumer that leads to social degradation, to feeling excluded or constrained, 'from the social feast' (Bauman, 1998, p. 38). Disability campaigners argue that persons with disabilities should be empowered to live as independently as possible and should be able to express preferences and make decisions (Benjamin, 2001). Surrogate consumption activities afford home confined consumers the means to negotiate the often negative

societal perceptions of disability and secure consumer agency (Barnes, 1991; Philips, 1990; Oliver, 1990).

Agency in a Postmodern Marketplace

Firat and Venkatesh's (1995, p. 243) liberatory postmodernism suggests that consumption processes have emancipatory potential and that 'the micropractices of everyday life ... better define the human condition'. A postmodern perspective advocates the acceptance of diversity and implies that deviations from accepted norms should not result in social exclusion. As Firat and Venkatesh (1995, p. 252) suggest, 'postmodern consumption is a ... diffusion into the hands of each and every consumer'. It is ironic then that the debate surrounding consumer agency and whether or not consumers are inside or outside the marketplace follows a modernist perspective (Thompson, 2004). In a postmodern marketplace there is no sharp demarcation line that separates the market and consumers' emancipated private places. Home confined consumers recognise the dominance of consumer society, but it is not from this perspective that they find meaning in life. Those who do not have direct access to a consumption lifestyle may be forced to find alternative 'regimes of truth' in the marketplace (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995).

Given the level of diversity in today's society, the medical model of disability only serves to further isolate those consumers whose consumption activities render them outside the boundary of normalcy (Baker, 2006). Home confined consumers are able to assume a position that is more aligned with the social model of disability as a consequence of their surrogate consumption activities. It is evident that diversity needs to be further addressed by both marketers and public policy makers and re-visited in these postmodern times.

Conclusion

This research explores the nature of surrogate consumption activity of home confined consumers and their surrogate providers (personal community) within rural Ireland (Armagh, Antrim and Down). Social change has brought the marketisation of care into the community, heralding opportunities to renew and build social capital (Putnam, 2000) through collective discourses of care. Initiatives to

spearhead this collective action (individuals, community and Government bodies) has resulted in independent living (Independent Living Fund, 2007) in the UK becoming a feasible choice for those consumers marginalised in society. The Taskforce on Active Citizenship initiated by Ahern (2006) in Ireland has put mechanisms in place with a view to securing a strong, healthy and engaged society, who are active on behalf of 'themselves and their families, their communities and the more vulnerable members of society'. The purchasing power of social welfare recipients (disabled consumers) should be protected so they can benefit from being part of this engaged society. Tools that enhance individual productivity, 'social capital', refer to social networks and social trust for mutual benefit. Communities of interaction have the potential to broaden the participants' sense of self and enhance collective benefits (Putnam, 2000). Indeed, Halpern (1999, p. 22) suggests that 'social capital may act to buffer the effects of social stress and that its presence might generate a sense of wellbeing and belonging'. Despite the discourse of declining social values, the evidence presented in this paper

suggests that social capital is not declining in Ireland, which supports Dekker and Van Den Broek (2005), who confirm similar patterns elsewhere in Europe. It may be that the focus is too much on some measurable aspects of social capital such as volunteering, membership and trust among persons, and not enough on more subtle issues around people's sense of empowerment, participation in decision-making and the way that political power and decision-making is distributed in the population. Despite physical barriers to marketplace interaction, home confined consumers are able to realise freedom and agency in their daily lives through engagement in surrogate consumption activity. Surrogate consumption activity provides home confined consumers with the means to reinforce traditional family practices through the often strong relationship bonds propagated as a result of personal community creation (Putnam, 2000). Home confined consumers can realise control and power in their daily lives (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006), support an identity in transition, and find a voice through surrogate consumption activity in the absence of direct marketplace interaction.

Authors

Hilary Downey is a teaching fellow/researcher at Queen's Management School, Belfast. Her research interests lie in consumer behaviour research, particularly in relation to marginalised consumers (homebound consumers and disabled), identity construction, ageing consumers and companion-animal consumption. As a member of the Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) community a strong focus in her research is on well being, empowerment and quality of life. As one of the first recipients of a TCR seed grant (Kelloggs) and a member of the Social Justice group within TCR, this strong focus on well being is continued.

Miriam Catterall is a senior lecturer in management at Queen's University Belfast, where she is responsible for marketing and research programmes. Her research interests lie in consumer research, feminist issues in marketing, and in qualitative market research, particularly in focus group theory, methodology and practice.

References

Ahern, B, (2006), Speech by the Taoiseach, T.D., at the Conference on the Future of the Community and Voluntary Sector Taskforce on Active Citizenship, Tascfhórsa um Shaoránacht Ghníomhach, www.activecitizen.ie

Arnould, Eric J. and Craig J. Thompson (2005), 'Consumer culture theory (CCT): twenty years of research', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 31, Mar., 868–82.

Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), Pub. L. No. 101–336, 104 Stat. 327.

Baker, Stacey Menzel (2006), 'Consumer normalcy: understanding the value of shopping through narratives of consumers with visual impairments,' *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 81, no. 1, pp. 37–50.

Baker, Stacey Menzel, James W. Gentry and Terri L. Rittenburg (2005), 'Building understanding of the domain of consumer vulnerability', *Journal of Macromarketing*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 128–39.

—, Debra L. Stephens and Ron Paul Hill (2001), 'Marketplace experiences of consumers with visual impairments: beyond the ADA', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 215–24.

Barnes, Colin (1991), *Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination: A Case for Anti-discrimination Legislation*,

Hurst and Co. in association with the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People, London.

Barnett, Clive, Paul Cloke, Nick Clarke and Alice Malpass (2005), 'Consuming ethics: articulating the subjects and spaces of ethical consumption', *Antipode*, vol. 37, pp. 23–45.

Bauman, Zygmunt (1996), 'From pilgrim to tourist – or a short history of identity', in S. Hall and P. Du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Sage, London, pp. 18–36.

— (1998), *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor, Issues in Society*, Open University Press, Buckingham, UK.

Baumeister, Roy F., Erin A. Sparks, Tyler F. Stillman and Kathleen D. Vohs (2008), 'Free will in consumer behavior: self-control, ego depletion, and choice', *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, vol. 18, pp. 4–13.

Belk, Russell W. (1988), 'Possessions and the extended self', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 15, no. 2, Sept., pp. 139–68.

Benjamin, Andrew E. (2001), Consumer-directed services at home: a new model for persons with disabilities, *Health Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 6, Nov.–Dec., pp. 80–95.

Bowden, Peta (1997), *Caring: Gender Sensitive Ethics*, Routledge, London.

Brownlie, Douglas and Susan Horne (1999), 'Consumption curtailed: an exploratory study of identity and exchange in a penal environment', *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 26, pp. 231–5.

Budgeon, Shelley and Sasha Roseneil (2004), 'Editors' introduction: beyond the conventional family', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, pp. 127–34.

Burchardt, Tania (2004), 'Capabilities and disability: the capabilities framework and the social model of disability,' *Disability and Society*, vol. 19, no. 7, pp. 735–51.

Burr, Jennifer (2002), 'Providing a contrasting view to evolutionary psychology's hypotheses on depression: using a material-discursive approach to interpret the experiences of depression in women from South Asian communities', *Psychology, Evolution and Gender*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 93–113.

Burroughs, James E. and Aric Rindfleisch (2002), 'Materialism and well-being: a conflicting values perspective', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 29, pp. 348–69.

Burton, Dawn (2002), 'Postmodernism, social relations and remote shopping', *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 36, nos. 7–8, pp. 792–815.

Central Statistics Office (2003), *Population Statistics, Third Quarter 2002*, Central Statistics Office, Dublin.

Chevalier, Sophie (1998), 'From woollen carpet to grass carpet: bridging house and garden in an english suburb', in Daniel Miller (ed.), *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter*, UCL Press, London, pp. 47–71.

Chouinard, Vera (1997), 'Making space for disabling differences: challenging ableist geographies', guest editorial essay, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 379–86.

Cornwell, Bettina T. and Terrance G. Gabel (1996), 'Out of sight, out of mind: an exploratory examination of institutionalisation and consumption', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 278–95.

Cruikshank, Barbara (1999), *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

Dekker, Paul and Andries Van Den Broek (2005), 'Involvement in voluntary associations in North America and Western Europe: trends and correlations 1981–2000', *Journal of Civil Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, May, pp. 45–59.

Delanty, Gerard (2003), 'Citizenship as a learning process: disciplinary citizenship versus cultural citizenship,' *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol. 22, no. 6, pp. 597–605.

Denegri-Knott, Janice, Detlev Zwick and Jonathan E. Schroeder (2006), 'Mapping consumer power: an integrative framework for marketing and consumer research', *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 40, nos. 9–10, pp. 950–71.

Denzin, Norman K. (1970), 'The research act', in N.K. Denzin (ed.), *The Research Act in Sociology: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, Aldine, Chicago, IL, pp. 345–60.

Desmond, John (2003), *Consuming Behaviour*, Palgrave, London.

Dobscha, Susan (1998), 'The lived experience of consumer rebellion against marketing', *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 25, pp. 91–7.

Downey, Hilary and Miriam Catterall (2007), 'Autopoiesis and the home confined consumer: the role of personal communities', in M. Carrigan, I. Szmigin and C. Bekin (eds.), *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, special issue, Communities and Consumption, Birmingham Business School, vol. 27 nos. 3–4, pp. 175–88.

— and Sarah Ellis (2008), 'Tails of animal attraction: the incorporation of the feline into the family', *The Journal of Business Research*, special issue, M. Holbrook and A. Woodside (eds.), vol. 61, no. 5, pp. 434–41.

DSFA (2005), www.dsfa.ie/EN/Schemes/Illness Disability And Caring/Pages/default.aspx. Accesssed August 2008.

Dunnett, N. and M. Qasim (2000), 'Perceived benefits to human well-being of urban gardens', *HortTechnology*, vol. 10, no. 1, Jan.–March, pp. 40–5.

Erlandson, David A., Edward L. Harris, Barbara L. Skipper and Steve D. Allen (1993), *Doing Naturalistic Enquiry: A Guide to Methods*, Sage, Newbury Park, CA.

Firat, Fuat A. (1987), 'Towards a deeper understanding of consumption experiences: the underlying dimensions', in Wallendorf, M. and Anderson, P. (eds.), *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 14, Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT, pp. 342–6.

— and Alladi Venkatesh (1995), 'A liberatory postmodernism and the reenchantment of consumption', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 239–67.

Fiske, John (1989), *Understanding Popular Culture*, Routledge, London.

Forsythe, Sandra, Sara Butler and Robert Schaefer (1990), 'Surrogate usage in the acquisition of women's business apparel', *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 66, no. 4, pp. 446–69.

Fournier, Susan (1998), 'Consumers and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 343–73.

Fuller, Barbara, K. and Suzannah C. Blackwell (1992), 'Wardrobe consultant clientele: identifying and describing three market segments', *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, vol. 10, Winter, pp. 11–17.

Gabel, Terrance G. (2005), 'Toward an expanded theory of surrogate consumption: consideration of consumer choice and choicelessness', *Academy of Science Marketing Review*, vol. 5, pp. 1–32.

Giddens, Anthony (1984), *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

— (1990), *The Consequences of Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Halpern, David (1999), 'Social capital: the new golden goose', Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Cambridge University, unpublished review.

Hanson, Nancy (2002), 'On approval: the geography of disabled women and work', *New Directions in Disability*, 10 April.

Harkness, Geoffrey and Carol A.B. Warren (1993), 'The social relations of intensive interviewing: constellations of strangeness and science', *Sociological Methods and Research*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 317–39.

Hewer, P. (2003), 'Consuming gardens: representations of paradise, nostalgia and postmodernism', in Darach Turley and Stephen Brown (eds.), *European Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 6, Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT, pp. 327–31.

Hill, Ron Paul (1991), 'Homeless women, special possessions, and the meaning of "home": an ethnographic case study', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 18, Dec., pp. 298–310.

—, Elizabeth C. Hirschman and John F. Bauman (1996), 'The birth of modern entitlement programs: reports from the field and implications for welfare policy', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, vol. 15, Fall, pp. 263–77.

Hollander, Stanley C. (1971), 'She "shops for you or with you": notes on the theory of the consumer purchasing surrogate', in George Fisk (ed.), *New Essays in Marketing Theory*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA, pp. 218–40.

— and Kathleen M. Rassuli (1999), 'Shopping with other people's money: the marketing management implications of surrogate-mediated consumer decision making', *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 102–18.

Holt, Douglas B. (2002), 'Why do brands cause trouble? A dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 70–90.

Imrie, Rob (2001), 'Barriered and bounded places and the spatialities of disability', *Urban Studies*, vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 231–37.

Johnson, Phil (2000), *Understanding Management Research: An Introduction to Epistemology*, Sage, London.

Kates, Steven M. (2001), 'Disposition of possessions among families of people living with Aids', *Psychology and Marketing*, vol. 18, April, pp. 365–87.

Kaufman-Scarborough, Carole and Stacey Menzel Baker (2005), 'Do people with disabilities believe the ADA has served their consumer interests?' *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, vol. 39, Summer, pp. 1–26.

Kellerhals, Jean, Cristina Ferreira, and David Perrenoud (2002), 'Kinship cultures and identity transmissions', *Current Sociology*, vol. 50, March, pp. 213–28.

Kleine, Susan S., Robert E. Kleine III, and Chris T. Allen (1995), 'How is a possession "me" or "not me"? Characterising types and an antecedent of material possession attachment', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 22, Dec., pp. 327–43.

Kozinets, Rob (2002), 'Can consumers escape the market? Emancipatory illuminations from Burning Man', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 20–38.

Lee, Robert G., Julie L. Ozanne and Ron Paul Hill (1999), 'Improving service encounters through resource sensitivity: the case of health care delivery in an Appalachian community', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, vol. 18, Fall, pp. 230–48.

McAdams, Dan P. (1993), *The Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self*, William Morrow and Co., New York.

Merlo, Omar, Glenn Whitwell and Andre Lukas (2004), 'Power and marketing', *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 12, pp. 207–18.

Mick, David Glen (2008), 'Degrees of freedom of will: an essential endless question in consumer behavior', *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, vol. 18, pp. 17–21.

— and Claus Buhl (1992), 'A meaning-based model of advertising experiences', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 19, pp. 317–38.

— and Susan Fournier (1998), 'Paradoxes of technology: consumer cognisance, emotions, and coping strategies', *Journal of Consumer Research*, Sept., pp. 123–43.

Miller, Daniel (1987), *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Mitchell, David and Sharon Snyder (eds.) (1997), *The Body and Physical Disability: Discourses of Disability*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

Murphy, Robert (1990), *The Body Silent*, W.W. Norton and Company, New York.

Murray, Jeff B., (2002), 'The politics of consumption: a re-inquiry on Thompson and Haytko's (1997) "Speaking of fashion"', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 427–40.

NESC (2008), *The Irish Economy in the Early 21st Century*, (report published June), www.nesc.ie/publications, National Economic and Social Council, Dublin.

Oliver, Michael (1990), *The Politics of Disablement: A Sociological Approach*, St. Martin's Press, New York.

Orlie, Melissa A. (2002), 'The desire for freedom and the consumption of politics', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 395–417.

Owens, Janine (2007), 'Liberating voices through narrative methods: the case for an interpretive approach', *Disability and Society*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 299–313.

Pahl, Ray and Liz Spencer (2005), 'Personal communities: not simply families of "fate" or "choice"', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, March, pp. 199–221.

Park, Clara Claiborne (1967), *The Siege: A Family's Journey into the World of an Autistic Child*, Back Bay Books, Nwport Beach, CA.

Pavia, Teresa M. and Maryls J. Mason (2004), 'The reflexive relationship between consumer behavior and adaptive coping', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 31, September, pp. 441–54.

Peñaloza, Liza (2004), 'Reflections on agency in consumer research', Association for Consumer Research, Doctoral Symposium Presentation, Portland, OR.

— and Price, L. (1993), 'Consumer resistance: a conceptual overview', in L. McAlister and M.L. Rothschild, *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 20, pp. 123–8, Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT.

Phillips, Michael J. (1990), 'Damaged goods: oral narratives of the experience of disability in American culture', *Social Science Medicine*, vol. 30, no. 8, pp. 849–57.

Putnam, Robert D. (2000), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

Room, Graham (1995), 'Poverty in Europe: competing paradigms of analysis', *Policy and Politics*, vol. 23, pp. 103–13.

Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin (1995), *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Shildrick, Margrit (2002), *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self*, Sage, London.

— (2005), 'The disabled body, genealogy and undecidability', *Cultural Studies*, vol. 19, no. 6, pp. 755–70.

Solomon, Michael R. (1986), 'The missing link: surrogate consumers in the marketing chain', *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 50, October, pp. 208–18.

— (1987), 'The wardrobe consultant: exploring the role of a new retail partner', *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 110–28.

— and Susan P. Douglas (1985), 'The female clotheshorse: from aesthetics to tactics', in Michael R. Solomon (ed.), *The*

Psychology of Fashion, Lexington Books, Lexington, MA, pp. 389–401.

Spradley, James P. (1979), *The Ethnographic Interview*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.

Stiker, H.J. (1999), *A History of Disability*, trans. W. Sayers, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

Susinos, Teresa (2007), 'Tell me in your own words: disabling barriers and social exclusion in young persons', *Disability and Society*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 117–27.

Thomas, Cynthia (2001), 'Feminism and disability: the theoretical and political significance of the personal and the experiential', in L. Barton (ed.), *Disability Politics and the Struggle for Change*, David Fulton Publishers, London.

Thompson, Craig J. (1997), 'Interpreting consumers: a hermeneutical framework for deriving marketing insights from the texts of consumers' consumption stories', *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 34, pp. 438–55.

— (2004), 'Marketplace mythology and discourses of power', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 162–80.

—, William B. Locander and Howard R. Pollio (1990), 'The lived meaning of free choice: an existential–phenomenological description of everyday consumer experiences of contemporary married women', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 336–61.

United States Bureau of the Census (2000), *Census of Population: General Population Characteristics*, US Government Printing Office, Washington DC.

United States Department of Health and Human Services, (2003), 'A profile of older Americans: 2003', available at http://www.aoa.gov, accessed 2/18/08.

Wachtel, Tom J. and David R. Gifford (1998), 'Eligibility for home care certification what clinicians should know', *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, vol. 13, no. 10, pp. 705–9.

Waldrop, Judith and Sharon J. Stern (2003), Disability Status: (2003), Census 2000 Brief, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, http://www.census.gov/prod/ 2003 pubs/c2kbr-17.pdf.26, *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*.

Walmsley, Jan and Kelley Johnson (2003), *Inclusive Research with People with Learning Disabilities: Past, Present and Futures*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.

Weeks, Jeffrey (1990), 'The value of difference', in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, Lawrence and Wishart, London.

Wellman, Barry (2001), 'Physical place and cyberplace: the rise of networked individualism', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 227–52.

Willis, Paul E. (1977), *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Columbia University Press, New York.

MAGNERS MAN: IRISH CIDER, REPRESENTATIONS OF MASCULINITY AND THE 'BURNING CELTIC SOUL'

Pauline Maclaran & Lorna Stevens

In this paper we go in search of the Celtic soul, tracking its historical intertwining with, and relation to, Irish masculinity, from Ireland's pre-colonial past to its colonial days and finally to its postcolonial present. We argue that the Celtic soul manifests itself, with great success, in the Magners Irish Cider advertising campaign. As a key part of our analysis, we also illustrate how representations of the Irish Celt serve as a means of enabling young male consumers to reconcile the many tensions and contradictions they are experiencing over what it means to perform ideals of masculinity in contemporary western culture. Magners Irish Cider is a fitting exemplar of how the 'Celtic Soul' that is embedded in ideals of Irish masculinity can be marketed in order to resonate with young men, as it represents and celebrates an alluring and enduring cultural myth to which men may aspire.

Introduction

This is a golden rule of booze marketing. If you're English, Welsh or Scottish then heavy drinking is seedy, depressing and wrong. But if you're Irish it's somehow artistic and glamorous. Alcohol is what drives your burning Celtic soul. It helps you write poetry and informs your heartfelt political convictions. When we drink, we all pretend to be Irish in a bid to stave off the nagging emptiness in our souls. This explains the continued popularity of Guinness despite the fact that it tastes like Benylin mixed with Nescafeacute; and Bovril. Damn it, if you're Irish, you can even get away with drinking cider! (Delaney, 2006)

Cider has made a somewhat remarkable comeback in the UK over the last three years, despite normally being associated with binge-drinking teenagers or down-and-out alcoholics. This paper explores the nature of the 'Celtic soul' that lies at the heart of this comeback, a soul that has convinced twenty-something males throughout the British Isles that it is ultra-cool to drink cider on the rocks. As a key part of this study, we go back into the mists of Ireland's past in order to better understand how this Celtic soul has evolved. In so doing, we highlight how gender and nationality are two of the most important discourses to shape identity, and also how they are often conflated to produce a single, powerful discourse (Howes, 1996). In Ireland, this conflation of gender with nationality is expressed, in both colonial and post-colonial discourses, as one that defines Ireland as a 'feminine' country. Historically, this identification of Ireland with the feminine has been wrestled with by Irishmen, both politically and personally, for centuries.

In this study we look at the implications of Ireland's 'feminine' identity for contemporary cultural representations of Irish masculinity. To illustrate our arguments, we draw on the highly successful advertising campaign conducted for Magners Original Irish Cider, which we believe encapsulates contemporary conceptualisations of Irish masculinity. Magners was launched just under ten years ago as the overseas version of the brand known in Ireland as Bulmers Original Irish Cider. Now available in 17 markets around the world, Magners is single-handedly credited with changing consumer attitudes to cider and of resurrecting a whole product category that was singularly out of fashion and in severe decline.

Advertisements are increasingly regarded as important bearers of meaning in contemporary society (Fowles, 1996), and advertisements for alcoholic beverages targeting men, such as beer, are highlighted as especially insightful in terms of the discourse of masculinity they celebrate. This discourse is about 'challenge, risk and mastery – mastery over nature, over technology, over others in good natured "combat", and over oneself' (Strate, 1992, p. 82). The Magners Irish Cider campaign very successfully taps into this beer discourse in order to

position and legitimise cider as a masculine and culturally empowering drink. We will illustrate, however, that a crucial aspect of the campaign's success is that it also draws on nostalgic, age-old images of the Irish male as being in touch with his deeply romantic, sensitive and emotional 'feminine' self, thereby creating a space and restoring a sense of the 'intense masculinity' that has become displaced and unfashionable in 21st century representations of masculinity. Indeed it is perhaps no exaggeration to suggest that Irish men have cornered the market in intense, soulful masculinity. In its blending of Celtic soul with masculinity, Magners Irish Cider is creating a resonant commercial myth that intersects with both historical and popular memory (Thompson and Tian, 2008; Arnould, 2008). We argue that the power of this myth is that it enables young male consumers to resolve a salient contradiction in their lives (Holt, 2004), as they find themselves caught between the 'sissiness' of the feminine and the widespread disapproval of the 'brutish' masculine.

Our study commences with a historical overview of colonial and postcolonial discourses on Ireland and how these have influenced cultural representations of Irishness and the Celt, particularly in relation to Irish masculinity. We have chosen to begin at this point because these tensions also highlight the tensions between masculine and feminine elements at a key stage in Ireland's history. We then go on to explore how these discourses impact on contemporary representations of masculinity as reflected in the Magners Irish Cider television advertising campaign, a campaign that has captured the popular imagination and has resulted in Magners becoming the UK's leading cider brand.

Ireland's Gendered Historical Discourses

This historical overview is intended to illustrate why Irish masculinity is feminised. At this point it is important to note that whilst postcolonialism has contributed to our understanding of this feminised identity, it is not the purpose of this present paper to present a postcolonial analysis of the Magners advertisements that we subsequently introduce. Rather, we seek to explore the ways in which Irish masculinity has historically appropriated the feminine in its quest for actualisation, a quest which we argue continues into the present day.

The perception of Ireland as a feminine, colonised, exotic 'other' has been well-documented (see, for example, Cullingford, 1993; Howes, 1996). The colonisation of Ireland by England began in the twelfth century and continued until the Anglo-Irish War in the early 1920s. The representation of colonised countries as 'feminine' and exotic 'others' enabled eighteenth century European colonisers to better position and indeed realise themselves as rational and enlightened men (Boehmer, 1995). Indeed, throughout its long history as a colonised country, Ireland, a Catholic country, was regarded by its English, Protestant colonisers as a land of primitive and superstitious idolaters (Cairns and Richards, 1988).

Aside from its religious and cultural differences, Ireland's 'feminine' nature was deeply enmeshed in English colonial discourse on Ireland. The country was represented as a weak, ineffectual and unstable woman who needed to be controlled and dominated by a strong, powerful and resolute man (Britain). The 'intrinsic' femininity of the Irish race was well documented throughout the nineteenth century by British commentators on the Celtic nature of the Irish race, notably Ernest Renan and Matthew Arnold, both of whom published studies of the Irish race in the 1860s. Matthew Arnold observed that the Celt was particularly and 'peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy; he has an affinity to it; he is not far from its secret.' Ernest Renan pronounced that the Celts were 'an essentially feminine race.' Indeed Renan argued that no other race had so carefully conceived the ideal of woman, or been more fully dominated by it. He described this as a kind of intoxication or madness (in Cairns and Richards, 1988). When the Celtic race were referred to in affirmative terms by British colonial commentators and scribes, descriptions tended to focus on their sensitivity, their ethereal qualities, their affinity with nature, and their otherworldliness. However, the negative side of this discourse was also much documented and emphasised, namely their impractical, feminine nature and, worse, their emotional excesses and mental instability, their complete unfitness to govern themselves and, of course, their dangerous, disruptive potential (Cairns and Richards, 1988).

As Ireland increasingly struggled to shake off the yoke of British rule in the nineteenth century,

Irish nationalism emerged as a powerful force to be reckoned with. Irish nationalists continued to identify their country as 'feminine', however, perhaps to emphasise the oppositional discourse, which was fundamental to their struggle to overcome their colonial oppressors. Indeed, this was perhaps the only thing they had in common with their oppressors! The traditional, indeed ancient, romantic perception of Ireland as a woman was deeply embedded in the cultural narrative of Irish nationalism. Understandably, this identification was far from unproblematic for the makers of the new Ireland. On the one hand, Celticism was viewed in affirmative terms as a powerful means of asserting *difference* from its colonial oppressors, and indeed Ireland was represented as a woman in distress in Irish nationalist tradition (Howes, 1996). But being a Celt clearly created problems for Irish nationalists, given the negative connotations attached to the feminine, largely thanks to the role of their colonial oppressors and helped, in no small part, by the systematic devaluing and eroding of the feminine in Ireland that had been going on for centuries (Condren, 1989; Billington and Green, 1996).

Irish nationalists needed an oppositional discourse that was indicative of masculine domination, agency and power (Cairns and Richards, 1988). Meaney (1994) observes that this alternative, repositioning discourse is true of all subject people, who 'in rebelling and claiming independence and sovereignty, aspire to a traditionally masculine role of power' (p. 191). Thus, in response to British imperialist discourse, which described Ireland as feminine, inferior, dependent and weak, Irish nationalists took up a discourse that emphasised an exaggerated masculinity (Kiberd, 1996).

The feminine element, however, proved hard to quash, and the 'feminine' qualities identified in the Celt were duly transformed into positive attributes such as passion, emotion, sensitivity and empathy. These were folded into the mix, along with the priviledged masculine qualities, in order to produce an alluring and enduring ideal of Irish masculinity.

Writing the Romance into Irish Masculinity

Culture, and literature in particular, has played an important role in this process, which we charac-terise as the ongoing perpetuation and celebration of the Celtic soul in postcolonial Ireland (Kiberd, 1996). The project of re-reading and re-writing Ireland and, in turn, the Celt, has centred around issues of nationhood and gender, and these were played out most vividly perhaps in cultural representations of Ireland and Irishness, which portrayed the nation in romantic, 'feminine' terms. This process began at the time of the so-called Celtic Revival in Ireland. The poet W. B. Yeats, who led the Celtic Revival and Ireland's Literary Renaissance, drew on Irish legend and folklore, and reinvented Celtic Irishness (the feminine) in a wholly positive way, in dichotomous contrast to the 'masculine', Anglo Saxon, British ideal. For Yeats, the Celtic nation represented sensitivity, brilliance and turbulence (Howes, 1996; Welch, 1993). Indeed Yeats repositioned Ireland (woman) as the embodiment of culture, rather than nature, and his assertion of Irishness and Irish tradition was manifested as a rewriting of Ireland in romantic, mystical and passionate terms (Welch, 1993).

In this way idyllic images of Ireland's Edenic primitiveness, rural simplicity, emotion, humour and wildness, perceived characteristics which had been used against the Irish to justify colonial rule, were re-appropriated by the Irish themselves as they engaged in re-inscribing a discourse of Irish cultural and national identity. Indeed, romantic cultural nationalism continues to be an important and resonant aspect of postcolonial identity-construction and re-construction in contemporary discourse on Ireland (McLoone, 1995), and is very much linked to the notion of the passionate and soulful Celt. It is visible in popular representations of Ireland and Irishness, from mainstream cinema to beer advertisements, from butter promotions to tourist campaigns as has frequently been highlighted by conceptualisations of Celtic marketing concepts (Brown, 2006, 2007). Irishness, and specifically Irish masculinity, has thus come to be synonymous with poetry and passion, as well as purpose and power.

Recently Kuhling and Keohane (2007) have highlighted the significance of a pre-modern Celtic culture in advertising campaigns for Guinness Stout, Ballygowan Water and Jameson Irish Whiskey. They draw attention to the inherent ambivalence and conflict between this ancient (and nostalgic) Celtic culture discourse and what

they term 'a postmodern hybridised aspirational cosmopolitanism' (p. 1). In their study these are key tensions that they identify as underpinning contemporary Irish advertising. We seek to explore similar tensions, but specifically in relation to representations of Irish masculinity. Such images (of Celtic culture and cosmopolitanism), especially in relation to alchoholic beverages, are highly influential, acting as a 'manual on masculinity' (Strate, 1992), and mediating young men's sense of self in their performance of masculinity (Ging, 2005). Moreover, in relation to contemporary Irish masculinity, Ging (2004, 2005) pinpoints the important influence of 'lad culture', a masculine culture that is anti-feminist and sexist, and that displays these values in an ironic and playful manner.

Before going on to look at how these various discourses influence representations of masculinity in the Magners advertising campaign, we give a brief background to the development of Magners as a brand, and then we offer an overview of the methodology employed for the study.

Overview of Magners Original Irish Cider

Magners Original Irish Cider is produced in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary by Bulmers Ltd. The drink is named after the founder of the company, William Magner, a local man who first set up the commercial production of cider in Clonmel in 1935. Two years later he went into partnership with H.P. Bulmer & Co, an English cider-maker (Wikipedia.com). When Magner left the business in 1949, the Bulmers name assumed dominance, although by now the Irish company was completely separate from its original English counterpart H. P. Bulmer. Importantly, the international rights for the Bulmers trade mark (currently owned by Scottish and Newcastle, makers of Strongbow) remained with H. P. Bulmer, and this ultimately led to the launch of the Magners brand in 1999 to develop markets outside Ireland.

The Magners advertising campaign has its roots in the marketing strategy developed to reposition Bulmers Original Cider in the Irish marketplace. A focal point for this repositioning was the creative message 'nothing added but time', a phrase used to differentiate it from traditional cider advertising and intended to convey a sense of

quality craftsmanship in order to overcome the many negative perceptions of cider. This positioning strategy centred on the fact that the product originated in Ireland in the apple orchards of Clonmel in Co. Tipperary. This fact ensured that the product had authenticity, history, and quality. The cider was made using a supposedly unique blend of over a dozen different varieties of apples, giving it a special quality and taste. The campaign, using a mixture of media including television, outdoor advertising and sponsorship, was also intended to make cider a year-round drink. This campaign, with its clever use of sponsorship, proved highly successful in the Irish market. The Bulmers Saturday Sports Show on Radio Ireland was the first radio show to report a live coverage of premiership football.

Building on this Irish success story, the Magners brand really took off in the UK in 2003 with the creation of a £20m promotional campaign to reposition cider as a drink for 18–34 upwardly mobile males. This campaign spectacularly used experiential marketing to offer billboards that rained apple blossoms down on unsuspecting passersby, and to create an apple orchard in Waterloo underground station in London, complete with complementary apples (Stokes, Jenkins and Nolan, 2007). This campaign has been highly successful by any standards. In 2006 Bulmers announced a 40 per cent increase in its cider sales over a two-year period (BBC News, 2006), and cider has recently been described as the 'new chardonnay' (Bowcott and Bowers, 2006).

The Methodology

Our overall research design emerged out of an interest in how the Romantic Celt discourse plays out in contemporary representations of Irish masculinity. Inspired by the journalistic quote at the start of our paper, we sought to explore how this discourse intersects with more traditionally masculinised discourses around alchohol (especially beer) advertising. The choice of the Magners Irish Cider was made on the basis that its advertisements represented a highly successful, and relatively recent, alcohol advertising campaign that was targeted at young men in both Ireland (as Bulmers Irish Cider) and the UK and beyond (as Magners Irish Cider). It should be noted here that although we focus on Magners as the brand sold outside Ireland for reasons explained earlier, the

advertisements for Bulmers, its parent brand within Ireland, are exactly the same in content. Thus we believe our analysis is as relevant to young Irish men as it is to their UK counterparts. The point here is that we are looking at representations of Irishness by an Irish company in order to understand more about the role of Celtic culture in contemporary cultural discourse.

The research design adopts a postmodern approach to analysing texts, in that we take a historical and genealogical perspective to track the many interwoven threads of symbolic meaning on which the Magners advertising texts draw (Fischer, 2000). This is particularly appropriate for exploring the cultural myths and narratives that may be embedded in advertising texts. In view of the multiple ways that advertising texts can be read (see Scott, 1994), we are not trying to predict an overarching meaning behind the text, either for consumers or advertising creatives. Rather, we are trying to explore the various, intersecting discourses that have found their way into the advertisements and how they complement or compete with each other.

In the first instance, this genealogical approach necessitated exploring colonial and postcolonial representations of gender and Irishness, as discussed above, in order to better understand the masculine–feminine dialectic embedded in the concept of 'Celtic soul'. We then sought to understand the ways that these representations influence the advertising campaign for Magners, by tacking back and forth in our analysis between the literature and the advertising texts. As this iterative process evolved, so too did our understanding of the multiple layers of symbolic meanings encoded in the advertisements.

This analysis is based on twelve TV advertisements that ran over a three-year period (Spring 2005 – Spring 2008) and that changed with each of the four seasons. All the advertisements follow a similar thematic pattern, and open with a cinematic shot, panning in from above on an orchard that reflects the four seasons: apple blossom in spring; luscious green with ripening apples in summer; falling leaves and tumbling apples in autumn; bare and snow-covered apple trees in winter. Then each advertisement shows a group of people enjoying themselves with a drink: inside a

marquee in spring; outside in the summer sunshine; harvesting apples then gathering together in a pub in Autumn; indoors beside a blazing wood fire on a winter's night. Classic soundtracks accompany these scenes, such as Donovan's 1965 'Sunshine Superman', the Kinks' classic 'Lazing on a Sunny Afternoon' and Steve Earle's 'Galway Girl', recently popularised in the Hollywood film PS I Love You (2007) with Hilary Swank and Gerard Butler, a film based on the novel by Irish writer Cecilia Ahern, and a movie that is regarded by many as one of the most romantic film releases of 2007.

Key themes emerged from our analysis of the TV advertisements around each of the two central discourses previously highlighted: 1) the Challenge and Mastery (beer advertising) discourse; and 2) the Romantic Celt discourse. Themes around the former are: *Cultivation of Nature* and *Craftsmanship*. Themes around the latter are: *Affinity with Nature* and *Leisure and Play.* Together these form two sets of dialectical tensions that underpin the Magners advertising campaign, tensions that provide a more contemporary and sensitised masculinity in their resolution. We now go on to discuss each pair in more detail, namely Cultivation of Nature versus Affinity with Nature; and Craftsmanship versus Leisure and Play.

Cultivation of Nature

Masculine characteristics of mastery and control are intimately bound up with the cultivation of (feminine) nature. Camille Paglia (1992) provides an eloquent historical account of this identification of women with nature and men with culture. All of the advertisements in the Magners campaign focus on the apple orchard. As a deliberate and controlled planting of trees that are annually harvested, the orchard recurs throughout the campaign as a powerful symbol of the cultivation of nature. It also acts as a constant reminder of masculine productivity and the values inherent therein, values that are reinforced through scenes that depict an exclusively male workforce that tends the trees and gathers the apples in large wicker baskets at harvest time.

The first advertisement in the series (Spring 2005) commences this link between men and their cultivation of nature. To the soundtrack 'Love is in the

Air' ('Everywhere I Look Around') by John Paul Young, the camera pans in on an orchard with its trees offering a profusion of soft pink blooms that fall gently to the ground in the breeze. We see a bee searching for honey amid the petals, raindrops rippling on water. The shot takes us swiftly to the inside of a pub where a young man pours himself a glass of Magners and catches the eye of a beautiful young woman as he puts his pint to his lips. As he studies her, a deep Irish voiceover asks, 'What is it about this time of year that awakens our interest in nature?' Woman is conflated with nature. She is nature. Moreover, the man is seated, at ease with the world, master of all he surveys. The woman, significantly, is the object of his gaze, a moving image of loveliness that he can gaze at appreciatively. She too can be admired as one of nature's marvels, like the bee or a ripe apple in an orchard, ready for plucking or about to fall into his hands. The mastery of the male gaze is omnipresent throughout the campaign in many other similar scenes. For example, the Autumn 2005 advertisement focuses on tumbling apples and falling leaves, to the classic Van Morrison track: 'Here Comes the Night' (1965). The voiceover says: 'Some say this would be the most beautiful season if it weren't for the shortening of the days. But hey, that does mean longer nights.' As he gives us a knowing look, the Magners man glances over towards what we assume is an attractive woman, underlining the perceived benefits of longer nights and echoing the ironic, playful sexism of 'lad culture' (Ging, 2004, 2005).

The cultivation of the apple also draws on another well known patriarchal myth that underpins Western culture, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Kitzinger, 1990). Here woman is cast as the evil temptress in cahoots with the devil, who easily succumbs to her desires by biting the apple, thereby bringing about Adam and Eve's fall from grace and their banishment from an earthly paradise. As an archetypal symbol of Eve's temptation to Adam, the apple potently conveys the power of female seduction, seduction that must be resisted if a male is to maintain mastery and control. Threads of this cultural myth resonate in the campaign and, of course, the overall idea of cider being produced from the apple: man transforms a potential seduction and loss of control into a pleasure for himself over which he has mastery.

The summer 2005 campaign illustrates this well. The opening shot pans in on an apple-laden orchard, before closing in on the brilliant red apples hanging heavily from the trees. Then the scene cuts to a group sitting outside around a table. It is summer and we can feel the heat in the air as a young woman reclines lazily on her seat, fanning herself with a piece of paper. She tilts her head back as if soaking up the sun and one of the guys gives her an admiring stare. Immediately the shot pans to another close-up of the red apples, then back to her. She is an apple, an object of desire, of temptation, but these men are in control of nature, rather than being controlled by nature (woman). The scene suddenly focuses in on one of the young men in the group, as he pours his Magners with great care into a pint-sized glass. The bubbles effervesce and a long, cool drip rolls down the outside of the glass. The guys concentrate on drinking their Magners and temptation is rebutted, a rebuttal that also signifies their overall mastery and control.

Affinity with Nature

The discourse of mastery and control is very much tempered by the Romantic Celt discourse against which it is juxtaposed, a discourse that draws heavily on the Celts' affinity with nature. This latter discourse is one that intertwines with colonial and postcolonial representations of Ireland as a feminine nation, and the land as female. Alongside its deep associations with the cultivation of nature, the Magners TV advertising campaign is a veritable homage to nature – the passing of the seasons, sunshine and rain, growth and maturity, and, above all, the importance of patience and time in ensuring that nature's bounty can be enjoyed. The campaign revolves around the apple tree and this is a particularly apt symbol, given that the apple symbolises healing, prosperity, strength, beauty, love and perpetual youth. Harking back to Ireland's pre-Christian past, this focus on apples, apple trees and apple orchards gives the campaign a strong pagan-like emphasis in that it is based around a devotion to and affinity with nature.

A core aspect of the Magners brand strategy was to make it a brand for all seasons, and the apple tree has proved to be the perfect symbol for Magners' year-round appeal. The tree is a symbol of nature in many mythologies, and it was a particularly powerful symbol for the Celts, reflecting

the passage of time and the cycle of nature. Indeed in Celtic mythology the high priests or wizards, the Druids, are so-called because the name 'druid' means tree, a highly sacred symbol of life and nature for the Celts. In Neolithic times the tree was a universal whole: male and female, dark and light, knowledge and mystery, the natural and the supernatural. In pre-Celtic, Pagan Europe, matri-centred societies revered and sanctified nature and the land. Intricately bound up with this reverence was the never-ending cycle of birth, life and death, the pagan cycle of 'eternal return' (Condren, 1989, Green, 1997). The landscape itself embodied the sacred goddesses, and according to this polytheis-tic belief system, these goddesses were all around, in the rivers, the trees, the mountains, and the earth itself (Stewart, 1990). Celticism embraced and appropriated mother culture and strongly believed in the omniscience of Mother Nature, which was to be expected, given that the Celts were a rural culture (Green, 1997).

Evoking a 'pre-modern Celtic Culture' such as that found in other representations of 'Irishness' (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007), the Magners cam-paign fully realises and in many ways re-enacts this fundamental tenet of Celtic belief. Each advertisement reveres the ongoing cycle of nature in its dedication to a particular season, just as pagan worship celebrates the yearly cycle of birth, death and rebirth in its rituals and festivals (Samhain, Beltaine, Imbolic, Lunasa). The Spring 2007 campaign celebrates the rebirth of nature as the apple trees burst into life, their blossom heralding the fruit to come: 'Isn't it refreshing to see things coming back to life again?' Similarly the Spring 2005 advertisement celebrates the sap rising and the pollination of the apple blossom by the bees. The Summer 2005 advertisement is set to the tune of The Kinks' 'Lazing on a Sunny Afternoon' (1966). The voiceover says 'Funny how we wait all year for it to get hot just so as we can cool down again.' The advertisement celebrates men who have earned the right to chill out and enjoy the fruits of their labour. This promise of sensual pleasure heralded by spring is reinforced by outdoor advertising which uses images such as an uncapped bottle with effervescent cider burst-ing forth with the caption 'Open Season' (Spring 2008), and one that shows a Magners Irish Cider bottle with a special Magners bar pump, and the slogan 'The Pull of Nature' (Spring 2008). The

double entendres of these advertisements, appeal-ing as they do to the laddish culture previously discussed (Ging, 2004, 2005), are not accidental, we suggest, and are fairly obvious even to those of us who are not experts in Freudian symbolism!

Autumn, which heralds the end of summer, is cel-ebrated as a time to be thankful and a time to enjoy nature's bounty: 'Magners original cider. Time dedicated to you.' The stark, white, frosty branches of winter suddenly dazzle with a profu-sion of fairy lights in the Winter 2007 TV adver-tisement: 'We have always believed in the magic ... of a little ice.' The lights on the bare branches recall the ancient Celtic tradition of lighting sacred fires in the dead of winter to appease the deities, and to signify the forthcoming rebirth of nature at the end of winter, the return of light and life after the long, dark, dead days. They also recall the 'christmas tree,' an enduring symbol of optimism in the dead of winter.

Craftsmanship

The second pair of dialectic tensions that we have identified are craftsmanship versus leisure and play. Taken together, the series of Magners Irish Cider advertisements communicates 'Naturalness, Tradition, Heritage and Craft' (www.Bulmers.ie). The overall message plays on the idea of 'Nothing added but time', to emphasise the quality and maturity normally associated with other alcoholic drinks such as wine and spirits, but not generally associated with cider, or indeed beer. This empha-sis on time is reflected in other slogans that recur throughout the campaign, such as 'All in its own good time' and 'A time to create.' Craftmanship is about skill, manual dexterity and taking time to do something well. The concept thus reinforces the previous theme of mastery and control that links Magners so well to beer discourses.

The notion of craftmanship also contributes something more powerful, however, by tapping into the Heroic Artisan male archetype, one that can be traced to the craft guilds of Medieval European craft guilds. A virtuous figure, this archetype is independent and honest, as well as extremely loyal to his male companions (Davis, 2005). Typically working on the family farm, or sometimes also to be found in an urban shop, the Heroic Artisan has a very strong work ethic and a self-reliance that ennobles him. At the core of this

archetype is the power of creation itself (emphasised in the Magners campaign by the message 'a time to create') and a manliness associated with production. The Heroic Artisan's 'productive labour' (Currarino, 2007, p. 479) asserts his independence, an independence that many men have lost in working for large corporations where they cannot control their destinies. The Heroic Artisan image thus evokes a postmodern nostalgia for a past where men remained in control of their own production, a time when they were not competing with women in the workplace. The orchard scenes with the all-male workers and brotherly bonding between them reinforce such associations.

The voiceover in the Autumn 2006 advertisement says 'The wonderful thing about this time of year is that you can always be sure of quite a gathering.' The word 'gathering' conflates the gathering of the apples with the convivial gathering of the men after their day's work, thus emphasising the fruit of their labours and the reward that awaits them: the companionship of other men, all of whom have earned, by the sweat of their brows, the right to relax with their fellow workers. Beer bonding is, of course, well established in advertising, but the special ingredient added in the Magners campaign is that of Celtic (male) souls gathering together in harmony. This is the triumph of the Celtic warrior discourse over the Celtic mother goddess discourse in Irish culture, but Irish masculinity is allowed to retain the feminine sensitivity of a matrilineal past (Cairns and Richards, 1998). This is indeed the 'time to gather' (Autumn, 2006), as the heroic male artisan unites both producer and consumer, and is in harmony with production and consumption, and, above all, his craft.

Leisure and Play

The old adage that 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' could never be applied to this campaign, because the advertising campaign is a celebration of men who know when and how to take it easy and enjoy themselves. This notion is cleverly framed within a context of hard work and reward. The theme of craftsmanship is juxtaposed with one of leisure and play, two important facets of the Celtic spirit that continually recur throughout the series of advertisements. The Celt knows how to enjoy himself, how to work and play, and, especially, how to relax with a long, cool glass of Magners Cider after a hard day's work. Here a

Celtic discourse of fun and pleasure is used in stark opposition to the Protestant work ethic, with its Calvinistic distrust of pleasure and self-indulgence, so espoused by their fellow countrymen, the Ulster-Scots, in the North of Ireland (Brown, Hirschman and Maclaran, 2006).

The summer 2006 advertisement, for example, celebrates summer's lazy days and pays homage to the summer sun: 'The perfect time to put everything on ice,' as the men cast off their boots, laze around in the sunshine and down their Magners cider, to the soundtrack 'Sunshine Came Softly Through My Window Today' by Donovan. The Spring 2008 advertisement also illustrates these associations well. The ad opens lazily with shots of clear water running over stones that pan out to become a river. We see a cobweb laced with raindrops, a horse, some cows in a field, and then two men, who stroll in an unhurried fashion on a bridge over the river. One is carrying a ladder, the other a basket. We're not sure whether they are going to or from work but they're in no hurry. The Irish voiceover tells us that 'At Magners we've long understood the importance of making time'. Now we are in the orchard, where the pace is slow. Walking in pairs, the men nonchalantly carry full panniers of apples as they walk away from the orchard, against the backdrop of a setting sun, and we realise that they are all winding down at the end of their day's work.

The husky tones of Steve Earle singing 'Galway Girl' set our feet tapping and the scene shifts to an Irish Ceilidh that is being held in a marquee at the edge of the orchard. The rest of the ad concentrates on the lively crowd of musicians, dancers and revellers that the men have joined in the marquee. A beautiful, dark-haired, fresh-faced young woman is the centre of our attention as she dances vigorously amidst the throng. As Steve Earle sings 'I took her hand as I gave her a twirl' the shot pans from her to a glass of Magners being poured. A young man sits at the side, content to relax and have a moment to himself, as the voiceover says 'Time dedicated to you'. The theme of craftsmanship is broadened to incorporate a monadic gift-giving element as the advertisement legitimises and indeed validates time off after toil: the men have earned a break and a pint of cider.

Interestingly, Holt and Thompson refer to the musician Steve Earle as being a perfect example of

the 'rebel' archetype in mass culture in his youth, namely a man who refuses to conform to society's norms and instead lives life as a hard drinking, hard living rebel who is loved and revered for his anti-establishment attitude (Watson and Helou, 2006). This archetype also parallels colonial representations of the wild, uncontrollable and emotionally unstable Celt. Earle is now, of course, a reformed character, it seems, living in Ireland and combining his American country style with the Irish traditional music genre to create an appealing 'country' sound which is perfect for the Magners campaign.

Discussion

As a rich and ancient form of narrative, myths have a powerful influence on us. Their stories encode significant meanings that help us make sense of our experiences and indicate appropriate ways for us to behave. Myths are continuously being told and re-told, appropriated and re-appropriated, as they change and evolve in response to the needs of particular social groups. Whereas in bygone times myths were most frequently religious and circulated by word-of-mouth, nowadays myths are likely to be commercially mediated, and circulated through marketplace phenomena such as films, television, brands and advertising (Arnould, 2009; Holt, 2004). In this sense companies can now be seen as competing in myth markets rather than product markets (Holt, 2004).

Traditionally, myths make us aware of oppositions that they progressively mediate, such as good/evil, life/death, science/nature, male/female and so forth; their tales take on life's central contradictions and the complexities of being human. It is in this respect that they speak across cultures. Fraser (1922), for example, has shown how similar myths and symbolic associations exist across very different religious beliefs. And so it is for commercial myths also; they can resonate with us at profound, unconscious levels. The nature/culture binary is central to the Magners' campaign and is played out in the two sets of dialectical tensions we have discussed above. Thus, the core contribution of our study, in relation to the theme of this special issue, has been to show the power of an Irish voice, literally in terms of the persuasive voiceover narrative in the Magners advertisements, and metaphorically in terms of the Celtic spirit contained therein. Our analysis of the Magners campaign illustrates how the Celtic soul that lies at its core enables young

men to negotiate a masculinity that restores ideals of manliness (culture) alongside a celebration of the feminine (nature). As a commercial myth, this conception of Magners man conveys a new mythic ideal that draws on many existing cultural myths to achieve its unique 'syncretic blending of narrative and imagistic elements' (Thompson and Tian, 2007). This new mythic ideal, we would argue, is also helping to reconcile the conflicting representations noted by Kuhling and Keohane (2007) that are currently present in Ireland, namely the tensions between premodern Celtic Culture and aspirational cosmopolitanism.

Holt and Thompson (2004) refer to two dominant models of masculinity in American culture: 'the rebel' and 'the breadwinner'. They argue that the man-of-action hero reconciles these two opposing mythoi of masculinity in American culture. In Ireland, two opposing sides of Irish masculinity, 'the warrior' and 'the artist', are reconciled to create Celtic man, thus accommodating extreme masculinity (strength, mastery, action) with extreme femininity (sensitivity, sentimentality, emotionality), and reconciling the oppositions of nature/woman and culture/man in the process. This dialectic tension is resolved in the archetypal site of masculine/feminine conflict and resolution, the Garden of Eden, as symbolised by the orchard, where nature (the feminine, 'Eve') is tamed, harnessed and cultivated by man (the masculine, 'Adam'). As a man who respects the land but harnesses the power of Mother Nature for his benefit, Magners Man embodies this reconciliation of dualisms. Through the Magners advertisements, men can return to a romanticised, idyllic pastoral past when men worked the land and earned the right to enjoy the fruits of their labour, in this case, chilled cider at the end of a long, hard day of sweat and toil. And indeed in late capitalist, fast-paced, urban cultures, there is a nostalgic longing for an agrarian, slower-paced, rural life.

The crisis of masculinity has been well documented in recent years (Thompson and Holt, 2008). Layton (2000), for example, refers to 'gender wounding' and a perpetually displaced masculinity. We would argue that advertisements such as the Magners Irish Cider campaign have the potential to help heal such wounds, as they show men in unambiguously masculine, active roles at the same time as they display a contempo-

rary cosmopolitanism, a man at ease with his 'nature.' Craig (1992, p. 94) writes that gendered commercials 'are designed to give pleasure to the target audience.' Showing men in an Edenic context, being masterful and strong, harvesting nature's bounty to produce an alcoholic drink, presents men in an empowered and attractive light. The cider comes to embody male potency, purpose and power as well as nurturance and passion. The Celtic soul thus becomes universal in its appeal, taking men back to a time when they were close to the land, and were in tune with the seasons and the cycles of nature, including their own.

The word 'Magners' is well chosen to signify ideal masculinity in the 21st century, an elixir that imbues its imbibers with natural heroism, and indeed the brand name seems to embody male potency, purpose and power, given its close word association with 'magnus' which means great in Latin. It also recalls other masculine brand names in popular consumer culture such as Magnum (a brand of ice-cream by Walls currently being enjoyed by Eva Longoria of American TV series *Desperate Housewives* fame, and the well-known 1980s American TV series of the same name with likeable he-man Tom Selleck). Although the name may have been taken from that of its founder, it is nevertheless highly fortuitous that it is similar to Magnus, and that it carries strong masculine overtones.

'New national identities may struggle to fully overcome the enduring legacy of the colonial encounter and the binaries it introduced,' write Cayla and Koops-Elsen (2006, p. 153). In postcolonial Ireland, the Edenic primitiveness associated with Celtic Ireland is packaged with playful, postcolonial purpose, we argue, to entice the British to swig the cider and thereby swell the coffers of the triumphant 'Celtic tiger', the Irish. Old rivalries are forgotten, and men are united in tasting the nectar that transforms them into rugged men of the land: artisans, craftmen, artists, in harmony with nature, and resplendent in homespun clothing, stubble, and well-toned muscles. In postcolonial terms, it may be that former colonised countries, like Ireland, portray themselves and are influenced by 'the colonial experience and the colonial gaze,' (p. 153). And perhaps Irish advertising is deliberately engaging in what Dirlik (1997) refers to as 'self-orientalisation', playing along with the 'exotic other' narrative of its colonial masters. Given that Ireland has truly proved itself to be an independent and economically successful nation, it can happily use its traditional associations with rural life to enhance its economic success. The fact that Magners' highly effective media strategy was to 'colonise and conquer' the British market (Stokes, Jenkins and Nolan, 2007) can be seen as another interesting, not to say ironic, turn of events, an amusing flip of the colonial/postcolonial coin. Magners Irish Cider (and Irish masculinity) has truly cornered the market in Celtic soul. The representation of Irish masculinity it celebrates has come to be a very successful manifestation of the Celtic soul myth which continues to endure, and which continues to enjoy supreme currency in contemporary culture.

Authors

Pauline Maclaran is professor of marketing and consumer research at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research interests focus on cultural aspects of contemporary consumption and gender issues in marketing. Her publications have been in internationally recognised journals such as the *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Psychology and Marketing*, *Journal of Advertising*, and *Consumption, Markets & Culture*. She has co-edited/authored a number of books including *Contemporary Issues in Marketing and Consumer Behaviour* (Elsevier, 2009) and *Marketing and Feminism: Current Issues and Research* (Routledge, 2000). She is also editor in chief of *Marketing Theory*, a journal that promotes alternative and critical perspectives in marketing and consumer behaviour.

Lorna Stevens is a lecturer in marketing at the University of Ulster. She is particularly interested in feminist perspectives and gender issues in marketing and consumer behaviour, and her research is primarily in the areas of experiential consumption, consumer culture and media consumption, particularly advertising and women's magazines. Her research is interpretive and primarily draws on reader-response theory and feminist literary theory. Prior to becoming an academic she spent 10 years working in the book publishing industry in Ireland and the UK. She lives in Coleraine in Northern Ireland.

References

Arnould, E. (2009), 'Commercial mythology and the global organisation of consumption', *Advances in Consumer Research*, forthcoming.

BBC News (2006), 'I am, now, a cider drinker: Ad Breakdown', 18th Aug.: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/5263394.stm

Billington, S. and M. Green (eds) (1996), *The Concept of the Goddess*, Routledge, London.

Boehmer, E. (1995), *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford

Bowcott, O. and S. Bowers (2006), 'Dark days for Guinness', *The Guardian*, 29 Aug., http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2006/aug/29/food.foodanddrink

Brown, S. (2006), 'Tiocfaidh ár lá: introduction to the special issue', *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 1–9.

Brown, S. (2007), 'Editorial to the special issue: Celtic marketing concepts', *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 1–6.

Brown, S., E. Hirschman and P. Maclaran (2006), *Two Continents, One Culture: The Scotch-Irish in Southern Appalachia*, Overmountain Press, Johnson City, TN.

Cairns, D. and S. Richards (1988) *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Cayla, J. and M. Koops-Elsen (2006), 'Global men with local roots: representation and hybridity in Indian advertising', in L. Stevens and J. Borgerson (eds), *Proceedings of the Association for Consumer Research 8th Gender, Marketing and Consumer Behavior Conference*, pp. 150–60.

Condren, M. (1989), *The Serpent and the Goddess: Women, Religion, and Power in Celtic Ireland*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York.

Craig, S. (1992), 'Men's men and women's women: how TV commercials portray gender to different audiences', in R. Kemper (ed.), *Issues and Effects of Mass Communication: Other Voices*, Capstone Publishers, San Diego, pp. 89–100.

Cullingford, E.B. (1993), *Gender and History in Yeats' Love Poetry*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Currarino, R. (2007), 'Meat vs rice: the ideal of manly labor and anti-Chinese hysteria in nineteenth century America', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 476–90.

Davis, R.G. (2005), *Understanding Manhood in America: Freemasonry's Enduring Path to the Mature Masculine*, Anchor Communications LLC, Lancaster, VA.

Delaney, S. (2006), 'The hard sell: Magners Irish Cider', *The Guardian*, 29 April.

Dirlik, A. (1997), *The Postcolonial Aura*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO.

Fischer, E. (2000), 'Consuming contemporaneous discourse: a postmodern analysis of food advertising targeted toward women', in S.J. Hoch and R.J. Meyer (eds), *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 27, Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT, pp. 288–94.

Fowles, John (1996), *Advertising and Popular Culture*, Sage, London.

Fraser, J.G. (1922/1985), *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, Macmillan, New York.

Ging, D. (2004), 'The lad from new Ireland: marginalised, disaffected and criminal masculinities in contemporary Irish cinema', *Film and Film Culture*, vol. 3.

Ging, D. (2005), 'A "manual on masculinity"? The consumption and use of mediated images of masculinity among teenage boys in Ireland,' *Irish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 29–52.

Green, M.J. (1997 edition), *The Gods of the Celts*, Sutton Publishing, Bridgend.

Holt, D.B. (2004), *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding*, Harvard Business Press, Boston, MA.

Holt, D.B. and C.J. Thompson (2004), 'Man-of-action heroes: the pursuit of heroic masculinity in everyday consumption', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 425–40.

Howes, M. (1996), *Yeat's Nations: Gender, Class, and Irishness*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Kiberd, D. (1996), *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*, Vintage, London.

Kitzinger, C. (1990), 'Why men hate women', *New Internationalist*, 212, October.

Kuhling, C. and K. Keohane (2007), 'Collective representations of Irishness in the Guinness and Jameson drink ads: "liquidity" and Irish identity', paper presented at the Consuming Identities Workshop, Dublin City University, http://www.ccs.dcu.ie/consumingidentity/resources/docs/Kuhling%20paper.doc.

Layton, L. (2000), 'Cultural hierarchies, splitting, and the dynamic unconscious', *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Scoiety*, vol. 5, pp 65–69.

McLoone, M. (1995), 'The primitive image: tradition, modernity and cinematic ireland', in E. Patten (ed.), *Returning to Ourselves*, Second Volume of Papers from the John Hewitt International Summer School, Lagan Press, Belfast, pp. 310–24.

Meaney, G. (1994), 'Sex and nation: women in Irish culture and politics', *A Dozen Lips*, Attic Press, Dublin.

Paglia, C. (1992), *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth.

Scott, L. (1994), 'The bridge from text to mind: adapting reader response theory to consumer research', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 21, December, pp. 461–80.

Stewart, R.J. (1990), *Celtic Gods, Celtic Goddesses*, Blandford, London.

Stokes, M., S. Jenkins and M. Nolan (2007), 'Magners Irish Cider – The Magners effect: how Magners singlehandedly re-invigorated the cider category', Case Study, Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, London.

Strate, L. (1992), 'Beer commercials: a manual on masculinity', in *Men, Masculinity and the Media*, Sage, Newbury Park, CA, pp. 78–92.

Thompson, C.J. and D.B. Holt (2008), 'How do men grab the phallus?', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 313–38.

Thompson, C.J. and K. Tian (2007), 'Reconstructing the south: how commercial myths compete for identity value through the ideological shaping of popular memories and countermemories', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 34, Feb., pp. 519–613.

Watson, J. and M. Helou (2006), 'Men's consumption fears and spoiled identity: the role of cultural models of masculinity in the construction of men's ideals', in L. Stevens and J. Borgerson (eds), *Proceedings of the Association for Consumer Research 8th Gender, Marketing and Consumer Behavior Conference*, pp. 229–50.

Welch, R. (ed.) (1993), *W.B. Yeats: Writings on Irish Folklore, Legend and Myth*, Penguin Books, London.

BRAND IRELAND

Anthony Patterson

In the cultural supermarket, Brand Ireland offers a lifestyle choice that appeals to many shoppers. Scores of companies that associate themselves with its symbolic constructions have profited from its country of origin cachet. This paper will illustrate how Brand Ireland gained its iconic status and provide a brief biography of its commercial life. It will begin by revisiting the dramatic historical changes in Irish history that inadvertently wrought Brand Ireland's accidental birth. It will proceed by defining and detailing the three incarnations of Brand Ireland that currently co-exist: BI-Generic, BI-Regional and BI-Plus. The paper will conclude by asking whether the success of Brand Ireland is sustainable over the longer term, especially at a time when its credibility in the marketplace is increasingly under scrutiny.

Aran Sweaters, Alcohol & Awesome Alliteration

'And we'll really shake them up, when we win the World Cup', might have been over-egging the prospects of the Irish football team, just ever so slightly, but not those of our beloved Brand Ireland, that 'postcolonial aura of privileged victimhood' (Witoszek and Sheeran, 1998, p. 1) and 'idealised ethnicity' that together create an inimitable cult of Celtic chic that sells everywhere (Foster, 2002; Negra, 2006). By a country mile, it would win 'The World Cup of Nation Brands', especially the alcoholic drinks section. While many bemoan the stagnant stereotype, it cannot be denied that Brand Ireland can drink any country under the table that ranks the international appeal of alcoholic drinks. While everyone knows that vodka is Russian, that the Germans and Belgians do beer best, and that the Greeks' national tipple is ouzo, no nationality, not even a global superpower, can boast a complement of alcoholic drinks to match the Irish offering. Behind the shadow of the dark stuff (i.e., Guinness), and innumerable casks of oak-aged whiskey, there stands a plethora of big brand names like Caffrey's *Irish* ale, Bailey's *Irish* Cream, Beamish *Irish* Stout, and Bulmer's *Irish* Cider that made no secret of their debt to the geo-political construction of Brand Ireland.

Irish national prosperity is so intrinsically linked to the ethereal edifice that is Brand Ireland that its most famous export, Guinness, recently took the strategic decision, against the beseeching advice of its revenue-maximising financial advisers, to upgrade and improve its manufacturing facilities in Dublin rather than relocating production to a low-cost economy in the developing world (Sibun, 2008). Its corporate owner Diageo is, of course, not of Irish origin but it is well aware that although there has been 'a reduction of the company's presence in Irish life' (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2008, p. 290), the Guinness brand still benefits from association with Brand Ireland, and vice versa. A company, after all, does not have to hail from Ireland or even be based in Ireland to benefit from Brand Ireland as the success of Lucky Charms breakfast cereal made by General Mills in the US attests. Proof, then, not only of Brand Ireland's efficacy, but also that even the suits in Diageo understand that, in some quarters, the woolly wonder of marketing make-believe, of Celtic storytelling and bog-trotting blarney, is infinitely preferable to the hard-nosed advice of Anglo-Saxon money men. And sure, as long as the rest of the world continues to believe the downright barmy myth that the seemingly unrivalled taste of Ireland's Guinness is directly attributable to the added Liffey water, not only will Guinness continue to be celebrated but the scholarly brand of neo-Celtic sensibility, promoted in this special issue and elsewhere, will also prevail.

Beyond the alcoholic drinks industry, its associated drinking mausoleum of ceol agus craic, better known as the Irish theme pub, the shibboleth and shenanigans of Irish tourism, and the ever pervasive Aran sweaters and tweed tam o' shanters found in picture postcards and on German tourists, the lustre of many other Irish products

has been enhanced by dint of association with Brand Ireland's country of origin cachet. While not to underplay the importance of the so-called Celtic Tiger, coined in the 1990s to signify Ireland's strength in manufacturing industries (Coulter and Coleman, 2003), it is clear that a main source of competitive advantage, and material resource for Brand Ireland lies in its outstanding cultural imagination (Smyth, 2001). Perhaps Ireland's well-honed trait of inventiveness is the result of over a century of practice, acquired at the culture-promoting Feiseanna and Oireachtas festivals that have been organised in Ireland since the 1890s (Koch, 2006). Or perhaps it is simply the enactment of the Celtic stereotype, discussed at length elsewhere (Aherne, 2000; O'Loughlin and Szmigin, 2007; Patterson and Brown, 2007). Whatever the reason, indisputably the Irish excel at producing saleable outputs that involve creativity, quick-wittedness and imagination.

In music, Westlife's cloying brand of identikit pop is probably not particularly representative of the nation's ideals but it is a good example, if not of musical talent, then certainly of skilful marketing, and anyway, I'd prefer not to mention Bono, Daniel O'Donnell or Ireland's seven winning Eurovision entries (Ferriter, 2005). In dance, the thunderous tapathon that marks the climax of the Riverdance performance might, by now, be a cliché and collective click-clog too far, but the show remains, no one can deny, on permanent world tour. Sturdier exemplars of Brand Ireland's value, though, exist in the literary market, where writers like Roddy Doyle, John Banville, Séamus Deane, Seamus Heaney, William Trevor, Edna Longley and Edna O'Brien have achieved widespread critical acclaim by writing stories about Brand Ireland's intemperate society, which, Holt (2004) might argue, resolve cultural contradictions embedded in Irish nationality. Why, it is even alleged that the Irish write better English than the English (Lesinska, 2005). Unsurprisingly, Irish writers of a different genus, comedians that is, are frequently the star draw on the international comedy circuit. Although they are legion, the loquacious wiles of Dara Ó Briain, Dylan Moran and Jason Byrne spring most readily to mind.

In film too, Ireland has a proud tradition that, from the beginning, seemed to subscribe to what I like to call the 4Ps of Celtic Marketing – *Poets, Priests, Pubs* and *Poverty*. This tradition began with the controversial documentary of island life, *Man of Aran* (1934), which, while a remarkable anthropological movie, was fiercely criticised for pretending that the Aran islanders still engaged in the then long dead tradition of capturing basking sharks (Ellis, 2000). Later the romantic comedy, *The Quiet Man* (1956), upped the non-reality stakes by portraying Irish life in a fashion that, depending on your perspective, can either be castigated as excessively sentimental (see McLoone, 2000) or celebrated as a exemplar of marketing abundance, excess, and overload that all Irish products, if they know what is good for them, should emulate (see Brown and Patterson, 2000). *The Quiet Man*, according to Gibbons et al. (2002, p. 3), came to represent the 'blueprint for subsequent travelogue films promoting Ireland as a tourist destination'. Today, similar sweeping scenes of rural Ireland are Bord Fáilte, the Irish tourist board's, stock-in-trade.

Of course, many cultural commentators outside of marketing, the Naomi Klein's (1999) of this world, would balk at the very idea that a country could ever be deemed a brand, but nations have been, Anholt (2003) assures us, quite deliberately inventing and branding themselves for centuries, and anyone who fails to recognise the importance of branding to the economic and social development of all nations is either ignorant or deluded (Clifton, 2003). And actually, the processes of national identity creation and brand creation are quite similar. One could be forgiven for thinking that Thompson (2000, p. 164), in describing the formation of national identity, is actually writing about brand creation when he asserts that this process of invention 'is not a reconstruction of past actualities and relationships, but rather the outcome of a "poetic act", a story that we tell ourselves and for our own purposes'.

This story of national identity has segued into the contemporary creation of Brand Ireland along with all the other pervasive journalistic, fictional, and literary representations that depict the Irish as ethnically distinct. It is true too that fixed stereotypes and stock imagery are associated with Brand Ireland. As consumers we immediately understand that *tartan*, *bagpipes* and *shortbread* belong to Brand Scotland, and, in a similar vein, that *sham-*

rocks, craic, and leprechauns are integral to Brand Ireland. Nonetheless, it is impossible to fix upon what Brand Ireland means to everyone, since its meaning is different for everyone. Any material distinctiveness, signification, or meaning depends entirely upon how it is perceived by individual consumers. As Batey (2008, p. xiii) eloquently acknowledges, 'Meaning can be elusive: It flows and drifts and is often hard to pin down. No matter – the search for meaning in all its forms is hardwired into our psyches. The millennia may have passed, but we are still hunters and gatherers – of meaning.' This article will try, therefore, neither to indulge in essentialist thinking nor to impose a reductive definition of what constitutes Brand Ireland, recognising that it will always remain what O'Toole (1994, p. 53) describes as 'a bizarre accumulation of heterodox imaginings', and that the character of a nation-state is extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to conceptualise (Giddens, 1990).

With this caveat in mind, the purview of this paper is to illustrate how Brand Ireland gained its iconic status and to provide a brief biography of its commercial life. The paper is slightly unusual in that it does not, as some other branding papers tend to do, merely consider a brand via its surface manifestations and immediate imagery (see Curtis-Wilson et al., 2006), preferring instead to adopt the cultural perspective that some branding theorists are advocating (Holt, 2004; Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling, 2006). My aim is thus to chart the connections between Brand Ireland and the social and cultural realm of its creation. To this end, this paper will begin by revisiting the dramatic historical changes in Irish history that inadvertently wrought Brand Ireland's birth. This will provide a reasonable springboard for defining and detailing the three incarnations of Brand Ireland that, in this author's opinion, currently co-exist: BI-Generic, BI-Regional and BI-Plus. The paper will conclude by asking whether the success of Brand Ireland is sustainable over the longer term, especially at a time when its credibility in the marketplace is increasingly under scrutiny (Bielenberg, 2006; Courtney, 2007).

A Write Old State

To fully appreciate the social construction of popular history that has created Brand Ireland, it should be understood that it was born out of Ireland's

struggle to be unlike England. Five hundred years ago Elizabethan England feared cultural pollution from the 'inferior' cultures that surrounded it. It expected the Celtic nations to assimilate to its 'superior' culture, particularly Ireland (Catey, 2008). Even the great Charles Darwin argued that the Irish posed a serious threat to England, saying that 'The careless, squalid, unaspiring Irishman multiplies like rabbits' and would, unless something was done, eventually outnumber and over-run the English (Paul, 2008). To justify a policy of assimilation, England's philosophical position was, according to Steingart (2008), that the absorption of the entire world under its rule would bring the end of all wars, and as regards the Irish, sure they were all savages, drunkards and troublemakers anyway: destroying their culture was for the greater good. One practice, for instance, used by the British against the Irish, in order to further justify their racist policies, involved the use of craniometry. Irish skulls, like those of black Africans, were said to be shaped like those of apes or Cro-Magnon men (Carroll, 2003). A colony was thus established to civilise the 'lazy' natives and garner resources for the Crown. Colonial administrators like the poet Edmund Spenser were ceaseless in propagating the notion of Irish inferiority and savagery, as well as introducing institutions of civilisation to Ireland. Their favoured instruments of control included warfare, slaughter, terror, and the confiscation of land (Catey, 2008).

The Great Famine marks another milestone in the development of Brand Ireland and the emergence of the postcolonial sensibility that helped forge Ireland's fierce nationalism. Many thousands of Irish peasants fled Ireland as a consequence of the poverty which was – whether rightly or wrongly – perceived to have been caused by both British oppression and the ravages of the devastating potato blight that struck Ireland from 1845 to 1849. Over the course of the disaster and the following decades well over a million people fled from Ireland. Starving, sickly and wretched, they left by whatever means they could for the cities of Great Britain, Canada, Australia and the United States, creating a massive transfer of Irish population. Neither transportation nor cities could cope with the tide of human misery. Liverpool – the first step for many on the journey to America – presented scenes of turmoil and tragedy. Lodging house owners, ships' captains, American employ-

ers' agents, loan sharks and charlatans all touted for trade among the dispossessed who were desperate to escape from famine (Kissane, 1995).

The peculiar and powerful reverence in which Ireland is held can be partly attributed to the wistful and nostalgic yearnings of its many immigrant descendants scattered across America, Britain, Australia and other corners of the world. Their conception of Ireland is almost entirely unencumbered by actual experience, but instead finds potent expression in the realm of the imagination. As a onetime Irish immigrant explains, 'What I could not discover I invented. Ironically, freedom to do so was greater than if I had remained in my own country [Ireland], bound by the actuality and truth of its place, its people, its food, its placenames' (Boland, 1996, p. 14). O'Toole (1997) sees this imagined Ireland as a creation not only of immigrant nostalgia but also of the emptiness felt by those who were left behind. Thus a shared victimhood was cultivated that was jointly sanctioned by the 70 million who claim Irish ancestry abroad and the Irish still living in Ireland. Nor, until quite recently, did centuries of British rule that culminated in the separation of the island in 1922 into two political entities – the Republic (Free State from 1922 to 1949) of Ireland and the 'Province' of Northern Ireland – do anything to ease tensions. In fact, it spurred the IRA into existence and gave them cause to attempt the reunification of one nation (a 32-county Ireland) and free themselves from another (England).

Ireland was naturally, then, full of loathing for the many injustices perpetrated against it by England. One response to continued British rule and the anti-Irish racism that accompanied it saw the Irish intelligentsias, at the end of the ninetieth century, initiate the Irish Literary Revival. The purpose of this revival, spearheaded by Yeats – which took place in a world that was just, coincidentally, beginning to understand how brands could provide a powerful means of differentiation – was to encourage writers and poets through literary endeavour to indulge in boundless mythomanic invention (Monaghan, 2004). It was hoped that this nostalgic vision which looked back towards the 'memory' of an ancient 'Celtic Race' (Kearney, 1997) would begin both to de-Anglicise Ireland and to reposition the country, according to

Terence Brown (2006, p. 57), as 'a zone of Celtic spirituality, a territory of the imagination, scenic in the Romantic fashion: rural, primitive, wild and exotic'. By actively opposing the stereotypes and prejudices prevalent in Ireland, the revivalists created an alternative space for the representation of a new Irish identity within which the 'marginal and the oppressed can find expression' (McLoone, 2000, p. 123). They challenged restrictive definitions of Irish culture through a radical revision of prevalent modes of representation such as Joyce's playful subversion of the English language in *Finnegans Wake*, and Wilde's knack of challenging convention in literature and in life.

Against the backdrop of the Irish Literary Revival, Éamonn de Valera also played a key role in the creation of Brand Ireland and indeed was hugely influential in shaping the entire course of twentieth century Irish history. A fierce patriot, he was one of the leaders of the unsuccessful Easter Rising of 1916 and in the wake of the martyrdom of his unfortunate fellow revolutionaries he chose to commemorate the event with a statue of Cú Chulainn, a mythic guerrilla fighter of awesome bravery. It came to symbolise both the emerging nationalist consciousness and the republican struggle (Cullen, 2006): a struggle that de Valera took too far when, to show his scorn for the English, at the end of World War II, upon hearing of Adolf Hitler's death, he rashly decided to pay his respects at the German embassy in Dublin (Skelly, 2006). In 1926 he formed Fianna Fáil, which rose to power in 1932 on a protectionist ticket of inward industrial development. His nationalistic aim was to retain Irish production in Irish hands, provide employment and diminish the constant emigration that was emptying the country. Even though such a strategy proved to be of limited economic worth, it served an important social purpose, the creation of a powerful national self-image that could help lift the darkness created by generations of colonisation (Ni Mhaille Battel, 2003; Campbell, 2005). From a postcolonial perspective, de Valera's penchant for insular policies exemplifies Edward Said's (1994) term – affiliation – the radical creation of one's own world and contexts and version of tradition. The limits of protectionism became widely accepted during the 1950s, when a new outward-looking strategy was created which in the main provided capital grants and tax concessions to boost export-oriented manufacturing.

This focus on a culture of resistance, which Irish writers and politicians knew to be absent from traditional history books, revised the history of Ireland, stimulated cultural pride, functioned as a means of community building, and ultimately began the long process that created contemporary Brand Ireland. In conjunction with the fragile survival of the Gaelic language in certain parts of Ireland and the Emerald Isle's rich history of 'impressive stone circles, megalithic ritual sites, solitary round towers, Middle Age monasteries, and romantic castles' (Olsen, 2007, p. 61), the Revival has served to emphasise and preserve the isolation and peculiarity of the Celtic tradition that constitutes much of what Brand Ireland is all about. It was a further lucky twist of fate that the thrust of the Celtic revival so perfectly tallied with the cornerstones of today's consumer appeal, particularly in the drinks market where heritage, authenticity and tradition are highly prized (da Silva Lopes, 2007).

Brand Ireland though, is hardly a homogenous entity, but instead encompasses a wide spectrum of diversely positioned Irish products. For the purposes of explication, I have discerned three loose categories into which many, but not all, of the Irish products that benefit from the Brand Ireland values that circulate in the public domain will fit. Nonetheless, I am well aware of the porous and protean nature of the category boundaries, and that additional ones may exist or spring into being as the brand continues to evolve.

BI-Generic

BI-Generic exists on a continuum. At one end, its Irish credentials are understated and matter-of-fact, typical of the brand offerings of Bewley's, Brown Thomas and Dunnes Stores, through to the other end of the continuum where Irish products construe Irishness as a set of stereotypes. These brands at the latter end of the continuum see Ireland as a homogenous entity. They happily produce the leprechauns and shamrocks, and perpetually attempt to sell the good time craic of the Emerald Isle. They privilege what some might deem the tackier side of Irish tourism, the one that is often condemned as superficial and patronising (Bielenberg, 2006; Courtney, 2007); the side that Crowley and Maclaughlin (1997) dub 'Ireland Inc' wherein 'Ireland itself has become a vast hotel and ethnic theme park – Eiredisney.' Typical

products in this brand category can be found in every airport trinket shop in Ireland: the tea towels, the T-shirts, the oven-gloves, all the Paddywacked made-in-China memorabilia that Irish natives would not-in-a-million-years buy for personal consumption. Among the most blatant attempts to cash-in on Generic BI was the launch of an Irish alcopop by A. & M. Ferguson called *The Craic*.

Another prominent product in this brand category might be that offered for sale by the ubiquitous Irish theme pub chains which collectively tend to celebrate a form of kitsch Oirishness. Although their heyday has well and truly passed, they are still in abundant supply. In the UK, *O'Neill's*, first developed by Bass but now owned by Mitchells and Butlers, is the single largest chain in the world with 88 outlets, as of 2007. Punch Taverns lags some way behind, with its 39 *Scruffy Murphy's*. The Greenall's Group operates a chain of 12 individually named Irish theme pubs, including *Shifty O'Shea's*, *Daisy O'Brien* and *O'Rafferty's*, and Whitbread has followed suit with 10 outlets under the sign of *O'Hagan's* and *J.J. Murphy*.

When they first entered the marketplace their prospects were not promising. Consider the story of *Flanagan's Apple* on Mathew Street in Liverpool, England, which first opened its doors in 1984. It was the first Irish pub in England by any means, but one of first Irish theme pubs. The pervading sentiment at the time suggested that it could never be the apple of England's eye. The British authorities were extremely reluctant to grant the venue a pub licence. Nightly knee-capping, punishment beatings, exploding incendiary devices, and the everyday death of soldiers from Liverpool and Leeds on the streets of Northern Ireland had dubbed the era 'the troubles' and damaged the still to flourish image of Brand Ireland. To make matters worse, the bloodshed was beginning to seep over onto the English mainland, where ironically, British pubs, among other venues, were prime targets for IRA bombers. Consequently, Irishmen living in England, like today's Muslims, were eyed through a veil of racial mysticism. Every Paddy or Mick had an evil glint in his eye and a heart as black as the pint of Guinness in his hand. Opening an Irish theme pub like *Flanagan's Apple*, it was thought, might

inflame sectarianism by acting as a rallying point and recruiting station for hard-line republican sympathisers, particularly in light of their historical involvement in the organisation of 'nationalist secret societies' (Reilly, 1977, p. 571). Bob Burns, the pub owner's masterstroke, aside from having such astonishing prescience, was convincing the Liverpudlian police and local community that the pub could be successful, even though it was a potent symbol both of centuries of struggle between Ireland and England and of fervent Irish nationalism (Elson, 2004). Needless to say, or else this story would hardly be worth telling, his charm offensive worked.

Today, *Flanagan's Apple*, and other Irish pubs like it, are still a success not just because of the sand-blasted bars, or the dancing leprechauns in the stained glass windows, but because claiming an association with Irish traits can complement a consumer's identity. As Delaney (2006) asserts, 'It's about pretending that you're James Joyce or Shane MacGowan and that you're getting pissed to reconcile your intense masculinity with your deeply romantic soul. Rather than the fact that you're a weak, pathetic booze-hound who despises every detail of your hellish, pub-bound existence.' Whether it is as pathetic a pursuit as Delaney asserts, such indulgence is part and parcel of what Negra (2001, p. 76) calls 'the pleasures of white ethnic heritage'. It allows white Americans to revel in a rich identity that would otherwise be unavailable to them. It enables them to make poetic declarations of this ilk: 'My mind keeps telling me I am an American. But I also feel that I'm a tiny part of a much larger story, perhaps a mere noun; but carrying with me all that hurt and passion, all that sacrifice that did not make a stone of the heart. I roam with Leopold Bloom. I bleed with Cuchulainn. I brandish the summit on a blasted hill and wave my defiance. I am dancing, wild and naked, under a crimson moon' (Patterson, 2007, p. 139).

BI-Regional

BI-Regional recognises difference within the construct of Irishness, and usually focuses on a specific dimension of Irish heritage, especially a place-name. It benefits from being able to draw on Brand Ireland as a general construct and a specific place-name, both of which are pivotal to its brand positioning. Regional BI products therefore move from the general to the specific. They benefit first from the broad-sweeping characteristics associated with Ireland, invoking some of the associations that have already been discussed in this paper, and perhaps some others that have not yet been mentioned, such as the breathtaking landscapes, the glacier-carved valleys, the bleak and beautiful mountainous terrain, and the unspoiled, green countryside. Ironically, this sparsely populated countryside now so celebrated by Bord Fáilte is the direct and still visual consequent of the famine unnecessarily caused by Ireland's colonial masters (Foley and Fahy, 2004). BI-regional brands garner further brand distinction by focusing on the specific – the particular local characteristics that make their product special. Everyone knows how the quirkiness of a person's accent can be endearing and interesting, well that same regional variation can accentuate a product. Consider Tayto Crisps. It relies as much on the local story told on every pack as it does on the country-of origin kudos it receives from Brand Ireland to bring its brand to life. 'Set deep in the heart of the Ulster countryside is Tayto Castle where Tayto have been making ...' the story always begins.

A key aspect of regionalism concerns the different ways in which Brand Ireland is rendered on either side of the border. Northern Ireland might be saddled with a history of violence on its streets, but unlike the Republic it benefits from being able to employ a two-pronged, and some might say two-faced, strategy that allows it to sell itself as British in British friendly territories and Irish in Irish friendly markets (Dinnie, 2007). How this schizophrenic dynamic affects the broader construction of Brand Ireland is still relatively uncharted. Furthermore, Henchion and McIntyre (2000), who conducted an interesting study of regional branding in Ireland, make the point that – although there are many such brands like KerryGold, Coleraine Cheddar, Cookstown sausages – their relation to the overall national Irish context remains understudied, and deserving of attention from marketing scholars. Given that so many marketing academics in Ireland spend a large part of their careers obsessing about the peculiarities of the Irish market, as though it were a rite of passage (there is no such fervour for the peculiarities of the English marketing landscape among English marketing academics), there

should be no shortage of researchers ready to study this niche area.

BI-Plus

Products that can be characterised as BI-Plus have BI-Generic values at their core, but no longer explicitly promote these values in marketing communications since the consumer populace is generally well aware of the product's Irish roots. Such brands are reluctant to roll out the clichéd images that Foley and Fahy (2004, p. 215) describe as 'donkeys, turf baskets and smiling red-headed natives' since they are an unnecessary reminder of the postcolonial struggle that Ireland has endured. Brands like Guinness and Bailey's Irish Cream typify this category. Bailey's Irish Cream, for instance, relies to some extent, as one would expect, on traditional Brand Ireland virtues of tradition and heritage. It even prints the word 'Original' twice on its front label: 'Original Irish Cream' and 'Bailey's the original'. Nonetheless, it has moved on from courting purely Irish values, and instead has introduced new tropes in order to build a more sophisticated brand personality and reposition the brand away from the old-lady-with-a-sweet-tooth market that it, until recently, reluctantly occupied (Kapferer, 2008). It has put its ethnic component on ice, preferring instead to link its brand with the trope of 'the lover' as in its 'Bailey on Ice' campaign. To this end, it has sponsored shows like *Sex and the City* and run saucy adverts. One such ad conveys the sensual brand values that Bailey's now desires with considerable elegance. It opens in a bar with a gorgeous woman playing pool while several lads vie for her affections. She notices her glass of Baileys empty and seeks to identify the culprit, not by taking a hissy fit – no, that would not do. Instead, she tenderly and with considerable composure kisses each of the lucky men in the hope of detecting the unmistakably Bailey's taste on their lips. On finding the perpetrator she does not scold him, but decides bizarrely to launch into full-on-tongue-active-snog mode. 'Let your senses guide you,' runs the strapline (Batey, 2008; Sullivan, 2008).

Bailey's BI-Plus strategy has clear parallels with Murphy's Stout campaign that ran in the late nineties and early noughties. It also sought to reposition its brand above and beyond the rural ideal Irish tropes that had stood the brand in good stead, but required a bit of BI-Plus bolster to further increase market share. 'The Sisters of Murphy's' adverts were a beer drinker's wet dream. They took three ordinary Irish girls and gave them a mission to protect Murphy's drinkin' men from whatever unfortunate situation befell them, such as being accosted by an operatic Valkyriesque woman. As Morgan and Pritchard (2001, p. 105) note, 'These sexy, black-leather-clad superwomen with their modern (*Loaded magazine*) and classic cult associations (*Charlie's Angels* and *The Avengers*) were felt to be more in tune with the late 1990s and early 2000s than the earlier campaign.' They also were a step ahead of the somewhat simplistic images often associated with BI-Generic.

Will the Periphery Remain the Centre?

Warding off the Anglo-Saxon assimilators via zealous guardianship of Ireland's national identity has inadvertently led to the accidental but perfectly rendered creation of Brand Ireland and its three incarnations of BI-Generic, BI-Regional and BI-Plus. Its competitive advantage is that unlike many other brands, Brand Ireland does not pay homage to Anglo-American culture, but strives instead to be an 'expression of non-Western cultural identity' (Williams, 2000, p. 10). Real marketers with branding books could not have done it any better, but then Yeats and his cohorts were real marketers, just they were armed with poetry and Celtic legend books, it has been contended (Aherne, 2000). Their strategy is an eerie pre-empting of branding guru Douglas Holt's (2004, p. 215) advice: he urges managers to 'see the brand as a cultural artefact moving through history … To create new brands managers must get close to the nation.'

Nonetheless, let us not be complacent about Brand Ireland's current cultural relevance. All this pat on the back, didn't we do well, aren't-we-the-best-thing-since-sliced-potatoes (i.e., chips) rhetoric needs a bit of a reality check. Nation brands, like all brands, can all too easily stagnate and even become reviled – as champions of a certain superpower, coping with rampant anti-Americanism, will all too readily attest (see Martin, 2007). No-one can deny that today we live in an era of 'competitive postcolonialisms' where it is not necessarily the country that suffers the most at the hands of a colonial power, but the country that can speak the loudest or, to put it in

the language of marketing, the country that can brand itself the best, that will succeed (Punter, 2000, p. 76). In the *2007 Anholt Nation Brands Index*, Ireland ranks at number 16 in the world: not a bad effort for such a small country, you might argue, but then when you consider that Belgium is just one place behind, you begin to wonder if Brand Ireland really is on the wane. Many argue that it is (Foley and Fahy, 2004; Bielenberg, 2006; Courtney, 2007). They say that Ireland is severely out of touch with reality, that it is no longer oppressed, that postcolonialism has served its purpose, that Ireland's heritage and history are safe and well, so why keep selling the same old kitschy virtues? They say that Ireland, despite its recent rejection of the Lisbon Treaty, is more of a cosmopolitan country at the heart of Europe than a parochial backwater like the tourist brochures depict (Courtney, 2007). They say that contemporary Ireland has a progressive outlook, that the government is very pro-business, that the educational infrastructure is sound, and that it is extremely easy to transport goods in and out of the country, and that these are the 'genuine' qualities that Brand Ireland should celebrate (Friedman, 2000). Then there are the less obvious exports of the cultural industries that have become an integral component of Ireland's market economy. Ireland, for instance, according to a recent United Nations (2008) report, is second only to America in respect of its global export of new media such as computer games, virtual worlds, and internet art. Sure, trying economic conditions are particularly affecting Ireland at the present time – the global credit crunch, the slump in the Irish property market, and a strong euro are making Ireland's produce comparatively expensive and raising the spectre of job losses and recession (Capell, 2008), but the same is true everywhere in the world.

Brand Ireland, if it is to survive and prosper, and if we turn to Holt (2004, p. 215) again for direction, needs 'a cultural historian's understanding of ideology as it waxes and wanes, a sociologist's charting of the topography of social contradictions, and a literary expedition into the popular culture that engages these contradictions.' While I perhaps run the risk of perpetuating a 'Celtic/Irish' versus 'Anglo-Saxon' opposition by saying so, **who** is better placed to take on this challenge than the Celtic marketers gathered in this journal? By dint of the national belonging and ethnic identity they share with their forefathers, they frequent a zone of scholarship that is deeply imbricated in the world that notorious Irish writers of the past like Wilde and Beckett inhabited. It is they, therefore, who are supremely positioned to advance Brand Ireland in a new direction, both in academia, with the publication of this special issue, and by practitioners like John Fanning (2007) who have eagerly embraced the Celtic imperative to engage with literature and the arts in seeking to understand the world of marketing. Their tribal passion and Celtic penchant to create 'political agitation' in the mainstream academic community can deliver periodic rejoinders that alternative modes of thinking, of representation and method do actually exist (Jacobson, 2001). Moreover, the performance of contemporary consumer spectacle deserves to be described and theorised through a Celtic lens. Like the riotous artists of the present, we attempt, as Gibbons (2005, p. 153) states, to 'speak to bohemianism and transgression and appeal to the rebellious side of the consumer' while, and I'm paraphrasing here, simultaneously conferring a sense of cultural knowing to those who identify with them and the radical nature of their work.

Author

Anthony Patterson is a senior lecturer in marketing at the University of Liverpool. His teaching includes marketing theory, qualitative marketing research, and critical perspectives in marketing. He has won the university's Sir Alistair Pilkington Teaching Award for teaching excellence. Patterson's research projects have investigated book marketing, theme pubs, text messaging, speeddating and nation branding. Recently, in the *Journal of Marketing Management*, Baines et al. (2006, p. 452) describe one of his papers as, 'the most entertaining paper that you are likely to read in a scholarly marketing journal this year.' His articles have been published in *Psychology & Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Journal of Strategic Marketing* and *Marketing Theory*, among others.

References

Aherne, A. (2000), 'Chronicles of the Celtic marketing circle, part I: the paradise parchment', *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, vol. 18, nos. 6–7, pp. 400–13.

Anholt, S. (2003), 'Branding places and nations', in R. Clifton and J. Simmons (eds.) *Brands and Branding*, Profile Books, London.

Batey, M. (2008), *Brand Meaning*, Routledge, London.

Bielenberg, K. (2006) 'Great Irish icons – 2006', *The Independent*, Saturday 6 May, http://www.independent.ie/unsorted/features/great-irish-icons-2006-96622.html

Boland, E. (1996) 'Imagining Ireland', in *Arguing at the Crossroads: Essays on a Changing Ireland*, New Island Books, Dublin.

Brown, S. and A. Patterson (2000), 'Knick-knack Paddy-whack, give a pub a theme', *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol. 16, issue 6, pp. 647–66.

Brown, T. (2006), 'Anglo-Irish literature', in J.T. Koch (ed.) (2006), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, Abc-Clio, Santa Barbara, CA, pp. 55–8.

Campbell, H. (2005), 'Modern architecture and national identity', in J. Cleary and C. Connolly (eds.), *Modern Irish Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 285–303.

Carroll R.T. (2003), *The Skeptic's Dictionary: A Collection of Strange Beliefs, Amusing Deceptions, and Dangerous Delusions*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ.

Catey, A.S. (2008), 'Reservation system', in J.H. Moore (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*, vol. 2, Thomson Gale, London, pp. 499–503.

Clifton, R. (2003), 'Introduction' in R. Clifton and J. Simmons (eds.), *Brands and Branding*, Profile Books, London, pp. 1–9.

Coulter, C. and S. Coleman (eds.) (2003), *The End of Irish history? Critical reflections on the Celtic Tiger*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Courtney, K. (2007), 'Cúl Hibernia?', *Irish Times*, Saturday, 17 March, Available at http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/magazine/2007/0317/1173880350835.html

Crowley, E. and J. Mac Loughlin (1997), *Under the Belly of the Tiger: Class, Race Identity and Culture in the Global Ireland*, Irish Reporter Publications, Dublin.

Cullen, P. (2006), 'Cú Chulainn', in J.T. Koch (ed.), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, Abc-Clio, Santa Barbara, CA, pp. 119–20.

Curtis-Wilson, K., G. McCain and N. Ray (2006), 'The challenge of creating and maintaining respected country-of-origin assets: the Irish linen story', *Journal of Business Case Studies*, Third Quarter, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 71–83.

da Silva Lopes, T. (2007), *Global Brands: The Evolution of Multinationals in Alcoholic Beverages*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Deans, G.K. and F. Kroeger (2004), *Stretch! How Great Companies Grow in Good Times and Bad*, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester.

Delaney, S. (2006), 'The hard sell: Magners Irish cider', *The Guardian*, The Guide, Saturday April 29, p. 3.

Dinnie, K. (2007), *Nation branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice*, Butterworth-Heinemann, London.

Edensor, T. (2002), *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, Berg, Oxford.

Ellis, J.C. (2000), 'Man of Aran', in T. Pendergast and S. Pendergast (eds.), *International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers*, vol. 1 – Films, 4th edn., pp. 730–2, Farmington Hills, MI.

Elson, P. (2004), 'A clever blend of Englishness, Irishness and Liverpoolness', March 17, Liverpool Post, Available at: http://icliverpool.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0100regionalnews/content_objectid=14060665_method=full_siteid=50061_headline=-A-clever-blend-of-Englishness—Irishness-and-Liverpoolness-name_page.html

Fanning, J. (2007), 'What business can learn from the poetry of Thomas Kinsella', *Irish Marketing Review*, vol. 19, nos. 1–2, pp. 46–53.

Ferriter, D. (2005), *The Transformation of Ireland 1900–2000*, Profile Books, London.

Foley, A. and J. Fahy (2004), 'Incongruity between expression and experience: the role of imagery in supporting the positioning of a tourism destination brand', *Brand Management*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 209–17.

Foster R.F. (2002), *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up in Ireland*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Friedman, T. (2000), *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Harper Collins, London.

Gibbons, J. (2005), *Art and Advertising*, I.B. Tauris, London.

Gibbons, L., K. Hopper and G. Humphreys (2002), *The Quiet Man*, Cork University Press, Cork.

Giddens, A. (1990), *The Consequences of Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Gilmore, F. (2002), 'A country – can it be repositioned? Spain – the success story of country branding', *The Journal of Brand Management*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 281–93.

Henchion, M. and B. McIntyre (2000). 'Regional imagery and quality products: the Irish experience', *British Food Journal*, vol. 102, no. 8, pp. 630–44.

Holt, D.B. (2004), *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.

Jacobson, M.F. (2001), *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish and Jewish Immigrants in the United States*, University of California Press, California.

Kapferer, J.N. (2008), *New Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*, Kogan Page, London.

Kearney, R. (1997), *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy*, Routledge, London.

Kissane, N. (1995), *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History*, National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Klein, N. (1999), *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, Picador, New York.

Koch, J.T. (ed.) (2006), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, Abc-Clio, Santa Barbara, CA.

Lesinska, E. (2005), 'Breakfast with brontosaurus: an interview with Harold Bloom', See: http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2005-10-07-bloom-en.html

McLoone, M. (2000), *Irish Film: The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema*, BFI, London.

Martin, M. (2007), *Rebuilding Brand America: What We Must Do to Restore Our Reputation and Safeguard the Future of American Business Abroad*, AMACOM, New York.

Monaghan, D. (2004), *Jaywalking With the Irish*, Lonely Planet, London.

Morgan, M. and A. Pritchard (2001), *Advertising in Tourism and Leisure*, Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford.

Muzellec, L. and M. Lambkin (2008), 'Corporate rebranding and the implications for brand architecture management: the case of Guinness (Diageo) Ireland', *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 16, no. 4, Sept., pp. 283–99.

Negra, D. (2001), 'Consuming Ireland: Lucky Charms cereal, Irish Spring soap and 1-800-shamrock', *Cultural Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 76–97.

Negra, D. (ed.), (2006), 'Introduction', *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture*, Duke University Press, London.

Ni Mhaille Battel, R. (2003), 'Ireland's "Celtic Tiger"', *Science, Technology and Human Values*, vol. 28, no. 1, Winter, pp. 93–111.

O'Loughlin, D. and Szmigin, I. (2007) 'Exploring the use of dichotomy in marketing: Celt versus Saxon revisited', *Irish Marketing Review*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 19–25.

Olsen, B. (2007), *Sacred Places Europe: 108 Destinations*, CCC Publishing, San Francisco.

O'Toole, F. (1994), *Black Hole, Green Card: The Disappearance of Ireland*, New Island Books, Dublin.

O'Toole, F. (1997), *The Lie of the Land: Irish Identities*, Verso, London.

Patterson, A. (2007), 'Inventing the theme pubs of Ireland: the importance of being postcolonial', PhD Manuscript, University of Ulster.

Patterson, A. and S. Brown (2007), 'Inventing the pubs of Ireland: the importance of being postcolonial', *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 41–51.

Paul, D.B. (2008), 'History of eugenics', in: J.H. Moore (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*, Vol. 1, Thomson Gale, London, pp. 441–7.

Punter, P. (2000), *Postcolonial Imaginings: Fictions of a New World Order*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Reilly, J. (1977), 'The American bar and the Irish pub: a study in comparisons and contrasts', *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 571–8.

Said, E. (1994), *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage, London.

Schroeder, J.E. and M. Salzer-Mörling (2006), *Brand Culture*, Routledge, London.

Sibun, J. (2008), 'Dublin's St. James's Gate brewery gets £520m Guinness facelift', *The Telegraph*, 10 May, available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/main.jhtml?xml=/money/2008/05/09/bcndiageo109.xml

Skelly, J. (2006), in J.T. Koch (ed.), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, Abc-Clio, Santa Barbara, CA, pp. 463–64.

Smyth, G. (2001), *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Steingart, G. (2008), *War for Wealth: The True Story of Globalisation or Why the Flat World is Broken*, McGraw-Hill, London.

Sullivan, L. (2008), *Hey, Whipple, Squeeze This: A Guide to Creating Great Ads*, 3rd edn., John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.

Thompson, W. (2000), *What Happened to History?*, Pluto Press, London.

United Nations (2008) *Creative Economy Report*, UNCTAD, Geneva.

Williams, G. (2000), *Branded?*, V&A Publications, London.

Witoszek, N. and P. Sheeran (1998), *Talking to the Dead: A Study of Irish Funerary Traditions*, Editions Rodopi B.V., London.

Afterword

Marketing Died Today. Or Perhaps It Was Yesterday, I Don't Know

Stephen Brown

Call me Phishmael. Last night I dreamt I went to Matalan again. It was the best of Timex, it was the worst of Timex. Listerine, light of my life, fire of my larynx. Happy meals are all alike, every unhappy meal is revolting in its own way. It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a marketing manager in possession of a budget surplus, must be in want of a glossy advertising campaign. A spectre is stalking Europe, the spectre of Kotlerism.

Why don't marketing articles have memorable opening lines? Why don't marketing articles – and, moreover, books – have memorable lines, full stop? Can you think of any quotable remark in any marketing article or book you've ever read? Can you recite it word for word? I thought not. Me neither.

Actually, now that I think about it, there *are* certain marketing literati with a facility for snappy opening sentences and melodious *bons mots*. Russell W. Belk has been known to rustle up an inaugural zinger or several ('We move those possessions that are most apt to move us'). Morris Holbrook is the Mephistopheles of the marketing academy, someone whose alluring language unfailingly activates 'fantasies, feelings and fun'.[1] Ted Levitt, likewise, is Oscar Wilde-ish in his epigrammatic acuity, if closer to Walter Pater in his penchant for deep purple prose ('gloriously glossy pictures of elegant rooms in distant resort hotels, set by the shimmering sea').

They are the exceptions rather than the rule, though. Most marketing writing is boring at best and woeful at worst, my own included. As often as not, our academic articles begin with the stultifying words 'This paper'; they continue with an unnecessarily interminable literature review of

who exactly said what way back when; they go on and on and on in perhaps the most catatonic literary style yet devised, past tense, passive voice; and they conclude with the chilling words that strike fear into the heart of every language lover, 'more research is necessary' (to which the only reasonable reply is, okay, do the research if you must, but for God's sake don't write it up).

How To Write About Articles You Haven't Read

You know, the more I think about the writing of marketing – especially given the sheer volume of superfluous stuff that gets published nowadays – the more I admire Pierre Bayard's (2008) *How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read*. Published in Paris to considerable acclaim, *Comment parler des livres que l'on n'a pas lus?* engages with the fact that it's almost impossible to keep up with the literature these days, let alone read everything one's supposed to have read, classics included. However, as our cultural capital-obsessed society demands familiarity with the latest literary sensation and the canon of great works alike, it is necessary to bluff one's way on occasion. Thus, he posits a four-category classification of unread works: UB, book unknown to me; SB, book I have skimmed; HB, book I have heard about; FB, book I have forgotten. Each of these categories is further subdivided, depending on Bayard's personal opinion of the worth of the work in question (++ is very positive, + is positive, - is negative and -- is very negative). He also includes advice on how best to act in certain social situations where one's lack of knowledge is liable to be exposed: encounters with the writer, encounters at dinner parties, encounters with professors, et al. All good stuff, I'm sure you agree.

I reckon we could do with something similar in marketing. The tsunami of RAE-triggered marketing scholarship demands nothing less. Even if our articles were well written – which, as we know, they most definitely aren't – keeping abreast of the output would be difficult, to say the least. But when the tedium factor is also taken into account, it's a miracle anyone manages to read anything at all. I strongly suspect, in fact, that everyone's bluffing, big time. Present company excepted...

---

[1] Holbrook, without doubt, is our field's foremost literary stylist. Every article he writes contains an eminently quotable passage, or several. Consider the following opening sentence, plucked at random from his oeuvre: 'If God is the Progenitor of the Universe; if Necessity is the Mother of Invention; and if George Washington is the Father of His Country; then who is the Father, Mother, or Progenitor of Consumer Research?'

Clearly, we need to give some serious thought to a suitable classification system. In order to get the ball rolling, I'd like to suggest the following academic article codes: SS, student sample; MM, me-too model; II, interminably interpretive; TT, theoretical twaddle. Each of these categories is further subject to appropriate easi-reading guidelines: AA, abstract adequate; TT, top and tail; SS, skim sufficient; EE, eschew entirely. The codes, I believe, should be printed alongside the contents list of the journal concerned, ideally in extra large point size to spare us the trouble of reading the offending title. A glance at the codes should suffice (e.g. TTTT, a conceptual piece where the introductory and concluding paragraphs tell all). Indeed, as most academic articles are indistinguishably interchangeable, there'll be no significant loss of knowledge accumulation. If anything it'll give us extra time to write all those papers we're compelled to foist upon fellow sufferers. Perhaps we should streamline the whole system and simply submit our article codes to the academic organ, which will be able to include considerably more career-enhancing contributions per issue. Everyone's a winner. What's not to like?

Neutron Hack

Some traditionalists, I suspect, will be appalled by this scholarly delayering-cum-downsizing suggestion, even though it merely applies prevailing management principles to ourselves. Literary style, they counter, is neither here nor there. Marketing scholarship is not about mellifluous prose or striking similes but getting the facts across as simply and expeditiously as possible. Marketing is a science. Science has no truck with linguistic curlicues or afflatic folderol, much less hi-falutin words like curlicues and folderol. And what does 'afflatic' mean when it's at home?[2]

There are two problems with this line of no-nonsense thinking. First, marketing's scientific standing is far from proven. Marketing academics may consider themselves scientists (much as I consider myself an undiscovered rock star) but that belief doesn't make it so. Even the most pure-bred positivists admit that marketing's scientific accom-

plishments are comparatively few in number and the oft-repeated assertion that a major breakthrough will transpire when the discipline finally matures is wishy-washy wishful thinking of the worst kind. I've more chance of being inducted into the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame – or, more realistically, being recruited as a backup singer for The Zimmers – than marketing has of making the leap to fully-fledged scientific status.

Second, advocates of utilitarian stylistics overlook the fact that there are many excellent writers in science. Science is not a citadel of give-me-the-facts-and-only-the-facts, though there is much of that. The writings of, say, Richard Feynman, Richard Dawkins, Steven Pinker and Stephen Jay Gould are proof positive that poetic prose is not impossible for unreconstructed lab rats. Their populist publications regularly top the non-fiction best-sellers lists. When was the last time a marketing scholar topped the charts, let alone troubled the lower reaches? Where are our academic popularisers, the marketing equivalent of Feynman, Dawkins, Pinker and Gould? If economics can produce a *Freakonomics*, albeit with the aid of a ghost writer, why can't we?

Keep It Simple, Pseud

Marketing, then, is not a science. Nor is science a swamp of stodgy prose and unreadable articles. There is no excuse, not even they-do-it-too, for our stylistic infelicities. Writing matters. Writing matters a very great deal. Notwithstanding the current enthusiasm for visual modes of marketing communication, good old-fashioned writing is crucial for marketers in general and academics in particular. Marketing plans, mission statements, sales brochures, inter-office memos and ubiquitously unavoidable e-mail are part and parcel of practitioners' pith and pelf, as are the lecture notes, teaching plans, research reports, manuscript reviews and published articles that make and maintain our academic reputations. Whether we like it or not, marketing academics are literary types. Unfortunately, the stuff we write is unreadable.

Careful readers – the heroic few who have got this far – might reasonably object that it is perfectly possible to write well without writing in a 'literary' manner. Crystalline prose is what good writers aim for. Not only is there no need for florid expressions or alliteration a-go-go, but stylistic excess is widely

---

2 Actually, 'afflatic' doesn't mean anything. It's a neologism, derived from 'afflatus', that I coined for the occasion. No, don't thank me. It's nothing ... really ...

considered a signifier of substandard writing. Certainly, several of the aforementioned scientists are renowned for their pellucid prose (prose, in fact, that has no room for flatulent, five-dollar words like aforementioned or pellucid). If you can't write simply, they say, don't write at all. *Capisce?*

This is fair criticism. Self-styled marketing literati often flaunt their vocabularies, their erudition, their figurative flair and so forth. In doing so they only succeed in antagonising the academic mainstream, who understandably wonder why the look-at-me wordsmiths are allowed to get away with it. Antagonism, of course, is part of the poetic provocateurs' plan, since denunciation means they're having an impact, getting under people's skins and, to some extent at least, setting the intellectual agenda. There's more to it than scholarly showboating, however. The presumption that simple-is-superior may be a commonplace of literary discourse, but it is not universally acknowledged, never mind set in stone.

Call Cyril Connolly
Seventy years ago, at the height of the Munich crisis, an Anglo-Irish literary critic published a slim yet profound volume. *Enemies of Promise* was a *cri de coeur* from someone who considered himself an abject failure. It wasn't that Cyril Connolly, a descendent of the Earl of Clontarf who married the daughter of Lord Craigavon, was lacking in talent or denied the opportunity to shine. On the contrary, he was educated at Eton and Balliol, and was widely regarded as a writer of prodigious talent (Lewis, 1998). However, he never produced the landmark novel that everyone expected, Cyril most of all. Sloth, self-indulgence, sexual distractions and the siren call of newspaper columns meant that he never fulfilled his literary destiny. He was the George Best of the books trade, a man of letters with numerous novels in him but who suffered from chronic creative constipation.[3]

---

3 Connolly had no time for academics, incidentally. He abhorred 'the world in which a critic writes for other critics, as a physicist or philosopher writes for other physicists or philosophers, in the well lighted penumbra of American college jails' (quoted in Lewis, 1998, p. 486). Indeed, he dreaded the posthumous day when his writings too would be 'pushing up theses'.

Enemies of Promise is a meditation on failure, on the obstacles that stand in the way of a writer of promise. 'Whom the gods wish to destroy,' Connolly (1938, p. 121) cynically commented, 'they first call promising'. Indeed, his embittered volume is best remembered nowadays for its rather less than PC line (p. 127), 'There is no more sombre enemy of good art than the pram in the hall'.

Palaver on the perils of domesticity apart, Connolly's screed is noteworthy for its distinction between Mandarin and Vernacular writing styles. English literature, Connolly contended, is characterised by two contrasting modes of discourse: a baroque, high-flown, totally OTT style and a plain, simple, ostensibly demotic tone of voice. The former he termed Mandarin, the latter Vernacular. The history of modern literature, Connolly further contended, exhibits a contrapuntal pattern, where the contrasting modes enjoy periods of ascendancy and unpopularity respectively. Thus the Mandarin of Alexander Pope gave way to the Vernacular of Daniel Defoe, which was superseded, after several long cycles, by the Mandarin of Henry James and the Vernacular of George Orwell, Connolly's contemporary and school chum.

This pattern of rise and fall is perhaps less important from our present perspective than the basic distinction itself. Although we post-postmodernists are understandably chary of dichotomies, it is incontestable that marketing academics (and social scientists generally) are encouraged to write in the Vernacular manner. Adumbrators on good academic writing frequently quote Orwell's (1962) paean to plain and simple prose, 'Politics and the English Language'. However, as George Orwell epitomises the Vernacular style, there's undoubtedly an element of self-justification in his brilliantly written essay. Connolly would presumably retort that it's not a question of one literary mode being better than the other, but being good in whichever style's in the ascendant.

Both Ends Burning
The curious thing about contemporary academic writing, I reckon, is that although marketing scholars are encouraged to write in the Vernacular mode, what we produce is irredeemably Mandarin. Our writings are so rococo, so incomprehensible to lay readers, that they are under-

standably ignored by marketing practitioners and prospective practitioners. True, certain 'critical' types will retort that marketing must abandon its managerialist baggage and ally itself with non-aligned academic disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology. The only problem with this suggestion is that sociologists – even sociologists of consumer society – aren't particularly interested in our writings. The very fact that they emanate from business schools taints them in sociologists' eyes. If a scholar of the calibre of Russell Belk isn't cited by the great academic unwashed, what chance for the rest of us?

It seems to me, then, that we are facing the worst of both worlds. Neither marketing practitioners nor contiguous disciplines pay attention to what we publish. We write for an unholy mixture of fellow marketing academics and careerist brownie points (nobody reads our *JMR* but hey it's a big 'hit'). That's a terrible thing to say, I know. Perhaps I suffer from what Connolly (1938, p. 15) calls the Celt's characteristic 'addiction to melancholy and an exaggerated use of words'.

Melancholy, in truth, is how I often feel when struggling with the Service Dominant Logic paradigm (SDL, surely, stands for Seriously Deluded Lunacy) or peruse the latest contributions to Consumer Culture Theory (CCT is neither cultured nor theoretical, in my opinion). Let's be honest, it's hard not to feel melancholy when the one and only paper on poetry in *JCR* didn't actually include any poems (because the editor felt they'd antagonise his hard-headed, science-or-bust readership). It's permissible to talk *about* poetry – just – but not to *be* poetic.

Bouts of the blues aside, I don't think the situation is hopeless. There are many exemplary writers in marketing, as this special issue of *IMR* bears witness. The subject matter we deal with is inherently fascinating, with a potentially huge popular audience, as journalists like Naomi Klein and Malcolm Gladwell have demonstrated. More importantly, history shows that the literary-cum-scholarly situation can change remarkably rapidly. The styleless style that predominates in our journals is an unwritten convention, not an unbreakable covenant. Economics, for example, is in the throes of a palace revolution in the aftermath of Levitt and Dubner's (2005) *Freakonomics*, which

has opened the door for behavioural perspectives.[4] Anthropology was famously rewritten in the mid 1980s, thanks to dazzling stylists like the late, great Clifford Geertz. The history of literature, furthermore, includes many instances of stylistic tipping points. This time last century, literary culture was dominated by 'decadents' of the Oscar Wilde, Algernon Swinburne, Aubrey Beardsley kidney. Within a few short years, however, they were completely swept away by the vernacular blast of Rudyard Kipling. A rank outsider from India, with no old boy connections to speak of, Kipling's *Plain Tales From the Hills* set London's literary salons alight. He never looked back. Kipling rapidly became the people's poet – 'If' remains a British favourite; Margaret Thatcher kept a copy in her handbag at all times – and was the youngest ever recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Granted, he became a boorish blowhard, who turned the same literary trick once or twice too often, then gradually fell out of favour (Amis, 1986). Nevertheless, Kipling reminds us that the tectonic plates of theory, scholarship, writing, et cetera, can and do shift very suddenly.

The Call of the Celt

This is where Celtic Marketing Concepts come in, for me at least. Ten years ago, I organised a conference in Belfast based around a Celtic theme. It included papers on the character of Celticism, the marketing secrets of Samuel Beckett and many, many more. At the conference dinner, I made an immodest speech outlining my Celtic Marketing philosophy, where I noted that, in addition to its cultural meanings, the word 'celt' also refers to a cutting instrument akin to a hatchet or adze.

For me, Celtic Marketing involves cutting through the impenetrable thicket of marketing pseudo-science. It involves writing stuff that grabs people by the throat. It involves usurping conventional academic articles, conventional conference presentations and conventional marketing textbooks, which are even more clichéd, arguably, than the yada yada yawn contents of our leading learned journals.

---

4 *Freakonomics* isn't the only factor, I hasten to add. The rise of Post-Autistic Economics, a student-led rejection of abstruse economic theorising, has also helped precipitate this change.

Table 1	Recreating Classification

Shrinkage City, they called it. Shrinkage as in stealing, theft, nicking, knocking, ripping stuff off. It was the Lanzarote of larceny, the Malaga of misappropriation, the Benidorm of blag. It was where lifers went to die, teenage thugs learnt their trade and hardened criminals liked to loosen up. It was where the long arm of the law didn't reach or would get amputated if it tried. It was a rest home for ex-cons, the Champneys of the criminal classes. It made Chicago during Prohibition look like Walt Disney World on Mothering Sunday. If shoplifting were an Olympic sport, it would be the host city in perpetuity.

But that was then, this is now. These days, Belfast is the very model of a modern major metropolis. Five star hotels, Michelin recommended restaurants, shimmering shopping malls, expensive apartment blocks, designer label boutiques, bijou art galleries, cosmetic surgery clinics, magnificent public buildings, picturesque riverside walkways, pretentious arts festivals, dramatic concert halls and pristine pedestrianised streets are all present and correct, though the jury's still out on an all-singing, all-dancing, super-duper sports stadium. The property market is booming. Booming in a good way. Not like before. Before's behind us. Belfast's many and varied paramilitary organisations have been pensioned off – thanks to generous government grants for 'decommissioning' – and the ill-gotten gains of the godfathers of yore are being confiscated by the Assets Recovery Agency. The agency costs more to run than it recoups in raids and seizures. But, hey, who's counting?

Jimmy James is counting. So's his sidekick 'Moonbeam' McCartney. They're counting down the retail stores in Greater Belfast. Ticking them off, in fact. Five years ago, Jimmy read that Belfast was the shoplifting capital of the world – Shoplifter City they called it in the paper – and Jimmy decided he wanted to be the king of the world, the best shoplifter in the best city for shoplifting in the world. A boy's gotta have ambition, right?

So Jimmy set out to steal something from every single shop in Belfast Urban Area, the continuously built up region from Ballygowan in the east to Ballymurphy way out west, from Whiteabbey in the down and out north to Black's Road in the up and coming south. Such a task, which surely warrants inclusion in the Guinness Book of Criminal Records on completion, is easier said than done, however. It's not the sheer number of shops that's the problem. Jesus, Jimmy could do twenty on a good day. It's defining what a shop is and what a shop isn't. Are dry cleaners shops? Are banks shops? Are pubs shops? Are estate agents shops? They look a bit like shops. They are found on shopping parades and in shopping malls, nestling among the other shops. But are they 'proper' shops? Who decides these things?

Whatever they are, Jimmy discovered, they don't provide particularly rich pickings for the filching fraternity. Money aside, what can you steal from a bank branch, bar exhausted ballpoint pens on a string? Takings aside, what can you pilfer from a pub, other than beer mats, bar towels or the pint of an inebriated punter? Petty cash aside, what can you snaffle from an estate agent, apart from Photoshopped photographs of unaffordable houses and maybe a desk calendar or two? Till-fill aside, what can you acquire from a dry cleaners, beside someone else's ill-fitting outfits and a couple of breeding coat-hangers?

Then there's the problem of chain stores. Does each branch of Boots or Superdrug or W.H. Smith count separately or does one dipping operation cover them all? And if so, must the operation be mounted on the city centre flagship store or will an outlying outlet do just as well?

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Definitions, definitions, definitions. Where does the urban area stop, for Christ's sake? Is there life after Abbeycentre?

Actually, Jimmy loved wrestling with these undecidable issues. He was a philosopher at heart. A shoplifting sage, sort of. He often waxed lyrical to Moonbeam about the art, the craft, the metaphysics of misappropriation.

Source: S. Brown (2008), *Agents and Dealers*, pp. 13–14.

The decade since Marketing Illuminations has seen considerable progress on the Celtic front, though a sudden breakthrough hasn't come to pass, alas. I am the first to acknowledge that I myself haven't always adhered to the tenets of Celtic Marketing, if only because I too am beholden to bogus benchmarks laid down by the RAE. The distinction I frequently make between Celtic and Anglo-Saxon marketing is undeniably crude, moreover, though dichotomising is an innate human trait, some say (Lakoff, 1987). The character of Celticity has always been a moving feast, requisitioned and redefined for ever-changing socio-political purposes (Davies, 2000). We post-postmoderns can equivocate as much as we like but at bottom there is a distinction, I believe, between humanistic and mechanistic, between qualitative and quantitative, between artistic and scientific, between Latin and Northern, between Anglo-Saxon and Celtic approaches to marketing. Call me a marketing fundamentalist, if you must, but fundamentalism has its advantages. At least we know what fundamentalists stand for.

Celtic Marketing, in my view, is neither a methodological toolkit nor a geographical feature. It is a mindset, a worldview, a standpoint, a conviction, if you will, that rejects the scholarly barbarities perpetuated in the pages of *MS*, *JMR* and suchlike. Above all, Celtic Marketing is a literary

style that communicates the magic of marketing in an engaging, energising and hopefully exciting manner. Even matters as mundane as classification, I firmly believe, can be conveyed rather more creatively than they are at present (Table 1).

Hogtied in Hibernia

One hundred and fifty something years ago, a young American author threw down the literary gauntlet. The American novel, he maintained, was still in thrall to British stylistic convention, even though three-quarters of a century had passed since the Declaration of Independence. It was time, he contended, for indigenous novelists to find their own voice, a voice that expressed what was unique about the United States of America. So he set out to write The Great American Novel. He succeeded. That novel was called *Moby Dick*. Needless to say, no one recognised the book's brilliance at the time, because it was so different from the pap that then prevailed. *Moby Dick* not only failed to sell but it effectively ended Melville's literary career (though his preceding porn-fest, *Typee*, didn't exactly help matters). It was only when the aesthetic shock wore off – seventy years later – that Melville's masterpiece was recognised for what it was and correctly placed atop the American canon (Delbanco, 2005).

I believe a similar ur-contribution exists within the Celtic Marketing tradition. It's a contribution that wasn't appreciated at the time. So much so, I suspect the author still has nightmares about the occasion, though he may have obliterated the moment from his memory banks. The paper-cum-multimedia presentation was made at the aforementioned Illuminations conference. It was called 'Joseph and the Pig Farmer' and its creator was Pierre McDonagh. At the time, no one had the foggiest idea what Pierre was going on about, but the aesthetic shock after his presentation was palpable. More pertinently, the only paper that anyone remembers from that series of pre-millennial conferences is 'Joseph and the Pig Farmer'. Of the 120 papers presented – and the three tie-in books published – the only one that people still talk about was the one that bamboozled delegates on the day.

So, much as I enjoyed reading the contributions to this special issue of *IMR*, it contains nothing to compare with 'Joseph'. As Pierre's academic apotheosis attests, we need to articulate our own marketing concepts not continue to swallow those excreted by American scholars some time back. It seems to me that we're in a mirror-Melville situation, one hundred and fifty years on. The monoculture of contemporary marketing will be the death of us, if we're not careful. Oh for another big pig farmer …

Author

Stephen Brown is professor of marketing research at the University of Ulster. Best known for *Postmodern Marketing*, he has written numerous books including *Fail Better, Free Gift Inside, The Marketing Code* and *Wizard: Harry Potter's Brand Magic*.

References

Amis, K. (1986), *Rudyard Kipling*, Thames & Hudson, London.

Bayard, (2008 [2007]), *How To Talk About Books You Haven't Read*, trans. J. Mehlman, Granta, London.

Brown, S. (2008), *Agents and Dealers*, Marshall Cavendish, London.

Connolly, C. (1938), *Enemies of Promise*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

Davies, J. (2000), *The Celts*, Cassell & Co., London

Delbanco, A. (2005), *Melville: His World and Work*, Picador, London.

Lakoff, G. (1987), *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Levitt, S.D. and S.J. Dubner (2005), *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*, Morrow, New York.

Lewis, J. (1998), *Cyril Connolly: A Life*, Pimlico, London.

Orwell, G. (1962), *Inside the Whale and Other Essays*, Penguin, London.

Marketers,
sharpen up.

The Marketing Institute of Ireland's Executive MSc in Marketing is delivered through our partners at DIT. This Masters degree has a cutting edge to sharpen only the brightest marketing minds. With just 25 places available each year, we can take only the very best.

To apply, you'll need to have at least five years' experience and a good business-related degree. To find out more, visit **www.mscmarketing.ie**

You

MSc in Marketing

The Marketing Institute

IRISH MARKETING REVIEW
Volume 20 Number 2 2009

CONTENTS