Institute of Art Design and Technology, Dun Laoghaire
School of Creative Arts

Representation of the Irish in Modern Culture

by
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This dissertation is submitted by the undersigned to the Institute of Art Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire on partial fulfilment of the examination for the BA (Honours) in Art. It is entirely the author's own work except where noted and has not been submitted for an award from this or any other educational institute.

Signed 
Finn Moreau

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Introduction:

This thesis will examine portrayals of the Irish in British and American media and, by extension, will be asking the question: "How have attitudes to the Irish been reflected in visual culture?". The aim of this text is to explore the media's portrayal of Irish people, Irish culture and the country itself as well as the social and psychological effects that different types of representation can have on society and its perception of certain people and/or their respective communities as a whole. This thesis will begin with Britain's depictions of the Irish in the early 1800s, to the more contemporary portrayals of Ireland seen in large scale studio productions from the United States of America, specifically focusing on two such examples: *Darby O'Gill and the Little People (1959)* and *The Quiet Man (1952)*. The research being conducted is to shed light on the story of Britain's intention to anglify Ireland, the actions Britain took to vilify the Irish, the image of Irish culture that has long permeated society's consciousness as well as understanding the social and psychological implications of these actions for Irish people in the modern world.

Chapter One will look at how Britain utilised illustrations and caricatures with the principles of physiognomy to vilify and dehumanise Irish people, making Ireland appear to be a lawless land filled with ape-like Neanderthals with a proclivity for excessive alcohol consumption. This chapter will examine the artistic style of the caricatures found in British publications, namely *Punch Magazine*, and compare its aesthetic similarities to that of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture which feature prominently in the scientific practice of

physiognomy. In addition, the first chapter will look at how the Irish press responded to Britain's defamatory behaviour, a part of history which tends to go unacknowledged in the conversation about its relationship with the United Kingdom and the part the Irish press played at the time.

Chapter Two will focus on the photographs taken by John Hinde depicting Ireland during the 1950s. This chapter will explore how these romanticised images of the Irish countryside influenced the rest of the world's idea of Irish people, their culture and the country as a whole. Hinde's romanticised depictions of Ireland through his postcard photographs implied the country to be a land frozen in time with its natural charm preserved due to an apparent separation from the rest of the modernising world. This second chapter will consider the impact Hinde's product had on Ireland and how it exposed the rest of the world to the idea that Ireland was a legitimate country with the potential to welcome tourists. This section will also examine highly saturated and orchestrated qualities in Hinde's images and how they compare to more modern depictions of the Irish countryside captured by amateur tourists.

Chapter Three will look at the portrayal of Ireland in US film productions. This chapter will look at the Americanised version of Ireland: a far off land that seems to be an amalgamation of the qualities mentioned in the two previous chapters. This text will discuss two famous American films and will make detailed assessments of each of them to examine the creative choices made by their respective production studios and how those choices reflect on their attitudes towards Irish people and Ireland as a whole. Expanding on this analysis, these

films from the Golden Age of Hollywood will be compared to more recent film productions that have been made with a more informed approach by those who have first-hand experience with the country and culture from which it originates.

It should be noted that access to physical books was hindered during the course of writing this thesis due to Covid restrictions. As a result, the bibliography will not have an extensive list of book titles.

Chapter One - Vilifying The Irish, The Victorian Way

Art in its many forms has played a significant role throughout human history by documenting the vast array of world events that have taken place over the centuries. Sketches, illustrations, paintings, sculptures, among other mediums, have served as a means to tell stories (cave paintings/Egyptian hieroglyphics), teach and inform (illustrated guides) as well as express ideas to the masses (war propaganda or protests by oppressed groups etc.).

One way in which art was utilised was by the English press in order to perpetuate propaganda against Ireland and its people during the 1800s. *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* by L. Perry Curtis Jr. explores the Anglo-Saxon portrayal of the Irishman in political cartoons. Dr. Curtis chronicles the gradual change of Britain's image of the Irishman from a feckless peasant to a dangerous beast-like threat to civilized society. Curtis explains:

> The attribution of physical and mental traits to any given type of man belongs to what used to be called physiognomy, a branch of the science of man which may well be as old as man himself. Neither entirely clinical nor occult in its so-called methods, by no means confined to any particular country or culture, physiognomy may be construed as the art cum science of judging character and temperament from the features of the head and face, the body and the extremities. Physiognomy has always had a strong appeal to those people who seek a simple and painless way of assessing their fellow human beings without having to resort to astrology, palmistry or medical examination.[1]

[1] L. Perry Curtis Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (New York, The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971), abstract page.

The author goes on to say how the principle *"*provided a quasi-scientific basis for those who wished to believe that facial features and mental or emotional states were closely bound together in the same physiological system."[2].

Curtis goes on to explain that the word 'caricature' is derived from the Italian word *caricatura*, originating from the seventeenth century. It is older than the meaning of the word 'cartoon' which roughly dates back to the 1840s; while 'cartoon' denotes a humorous drawing, 'caricature' is associated with the grotesque. During the Victorian era, illustrations had become a common fixture within magazines and newspapers which were enjoyed by their readers with each passing issue. These comic strips (Fig. 1 & 2) possessed qualities that were grotesque or humorous in nature (sometimes possessing both qualities in the same illustration), thus blurring the lines between 'cartoon' and 'caricature' in the process.

[2] Curtis, abstract page.

Fig. 1: English School, title unknown, engraving, 1869

Fig. 2: Artist unknown, title unknown, engraving, 1857

Amongst the many English publications around at the time, *Punch* magazine was one of the most notorious publications known for perpetuating anti-Irish propaganda (Fig. 3). Sir John Tenniel (1820 - 1914), the celebrated artist known for his illustrations in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and

Alice Through the Looking Glass, held the position of principal cartoonist at *Punch* for forty years. Tenniel considered himself a cartoonist due to his work being more humorous than grotesque yet his depictions of the Irish share similarities to the style and subject matter to the work of known caricaturist Thomas Nast (1840 - 1902); Nast was an American artist known for his anti-Irish illustrations in respected magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar*. Harry Furniss, another notable *Punch* artist, defined a caricaturist as "an artistic contortionist. He is grotesque for effect … the good points of his subject must be plainly apparent to him before he can twist his study into the grotesque."[3] Caricature tends to possess its own qualities of the grotesque and malformed while also possessing humour intended for the audience's amusement - albeit at the expense of the subject in question.

The practice of creating caricatures was influenced by scientists and ethnologists of the time who had already established the principle of 'the facial angle', an integral part of 'physiognomy'. According to Curtis: "The attribution of physical and mental traits to any given type of man belongs to what used to be called physiognomy, a branch of the science of man which may well be as old as man himself.*"*[4] Artists referred to the literature and illustrations that already existed and applied these ideas to their illustrations to accompany the rhetoric against Irish people that *Punch* magazine and other publications were spreading across the United Kingdom and beyond.

[3] Curtis, p.23
[4] Curtis, p.23

Fig. 3: John Tenniel *"Rebellion Had Bad Luck"*, engraving, 1865

Observing the illustrations closely, there are some notable differences in the way British artists like John Tenniel depicted British people in contrast to how Irish artists such as John F. O'Hea and Thomas Fitzpatrick depicted Irish people. British artists like Tenniel had a tendency to draw their characters (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5) with features akin to classic Greek and Roman sculptures; this is to be expected as the illustrators evidently drew inspiration from the sketches made by Petrus Camper and his pre-established principles of physiognomy.

Fig. 4: John Tenniel, *Two Forces*, engraving, 1881

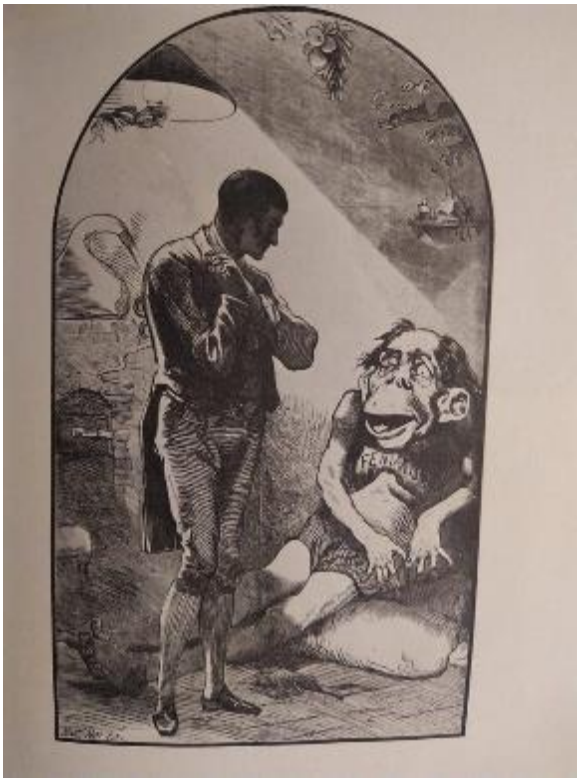

Fig. 5: Artist unknown, *The Irish Frankenstein*, print, 1869.

Fig. 6: Artist unknown, *The Irish "Tempest."*, medium unknown, date unknown.

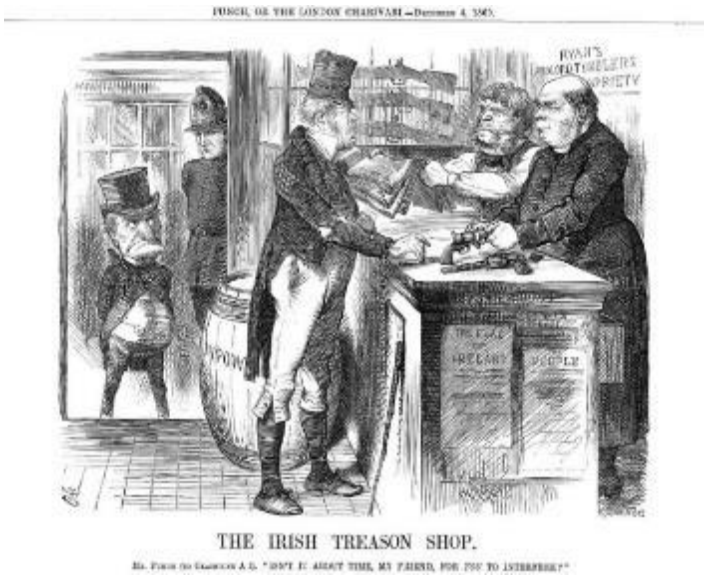

Fig. 7: Artist unknown, *The Irish Treason Shop*, print, 1869

Fig. 6 is an especially interesting illustration: the image depicts the personification of Hibernia; a fair and virtuous young woman who is being comforted by the personified Land Bill as they look at the simian monster baring its large, sharp canines. The so-called 'tempest' appears to be using a Shakespearean quote to express his anger at his island, which he claims to have

inherited, being taken away from him by the English. The Tempest, also referred to as 'Caliban', claims his mother to be Sycorax, a vicious witch and mother of the Caliban character in Shakespear's play *The Tempest*. *Punch's* choice to depict the Irish as a violent primate who appears to be a descendant of a malevolent entity, is clearly vilification on their part and indicates at their unrelenting opposition against the Irish; not even concealing self-awareness of their actions and how it affects the people from whom they are taking land; the innocent young maiden in Fig. 6 known as Hibernia appears to be plagued by an ugly menace that is the Irish – this was how the British perceived the country and the people who dwelled within it, respectively.

As seen in the sketches below (Fig. 8), the English felt such a kinship with the early Greco-Romans – both in ideology and physiology – that they modelled their depictions of themselves after the refined and stoic Greco-Roman sculptures, commonly associated with culture, wealth and, most importantly, the physical ideal.

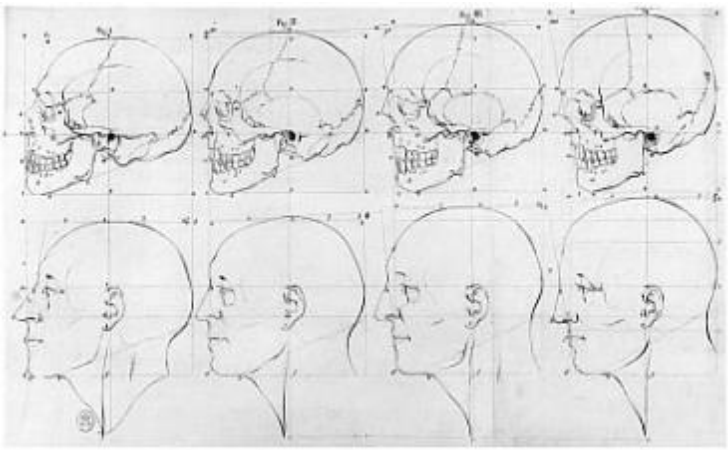

Fig. 8: T. Cogan, Petrus Camper's Facial Angles sketches from *The Works of the Late Professor Camper on the Connection between the Science of Anatomy and the Arts of Drawing, Painting, Statuary*., 1821.

Fig. 9: *Apollo Belvedere*, white marble sculpture, circa AD 120 - 140.

Fig. 10: *Diana of Versailles*, white marble sculpture, AD 1-2.

According to Camper, Grecian and Roman skulls had a natural angle of 90° and 95°, respectively[5].

The English undoubtedly felt a strong sense of superiority based on their history of establishing colonies in foreign lands, infiltrating them and imposed their will, ideals and customs. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume the English would have developed an almost God-like complex over the centuries which

[5] Curtis, p.9

would have translated into an inflated perception of themselves depicted through the various visual mediums of fine art.

By contrast, O'Hea and Fitzpatrick's work bears a considerably more understated and less romanticised image of the Irishman. In response to the many attacks made by the British Press, Ireland made a concerted effort to retaliate in the same way through the medium of print. The Irish press made multiple attempts to create a supplement that could reach the same level as that of *Punch*; one such periodical was the *Zozimus* which was first launched in May 1870 but only lasted two years, eventually closing in August 1872. Over the years, other attempts were made in the form of *Zoz*, *Ireland's Eye*, *The Irish Figaro*, *The Weekly Freeman and Pat* (Fig. 13), among others; different ideas were implemented to each of the supplements' content in pursuit of a successful publication, but these varied approaches continued to yield less than favourable results.

While the many attempts at creating a formidable foe to go up against the likes of *Punch* were unsuccessful, the positive contributions made by the Irish illustrators who worked for the aforementioned weeklies at the time should be noted. Illustrators like John F. O'Hea, John Reigh and Thomas Fitzpatrick were main players who dedicated their artistic talents in the fight against the likes of Tenniel, Proctor and Bowcher. In collaboration with publications like *The Jarvey* and *The Weekly Freeman*, characters such as Pat and Erin were created as positive representations of the Irish people; these two particular characters would frequently appear in weekly comics. In addition to Pat and Erin, the other

Irish characters portrayed throughout the different Irish comics were not as animated in posture and did not bear the exaggerated facial expressions exhibited by their British counterparts. Instead, the illustrations are imbued with a sense of humanity, Pat the Irish tenant (Fig. 7) exudes a calm demeanour as his expression portrays him as a sound and reasonable everyman in which Irish readers could see themselves.

Fig. 11: John Leech, title unknown, print, 1861

Fig. 12: Thomas Fitzpatrick, *Tyrant and Toady*, print,1892 (right).

Whether one was a follower of Charles Parnell (a Parnellite), a member of the Irish Land League or an Irish person simply existing, one was depicted as an ape-like humanoid (Fig. 11) with a tendency to drink excessively or behave violently. However, it is worth noting how the Irish themselves would retaliate by portraying their accusers as merely unpleasant individuals perpetually looking down their distinctly large noses - the only aspect of their sketches remotely exaggerated (although they were depicted as ape-like creatures on occasion [Fig. 13]). While these interpretations were intended to be insulting, it should be noted that other images of the British maintain an overall human appearance (Fig. 9).

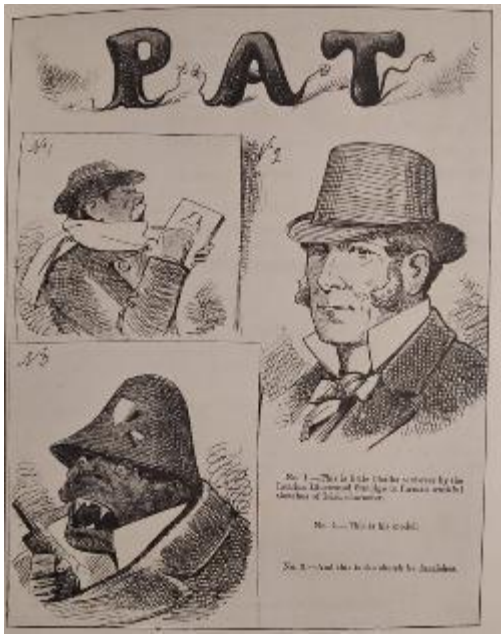

Fig. 13: John F. O'Hea, *Setting Down to Malice*, print, 1881

With physiognomy playing an integral part in the British press' self-portraits, the presence of the Greco-Roman aesthetic in English illustrations should come as no surprise as the usage of physiognomy has, in fact, been recorded in ancient Greece; one's facial features were believed to offer accurate insight into one's character. Curtis explains:

> In ancient Greece, physiognomy formed a branch of physiology and was considered an indispensable method of detecting organic as well as emotional disorders in people. According to the Hippocratic school of physiology, facial features provided infallible clues to the somatic and pneumatic or life-giving qualities of mankind. Even a cursory examination of skin, hair, and eyes and size and shape of face was sufficient to reveal the nature of the humors and pneuma which determined health and behaviour.[6]

Dr. Curtis expands on this further by delving into the physical and superficial aspects of the practice. According to him, a perfect specimen possessed:

> ...symmetrical, harmonious features matched by an equally balanced temperament made up of the right proportions of all four humors. Neither too sanguine nor melancholy, neither too phlegmatic nor choleric, neither too hairy nor hairless, neither fat nor thin, this Aristotelian archetype survived more or less intact into the Victorian period, when it became the model of the many, respectable, and self-controlled English gentleman so highly prized among the governing and educated classes.[7]

By observing the myriad of prints produced by the British press over the years and comparing them to those created by the Irish press in retaliation, one can see how manipulative and thought-out Britain's actions were against Ireland. Britain's choice of method to vilify Ireland alludes to a level of cunning on their part. Although they initially expressed a supposed concern for Hibernia as their sister island infested with Irishness, their use of printed media and

[6] Curtis, p.6
[7] Curtis, p.6

accompanying illustrations doubled as pro-British, anti-Irish propaganda in response to the local peoples' defiance.

It is evident that Ireland showed considerable restraint and humility in the face of consistent adversity; the Irish press' decision to portray the English as human despite that latter country's concerted efforts to dehumanise the former speaks positively of Ireland's maturity through such an historical period in its history.

The British press used its influence and power as a reputable journalistic entity to vilify Ireland and its people in the eyes of the former country and abroad. The actions taken by the British press resulted in the dehumanization and ostracisation of Irish people, causing widespread belief in their innate biological inferiority; this journalistic ambush against the Irish also lead to discrimination and violence against people who emigrated from Ireland to other countries like the United States and Australia.

While the English were relentless in their pursuit to correct the supposed Irish problem, the Irish fought back in a similar manner to the English, albeit with evidently more grace and stoicism. This knowledge of Ireland's side during this ordeal, especially during a time of such constant hardship, illustrates their ability to stand their ground in the face of such adversity.

This unique spirit of the Irish would go on to be noticed in the coming years, with the country's natural beauty even celebrated through the medium of photography and the written word. The former medium played an important

role in the promotion of Ireland as a country with its own character that made it a viable product to welcome tourists thus benefiting the country's economy. The man responsible for exposing the world to Irish culture was British photographer and entrepreneur John Hinde.

Chapter Two - John Hinde's Romanticised Ireland

As time passed, Ireland was gradually establishing itself as its own entity. The country was beginning to appear more attractive to holiday-goers, causing an increase in the country's tourism industry. Although Bord Fáilte's intention was to portray Ireland as a progressive, modern country that was open for business, the forgotten image of Irish country life turned out to be the aspect of Ireland that attracted business and prosperity for this small island thanks to an Englishman named John Hinde (Fig. 14).

Fig. 14: Joe Lee, *Hindesight*, film still of John Hinde, 1993

John Hinde was born in Somerset, England in 1916. Hinde lived with physical ailments as a child which rendered him immobile. According to writer Aiden Dunne, "while still at school he acquired a passion for, rather than an interest in, photography and after abortive forays into the family business and architecture he turned to photography in earnest." Hinde pursued the medium further when he travelled to London and joined a studio where he "succeeded in

mastering the three-colour carbro process, giving beautiful colour photographs on paper".[8] This was during the early years of World War Two when he took photographs documenting the citywide destruction of London during the Blitz bombings which took place in 1940 and 1941 (Fig. 15). Hinde explains:

> At this point, the war, the last war commenced during this period, I was fortunate to work for a company called 'Adprint' who produced many books with colour plates based on colour photography, something quite new in Britain at this time...setting up cumbersome cameras for big outdoor scenes, using hundreds of flashbulbs and doing this singlehanded at a time when London was receiving its heaviest air raid.[9]

Fig. 15: John Hinde, *Woman saving board games from bomb wreckage in London*, photograph, 1939-1945.

[8] Lee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ja0B3VxU0AI
[9] Lee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ja0B3VxU0AI

Fig. 16: John Hinde, Civil Defence Rescue Service, photography, circa 1940

Fig. 17: John Hinde, Civil Defence Rescue Service, photography, circa 1940

In 1944, World War Two was starting to come to an end and Hinde entered a rather significant chapter in his life during which he worked in the circus business. He took photographs for the likes of Rico Circus, Bertrum Mills and

Chipper Fields, for whom he worked as a publicity director and general manager. After ending its tour of Ireland in Dublin, Hinde and his wife Jutta (now married) parted ways with Chipper Fields to manage their own circus called The John Hinde Show. However, due to the show's inherent complications and the country's unsuitable weather, the show was forced to shut down causing the young couple to sell the tent and its transportation. Jobless and in need of stable income, Hinde chose to pursue photography professionally to provide for his family. His decision to focus on postcards came from his belief that the postcards Ireland had to offer were not of good quality and felt he could improve upon them with his colourful depictions of the Irish countryside.[10]

At this point in time, it was the days before colour photography but Hinde mentioned how he was greatly moved to try and make colour photographs. This compulsion to enter a field where he could devote all of his time to photography and, particularly, colour photography became almost fanatical.

In the beginning, Hinde took the photographs himself then printed them and sold them as postcards. As the business expanded, it became clear that he and Jutta could no longer manage production on their own, leading Hinde to employ two German photographers: Edmund Nagele and Elmer Ludwig; they were given the task of taking photographs with "a Hinde view".

[10] Lee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ja0B3VxU0AI

Fig. 18: John Hinde, *Traditional Irish Dancers, Ennis, Co. Clare*, photograph, circa 1950's

Hinde and his colleagues took photographs as a celebration of Ireland. They invested a significant amount of time and energy lying in wait and organising scenes to achieve a rather heightened sense of 'Irishness'. By purposely featuring things like Aran sweaters worn by a fisherman on the shores of the Aran Islands with the natives carrying the island's signature Curragh boats (Fig. 19), or consciously depicting the local freckled-faced, ginger-haired children who were instructed to load large wads of turf onto the wicker saddle baskets worn by their domesticated donkey (Fig. 20), these images were captured with a sincere love for the country and its landscape.

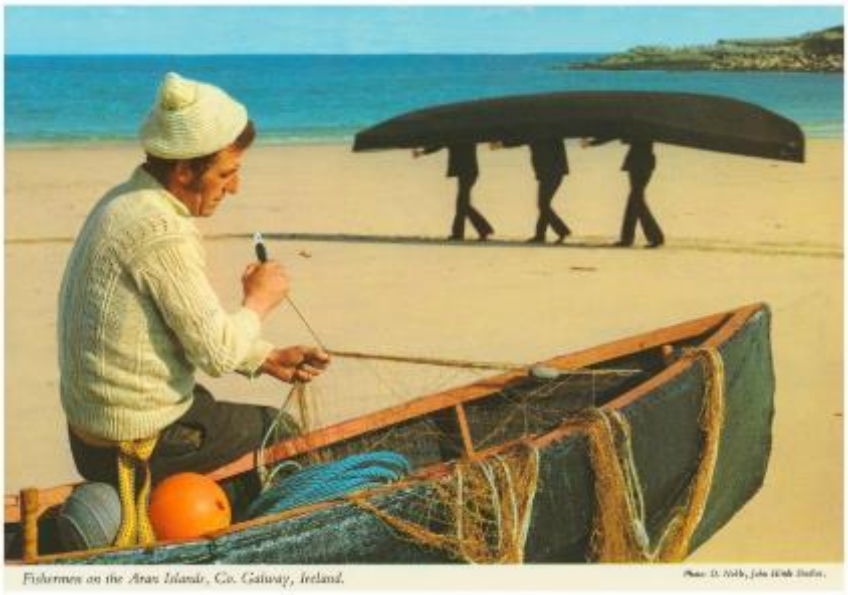

Fig. 19: John Hinde, *Fisherman on the Aran Islands, Co. Galway, Ireland*, photograph, circa 1950

Fig. 20: John Hinde, *Collecting Turf from the Bog, Connemara, Co. Galway, Ireland*, photograph, circa 1950

Hinde and his colleagues also produced the iconic images we have today with a keen sense of how to commodify the Irish landscape and how to produce a sellable product for the masses to consume; this was a rather outstanding

attribute to Hinde's personality and approach to his practice. In writer Gerry Barton's words: *"*The striking thing about John Hinde, apart from his photographs, was his ability to produce a thing of beauty with a keen eye for marketability*"*. Hinde took photographs with its monetary potential in the forefront of his mind, he viewed his work as a product and proved this to be his approach by stating in his own words that "people love sunsets. You can sell a sunset to anyone".[11]

Hinde's photographs of Ireland came at a rather interesting point in Ireland's modern history. He started capturing the quintessentially Irish scenes in 1956 and onward into the sixties which introduced people around the world to what could be considered an outdated image of a culture that had largely gone unacknowledged, even forgotten. In Declan McGonagle's words:

> John Hinde left Ireland in the early 1970s but he left behind a legacy in terms of visual culture that is resurfacing now in a very particular way, issues of identity have been raised within the cultural practice of both artists and writers. It's at this point that Hinde, Hamilton and Warhol and Jeff Wall meet and I think, actually Hinde's work is more legible because Hinde's work has been tested in a mass market place. Hinde can function out in a shop window perfectly clearly, this communication is subliminal, is far more subtle and is successful.[12]

[11] Aiden Dunne, newspaper unknown
[12] Lee, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ja0B3VxU0AI

People around the world, especially Irish-Americans, had taken a particular liking to Hinde's postcard depictions of old Ireland. It was this very image of Ireland that Bord Fáilte was trying to subdue and even erase in favour of a more aesthetically modern and forward-thinking country. Given the millions of people who had left Ireland since the days of the Great Famine, Hinde's images served as a reminder for descendants both at home and abroad of the country that was left behind. Hinde's work acts as a visual representation of Ireland's identity by acting as a form of documentation, albeit in a rather creatively heavy-handed manner.

There are some notable differences between the two images of Baltimore Beacon in West Cork; Fig. 21 is the postcard photograph created by John Hinde while Fig. 22 is a tourist photograph of the same landmark. The Hinde image possesses the trademark saturated colour palette, especially the cloudless vivid blue sky. The grass appears to be an unnatural lime green while the amateur photograph features more natural shades of green and earthy tones from the exposed dirt patches seen in the foreground. While the sun is present in both photographs, the colours in Fig. 22 are noticeably more subdued in comparison to the Hinde photograph; while the sun in Fig. 21 is present, there is no sign of it on the surface of the water which causes it to blend into the sky, with only a hint of the horizon visible to the viewer. This comparison serves as a prime example of John Hinde's visual style and how it included significant enhancement of the light and colours which created rather unrealistic depictions of the Irish countryside and its climate.

Fig. 21:John Hinde, *Baltimore Beacon, Sherkin Island and Cape Clear, West Cork, Ireland*, photograph, circa 1950

Fig. 22: Owner unknown, tourist image of Baltimore Beacon, photograph, year unknown

Although Hinde is English, it was revealed that his mother was, in fact, born in Dalkey, less than a mile away from the home-studio he bought with his wife Jutta. His mother's Irish roots seem to have established a connection to the

country that endured for years only to be passed on to the next generation in the form of John Hinde.[13]

By creating such widely shared images of Ireland, John Hinde effectively inserted the country and its natural beauty into the global consciousness, advertising its status as a holiday destination to the world. His love for the country's natural scenery and way of life was captured in his photographs and was a quality which people gravitated towards and related to on a deep level. For many Irish living abroad, Hinde created something that triggered a personal sense of nostalgia about a place for which they feel an innate connection.

This kind of art practice was being carried out on an even bigger scale at around the same time in the form of large-scale film productions. These productions share similar visual aesthetics seen in Hinde's work and enhanced his aesthetic to the nth degree, creating something entirely new.

[13] Author unknown , *The John Hinde Story*, year unknown, (Dublin, John Hinde Ltd.)

Chapter Three - Depictions of Ireland in Cinema

Screen-based media would prove to be arguably the most influential medium when it comes to artistic expression and the perpetuation of ideas regarding social issues and communities of people. Specifically, film and television would prove to be integral in the coming years at reinforcing ideas and solidifying attitudes in the subconscious minds of millions of people the world over.

By the 1940s, Hollywood had become a powerhouse in the film industry. It was a leading entity in film production where many film studios were cropping up since the early 1920s. Warner Brothers, Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer and Walt Disney Studios were the most significant studios making films that would go on to become classic fixtures within pop culture of which millions of people would remember for decades.

As previously discussed in Chapter One, the United Kingdom and the United States exhibited xenophobia against the Irish in different ways during the 1800s onwards. The former country was an especially outstanding figure in the hate campaign against Ireland which saw its people dehumanised and discriminated against; the image of Ireland varied from infantile, dim-witted drunkards to belligerent, volatile ape-like menaces. While these prejudices would have become somewhat diluted over the years, these ideas associated with Irish people inevitably stayed in the consciousness of society thus finding its way into stories being adapted and broadcast onto the screens for millions of people to consume and internalise.

The latter studio, Disney, was one such studio that has an immense catalogue of films under its name. One such film is Robert Stevenson's *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* (1959) (Fig. 1). Set in the fictional town of Rathcullen, County Kerry, the story centres around the titular character of Darby O'Gill, an elderly widower who regails the townsfolk in the local pub about his encounters with the Little People (otherwise known as Leprechauns) and their king, Brian of Knocknasheega (Fig. 2). Darby is shown working (albeit not very much and usually offscreen) as a caretaker for the Fitzpatrick estate but most of, if not all, his free time is spent frequenting the local pub as mentioned previously. While the film runs for a respectable ninety minutes, almost the first half of the film is comprised of its main protagonist either engaging in song and dance or consuming alcohol or both.

Fig. 23: Artist unknown, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* poster, print, 1959.

Fig. 24: Robert Stevenson, Darby O'Gill recanting his encounters with the Little People, film still, 1959

That is not to say that Darby is the only one participating in these activities. About thirty minutes into the film, Darby is lured by his horse, who reveals itself to be a púca (a mischievous Irish spirit), to the mountain ruins of Knocknasheega where he falls down a hole and lands in the underground lair in which the Little People dwell. There they seem to spend their time, unsurprisingly, dancing Irish jigs (Fig. 3) to the music of the harp and bagpipes, musical instruments which are just as equally Irish and recognised as such by people around the world.

A consistent attribute of Darby O'Gill's character is his cunning and greed while in constant pursuit of fortune and treasures; these qualities go hand in hand with the Irish tendency to participate exclusively in a leisurely lifestyle. When Darby is not shown drinking or recanting his encounters with King Brian, he's interacting with King Brian himself. The time the two characters interact with each other consists of them bickering as they try to outsmart each other, with Darby usually proving himself to be the most cunning and deceitful. These depictions show the Irish frequently consuming alcohol with no real

characterisation or depth; the people of Rathcullen seem to show very little ambition and any aspirations they do have never seem to stretch further than drinking at the local pub; these depictions harken back to the much more malicious imagery of the Irish established by the British press as discussed in Chapter One.

Fig. 25: Robert Stevenson, Darby playing the fiddle for the Little People, film still, 1959

Themes of greed, monetary gain and materialism are among the many other common tropes seen in another classic Hollywood film based in Ireland. The lesser known Argosy Pictures could be considered a more egregious perpetrator of these negative portrayals of Ireland and its people with its film *The Quiet Man*.

As soon as John Wayne's Seán Thornton steps from his carriage onto the train platform in the opening scene (Fig. 4), he is almost immediately surrounded by overly friendly and curious locals who argue over which one of them is giving Thornton the right direction to get to Inisfree (his place of birth) (Fig. 5). Thornton stands tall and upright, his clean, brightly coloured coat and trilby

casting a distinct contrast among the local townspeople, most of whom appear smaller in stature in their darker albeit more faded attire. Although the people of Inisfree come across as friendly and eager to help this (seemingly) new arrival, they are shown to be easily led into arguments to the point of being oblivious of their surroundings when Thornton walks away to follow the matchmaker Michaeleen Oge Flynn taking his (Thornton's) luggage to his horse and cart. Thornton holds himself with ease and style while sitting in the cart, using the sole of his shoe to ignite the match for his cigarette while Michaeleen slouches and scrunches his face as he smokes his pipe, sporting a Pop Eye-esque expression on his face (Fig. 26); the implications of which will be discussed further into this thesis.

Fig. 26: John Ford, Wayne's Americanised Seán Thornton lights his cigarette with style, film still, 1952.

The rest of Rathcullen's residents remain quiet and stare (Fig. 5) as Thornton enters the pub upon the advice of Micaeleen as he feels he is in serious need of an alcoholic beverage; the rather subdued crowd of pub-goers spring into lively song and dance as soon as Thornton declares free drinks for everyone.

Fig. 27: John Ford, the Rathcullen locals stare in awe and curiosity, film still, 1952

Fig. 28: Artist unknown, *The Quiet Man* film poster, print, 1952

Fig. 29: John Ford, Seán Thornton surrounded upon arrival into Rathcullen, film still, 1952

As witnessed in the opening scene of the film, the people of Rathcullen continue to stare and ogle at Thornton but this time in awe; his wardrobe makes these interactions all the more interesting as he continues to be dressed in pale or bright colours which contrast with the Irish natives' more subdued earthy tones. Thornton's choice of clothing and stature along with his substantial fortune set him apart from the people who surround him, contributing to this almost God-like image; this differentiation is further enhanced when Michaeleen and the rabble of Inisfree enter the same scene on his donkey cart with bottles of whiskey in hand as they drunkenly sing amongst each other.

On the subject of alcohol's predominant presence throughout the film, Michael Patrick Gillespie articulates this point rather concisely in his article *The Myth of Hidden Ireland: The Corrosive Effect of Place in "The Quiet Man"*:

> On the surface, the village seems filled with the harmless stereotypes that punctuate any simplistic, cartoonish view of the past. Men of all ages emerge

> as belligerent louts, quick to take offense and inclined to settle differences with their fists. Women of all classes and ages take the roles of indulgent mothers pampering the spoiled males around them. Alcohol lubricates most social intercourse, yet excessive drinking leads to nothing more serious than increased joviality or the occasional fight in which real injury never occurs. Above all, Ireland appears to function as a sheltered, salubrious place with a tranquil environment that will restore the psyche of a man drained by exposure to the harsher attitudes of the outside world.[14]

The Quiet Man also utilises another trope associated with Irish people: a proclivity for violence, either to settle disputes or merely a typical outcome from excessive drinking which can be seen in spades by the Rathcullen inhabitants. As stated by Gillespie:

> Throughout the film, violence surfaces as the immediate, abusive response of the strong to the weak. The film depicts railroad workers on the point of blows over the best way to get to Innisfree, Squire Danaher shaking his fist at his farm hands for not working hard enough, or the local IRA man menacing Danaher with the threat of arson if he oversteps the limits of political dissent-scenes where violence always holds the promise of gruesome, if offstage, consequences.[15]

Maureen O'Hara's character Mary Kate Danaher is depicted as an outspoken, no-nonsense individual with a fiery personality to match her fiery red locks; this

[14] Michael Patrick Gillespie. "The Myth of Hidden Ireland: The Corrosive Effect of Place in "The Quiet Man" ". *New Hibernia Review/Iris Éireannach Nua* (Vol. 6, No. 1 2002), pp. 18-32 (15 pages)
[15] Gillespie, pp. 18-32

fiery demeanour often sees her exhibit violent tendencies, about which she is aware when she mentions to Seán "we Danahers are a fighting people" and that she herself has "a fearsome temper". This proclivity for violence is proven when her brother Squire 'Red' Will Danaher is introduced to the story as the town bully who resorts to blatant intimidation (Fig. 8) to coerce people into giving him what he wants and threatens to resort to physical violence if he deems it necessary.

Fig. 30: John Ford, Squire 'Red' Will Danaher (left) ready to fight Seán Thornton (right), film still, 1952

The Irish's association with violence can be traced back to Britain's depiction of the Irish in the 1800s, as discussed in Chapter One. Michaeleen's scrunched up face (seen in the beginning of the film when he is first introduced, Fig. 10) shares similarities to that of the common Irish Frankenstein caricature (Fig. 9). The image depicts the so-called Irish Frankenstein that has joined the ranks of other depictions of such a figure created by the British of the same name. However, this version of the monster can be seen sporting devil horns sticking out of its hat, indicating the literal demonization of the Irish people. Taking this information into account, adopting such a distinct and exaggerated expression for the character is odd, to say the least. Whether this was a creative choice

made by Barry Fitzgerald (the actor who portrayed Michaeleen) or a direction given to him by John Ford is unknown. Regardless, this creative decision applied to Fitzgerald's Michaeleen remains noteworthy given its aforementioned similarities to the problematic and damaging figure that was the Irish Frankenstein.

Fig. 31: Kenny Meadows, *The Irish Frankenstein*, print, 1843

Fig. 32: John Ford, Fitzgerald's Michaeleen Oge Flynn (left), Wayne's Seán Thornton (right), film still, 1952

Another noteworthy aspect to The Quiet Man's characterisation of the Irish people were the accents used by the Irish actors Fitzgerald and O'Hara in addition to the non-Irish actors featured in this film, such as English actor Victor MacLaglen (Squire 'Red' Will Danaher [brother of Mary Kate Danaher]) and American actor Ward Bond (Father Peter Lonergan). As an Irish person who watched John Ford's creation, the accents used by the actors come across as rather inconsistent to the county in which this film is set, that is, County Kerry. While the likes of Fitzgerald and O'Hara spoke with an accent that could be interpreted as loosely Cork-based, the non-Irish actors spoke in more nondescript, generalised Irish accents primarily used to impersonate the Irish way of speaking in a mocking fashion. This only adds another layer of inconsistencies to the world Ford created.

In the final scene, we witness another conspicuous inconsistency. After Danaher and Thornton engage in a drawn-out brawl akin to a cartoonish cloud

moving throughout the village, the two dishevelled men resolve their fight at the local pub where they realise their newfound respect for one another then drunkenly make their way to Thornton and Mary Kate's marital home (Fig. 11). It is there when we see a notable shift in Mary Kate's character when Seán bellows for his dinner, thus echoing, as Gillespie explains "the loutish behaviour of Danaher that Mary Kate had not tolerated in an earlier scene inside the home that they shared before her marriage to Thornton." In a glaring contradiction to her initial portrayal, Mary Kate tolerates her husband's outburst with an appreciative smile as she complies with Thornton's demands and dutifully puts food onto the men's dinner plates. Gillespie explains:

> The disconcerting implications of both Thornton's and Mary Kate's behaviour at the end of the film undermine the sentimental reading of The Quiet Man that its supporters and detractors alike have been quick to impose. The climactic scene in the kitchen of Light o'Morn reveals a much more complex narrative. A world emerges that stands as the antithesis of the romanticized Ireland that Seán Thornton had sought, a place that would cure the spiritual wound that he carried with him from the prize ring in Pittsburgh. Although the Ireland that Thornton encounters proves to have a transformative effect upon his temperament, the change in fact, seems to degrade the gentle considerate man of the opening scenes into an unfeeling savage.[16]

[16] Gillespie, pp. 18-32

Fig. 33: John Ford, Will (left), Mary Kate (center), Seán (right), film still, 1952

From the beginning of the film, Ireland is made out to be a land untouched by the conventions and machinations of modern society. The Irish countryside boasts lush flora of the most vibrant shades of green that is capable of converting even those who have witnessed the liberties the new world has to offer (i.e. Seán Thornton). However, the longer we stay in the quaint little town of Rathcullen, neither the characteristic stonewalls of the surrounding hills nor the tranquil sounds of streams trickling outside the whitewashed cottages can distract from the unsavoury aspects to life in this charming and seemingly wholesome town.

Although similar in aesthetic to John Hinde's photographs discussed in Chapter Two, these kinds of films were evidently not made for the Irish people upon which these characters were based, but rather for the viewers in America descended from those who had previously emigrated from Ireland in search of a better life in the United States, as well as the non Irish-American viewers who had never been to Ireland themselves. Viewers were watching films like The

Quiet Man with a sense of nostalgia - albeit provided in a rather pandering way - for a place they had never visited.

My Name Is Emily (Fig. 12) is a 2015 independent Irish film directed by Simon Fitzmaurice. The film centres around the titular character Emily, a withdrawn teenage girl dealing with the aftermath of her father being admitted into a psychiatric institution due to displays of disturbing behaviour as a result of the death of his prior to the events of the film. The film deals with mental illness and asks philosophical questions throughout. It depicts Irish people as three-dimensional individuals who think and feel. Emily partners up with one of the boys from her new school to drive her across the country to visit her father in the institution to which he was admitted. The shots of Ireland's countryside (Fig. 13, 14) show a more authentic depiction of the country's natural landscape; the muted, earthy tones of the patchwork hills set against the pastel peach skies with wispy clouds are embraced and accentuated.

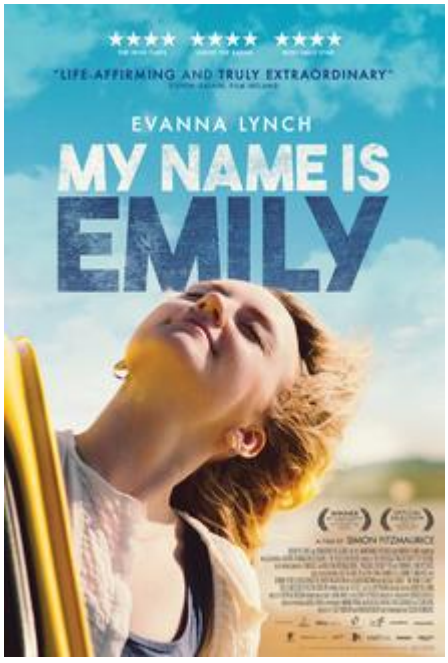

Fig. 34: Artist unknown, *My Name Is Emily* promotional poster, 2015

Fig. 35: Simon Fitzmaurice *My Name Is Emily* (Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland), film still, 2018

Fig. 36 :Simon Fitzmaueice, *My Name Is Emily* (Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland), film still, 2018

It goes without saying that Darby O'Gill and The Quiet Man are only a couple of examples of the impact anti-Irish ideology has had on the treatment and perception of the Irish. When an idea is perpetuated by those in a position of privilege, it is internalised and then spread by the masses, trickling into society's collective consciousness. Thus, these attitudes become normalised to the point where they are considered innate at the expense of a given community of people - in this case, the Irish.

Conclusion

Over the course of writing this thesis, I have been selective with three areas that promote the idea of Irishness to ask the question: what constitutes being Irish? I have looked at the British version of Ireland, John Hinde's version and Hollywood's portrayal of Ireland.

In **Chapter One**, I looked at how the British press, particularly *Punch Magazine*, adopted the ideas of physiognomy (i.e. judging one's character or personality based on their physical appearance) and used written media and caricatures to spread their ideology in the form of hate speech against Irish society. People around the world consumed this anti-Irish rhetoric and, as a result, the Irish were seen as ape-like humanoids with a predisposition for violence and excessive alcohol consumption. Irish people who relocated to other countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, became social outcasts as they were being discriminated against simply due to their Irish heritage.

In response to these attacks, Irish artists such as John O'Hea, Thomas Fitzpatrick and John Reigh sought to depict their own people on their own terms. Their depictions of Irish people possessed a more modest and understated appearance, the characters dubbed Pat and Erin were presented to the Irish readership with a sense of dignity and grounded-ness whereas the British saw the Irish as ape-like threats. Another notable aspect of these artists 'work was the way they chose to draw British people; most Irish portrayals of the British were clearly given human appearances while the British depicted themselves in a more stylized

fashion to appear more distinguished and flattering with a rather Greco-Roman aesthetic. By viewing the end products created by these two rivalling countries, we are presented with an arguably more authentic representation of Ireland's character compared to that of the United Kingdom. These two separate portrayals present a stark contrast between the countries 'perception of themselves.

The United Kingdom's actions against Ireland during the 1600s through to the 1800s in addition to the former's history of invading territories and imposing their will upon those they deemed different and in need of salvation is quite telling of the country's attitude towards itself as well as other countries. As such, the actions taken by Britain indicate a rather heightened sense of superiority on a number of levels: physically, intellectually, morally.

This form of media acts as visual indicators, archives documenting the customs society held, the remains of a time when society held certain beliefs. In this case, we see how the British public perceived the Irish as being belligerent simian humanoids with a natural inclination to drink excessively and live in a near-constant state of blubbering ignorance or violent behaviour. This 'lifestyle' was largely believed to be the country's perceived culture, contributing to the impression that Ireland existed in a vacuous bubble, keeping the country and its people in a kind of stasis of a bygone era while the rest of the developing world watched on in curious bewilderment, much like the people of Rathcullen upon meeting the American giant that was John Wayne.

In **Chapter Two**, I analysed John Hinde's postcard photographs of the Irish countryside. Hinde made a reputation for himself as someone who travelled the length and breadth of Ireland's countryside to take highly orchestrated photographs and put them through an intense editing process to create his trademark postcards.

While he took these photographs out of a sincere love for the country's natural flora, we should consider the reasons behind his creative choices related to the colour and compositions of his images. It could be argued that Hinde produced his highly colourized images to stray away from the monochromatic media still around at the time. The technicolour images of Ireland that circulated around the world exposed people to fully realised documentation of Ireland's culture and its peoples 'ways of life. While some of Hinde's images were heavily coordinated and stylized, he still managed to capture scenes which were authentic to the country - to a point. This gave context, background information and history, especially for those with roots to the island. Regardless of how much Bord Fáilte tried to distance itself from that seemingly outdated image of Ireland, it was this image that served a purpose for Ireland in terms of its identity.

Hine's images, while famous and significant for different reasons, had its relevance at the time of their distribution. As times have changed so, too, have attitudes towards Ireland as an entity with something to contribute - this is reflected through more modern imagery depicting popular tourist destinations. Photographs of the country's natural flora (and fauna) commonly

embrace the naturally occurring colour palettes of Ireland's landscape, including those that come with Ireland's more gloomy overcast weather and cold climate (contrary to the more summer-y depictions of Ireland's weather captured by Hinde).

Given how the previous chapter dwells on the negative actions and impact the British had on Ireland and its people, the positive impact John Hinde's photographs had for Ireland as a country of natural beauty and unique culture as well as a viable destination for tourists to spend their summers (and their money) should be acknowledged.

In **Chapter Three**, I discussed the implications that came from the advent of large-scale Hollywood productions. As a result, the United States became a main player in the representation of Ireland and its people.

While Irish people were more widely accepted in society, anti-Irish prejudices and preconceptions had already seeped into the fabric of society's consciousness. This was exemplified through films such as John Ford's *The Quiet Man* and Robert Stevenson's *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. While not mean-spirited, these two films are examples of how preconceived notions, which were insidious in nature, were internalised and inadvertently found their way into a medium as far-reaching as film. These two films in particular upheld the long-established stereotypes of how Irish people behave and appear, as addressed in Chapter One, i.e. their proclivity to drink alcohol excessively, tendencies towards violence and rather feckless behaviour.

The American film industry has since continued to perpetuate these stereotypes, allowing them to linger around in future portrayals of Irish people. Filmmakers who came after the likes of John Ford and Robert Stevenson have made films that contain a number of the same tropes we have already seen in the films made by the two aforementioned directors. The lasting impact this has had on more modern film productions can be seen in films such as *Leap Year* (2010) and *Wild Mountain Thyme* (2020).

Anand Tucker's film *Leap Year* saw Amy Adams 'Anna Brady travel to Ireland to propose to her boyfriend, invoking the Irish tradition known as Bachelor's Day whereby a woman can propose to a man and he must accept. After a disastrous (and inaccurately scripted) journey from Boston, Anna finds herself in Dingle where she gets Matthew Goode's Declan O'Callaghan to drive her to Dublin where her boyfriend is holding a conference. The Irish countryside is shown to be a place that has managed to stay separate from the rest of the modern world, as though the people of Ireland have been incapable of changing since the 1920's, both physically and morally; an example of this is shown when Anna and Declan pretend to be a married couple in order to gain lodging at a bed & breakfast in Tipperary. British actor Matthew Goode speaks in the same ambiguous Irish brogue which is not dissimilar to the accents heard in 'The Quiet Man'; Goode's Declan O'Callaghan also happens to be the owner of the town's beloved pub that is being threatened with foreclosure and it is Anna's promise to pay him €500 that motivates him to help her in the first place.

John Patrick Shanley's *Wild Mountain Thyme* shares an uncanny resemblance with the town of Rathcullen in John Ford's *The Quiet Man* - both in appearance and customs; men are seen wearing tweed flat caps and smiling toothless grins as they peek over their trademark stonewalls while the women sport their signature shawls to keep warm. The appearance of this provincial Westmeath town would lead viewers to believe this film is set around the 1920s but as the film progresses, it is revealed that the film is, in fact, set in the present day when Emily Blunt's Rosemary Muldoon travels to a bustling and very modern New York City. This jarring revelation acts as a clear indication at how Shanley's perception of Ireland is virtually the same as that of the filmmakers from 1950s Hollywood. This modern depiction of Ireland shows how easily ideas can leave a lasting imprint on society and can still influence the way future generations view the world.

During the research and writing process of this thesis, I have looked at three areas where Irish culture has been examined and formulated; for example, the dehumanising image of Irish people constructed by the English, John Hinde's romanticised rendering of the Irish landscape made to appeal to tourists - particularly Irish-Americans - and Hollywood's portrayal of the Irish. Observing these different interpretations of Irish culture, one must ask: can we come up with a true identity of Ireland? Due to England colonising Ireland and actively erasing the country's language, religion and culture, the concept of Irish identity is something the country was somewhat deprived of developing. While this may be the case, certain aspects of Irish culture still remain.

As times changed, Ireland joined the European Union and the country itself saw an influx of people immigrating from other countries, the idea of the 'white and fair Irish celt' seems to no longer apply by today's standards. This was especially relevant in the year 2020 when awareness of monoracial and multiracial Irish people grew. Social unrest increased around the world after George Floyd, an African-American man, was killed by a Minneapolis police officer; this incident triggered a conversation about the way in which people of colour, particularly black people, are treated in Ireland

My thesis has shown that these portrayals are not authentic to Irish culture. Contemporary Ireland has become a melting pot of different cultures, creeds and races, therefore, the Irish identity reflected in these areas could not be further removed from reality. How can we define true Irish culture and Irish identity? Can we still apply the traditional definitions of Irishness?

By looking at these three areas through the lens of someone who is mixed race who was born and raised in Ireland, it has helped clarify the issue of what it means to be Irish to a certain degree, but I have yet to come to a definitive conclusion. Establishing one's own identity is a process that requires much time and energy, determining the cultural identity of an entire country with a history as complex as Ireland is a task that requires more time and external resources.

Based on the studies and observations made during the course of writing this thesis, it stands to reason that art is a powerful tool. The impact art has can be

detrimental if in the wrong hands. Art has the potential to influence the minds and, by extent, behaviour of those exposed to its message. In other words, it can be weaponized if used accordingly by those who recognise its potential to be utilised, to harness its properties in such a way as to elicit a response within the minds of the public. This clearly showcases the power any visual media has over people and how easily those who consume it can be manipulated by mere suggestion - be it still or moving.

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