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Tourism in Sandy Row

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Ireland has an incredible history and has an immense difference in culture and opinion that the world needs to know more about. Particularly, the community of Sandy Row in Belfast, Ireland, has an incredibly rich history and an incredible close-knit group of people who have such strong opinions on their identity (Gilmartin, 42). This part of Northern Ireland is staunchly loyalist because this community is a majority Protestant and they consider themselves British (Drisceoil, 65). The identity of being British fostered several nationalist movements and created a lot of conflict between the republicans who wanted to split from the UK. The Irish Republican Army, or IRA, is very well known because of the dangerous situations they created throughout the country. The major problem is that the neighborhoods and people who fought on the loyalist side through the Troubles get no attention despite the massive sacrifice that they went through. Sandy Row was one of these neighborhoods that has a lot of loyalist history with amazing art and history that the world should know about. So the question that remains is why do people not know about this really historically important place?

The people of Sandy Row take such pride in their British identity and that pride should be shared with the world because personal identity is very important to human nature, in my opinion. The way to spread the word about this prideful and very rich community is through tourism. Currently, there is a walking tour of the community and a website to book a tour in advance (“Home”). I looked at this website and the amount of information on it was minimal and the site itself was visually unappealing. I plan to meet with a graphic designer, talk to the owner’s of the site and change the website to include more information to excite the public about visiting Sandy Row. An online presence both with an independent website and through social

media would increase the awareness of this community to the general public. I also plan to enhance the walking tour with my own experience as a tour guide. I personally have been giving tours of historical places since I was eleven years old so I would bring expertise to the guides. The idea behind giving tours is the excitement that the guide brings to the group of visitors. The technique of the tours is going to be an essential part of the project and will be a major part of the pride in the community as well.

The Honors program itself will benefit from this project, as well. I will set up a Skype call with one of the tour guides and have them talk about Sandy Row to some of the LMU student body/Honors community. The entire goal for this part of the project is to spread the word about this community. I plan to video this call and post it online both on the site and on social media to develop tourism in the area. The community of Sandy Row will benefit from this project because a greater population will acknowledge the sacrifice for their identity.

References

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