

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	x
<i>Introduction</i>	xiii

Part I Race

1 Not Irish Enough? Masculinity and Ethnicity in <i>The Wire</i> and <i>Rescue Me</i> <i>Gerardine Meaney</i>	3
2 Reading and Writing Race in Ireland: Roddy Doyle and <i>Metro Eireann</i> <i>Maureen T. Reddy</i>	15
3 Marching, Minstrelsy, Masquerade: Parading White Loyalist Masculinity as 'Blackness' <i>Suzanna Chan</i>	26
4 'Is it for the Glamour?': Masculinity, Nationhood and Amateurism in Contemporary Projections of the Gaelic Athletic Association <i>Mike Cronin</i>	39

Part II Space

5 'Our Nuns are not a Nation': Politicizing the Convent in Irish Literature and Film <i>Elizabeth Butler Cullingford</i>	55
6 Fanfic in Ireland: No Country, No Sex, No Money, No Name <i>Aintzane Legarreta Mentxaka</i>	74
7 Widening the Frame: the Politics of Mural Photography in Northern Ireland <i>Kathryn Conrad</i>	85

8	Tracking the Luas between the Human and the Inhuman <i>Wanda Balzano and Jefferson Holdridge</i>	100
Part III Diaspora		
9	Cinematic Constructions of Irish Musical Ethnicity <i>Christopher Smith</i>	115
10	St Patrick's Day Expulsions: Race and Homophobia in New York's Parade <i>Katherine O'Donnell</i>	128
11	Fantasy, Celebrity and 'Family Values' in High-End and Special Event Tourism in Ireland <i>Diane Negra</i>	141
12	A Mirror up to Irishness: Hollywood Hard Men and Witty Women <i>Claire Bracken and Emma Radley</i>	157
Part IV Aporia		
13	'Let's Get Killed': Culture and Peace in Northern Ireland <i>Colin Graham</i>	171
14	Boyz to Men: Irish Boy Bands and Mothering the Nation <i>Moynagh Sullivan</i>	184
15	Quare Theory <i>Noreen Giffney</i>	197
16	Camping up the Emerald Aisle: 'Queerness' in Irish Popular Culture <i>Anne Mulhall</i>	210
	<i>Index</i>	225

Part I

Race

1

Not Irish Enough? Masculinity and Ethnicity in *The Wire* and *Rescue Me*

Gerardine Meaney

What is the value of 'Irishness' in the global economy of images? What are its uses? How does it work? Traditionally, Irish Studies defined itself in terms of the study of culture emanating from Ireland itself, defending the authenticity of its subject against the continuum of stage Irishry and Blarney characterized as first London's, then Hollywood's failure to represent either the complexities of Ireland's history or the reality of its people. While there is a significant body of scholarship on the negative stereotyping of the Irish in nineteenth- and twentieth-century British and American media, there is relatively little on the production of positive (or at least attractive) stereotypes of Irish ethnicity and their functions in the discourses of race, gender and 'homeland'.¹

This chapter will examine critical elements within US popular culture, which engage with the construction of Irish-American masculinity as embodiment of patriotic, blue-collar masculinity. It seeks to extend the analysis of the way in which Irishness has been crucially deployed, post-September 11, 2001, in the articulation of white, working-class male identity. The 2006 New York St Patrick's Day Parade was led by the 69th Infantry Regiment of the US army, recently returned from Iraq. The ceremony at the parade's end, in which military medals were bestowed on members of the regiment, was accompanied by music from the Wolfe Tones. The regiment has a historical link with Irish America, as have the New York fire and police departments, which have achieved an iconic status in the representation of the 9/11 attacks. In some ways, the conjunction of militarism and republican balladry at the New York parade indicates the enormous gulf that separates the self-representation of Irish America and Ireland. The Dublin parade in the same year came in the aftermath of republican riots, and the sound of the Wolfe Tones would probably have cleared the streets of law-abiding citizens in ten minutes

(a different strand of the ballad tradition was represented by the Dublin Grand Marshall, Ronnie Drew). The no doubt bemused Powder Springs High School marching band found itself marching in Dublin beside a lone protestor waving a 'US troops out of Shannon' banner. (The official anti-war protest was staged on 18 March 2006.) The relation between Ireland and Irish America is not that of easy contrasts and oppositions, from whichever side of the Atlantic it is viewed. US troops are in Shannon, after all. For, as the New York parade indicates, Irishness has become part of American self-representation.

Irishness in US media

For the purposes of this chapter, I will concentrate on two television drama series featuring Irish-American characters. *Rescue Me* (2004–) has been a critical and ratings success while *The Wire* (2002–) is a prestigious HBO production that has won widespread critical acclaim, and features two well-known novelists among its screenwriters (George Pelecanos and, more recently, Denis Lehane).² The main protagonist in *Rescue Me* is that epitome of Irish-American heroism, a New York fireman who has survived the 9/11 attacks, Tommy Gavin. He is also the epitome of all the major Irish stereotypes; hard drinking, impulsively brave but prone to violence, hopelessly in love with his ex-wife, self-destructively having sex with all the other women who find him fatally attractive. These stereotypes also attach to Jimmy McNulty, one of an ensemble of interlinked central characters in *The Wire*, though McNulty is practically an intellectual by comparison with the foul-mouthed Gavin. Unlike Gavin, McNulty also works well with strong, competent women. In fact his working relationships with women in general are much more successful than his sexual ones.

Both characters are emotionally inept, but passionately committed to their work. Both have an intimacy with death which sets them apart from their colleagues. In *Rescue Me*, the central protagonist is literally haunted by his dead partner and by all of those whom, over the years, he has not succeeded in rescuing.³ Much of the first series concerns his conversations with these dead people. In a striking parallel, McNulty spends much of the second series of *The Wire* carrying around a photograph of a dead Eastern European woman whose body he has retrieved from the bay, seeking to identify her and get her a 'proper' burial. In both series, the relationship between Irishness and America is played out as the tension between the incompatible demands of modern masculinity.

Abject heroism: masculine body anxiety in *Rescue Me*

The pilot episode of *Rescue Me* appears to open with Tommy Gavin going to the bathroom.⁴ An overhead shot shows the toilet bowl from Gavin's perspective as it fills with smoke. Just as he appears to be trapped inside the bathroom, Gavin wakes and we realize we have been inside his nightmare. The series repeatedly plays with the boundaries between dream and reality to the extent that it, like the main character, inhabits a psychotic space where such boundaries cannot be drawn. The location of the first such breakdown in the bathroom, at a site where the body separates itself from its waste, is telling. The abject vortex where boundaries between inside and outside, food and waste, life and death, are always in danger of breaking down is the very site of this narrative, which tells how difficult it is to maintain one's own proper identity as the man in the heroic story. Tommy wakes from his dream and coughs, as if the smoke from it is still in his lungs. He drinks some juice, goes out the door, all of which is shot in close up with a rapid sequence of shot and counter-shot at eye level that puts us unsettlingly close to Tommy. The first words we hear Tommy Gavin speak are 'Do you want to know how big my balls are?' in voiceover over a panning shot of new recruits to the fire brigade lined up in a classic military formation, with a panoramic view of New York's skyline visible across the river behind them. In the commentary on the DVD of the series, Dennis Leary maintains that the speech which follows was taken almost verbatim from one delivered by a drill instructor in the New York fire department of an acquaintance of his, whose brother, also a fire-fighter, died in the 9/11 attacks. (The additional features included on the DVD are very much concerned with authenticating the series, stressing its realism, the casting of actual or former firemen, and so on, in contrast to the series' willingness to break the rules of conventional television realism.) The accuracy of this is not undermined by the familiarity of the scene, common to many other films featuring raw army recruits, tough sergeants and the relations of men in combat. The beautifully composed shot, which sets this quintessentially military exchange between men directly in front of the skyline which was changed forever on 9/11, leaves the viewer in no doubt that these men are on the front line of a new battlefield.

Gavin's macho speech, however, is somewhat at odds with the beauty of the scene and the heroic narrative implicit in it. 'My balls are bigger than two of your heads duct-taped together. I've been in the middle of shit that would make you piss your pants', he informs the new trainees. The purpose of their training, he tells them, is not to make heroes of them, but to find out cowards, because 'if you can't take the heat that's

what you are, you're a pussy and there ain't no room for pussies in the FDNY'. To be less than a man is to be that part of a woman that both threatens castration and promises life. Until this point the scene had effectively disconnected Tommy's voice from his physical presence: the camera pans over the ranks of men so that we don't see the speaker. Voice and body are re-united only in confrontation with a young man who dares to express amusement at all this macho excess, and we see Tommy in close up facing him and standing threateningly close to him until seriousness is restored. At this point the dead men whose photographs are displayed as examples for the recruits are used to validate the form of masculinity needed on this new frontier. 'I knew sixty men who gave their lives at Ground Zero, sixty. Four of them from my house . . . Vito Costello, found him almost whole. Ricky Davis, found him almost whole hugging a civilian woman. Bobby Vincent, found his head. And my cousin, Jimmy Keefe, my best friend, know what they found of him? What they was able to bring back and give to his parents? A finger.' Throughout this part of his speech the camera cuts back and forth between Tommy and the photographs of the dead men. The reaction shots, close ups, of the horrified and chastened recruits are kept until the reference to the finger, and then continue to the end of the speech as Tommy tells them: 'these four men were better firemen and better human beings than any of you will ever be'.⁵ At this point the camera pulls back, and Tommy's parting salute to the ranks of men heavily reinforces the military overtones.

This pre-credit speech sets up the central conflicts of the series: the absolute necessity and simultaneous impossibility of emulating the heroes of 9/11; the fascination and horror of 'pussy'; the erasure of the trauma of vulnerability in the emphasis on the men who 'gave' their lives, rather than having them taken. The language of the speech sets up the tone and atmosphere of the series. Its reliance on the kind of language completely unacceptable on primetime mainstream television is typical of the increasing sub-genre of amoral crime drama aimed at a predominantly male audience, such as *Prison Breakout* (2005–), *The Shield* (2002–) and *24* (2001–), which go far beyond the moral boundaries of traditional primetime fare. The credit sequence of *Rescue Me* features the rapid edits of urban scenes, handheld cameras and pounding rock soundtrack signatures of 'hard-hitting', that is, masculine, US television. However, the language of Tommy's speech also reveals the extraordinary difficulty of 'holding it together' in the context of the grief, loss, paranoia and post-traumatic stress disorder these series normalize as the masculine condition. Tommy's wife has left him because he can't open up and is emotionally 'unavailable', but this extreme psychic closure is accompanied

by the language of mental and physical disintegration. The references to the body indicate a crisis of boundaries. Tommy has been 'in the middle of shit that would make you piss your pants'. The opening dream sequence features an attempt to make water which turns into smoke. A running joke through the first episode culminates in the closing scene when the fire station chief mistakenly drinks a urine sample. The men discuss at length medical tests which involve rectal examinations. These are not the hard bodies of the action movies of the eighties. On the contrary, they are porous, vulnerable to penetration, their fluids seeping from them, their boundaries unstable. Mortality stalks them.

The ultimate expression as well as the explanation of this is in the pre-credit scene which validates archaic masculine values, but also catalogues the literal decomposition of men. The proud names of the fallen heroes are reduced to their body parts, some almost whole, others only a head or a finger. All that is left is not to be 'pussy'. Yet even this is no longer viable. The band of men at the fire station will be penetrated and dispersed by the female therapist sent by the troublingly authoritative and alien 'head-quarters' before the end of the episode. By the end of the series, there will actually be a woman fire-fighter among them. Ultimately, in this context, the aftermath of 9/11 is no more than a verification of the paranoia that pre-existed it. 'Where have we already seen the same thing?', asks Slavoj Žižek in 'Welcome to the Desert of the Real'.⁶ In the nightmares of our competent men, answers *Rescue Me*. The phallic dilemma, where the masculine ego will never actualize its ideal, reaches crisis proportions in the guilt and anxiety of survivors who will never be the men their dead predecessors were.

The pre-credit section of the first episode of *Rescue Me* has one more twist. After the military salute, Tommy gets back in his truck, which an establishing shot shows us is empty. A rapid shot/counter-shot then cuts from Tommy, unsurprised, to Jimmy Keefe, his cousin and friend killed at Ground Zero. 'That was nice, what you said about me', says Jimmy's ghost, though he goes on to point out that they wouldn't think Tommy so tough if they knew he was talking to dead people. When Tommy finally addresses Jimmy, he disappears. Tommy's arrested grieving process and his communications from the dead are part of the way in which *Rescue Me* deploys the psychological framework its protagonists so strenuously resist. Since Tommy cannot talk about his feelings without becoming a 'pussy', without in effect being castrated, his feelings are externalized as ghosts and talk to him. (This takes an unexpected turn in the second season when giving up drink results in hallucinations of Jesus Christ who takes on the role of Tommy's internal/external interlocutor.) The series' actualization of

Tommy's ghosts goes a step further than the use of dream sequences as an indicator of buried trauma. The device breaks the convention of realist television drama, as do the use of techniques borrowed from body horror. Bobby Vincent's head turns up in Tommy's locker, for example, talking amiably. *Rescue Me's* combination of such shock tactics, ghosts, humour and tragedy identifies it with postmodern Gothic television and especially with genre hybrids such as *Twin Peaks* (1990), *The X Files* (1993–2002) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003). Fred Botting commented on postmodern Gothic in 1995 that the horror at the heart of its narrative games was that there were only narrative games.⁷ In other words, postmodern Gothic was afraid there was ultimately nothing outside in the dark waiting to pounce. In *Rescue Me*, something has already pounced, but this only serves to make it more unnameable. The terrible other is no longer a luxury of the imagination but an enemy so alien that it cannot enter the narrative at all. For *Rescue Me* so relentlessly focuses on Ground Zero that it never refers to the sky above. What happened and who did it are absent from the narrative. Instead, the event impacts in the fragmentation of bodies and selves, the breakdown of the boundaries between inside and outside and the living and the dead.

The extraordinary racial and sexual homogeneity of the fire station reflects a sense of tightly drawn boundaries and this community, like the men within it, is under pressure from the start to maintain itself against forces outside and beyond it. Even in this first episode, female therapists, bureaucrats at headquarters and dissatisfied citizens make demands which the characters and, to a large extent, the narrative deride, yet cannot resist. In an exchange which has gained considerably in irony since the series first broadcast, an African-American waylays the chief fire officer to complain that the rescue services would have responded much more quickly if it had been a white neighbourhood. The therapist's arrival in the fire station clears the room. Tommy stays to tell her how little she understands, but ends up explaining himself and breaking down in tears. Women completely undermine the fragile masculine selves to which the characters cling in the series. Tommy's ex-wife makes him feel inadequate in her obvious preference for far less macho men in her choice of new boyfriend. His daughter is almost killed when she goes out in a car with an unsuitable boy whom her father had warned her against. Beyond his daughter's burgeoning sexuality, a much greater threat to Tommy's definition of himself as father is his ex-wife's desire to move and take the children away from him and from the scene of trauma. Tommy's sexual relationships with women other than his wife are desperate; alcohol fuelled and, for most of the first season, short lived.

The threat of impotence hovers over his investment in a dead relationship and dissatisfaction with sex outside his social role as husband. Jimmy's ghost is banished in the course of the series when Tommy starts sleeping with his widow, but this sublimation of his unhealthy obsession with a dead man in relationship with a live woman is in fact considered perverse by his colleagues, who see it as an insult to Jimmy's memory. The terms of identity through the homosocial bond at *Rescue Me's* heart include the priority of the dead past over future living. The narrative circles around the originary trauma of 9/11 with the possibility of a different story in the future troped from the start as a form of betrayal, specifically of allowing the dead to be dead.

At the end of the pilot episode, Tommy takes a trip to the ultimate liminal space, the edge of the ocean, accompanied by the ghosts of all those he failed to save. These include his fallen comrades and two children who perished in the more ordinary tragedies of fires in overcrowded apartment blocks. The scene is visually very striking, especially as Tommy leads the procession of ghosts back from the edge of the sea towards the land and ultimately the city. At its beginning and its end, the pilot episode of *Rescue Me* establishes Tommy Gavin as a haunted man and a liminal consciousness, neither mad nor sane, between the living and the dead, nature and the city, land and water. His particular link to the dead, the tragedy of his fidelity to the past, and his association with in-between spaces make Tommy Gavin typical of the new image of the Irish-American, embodying masculinity as something primal and atavistic, defined by discipline and self-sacrifice, but shadowed by its other, the experience of social and personal fragmentation, random violence and meaningless loss. In effect, Irishness is put to its old work of figuring liminality, while acquiring a new function of mediating death, transforming it from victimization to heroic choice.

Ritual, race and death: ethnicity in *The Wire*

In the first season of *The Wire*, Jimmy McNulty is told by his superior that his dogged integrity indicates he is 'not Irish enough' for the Baltimore police force. However, in the course of the second season, McNulty's Irish ethnicity becomes much more explicit as his professional identity temporarily breaks down. The narrative context for the foregrounding of McNulty's Irishness is his exclusion from the ranks of detective as a punishment for what his immediate superior sees as insubordinate zeal in the pursuit of a case. Jimmy is consigned to the water, the harbour patrol of Baltimore City, an assignment which he hates. *The Wire* has a much

more complex ensemble of central characters than *Rescue Me*, however, and McNulty's Irishness is part of the season's exploration of white, working-class, masculine identities in which ethnicity is linked to the experience of immigration and assimilation. The central investigation in the series is set in motion by rivalry between two sets of Polish workers, dockers and policemen. When the dockworkers' union succeeds in getting a stained-glass window in their local church previously intended as a police memorial, a senior Polish policeman, out of spite, starts an investigation into where they got the money. The discovery of the bodies of 14 young women in a cargo container, where they had suffocated, makes the issue of immigration one of current desperation, not past heritage. The story's focus on the docks makes it a story of how America was and is made at the point of intersection between it and its others. The anonymous stacks of containers offloaded in Baltimore Harbour make any hard and fast border almost impossible to maintain.

The second season of *The Wire* was broadcast more than a year before the possibility of foreign control of US ports provoked a major political crisis, but it dissects the central dilemma that the 'business' by which the US defines itself inevitably makes it open to others. The waterfront setting insists on the history of this process. Yet, even here, openness and borders are a scene of terrible anxiety. The Polish dockworkers are becoming obsolete, a highly organized masculine labour force competing for work that is in increasingly short supply. They long for the work promised by a long-hoped-for ganary, a source of employment linked to nurture, agriculture and to traditional modes of production, but must contend with increased mechanization and computerization, which means the docks require fewer and fewer men. In its dissection of the way in which global capital destroys traditional masculine and social roles, *The Wire* engages in an exploration of the causes of crime highly unusual in the television crime genre where good and evil, them and us, are more usually treated as explanatory categories in themselves. It shows the desperation that drives Sobotka's nephew Nick to drug dealing, for example, in order to fulfil the traditional male role of providing a home for his girlfriend and child. While it is predominantly the male role which drives the no longer working class to crime, the women, who are strongly identified with ethnicity, are also incapable of surviving or providing for themselves in the brave new world. Sobotka's wife has retreated into tranquillized non-entity as the moral universe collapses around her, and her role as 'good Polish mother' becomes meaningless. Nick's girlfriend pressures him to create their mutual future, but she has none of her own, and the young Eastern European women who die in the container seem to indicate that an American

future is no longer available to the new arrivals. When it becomes apparent that the women were suffocated deliberately, it turns out that this is because one of them refused to prostitute herself on board the ship when the 'shepherd', charged with getting them to the US, turns pimp. Refusing to be an object of exchange, this girl ends up as an unidentified subject. She is the floater, whom Jimmy McNulty pulls out of the bay, separated from the other girls, who enter the US as damaged goods. His unsuccessful attempts to identify her lead the narrative into an underworld of young women who cannot or will not communicate, moved around by pimps and immigration officers, with no apparent volition of their own, except their desperate desire to stay. These lone female immigrants destined for exploitation counter the history of the successful migration of families and generations of assimilation in Frank Sobotka's stories of the old days and Jimmy McNulty's Irish ballads. The INS tells Baltimore police that there are 50,000 such undocumented girls working in the US: 'They need a whole new agency just to police 'em.' Russell, a policewoman, responds: 'What they need is a union.'⁸

Russell, the patrolwoman who investigates but eventually weeps for Frank Sobotka, has found police work to be a way out of the economic dead-end in which her husband's departure left her, though we are shown that her prospects for the kind of detective work which she learns to enjoy are severely restricted by the fact that she is a responsible and competent parent. The incompatibility of work and family is a recurrent theme of *The Wire* and an implicit theme in a vast array of crime fiction. For the male characters the incompatibility of the demands of work and the demands of contemporary fatherhood mean that it is structurally impossible to fulfil the male role required of them. However, even McNulty's eventual working partner, Kima, finds herself following in his dysfunctional footsteps when she becomes unfaithful and distant with her lesbian partner after she has a baby.⁹ Kima complains to McNulty, 'they know you're police when they hook up with you . . . And they know you're police when they decide to start a family with you. And all that shit is fine until one day . . . "You should have a regular job" and "You need to be home at five o'clock".'¹⁰ Only work confers identity in the society *The Wire* maps out, but the identity it confers is sterile, limited, itself deathly.

In the character of Jimmy McNulty, as with Tommy Gavin, this is intensified to the point where fidelity to the dead prevents them from living. Other detectives in the series are strongly associated with new technologies: the series takes its name from wire-tapping after all, and Freamon, an African-American detective who shares a history of being punished for doing his job too honestly with McNulty, rediscovers himself as a

detective through the application of technology to intelligence gathering. McNulty is a much more traditional detective. Like the dock workers whose sense of themselves is corrupted by lack of work and the traditional social networks it supports, McNulty disintegrates when his identity is not fixed by the job. He tells Bunk that he ‘needs to get off that boat. I need to do a case’.¹¹ When he is not a detective, McNulty becomes much more stereotypically Irish.

‘Duck and Cover’ opens with him stumbling around a bar, trying to talk to his wife on the phone, failing, demanding more drink. He then drives away with The Pogues’ ‘Transmetropolitan’ blaring on the car stereo:

. . . This town has done us dirty
 This town has bled us dry
 We’ve been here for a long time
 And we’ll be here ‘til we die
 So we’ll finish off the leavings
 Of blood and glue and beer
 And burn this bloody city down
 In the summer of the year . . .¹²

The song’s nihilism links Jimmy’s despair, his Irishness and self-destruction. He doesn’t burn the city down, but he does drive his car quite deliberately at a wall. As Bunk tells their captain to persuade him to take McNulty into his detail, ‘Jimmy McNulty, when he ain’t policing, he is a picture postcard of a drunken self-destructive fucker . . . but on a good case, that’s the closest the man comes to being right.’ The drunken self-destruction is linked via the soundtrack to McNulty’s Irishness, though the choice of ‘Transmetropolitan’ hints that it is the migrant condition and not the accident of origin that defines Jimmy’s insecure identity. The phrase ‘homeland security’ is routinely derided by the police in *The Wire*, signifying a shift of resources away from regular policing: they are reduced to pretending a drug dealer’s first name is Ahmed in order to secure a wire tap on him. ‘Homeland’ transparently doesn’t include West Baltimore.

Jimmy McNulty’s drunken driving spree is shown in a sequence of alternating close ups of Jimmy in his car with The Pogues blaring and long shots of his car driving at speed through deserted, broad and unmistakably American streets, which have been part of the visual repertoire of American alienation since film noir. His car hints more at the seventies than the forties, though, and the streetscape is more reminiscent of *Taxi Driver* than

The Maltese Falcon. At the point when he is most forlornly Irish, Jimmy is most quintessentially American.

Music works as an important signifier of ethnicity, and sometimes as commentary on the narrative throughout *The Wire*. McNulty's soundtrack signature is the use of The Pogues, and their music signals the occasions when Irishness serves as metonym for blue-collar masculinity. In an extraordinary wake scene, in the third series of *The Wire*, the ritual mourning of a dead colleague involves laying him out at Kavanagh's Irish Pub, an oration, a great deal of drink, and the singing of The Pogues' 'Body of an American' by a group of colleagues, of whom at least half are African-American officers. The scene mirrors the song's mock heroic: the dead man, Ray Cole, has died not from a bullet but a heart attack in the gym. 'We're police', says Landsman, 'so no lies between us: he wasn't the greatest detective and he wasn't the worst. He put down some good cases and he dogged a few bad ones. But the motherfucker had his moments. Yes, he fucking did.' Characteristically ambivalent, the scene both mocks and celebrates the archaic masculine values of heroic camaraderie. That this male bonding through shared work and experience is archaic is very clear. The second series of *The Wire* was declaredly an analysis of the 'death of the American working class', figured through those most masculine occupations of dockers and longshoremen, though often seen through the eyes of the policewoman, Russell.

Not-quite American heroes

Gavin and McNulty configure Irish-American masculinity as a combination of heroic resistance and traumatized survival. The Irish inheritance of emigration and struggle is recruited to express both the sense of loss and the requirements of survival. Tommy Gavin and Jimmy McNulty bear the traces of troubled migration, not triumphant assimilation. The care both lavish on the dead identifies Irishness and the past: their failures as fathers indicate that they have more trouble connecting to the future.¹³ These characters tend to self-deconstruct. It is tempting to read their limitations and the failures of their attempts at heroic patriarchy as national allegories, with their Irishness functioning as a protective distance (they are not-quite American heroes). They certainly reflect a renewed preoccupation with ethnicity at a time when fear of terrorism is generating both a desire for closed borders and for clear lines of demarcation between 'them' and 'us' in the US. The two characters reflect different responses to this. Gavin cannot imagine working with Chinese, women or little

green men:¹⁴ McNulty by contrast finds that the drowned immigrant girl he cannot name is turning up in his dreams.

Because ethnicity is a matter of family, it is part of the fabric of domesticity, determining food, music and conversational practice ('Four Polaks, six opinions', Frank Sobotka reminisces fondly).¹⁵ As a result of this intimacy, ethnicity makes the history of immigration personal, immediate. It invokes the security of home(land), but reminds that homeland is always already lost in the process of becoming American. In this context, the figure of the tragically Irish-American expresses the desire for unity and the terror of disintegration in a divided nation.

Notes

1. See *The Irish in US*, ed. Diane Negra (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).
2. *Rescue Me* (Sony Pictures Television, 2004–); *The Wire* (HBO, 2002–).
3. Unlike the ghostly partner in *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* (ITV, 1969–71; Universal Pictures, 2000–01), Tommy's dead partner impedes his work rather than attempting to assist it.
4. *Rescue Me*, Season 1, Episode 1, 'Guts'.
5. *Rescue Me*, 'Guts'.
6. Slavoj Žižek, 'Welcome to the Desert of the Real', *The Symptom: Online Journal for Lacan.com*, 2 (Spring 2002), www.lacan.com/desertsymf.htm (accessed 1 April 2006).
7. Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).
8. *The Wire*, Series 2, Episode 3, 'Hot Shots'.
9. *The Wire*, Series 3, Episode 2, 'All Due Respect'.
10. *The Wire*, Series 3, Episode 3, 'Dead Soldiers'.
11. *The Wire*, Series 2, Episode 8, 'Duck and Cover'.
12. The Pogues, 'Transmetropolitan', *Red Roses For Me* (Stiff Records, 1984) (cat. SEEZ55). In the US 'duck and cover' is, of course, synonymous with inadequate precautions against nuclear attack.
13. See Gerardine Meaney, 'Dead, White, Male: Irishness in *Angel* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*', in *The Irish in US*, ed. Negra, pp. 254–81.
14. *Rescue me*, Season 1, Episode 1, 'Guts'.
15. *The Wire*, Series 2, Episode 6, 'All Prologue'.

Index

- Adair, Johnny, 31–2
Adorno, Theodor, 104, 179, 189–90, 192, 194
advertising, 39–49
Ahern, Bertie, 191–2
aliens, 177–8, 182
 see also the other; otherness
Allen, Theodore W., 129–30
alterity, 185, 190–1
 see also otherness
Alternative Miss Ireland, 210–14
amateurism, 39–49 *passim*
America and Ireland
 Irish-American diaspora, 129–31
 Irish-American identity, 128–39
 Irish-Americans and modern Ireland, 137–9
 in the US media, 3–14
Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), 128, 131, 133, 134–7
Anzaldúa, Gloria, 201
authenticity, 149, 152–4, 186–90
authorship, 74, 76–7

Bank of Ireland, *see under* corporate sponsorship
Barthes, Roland, 74
beauty pageants, 210–14
Bell, Desmond, 32
Bennett, Larry, 192
Between War and Peace (Bew, Patterson and Teague), 175
Bew, Paul, 174, 175
Bhabha, Homi K., 185, 187, 190, 194–5
blackface, 29–31
 see also minstrelsy
blackness
 and Irish identity, xviii, 24–5, 32
 and masculinity, 26–36, 192–3
 and pop music, 192–3
 stereotypes of, 33–5
 see also minstrelsy
body anxiety, 5–9

Bono, xviii, 16
borders, *see* boundaries
boundaries, xiv–xv, 5–9, 10, 111–12, 158–9
 see also cyberspace; framing; immigration; liminality
Bowen, Elizabeth, 102, 105–6
boy bands, 184–95
boyhood, 186
Boyzone, 184–95 *passim*
brotherhood, 186
Bryan, Dominic, 29
Burke Brogan, Patricia, 55, 68
Butler, Judith, 163, 206–7
Byrne, Nicky, 191

Cameron, James, 115, 117–21
camp, 210–13, 219–20
Casey, Natasha, 149
castration anxiety, 6–9
Catholic Church, 42, 55–70, 131–4
Catholicism
 and sexuality, 61–2, 66–8, 69
 in the USA, 129, 131–4
celebrity tourism, 141–4
celibacy, 67, 68
Celtic Tiger Ireland, 137–9, 141–2, 157, 158–9, 166, 184, 194
Certau, Michel de, 109
circulation, 107–9
citizenship, 17
 in fandom, 76, 81
 legislation, 35, 47–8, 192, 194
city, the, 100–2, 108–12
Civil Rights Movement, 132, 134, 135
class, 117–20
Clear, Catriona, 56, 57
clothing
 cross-dressing, 189, 210–12
 and effeminacy, 217–18
 fancy dress, 27–30
colonialism, xvii–xviii, 69–70
 and effeminacy, 216–18

colonialism – *continued*

- postcolonialism, 56, 194–5, 198
- and sexuality, 211–13, 216–18
- and surveillance, 89
- comedy, stand-up, 162–6
- Commitments, The* (Doyle), 32, 193–4
- commodification
 - of masculinity, 157–8
 - of the Northern Ireland conflict, 85, 91, 97
- community
 - and Irishness, 45–7
 - and tradition, 173–4
 - and traditional music, 116, 117–21, 122–3
- Connolly, Claire, xiii–xiv
- Conrad, Kathryn, 216
- convents, 55–70
- corporate sponsorship, 39–41, 43–9
 - Bank of Ireland, 39, 44, 45–6, 48
 - Guinness, 39, 44, 46–7, 48
 - Vodafone, 39, 41, 44, 48
- cross-dressing, *see under* clothing
- cultural identity (in Northern Ireland), 171–82
- cyberspace, 75–81, 111
- cyborg culture, 77–8
- dance music, 180–1
- Dandelions* (Looney), 165
- Darke, Colin, 28
- de Lauretis, Teresa, 205
- Derrida, Jacques, 110, 176, 177, 181–2
- Dery, Frank, 78
- Desmond, Jane, 141
- destination weddings, 146–54
- Devil's Own*, 121, 123, 124, 180
- Diderot, Denis, 60–1, 67, 69
- Dinkins, David (former Mayor of New York), 133, 134, 135
- 'The Dinner Party', 219–20
- Doan, Laura, 202
- Dollimore, Jonathan, 211
- Downing Street Declaration, 173–4
- Doyle, Roddy, 15–25, 32, 193–4
- drag, 194, 210–12
- Duggan, Lisa, 215
- Durbinsky, Karen, 151

- Eclipsed* (Burke Brogan), 68
- effeminacy, 212, 216–20
 - and colonialism, 216–18
 - history of, 218–20
- eroticism
 - in cyberspace, 78–80,
 - and Gothic, 60–2
 - and boy bands, 185–6
- ethnicity
 - Irish-American, 9–14, 128–39
 - and masculinity, 3–14, 26–36
 - and music, 115–26
 - and race, 32–3
 - and weddings, 144–54
 - see also* race
- family values
 - and boy bands, 185–6, 188, 191
 - and homosexuality, 214–15
 - and Irishness, 141, 143–4, 146, 150
 - see also* motherhood
- fan fiction (fanfic), 74–81
- fancy dress, 27–30
- fans, 74–81, 188–9
- Fanon, Frantz, 31, 216
- Farrell, Colin, 157, 158–61, 166
- father, the, 159–61, 165–6
- Feehilly, Mark, 191
- Feldman, Allen, 86, 88
- femininity, 40–1, 157–9, 161–6, 212–13
- feminism
 - and convent life, 55–6, 63–4, 68, 69–70
 - and queerness, 197–204 *passim*, 213
- feminization of mass culture, 188–9
- fiction
 - fanfic, 74–81
 - novels, 60–6, 193–4
 - science fiction, 76–9, 177–8, 187
 - short stories, 15–25,
- film
 - Hollywood, 115–26, 144–6
 - Irish film, 58–9, 62, 66–9, 108
 - and Irishness, 121–6, 144–6, 157–62, 163, 166
 - music in, 115–126
 - and religious institutions, 58–9, 62, 66–9

- Fiske, John, 74
 football and national identity, 21, 29
 Foucault, Michel, 200
 Foy, Marie, 92–3
 framing, 85–97, 162, 164, 165
 see also boundaries; stereotypes
 Freud, Sigmund, 104, 110
 Frith, Simon, 193
- Gaelic Athletic Association, 39–49
 see also corporate sponsorship
Gangs of New York, 129
 Garber, Marjorie, 189, 194, 212
 Garner, Steve, xviii, 20
 gayness, 128–9, 132–9, 190–1, 197–207 *passim*, 210–20
 see also homosexuality; queerness
 gender, 78–80, 210–20
 see also gayness; homosexuality; femininity; lesbianism; masculinity; queerness; sexuality
 ghost stories, 178–80
 Gibbons, Luke, 59
 global capitalism, xiii, 10–11, 39, 40, 180–1, 217
 Good Friday Agreement, 171, 174
 Gothic, 59–63, 66–70, 178
 graffiti, 92–5
 Graham, Brian, 32
 Graham, Colin, 186–7, 210
 Greavu, Sara, 26, 28–9, 35
 Gubar, Susan, 34
 Guinness, *see under* corporate sponsorship
- Halberstam, Judith, 203
 Hall, Donald E., 201
 Halperin, David, 206
 Haraway, Donna, 77–8
 Haver, William, 205
 heart-throb, the, 192–3
 Herr, Cheryl, 211–12
 Hollywood, 115–26, 157–66
 Holmes, David, 160–1
 homophobia, 128–39, 216
 homosexuality
 and colonialism, 216–18
 in eighteenth-century England, 218–20
 and Irishness, 128–9, 132, 133–9
 and modern Ireland, 214–17, 219–20
 see also gender; queerness
 Howe, Stephen, 31
- identity
 and culture, 171–82
 Irish-American, 128–39
 and sexuality, 199–200, 205–7
 and work, 11–12
- Ilouz, Eva, 148–9
- immigration
 in fiction, 18–25
 in the Irish media, 15–18
 and queerness, 215
 to the USA, 10–14, 129, 131
- industrial schools, 55–8
- Inglis, Tom, 197–8
 inhuman, the, 100–12
Intermission, 161, 163
 internet, 74–81
Invention of the White Race, The (Allen), 129–30
- Ireland
 fantasies of, 141–54
 and heritage, 142, 152, 153
 as a refuge, 142, 143–44
 and tourism, 141–54
 and the USA, *see* America and Ireland
 as a wedding destination, 141–2, 146–54
- Irigaray, Luce, 194
- Irish cultural revival, 41, 64, 186
 Irish fanfic writers, 76, 78, 79–81
 Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO), 128–9, 132–9
- Irishness
 accessorization of, 146–50
 and American identity, 3–4, 142, 150–4
 and ancestry, 47–9
 and authenticity, 149, 152–4, 186
 and blackness, xviii, 24–5, 32
 and Catholicism, 59
 and the Celtic Tiger, 158–9, 160–1, 166

- Irishness – *continued*
 and community, 45–7
 in cyberspace, 76, 78–81
 and death, 9, 13
 and drunkenness, 12, 137
 and family values, 141, 143–4, 146, 150
 and femininity, 157–8, 161–6
 and the GAA, 39–49
 and Hollywood, 144–6, 157–66
 and homophobia, 128–39
 and homosexuality, 128–9, 132, 133–9
 and liminality, 9
 and masculinity, 13, 39–49
 measures of, 21–2
 and music, 115–26, 184–95
 and self-destruction, 12–13
 and sexuality, 57
 and slavery, 129–30
 and the USA, xv–xvi, 4–14, 128–39
- Jameson, Fredric, xiii, xviii, 210
 Jarman, Neil, 29, 85–6, 88–9
 jazz, 34–5
 Jenkins, Henry, 74, 79
 Johnson, E. Patrick, 201, 204, 206
 Joint Declaration of Peace, *see*
 Downing Street Declaration
 Joyce, James, 102, 106, 173
- Keating, Ronan, 187, 189
 Kelly, Aaron, 91–2, 95–6
 Kiberd, Declan, 102
 Kirkland, Richard, 175, 210
 kitsch, 210–12
 Kuchta, David, 218
- Land of Spices, The* (O'Brien), 55, 62–6, 68
 landscape, aesthetics of, 100–12
 Larkin, Jim, 107, 109
Laws of Attraction, 144–6
 Lentini, Ronit, 17
see also homosexuality; queerness
 Lesbian Lives, 199, 202, 203
 lesbian studies, 197–207 *passim*
 lesbianism, 60–1, 63–4, 128–9, 132–9
 Lewis, Matthew, 60, 61
- LGBTQ, 198–202 *passim*
 Lijphart, Arend, 174
 liminality, 9, 151, 166, 185, 214
see also boundaries
 Lloyd, David, 56, 210
 localism, in Irish sport, 45–8
 Loftus, Belinda, 87
 Longley, Edna, 175
 Looney, Fiona, 165
 Lott, Eric, 30
 loyalism, 26–36
 Luas, 100–12
see also speed
 Lyotard, Jean-François, xiii, 104–5
- MacNeice, Louis, 102–5
 Magdalene laundries, 55, 56–7, 58–9, 62, 66–9
Magdalene Sisters, The, 55, 58, 62, 66–9
 Magray, Mary, 56–8
 Maguire, Anne, 132, 133, 134
 Manalansan, Martin, 213–14
 marching bands, 27–8, 30–1, 32–3
 Martin, James H., 44–5
 masculinity
 and authenticity, 187–8
 and blackness, 26–36, 192–3
 and the body, 5–9, 31–2, 40–1, 194
 crisis of, 4–14, 39–41
 and ethnicity, 3–14, 26–36
 and fanfic, 79–80
 and femininity, 40–1
 and the GAA, 39–49
 and global capitalism, 10–11
 and Hollywood, 157–61, 165–6
 Irish-American, 3–14
 and loyalism, 26–36
 and marching bands, 27–31
 and militarism, 5–6, 30–1
 in music, 187–9
 and self-sacrifice, 9, 40
 and women, 8–9
- McAleese, Mary, 185
 McCurtain, Margaret, 56
 McDonald, Mary G., 142, 151
 McFadden, Brian, 187, 189, 190–1
 McGonagle, Declan, 87
 McKibben, Bill, 101

- McTeague, Tommy, 26
 McTigue, Eoghan, 91
 McVeigh, Robbie, 26
Metro Eireann, 15–25
 metrosexuality, 157, 166, 167n
 Mighall, Robert, 59, 67
 militarism, 3–4, 5–6, 30–1
 minstrelsy, 26–8, 33–5, 211–12
 mobility, 110–12
 modernism, 102, 103, 105–6
 mollies, 218–19
 see also homosexuality; queerness
Monk, The (Lewis), 60, 61
 Monk, Maria, 61–2
 mother, the
 and boy bands, 185, 187, 189–90, 194–5
 in the Oedipal moment, 158–9
 as stereotype of Irish woman, 157–8, 159, 161, 164–5
 see also Oedipal archetype
 motherhood, 158–9, 164–5
 Mullan, Peter, 55, 58, 59, 66–9
 multiculturalism, 16–17, 138, 161
 mural paintings, 85–97
 Murphy, Brenda, 46–7
 Murphy, Kieran, 138
 music
 dance, 180–1
 jazz, 34–5
 pop, 184–95
 traditional Irish, 115–26
 music hall, 211–12

 Nairn, Tom, 176
 Nandy, Ashis, 216
 nationalism
 and boy bands, 186–7
 and the Catholic Church, 66
 and the GAA, 39–49
 and religious institutions, 64–6
 nature, 100–6
 negotiation, consociational model of, 174, 177
 Negra, Diane, 157–8
 9/11 attacks, 3, 4–9
 Northern Ireland, 26–36, 85–97, 171–82
Nun, The (Diderot), 60–1

 nuns, 55–70
 Nussbaum, Martha, 18

 O'Brien, Kate, 55, 62–6
 O'Connell, Daniel, 129
 O'Connor, John Cardinal, 132, 134
 O'Donnell, Daniel, 188–9
 O'Kane, Deirdre, 158, 161–6
 O'Loughlin, Peadar, 123
 O'Rourke, Michael, 203
 O'Toole, Fintan, 16, 17
 Oedipal archetype, 158–61, 164–6, 184–95
 Onyejelem, Chinedu, 15, 16–17
 Orange Order marches, 26, 27, 29–31
 other, the, 177–8, 200–1
 see also otherness; outsider
 otherness
 and jazz, 34–5
 and technology, 103–6
 see also alterity; other
 Otnes, Cele, 149
 outsider, the, 161, 178–80
 see also aliens; the other

 Padel, Ruth, 188, 193
 paranormal, 178–80
 Patterson, Henry, 175
 peace and violence, 176–7, 178
 Peace Process in Northern Ireland, 171–82
 Pearse, Padraig, 186
 penis envy, 189
 photography, 26, 28–9, 85–90, 102, 171
 and power, 87–90
 and violence, 87, 89–90
 Pitt, Brad, 180
 Pleck, Elizabeth H., 149
 Poole, Michael, 32
 pop music, 184–95
 postcolonialism, *see under* colonialism
 postmodernism
 and modernism, 102, 105–6, 110
 and plurality, 111–12
 and queerness, 215–16
 postmodernity, definition of, xiii
 Presley, Elvis, 192
 public transport, 100–12

- quare theory, 197–207
 queer theory, 197–207
 queerness, 197–207, 210–20
 and child bearing, 218–20
 in the convent, 60–1, 63–4
 definition of, 203–4
 and fanfic, 78, 80
 and global capitalism, 217
 Irish queerness, 210–20
 and modernity, 215–16
Quiet Man, The, 116, 122
- race, xiv, 3–51
 and ethnicity, 32–3
 in fiction, 18–25
 in Northern Ireland, 26–36
 see also ethnicity; racism
- racism
 and boy bands, 192
 and homophobia, 128–9, 135–7
 in Ireland, 15–25
 and Irish-Americans, 129–31, 135–7
 and sectarianism, 35–6
- Raftery, Mary, 69
 rail travel, 102–6
 reader as writer, 74, 77
Recruit, The, 159, 160
 religious orders, 55–70
Rescue Me, 4–9, 13–14
 Reynolds, Paddy, 121
 Riach, Douglas C., 33
Riverdance, 116
 Rolston, Bill, 36, 94
 RTÉ, 41–2, 43
- science fiction, 76–9, 177–8, 187
 Scott, Joan Wallach, 203
Sex in a Cold Climate, 58–9
 sexuality, xvii–xviii
 and Catholicism, 61–2, 66–8, 69
 and colonialism, 211–13, 216–18
 and Gothic, 60–1
 and Irishness, 57
 and monastic life, 57, 60–1, 63–4, 66–8
 research into, 197–8
 repression of, 57–8, 60–2, 66–8, 69
 Shapiro, Steven, 218–20
 Shoukri, Andre, 31
- Siegel, Norman, 135
 Sinfield, Alan, 218, 220
 Sisters of Mercy, 56, 57, 58, 64, 68
 slavery, 129–30
 Sloan, Darryl, 177–8, 180
 Smith, Jim, 57, 59
 ‘Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs’, 162–3
 Sontag, Susan, 89–91
 speed, 105–6, 107–12
 sport, 39–49
 St Clair, Sheila, 178–80
 St Patrick’s Day Parades, 3–4, 128–39
 stand-up comedy, 162–6
 stereotypes
 of class, 117–21
 and fancy dress, 28
 of Irish women, 157–9, 161–6, 212–13
 of Irishness, 3, 128, 137
 racial, 27–31, 33–5
 street, the, 107–12
 surface and depth, 211–12
 surveillance, 87–9
 Szarkowski, John, 86
- Tagg, John, 92
 Teague, Paul, 175
 technology, 103–6
 television, 3–14, 76, 78, 150–1, 165
 theatre, 68, 165
 Thompson, Spurgeon, 89
Titanic, 115, 117–21, 123
 tourism, 141–54
 trade unionism, 107
 tradition and community, 173–4
 traditional music, 115–26
 and community, 116, 117–21, 122–3
 definition of, 115–16
 and the exotic, 119–21, 123
 and vitality, 117
 tram, *see* Luas
 transgender, 79–80, 163, 211, 218–20
 transnationalism, 75–7, 110–12
- Ugba, Abel, 15, 17, 20
 University College Dublin, 197, 199, 203
 urban landscape, *see* city

- violence and peace, 176–7, 178
 Virilio, Paul, 109
 Vodafone, *see under* corporate
 sponsorship
 voyager as voyeur, 111–12
 voyeurism
 and film, 122
 and the Luas, 111–12

Waking Ned Devine, 121–6
 weddings, 142, 144–54
 Weed, Elizabeth, 201
 Westlife, 191, 184–95 *passim*
 whiteness
 and ethnicity, 32–3
 and Irish-Americans, 129–31
 and minstrelsy, 34
 and national identity, 24
 in Northern Ireland, 26–7, 30–3,
 34–5, 36
 Wilde, Oscar, 212, 217
 wild Irish girl, 157–8, 161–4
Wire, The, 4, 9–14
 women
 and masculinity, 8–9
 see also femininity; gender;
 motherhood
 Women's Studies, 197, 198, 202
 Woods, Oona, 90
 work and identity, 11–12

 Žižek, Slavoj, 7