TITLE: 'THE AESTHETICISATION OF PUB

CULTURE IN DUBLIN'

BY

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TOPICS

INTRODUCTION

'The aestheticisation of everyday life constructs the agent as a flaneur or stroller, where new pubs are temples in which goods are worshipped as fetishes'

(Featherstone: 1982:70)

The 1970's and 1980's in Ireland, witnessed gigantic capital investment in escape areas organised around spectacle and sensation. Whilst the pub in the past has served as a public space to escape to, for men mostly, it now fits in well with the whole notion of mass produced commodities and simulated images. Different pubs adopt different themes and this project will examine some of the newly organised pubs in Dublin.

Firstly, this thesis will discuss the basis for this research project and outline some examples on which it is born. It will outline the content of the following topics and give a brief overview of each topic. Rather than following the usual format of chapter headings, this thesis will take an extended essay format with various topic headings. This will make it easier and more interesting for the reader to make a connection between the suggested ideas, theoretical frameworks and the research behind them. The first topic is pub life and lure, it will examine pub life and culture in the past, using oral histories and secondary sources, such as published works on pub life. The second topic for discussion is 'The sociology of Leisure'. This will bring the information gathered from the previous topic into a theoretical context and explain how the leisure industry came about. It will look at sociologists like

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MacCannell and Rojek and it will illustrate the similarities between the tourist and the postmodern consumer. Following on from this, it will continue to use a theoretical approach and examine the aestheticisation process in everyday life and how it is affecting pub life and culture. The aestheticisation of everyday life is evident in different aspects of society such as sport, music, the media, and even our cultural heritage. Pub culture is no exception and it will be examined specifically in relation to this. One outcome of the aestheticisation process in our leisure industry is theme parking outside of theme parks. The thesis will discuss this idea referring to particular examples where it is evident in Dublin. Places like the 'Icon' for example, are more like a theme park on a Sunday afternoon than a pub. They have various architectural displays around the pub which serve to lure and distract the customers. These will be illustrated in the thesis.

To give body to the up-to-date findings, it will refer to an article by, Rojek called 'Fatal Attractions', and this will highlight some of the issues raised earlier on. From this then, the thesis will begin to discuss each of these topics in relation to each other.

For this thesis, I involved myself in participant and non-participant observation. This was essential so that I could get a first hand account of what was actually happening in these theme bars. I also did a lot of content analysis, which involved newspaper articles, advertisements in the media and brochures.

Having considered all the findings to date, it will move towards suggesting how pub life is changing again from the aesthetic back to the authentic. Having considered my findings and spoken with customers and architects, it seems that pubs that haven't changed are now becoming a spectacle. It appears that aesthetic is not the way forward, but rather people/consumers want the authentic. The thesis will give several examples of where this is happening in Dublin also. Finally, it will summarise all of these findings, putting forward some original ideas and suggestions. It will give a concise summary of each of these topics and leave the reader with a new critical interest in pub culture.

A desire for authenticity has caught the minds of pub owners in Dublin and increasingly, theme pubs are sprouting up all over the city. People are aware that things aren't always as they seem, and so publicans, along with tour guides and heritage centre managers are taking this on board. They are fully aware of the fact that their audience needs are changing, they want the authentic and need to be amused. Pubs no longer serve as places just for drinking and socialising, to be entertained by the music and the 'craic'. Contemporary theme pubs are here to serve a symbolic role also. The fact that you have to be a certain 'type' to get into them, the dress code etc., means that it is symbolically significant that you are even there. This means that theme pubs are exclusionary, based on cultural and financial capital. This is in stark contrast to several oral histories of Dublin's pub culture in previous years. One of the books used in my content analysis was by Kevin Kearns. In it, a man describes the scene in a pub as the one place where there are no social exclusions implemented. In fact, he says, that many of Dublin's greatest poets got their most valuable inspiration from local 'characters' in the pub.

'One of the factors that accounts for the stimulating conversation in a public house is the egalitarian setting in which all sorts of individuals mix together in open discussion. Intellectuals, manual labourers, professionals, shop clerks, civil servants and office workers share freedom of expression in which an uncommonly wide range of ideas and attitudes are exchanged.

In probably no other social setting in Dublin could one find such a variety of socio-economic types rubbing elbows in spirited chat'(Kearns, 1996:56).

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This gives us an idea of how much pub culture has changed in Dublin. With the huge influx of multinationals into Ireland, especially Dublin, in the past five years, a large population of young business people have followed. This is one of the reasons why pub culture has changed. Also with the 'importance' of simulation, pubs have had to alter their appearance to cater for a young fiction-seeking audience.

The 'Zanzibar' is one such theme pub, recently opened in Dublin's city centre. This bar is supposed to give us a taste of Morocco in North Africa. As 'coffee-table' travellers/tourists claim to be familiar with certain tourist 'spots' around the world even though they've probably never been there, people who socialise in the Zanzibar in Dublin are supposed to be able to get a taste of Africa, without actually leaving Dublin. Granted, they have produced an admirable effort at its' re-creation, with the awe-striking architecture, deep purple drapes on the walls, very high ceilings and beautiful blood- red wall paintings. The floor staff are dressed in African attire and despite one or two foreign staff members, the majority of workers in there are Irish.

A decline in the puritan work ethic and a changing allocation of time and work means that the economic function in life is no longer the single largest source of meaning in people's lives. As modernity/industrialism emerged, people began to travel more, With this they brought 'exotic' ideas back with them, which penetrated the lives of those in the artistic world. Whilst the 'exotic' has always been an attraction to those who haven't experienced it, it is only recently that architects and cultural theorists have brought a taste of the 'exotic' to those, who otherwise, would probably never get to experience it. In other words it has become a commodity, now

you can buy the type of experience that you want. This can be seen in any of the advertising brochures: 'The Moroccan experience', 'Experience traditional Ireland', 'Ireland-the alternative experience'. However, such developments have brought with them many controversial elements, one of these being the problem of authenticity

'In modern society, individual's place in society is preserved by newly institutionalised concerns for the authenticity of their social experience'(MacCannell,1989:591).

A rational explanation was very necessary in the industrial age. With postmodernity though, theorists such as Baudrillard and Jameson argue that the 'real' no longer matters, as long as it is amusing. It no longer matters if the Zanzibar is an actual replica of Northern Africa, in fact, a lot of people may not even be aware of the fact that it is trying to be. All that matters is the image it portrays and the entertainment it provides just by being there. For those who are in between both categories; modernity and postmodernity, certain pubs in Dublin have caught on to their *'needs'*. Pub owners are putting these concerns high up on their list of priorities. They claim to understand their clients' needs and for just £2.50 a pint, they will give you what you want, something new, something different and something *real'*.

MacCannell discusses new social space. By this he means where it appears to the consumer that the producer is hiding nothing. *'It gives outsiders the opportunity to see details of the inner operation of a commercial, domestic, industrial or public institution'* (MacCannell,1989:*562)*

Consumers seem to want to know what's going on behind the scenes, where the product is coming from and who is handling it. The 'Porter House' in Dublin's Temple bar, have their brewery on display and are an example of the front/back distinction. You can look through the glass at the big brass brewery, as you are going to the bathroom. Having spoken with consumers in there, evidently, the main attraction is that they make their own beer and ale and more importantly, that the customers can see where it is being brewed.

'Apparently, entry into this space allows adults to recapture virginal sensations of discovery, or child like feelings of being half in and half out of society, their faces pressed up against the glass'(MacCannell, 1989:*596)*.

This illustrates the whole ambiguity of truth, 'reality' and more importantly 'authenticity'. Authentic or not, pubs and pub culture have served a crucial role in providing a means of escape for thousands of Irish people for years. In Dublin however, it seems to be a crucial part of the outsiders' experience of the city.

This is illustrated by Costello when he writes;

'The public house has providentially survived into the modern age as a vibrant social institution and the most ubiquitous feature of Dublin's cityscape'. (Costello,1996:1)

He also enlightens us as to how the public house came about. In the sixteenth century, ale was brewed in local houses by the woman of the house. Eventually, it became common knowledge that certain women had perfected it better than others. So the woman who had the best ale attracted all the locals to her house and it became known as the public house, where people could have a taste the 'good stuff'. By the 1600's, alehouses mushroomed up all over towns and villages and were scorned at by English visitors. By the eighteenth century, Dublin was noted for its' vast array of pubs;

'... they *ran the gamut from squalor to splendid and became know as the rendezvous points for various groups such as labourers, tradesmen, lawyers, businessmen, professionals, political party members and common rogues for all of whom the pub became their local'* (Kearns,1992:2)..At this stage, the pub was a 'holy ground' for men only and women were strictly forbidden, except for the odd street woman. However, it did not exclude certain 'types' among the men that drank in them. This system of acceptance for all classes is disappearing with the exclusionary system in its' place.

PUB LIFE AND LURE

In his article, 'The Irish publican', John Daly outlines some of the significant changes which pubs are undergoing. These findings are also a result of my content analysis. He laments on how ....*the old-fashioned, men-only, dusty and silent havens of the holy hour are gone forever.* This was made official just a while ago when it was announced that the holy hour will be abolished and business will continue as usual. Of course we all knew that this was usually the case anyway, but we also know that the experience is spoilt when it's allowed. It takes from its' uniqueness. The sneaking in for a quick one before and after mass days are gone. Now people can just go in and stay in.

He laments the disintegration of the relationship a customer has with the publican.

The days of *'The usual Mr.O'?.. have passed into history- relics of auld daeceny whose decayed remains have been scattered on the winds of change to adorn the walls of disco bars from Beijing to Baltimore'.*(Independent, Sat. 3rd of July, 1999).

He acknowledges that pubs are an indispensable part of our culture, and pinpoints the biggest change as being that of the globalisation process. He says that we are no longer an island cut off from the rest of the world but rather we have absorbed much of the 'outside' cultures, and now we are experiencing a collision between the new

and the old. He goes on to give some examples and his first is the Zanzibar. He explains how the evolution of *'coffee- table travellers'* has developed from a world where convenience and consumption is the key. *'Even if you have no intention of ever setting foot on the Spanish costas for a holiday, a visit to the dramatically revamped Pembroke bar on Merrion street will introduce you to a Gaudiesque environment harking back to 1930's Barcelona as its' inspiration'.*

He examines the type of market for which these theme pubs are marketing towards and sees a rise in the consumer market. He found that the number of single persons in the Republic has jumped by 150,000 in the last decade. This and the fact that there is a decreasing birth rate, as professional couples wait until they are in their late 20's and even 30's before they have kids, means that young professionals there are either on large single incomes or large double incomes. All of this combined means that people can afford to have that 'Saturday night feeling' more than once a week.

* WOMEN AND PUB LIFE- A HATRED OR A HAVEN?

He looks at women's roles, and studies how their place or absence in the pub has changed over the last decade. He examines the difference between the architectural design of pubs, when they were male-only and when women started drinking in them. In an interview with a spokesman from the rival 'Allied Dominique' chain, he reveals that, with the increasing female interest in pubs, the process of bringing women into the pub begins on the outside.

That women can see into the pub from the outside is apparently very important. Secondly, the washrooms and the level of hygiene in the pubs had to have a high standard. Spitting on the floor and behaving boisterously had to stop.

The role of the publican has changed also and this is something that has been discussed in all of the literature records and in conversation. He explains that many of the 'new' publicans emerged about six or seven years ago with the instigation of 'designated areas' incentive by the government. This resulted in property developers entering a market initially as developers of property which in turn gave them an entree into the liquor trade which was tax efficient.

Daly gives a concise account of the changing nature of pub culture in Ireland. On a more extensive scale, Kevin Kearns gives an indebt account of pub culture, from its' very foundation to its' present regenerated state. He uses mostly oral histories and participant observation for his research and this provides him with a wealth of information. Unlike many authors who brief over the whole issue of women in the pub, Kearns gives a very insightful 'underground' account of why women were forbidden from the pub and also gives some humorous examples of how certain types of women were an exception to the rule.

Women undoubtedly, were restricted in public areas. Their 'place' was in the home. The whole idea that they weren't safe out on the street, still a relevant fact today, dominated their lifestyles during the early capitalist age.

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A more effective way of keeping women off the streets, was to invent a social stigma against women who were found to be 'loitering' on the streets. He says that the 'white' woman was the diligent wife who stayed at home, as a housewife should. The 'red' woman was independent, male-dominating and sexual. He says however, that by the 1860's, contact between the two types of women came about and the red woman underwent change. The class and racial character of both archetypes loosened and with this came the independent woman, regardless of her class.

The majority of older people that I spoke with referred to the pub as: 'the holy ground' and meant that time spent there was male only. The interior decor and the way it was laid out was another way of ensuring that women were not tempted to sneak in. This also made men content in knowing that what they made was their own mess, they way they liked it.

One woman illustrates the general attitude held by woman towards pubs in the early 20th century; *'Your first impression was that pubs were horrible and there was sawdust all over the place and the men just spit everywhere and they'd urinate everywhere. There was no hygiene at all. And the smell of the smoke and tobacco! They'd chewed tobacco so when they weren't drinking they were spitting. And T.B. was rampant then. I mean it was disgusting, I used to be horrified with it'.*(Kearns, 1996:41).

Women are described in several books as respectable beings. However, some were the exception and their presence in the pub was overlooked. Street women, who were

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mostly old, often smoked pipes and sipped sherry in the snugs. The snug meant that these women could hide from the male audience, in their own little haven and sip a drink or two. Also, another very significant development in pub life for women was the grocery store, which usually hid the pub behind it. This allowed women easy access to a drink while appearing to be a dutiful wife and mother out getting some groceries for her family. In a sense then the pub also became a haven for women, since it was one of the rare occasions when she could escape from the mundane housewife role, which was often tarred with many problems such as alcoholism, infidelity and unhappy marriages as a result of alcohol abuse.(Kearns,1996:41).

Nowadays, it is not unusual to find as many women in pubs as men. By the 1970's, men no longer felt ashamed of having their wives beside them in the pub and publicans built lounges and ladies toilets for them.

Kearns gives very humorous accounts of the difficulties endured by women before the invention of female toilets. Publicans soon learnt that it was just easier to build separate toilets for the ladies. Nearly every pub now caters for women and some have become *'feminised'* . By this he means that womens' presence in the pub is evident in the dress code, the architecture and in the behaviour of people in there.

Towards the second half of his book, Kearns looks at pubs in the present day and goes back as far as the 1940's and 50's to explain how change came about in the physical and cultural nature of the pub.

Obviously very much in favour of preserving the old, instead of replacing it with the new, he describes the way a pub can be changed so dramatically. *'When a favourite pub is 'done up' it's rather like a friend having a nose altered- the personality is never the same again'* (Kearns,1996:87).

* MODERN TRANSFORMATION-THE FORMICA AGE

In his chapter, *'Transformation and desecration of venerable pubs,* Kearns gives extensive accounts of people's wish to preserve the pub in its' original state. He pinpoints a crucial change in pub culture in the post war period, 1940's, when women were gradually admitted into pubs. Certain changes, as a result of women were good he admits, such as hygiene and sanitation. In general however, he seems to believe that pubs were never the same after the 1950's. This decade also witnessed the insidious incursion of television which not only inhibited the natural flow of conversation, but glaringly brought the complexities and problems of the outside world into the simplicity and quietude of the neighbourhood pubs, thus diminishing its' role as a peaceful retreat.(Kearns,1996:89)

Following this 'development' came the invasion of greedy investors who had no sense of history *'...for the venerable institution'*. Here he laments the stage where history and personal affection for the pub became undermined by money. As a result, hundreds of pubs of historical significance, architectural integrity and unique social character were destroyed beyond all original recognition, all in the cause of capitalism.

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Some have been disguised by flat complexes, gyms, office blocks, shops and others have remained as pubs but have undergone extensive 'plastic surgery'.

By the 1960's, urban redevelopment was in vogue and Dublin was no exception. One man describes this period as the 'Formica age'. This, he says, *'was where the finest of mahogany fittings, the finest of marble tops and beautiful ornate counters were taken out and replaced with Formica....what a disaster......that was alien to me...it was a hatred of the old'*(Kearns,1996:88).

This highlights the difficulty that some 'locals' and regulars experienced when their social haven was ripped apart and left almost unrecognisable to them. Even the pub trader's magazine, 'Irish licensing world', acknowledged the *'Formica age'* when they wrote that most pubs were now *'just factories for drinking in'*(Kearns, 1996:88). Pub culture was once a way of life for many Irish people, now it's, well no one really knows what it is anymore. The new pub culture that is emerging is a depth less and meaningless one, solely based on temporary symbolic significance.

* THE PUBLICAN

As we already mentioned, the role of the publican has changed over the last decade and Kearns describes their role as being diminished. Years ago, the publican had several very important roles to play. Not only would they own the pub and run it efficiently, they also had to know all of their customers on a personal level, they provided a sympathetic ear for those who were troubled, provided drink for those

who couldn't afford to pay for it, they would put it 'on the slate', and also the publican was so well respected that his word for or against someone was taken as a reference. The name of the pub was also very significant and was usually the family name passed down, just like the land, through generations. Some locals who spoke with Kearns believed that traditional pub culture is a way of life and is dying rapidly because the economic value of the pub has risen and this has altered the way in which people regard pubs. It has moved from a personal devotion to a impersonal capital investment. He quite rightly sums it up when he says that; *'this development has produced a sadly ridiculous paradox- pubs without publicans*(Kearns,1996:89)

According to a calculation made by the Licensed vintners association, there are a total of 775 pubs in Dublin , of which only 3% have kept their authentic Victorian interior. Undoubtedly, this number has decreased in the last three years and if anything the authentic representation has lessened even more. One publican, Larry Ryan who owned a pub in the Coombe area in Dublin in the 1950's gave a very touching and heartbreaking statement expressing a genuine concern for the locals and regulars of traditional pubs; *'I hope that all the old Dublin men die before the old pubs go, replaced with modern things that are not pubs at all. Because pubs were a tradition in Dublin, a way of life. They weren't just a watering hole, the family's lives were built around the pub* '(Kearns,1996:89).

The role of the family has long been replaced by a fragmented, complex concept-the individual. We need to be sceptical and cautious about what is replacing traditional pubs and about what is replacing traditional culture and why. In his list of oral

histories, he illustrates the significance of a pub and the role it served to the customers. It was a social event, a comforting ear to some and the quality of the beer was of course of utmost importance. One publican said; *'pulling a proper pint has always been regarded as an 'art' in the trade. It's mastery was much respected'.* (Kearns).

* THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD PINT

To be served a bad pint is little short of being a victim and the barman a sinner. Nowadays, the beer, ale and larger are no longer the most important feature of a pub for consumers. With so many variations of beers and the more recent invention of alcoholic lemonade, people assume a good standard from a pubs' products and so they now concern themselves with being entertained. What's important is the atmosphere, the unique character, physical structure of the pub and the type of people who go there. There is a shift from the 'perfect pint' and a sense of localism being central to the consumer's experience towards the symbolic significance of just being there. Theme pubs attract customers to their pub so that they can make up their own minds as to whether they like it or not. This decision though, is of course influenced and tailored by the media and aesthetic society in general.

For some indeed, porter was a very significant part of their lives. It had a significant role to play for dockers especially.

The amount of pints a man could drink while remaining on his feet, was a measure of his manliness. *'For dockers, drink was their main diet. Dockers lived for pints. It was food-they used to call it liquid food'.*(Kearns,1996:48).

* USE VS. EXCHANGE VALUE

This ties in with Adorno's discussion on use vs. exchange value. That is the authentic use value of a pub and drinking a drink there because it's the local or because of one's personal preference, has changed and the exchange value is more important now. The symbolic reasons for drinking in a certain pub, with certain people are important, because it's the fashionable thing to do or because it's different. Although this may appear as mere here say, there is much evidence to suggest that this move from use to exchange value, from the real to the unreal, has had much effect on peoples' lives. Simmel feels that because of the exchange from the real to the unreal, people no longer have a sense of personal meaning.

'We feel as if the whole meaning of our existence were so remote that we are unable to locate it and are constantly in danger of moving away from, rather than closer to it...the lack of something definite at the centre of the soul impels us to search for momentary satisfaction in ever-new stimulations, sensations and external activities' *(1907:48:101).*

* SIMMEL- MODERNITY: COLOURLESS AND INDIFFERENT

Simmel also suggests that the endless change within modern society actually produces the opposite effect to that which it suggests. He argues that it serves to produce a colourlessness and indifference in social relations p.1`02.

However, he also acknowledges that sociability and adventure are two ways through which this condition can be overcome. Perhaps he was ahead of his time and perhaps sociability and adventure are the underlying ideas of theme pubs in Dublin.

By creating an atmosphere that plays on one's childlike fantasies, consumers can experience a sense of adventure and difference. The important point here is that this type of adventure can only be temporary and wears off after three or four visits to the place. Simmel describes how the phantasmagoria of modernity is fractious and restless. People are restless because they are continually on the move to find the next best thing.

Like the drug user out to score the next hit, to get that extra buzz, people who have fallen victim to the aesthetic valour of modernity/postmodernity, are seeking the latest gadget, the biggest car, the most technologically advanced equipment, not because they need it, but because it provides temporary satisfaction.

* THE LURE OF COLOUR-TROMPE D'OEIL

Another way in which we as consumers are being lured into buying things that are meaningless is through colour. In his article called 'the lure of colour', Eamonn Slater looks back to the beginning of a tourist economy and the development of the tidy towns competition in Irish towns and villages. He uses this as an example of how colour can be used to create a facade and therefore lure people towards an area or an object and make it a tourist attraction.

With modernisation, it seemed that a 'self-conscious image improvement' was the thing to do. To clean up a town or premises was important for businesses and tourism. Recently though, it seems that more than just a clean up is required. Rather, we now need a whole facelift on our town or premises for it to be considered 'done-up', an attraction to consumers. Places that were once 'dull and dreary' are now bright and colourful. Some pubs had very low roofs and poor lighting and have been ripped apart and been replaced with high roofs and colourful exteriors and interiors. Slater refers to the town of Eyeries in South West Cork, where a whole village has been 'colourfully' transformed into a facade. He discusses how the village has attempted to tackle the problem there of depopulation by making derelict, empty houses look occupied and lived in, by giving them attractive fronts. Such attractive fronts bring about a sense of departure from the practice of everyday life and more importantly, it distracts us from the social and economic problems in the area.

This is not exclusive to Eyeries of course, but does serve as a basis for other examples elsewhere. One such example is the urban regeneration programme in operation in Dublin's north side. Smithfield has, in the past, been associated with being a rough area, not the kind of place you would want to send tourists to see. Recently however, places like the Zanzibar and Chief O' Neill's have opened up there and this means that people are being lured into the area in the hope that this will over shadow the fact that the area has huge social and economic problems. By attracting upper and middle class consumers into the area, it is hoped that they will have an influence on the locals.

Chief O' Neill's manageress directed me towards the new 'look-out tower' and informed me that this is to be the only one of it's kind in the country. This will certainly attract a large amount of tourists, giving those in the area a sense of hierarchy, looking down on neighbouring areas. It is also supposed to promote a sense of local pride there.

Slater moves towards a criticism, not about the fact that Eyeries have made great efforts to improve their village scape, but rather about the way in which it is done. He speaks most importantly of the use of and deceptive nature of *'the artful technique of trompe d'oeil'* (Slater,1996:34). He shows how one house that appears to be occupied actually isn't. It has no back to it and hasn't even got a roof. The small 'replica' of the Trinity library in the 'Icon' bar, in Leopardstown springs to mind here, where the shelves of hardback books have no back to them and are just glued to some timber, also the climbing ivy in the 'Botanic Gardens' there, appears

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to be real but is actually plastic and is tied to the poles around it.

The trompe d'oeil serves a very important function in the whole luring process. One glance at an object, although it may appear unusual, encourages the onlooker to look again. It serves as a luring devise to the tourist/consumer. Despite the fact that the spectator usually finds out at a second glance that the spectacle is a hoax, they are still curious enough to want to go back to see how they were fooled in the first place. In other words they are actually being lured towards the aesthetic instead of the authentic object. Most theme pubs in Dublin are all different forms of trompe d'oeil.

Just like the small underpopulated village of Eyeries in south west Cork, Dublin theme pubs have used art forms and postmodern techniques of illusion to lure their consumers in.

Economically speaking, theme pubs in Dublin adopt a form of trompe d'oeil in order to get more people into their pubs. At the end of the day the owner of or investor in the pub wants capital and is not concerned about knowing the customer, they don't want or need to know the customer. They know that in Dublin, people can consume drink from a choice of 100's of different pubs, and so it is their concern to provide the latest craze, the best luring devise to bring the customers in. In the 'Zanzibar' the louring devises are mysticism, exoticism and curiosity and it works. Queues of young people line up diligently waiting to get in there.

The queues go back as far as the ha'penny bridge every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night, just to get in there despite the fact that there are lots of other pubs around that area.

In general then this section has discussed the background to the development of pubs and pub culture. It has looked at various changes it has undergone and the different explanations for these changes. We will now move toward a theoretical review of pub culture and attempt to explain the different changes that took place in society from a theoretical prospectus.

THE LEISURE INDUSTRY

AND TOURISM.

As the second half of the 20th century progressed, marketing ploys were developed and proprietors began to realise that they could greatly increase their sales by making their products look and appear more attractive, even if this meant bending the truth a little.

'*By mystifying the use of items in their stores, giving...(an item).. status, by showing someone famous or well-respected wearing, occupying or using it... retailers diverted consumers first, from thinking about how or even how well the objects were made and second, about their own role as buyers*'.(Rojek,1997:45).

By insisting on the necessity of continuos innovation as the spearhead of modernity, bourgeoisie culture wrecked its' claim to impose a secure and rational order of things in society. In other words, Bourgeois society imposed a strict division among different sectors of society as a way to produce a rational and controlled society.

Yet the fact that it adorned the whole notion of modernity and change ironically meant that it was developing instability and diversity.

Baudelaire held that modern society was 'riddled' with change, opposition and illusion, while Marx and Engels felt that modernity was distinctly different to previous times by 'constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions and everlasting uncertainty and agitation. With modernity, life became compartmentalised. The interior was separated from the exterior as was nature from culture, mind from body and work from leisure (Rojek,1997:100).

Various commissions mushroomed up out of modernity. The whole idea that people could be made tame and rational prevailed. By the 1870's even, such commissions *'bemoaned what they saw as the excess, indulgence and violence of lower working class leisure activities. They attempted to regulate these activities by introducing licencing laws for the consumption of alcohol...*(Rojek,1997:109)

Rojek illustrates how modernity brought about quite an unusual frame of mind. For example, he discusses the idea of space and zoos. The wild and so-called natural open space is attractive, but for most, the nature and well-being of the animals is only of secondary importance. This is also the case with science and cloning. Invention and *'progress'* is everything in science, but the well-being and moral ethics behind such developments is not their primary concern. Pubs and the entertainment that they provide are of primary concern to the majority of consumers. The way in which theme pubs go about providing entertainment and the significance of it seems to be insignificant. In the Zanzibar for example, I spoke with an ex-barman who informed that the management in there was hierarchical.

They were told that the 'Zanzibar' was the best place in Dublin and if they didn't like the rules in there, they could leave. Even though they have a very important role to play in providing the experience for the customers, they are not allowed enjoy it on their days off. After they leave, they are not allowed to drink in there for six months either.

Just as tourist attractions are becoming routinised, commercialised and commoditised, so too, is the pub experience. Basically, ones' experience in the pub is predetermined since it is a theme pub. When a pub is in its own unique state, without a theme, people will go there without expectations and inhibitions. Traditional pubs are not claiming to be anything spectacular, and so people will go there of there own accord, not with a sceptical or critical mind.

They will entertain each other through the fine old art of conversation, and most importantly what they experience in there will be real. Baudrillard is concerned with the distracting and dominating role of signs and images. He notes that there is no simple, direct relationship between reality and its' supposed expression in words and pictures and suggests that all this representation has saturated reality to such an extent that experience can only take place at a remove(Ward,1997:60).

Ward, picks up on Baudrillard's point about iconography and simulation by saying that we can now experience the world through a kind of filter of preconceptions and expectations, fabricated in advance by a culture swamped by images (p.60). He refers to several experiences and how they are influenced by signs and images from

elsewhere. One of these experiences is love. He questions the use of the term love and the expression 'I love you', and asks if we can say it without referring to a soap or a film or a play in which it was said. Indeed, would we even use it at all had we not heard it on T.V.?

He laments that the simulated world is dominating us now where there is no pure reality left and electronic production has gone so far that the notion of originality is irrelevant(Ward,1997:61). What we have now, according to Baudrillard, is a *'centreless network of communications which endlessly reproduces and cannibalises its' own constant production of simulations, a situation in which the image is a phantasm of authenticity which always ends up just short of reality'* (ward,p.65- revenge of the crystal 1990)

Here Baudrillard cuts straight to the point. He believes that society is no longer fixed on rationale and meaning. It now thrives on a repetitive continuum of signs and images which attempts to or appears to represent the authentic, but never actually does. The rejection of history and tradition in postmodernity means that ideas are merely born from the present. Theme pubs are based on a very temporary, depth less foundation, with little or no connection to anything except signs, whose interpretation is constantly changing. Baudrillard also sees representation as the 'real' under counterfeit and production, and the real is only a matter of appearance. For Baudrillard, leisure is no longer an activity, rather it is a sign. It has a sign value of unproductive labour. Free time is not free, it is sacrificed and wasted. One must verify the uselessness of one's own free time.

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He also sees that leisure and tourism are consumptive activities and the modernist quest for authenticity and self-realisation is at an end. He says that the demand for the real thing is achieved, by fabricating the absolute fake. (Rojek,1997:135).Paradoxically, he also contends that although simulations may have very little reference to reality, they may be connected to real life. In the sense that simulations affect our lives and are therefore real.

He would say that reality itself is already simulated and so it is unreasonable to suggest that there is any pure option to simulacrum. Not only does Baudrillard suggest that the divide between reality and images is broken down, but also that images, the simulated world precedes the real and anticipates it, absorbs it and produces it.(Ward,1997:67). This is rather extreme, in that he takes us so far back, without being historical, that he believes that everything that we thought of as real, was merely a reaction to or product of the image. He reverses our conventional 'logical' way of thinking. From this point of view, we could look at pubs and say that they were never authentic, they couldn't be because they only succeeded an image. However, this way of thinking certainly blurs the whole focus of this thesis, since it argues that the fact that something based on a symbolic image is exclusive to postmodernity. Traditional pubs based their design relative to practicalities, not simulacrum.

If we examine the 'Icon' bar though, we can see some justice in his statements. The management claim that;..*if you've exhausted the possibility of the city-centre socialising,.....you're thinking of what to do with foreign visitors who have 24hrs. to see all of Ireland. The 'Icon' is an alternative'* (Irish Times, Sat. April 17th, 1999). The 'Icon', is a museumised version of Ireland's tourist attractions. Having visited it several times, I found the following: the Botanic gardens, which consists of fake creeping ivy hugging iron silver platforms. The round tower of Glendalough reaches to the ceiling from the ground floor, and without the accompanied surrounding beauty of the actual tower, it stands isolated in its own ahistorical context[1]. A corner of the Trinity library hosts about 15 customers. The Waterfall there is portrayed in a most simulating way, through technological holographs and images. It gives a tourist a really safe way of looking at it. A far cry from the terrifying temptation of stepping one more step, just to see a little more of the real thing, but decline in fear that the wind would sweep you away to your death.

An authentic feeling that sends a shiver down your spine. Perhaps the 'Icon' is indicative of Baudrillard's train of thought in that it predicts and shapes the tourists' perception of Ireland. Sophia Greene, author of the article on the 'Icon', humorously concludes that this theme pub is the epitome of the 'Celtic tiger' and says it is perfect for those who are afraid to go anywhere their mobile phone would be out of reach!!!

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[1]. Refer to photograph 1.

Benjamin believes that once an object becomes readily and effortlessly available, it loses our capacity to question reality. We are no longer concerned with the real and unreal since a distinction between the two can often be impossible. Benjamin see modernity as a dreamland, dominated by the enthronement of the commodity and the glitter of distraction and reproduction, so that to make a distinction between the two is difficult.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF LEISURE

Dean MacCannell is concerned with '*staged authenticity*' and the arrangements of social space in tourist settings. He examines how popular culture serves to initiate the same properties as the fairytale. This lessens the harshness of our surroundings and distracts us from reality. He says;

'*the elements of fantasy embedded within popular culture function in much the same way as the irrational and absurd elements of the fairytale, they are conduits for examining from a safe perspective the real social conditions that appear in fantastical guise. When articulated in the landscape, these 'residues of a dream world' hold the power to transform our imagination and suggest possibilities for the future'* (MacCannell, 1996:181).

This popular culture has been taken on board throughout several pubs in Dublin. With urban regeneration in progress, the poor social and economic conditions of certain areas in the city are being glossed over by a facade of lights, bright colours and luring devices. Just as drug use can serve to distract us from the reality of ourselves, so too the theme pub can distract us from the real reason why we are there. A common condition of postmodernity, that is place lessness, can be the outcome of this distraction.

Theme pubs can be entertaining and distract us from the qualms of everyday life, but the novelty soon wears off and we are left to search for something else.

In this context, popular culture is a form of resistance to reality. This increases by the fact that things which appear to be real are increasingly unreal and so it is more difficult even for the critics to distinguish between the two, and easier at the same time to escape reality. In his study, MacCannell focuses on the theory of leisure and explains how it evolved.

In a study he refers to, carried out in four countries, he tells us that; allocation of time to one's life is very difficult and a separation of free time from work is difficult also. This is because work is being disguised as a form of leisure activity. The results from the survey show that the length of vacation periods have become the most important time blocks during the major years of working life. The dynamics of developing popular mass culture has contributed to the socio-political cultural pressure to free-time from work and manual workers have long hours, working years and working lives.

What's happening now is that technology has advanced to such a stage that people have higher earnings, take more time off and work is no longer a central feature in their lives. In western society, most professional people surpass the means to survive and now people are working to finance their social lives. MacCannell uses the term 'tourist' throughout his project to mean both tourist as we understand the term, to mean an onlooker, or spectator. He also uses it to mean the modern person who

'travels' constantly in search of entertainment and distraction. They are all pretty much one and the same thing in that they are all subject, in most cases to the same thing. Even the romantic tourist who continually seeks the authentic experience, shares that same desire with all those other tourists who have reached the top of some isolated mountain, or spent a week in an authentic Irish cottage in the countryside.

So too, those who drink or even go to certain pubs in Dublin, although they are different, can collectively be described as tourists. They all pay a set price and adhere to certain rules so they can be in and drink in a place that provides a predestined collective experience. That is not to say that such an audience is to be criticised for going to see such places. But as Boorstin argued; *they are to be reproached for being satisfied with superficial experiences of other people and places'.* This fear of not fitting in with other spectators, instead of just being there as an individual and consumer in their original form, means that people force themselves to be like everyone else. This image is determined by the media and consumer capitalists. As MacCannell asserts; *tourist shame is not based on being a tourist but on not being tourist enough, on a failure to see everything the way it ought to be seen'*(MacCannell, 1996:10).. The term tourist, will serve the same double meaning in the context of this project.

He acknowledges the conditions of modern man and says that;'*the concerns of moderns for naturalness, their nostalgia and search for authenticity are not merely casual and somewhat decadent, though harmless, attachments to the souvenirs of destroyed cultures and dead epochs'.*(MacCannell,1996:2)

In postmodern society, people are constantly consuming the aesthetic, the unreal. As soon as they become aware of this, they search for the authentic and the real. However, to link onto the past is increasingly difficult in an ahistorical and aesthetic era.

MacCannell attempts to characterise the difference between structural and traditional sociological approaches. He comments on how academic sociologists have broken society into categories such as; class, the city, rural community, ethnic groups, and criminal behaviour before determining their connection. He promotes the idea of linking sub fields together in a single framework. He brings to our attention the complex nature of modernity and announces that he will undertake to do an ethnography of modernity- a study of the sociology of leisure.

'Leisure is displacing work from the centre of modern social arrangements. There is evidence in the movements of the 60's that the world of work has played out its' capacity for regeneration'.(MacCannell,1996:5)

Whilst we can acknowledge the fact that drinking in pubs has always been part of our leisure activities, the nature of pubs and the type of people who are going there is changing. Within the complexities of modernity, it's no longer a case of quality time with the family. People who are working long hard hours, expect to be entertained by someone else in a constantly new and changing way, and they don't mind paying for it.'*Affirmation of basic social values is departing the world of work and seeking refuge in the realm of leisure '*. (MacCannell,1996:5).

Work, he believes, in order to be carried out needs to be made into a fetish, an entertaining aspect of one's life. He feels that;'*it's only by making a fetish of the work of others, by transforming it into an amusement, spectacle or attraction that modern workers can apprehend work as part of a meaningful totality*'.(MacCannell,1996:5).

In some theme pubs the staff are paid to perform an act as they go about their work, some of them even dress in costumes. In the Zanzibar for example, the floor staff wear Moroccan style clothing, even though they aren't Moroccan themselves. Their job is to make the consumers' experience in there as real as possible. The customers are aware of the fact that this is all a performance.In the 'Icon', the floor and bar staff wear beige and black waistcoats, promoting the Bailey's colours.

In an article called 'Fatal attractions' Rojek quotes Debord;

This spectacle presents itself as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible. It says nothing about more than that which it appears is good and that which is good appears. The attitude which it demands in principle is passive acceptance (1967:12,145).

Therefore while people are searching for the authentic, MacCannell feels that whether people actually find it or not is irrelevant. All people want is a taste of the exotic. The 'Icon' at the Leopardstown racecourse is no exception to this.

It has been described in the Irish Times newspaper, April, 99' as; '*a union between architectural bravado and the talents of craftspeople who have turned an ambitious concept into a breathtaking reality'p.*14. This breathtaking 'reality' is highlighted in their brochure. It promotes passive acceptance when it offers; *for a breathtaking new venue, just use '**our**' imagination*'[2].

To know and understand the beauty of Ireland, one no longer needs to use their own ideas, their own minds. The 'Icon' will tell you and your tourist friends what you need to know. It will show you all that is good and pleasant to see about Ireland. You're no longer under pressure to have and provide insightful knowledge about your homeland.

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[2]. Refer to photograph 2.

Bring your foreign friends to the 'Icon' and they will provide 'thee' experience. In a sense they have selected a particular type of Irish experience, packed it into a commodity and sell it to hundreds of consumers. They claim that you will not be able to believe your eyes when you go there. This is illustrated in their brochure also[3].

With a 'booming' economy and so-called Celtic tiger, we are now in a position to give more attention to our leisure industry. Ironically though this is work in itself. According to the 'Irish Times' article, the 'Icon' claims to take you around Ireland, while treating you to an experience of luxury.

In fact; *the trompe d'oeil scenes of stephen's green, the ha'penny bridge and the botanic gardens are disconcertingly real, backlit by fibre optic cables and it takes a while to work out how little they actually represent reality'*. Experience and indulgence are the two key aspects of the 'Icon' experience, according to director, Peter O' Connor. Their staff had been in training for three months before they opened and the chefs final products are described as 'food acts'.

On a Sunday afternoon, it appears almost like a theme park where families stroll around and kids run a riot with excitement. They have chess, draughts and jenga on the tables in one section of the pub, all of which incorporate the Bailey's logo.one of the table games is called Truth or Dare, it also has the Baileys bottle inside to use for spinning.

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[3]. Refer to photograph 3.

This is rather ironic since it sums up the whole arguement of postmodernity, we don't actually know ourselves between truth or dare[4]. In the evening, the mood changes and it becomes very like the Zanzibar consumer type, minus the few exceptions who are just there for a look. Mobile phones seem to part of the furniture; Trinity library, the botanic gardens etc.!, and the dress code and etiquette seems to be standard, that is standard to theme pubs.

MacCannell makes an interesting statement in his introduction and it is an echo of my sentiments in this project also. This project ;*does not suggest the disappearance of the modern world....rather my concern is with the artificial preservation and reconstruction in modern society of the non-modern world*' (MacCannell,1996:5). As Josef Pieper adds (leisure and the basis of culture, 1963,New York) *'leisure is an attitude of the mind and a condition of the soul that fosters a capacity to perceive the reality of the world'*. This attitude of mind is being captured and controlled by the media and the consumer market.

However, this gives consumers a false sense of freedom which he calls differentiation. Sightseeing, he argues;'...*is a ritual performed to the differentiation of transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience..but..even as it tries to construct totalities, it celebrates differentiation'*.(MacCannell,1996:8).

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[4]. Refer to photograph 4.

Therefore, he maintains that differentiation between the old and the new, real and unreal are the attractions of modernity.

He gives examples like modern apartments beside 18th century town houses and major cities having exotic wildlife parks. He notes however, that 'modernisation *simultaneously separates these things from the people and places that made them, breaks up the solidarity of the groups in which they originally figured a cultural element and brings the people, liberated from traditional attachments into the modern world where as tourists, they may attempt to discover or reconstruct a cultural heritage or a social identity'.* (MacCannell, 1996:13).

He does not claim to be against the move, rather he grasps it hands on and says that even though modernity has produced a society which suppress interpersonal morality, it is believed, he tells us that modern society has become moral in itself.'*modern man has been forced to become conscious of society as such, not merely of his own social life*'. (MacCannell,1991:16). He also contends that modern societies have become tourist attractions and so therefore the people who make up these societies have become aware of it.

Dublin literary pub crawl pub owners and locals accept and commoditise the fact that they are very much part of the tourist experience in Dublin. 'The Liberties' has also become a commoditised place and in the 'Evening Herald' ,13th of July, 1999, one local pub owner spoke about the change he has witnessed in the place.

He says that years ago he remembers in a Job interview being afraid to say that he was from the area and now he says that it is the place to be. Locals and pub owners alike serve to provide an experience for the consumers, which has been marketed in brochures and entertainment guides.

MacCannell acknowledges a definite change from traditional to modern society. He refers to the work of Hegel and Feuerbach but mostly to Marx and the industrial change in Western society.

Marx suggests that ; *'change is not merely a change of mind or social position, but a change of the total society'* (MacCannell,1991:18). MacCannell suggests, as Marx does, that the move towards alienation from the final product culminates in capitalism. He agrees also with Marx' analysis in that the most important relationship in modern society is not between man and man (as in peasant society) but between man and his productions (p.21).He deviates from Marx after that and believes the 'thing' that is made or produced in modern society- is a symbol. He holds strongly to the belief that; *the commodity has become an integral part of everyday life in modern society because its original form is a symbolic representation (advertisement) of itself which both promises and guides experience in advance of actual consumption'* (MacCannell,1991:22)

This is similar to the fact that pubs are not simply a material commodity now, but they are also a symbolic commodity. One part of the whole modern experience.

* CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

He takes one aspect of experience and limits his definition to cultural experience, since he believes; '*that all tourist attractions are cultural experiences*'. The two parts he sees as making up this cultural experience are representations of an aspect of life on stage for example, which he calls a **model**, and the second part is changed, created or a belief that is based on the model which he calls the **influence** . The spectacle of the physical structure of a theme pub is a model and the experience it provides and the whole image that surrounds these places; souvenirs,   T-shirts etc. is the influence. He also mentions the **medium**, which connects the model to the influence, this may be a social situation such as face-to-face interaction, like a gathering.

So a model, its influence and the medium which connects the two to each other, are the main ingredients behind cultural production.

Cultural productions are signs and nowhere is this more evident than in the 'Icon'. The sign/icon being the Bailey's sign, signifies all that is new about the western world. This sign is incorporated into the furniture and paintings throughout the bar and restaurant[5]. Baileys also sponsors the t.v. series 'Friends' which epitomises the condition of place lessness and social anomie in postmodernity.

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[5]. Refer to photograph 5.

Cultural productions in modernity ultimately *'organise the attitudes we have toward the models and life'*. A tourist who visits the 'Icon' will see Ireland in the way that Baileys see fit for them to see it- 'armchair tourists', just as those visiting the Viking centre in Dublin, will see the Viking past in a very sanitised way[6]. The traditional pubs in Dublin and indeed all over Ireland laid bare the authenticity of their environment, while they were catering for a certain crowd, the locals; their job was not to entertain, but rather to provide good drink and a sense of localism -the barman knew his regulars, who wanted what drink and whether they were trustworthy or not.

In some places a tourist was looked upon as a spectacle and in some cases as a threat, for example, the 'Quiet Man' and 'The Field'. In Dublin, the Zanzibar and more recently, 'Chief O'Neill's' has transformed a local area into a tourist attraction.

Cultural production serves two essential functions;

1. It adds to the 'ballast' of our modern civilisation as it sanctifies an 'original' as being a model worthy of copying.

2. It may give new direction and contribute to the progress of modernity by presenting us with new combinations of cultural elements and working out the logic of their relationship. (MacCannell,1991:26)

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[6]. Refer to photograph 6.

Whilst the second function appears to be impossible in that something so false, so in authentic could possibly give us new direction, he argues that;

'Modern international mass tourism produces in the minds of the tourists juxtapositions of elements from historically separated cultures and thereby speeds up the differentiation and modernisation of middle-class consciousness'. MacCannell,1991:27).

However, the way in which historically separated cultures are being brought together is not real and so therefore it may as well not be happening at all. Just as discovery channel will give us deep insights into a vast array of exotic places, it cannot suffice for the actual experience. The 'Icon' has gone to great lengths to produce such a spectacle and it is worth spectating at. It is not Ireland however, and yet this is exactly what people want. We're all too busy now to see the real thing.

To sit in a snug or near the open fire and chat seems passe when you could be entertained and in with the 'in crowd' somewhere else.

Instead the 'Icon' has provided a way for us to be 'cultural' without having to exert ourselves and more importantly, we are being entertained[7]. Of course it is very much to do with one's personal choice.

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[7]. Refer to photograph 7.

*WHAT'S NEW?

My concern however, is that in Dublin, more and more people are looking at and doing the same thing, drinking the same drink and going to the same place all the time. 'Why are there queues stretching back to the ha'penny bridge, when there are hundreds of other pubs in Dublin?.

Economically, Dublin is apparently 'lapping it up' in this, the age of the Celtic Tiger. With the huge growth in M.N.C.s to Ireland, there has been a large decrease in unemployment figures. This cultural prostitution although short lived, means that even Irelands' poor aren't really poor anymore. They are poor relative to the increasing wealth in the country. Shopping is the new religion and cars and mobile phones are now the bare essentials that everyone must have. One need only stroll through Dublin city on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday night to note the queues at the A.T.M. machines and the amount of new restaurants , all reasonably full, to know that there is something strange going on. That's not to suggest that people necessarily have more money but that their priorities have changed.

Traditionally, we can say that the pub has always been a priority for several reasons, among Irish people. Now there are a lot more people going there but for symbolic reasons. At £2.75 for a pint of beer, the Zanzibar is not popular because it is somewhere to go for a quiet drink.

People go there because, symbolically, it is the place to go. Like a car, a mobile phone and a flat in town, symbolises status, so too, one's pastimes and social habits are significant.

The middle class and upper class are important customers in theme pubs since they are be likely to have some background cultural capital. Cultural producers have worked out how to exploit this class into believing that what they are consuming is not trash, but rather a symbol of their class and capital. This gives such people a sense of superiority. Of course there are people in there just because everyone else is, or those who are there just to spectate. But there are people who go to a specific place because they are fully conscious of the fact that this is a bar, not a pub, and is designed and serves to cater specifically for their 'type', therefore excluding others. Such people are culturally produced from world views and therefore, leaders or role models in their fields. Western cultural production *'have aimed at transforming the negative, critical audience into one that is taken in by the show'* (MacCannell,1991:31).

In a way however, this particular 'type' together in one place, will not be totally alone since them all being there together means that they have something in common. Such places are the epitome of an attempt (either intentionally or not) to overcome loneliness and alienation in the city.

Not because people are lonely, but that they can create a sense of community for themselves amidst the complex modern city structure.

He notes that unlike Marx, who saw a class struggle in operation in society, he believes that the class vs class struggle has been replaced with the individual against him/herself. He sees a society wherein workers are displayed and other workers/consumers on the other side of the cultural barrier, watch them for their enjoyment. When business people come into the Zanzibar after work, they expect a certain high standard from the bar and watering staff and observe the staff closely, as they carry out their 'act'.

* GOFFMAN- SIGHTSEEING AS A PILGRIMAGE.

He refers to Goffman's prescribed analysis of sightseeing as a 'pilgrimage. The individual 'tourist' performs a sense of duty. He warns how it may *'permeate an individual's innermost being so he performs his ritual obligations zealously and without thought for himself or for social consequences'* MacCannell,1991:42).

He also says that; *'Tourist attractions are not merely a collection of random material representations. When they appear in itineraries, they have a moral claim on the tourist and, at the same time they tend toward universality, incorporating natural, social, historical and cultural domains in a single representation made possible by the tour'*. (MacCannell,1991:45).

The universality/globalisation of theme pubs is a main characteristic of the aestheticisation process. As with most material signifiers, there is a problem with the way in which something is being represented and more importantly being

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consumed. In 'American' bars like 'Captain Americas', most of the staff are Irish, even though we are supposed to be experiencing American culture. The same is true for the representations of Irish bars abroad. Consumers are getting a misrepresentation of the 'real' thing.

'The modernisation of work relations, history and nature detaches things from their traditional roots and transforms them into cultural productions and experiences'. (MacCannell,1991:91).

MacCannell argues that this is happening in several aspects of modernity. He claims that it is turning industrial structure inside out as authenticity is 'woven' into the fabric of our modern solidarity alongside other attractions. Unlike industrial man, who had a sense of place at work, at home and in his 'local', modern man is losing his attachments to these places but he/she is however, developing an interest in the 'real life' of others.

* THE SIGN

He looks at the importance of the sign and tries to make the connection between the sign and the attraction. The first thing that a tourist is in contact with is the marker, meaning something which provides information about the sight.

Tourists will see pubs of Dublin via the literary pub crawl for example, but these are not the only pubs in the city. Some sightseers are simply content to see the place,

others are 'sight involved' and may be disappointed by the sight, but impressed with the marker.

The Zanzibar may not be what impresses people who go there, but the social life in there is an attraction. He goes on to examine the arbitrariness of the 'sign' and says that it is important to make the connection between the sign and what it signifies. That is the importance of language and how it determines our interpretation of a place, person or object. So when we hear or see the 'Icon', we should automatically think Baileys, when we hear of the Zanzibar we should think Africa and the Literary pub tour, we should think James Joyce. The signifier therefore is associated with the object and the signified is associated with the observation which MacCannell believes, preserves the separation of theory from reality or subject from object.

He says; *just as the individual tourist is free to make his/her own final arrangements of sights and markers, so too modern places are free to construct their own images in advance of tourists arrival'*. The place is Dublin, the staff are multi-ethnic and the theme is North African.

'The underlying structure of tourist imagery is absolutely plastic, so its eventual form is a perfect representation of the collective conscience including, most importantly, those aspects of the collective conscience which strive for clarity, precision and accuracy' (MacCannell,1991:143).

In other words, theme pubs are fully ready to deal with scepticism. However, John Urry would suggest that there is an important difference between one's residence and work and the object of the tourist gaze. He suggests that the tourist is looking for a contrast to their everyday lives and experiences and are not so naive as to believe that an authentic experience is possible. Post-tourists will totally buy into the fact that they know their experiences are all simulational. Such people are not looking for the real but rather signs of the real. The flaneur can be seen as the next step on from the modern tourist, it's all about seeing and being seen.

* THEME PARKS- THE AUTHENTIC VS. THE AESTHETIC

In the article, 'Fatal Attractions', the authentic vs. the aesthetic is examined in relation to theme parks. Rojek looks at the significance of a journey to Grace land and how the tourist can walk where Elvis walked, sit where he sat, eat food from his chef and in a sense, be Elvis for an hour or so. This makes the tourist feel as though they are getting something real, more than others. They will feel as though they have reached the back stage that Goffman talks about, and so they will know or feel attached to him in some way. Elvis' death is incidental, but the relived experience, in a way keeps him alive. History, to many is a boring topic, but by inviting tourists to actually live out a part of the past, they will feel attached to that particular event somehow and more importantly, they will buy into it.

According to Lash and Urry (1994:52), a new era of disorganised capital is characterised by reflexivity and reflexive accumulation, in production but also in consumption. Consumers reflect on their actions, where they carry out their actions and why they drink in certain places.

Anthony Cunningham notes that changes in production has made it a reflexive process in accordance with the market, constantly being questioned by locally situated and global information and communication structures.(1998:64).Such information structures encourage reflexive consumption. Cunningham also notes that the globalisation process has altered the individuals' concept of time and space and, has also brought about a reflexive project of the self. '

This consists of sustaining a coherent, yet continuously revised biographical narrative....in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems '(1998:5). He acknowledges also that old regimes of truth and knowledge can no longer be trusted and in many ways have lost their authenticity. This is characteristic in general, with postmodern theory. The differences between past and present, real and unreal become blurred. The past is displayed in the present through stage representations; pop songs, fashion, and architecture.

* ROJEK-POPULAR CULTURE-RECURRENT OR ORIGINAL?

Rojek follows that popular culture is dominated by images of recurrence rather than originality. According to Ward, the city seems to live out in concrete terms the

problems arising from the relationship between the individual and the collective. As the city grows, there is new emphasis on the fragmentary and fluid nature of experience (Ward,1997:175) Lyotard also sees the complexities of a society where the real is lost amidst a world of reproductions.

He says; *'eclecticism is the degree zero of culture: one listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonalds for lunch and a local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume made in Tokyo and wears retro clothes, made in Hong Kong: and knowledge is a matter for T.V. games'* (the postmodern condition (1976:175). Bob Dylan reiterates these same sentiments in his song called '**sundown on the union**'.

'Well my shoes, they come from Singapore, my flashlights from Taiwan,

My tablecloths come from Malaysia, my belt buckle's from the Amazon.

...they used to grow food in Kansas, now they grow it on the moon and eat it raw.

I can see the day coming when even your own home garden is gonna'

be against the   law'.

Rojek makes a very important point in the early part of his work (Rojek,1993,5) when he questions this idea of the consumer being a reflexive project of the self and criticises our concept of leisure. He argues in this context that if we have to adhere to rules and regulations, such as dress code and etiquette, then how can that be freedom?.

In this, he is pointing towards the fact that much of our leisure activities remind us of work. He argues that even leisure activities, such as going to the pub has made us self-conscious. If we are aware of the significance of our leisure activities, whether it can be said to be good or not, whether it has high or low status, can we really be *free*?(Rojek,1993:4).

Therefore he opposes the traditional idea, that leisure affords us real freedom and choice. He sees that the postmodern experience is not about what the experience teaches us or whether the attraction is authentic, but just that it is amusing, for a while anyway.

In another article; *The professionalisation of leisure management*, Rojek looks back to the design and architecture of public areas in the 1880's. He says, that pleasure gardens and public parks became popular and this brought about the accumulation of groups of people together in specific spaces. Much of the crucial interventions were made at the municipal level through the initiatives of the local authorities. This resulted in local parks, swimming baths and art galleries for the relaxation of local people. The philosophy behind these interventions in the public sector reflected the preoccupation of the rational recreation campaigns. Rational recreationists argued that moral decay of the lower classes could be changed and made more like the middle classes by; '*the wise leadership and inculcation of respectable values*' (Rojek,1993:46).

The professionalisation of leisure management was part of the technology of self improvement and self realisation invented by the bourgeoisie class, to promote cultural revolution and to manage moral regulation.

Apparently; *'to know oneself and to become aware of one's behaviour was the key to healthy organisation of character and society'*.This is evident today in Dublin especially where retail outlets on Henry street for example, have all the reproductions of the required labels necessary for access to all theme pubs.

Benjamin traced this to the mechanical age of reproduction when new technologies of mass produced art became available to everyone. Although this is essentially progress in a sense, Debord finds that people could no longer take control over their own lives and actively participate in the creation of their own pleasure.

Unlike the oral histories given in Kearn's book, where people made their own 'craic' through music, jokes and chat, theme pubs determine your experience. By having a dress code in a pub and a certain level of etiquette, people will mould and change themselves just so as they will 'fit in'. If people cannot be themselves, then there isn't much room for difference and originality, something that most of these theme bars boast about. Some places feel that they have to keep control over their customers leisure because recreation is a response to pleasure cravings and must be regulated by society or become a menace....*when pleasure becomes an indulgence, one grows unable to organises ones' life; he loses hold on self and situation'* (Rojek,Slavson, 1948:20,p.47).

The problem here is who is anyone to decide on what is good and what is bad behaviour.

* THEME PUBS- A PACKAGED DEAL?

Rojek limits this ideology to the 40's and 50's, although it is not unusual to see the same thing happening in theme pubs, in Dublin, today. One's leisure experience is packaged. You enter the pub, after you pass the inspection, (the dress code), then you pay expensive prices for an ordinary beer and you mingle, ensuring that you use all the correct lingo and have the right dramatic reactions to compliment your insightful knowledge, which is probably based on a documentary or reproduced interpretation from the discovery channel. This is usually the case since there is a multiplication of cultural mediators. The media are offering us advice and information on lifestyle, arts, leisure, past times, holidays, health and diet. These can be seen in daily newspapers and are especially evident in Women's weekly magazines.

Baudrillard, describes society as hyperreality which he defines as the generation by models of a real without origin or reality. He also notes that the information which we use to make a choice is already packaged, thereby compromising the status of our decision.(Ward,1997:131)

'Slan abhaile', has more recently become part of the packaged experience. This idea was introduced a couple of years ago as a prevention of and solution to drink driving in Ireland. If one has drank more than is legally accepted while driving, then one can

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hand their keys over to a reliable Slan abhaile hire who will escort the driver home safely with their car, thus avoiding taxis and the hassle of going back into town to collect the car the next day. This package deal suggests that one can fully let go and enjoy the freedom of the pub experience without worrying about restrictions or responsibilities.

This idea, 'Slan abhaile', is little short of genius. The publican/barman, is no longer guilt-ridden about how much they serve to their customers and can relax and enjoy the extra cash flowing over the counter. The customer can relax and look forward to the 'freedom' of the unpredictability of the night that lies ahead. Some people, mostly men would shake a fist at the mere thought of being driven home in his own car, but the idea, in general, is a good one.

We will now move towards a theoretical prospectus and examine the aestheticisation process. This next section will assess postmodern theorists, such as Rojek, Lyotard and Baudrillard.

THE AESTHETICISATION OF

EVERYDAY LIFE.

The theoretical framework that I have chosen for this particular study is the aetheticisation process and theme-parking. This project will bring to the reader's attention some of the ways in which everyday life is being aestheticised, but in this context, will focus mainly on pub culture and how it is moving towards the aesthetic, using the work of Mike Featherstone. Theme-parking of pubs in Dublin is one of the outcomes of this process and it will be discussed, using the work of Dean MacCannell and George Ritzer.

According to Featherstone, the world is about culture, instead of consuming goods, we are actually consuming the meaning behind them.(Featherstone,1992:269) Instead of being made distinct from the product we are now invited and encouraged to have a 'hands on' experience. We are told where the product came from and exactly what it is. He says; that not only can we look at postmodern change in terms of capital and cultural logic, but also, '*to understand it in terms of the practices and experiences of particular groups of people'* (1989:215). This thesis will focus on the cultural experiences for both the producers and consumers of pub culture in Dublin.

This aestheticisation process is something that has been taken up by many postmodern theorists who feel that society has moved from one of practical consumption, where people buy things out of need, to a society where people consume products for their symbolic value.

Featherstone discusses the many different people who contribute to the way in which we see things as a necessity or a symbolic thing. One such group of people, whose job it is to make us think that we need a product, are architects. This ties in with Slater's article on the lure of colour. Architects serve an important role as cultural specialists and Featherstone feels that we need to focus on their role as interpreters who are sensitised to searching the cultural domain in its' multifarious dimensions for signs and traces of new sensibilities and experiences. Architects then, are cultural producers in that they interpret what they think is modern and produce it so that it can be consumed and provide capital.

The way in which they produce something, greatly influences the way in which consumers will interpret it. In the 'Icon' for example, the architectural design in there is selective and therefore gives a 'select' interpretation of Ireland.

Jameson emphasises the loss of a sense of history in postmodernity, and the fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents, in which there is the experience of multiphrenic intensities. Featherstone notes that many postmodernists draw inspiration from the intensification of image production in the media and consumer culture, also he says; one finds description in the contemporary city.

The media, since it first came to our attention, has always served as an influential role in our lives.

More recently however, the media along with capitalist business people all over the Western world realise that simulacrum, virtual reality and signs will sell. With this in mind, the whole world of media has transformed into one that promotes the symbolic significance of viewing, consuming or even just knowing of the product being advertised.

'Beamish' beer has recently advertised their product on billboards all over Dublin. They certainly seem to be ahead of the rest when they promote 'Beamish'as

'CONSISTENCY IN A WORLD GONE MAD'

Not only does this kind of advertising offer a kind of escape from a 'crazy' world but it confirms for us that the world is gone mad. Featherstone's issues on the city as being placeless was developed by George Simmel in the 19th century. Featherstone sees the aesthetic at play everywhere in the city, both in its' physical appearance and in the fashion and gait of the people in it. We need only turn our attention to the new 'monuments' being put up in Dublin's city centre, which will probably make the front of every Irish postcard, promoting Ireland through the icon of a big needle in the middle of O' Connell street. And so the city is a nowhere land of signs and symbols, signifying nothing.

* CULTURAL TRENDS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Jameson finds it necessary to trace cultural trends throughout history to examine specific trends. Within the aesthetics of everyday life he finds three senses that are noteworthy.

1. Artistic subcultures which produced the surrealist movements, in world war I. These sought to efface the boundaries between art and everyday life. This is a challenge to the work of art and it implies that art is everywhere.

2. He sees it possible to turn life into a work of art. This late 19th century development evolved in the writings of Oscar Wilde and promoted aesthetic enjoyment. Wilde enjoyed the 'idea of realising himself in different forms' and this developed into Dandyism, which was a superior aristocratic position that held contempt towards the masses.

3. The third sense refers to the flow of signs and images. This traces the work of Marx and fetishisation. It includes Adorno's work on use vs. exchange value which Baudrillard described as sign value. Consumer society, in this context, confronts people with dream images which speak to desires, and aestheticism and de-realise reality.

For Baudrillard;

'it is the built up, dense and seamless, all encompassing extent of the production of images in contemporary society which has pushed us towards a qualitatively new society in which the distinctions between reality and image become effaced and everyday life becomes aestheticised: the simulated world or postmodern culture' (Featherstone, 1989:270)

Baudrillard focuses on the power of the 'sign' in postmodern culture and how it is manipulated and used in the media, so that 'T.V. is the world'. Because everything is neither real nor unreal, it becomes hyperreal and so even reality is hyperreal.

He describes reality as a hallucinogenic and says that it is *'entirely impregnated by an aesthetic which is inseparable from its' own structure and been confused with its' own* image'(1989:272). Things like the Internet, M.T.V., mobile phones and theme bars, all contribute to people feeling a sense of place lessness. Unlike language, images signify iconically, that is through resemblances.

THEME PARKS, OUTSIDE OF

THEME PARKS

As we mentioned earlier in the thesis, womens' access into pubs had a big influence on the architecture and space. Featherstone describes this as *gentrification* and sees it in shopping malls, theme parks and hotels. Also museums are no longer places for the educated connoisseurs of history and culture, now anyone can go into them and be entertained. They used to cater for intellectuals, now they have discarded their exclusionary label and become sites of sensation and illusion. The same is true with pubs, they are now more like theme parks than actual pubs. Simmel also mentions this process in relation to space in the city. Certain places that used to be male orientated are now unisex or even feminised.

Featherstone examines the work of theorists like Stallybrite and White who have made a connection with Bohemia in the present day and earlier carnivalesque forms. A carnival back in the middle ages was a place where people absorbed images and lived out different experiences by wearing outlandish costumes and behaving in a very wild and untamed way, '*in a world in which official culture is turned upside down*'(1989:283).

These theorists see the link here with modern dream images and believe that it may be possible to trace back to the carnival of the middle ages many of the figural aspects, the disconnected succession of fleeting images, sensations, de-control of the emotions and de-differentiation which have become associated with postmodernity and the aestheticisation of everyday life. This suggests that the phantasmagoria of society that we spoke about earlier is not exclusive to postmodernity. It suggests that this kind of society was actually in existence by the middle ages and took the form of the carnival. However, the carnival was something selective that happened a few times a year. It had a starting and a finishing time, and it was located in a certain place. In postmodernity, the carnivalesque is not specifically anywhere. In fact it is everywhere and we may not even be aware of it. Not only is pub life being aestheticised but also life in general is being aestheticised. It is more difficult now to make a distinction between what is real and what is not, who is acting and who is not.

As some theorists have suggested, even our work place is being made aesthetic. Stallybrass and White give another example of the fair and how it was also a place in which traditional culture was open to absorbing outside 'exotic' cultures. They say that the fairs were sites of *hybridization*, which brought together the exotic and the familiar. By this they mean that the local villagers who were selling products were interacting with more cosmopolitan people, who dressed, spoke and behaved differently to themselves. Featherstone follows that today's funfairs and theme parks still retain these same aspects but in a more controlled way.

They have gathered this carnivalesque ideology and made it into something that can be organised, the controlled de-control of the carnival. In other words the crazy and bizarre world inside the funfair has been surrounded by walls, has opening and closing hours and allows adults to live out their childhood fantasies in a socially acceptable manner.

The carnival was a place where people could let go. With the civilising process people were apparently tamed into controlling their emotions. Stallybrass and White suggest that this taming of the senses produced a nostalgia and longing for 'otherness'. Hence, he argues that we absorb the attraction of the fair, theatre, circus and seaside for the bourgeois. In Dublin today, perhaps the same course of events are being repeated.

Modernity brought about rationality which restricted people somewhat in their behaviour. Postmodernity is so successful as far as theme parks are concerned because people have an innate desire for pleasure. Theme pubs restrict people since they have certain rules to follow, yet through symbolism the consumers is supposedly set free. In Ritzer's examination of Baudrillard, he sees that we now live in the age of simulation. He argues that we have a become a society who prefer to experience the simulated world than the 'real'. He uses Disneyland as an example and theme parks in general. Crowds of people travel just to see the 'simulated submarine ride to see a simulated sea life', far more people go there than to the more genuine aquarium nearby. Postmodern society allows us to live out our desires but in a commoditised way.

The entertainment value one attains in a theme pub is aesthetic and leaves the consumer with a very shallow experience. As Ritzer contends, the glossing over in postmodernity of all negativity, *'leaves us in a world resembling the smile on a corpse in a funeral home'* (Ritzer,1997:101).

Ritzer looks at consumer society and acknowledges Baudrillard and Featherstone's work on this. However, he feels that not only can we look at marketing and advertising but also, he wants to focus on the *'new means of consumption as both social structures that constrain people and as signs (as producers, sponsers, and so on of signs).*(Ritzer,1997:222). In this context he describes how certain developments such as fast-food restaurants and credit cards, supposedly designed for our benefit, can actually be harmful. In other words these means of consumption enable us to have things we might not otherwise have, but it constrains us financially and psychologically. Theme bars enable us to experience a certain theme but constrains us to being a ceratin 'type'.(1997:223).

Like fast-food restaurants, social relations are similarly superficial in many different situations, he gives us an example of the employee calling on behalf of a credit card company, we respond *'with a recipe that has been developed to handle the situation'.*In theme pubs we learn how to behave, how to order food and drinks etc. .we learn from the 'pros' but this is dangerous since it contradicts postmodern theory and suggests a grand theory.

'Boundary objects both inhabit several intersecting worlds... and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them. Boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in individual-site use. They have different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognisable, a means of translation' (Star and Griesemer, quoted in Fujimura, in Pickering 1992, p.173).

These boundary objects are what consumers focus on in theme pubs. Certain 'things' that are symbolic to them being there. Like the cellular phones and dress code for example. Just like the noninteractive process in operation in fast food restaurants that Ritzer speaks of , theme pubs have simulacrum also since there is very little, if any interaction between the publican and the consumers. Bar men/women follow certain rules and regulations as do the customers *'with the result that no genuine, authentic interaction ever takes place'* *(1997:226).* This was very obvious during my non-participant observation research. In theme pubs on a Saturday night, it's a case of screaming out your order, hand over the money and decide on how to get back to your place without knocking over your drinks. Ritzer states that after a while we, as consumers, become so accustomed to this simulated interaction, that in the end all we have are simulated interactions, where the entire distinctions between the simulational and the real is lost: *'simulated interaction is our reality'*.(1997:226).

He describes how the design of so-called 'real' restaurants are not based on anything real but rather they are based on movies. Some theme pubs supposedly based on an original somewhere else, don't actually have an original. This exemplifies Baudrillard's idea of a simulacrum based on an original that never existed. He also notes that the consumer has expectations going into somewhere special, like a theme bar or restaurant.

*MACDONALISATION

'We seem to be fooled continually by the peripherals into believing that we are in for some excitement when we pass through the portals of the fast-food restaurant'. (1997:229). Like theme pubs they are not just marketing the product that they are selling, they are peddling their version of an enchanted environment in which to buy/consume these goods. We are not always readily aware of the fact that we are in there consuming beer or spirits, since we are distracted by the 'theme'. Most postmodern theorists believe that such systems are intent on offering 'spectacles' and this is why theme parking has become so popular in several aspects of our social lives like pubs, shopping malls and restaurants. Ritzer discusses how this theme parking ideology has brought about a loss of historicity with things like the 'golden arch' of MacDonalds. In theme pubs also, we can see various architectural designs based on an original or historical figure that never really existed.

He describes these aestheticised places, like malls, fast food restaurants and theme pubs as part of a series of empty forms that endlessly differentiate themselves from one another (even though they are all very much alike). All this results in a whirlwind of signs and symbols in a hyperreal world.

The 'Icon' is certainly a theme park of ecstatic signs and symbols. Not only is it a pub and restaurant, it also has a souvenir shop selling products with the 'Baileys' label on it. This is an important aspect for the modern tourist who needs to mark their experience with something from the site/spectacle. During your meal you can either be entertained by the country kitchen window which has audiovisual cows or you can eat in the restaurant which looks out at a scenic sunset. This serves the same features as a theme park in that consumers need to be entertained and distracted. Although these theme areas look different, they don't actually produce anything new, rather they reproduce the same idea, that is to be distracted and amused. By going to such places, we are making statements about ourselves and it is significant that we go there and consume its' products. Like the referenda that Baurillard speaks of, Ritzer says that by going to theme parks/pubs; *our ostensibly free choices are defined for us in advance; our free choices are tightly constrained'.(1997:233)*. This is especially true since the difference that these theme pubs offer are superficial. Because the advertisements for these places define certain experiences as being 'fast', 'exotic', 'different' and 'exclusive', Ritzer argues that we are led as consumers to demand these characteristics in certain places.

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The postmodern consumer doesn't want some dingy, smoky pub where you have to wait three minutes for a pint and make small talk with the old man beside you. Because of advertising ploys, he says that consumers are led towards a particular standard place that fulfills their (or at least what they think are their) ideals. Consumers do not go to a theme pub because they need to, people managed in traditional pubs for years. Ritzer states that we do not consume the product but rather we are consuming the object-sign, we are acknowledging our similarities with those around us and our differences with those who are on the outside. In fact he says, that consumers are far more concerned with expressing their commonalities with others than their differences. In the city, going to a particular type of pub, a theme bar, one can feel secure in knowing their similarities with others in there.

Ritzer sees a danger in this type of consumerism and warns of the importance of symbolic exchange between both the customer and the employee. In a theme park place, consumers don't see employees, they see machines, colours and entertainment. They do not experience personal exchange between themselves and the employee. He sees that it is important also to have an exchange of emotions, feelings, experiences, knowledge and insight. Theme pubs have tried to do this, by having different themes but once it goes beyond an original pub it becomes simulacrum. It promotes mysticism and difference and so therefore it promotes the symbolic.

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Rojek, discusses the whole notion of theme parks and how the idea behind them has penetrated into several aspects of society, especially the leisure industry, and pubs are no exception to this. He describes how 'locale' is used by these theme producers to cover up the fact that they are totally transforming the local area itself. The second factor that he refers to is that of product portfolio. By this we mean that theme pubs ensure that they promote the product of their image. The souvenir shop in the 'Icon' is an example of this.

He sees two paramount themes throughout all thematised things. The first one is velocity and the second is time-space compression. Bennet (1983:148), looks at velocity in theme parks and sees that mere difference and speed are identified as sources of pleasure. The fascination with difference for its own sake is evident also in the second part, called time-space compression. It is this aspect which is most evident in theme pubs today.

The 'Icon' attempts to annihilate temporal and spatial barriers by bringing several particular tourist attractions from around Ireland, together under one roof, for convenience sake. Like the 'World Showcase' Pavillon in Disneyland, which boasts reconstructions of ten countries; Canada, China, France, Mexico, U.K., Japan, Germany, Italy, Norway and Morocco, the Zanzibar in Dublin boasts its representation of Morocco. Apparently, this time-space compression does not anticipate a fundamental change in everyday life, it reflects it.

'Through the experience of everything from food to culinary habits, music, T.V.,
entertainment and cinema, it is now possible to experience the worlds geography
vicariously, as a simulacrum. The interweaving of simulacrum in daily life brings
together different worlds (of commodities) in the same space and time'
(Harvey,1989:300).

Pub culture in Dublin is no longer about the local experience. Theme pubs have
implemented ways in which a visit there is similar to that of a theme park. They
provide a means of escape from everyday life. Goffman describes these places as
'action places' where people can go to let off steam. One implication he notes,
previously mentioned in this thesis is that attractions which simply rely on spectacle
eventually generate a sense of anticlimax.

A BRIEF NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

* PARTICIPANT AND NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

'The term observation and in particular, 'participant observation', is usually used to refer to methods of generating data which involve the researcher immersing him herself in a research setting and systematically observing dimensions of that setting; interactions, relationships, actions, events and so on, within it (the pub).(Mason,1996:60)

With sociological observation, the sociologist must organise and analyse their data in terms of sociological theories and concepts. By keeping written details of events and more importantly by observing with sociological theories in mind, one can have a wealth of information lying right in front of them. In this way, written theory comes off the page and into action in everyday life.

Although there is some literature on pub life and culture and also on the aestheticisation process, very little has been written linking the two together. Because of this being such a new research subject, most of my research is based on the grounds of printed materials, such as newspaper articles and brochures, and also on observation methods, both participant and non-participant.

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Observation methods are very useful in this context, since the researcher can note specific details and actions that would not otherwise be attained in say, an interview for example. Consumers and cultural producers in theme bars are not necessarily aware of the fact that their environment is aesthetic and subject to study. However, it is a very time-consuming task and unlike a recorded interview, it is not always possible to repeat the situation or event.

'*Some types of social action can only be truly understood and appreciated when they are actually witnessed, seen in the flesh*' (Wiseman, J. And Aron 1970:15)

To have a successful observation; the researcher must be aware of the following sources of bias and therefore neutralise their effects.

1. Unintentional selectivity in perception, recording or reporting. This is difficult since the researcher usually goes into the field with a particular hypothesis and theoretical framework in mind.

2. Imputation of meaning that the actors themselves do not intend or experience. The researcher needs to be open-minded here and careful not to assume or to predict the actors position.

3. Mistaking an idiosyncratic event for a recurrent one. This can be avoided by making several trips to the same place, using the same social and environmental conditions.

4. Affecting the action by his/her presence. The researcher can prevent altering the situation by involving themselves in participant observation, in other words, undercover work.

These are the basic but essential requirements the researcher must keep in mind when carrying out observational research. Mason follows on this and says that we, as researchers, use observation methods because we have an ontological perspective, meaning that we see interactions and behaviour as central to our study. She also says that we would have an epistemological position, that is knowledge or evidence to suggest that observation will reveal data. If you regard yourself as active and reflexive in the research process and feel that it is a more ethical approach than say interviewing, then observation is a good option.

'Once we move from this liminal sphere into direct social encounters in shops, offices and pubs, the 'flow' is slowed down and the reading process goes on more precisely, as participants are able to detect, monitor and react to the symbolic power manifest in the unconscious bodily signs and gestures: the dress, style, tone of voice, facial expression, demeanour, stance and gait all incorporated in body volume, height, weight etc. which betray the social origins of the bearer.. understood in terms of their lifestyle'. (Mason, 1996:280)

* CONTENT ANALYSIS

The second method used in this research is **Content Analysis**. This particular study examines a content analysis of collective behaviour. This is where the researcher is concerned with the manifest content of the written document- with that which is openly stated.(Mason,1989:113).

A group's behavioural patterns are revealed in newspapers, magazines, literature, drama, advertisements and also nonverbal symbols such as architecture and art. In this way, the social researcher can examine the way in which communication can both affect and be affected by the social environment, which in this context, is the aestheticisation of everyday life.

Collective behaviour is relevant here because unlike other group behaviours it occurs among people who do not form a society. Members of a collective group have no other historical social relationship. Other than the fact that they are all there together. (1996:119). An examination of particular language in articles and brochures such as; trompe d' oeil, spectacle, illusion and amusing, is one way of measuring the extent of the aesthetic in representing theme pubs.Projective techniques within field research enables the researcher to get information on certain people that they would not necessarily be aware of or willing to reveal. Much of this research involved debating with myself as to whether this study constituted an ethnographic study of a sub-culture.

There are some indications to suggest that consumers in theme bars are a subculture in their own right. They have a specific dress code, behaviour and language. However, they are not necessarily aware of this and this thesis feels therefore, that they do not constitute a subculture. Rather they are a small representation of larger society in general. The aestheticisation process has penetrated and been reproduced in several areas of society, pub culture is just one specific example of it.

TRADITION- A SPECTACLE TODAY

Postmodernity has produced a shallowness in modern lives and an inauthenticity of our experiences. MacCannell describes the tour as being similar to a pilgrimage . Both are searching for the authentic. This next topic is a progressive step up from the previous ones. It suggests that what consumers are seeking now, is authentic. It seems that consumer society has moved from a desire for the authentic to aesthetic (which is still the case in some sections of society) and back to the authentic.

In relation to consumer society, in the context of pub culture, we will examine Goffman's front/back theory and look at some examples of this in pubs today. Goffman states that consumers' desire to know and see what is happening behind closed doors has been exploited by producers who have made the authentic a 'staged' one. By staged authenticity, he means that consumers who think that they are getting the real thing are actually only getting an aesthetic version. The back area, supposedly a site in its authentic form, is actually a front stage, altered to accommodate spectators, and the real backstage is moved back even further. The Porter House in Dublin is one example of this, where the kitchen and brewery are on 'display'. More recently a pub on Tara street has adopted the same idea as have some pubs down the country. However, the mere fact that they have done this suggests that they are theme pubs, their theme being authenticity.

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This authentic experience is aestheticised. It is founded on the notion of mysticism, which is very much part of the postmodern condition. Goffman offers back regions as '...*secrets, more than what meets the eye, like theatre doors closing in E.R.. Just a glimpse of silver and then its gone*' (Goffman,1971:591). This is evident in 'real' life T.V. and documentaries. Behind the scenes in Hollywood also illustrates this idea.

Touristic experience is always mystified and the lie contained in the touristic experience, moreover, presents itself as a truthful revelation, as the vehicle that carries the onlooker behind false fronts into reality.... a false back is more insidious and dangerous than a false front, or an inauthentic demystification of social life is not merely a lie but a surprise, the kind that drips with sincerity.(1971:599).

Such places contrast with Guinness' hopstore at James' gate, where the smell of oats, barley and hops goes up your nose, attracting your attention to a brick wall. There is a sense of real mystery here, the wonder of what is going on behind he walls. The two examples contrast, the first one is intentionally displaying the back regions and the second one is not. Both are equally impressive and effective.

This type of mysticism has been adopted by pub owners and architects, whose job it is to produce this staged authenticity. Liam O' Dwyer, owner of several pubs in Dublin and Kildare, describes the importance of architecture in a pub. Certain features such as seating arrangements are very important. Girls on the low stools and men at the bar apparently inhibited intermingling of the sexes, and so modern seating

or standing mostly is supposed to have conquered this.

He describes the barman as the prime player in pub theatre and believes that the key to a good pub is its staff not its theme '...*if it's done the right way from day one there shouldn't be a need to latch onto whatever theme is popular at the moment'*. He states that people are already looking for that old-fashioned style but with up-to-date technology. This is the case in the 'Icon'. Its architecture is based on history and localism but it also incorporates the latest in audio-visual technology.

Despite the search for front/back distinction and much debate about the blase attitude of postmodernity, this thesis proposes the motion that what is actually happening is a deaestheticisation process. In relation to pubs and pub culture we can see how several traditional pubs have become a spectacle for the simple reason that they haven't become modernised. 'Haverty's' pub in Birr, Co.Offaly, is an example of a traditional pub but the difference here is that it's attractive factor has not been commoditised and so people love to go in there, especially tourists. The fact that it is a traditional pub means that it is actually a spectacle now, whereas a few years ago, a pub that had a theme or had been modernised, was an attraction.

In here tourists can gaze at it's unique, raw backstage form. Eoin Foyle (manager of Ri Ras, The Front Lounge and The Globe), believes *that; modern pubs will never return to the way they have been, change doesn't happen without leaving its scars'*, he predicts that; *after many years of huge pubs able to accommodate hundreds of people...the future trend will be towards smaller and more intimate establishments'*.

Having carried out extensive research, 'Chief O' Neills' in Dublin has certainly been the most impressive pub. It is very much part of the urban regeneration process in that area and so there are numerous problematic issues based on these grounds. However, it is important to acknowledge the positive side also. This pub/restaurant/hotel, is built beside the Jameson distillery and in an attempt to promote a sense of localism, 'Chief O' Neills' sell two of the locally brewed beers. They also employ mostly local or at least Irish staff. This is very important as it gets locals involved and shows support for the locality.

They also have traditional dishes on their menu, like colcannon, Irish stew and Bacon and Cabbage. The manageress describes it as an Irish theme pub and this theme is promoted through audio- visual aids but also on occasion, they have live entertainment. What we have here is a good attempt to accommodate the fact that consumers, used to having the everyday gadgets of postmodernity, also want a touch of traditionalism. Frank Ennis, one of the most popular architects in Dublin, sees traditional architecture as the way forward.

For discussions sake we could compare the 'traditional' drinker/pub-goer to the traveller, and the postmodern drinker to the tourist. According to Rojek, the traveller will go to a destination for a specific reason, there is a deep meaning and personal experience in it for them, such as close friends and perhaps a family tradition. The tourist goes to a location usually as a collective tourist, to experience what they have been told to experience. The postmodern drinker will similarly go to a pub because it's trendy, not because of any familiarity with the place.

Of course lots of customers have become familiar with the Zanzibar and it has, for many, become their local on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. This is not because of some local obligation to the place or its owner. It's more likely to be a regular for some because of the irregularity of their experience. People can go through the same ordeal to get in, stand in the same corner and drink the same type of drink every week and still be amused. The crowd will never be the same every week because the place is so big. This is an important attraction for the postmodern consumer since they tire easily of the same ole' thing.

Perhaps time will reveal that even those who are enthralled by the vast extent and amusement of theme bars, will come to realise that this timeless, depth less culture serves only to distract us from reality

In a sense then the way forward is to go back, via the traditional approach. This does not necessarily mean authentic, but it does mean that pubs retain as much history and tradition of their original premises. Several examples of this exist in Dublin, such as, Mulligans on Poolbeg street, Cassidys on Wexford street, O' Donohues on Baggot street and The long Hall on Georges street. Even though most of these pub have become commoditised through the literary pub crawl or some other tourist schemes, the reason for them being made a commodity is very different to that of postmodern pubs being commoditised, since they have become a commodity based on the fact that they are authentic traditional Irish pubs.

Rojek comments on modern architecture and suggests that it refused historical or local references and promoted a rational purity of style. This has been replaced by postmodern architecture, the aesthetic, designs that are not necessarily based on rationale. Stemming from an exhaustion of this society, we see consumers choosing architectural designs from the past. The deaestheticisation of pubs promotes a sense of history and localism and tries not to appear to be making itself a commodity.

Glenn Ward describes postmodern architectures as having lost their modernist bottle and *;run out of revolutionary spirit, swapping their moral and authentic responsibilities, for cheap populism, they no longer see their activity as vital to the creation of a better tomorrow. Therefore, it is regressive rather than progressive '*(Ward, 1997:19).

Baudrillard suggests that when the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes it's full meaning. Our reaction to all of this is to panic and so we become obsessed with authenticity and the real. Perhaps this suggests why society is beginingto adopt traditional lifestyles and values in a modern world.

THE FUTURE OF PUB CULTURE IN DUBLIN.

We need to ask ourselves seriously if the aestheticisation of everyday life serves any purpose other than to distract us from the fact that we are slowly but surely being lured by a facade of capitalist propaganda. What about young people who are growing up in this phantasmagorical society, where drug use has soared to enormous heights, where kids are trying themselves to quench reality themselves?. How will they stand when they realise that 'the drugs don't work' and that they have neglected their deeper side, that which gets you through life when you have been exhausted by the substitutes for happiness as a teenager. By introducing people to theme areas, like pubs for examples, people learn to shape their lives around this artificial kind of lifestyle. Take for example, a group of young people setting off for the Dublin mountains, a short hike up to the top of the Sugar Loaf will undoubtedly provoke exhilaration unlike anything that can be virtually produced in theme pubs and parks.

All these kind of experiences have been captured by the media and capital investors and made into a commodity and so now , Coca- Cola, is even better than the real thing!!. So too it is considered easier to sit and virtually climb a mountain than to actually do it. As with the tourist, the postmodern socialiser wants to leave the drab particulars of the locale behind and enter a more colourful, intoxicating world.

What is happening now, is that increasingly these so-called escape areas are tiring of their escape capabilities and there are no more escape routes to take except the material ones which some people are not even aware of. Postmodern culture is not necessarily a bad thing. The concern of this thesis is that we don't get carried away with or hypnotised by the depth less artificiality of it. In most cases, these theme pubs are founded on the basic function of traditional pubs and we need to remember this.

This thesis has examined pub life in the past and compared it with the new trend of theme pubs today. It has illustrated the aestheticisation process referring to various theoretical authors, in relation to pub culture. It accounted for these findings through observation and content analysis and discussed the results. In conclusion, pubs have been around for four centuries now and the basic function behind it hasn't changed. However, this thesis has argued that because of the aestheticisation of everyday life in society, theme pubs have scared and in some cases, totally altered pub culture. Some bars are now more like a theme park than an actual pub.

However, having carried out some extensive up-to-date research, it would seem that pubs are actually, one of the very few establishments that have managed to escape being totally taken by aesthetics. It seems that although theme pubs are very popular, the majority of people actually realise its' depth less nature and have showed their support for a return to the traditional pub culture. Undoubtedly, it will never be the same, but it can certainly attempt to provide a more solid and meaningful haven from a world that isn't.
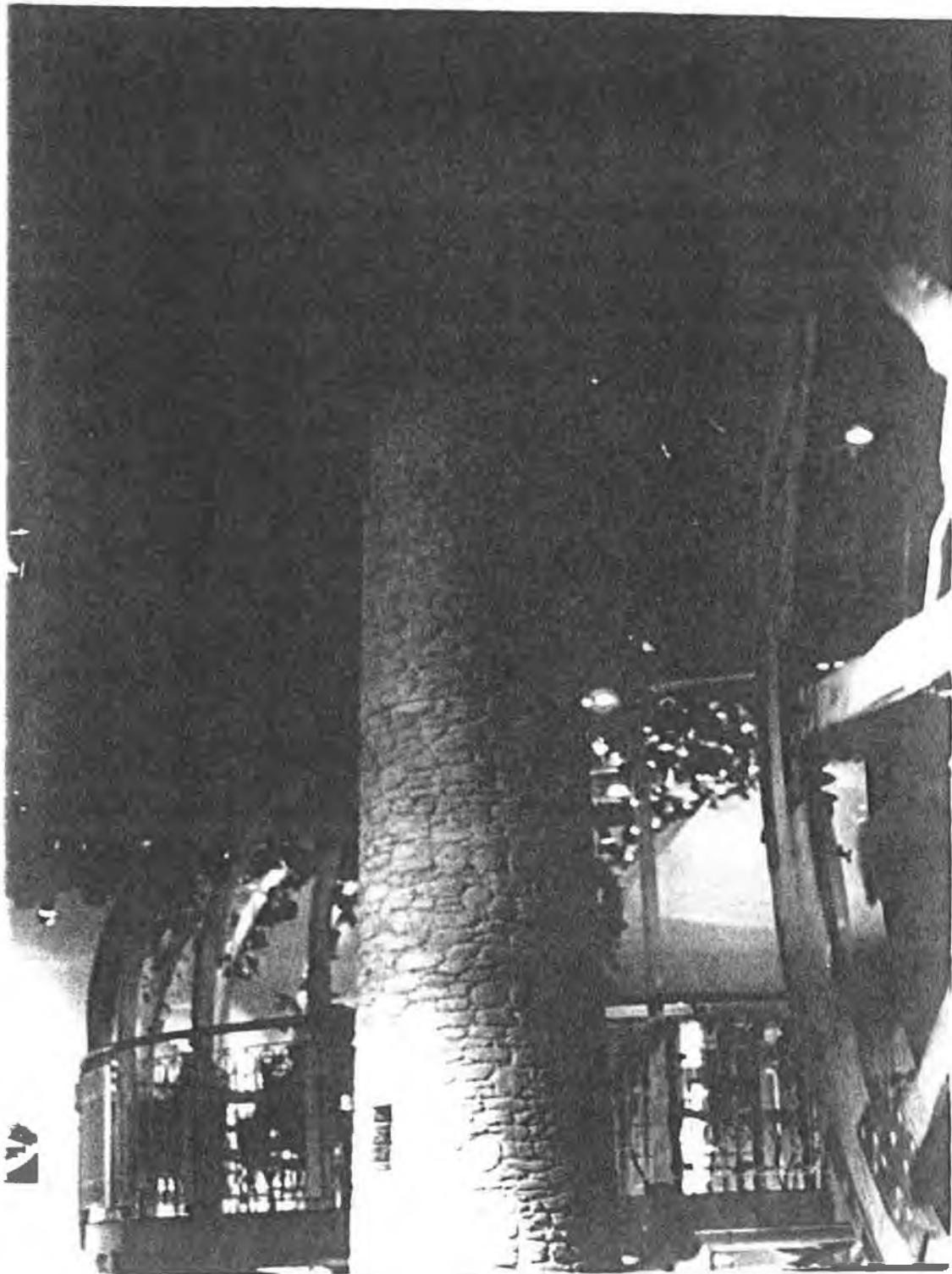
icon

AT THE BAILEYS CENTRE

"To see it is to believe it,

yet when you see it,

... it is unbelievable"

3.

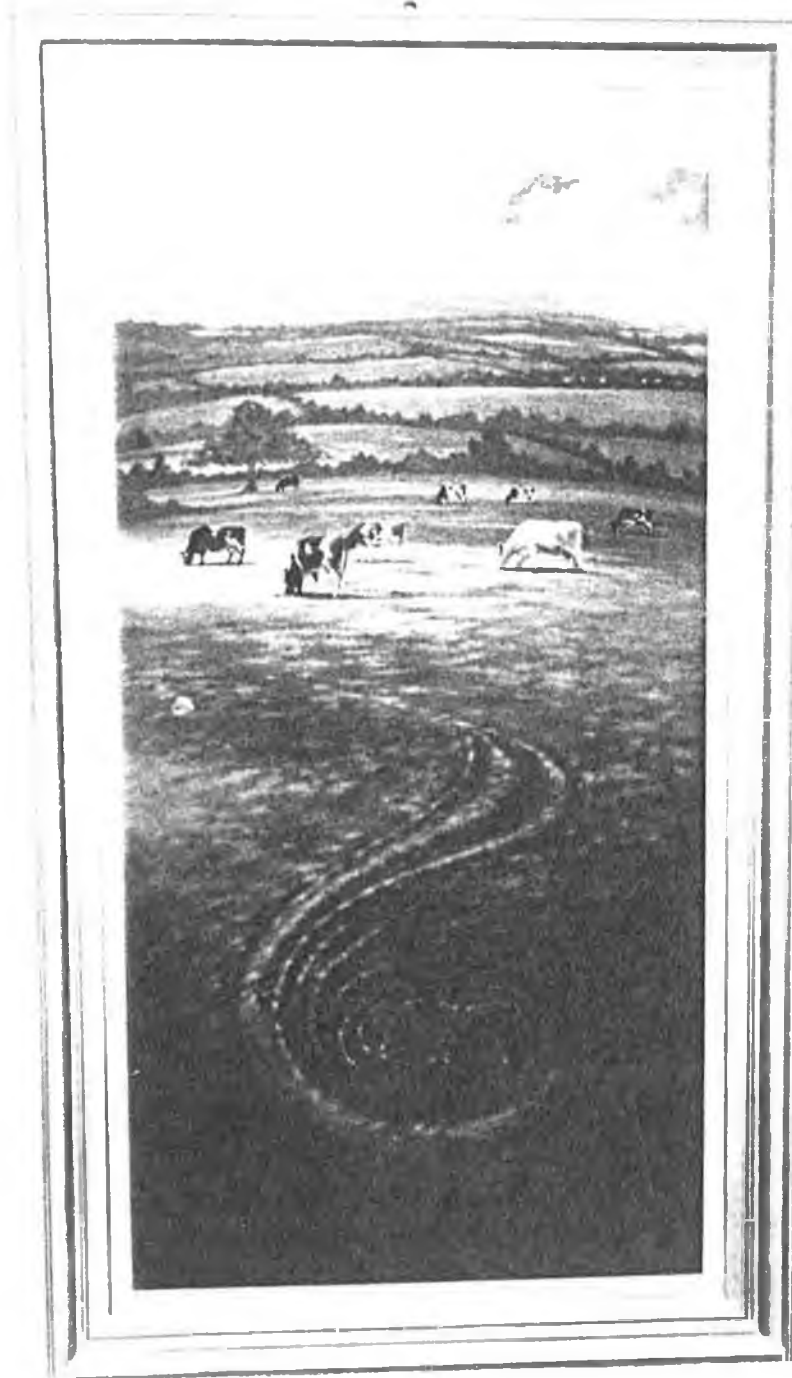**FOR A BREATHTAKING NEW VENUE** *just use our imagination...*

icon
AT THE BATTERY CENTRE

2.

1. Glendalough Tower, the Botanic Gardens and a waterwheel.
This illustrates the idea of theme-parking in pubs.

4. Chess/draughts board inlaid on pub table.
'Do they dare to tell us the truth?'.

5. Baileys- part of the Irish countryside?!!

If you think this is an icon of Ireland, you're not even warm.

EXPERIENCE IRELAND THE WAY WE DO AT ICON. LEOPARDSTOWN. DUBLIN.

6. A luring device- what is the alternate icon?

7. That's entertainment.
   Enjoying a meal in a medieval environment with
   A holographic background to the Cliffs of Moher.

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