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Dun Laoghaire Faculty of Film, Art and Creative Technologies

A Romantic Expression

The role of Gaelic type in the Irish national identity

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Declaration of Originality:

This dissertation is submitted by the undersigned to the Institute of Art Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire in partial fulfilment for the BA in Visual Communication Design. 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 institution.

Signed 

Abstract

This thesis argues that Gaelic type has been an expression of romantic Irish nationalism throughout the past century, 1922-2022. Tradition, heritage and vernacular expression are shown to be explicitly linked to Gaelic type's role within the Irish national identity. It provides evidence of how the Irish government established a romantic Irish national Identity through the use of Gaelic type on forms seen throughout the nation. Romanticism expressed by Gaelic type is seen to permeate time through Irish culture, where Gaelic type is found in modern design and popular culture. Gaelic type on the national stage is also shown to construct and perform romanticism in the Irish national identity. This thesis uses sociological theories that explain the relationship between citizens and their national identity, people and their past and visitors and their journey. Gaelic type understood through the lens of these theories, proving its expression of romantic Irish nationalism.

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Introduction



Fig 1. Hand coloured card. Cuala Printing Press. Circa 1930

While clearing out a press in my grandmother's house, I stumbled upon a card, hand coloured and printed by the Cuala press, a printing press set up by Elizabeth Yeats to aid the early twentieth-century Celtic revival in Ireland. The card illustrates a quaint, pondside cottage set against the backdrop of rolling mountains. The illustration is paired with a poem:

“If I had a little house
A white house on a hill,
With lavender and rosemary
Beneath the window sill,
The door should stand wide open
To people of good will.”

- W.M. Letts

The poem makes no mention of, and the illustration does not show any famed Irish landmarks. Despite this and the fact that it is written in English, an unmistakable sense of ‘Irishness’ is still embedded in this old card. The ‘little house,’ the stone walls, the mountains, and the ‘people of good will’ all evoke feelings of national pride, without mentioning Ireland as a state. How could this be? As I examined it further, I found the answer lay in the type with which the poem was written. The hybrid of Gaelic script and Roman letters allied the poetry and illustration to induce a sense of nationalism within the viewer. Upon further consideration, I found that this nationalism was not one of patriotism or political pride; instead, it connected with one's Irish heritage and tradition. The Gaelic type appears as a symbolic connection to the native culture. To understand the Irishness of Gaelic type, one must first understand what it means to be Irish, the national identity of Ireland, a product of Irish nationalism.

Firstly, nationalism isn't natural, nor is the definition of a nation obvious. Benedict Anderson defines a nation as “an imagined community”¹. A nation is imagined through space and time as a shared society in which its people have formed a binding comradeship within limited artificial borders². This comradeship is formed as a result of manufactured means. For example, sociologist Ernest Gellner argues that a small group of elites define the ‘truth’ in a society via education systems; by doing so, they unwittingly construct a national identity.³ Gellner’s theory is one of many sociological constructs discussed in this thesis. Anderson argues that the concept of the modern nation comes from the influences of national media. Most European countries built their nationalist values with the invention of the printing press, where national media would centralise the beliefs and rhetoric through quotidian life, forming a symbolic connection between the nation's people.⁴ While this focus on print media may seem reductive, his theory can be utilised in understanding how nationalism operates in modern society. Literary, material and symbolic forms that describe the nation, which is seen throughout the nation, allow citizens to imagine themselves within that nation.

When Ireland is analysed using these theories, it should be noted that the country had no such privilege of national media during the print revolution⁵, nor was there an educated populace that had the means to spread centralised knowledge. Many of these theories can only be used in context in Ireland after the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. Before that, the British Empire had control over Ireland, implementing penal laws that prohibited the spread of Irish culture, whether it be language, religion, arts, or politics⁶. Irish nationalism would be labelled as

¹Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (Verso. 1983) pg.5

² *ibid*, p.6

³ Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Blackwell Publishers. 1983. p.57

⁴ Anderson, Op. Cit. 1, p.36

⁵ Murphy, Andrew. *Reading Ireland: Print, Nationalism and Cultural Identity*. The Irish Review no.25. Cork University Press. 2000. p.18

⁶ Parnell, Sir Henry. *A History of the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics*. Fourth edition. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Greene. 1825. Accessed at <https://glc.yale.edu/history-penal-laws-against-irish-catholics>. 13th January 2023

rebellious and punished severely. Despite this, throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, there existed undercurrents of Irish romantic nationalism bent on the reclamation of Ireland and its culture. By the turn of the twentieth century, a romantic cultural movement known as the 'Celtic revival' would come to the fore, accompanying the ever-louder cry for political independence from Britain. These revolutionary and rivalist sentiments would influence the ideals and forms of nationalism constructed by the Irish Free State.

The Irish revivalists during the late 19th and early 20th century strove to express lost Irish heritage and bring to life Irish archaic culture. William Butler Yeats, the face of the Irish literary revival, sought to capture a romantic image of Ireland in his collection: 'The Celtic Twilight.' Douglas Hyde published folklore tales in the Irish language as part of the Gaelic revival headed by the Gaelic League. These influential pieces of work focused on tradition, which served as a reaction to the slowly modernising Ireland. Another response to modernisation was the Irish Arts and Crafts movement, which Nicola Gordon Bowe describes as a 'distinctive visual counterpart to the better known literary Celtic revival'⁷. The designs focused on the 'most fitting, natural, simple, preferably indigenous materials devoid of cluttered historicism'⁸ which resulted in a romanticised expression of traditional Irish native heritage and ethnic culture. These movements were an expression of romantic nationalism, the writing and design defines the intentions of Irish nationalists to root national identity in romantic ideals. The history of Gaelic type reflected the Gaelic revivalist movement and played a vital role in the redemption of lost Irish culture.

Historians theorise that the Gaelic script evolved from the Roman alphabet in the fifth century, likely due to the introduction of Christian manuscripts. The script developed through the writing of these manuscripts in early Irish monasteries by scholars and monks⁹. Monasteries created

⁷ Gordon Bowe, Nicola. 'A Contextual Introduction to Romantic Nationalism and Vernacular Expression in the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement' pg 181

⁸ Ibid, p.181

⁹ McGuinne, Dermot. 'Irish Typeface Design'. Irish Academic Press. 1992. p.1

beautiful works such as the Catach and the famed Book of Kells. During the script's development, the script diverged into two distinct styles, the Irish half-uncial and Irish minuscule script. The first Gaelic typeface made was a hybrid of Gaelic and Roman letters, the Queen Elizabeth Irish Type. This was used by the reformed church to convert Irish speaking catholics in the late sixteenth century¹⁰. When catholics in mainland europe caught wind of these conversion tactics, a Gaelic typeface was created in Louvain, Belgium, to print catholic material in the Irish language. An English Agent in Brussels attempted to shut this printing press down and ordered that any Irish material was to be collected and burnt. Proceeding printing presses that used Irish typefaces were met with a similar reaction, like the Moxon typeface, used to print the first Gaelic Bible. ¹¹

Gaelic typefaces largely faded into obscurity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When printing in the Irish language, the Roman alphabet was preferred by many, due to its accessibility and less controversial nature.¹² At the turn of the twentieth century, scholars debated the use of Gaelic type versus Roman type. Irish scholars argued that Gaelic typefaces were less favourable while writing in the Irish Language because Gaelic type alienated the new English-speaking population, making it difficult for them to read and write in a script they had no experience with. They suggested Roman type was the solution to this problem. However, traditionalists argued that writing the Irish language in Roman type was inauthentic and that Gaelic type was the proper way to read and write the Gaelic language. They claimed that writing Irish in Roman type destroys the very essence of the Gaelic type, this would destroy half its worth.¹³

The argument for using Gaelic type at the turn of the twentieth century exemplifies the understanding of Irish national identity seen in the revivalist movements. Romanticism was at

¹⁰ *ibid*, p.4

¹¹ *ibid*, p.51

¹² *ibid*, p.186

¹³ *ibid*, p.186

the core of nationalist ideology and Gaelic type can be understood as an expression of this. Gaelic type was rooted in history, heritage, nationalism, literature and art, as were the romantic revivalist movements. In this thesis I argue that Gaelic type is an expression of national romanticism. Throughout the past decade Gaelic type has been utilised to express and instil romanticism in the Irish national Identity, whether directly in government design, reflectively in contemporary design, restoratively in popular culture or commercially in the tourist industry.

Chapter one describes the role Gaelic type played in the construction of the Irish national identity after the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. The chapter uses Michael Billig's theory of banal nationalism and the work of Tim Edsnor to explain the use of Gaelic type on government designed forms. The forms are first analysed to understand their intention, primarily showing the importance of Gaelic type on banal forms to express nationalism. The chapter then outlines the ways in which Gaelic type has become embedded into the national identity through its appearance on forms interacted with in the quotidian experiences of the populus.

Chapter two analyses the role of Gaelic type in contemporary Irish visual culture, predominantly in the negotiation between traditional and modernism in the Irish Identity. The chapter uses Svetlana Boym's theory of reflective and restorative nostalgia to understand Gaelic type as a symbol of the past. Reflective nostalgia is seen in government design after the 1960s, where Gaelic type was used in modern designs to reflect romanticism. Gaelic type as an expression of restorative nostalgia is analysed in Irish popular and material culture.

Chapter three discusses the role of Gaelic type in the outward expression of the Irish national identity, through the exportation of the Kerrygold brand and the tourist landscape of Temple bar. John Urry's theory of the tourist gaze is used to understand the construction of the expectations and performances of romanticism in the Irish national identity.

Chapter 1:

Gaelic Type Establishing National Identity

Eamonn DeValera gave a famous speech, known as ‘The Ireland that we dreamed of’, on St Patrick’s day in 1943, addressing the Irish people during the second world war, a time of crisis. He speaks of his vision of an ideal Ireland;

“a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contest of athletic youths and the laughter of happy maidens, whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age.”

This speech¹⁴ overtly reflects the romantic national identity of Ireland portrayed by the government during its construction of the Irish state. A connection with land, heritage, wisdom and tradition seem to be inherent to the identity of the Irish person and while many of DeValera’s remarks now seem outdated, it speaks to the core sense of romantic Irishness that is still felt to this day. This national identity feels obvious to the citizens of Ireland. It can be assumed by DeValera that his audience will embrace his dream and understand his vision of Ireland to be coherent with the identity of the Irish people. However, he can assume as much not because these themes of heritage and tradition are embedded into the DNA of Irish people, it is because the Irish people are routinely reminded of them¹⁵, in overt and subtle nationalist signalling. In this chapter I will discuss how Gaelic typography is a subtle reminder of the national identity overtly portrayed in the likes of DeValera’s speech.

¹⁴ Accessed at: <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/eamon-de-valera/719124-address-by-mr-de-valera/>. 20th January 2021

¹⁵ Billig, Michael. ‘*Banal Nationalism*.’ Sage publications. 1995. p.6

1.1 - Distinguishing Irish as Romantic

In the development of the Irish nation, government entities were crucial in creating a prosperous country, especially with political nationalism and self-sufficiency being the primary motive in development. These government departments and entities would have a platform to communicate visually to their citizens and would be crucial in establishing the Irish national identity. In Michael Billig's book 'Banal Nationalism', he describes the flagging of the nation in everyday life. "The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building"¹⁶. The state's use of unwaved flag routinely reminded the citizens of their national identity. While Billig uses the national flag to explain this theory, these banal reminders extend to various forms that pass the eyes of the nation's people daily. This section will discuss the early Irish government's design of these 'flags' and their intention. This includes the use of Gaelic type in these designs to signify the romantic sentiment of Irish nationalism at the time.

¹⁶ Billig. Op. Ci. 15. p.8



Fig 2. First Irish Free state coin designed by Percy Metcalf. 1922.

The banal flagging of a romantic national identity can be seen in fig 2, the first Irish coin to be produced. Designed by Percy Metcalf who won the competition for the design of the coins, released shortly after Irish independence in 1928. These coins feature the harp on one side and detailed images of Irish animals on the other. Gaelic typefaces feature on both sides of the coin, which was a specific requirement stated by the government in their brief for the design competition¹⁷. This requirement tells us that the government thought it was imperative for the people to associate Gaelic type with their nationhood. The presence of Gaelic type displays the young states desire to promote national heritage and the revival of archaic Irish culture in the same way that the animals on the coin represent the promotion of the agricultural industry. These designs and what they symbolised were seen and understood by every citizen; passing through their hands daily without being consciously studied. Repeated interaction with the coins would subconsciously remind the people of their place within the Irish nation, allowing them to imagine

¹⁷ O Conchubhair, Brian. *Nationality and representation: The Coinage design Committee (1926-1928) and the formation of Design Identity in the Irish free state.*. Cork University Press. 2011. p.75

the Irish community¹⁸. The associations they made with Gaelic typography allowed for the construction of a national identity rooted in romanticism and tradition.



Fig 3. (Left) Department of Post and Telegraphs logo. 1923.

Fig 4. (Right) Irish post box. Photographed by Author.

The national identity displayed on the coinage will routinely remind the people of their nationhood; however, according to Billig, it is only when these reminders of identity are repeated enough to be ignored that the national identity becomes embodied and unforgettable.¹⁹ The department of post and telegraphs is an example of the continued repetition of nationalist signalling, used to establish a romantic national identity. The identity of the post and telegraph department was one of the first major expressions of Irish national identity, as when Ireland

¹⁸ Billig. *Op. Ci.* 14. p.38

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.38

gained its independence, the new government changed the post boxes from the historically British colour of red to dark green.²⁰ This colour was a symbol of Irish national identity, as was the Gaelic type used for figure 3, the first logo for the department, the P and the T, with the Tironian et symbol in the middle. This logo would last for decades and appeared on post boxes (seen in figure 4), postman badges, post offices, letters, and postal orders. These places and forms are purposefully coded with nationalist symbols. Constant repetition of nationalism through Gaelic type like this allows for the romantic national identity that it represents to transfer “from symbolic mindfulness to mindlessness”²¹. The Gaelic type on coins, notes, postboxes, stamps, etc become so obvious that they are overlooked, making the national identity that the type represents ingrained into the minds of the Irish people.



Fig 5. An Gardai Síochána badge designed by John Francis Maxwell. 1922

²⁰ O Conchubhair. *Op. Ci.* 17. p.77

²¹ Billig. *Op. Ci.* 14. p.41

The presence of Gaelic type signalled romanticism to the Irish people through its natural forms and handmade aesthetic, reminding them of their national identity daily. However, Gaelic type would play an important role in distinguishing the national identity through the Irish language. Script nationalism was used to achieve this, which is “using the visual uniqueness of a language to express national difference”²². The design of the Gardai Siochana badge, seen in figure 5, is an excellent example of how Irish designers used Gaelic typography and the Gaelic language to define the Irish identity. Designed by John Francis Maxwell, an art teacher based in Blackrock, Co. Dublin. It was intended to be a symbol of peace but more importantly a symbol of the state. The intricate designs on the badge include two instances of Gaelic type, the ‘Gardai Siochana na hEireann’ and the letters G and S woven together in the centre. The piece is also decorated lavishly with traditional celtic knots and designs.

This identity came at a time when Ireland was attempting to distinguish itself as a sovereign state by eradicating any traces of British rule, known as de-Anglicisation. The government was also attempting to prove to Irish republicans that the free state had autonomy from Britain.²³ The Gardai Siochana badge uses script nationalism and the Gaelic type was used as a medium for it. The appearance of the Gaelic language written with Gaelic type on nationwide forms like this, defines the ‘language-field’ that the government wished to construct. The reading of the Irish language on an everyday level by the Irish people allows them to imagine their community as the area in which people that can read the Irish language reside²⁴. It must be noted that this could not be done outright through the Gaelic language in national print media, like how most European countries defined their language-fields, because while most Irish people recognised the language, only a minority were fluent. Through the use of Gaelic language and typography in state entities like ‘An Gardai Siochana’, the Irish people could imagine their nation as distinct from England and the rest of the world.

²² Murphy. Op. Ci. 5. p.17

²³ O Conchubhair. Op. Ci. 17. p.77

²⁴ Billig. Op. Ci. 14. p.33



Fig 6. First Irish Free State stamp designed by J. Ingram. 1923

The state distinguished the Irish national identity from other nations through the Irish language. However the distinguishing extended into the graphic forms found on pieces of government design. The first postage stamp, figure 6, designed by J. Ingram for the department, utilised language, type and graphic motifs to further establish a distinct national identity. The designer utilised traditional Celtic symbols and interlaced designs, drawing from the romanticised Irish visual vernacular that one can find in the Irish Arts and Crafts movement from the decades previous. The Gaelic type that accompanies the Celticism falls under these romanticised Irish motifs. This stamp is an example of an expression of the ‘Irish Ireland’²⁵ that the government was trying to establish in an attempt to distance itself from Britain further. The label ‘Eire’ instead of ‘Irish Free State’ further reinforces this idea. The government utilised traditional Irish motifs like the Gaelic type to form a distinctive Irish identity.

²⁵ O Conchubhair. Op. Ci. 17. p.75

1.2 - Embedding Romanticism in the Everyday

The quotidian experience of the people encompasses many actions and feelings. Still, it can be generally described as “a common sense that this is how things are and this is how we do things”²⁶. The habits, routines, and social interactions of daily life define the structure under which people operate. The construction of these daily experiences solidifies what is perceived as ordinary, and this obviousness becomes overlooked. The daily experiences are considered to be local, when one walks to the post office they are not navigating the nation, they are operating within their local community. However, within this experience they encounter the national symbols that subconsciously remind them of their nation and, in turn link those local experiences to a national structure. As Billig states; ‘national identity in established nations is remembered because it is embedded in routines of life, which constantly remind, or 'flag', nationhood.’²⁷ While the previous section examines these ‘flags’ and the intention behind them, this section will examine the flagging in everyday life.



Fig 7. Castle street sign. Photographed by the author.

²⁶ Edsnor, Tim. *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. Berg. 2002. p.19

²⁷ Billig. *Op. Ci.* 14. p.6

An example of a mundane routine that the individual experiences would be getting from place A to B. In this transport, people navigate using the signs that signify a place or direction. The majority of street signs in Ireland have the Irish and English language spelling out the name of the street, usually written in regular roman font and italics for the gaelic language. However, in Dublin a few examples, shown in figure 7, have the Irish language written in a gaelic typeface. They can be located on important streets like Castle Street, with its historical landmarks like Dublin Castle and Dublin City Hall. Navigation and locating are broad actions that people do in different ways, making the signs that assist it either obvious and sought after or irrelevant and forgotten, either way they are interacted by the populus across the nation. The distribution of this navigational infrastructure across the nation creates what Edensor describes as a “powerful sense of national spatialisation”²⁸. Their repeated use of these signs across the national landscape sow the local street corners and roads together within a more extensive national system. The gaelic type on these signs become part of the quotidian landscape through their repeated use, making it part of the national identity that weaves its way into the everyday lives of the citizens. The function of these signs act necessarily within the national landscape, but the appearance of all features with forms generally familiar to the populus accumulate to create the national identity.²⁹

²⁸ Edsnor. Op. Ci. 26. p.51

²⁹ *ibid.* p.51



Fig 8. Old Irish phone box

The Phone box, shown in figure 8, was interacted with on a daily basis from the 1920s until the 1980s when they began to be replaced. Their green and cream colours paired with the Gaelic type would be seen on street corners nationwide. After an initial fascination with this new infrastructure, people's familiarity with these phone boxes allowed them to become mundane and a prominent part of their environment. The green colour and gaelic type on these phone boxes, becomes the signifier for the nationwide infrastructure. This is reinforced by the previous examples of the post box and the street signs having the same characteristics. These forms become what is known as the spatial identity of the nation³⁰. Gaelic type is deliberately made a part of this identity to physically embed romantic ideals into the landscape of the local community. When one acknowledges, subconsciously or not, that these familiar features are to be found throughout the nation, it allows for imagining the national community and, subsequently, the national identity that these forms reproduce.³¹

³⁰ *ibid.* p.51

³¹ Billig. *Op. Ci.* 14. p.38



Fig 9. Statue of Tomas Daibhis

National monuments may seem like the opposite of the mundane forms like street signs and post boxes, spectacle if anything, but their presence within the quotidian landscape plays a significant role in the construction of national identity. The presence of statues and historical sites intend to symbolise a nation's historical characteristics and heroic philosophy.³² Today these sites are a place for tourists to visit and learn the history of a nation while the native people often overlook their presence let alone their historical significance. This loss of the site's original intent makes it simply part of the landscape³³. Gaelic type is found on these monuments as it is a signifier of the

³² Edsnor. Op. Ci. 26. p.45

³³ *ibid.* p.46

heritage and culture of Ireland. Figure 9 is a statue of Tomas Daibhis, a historic revolutionary writer and proud nationalist who campaigned for the use of the Irish language in Ireland. Underneath his statue is his name, birth year, and death year engraved in Gaelic type. The mundanity of these sites allow them to play a significant role in reminding people that they are part of a larger community with a longer history than their own.³⁴ This statue is located in a densely populated area in Dublin and would be seen by a sizable number of people daily. The majority of these people, however, wouldn't know Daibhis' work or his significance, but the statue itself is important to the national identity. However, while unconsidered, the presence of these historic monuments contributes to the 'memoryscape' of the nation³⁵. The Gaelic type, along with the monument is a subtle reminder to the people of their collective history.



Fig 10. Historic plaque on Dublin bridge

³⁴ ibid. p.46

³⁵ ibid p.45



Fig 11. Irish Fogra notice

One can find Gaelic type on historic monuments like this throughout Dublin. Figure 10 shows an example of a plaque with Gaelic type that describes history in the Gaelic language. At the same time, many wouldn't understand the plaque, whether because of the language or the old uncial style, its place builds a sense of national identity on an everyday level. This use of Gaelic type extends to the majority of historic ruins and ancient sites around the country on the Fogra notice, seen in figure 11. These references to the past allow for imagining a national community throughout time, an important feature of national identity. As Billig states “Every nation must have its history , its own collective memory. This remembering is simultaneously a collective forgetting: the nation, which celebrates its antiquity, forgets its historical recency.”³⁶

In conclusion, during the construction of the Irish Free State, Gaelic type was utilised by the government to establish the national identity. Gaelic type expressed the romantic image of a

³⁶ Billig. Op. Ci. 14. p.38

traditional Ireland that the government wished to establish. The routine interaction between Gaelic type and the Irish people would allow it to become overlooked everyday, making Gaelic type and what it represents seem natural and obvious to the citizens of Ireland. The romanticism of Gaelic type paired with the Gaelic language was used to distinguish the Irish national identity as unique from the British Empire. Gaelic type became part of the spatial identity of the nation because of its placement throughout the nation. This spatial identity tied the local to the national, making the romanticism of Gaelic type part of the national identity. Gaelic type was not only used to remind the nation of the physical area but the collective past of the imagined community through national monuments.

Chapter 2:

Gaelic Type in Modern Culture

Fianna Fail's protectionist government continued the Gaelic revival to encourage nationalism in their newfound state. The Gaelic language was taught in schools and written in the literature using the Gaelic script. The practicality of this became an issue as the government moved away from protectionist policies in the 1960s, with progressive international economics in an increasingly modernising country. Ireland opened itself up to the world, and it was clear that traditional design and media would need to take a back seat to the modernist values needed to succeed in the international market. Due to this modernisation, the debate between the Roman letter and Gaelic script peaked, and the Gaelic script was decommissioned. Irish intellectuals argued that if the Irish language were to survive in the modern environment, it would have to adapt to a modernism and leave traditionalism in the past.³⁷ The negotiation between modernism and tradition was evident in the design industry, and it was clear that Gaelic type was firmly associated with tradition. It was at this particular moment, Gaelic type became a symbol of romantic tradition in the Irish national identity. The type had lost its function as the medium for the Irish language and would here on out be a symbolic expression of the native vernacular.³⁸ As Eric Hobsbawm writes; "objects or practices are liberated for full symbolic use when no longer fettered by practical use."³⁹

Modernism in design assimilated itself with globalisation and standardisation, and so Gaelic type became the antithesis to this. The romantic image of Ireland discussed in chapter one is unmistakably not modern, as was the Gaelic type that represented it. However, designers would utilise its associations to maintain the romantic identity during modernism. Use of Gaelic type

³⁷ McGuinne. Op. Ci. 9 p.186

³⁸ Bolger, Mary Ann. *'Designing Modern Ireland: The Role of Graphic Design in the Construction of Modern Ireland at Home and Abroad (1949-1979)'*. Royal College of Art. 2017. p.249

³⁹ Hobsbawm, Eric. *'Introduction: Inventing Tradition.'* The Invention of Tradition. Hobsbawm, Eric. Ranger, Terence. Cambridge University Press. 1983. p.4

would offer a distinctive Irishness in an ever-standardising world. During these times Gaelic type would become symbolic of tradition and the past. While Gaelic type first became an expression of the distinctive romanticism of Irish identity, it secondly became an expression of nostalgia for the romantic image of Ireland in popular culture. In her essay 'Nostalgia and its discontents' Svetlana Boym describes nostalgia as not antimodern but a result of modernity.⁴⁰ As Ireland progressed into modernism, Gaelic type offered an expression of reflective nostalgia in government design and restorative nostalgia through television, music and sport. This chapter will discuss these two aspects of Gaelic type in modern Irish national identity.

⁴⁰ Boym, Svetlana. '*Nostalgia and its Discontents.*' The Hedgehog Review, Vol.9, Issue 2. Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture. 2007. p.8

2.1 - Reflecting Tradition Through Modernism

In 1961 The Coras Trachtala (CTT, the Irish Export Board, est 1951) invited Scandinavian designers to examine the design industry. Their findings, commonly known as the Scandinavian report, were published as 'Design in Ireland' in 1962. The report outlined the changes in Irish design's problems and the reformations needed to meet the modern international market. This resulted in founding the Kilkenny Design Workshop (KDW) that would spearhead modern graphic design in Ireland. Foreign designers ran workshops to improve the overall quality of Irish designers.⁴¹ The contemporary aesthetics that resulted from these workshops often referenced traditional Celtic motifs and Gaelic type, as seen in the following examples.



Fig 12. Telecom Eireann Logo designed by Peter Dabinett. 1983.

⁴¹ King, Linda. 'Culture is ordinary: an (incomplete) History of Graphic Design 1950-2020'. Marshall, Catherine. Scott, Yvonne. Irish Art 1920-2020 Perspectives on Change. Royal Irish Academy. 2022. p.234-236

In 1983, the department of Posts and Telegrams split into two entities, the board for posts and the board for telegrams, each turning into An Post and Telecom Eireann, respectively. This resulted in new logos that exemplify the shifting government design identity towards modernism and the fixation of tradition in the Irish vernacular. The design of figure 12, the Telecom Eireann logo, features a modern interpretation of a Gaelic logotype. While the logo has a modernist aesthetic, the Gaelic type expresses tradition. A preoccupation with tradition is birthed from the anxiety over the vanishing past; it is a modern condition⁴². I argue that the Gaelic type in this logo expresses the anxiety over the vanishing past in modern times. However, the romantic expression of the Gaelic type in this logo is not an attempt of revival but a thoughtful expression of the romantic national identity.



Fig 13. An post logo. Designed by Della Varilly and KDW. 1983.

This negotiation between modernism and tradition⁴³ is also evident in figure 13, the logotype for An Post. This logo has none of the ornament seen in early governmental design, it barely resembles Gaelic type whatsoever. However, the uncial 't' shows a distinct yet slight reference to tradition and heritage in the design. The reflective consideration of the uncial type would become the vernacular for national design. These logos established the motivations of Irish design not to replicate or restore traditional designs but appreciate the past through the indication of romantic expression.

⁴² Boym. Op. Ci. 40 p.9

⁴³ King. Op. Ci. 41 p236



Fig 14. RTE logo designed by Neasa Hardiman. 1995

The modernisation of Ireland changed the national identity; through new technologies, the collective imagining of the Irish community was influenced by different forms of media. Once television was available to most households in Ireland, it was of utmost importance that the government had a platform to communicate with its people. RTE was established as the national broadcast. Initially, its identity expressed outright traditionalism. At first, the logo consisted of the St Brigid's cross, a national symbol of Irish folklore. However, this logo changed in 1995 to a modernist logotype with an uncial 'e' that took influence from Gaelic type, seen in figure 14. The design of this logotype came three decades after the toilings of modernism and tradition shown in the previous two examples; however, the logo relies on a similar expression. This logo shows that the design of the national identity by government design after modernisation is consistently one of modernism with a reflective expression of tradition.

The modernising of Gaelic type in these designs show how though modern, the Irish national identity needs to remind the nation of the past. The references to Gaelic type don't show the inability to let go of the past but the recognition of the distance between the present and the past, subsequently celebrating romanticism through modernism. As discussed, this is an example of

reflective nostalgia⁴⁴, which expressed the government's motivations to modernise, however, this reflective expression isn't as commonly found when understanding the national identity through popular culture in Irish contemporary life. In popular culture, Gaelic type represents a restorative nostalgia for the romantic image of Ireland.

⁴⁴ Boym. Op. Ci. 40 p.15

2.2 - Restoring a Romantic Culture

While state-run organisations have a large influence on national identity, popular culture also influences the people in imagining their community. Many sociological theorists describe the nation as curated by the groups operating at a high level, with high influence, within their country but neglect the influence of popular culture and mundane experiences on national identity⁴⁵. However it is the fact that Gaelic typefaces have an organic appearance in everyday life and popular culture that proves its presence in the national identity. Popular, as described by Tim Edsnor, “has been considered to be that culture which is prevalent among the people.”⁴⁶ In this context, the Irish contemporary popular culture pertains to the taste of the Irish people, as opposed to the culture created by elites. This taste inevitably influences and makes up the material culture, the network of objects and forms that embody a common taste in the everyday. When considering popular culture concerning national identity, the culture revolves around the forms and experiences that celebrate the traditional values of their nation. Popular culture is constantly shifting and changing but people's taste when it involves their nationality holds value in nostalgia and traditionalism.⁴⁷ In contemporary popular culture, Gaelic type is majoritively found as an expression of restorative nostalgia.

One can generally understand the restorative nostalgia in Irish popular culture in the same way as sentiment of the Celtic Revival in the 20th century. The traditional experiences greatly influence the national stage. While these traditional experiences are not necessarily inauthentic, the expression and communication of their importance is distinctly nostalgic for tradition in a modern world. The visual communication of traditional practices starkly contrasts the reflective expression in government design discussed in the previous section, it does not attempt to

⁴⁵ Edsnor. Op. Ci. 26. p.45

⁴⁶ Ibid p.14

⁴⁷ Ibid p.14

reference traditional Gaelic type but attempts to restore the traditional display of gaelic type. The popular culture does not consider this to be nostalgic but simply “truth and tradition”⁴⁸.

Popular rituals are a great example of national identity being expressed in popular culture.

“Probably one of the most currently powerful form of popular national performance is found in sport.”⁴⁹ Today, Gaelic sports are one of the most popular pastimes in Ireland. Being almost only

found in Ireland, these sports generate a feeling of national pride when played or spectated.

However this pride does not only apply to the Irish nation, it applies to one's county and parish, one's roots in where they were born and raised. The visual identity of these sporting events reflects this sense of nationalism.



Fig 15. Gaelic Athletic Association Logo

The Gaelic Athletic Association’s logo, shown in figure 15, uses gaelic type to convey traditionalism reflecting the deep rooted Irish heritage of the association. The Gaelic logotype creates an identity that doesn't pay homage to the past but reinforces traditionalism in the present. Its organic, script-like type recreates the design of premodernism. There is an attempted restoration of the past through its repeated use on the national stage. The logo evokes a sense of

⁴⁸ Boym. *Op. Ci.* 40 p.13

⁴⁹ Edsnor. *Op. Ci.* 26. p.78

traditionalism in players and spectators on a large and small scale when engaging with this logotype during this traditional ritual. While the national organisation's logo has aspects of modernism within its logotype, many smaller identities that have spawned from the sport reject any aspect of modernism and instead fully embrace traditionalism through Gaelic type.



Fig 16. (Left) Murphy's Hurl

Fig 17. (Right) O'Neills gaelic football

The use of Gaelic type has become ubiquitous with the Gaelic sport and its traditionalism, the material culture surrounding the sport reflects this. Gaelic type appears frequently on the equipment used to play the sport. The Gaelic sports company, Murphy's, has a traditionally written Gaelic logotype. The font extends beyond just the logo, appearing on most prominent copies of their products, as shown in figure 16. Murphys produce Gaelic football gloves, balls, hurling helmets, slitters and hurls. These provide evidence of restorative nostalgia in Ireland's material world of objects⁵⁰. Through their everyday use they exemplify the shared understanding

⁵⁰ Edsnor. Op. Ci. 26. p.103-104

of the relationship the populous have within their past. The use of Gaelic type extends further than logos, take this ball for example, shown in figure 17. The brand that produced it, O’Neills, does not have Gaelic type in their logo but the words ‘Inter County’ on the back of the ball are written in Gaelic type. This demonstrates the vernacular in material objects surrounding Gaelic sport. Here, Gaelic type embodies the common sense obviousness⁵¹ of romantic traditionalism in the Irish national identity. This expression of restorative nostalgia permeates through the culture, in many instances where acts of tradition are experienced.



Fig 18. Luke Kelly; The voice of Ireland. Poster

In Ireland, the traditional music scene is deeply rooted in romantic nationalism. Like any other traditional arts, crafts and literature in Ireland, the contemporary scene is influenced by the Celtic

⁵¹ *ibid.* 103

revival of the early twentieth century. One can look to Hobsbawn's writing and understand the contemporary traditional music scene as an example of invented tradition, invented in the time of celtic revival, a time of societal change. These traditions are of high importance to people in their day to day life and point to the connection one feels with their societal past.⁵² The popular trad singer Luke Kelly is a symbol of Irish traditionalism and romantic expression. The poster, shown in figure 18, reflects this and communicates nostalgia to his fanbase through the use of Gaelic type. The type is very true to the original form of Gaelic script as the audience is searching for connection with the traditional past that Luke Kelly's songs offer. Traditional music in Ireland is a romantic expression of an imagined past and the visual culture surrounding the music scene reflects this, therefore Gaelic type is used as part of this expression.



Fig 19. Logo on an advertisement for Fleadh 2022

TG4 broadcasted the popular Irish traditional music festival 'Fleadh' in 2022 and the event's branding used a Gaelic logotype, shown in figure 19. The Fleadh logo uses a non-uncial version of Gaelic type but in a modernist fashion to bring the traditional content to a modern audience.

⁵² Hobsbawn. Op. Ci. 39. p4

The Gaelic logotype is a modern design, however the ‘e’ and ‘d’ letters make their traditional forms exaggerated, evoking restorative nostalgia of the romantic Ireland Gaelic type represents. This is not an attempt to reference the past, it is an attempt to bring the past into the present, the traditional disguised as modern⁵³. The type is used to reflect the traditional Irishness of the event, this is reinforced by the celtic inspired graphics that have organic form and a modern RGB colour palette. The brand reflects the place that tradition has in Irish popular culture.

In conclusion, Gaelic type in modern culture acts as an expression of nostalgia felt for a romantic past. The difference between Gaelic type in government design and popular culture is between reflective and restorative nostalgia. As Boym states, “Restorative nostalgia stresses nostos (home) and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives on ‘algia’ (the longing itself)”⁵⁴. The modernist Gaelic logotypes shown above reflects romanticism through the similarities of its design with Gaelic type forms, however it does not attempt to recreate the authentic Gaelic type as seen in examples from modern popular culture.

⁵³ Boym. *Op. Ci.* 40 p.7

⁵⁴ *idid.* p.13

Chapter 3 - Gaelic Type on the International Stage

Ireland began to enter the global market as it progressed onwards from the protectionist government in the 1960s. To be successful in this endeavour they needed to export well through good advertising and produce. The Irish national identity was packaged as distinctly non or pre modern, which defined the Irish niche in the global market. Dutch designers were given the opportunity to construct the Irish national identity on the international stage, in the Aer Lingus advertising and branding⁵⁵. The Aer Lingus brand uses the Shamrock as a symbol of national identity which was reinforced through romantic imagery of quaint moments in rural Ireland on posters plastered throughout the western world, specifically in the USA⁵⁶. The advertising of Ireland as pre-modern would construct the anticipation of foreign consumers and visitors under what John Urry calls 'the Tourist Gaze'. The tourist gaze is the socially constructed ways of seeing that seekers of pleasurable experiences understand in relation to themselves⁵⁷. The constructs that define the performance of gazing are vast and complex, however, in this chapter Gaelic type will be considered as a reflection of the construction and performance of the Irish tourist gaze. This chapter will discuss the mediatised construction of the romantic gaze of Ireland through Kerrygold's branding and advertising abroad. The Gaelic type utilised in this construction exemplifies the romantic image of Ireland. It will then discuss the collective gaze of tourists when visiting the country through a case study of Temple bar, where Gaelic type can be found in its highest concentration.

⁵⁵ Sisson, Elaine. King, Linda. '(De)constructing the Tourist Gaze' Ireland, Design and Visual Culture: Negotiating Modernity, 1922-1992. Sisson, Elaine. King, Linda. Cork University Press. 2011. P.173

⁵⁶ *ibid.* p.175

⁵⁷ Urry, John. Larsen, Jonas. 'The Tourist Gaze 3.0'. Sage Publications. 2011. p.2

3.1 Kerrygold: Constructing the Romantic Gaze

According to Urry, the birth of mass tourism came from a reaction to the industrialised working environment.⁵⁸ The English Seaside resort boomed in popularity when working class industrial towns in England could travel through an economic, demographic and spatial transformation. There would be a widespread rationalisation of leisure and social activity as a necessary inverse to working life.⁵⁹ Seaside resorts offer tourists an inclusive place constructed for their pleasure, to experience a shared relaxation with fellow tourists. This understanding of tourism eventually became countered by the development of the Romantic movement. The Romantic's focus on nature and emotion offered an alternative to the collective experiences of resorts. Urry describes the romantic gaze as "solitude, privacy and a semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze"⁶⁰. The romantic gaze valued an individual connection with a space uninterrupted by the modern manufactured world. The romantic gaze was constructed in the exportation of the Irish national identity by Kerrygold branding and advertising.

The Kerrygold brand was established in 1961 by Sir Anthony O'Reilly under the name 'An Bord Bainne'. The Board was set up to coordinate, facilitate and promote the Irish dairy industry⁶¹. Ireland was going through an economic expansion at the time, and food exports were a cornerstone of this. The 1952 IBEC report outlined the potential of the Irish dairy industry, which influenced Sean Lemass' First programme for Economic expansion. The brand first launched not in Ireland but in Britain, as the opportunity in the market was greater there. Previously, Irish butter had been sold to Britain wholesale and was mixed with British products to be sold at a cheaper rate. It was vital to Anthony O'Reilly and An Bord Bainne that its brand

⁵⁸ *ibid.* p.31

⁵⁹ *ibid.* p.35

⁶⁰ *ibid.* p.19

⁶¹ "Kerrygold | Ireland". Ireland, 2022, <https://kerrygold.com/ie>

was successful abroad. Irish butter was no longer a commodity, it was a brand, a brand identity that did not convey the values of a company but the whole country of Ireland.⁶²



Fig 20. An ad for Kerrygold Irish Butter. 1964.

The first Kerrygold packaging (seen in figure 20), sold in London, had the name ‘Kerrygold’ written in a semi-uncial typeface. The type used in this logo can be thought of as an accessible version of traditional Gaelic typefaces, a frankensteined combination of roman and various Gaelic typefaces. There is no ‘K’ nor ‘Y’ in the Irish language and Gaelic type would never contain such letters, yet the kerrygold logo has both, designed in a celtic style to fit in with the other uncial letters. The two ‘R’s in the logo are simply roman uppercase letters while the g is a lowercase roman letter. The ‘E’ is written in regular uncial form while the ‘D’ is written in

⁶² Bolger, Anne, Mary; “*Buttering up the British: Irish Exports and the Tourist Gaze*”, Technological University Dublin, 2012. p.2

minuscule form. Half serifs, swashes and spurs appear on the lettering to add to its organic, crafted feel⁶³.

When viewing the Gaelic logotype alongside the earliest tagline of the company, ‘made of Ireland’, proves how the distinctiveness of tradition and romanticism encompassed the national identity on the international stage. The use of traditional script-like type solidifies the product as non-modern. The distinctiveness of the Gaelic type on market shelves abroad allowed Kerrygold to create a niche for the brand. The brand sought to sell butter through the imagination of Ireland as a mythical, premodern space of rural landscapes, undisturbed by the industrial society of Britain⁶⁴. The brand heightened the contrast between the English consumer and the Irish producer.⁶⁵ Kerrygold branded itself as the romantic antithesis to the English industrial society. This led Ireland to be gazed upon romantically, it constructed the anticipation of foreign visitors as a mythical place of rural cottages⁶⁶, cows and rolling hills. This becomes ever more evident when Kerrygold TV advertisements are analysed.



Fig 21. A still from ‘The Buttermen’ TV ad. 2012. Directed by Jeff Lunne

⁶³ *ibid.* p.4

⁶⁴ *ibid.* p.3

⁶⁵ *ibid.* p.5

⁶⁶ Urry. *Op. Ci.* 57. p.8

Throughout the years, Kerrygold has run several successful ad campaigns that have further imposed the romantic Ireland idea on its audience. In 1994, an ad titled ‘Who’s taking the horse to France’ became popular in Ireland and foreign markets. The ad is set on a farm in the Irish countryside. It is important to note that a cow does not feature in the ad; the focus is on lush land and the whimsical kitchen where the traditional Irish family gathers. Urry states that “places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures.”⁶⁷ Non-tourist technologies like TV, literature, magazines, CDs, etc create the construction of such anticipation. The daydreaming of pleasurable sensations must differ from the senses experienced everyday⁶⁸, typically modern industrialised life. The likes of this Kerrygold ad allow for such daydreaming of Ireland, constructing the frame in which Ireland is gazed upon. The frame of the tourist gaze of Ireland involves nature, quantness, rural land, solidarity and heritage. This is the romantic image that Gaelic type represents. An ad named ‘The Buttermen’ (a still can be seen in figure 21) pushes the idea of a romantic Ireland even further. This ad, which did very well in America, sees a typical Irish farmer telling the story of the Buttermen to the old, traditionally Irish looking men surrounding him, set in a cobblestone cottage without windows or doors. This plays off the storytelling tradition that Ireland has been known for. Many of the shots in the ad contain the remarkable scenery of lush hills, rolling fields, waterfalls and lakes. The sky is full of thick white clouds with the sun's golden rays shining through. Here the image of a romantic Ireland is exaggerated to its full extent.

Today, the Kerrygold brand has become an international phenomenon. It is the largest butter brand in Germany and the third largest in the United States of America. Kerrygold is also hugely popular in Africa, Greece, Japan and many other European countries. In 2019, Kerrygold reached a high of 1 billion global retail sales. The Gaelic typeface is displayed on shelves in

⁶⁷ *ibid.* p.4

⁶⁸ *ibid.* p.4

supermarkets all around the world. The widespread presence of Kerrygold has established the context in which Ireland will be gazed upon globally. As Urry states

“Over time, via advertising and the media, the images generated through different tourist gazes come to constitute a closed self-perpetuating system of illusions which provide the tourists with the basis for selecting and evaluating places to visit”.⁶⁹

The Kerrygold brand has continued to push the idea of this image in its brand strategies and advertisements. Taglines like “Irish. Pure and simple”, “Just as nature intended,” and “The taste that takes you there” have been used to give the audience images of a mystical Ireland.

Kerrygold's most recent global image strategy was designed by VARD design. It contains an image library of digitally created green hills and rolling fields, with deep green grass and even deeper blue skies. The current logo redesign only exaggerates the characteristics of the original Gaelic logotype, with more organic lines and line weight changes to give it a more script-like feel.

⁶⁹ *ibid* p.8

3.2 Temple Bar: The Romantic Experience

The romantic image of Ireland defines the tourist gaze of Ireland analysed in the above section. Tourists in Ireland expect to experience the romantic gaze. The strategy, infrastructure, economy, and design that cater to tourists in Ireland attempt to meet this expectation through various attractions. This section will discuss Temple Bar, a popular destination for tourists, as a product of the tourist gaze in Ireland. Today, tourism is one of the leading contributors to the Irish Economy. An average of 7 million tourists visit Ireland annually, all seeking an authentic Irish experience. These tourists are the audience for the Irish nationalist performance on the global stage. Edensor describes how “tourism strategies increasingly seek to compete in this global market by advertising their distinct charms; trying to carve out a unique niche that might attract the ‘golden hordes’”⁷⁰. These tourists visit Ireland in search of an authentic Irish experience that matches their expectations. To cater to the expectations of tourists, there must be a condensing of culture into tourist ‘honeytraps’, creating what is known as the ‘experience economy’⁷¹. Temple bar has become an example of this, making it an epicentre of traditional Irish signalling, showcasing the Irish identity tourists expect from their visit. Attractions like temple Bar, within the experience economy, undergo what Urry describes as ‘Disneyfication’⁷². The tourist is offered the opportunity to explore the spectacle of themed spaces. The themed spaces are constructed to offer ‘authentic’ Irish experiences and an insight into Irish culture. Within themed spaces like Temple Bar, a high concentration of Gaelic type is found to signal Irishness.

⁷⁰ Edsnor. Op. Ci. 26. p.85

⁷¹ Urry. Op. Ci. 57. p.53

⁷² *ibid.* p.120



Fig 22. The Norseman pub. Temple Bar. 2022

A quintessential Irish experience is that of the Irish pub. The Irish pub has been exported internationally for generations, promoting a cultivated image of Ireland through traditional Irish design and artefacts⁷³. These pubs, alongside the stereotypes surrounding the Irish drinking culture, make tourists expect to experience the music, dancing, friendly people, and alcohol. Stood just around the corner from The Temple Bar itself, the Norseman pub is a prime example of the highly coded spaces designed for the tourist gaze. The tourist is first met with the pub's shopfront, with its name written in an uncial typeface reminiscent of Gaelic type. The pub has crafted its aesthetic to seem folkloric, through recognised Gaelic type, Irish symbols, sounds, and atmosphere. The overtly Irish symbols decorating the pub convince the tourist they have

⁷³ Edsnor. Op. Ci. 26. p.85

experienced a uniquely Irish tradition.⁷⁴ Places like the Northman pub, seen in figure 22, are an example of the reproduction of socially and materially invented Irish novelty experiences. The spectacle of the Irish pub is deemed authentic under the tourist gaze, the Gaelic type signals this authenticity to the tourist. As Urry states “Themed environments stimulate primarily the visual sense through spectacle but also predictable well-known signs”⁷⁵. The copy, location, interior design and the Gaelic logotype all reinforce the narrative of a romantic Irish culture, convincing the tourist that they are having an authentic Irish experience. While the meeting of expectations through the experience economy is an essential part of the tourist’s trip, having evidence of their trip to bring home with home is also quintessential.



Fig 23. (Left) Irish Weave Spoon Rest

Fig 24. (Right) Irish Heritage bag

⁷⁴ Edsnor. Op. Ci. 26. p.87

⁷⁵ Urry. Op. Ci. 57. p.125

The tourists journey is one of gathering memories. This creates a market of souvenirs that tourists can buy to remind them of their journey. These items are highly engendered with Irish semiotics and cultural symbols, as tourists seek commodities that will forever evoke the sense of Irishness they had on their trip. Souvenir shops are dotted around Dublin and are in a particularly high density in Temple Bar. In these shops there are high volumes of Gaelic type on various products, as shown in figures 23 and 24 above. Here, tourists can collect forms that express to them the national distinctiveness of Ireland. The design of the products are highly coded with traditional signs and symbols of Irishness. The products condense the romantic Irish national identity into digestible memorabilia, exemplifying the frame under which the tourist gazes⁷⁶. The souvenirs are an ideal representation of the Irish tourist gaze, they graphically symbolise the image of Ireland tourists search for on their visit. The Gaelic type on these objects allow for the efficient communication of Irishness in these densely coded objects.

To the Irish people, tourist trap pubs and souvenirs are inauthentic, many deem them as stereotypical and reductionist. However, as Tim Edensor puts it;

“Although the staging of forms of ‘traditional’ or ‘folk’ national culture for tourists may be presented in ‘inauthentic’ and spectacular fashion, ‘reconstructing’ ethnicity and national identity, it also has the potential to replenish moribund traditions and thus feed into new expressions of identity.”⁷⁷

These places and items are exaggerations of the mundane national identity. The romanticism that tourists anticipate to gaze upon on their visit in Ireland is expressed through the inauthentic forms that are constructed to meet that gaze. It is in the places where the tourist industry intends

⁷⁶ *ibid.* P.120 (*Urry talks about the design of buildings to fit the tourist gaze, here I use that theory to understand souvenirs in the same way*)

⁷⁷ Edsnor. *Op. Ci.* 26. p.88

to meet the anticipation of a romantic Ireland where Gaelic typefaces are used with the highest frequency, showing that they are a symbol of romanticism in the national identity.

In conclusion, on the international stage, the Irish national identity is distinctly one of romanticism. Media like the Kerrygold branding and advertising constructs a romantic national identity, using images of rural landscapes and premodern homes. Gaelic type acts as a symbol for a distinctive Irish past in this construction. This media allows for a tourists anticipation of Ireland to be a place of heritage, quantness, nature, tradition and mysticism. The romantic gaze of tourists is met in places like Temple bar, where the space is highly coded with symbols of Irishness. Gaelic type plays a key role in the meeting of expectations of foreign visitors, expressing the romantic nationalism they are searching for.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I argue that Gaelic type is an expression of romantic nationalism. Throughout its use in the past century, it has symbolised romantic tradition in the Irish national identity. The romanticism Gaelic type possesses stems from the sentiments of the Celtic revival, a distinctly romantic movement. Themes of heritage, history, archaic culture, nationalism, tradition, folklore, nature, and vernacular expression could all be found in this revivalist movement, which was accompanied by the revival of Gaelic type. After the formation of the Irish Free State, these romantic themes would predominantly influence the Irish national identity. During this time, the government purposely utilised Gaelic type in forms like coins and stamps, that would be seen throughout the nation. The use of Gaelic type distinguished the Irish national identity from Britain, alongside celtic motifs and the Irish language. Through its repeated appearance in the quotidian experiences of the Irish people, Gaelic type would remind them of their shared national identity, specifically the romanticism within the identity. Gaelic type would be used on Street signs to remind citizens of the national space in which they live and monuments would be used to remind them of the shared time in history of their nation. The Gaelic type of banal forms of government design, over time, become forgotten, making the identity it represents become obvious.

Gaelic type in modern culture became a symbol of romanticism in Ireland after the decommissioning of its use to write the Irish language in the 1960s. It was used to express nostalgia for the romantic national identity constructed earlier in the century. Government design reflected traditionalism through the use of Gaelic type inspired modernist logotypes. In contemporary popular culture, Gaelic became a means to express restorative nostalgia. Through its use in communicating traditional Irish rituals, Gaelic type instils a sense of the past in its

audience. The material culture that surrounds traditional rituals shows how Gaelic type became the vernacular for romantic expression in the Irish national identity.

When the Irish national identity was exported abroad, Gaelic type was also used to express romanticism. The Kerrygold brand, with its Gaelic logotype, sold its product through the idea of an imaginary romantic image of Ireland. Through advertising and branding abroad, brands like Kerrygold construct the national identity that foreign visitors expect to experience on their arrival. The brand created a romantic gaze under which Irish culture was understood by people across the globe. The anticipation of this romanticism is met by places like Temple Bar that are constructed under the tourist gaze. Temple bar is a highly coded themed space that offers tourists seemingly authentic Irish experiences. They are deemed authentic by the tourist because of the signalling of Irishness, the use of Gaelic type is an example of this signalling. The use of Gaelic type to signal authentic Irishness can be found in its highest volumes in souvenir shops in Temple Bar. These products wish to give tourists a condensed piece of Irish culture and Gaelic type is used to efficiently communicate this. While the spaces and objects seem inauthentic to the Irish people, they are an exaggerated reflection of the Irish romantic national identity.

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