In the article *Consuming Ireland: Lucky Charms Cereal, Irish Spring Soap and 1-800-Shamrock*, Diane Negra examines the portrayal of Irish culture to North Americans through popular advertising. Negra names various products that have used “Irishness” as a marketing scheme in their advertising campaigns but focuses on three very different products in her essay. For the purpose of this annotation, we will focus only on the first product that Negra reviews, which is General Mills Lucky Charms cereal (Negra 2001:77). She concentrates on how each of these products individually skews the idea of “Irish-ness” to further its own marketing goals (Negra 2001). In the introduction, she states that the purpose of her essay is to examine the “promise of transformation through consumption,” that has often been linked to the use of “Irishness” in US advertising (Negra 2001:77). She then goes on to describe the way that the Irish culture has often been portrayed as “…the primitive, the underdeveloped or the romantic” (Negra, 2001:77).

The majority of her assessment of Lucky Charms focuses on the main character used in Lucky Charms television advertisements, a leprechaun named Lucky. Negra details for us how time and time again Lucky is foiled in his attempts to possess the sugary cereal by children with American accents. Negra makes the argument that the choice of an Irish leprechaun as a spokesperson was no happy accident, in fact, there was a great deal of thought behind it (2001). She compares Lucky to the Irish immigrants of past, and how they, too, were faced with tribulations at each turn when they entered this country and how they were “similarly disempowered and must abide by the forces of a broader cultural authority” (Negra 2001:79). These children often make fun of his brogue or dance Irish jigs with him (Negra 2001:82). Lucky’s character is also drawn quite small, at times closely resembling the size of the cereal box he is attempting to obtain (Negra 2001:80).

Negra points out her feeling that the underlying message of the ad is that all one has to do to obtain “Irishness” is consume Lucky Charms cereal. She mentions a quote from Lucky taken from one of the commercials, “Nobody can catch a leprechaun. But you can catch Lucky Charms at your neighborhood store” (Negra 2001:82). I feel this insinuates that being of the Irish heritage is easy and fluid, nothing special and certainly nothing to be proud of. As a member of an Irish American family, I was always taught growing up to value my heritage. I spent countless hours with my Nana and Granda eating food that my Nana had prepared that she had eaten throughout her life in Ireland. It was certainly a far cry from the sugary cereal with little gold pot marshmallows that General Mills was endeavoring to market using stereotypical Irish themes.