

*Second-Generation Irish Rock Musicians in England:
Cultural Studies, Pop Journalism and Musical 'Routes'*

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on a relatively under-researched immigrant-descended group: the second-generation Irish in post-war England. Taking popular music as a case study, the thesis examines some of the key ways in which the second-generation Irish have been discursively managed in both academic and journalistic discourses. To this end, the thesis develops a critical dialogue with particular aspects of Irish Studies, British Cultural Studies, and the discourse of popular music journalism. Much of this dialogue is, in turn, refracted through the prism of specific themes and issues, especially those pertaining to assimilation, essentialism, and 'white ethnicity'. In addition to these considerations, the thesis also addresses the question of musical 'routes', examining the variegated aesthetic strategies that have been mobilised by second-generation Irish rock musicians such as John Lydon, Kevin Rowland, Shane MacGowan, Noel Gallagher, and The Smiths.

Throughout, the thesis is informed by a desire to challenge the invisibility of the second-generation Irish in academic and journalistic discourses; to highlight the diversity and complexity of second-generation Irish experience and identity-formation processes; and to point to the productive and diverse ways in which second-generation cultural practitioners have reconfigured popular culture in England.

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Introduction

Beginnings: 'Britpop' and the Importance of Being Irish

The germ of the idea for this thesis was forged in response to a particular moment in the mid-1990s, when a number of academic and popular discourses began to increase the visibility of the second-generation Irish in England, who had hitherto been a largely overlooked immigrant-descended presence.¹

At this time, a study published in the *British Medical Journal*, and widely reported in the mainstream press, demonstrated that while second-generation Irish people had conventionally been conceived as a fully assimilated and largely indistinguishable component of the host population, they had in fact experienced disproportionately high instances of ill-health, having 'significantly higher mortality' than the host population 'for most major causes of death'.² The study suggested, therefore, that it might be useful, at least in the context of health provision, to differentiate the second-generation Irish from the ostensible homogeneity of the white English host population.³ And while this conclusion was, of course, directed specifically at the realm of health provision, the implication was clearly that the second-generation Irish were, in important ways, distinct from the host population and that this difference should, moreover, be formally recognised and acknowledged.

At approximately the same time as the publication of this medical study, second-generation Irish difference was becoming increasingly visible in an entirely different context, that of

popular music culture. At this time, the rock group Oasis, led by the second-generation Irish brothers, Noel and Liam Gallagher, who had attained an especially high-profile media status after their group had achieved considerable critical and commercial success,⁴ authorised a biography of Oasis that unambiguously foregrounded their Irishness.⁵ This apparent desire to assert Irish difference coincided with similar gestures made by other second-generation rock musicians. For instance, the former Smiths' guitarist Johnny Marr, spoke (in the aftermath of a major IRA bomb attack on his hometown of Manchester) for the first time about his personal experience of anti-Irish prejudice,⁶ while John Lydon, the former Sex Pistols' lyricist and vocalist, who re-emerged in the mid-1990s for that group's much publicised re-union tour, published an autobiography entitled *No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs* in which he explicitly located himself in an immigrant Irish narrative.⁷

This apparently collective desire to assert Irish difference served to highlight a dimension of these musicians' backgrounds that had hitherto been marginalised in both academic and journalistic discourses, and thereby drew attention to the scarcely acknowledged fact that some of the most high-profile and critically canonised English rock musicians of the past three decades have been the immediate descendants of working-class Irish Catholic labour migrants.

Though this point did receive recognition in a highly exceptional article by the music journalist Jon Savage in the *Guardian* newspaper in 1995,⁸ the increasing visibility of the second-generation Irish in the realm of popular music culture was largely eclipsed by a corresponding endeavour to recruit second-generation rock musicians for an entirely different project, the phenomenon of 'Britpop', a 'defiantly nationalistic'⁹ discourse that emerged in the London-based music press in the mid-1990s, predicated upon the notion of an ostensibly

homogeneous white Englishness (rather than a multi-ethnic Britishness).¹⁰

Oasis were arguably (and, perhaps, not entirely unwillingly) the most prominent band to be critically designated under the aegis of Britpop, which posited the group as an Anglo-Saxon archetype.¹¹ Other second-generation rock musicians, meanwhile, were, in much of the discourse around Britpop, taken to be its principal predecessors. Thus, The Smiths were conscripted for what *Melody Maker* called the 'Home Guard' of Britpop, while Marr was honoured as a key 'Britpop icon'.¹²

Such assertions were not restricted to the domain of popular journalism. Indeed, the Britpop thesis received a quasi-academic rendition in Michael Bracewell's *England is Mine: Pop Life in Albion from Wilde to Goldie* (1997), which characterised second-generation rock musicians as quintessentially English, claiming, for example, that the 'project' of The Smiths was 'organically English'.¹³

More formally academic engagements with Englishness and popular music at this time also posited second-generation Irish rock musicians as representative icons of an archetypal Englishness, whilst making little or no reference to their Irishness. For example, at the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) conference held at the University of Strathclyde in 1995, a panel on national identity and popular music included a paper on Englishness that made reference to Lydon, Elvis Costello, The Smiths and Oasis without once mentioning their Irishness.¹⁴

Also at this time, the Commission for Racial Equality published a pedagogically-driven

multi-culturalist text (to coincide with a touring exhibition) entitled *Roots of the Future: Ethnic Diversity in the Making of Britain*, whose express purpose was to ‘focus on those areas where post-war immigrants and their descendants have made the most striking contributions since they settled in Britain’.¹⁵ However, while this text explicitly acknowledged the presence of Irish immigrants in an introductory chapter on Irish migration to Britain, the authors failed to register a single Irish contribution in the section on popular music, instead recruiting second-generation rock musicians for a putative Anglo-Saxon ‘centre’ against which to differentiate more identifiably immigrant-descended rock and pop musicians. Pointing to the diverse cultural forms available in contemporary Britain, the authors explained: ‘young people from a wide mixture of backgrounds are picking up the languages and accents spoken around them, moving easily from Cockney to Patois or Punjabi, and arguing the merits of Paul Ince over Paul Gascoigne [and] Oasis over Echobelly’. This binary division between Oasis and Echobelly is particularly instructive. Echobelly were, according to authors of *Roots of the Future*, ‘Britpop superstars [who] enjoy massive chart and critical success with their unique brand of guitar-driven pop’, a description that was, of course, equally applicable to Oasis. However, the key distinction between the two bands (and therefore the reason why Echobelly are included here and Oasis are not) was that Echobelly’s vocalist was of ‘Asian decent’ and their guitarist was of ‘Caribbean origin’. The fact that all five original members of Oasis were second-generation Irish was evidently insufficient, despite the text’s explicit acknowledgement of Irish immigration, to qualify them for inclusion.¹⁶

Coinciding, then, with the increasing visibility of second-generation Irish difference outlined above, was a simultaneous endeavour, across a range of disparate discourses, to incorporate the second-generation into an ostensibly homogeneous white Englishness. And while it would not

be unreasonable to suggest that there was perhaps some degree of complicity in this project,¹⁷ there was nevertheless an unequivocal attempt, amongst second-generation rock musicians, to assert Irish difference in the face of Anglocentric appropriation. Thus, at the height of Britpop, in the summer of 1995, Noel Gallagher succinctly quashed a rumour that Oasis would record a song for the England football team (in the following year's European Championships) with a robust assertion of the group's Irishness: 'Over my dead body ... we're Irish'.¹⁸ Also at this time, Johnny Marr expressed his 'despair' at the 'nationalism' of Britpop, before making reference to his Irishness.¹⁹

In this context of contradictory discourses and contested identities, then, I wanted to try to make sense of the increasing visibility of the second-generation Irish in certain contexts, and the abiding silence about the second-generation in others. To this end, much of the thesis concerns itself with critical discourses, in particular the field of British cultural studies, but also that of British popular music journalism. In its engagement with these discourses, the thesis develops a critique of cultural studies' handling of the Irish ethnic group in England, before evaluating the reception of second-generation rock musicians in both cultural studies and music journalism. In addition to this engagement with critical discourses, I also wanted to consider the particular creative strategies adopted by second-generation cultural practitioners, and specifically the musical 'routes' traversed by the strand of second-generation music-makers outlined above.

My use of the term 'routes', here, originates in Paul Gilroy's discussion of black popular musics, in which he points to the validity and inevitability of diasporic, hybrid musical forms that exceed the narrow frames of a fixed - and supposedly authentic - ethnic music, and thereby

confound ‘any simplistic ... understanding of the relationship ... between folk cultural authenticity and pop cultural betrayal’.²⁰

Admittedly, it has not been the project of musicians like Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis to hybridise ‘traditional’ Irish musical styles in the manner of, say, Shane MacGowan, whose post-punk reconfiguration of Irish folk music articulated a peculiarly London-Irish experience, or Kevin Rowland, who endeavoured to fuse Irish music with soul.²¹ Eschewing such an ostentatious display of Irishness - perhaps, like Noel Gallagher, these musicians felt ‘stifled’ by the constraints of ‘traditional’ music²² - they have instead engaged with the aesthetic sensibilities of an ‘independent’ guitar-based rock tradition.²³ This would appear to serve as a demonstration of Mark Slobin’s point that while ‘we all grow up with *something* ... we can choose just about *anything* by way of expressive culture’.²⁴ With this in mind, the thesis concludes with a discussion of the aesthetic strategies that second-generation rock musicians have mobilised, with specific reference to the particular ‘route’ traversed by The Smiths.

Objectives

The overarching aims of the project are primarily four-fold: first, the thesis demonstrates the complexity and diversity of second-generation Irish identity-formation processes. This complexity and diversity has hitherto been overlooked in both academic and journalistic discourses which have tended to contextualise the second-generation in terms of, on the one hand, (English) assimilation (and the denial of difference) and on the other (Irish) essentialism (and the derision of difference).

Secondly, I draw attention to the diversity and productivity of second-generation cultural

practitioners, by highlighting the ways in which second-generation rock musicians have reconfigured popular culture in England. This contribution has been masked by the critical discourses outlined above, which have restricted our conception of second-generation Irish music-making to the work of identifiably Irish musicians such as Kevin Rowland and Shane MacGowan.

Thirdly, then, the thesis explores the particular ways in which this complexity, diversity and productivity have been overlooked in both academic and journalistic discourses, thus developing a critique of the assimilationist thesis on which much of this work has been predicated, and arguing that this work has implicitly maintained the popular assumption that the Irish in England have been a largely problem-centred presence.

Fourthly and finally, I suggest that the abiding silence about Irish ethnicity outlined above has foreclosed certain kinds of questions about second-generation Irish cultural production, and that the adoption of an interpretive frame that acknowledges Irish ethnicity can facilitate the formation of productive re-readings of second-generation cultural practitioners.

Structure

Chapter One, 'Locating the Second-Generation Irish in England: Between Essentialism and Assimilation', surveys the dominant ways in which the second-generation have conventionally been handled in academic discourses, developing a critique of the assimilationist thesis which has underpinned the dominant historical and sociological paradigm for understanding the second-generation Irish in England. The chapter begins by re-examining the autobiography of Tom Barclay, a key source in historical accounts of second-generation assimilation in

nineteenth-century England. This re-consideration demonstrates the ways in which academic discourses have overlooked the complexity of second-generation identity-formation processes. Studies of the health patterns and educational performance of the children of Irish immigrants in post-war England are also re-considered. The chapter examines the way in which the concept of assimilation has been constructed and used in these studies, and suggests that this has masked the variegated experience of the second-generation. Arguing that studies of the second-generation Irish have hitherto focused on a narrow range of largely problem-centred issues, and have neglected to consider the possibility of second-generation cultural agency, the chapter suggests that second-generation rock musicians offer a useful demonstration of the productive and diverse ways in which this generation has reconfigured popular culture in England. The final section of the chapter explores the notion of the 'plastic Paddy', a derogatory term denoting the perceived inauthenticity of this generation's identification with Irishness. The chapter concludes by suggesting that future studies of the second-generation might more usefully conceive of this generation beyond the narrow frames of either assimilation or inauthenticity, positing the notion of a hyphenated Irish-Englishness as a possible route forward.

Chapters Two and Three examine the handling of Irish ethnicity in the field of British cultural studies. While Chapter Three focuses specifically on the field's treatment of second-generation Irish rock musicians, Chapter Two, 'Unthinking "Albion": British Cultural Studies, "White Ethnicity", and the Irish in England', considers the overarching absence of an Irish dimension in the field, tracing the particular ways in which Irish ethnicity has been handled in British cultural studies. To this end, the chapter considers the formative work of Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson, as well as the subsequent project of black British

cultural studies practitioners, such as Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy. Exploring the marginalisation of Irish immigration in the class-based accounts of Hoggart *et al*, and the problematic absence of an Irish dimension in the field's decisive 'turn' towards questions of 'race' and ethnicity, the chapter demonstrates that the Irish ethnic group has been doubly elided, and argues that this abiding absence constitutes a kind of disciplinary policing of Irish ethnicity in the field. The chapter argues, however, that the ostensible absence of an Irish dimension has masked the fact that the Irish presence in England has been intrinsically relevant - not to say centrally important - in some of the field's major interventions into questions of 'race' and ethnicity. Exploring some of the key implications of this point, the chapter draws particular attention to the field's tendency to subsume the Irish ethnic group into an all-encompassing, and largely undefined, 'white ethnicity'.

Chapter Three, 'Sounding out the Margins: Cultural Studies, White Englishness, and Second-Generation Irish Rock Musicians', demonstrates that while musicians such as John Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis have inhabited a crucial position in cultural studies' engagements with questions of race, ethnicity and popular music, the field's principal practitioners have, with few exceptions, been wholly oblivious to the fact that these musicians are the immediate descendants of post-war Irish Catholic labour migrants. Rather than simply overlooking the second-generation Irish, this work has instead overlooked their Irishness, positing them in a putative 'white ethnicity' that many of these texts have employed to denote a notional white Englishness. The chapter demonstrates that this tacit positioning of the second-generation Irish in an ethnically undifferentiated white working class, and the textual deployment of second-generation Irish musicians as representatives of 'white ethnicity' in England, has become the paradigmatic way of handling second-generation Irish musicians in British cultural

studies.

Chapter Four, 'The Critical Reception of Second-Generation Irish Rock Musicians in the British Music Press', analyses and evaluates the handling of the second-generation Irish in British popular music journalism, the principal site in which popular music has been contextualised and mediated. The first half of the chapter identifies some of the key ways in which Irishness has been foregrounded in British music journalism. After demonstrating the fact that, in this material, Irishness as a means of categorisation has been invested with considerable significance by both journalists and readers, I turn to the critical reception of Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis, pointing to the relative absence of an Irish dimension in this material. The chapter suggests that this absence is symptomatic of the highly routinised critical procedures of popular music journalism, including the field's habitual concern with issues of nationhood and regionality, in which notionally homogeneous social formations (based on conventionalised binary divisions, such as English/Irish, northern/southern) have been discursively produced. Consequently, while questions of race and ethnicity have often been prominent in material on musicians of African-Caribbean and South Asian descent, the particular immigrant background of the second-generation Irish has tended to be marginalised by a special emphasis on nationality and region.

Chapter Five, 'Re-thinking Second-Generation Irish Music-Making in England: The Case of The Smiths', turns attention to the question of musical routes and the second-generation Irish, focusing specifically on the strand of second-generation Irish music-making outlined above. Taking The Smiths as a case study, the chapter suggests that the group's performance can be understood as constituting a particular second-generation Irish musical 'route' in the pop

cultural context of 1980s England. Situating the group in the context of contemporaneous second-generation musicians, such as Kevin Rowland and Shane MacGowan, the chapter argues that the performance of The Smiths, rather than attempting to resolve the apparent tensions posed by a putative Irish/English dilemma by either vigorously asserting an essentialist Irishness or overstating an easy assimilation into Englishness, offered a dramatisation of this condition of ambivalence and uncertainty itself, particularly with regard to notions of home, return, belonging and origins. Instead of adopting a stable and secure position on either side of a neatly forged binary division, then, the group conveyed a desire for transgression and anti-segregationism, whilst maintaining an unequivocally dissident sensibility (particularly regarding hegemonic forms of Englishness) and positing themselves as eccentric outsiders on the margins of 1980s British popular culture. The chapter demonstrates that this marginal standpoint was informed not by an identifiably Irish-in-England set of interests or concerns, but by a more broadly conceived affiliation with a range of radical positions that coalesced in opposition to the British Prime Minister of the time, Margaret Thatcher. In light of this point, The Smiths, rather than displaying a narcissistic preoccupation with Irishness *qua* Irishness, instead mobilised a speaking position that might be called a 'critical outsidership', by which I mean that they developed a radical critique of hegemonic forms of Englishness from a marginalised perspective, rather than offering a straightforward assertion of Irish difference. In this sense, the group's performance clearly exceeded the narrow parameters of both (English) assimilation and (Irish) essentialism associated with the second-generation Irish.

Endnotes

1. I use the term 'second-generation Irish' to refer to the immediate descendants of Irish immigrants. (The term Irish ethnic group will be used to denote the combination of first- and second-generation Irish). This thesis is primarily concerned with the English-born children of post-war Irish Catholic immigrants from the Republic of Ireland. My emphasis on this particular section of the second-generation is an attempt to be historically specific rather than politically or ethnically exclusive. The second-generation musicians on which the thesis focuses (John Lydon, Shane MacGowan, Kevin Rowland, Steven Morrissey, Johnny Marr, and Noel Gallagher) were all born to two Irish parents, from the Republic of Ireland, and were raised in working-class, Catholic families. They are also all white, male and (with the possible exception of the sexually ambiguous Morrissey), heterosexual.
2. Seeromanie Harding and Rasaratnam Balarajan, 'Patterns of Mortality in Second Generation Irish Living in England and Wales: Longitudinal Study', *British Medical Journal* Vol. 312, No. 7043 (1 June 1996), p. 1392. For articles in the mainstream press, see Cal McCrystal, 'Emigration "Poses Huge Danger to Irish Health"', *Observer*, 9 June 1996, p. 3; Owen Bowcott, 'Concern Over Health of Irish Immigrants', *Guardian*, 9 February 1998, p. 2.
3. Harding and Balarajan, 'Patterns of Mortality', p. 1392.
4. In August 1996, for instance, Oasis played the biggest ever concert in British rock history. See Johnny Cigarettes, 'Five Go Mad For It', *New Musical Express*, 17 August 1996, p. 35.
5. Paolo Hewitt, *Getting High: the Adventures of Oasis* (London: Boxtree, 1997). For a brief discussion of the biography's handling of the group's Irishness, see Sean Campbell, 'Review of Paolo Hewitt, *Getting High*', *Popular Music* Vol. 18, No. 1 (1999), pp. 158-60.
6. Dave Simpson, 'Why Two's Company', *Guardian*, 13 July 1996, p. 30.
7. John Lydon, with Keith Zimmerman and Kent Zimmerman, *Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994), pp. 13, 14, 249, 274. Marr has explained that he 'really related' to *No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs* 'because that was my experience as well', adding that '[this] is something that I talk a lot about with Noel Gallagher because he's got the same Irish background as me'. (Brian Boyd, 'Johnny, We Never Knew You', *Irish Times*, 'Arts' section, 8 May 1999, p. 6).
8. Jon Savage, 'Rough Emeralds', *Guardian*, Second section, 17 March 1995, p. 11. This article's acknowledgement of the Irishness of second-generation rock musicians was extremely untypical of popular music discourses in Britain at this time. Its exceptionality is underlined by fact that the article appeared in the *Guardian*, a liberal daily broadsheet newspaper (rather than a weekly music paper), on Saint Patrick's Day, an occasion when English newspapers have traditionally included articles of Irish interest.
9. Roy Shuker, *Key Concepts in Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 36.
10. See, for instance, David Bennun *et al*, 'Britpop', *Melody Maker*, 22 July 1995, pp. 29-33; Andy Richardson, 'The Battle of Britpop', *New Musical Express*, 12 August 1995, pp. 28-30.

For a discussion of Britpop, see Andy Bennett, “‘Village Greens and Terraced Streets’: Britpop and Representations of ‘Britishness’”, *Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research* Vol. 5, No. 4 (1997), pp. 20-33; Martin Cloonan, ‘State of the Nation: “Englishness”, Pop and Politics in the mid-1990s’, *Popular Music and Society* Vol. 21, No. 2 (1997), pp. 47-70.

11. Steve Sutherland, ‘See! Hear! Now!’, *New Musical Express*, 20 September 1997, p. 40. Oasis have often demonstrated an identification with Britpop’s principal signifier, the Union Flag. However, it is perhaps worth stating that the ‘swirl’ Union Flag graphic that has adorned official Oasis paraphernalia originates from an early demo tape sleeve which, according to Johnny Marr, featured ‘the Union Jack going down the toilet’ (David Halliwell and Ste Mack, ‘The Johnny Marr Interview’, *The Official Oasis Magazine*, No. 1 (Winter 1996), no pagination). This may indicate that this image was, at least initially, not intended as a straightforwardly patriotic gesture.

12. Bennun et al, ‘Britpop’, pp. 29-33.

13. Michael Bracewell, *England is Mine: Pop Life in Albion from Wilde to Goldie* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), pp. 219, 229.

14. For a published version of this paper, see Martin Cloonan, ‘What Do They Know of England?: “Englishness” and Popular Music in the mid-1990s’, in Tarja Hautamaki and Helmi Jarviluoma (eds), *Music on Show: Issues of Performance* (Tampere: University of Tampere, 1998), pp. 66-72.

15. The Commission for Racial Equality, *Roots of the Future: Ethnic Diversity in the Making of Britain* (London: CRE, 1996), p. 39.

16. CRE, *Roots of the Future*, pp. 121, 75. For a fuller discussion of *Roots of the Future*, see Sean Campbell, “‘Race of Angels’: The Critical Reception of Second-Generation Irish Musicians’, *Irish Studies Review* Vol. 6, No. 2 (1998), pp. 165-74.

17. As Terry Eagleton has pointed out in the context of Irish writing in England, certain authors are ‘in many ways glad enough to be recruited’ for an English cultural canon. (Eagleton, ‘Mm ... he was Irish, actually’, *Fortnight*, Vol. 277 (October 1989), p. 29). This might equally be the case with some of the second-generation rock musicians discussed here.

18. Cited in Eugene Masterson, *The Word on the Street: The Unsanctioned Story of Oasis* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1996), p. 56.

19. Dave Simpson, ‘Why Two’s Company’, p. 30.

20. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Verso, 1993), p. 99. Although Gilroy is primarily concerned here with cultures of the ‘black Atlantic’, the theoretical frames that his work proffers can be usefully employed in studies of other - differently located - migrant groups.

21. For a discussion of The Pogues, see Noel McLaughlin and Martin McLoone, ‘Hybridity and

National Musics: The Case of Irish Rock Music', *Popular Music* Vol. 12, No. 2 (2000), pp. 190-2. For a discussion of Dexy's, see John Aizlewood, 'Thankfully Not Living in Yorkshire It Doesn't Apply', in Aizlewood (ed.), *Love is the Drug* (London: Penguin, 1994), pp. 21-37.

22. Paul Gallagher and Terry Christian, *Brothers: From Childhood to Oasis - The Real Story* (Virgin, 1996), pp. 78-9.

23. For a discussion of 'independent', or 'indie', music, see David Hesmondhalgh, 'Indie: The Institutional Politics and Aesthetics of a Popular Music Genre', *Cultural Studies* Vol. 13, No. 1 (1999), pp. 34-61.

24. Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993), p. 55.

Chapter One

Locating the Second-Generation Irish in England:

Between Essentialism and Assimilation

There are approximately two million second-generation Irish people in Britain.¹ However, very little research has been conducted on this section of the Irish diaspora. This paucity of research is, in part, symptomatic of the scarcity of official statistics regarding Irish migrants in Britain. As Donald Akenson, a major historian of the Irish diaspora, has explained, 'there are *no* systematic data on the Irish in Great Britain as a multigenerational ethnic group'.² However, this lack of attention may also reflect an academic assumption that the second-generation Irish in England instantly assimilate, and identify unambiguously, with the host country. In other words, that they are an indistinguishable component of the 'white, English' population.³ Liam Ryan, for example, has argued that, for the Irish in Britain, assimilation is '*practically complete* in a single generation'.⁴ John Rex, meanwhile, has claimed that 'the incorporation of the Irish into the [English] working-class [is] relatively easy' (although his qualification of this assertion hardly suggested that assimilation was rapid: 'within *three generations* Irish families were able to move into core working-class positions and beyond them').⁵

Such simplistic assumptions about straightforward assimilation have frequently been contested by ethnographic surveys of the second-generation.⁶ In one such study, conducted in the early 1980s, the social psychologist Philip Ullah demonstrated the extent of this generation's self-ascriptive identification with Irishness: more than three quarters of his respondents felt either 'half-English,

half-Irish', or 'mainly Irish'.⁷ Moreover, Ullah concluded that:

anti-Irish prejudice was widely experienced [and] questions relating to identity formed a major issue in the lives of many of these people. It was clearly not the case that they had been assimilated to a greater extent than other minorities, or that they had escaped the many problems associated with second-generation youth.⁸

Despite Ullah's findings, relatively little research has subsequently been conducted on the second-generation Irish in England, and the assimilationist thesis, predicated on the notion that the immediate descendants of working-class Irish Catholic labour migrants are a fully assimilated and largely indistinguishable component of the host population, has continued to be the dominant historical and sociological paradigm for understanding the second-generation. There have, however, been a few genuinely ground-breaking interventions that have cast serious doubt on the assimilationist thesis, and I will also consider some of these endeavours here.⁹

The central concern of this chapter, though, is to evaluate the key ways in which the second-generation Irish in England have conventionally been understood in academic literature. In doing this, I suggest that a narrow index of Irish 'authenticity' has circulated in this body of work which has served to mask the complexity and diversity of second-generation experience. I then introduce the framework of my own research, suggesting ways in which a critical re-consideration of second-generation Irish rock musicians might contribute to our current understanding of this under-researched section of the Irish diaspora. However, before I do this, I want to first of all revisit,

and perhaps revise, a certain aspect of the assimilationist thesis. Specifically, I want to re-examine the handling of a particular second-generation Irish autobiography in historiographical writing (and especially the work of Lynn Lees and Graham Davis) about the Irish in England.

Revisiting 'Assimilation': The Case of Tom Barclay

Lynn Lees' *Exiles of Erin*, and Graham Davis' *The Irish in Britain 1815-1914*, each present distinct, and broadly based, historical accounts of the Irish in nineteenth-century Britain.¹⁰

However, I am primarily concerned here with their particular handling of the second-generation Irish, and specifically with a key source which they both use to substantiate their argument about second-generation assimilation. This source is *Memoirs and Medleys: The Autobiography of a Bottle-washer* (1934) by Tom Barclay, who was born in the English midlands in 1852 to Famine-era migrants from the west of Ireland.¹¹ For Lees and Davis, Barclay's text offers an unequivocal testimony of second-generation Irish assimilation in England. However, as I will demonstrate, their reading of his autobiography is predicated on a rather narrow evaluation of a single passage, and this has, I think, steered them towards erroneous deductions about Barclay's 'assimilation' in particular, and precarious inferences about second-generation Irish 'assimilation', more generally.

The passage which they choose to consider is Barclay's rather fraught recollection of his mother's practice of reciting Irish songs, poems, and bardic legends in the family home. Here, he wonders:

what had I to do with all that? I was becoming English! I did not hate things Irish,

but I began to feel that they must be put away; they were inferior to things English.

How could it be otherwise? My pronunciation was jeered at, - mimicked, corrected ... Presently, I began to feel ashamed of the jeers and mockery and criticism, and tried to pronounce like the English.¹²

Clearly it would not be unreasonable to infer that this extract is indicative of a desire to assimilate.

Indeed, for Lees, this passage demonstrates that 'as a child Barclay turned away from both the language and the culture transmitted through it'.¹³ What I want to suggest here is that Barclay's thoughts might demonstrate a rather more complex point about second-generation identity-formation. For instance, it appears that his wish to appear English is motivated by the perceived inferiority of his Irishness, rather than a conviction that his ethnicity is somehow irrelevant. Conceivably, then, this could be read as a strategic attempt to 'pass' as English in an evidently hostile environment. As he explains it, his Irishness 'must be put away' rather than abandoned, hence his endeavour to be less publicly identifiable by '[trying] to pronounce like the English'.

Rather than confirming simple assumptions about easy assimilation, then, this passage instead draws our attention to the particular conditions that furnish the desire to assimilate (for example, the socially negative status of Irishness), as well as the various ways in which the second-generation have responded to this (such as the practice of 'passing'). Moreover, this particular passage is, of course, only a transitory moment in a complex, and unending, process of identity-formation.

Lees and Davis, however, do not appear to have to read this passage in conjunction with the rest of the autobiography. For instance, Barclay's subjection, in this passage, to 'jeers and mockery and criticism' clearly broaches the issue of anti-Irish prejudice in England. However, despite L.P. Curtis' claim that 'anti-Irish prejudices constitute one of the largest secular trends in English cultural history'¹⁴, both Lees and Davis are apparently reluctant to consider Barclay's vividly recalled experiences of such hostilities, including the incident in which he was 'hounded and harassed' by 'the Sassenach kids':

"Hurroo Mick!", "Ye Awrish Paddywack", "bad luck to the ships that brought ye over!" These were the salutes from the happy English child: we were battered, threatened, elbowed, pressed back to the door of our kennel amid boos and jeers and showers of small missiles.¹⁵

Similarly, both historians disregard Barclay's recollection of how he 'lamented the hanging of the Manchester Martyrs' while his 'English neighbours danced and rejoiced'. Shortly after the Manchester executions, Barclay was evidently confronted by an English neighbour, named Billy, who led a collective assault on Barclay and his friends. Regardless of the particular motivations for this attack, or the extent to which it may have been embellished by memory and imagination, it is nevertheless significant that Barclay conceived of it in terms of ethnic difference: 'My imagination went to work: Billy was King William and we were the Irish'.¹⁶

In addition to these points, Lees and Davis also choose to overlook the more significant fact that Barclay maintains a self-ascriptive identification with Irishness well into adulthood, frequently using the term 'we Irish', and regularly participating in diasporic cultural practices. For instance, in the 1890s, when Barclay was in his forties, he explains 'I became impressed (I might say obsessed) with the thought that I couldn't really be Irish without a knowledge of the Irish language' [and] 'I started on the old language for all I was worth', recording that he attended eighteen months of regular lessons.¹⁷ Elsewhere, he recalls singing Irish songs in public and, after initially teaching the Waltz and the Polka at a dancing class, he evidently 'reverted to things Irish, and *then*, nothing for me, thank you, but jigs and reels'.¹⁸

While it is, of course, regrettable that Lees and Davis overlook these passages, what is even more unfortunate is Lees' subsequent assertion that 'Barclay's rejection of Irish language and culture *must have been repeated* by many second-generation migrants'.¹⁹ As I have demonstrated, much of Barclay's text clearly contradicts the notion that he simply abandoned his Irishness. Conversely, then, we might want to infer that Barclay's self-ascriptive identification with Irishness, his experience of anti-Irish prejudice, and his participation in diasporic cultural practices, *must have been repeated* by 'many second-generation migrants', an assertion that would, of course, cast serious doubt on the validity of the assimilationist thesis. Similarly, Davis' conclusion ('How many young Irish people were like Tom Barclay ... and turned away from Irish language and culture?')²⁰ should also be re-considered, particularly in the light of Barclay's subsequent attendance of Irish language and dancing classes.

Such narrow readings of Barclay's autobiography have clearly restricted our understanding of the second-generation Irish. Moreover, the apparent reluctance of such historians to consider fully the complexities of second-generation experience has arguably inhibited the development of more fruitful discussions about diasporic identity-formation amongst the Irish ethnic group in England. For instance, thirty years after Barclay's attendance of Irish language classes, at the age of 72 (the point at which he wrote the autobiography), Barclay disputes any necessary correlation between Irishness and the Gaelic language. Moreover, he substantiates this claim by pointing to a number of Irish Protestant political figures whom he admires, offering an inclusive, non-language based notion of Irishness: 'it seems to me that men like Wolf [sic] Tone, Robert Emmett [sic], John Mitchell, Philpot Curran and Henry Grattan are enough to confound anyone who holds that the old tongue must be used before one can call himself Irish'. Thus he subscribes to a pluralist conception of Irishness, explaining that 'we are a considerable mixture'.²¹

Similarly, Barclay's experience of anti-Irish prejudice does not provoke an aggressive repudiation of all things English, nor an essentialist assertion of Irish difference. Instead, for Barclay, this experience facilitates a consciousness about the condition of prejudice itself. Thus, he explains: 'My own attitude towards a foreigner of whatever colour or creed is simply one of interest - intense curiosity', and he confesses that 'the only thing that might repel me, or make me cold, is denseness, want of mentality; but this repels me in men of my own nationality'.²²

Rather than making special claims about Irish victimisation at the hands of English oppressors, then, Barclay uses his experience of such hostilities in a more enabling manner, developing a

self-reflexive consciousness about comparative forms of prejudice. Consequently, if we - like Lees and Davies - wish to take Barclay's text as an index of second-generation Irish experience, then we might want to suggest that Barclay's identity-formation processes clearly exceed the narrow parameters of both (Irish) essentialism and (English) assimilation, and that while a self-ascriptive identification with Irishness is undoubtedly maintained, it is characterised less by a nostalgic, sentimental desire to narcissistically fetishise Irishness *qua* Irishness, than a desire to make a more enabling gesture towards the condition of marginality itself. This is a point that I will return to in my discussion of second-generation Irish music-making in Chapter Five.

The subtle and complex routes that Barclay takes have, however, been overlooked by subsequent chroniclers of his journeying process. This point, about the failure of critical work to register the unexpected routes taken by second-generation Irish cultural practitioners, is one that I will develop throughout the thesis. However, as this discussion has been concerned with the descendants of nineteenth-century Irish migrants to England, I will now consider the way in which this work has handled the children of mid-twentieth century Irish migrants.

A View of the Present State of Second-Generation Studies

As the second-generation Irish in England constitute a relatively invisible and inaudible minority, it is perhaps unsurprising that their assimilation has so frequently been assumed, and that they have been discursively subsumed into a 'white English' category. However, as I pointed out in the Introduction, a number of studies in the late 1990s served to distinguish them from the ostensible homogeneity of this 'white English' classification, and thereby increased the visibility of the

second-generation Irish. These studies were primarily concerned with instances of mental and physical ill-health amongst this generation.

Perhaps the best known of these studies, Harding and Balarajan's 'Patterns of mortality of the second generation Irish in England and Wales', was published in the *British Medical Journal* in 1996.²³ In this article, the authors explain that, as the 'patterns of mortality' of immigrant groups are expected to 'converge over time with those of the host population' then 'the patterns of mortality of the second generation Irish should be similar to those of the population in England and Wales'. However, as they go on to demonstrate, the children of Irish immigrants 'experience significantly higher mortality than that for England and Wales for most major causes of death', a finding which, for Bracken *et al*, is 'very unusual in migrant mortality research'.²⁴ Harding and Balarajan conclude, therefore, that the poor health of the second generation Irish 'implies that ... structural factors [such as economic and cultural differences] remain in place' for this generation, and they suggest that it might be useful, at least in the context of health provision, to conceive of the second-generation Irish as different from the host population.²⁵

Before I comment on this article, I want to first of all compare it with an earlier study of the second-generation, Hornsby-Smith and Dale's 'The assimilation of Irish immigrants in England', which was published in the *British Journal of Sociology* in 1988.²⁶ In this article, the authors contend that the second-generation have assimilated, both structurally and culturally, into a putative 'white Englishness'. One of their key definitions of 'cultural assimilation' here is 'a convergence in the levels of education achievements' between the migrant group and the host

society.²⁷ It is the authors' objective to look, then, for a convergence between the 'education achievements' of the children of Irish immigrants in England, and those of an English control sample.

What they go on to discover, though, is that the second-generation Irish actually '*exceed* the educational qualifications held by their English counterparts'.²⁸ However, despite the fact that this evidence clearly disputes their own criteria for assimilation, which requires a 'substantial convergence' between the second-generation Irish and the English control sample, the authors nevertheless claim that this educational success is an instance of second-generation Irish assimilation.²⁹

It seems, then, that when the second-generation exceed the educational achievements of the English group, they become invisible and are conceived in terms of their assimilation. Yet, when they exceed standard mortality rates, they become visible and are conceived in terms of Irish difference. Admittedly, this makes sense for a number of reasons. For instance, the parents of this generation generally achieved lower levels of educational success, and experienced higher instances of ill-health.³⁰ Consequently, the second-generation appear to be closer to their parents in terms of health patterns, and closer to the host population in terms of academic performance. In addition to this consideration, it is worth pointing out that migrant 'success' is often understood in terms of assimilation, and thus disadvantage in terms of difference. Such a paradigm of assimilation is, however, crude and reductive, not least because it implies that the experience of being Irish in England is restricted to a narrow range of problem-centred issues (for example, poor

health but not educational success). Indeed, the editorial that introduced the *British Medical Journal* article explained that the ‘persistence of excess mortality into the second generation ... suggests that some important elements of *being Irish* persist long beyond the initial migration’.³¹

Clearly the predicament outlined here poses a fundamental question for studies of the second-generation Irish. For instance: should the Irishness of this generation be conceived *only* in terms of disadvantage? Do ‘positive’ divergences, such as educational achievement, *necessarily* signify Irish assimilation? If only ‘negative’ divergences, such as poor health, are used to demonstrate Irish difference, then this clearly restricts our understanding of the second-generation, who become textually constructed as a problem-centred presence.

In addition to this dilemma regarding the conceptualisation of Irish difference, there is perhaps a more overarching problem pertaining to the overall field of second-generation studies (as it currently stands). For while individual studies of the second-generation have been intrinsically valid and useful, the evolving field has tended to cluster around a narrow range of largely problem-centred issues, including the problematic processes of identity-formation among the second-generation, their subjection to the incorporationist strategies of the Catholic education system, and of course their experience of ill-health.³²

It is this context, then, that provides the particular point of departure for my thesis. For this body of work has, by focusing on a narrow range of issues, neglected to consider the possibility of second-generation cultural agency, and has tacitly assumed their cultural passivity. This notion of

cultural passivity is, perhaps, an inherent feature of the assimilationist thesis, in that it assumes that the host culture will *act upon* the migrant group, for example by assimilating, or incorporating, them, while overlooking the possibility that the migrant group may not only resist this, but that they may also *act upon* the host culture. My own research on second-generation Irish rock musicians in England offers a means by which to conceptualise this issue of cultural productivity.

Music and Authenticity

The few references to cultural activity found in studies of the second-generation typically focus on ‘traditional’ cultural practices, such as Gaelic sports, Irish dancing, and traditional music.³³ Clearly this is a valid and understandable approach. Moreover, as Simon Frith has pointed out, for the Irish ethnic group in England, “‘traditional’ Irish folk songs are still the most powerful way in which to make people feel Irish and consider what their Irishness means’.³⁴ However, many second-generation musicians, who have grown up listening to, or playing, ‘traditional’ music, and who continue to self-ascriptively identify with Irishness, have subsequently chosen to perform popular (rather than ‘traditional’) music professionally.³⁵

Despite this point, however, it is only those second-generation Irish musicians who have adopted identifiably Irish styles, or addressed recognisably Irish issues (such as Shane MacGowan of The Pogues and Kevin Rowland of Dexy’s Midnight Runners),³⁶ who tend to be considered in terms of their Irishness. The implication, then, is that there is a kind of ‘ethnic aesthetic’, which is used as a criterion of Irish authenticity. Akenson has referred to this phenomenon as the ‘iconic tyranny of the homeland’ which has promulgated an assumption that ‘whatever social, cultural, and

intellectual practices occurring [in the diaspora] *most approximate* those that occur in Ireland, are most “Irish.”” Consequently, the particular ways in which the descendants of Irish migrants adapt to new social and cultural mores ‘are seen as less historically important than those that resemble the old home country’.³⁷

This is regrettable, as some of the most critically important, and commercially successful, English rock musicians - for example, John Lydon, The Smiths, and Oasis - have been the immediate descendants of Irish immigrants. However, despite the fact that these musicians grew up listening to, and playing, traditional Irish music at home, in Irish social clubs, and on regular visits to Ireland, their work appears to bear little trace of an identifiably Irish dimension.³⁸

Consequently, this collection of musicians may initially appear to be an unlikely inventory of subjects for a study of the second-generation Irish in England. However, if we take Akenson’s point that ‘[any] concept of Irish migration ... must be cultural and institutional and must deal with the entire multi-generational ethnic group’, then these musicians become a valid and legitimate object of study.³⁹ Moreover, even if a number of second-generation musicians have chosen to perform popular music professionally, this does not *necessarily* mean that we should cease to conceive of them in terms of their Irishness. As I will demonstrate in Chapters Three and Four, most academic and journalistic work on these musicians has tended to disregard this Irish dimension and, in its absence, these musicians have been critically recruited for a specifically English pop cultural canon.

This Anglocentric appropriation of second-generation Irish cultural production is, I think, analogous to the treatment of the academic achievement mentioned earlier, which was, of course, taken as an instance of assimilation. For even if the music produced by these musicians has little or no resonance with notions of Irishness in England, the simple fact of their cultural productivity is no less relevant for our understanding of the second-generation Irish in England. As I have demonstrated, second-generation Irish difference has been readily asserted in terms of their poor health. Clearly, if this remains the only recognised manifestation of second-generation experience, then this becomes problematic, not least because the evidence presented in these studies dovetails unfortunately with stereotypes of violent, drunken, and mentally ill, Irish migrants in England.⁴⁰ In this context, then, the narrative of second-generation cultural agency provided by these musicians offers a striking demonstration of the productive and diverse ways in which the children of Irish immigrants have *acted upon* the host culture.

This is not to suggest, however, that we should simply displace the ‘disadvantage’ paradigm of recent studies with a straightforward ‘success’ model of easy Irish achievement in England. As Liam Ryan has pointed out, ‘considerable attention has been paid to the “success” or “failure” of the Irish in Britain’.⁴¹ It is my contention that this binary division is an unhelpful way of conceptualising the Irish ethnic group in England, as both realms of experience are perhaps better understood as interrelated. For instance, in light of the recent emphasis on second-generation ill-health, which has also been reported in the mainstream British media,⁴² it has become necessary to demonstrate the productivity and diversity of second-generation experience. In other words, it has become imperative to point out that this generation includes ‘successful’ cultural agents *as*

well as sufferers of mental and physical ill-health.⁴³

Given that such a demonstration of second-generation achievement might be beneficial for the profile of the Irish in England, it is perhaps surprising that the most vocal resistance *against* including this generation in definitions of the Irish ethnic group appears to originate from many Irish-born people. I will now address this point in the final section of this chapter.

‘Plastic Paddy’

In the first few months of 1999, the letters page of the *Irish Post*, the principal newspaper for the Irish in Britain, featured a particularly fraught debate about the putative Irishness of the second-generation. Many of these letters used the pejorative label ‘plastic Paddy’ to designate the children of Irish immigrants in England.⁴⁴ This term had previously emerged in an ethnographic study of young, middle-class Irish migrants in London in the 1980s, who used it to refer to the English-born children of the previous wave of Irish immigrants.⁴⁵ More recently, it has appeared to gain currency among high profile Irish academics.⁴⁶ In particular contexts, the term can apparently have a very specific meaning, denoting the adoption of narrow, regressive and essentialist forms of Irishness amongst the second-generation in England.⁴⁷ And while it is understandable that this practice might exasperate Irish-born migrants in England, the label ‘plastic Paddy’ is, fundamentally, a derisive allusion to the perceived inauthenticity of the second-generation’s identification with Irishness.

A particularly virulent manifestation of this gesture has been identified in the realm of sport, an

especially potent site of national identification. In a study of supporters of the Republic of Ireland football team, Marcus Free demonstrates the various ways in which Irish-born supporters have endeavoured to distinguish themselves from the second-generation. For instance, he records an incident on a train in Portugal in 1995, where the Republic of Ireland were playing the Portuguese national team. Here, a group of fans from Dublin respond to the presence of second-generation supporters on the train by ridiculing their English accents and displaying a 'degree of bitterness' towards them.⁴⁸

What is immediately remarkable about this, of course, is the fact that the practice of supporting a sports team typically involves an unambiguous assertion of group homogeneity. Here, however, these Irish-born fans choose to deride a section of their own support, even in the face of the putative 'opposition' (a number of Portuguese supporters are also on the train). This essentialist monitoring of ethnic boundaries (which the second-generation have implicitly transgressed), demonstrates an apparent desire, amongst Irish-born people, to diminish the Irishness of the English-born children of Irish migrants.⁴⁹

What is perhaps even more striking, though, is that this should be the case even when the second-generation have explicitly designated themselves as Irish, as is clearly the case with these travelling fans. A number of other studies of the second-generation have also demonstrated their self-ascriptive identification with Irishness, and documented their participation in diasporic cultural practices.⁵⁰ This evidence would appear to indicate that it is valid to conceive of the second-generation in terms of their Irishness. Moreover, despite the dominance of the

assimilationist thesis in previous studies, it is difficult to overlook Akenson's assertion that 'for at least two or three generations [Irishness is] a significant determinant of the behaviour of most people of Irish descent'.⁵¹

Conclusion

There is, of course, something deeply paradoxical about the essentialist position held by those Irish-born sports fans on the train in Portugal. For the putatively authentic Irish football team that they are so anxious to protect from the adulterously hybrid second-generation, itself consists of many second-generation players.⁵² Clearly this demonstrates the untenability of such exclusive claims to authenticity. As David Morley and Kevin Robins have pointed out:

There can be no recovery of an authentic homeland. In a world that is increasingly characterized by exile, migration and diaspora, with all the consequences of unsettling and hybridization, there can be no place for such absolutism of the pure and authentic.⁵³

The second-generation Irish in England appear to be cognizant of this issue, and have recognised the untenability of such notions of 'recovery' and 'authenticity'. For instance, in a study of the Irish in London in the 1980s, an apparently 'prevailing second-generation attitude' was articulated by a particular member of this generation:

We are a different breed from that of our parents. Of course we know and enjoy

Ireland, but London is our home, our city. We can't try to recreate a lost Ireland in the midst of 1980s London. Neither are we prepared to put up with the shabby treatment once meted out to our parents.⁵⁴

Such comments are not, however, indicative of a straightforward desire to simply abandon Irishness. Indeed, this particular individual concludes: 'we believe that the only way the Irish community in London will ever be treated on a par with the home nation is through asserting its Irish identity'.⁵⁵

Significantly, this standpoint was corroborated by a second-generation Irish person who intervened in the 'plastic Paddy' debate in the *Irish Post* in 1999. This Leeds-Irish letter-writer responded to essentialist claims about the inauthenticity of the second-generation, by explaining:

we are Irish but not in the sense of our parents or people in Ireland today. The identity of the Irish in Britain is an extension of the Irish in Ireland but it's not the same - there is a clear divergence. We have to recognise this.⁵⁶

And although this letter was directed primarily at Irish-born migrants in England, it might also provide a useful pointer for historical and sociological work on the second-generation Irish in England. For it is perhaps time that academic studies of the second-generation began to conceive of this section of the Irish diaspora beyond the narrow frames of, on the one hand, a wholly

assimilated Englishness, and, on the other, a regressive, essentialist Irishness. Such quasi-Celticist binary divisions are, of course, relics from (at least) the nineteenth century, and are consequently oblivious to the hybrid identities that have characterised the second-half of the twentieth century.⁵⁷

In this thesis, then, I want to suggest that it might be more fruitful to conceive of the second-generation Irish in terms of a hyphenated Irish-Englishness, that is not reducible to *either* dimension, and which facilitates a flexible, fluctuating, and reconcilable, identification with *both*.⁵⁸ This is a point to which I will return in Chapter Five. Before that, I consider the particular ways in which the second-generation Irish have been discursively managed in the field of British Cultural Studies.

Endnotes

1. Seeromanie Harding and Rasaratnam Balarajan, 'Patterns of Mortality in Second Generation Irish Living in England and Wales: Longitudinal Study', *British Medical Journal* Vol. 312, No. 7043 (1 June 1996), p. 1392.
2. Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1996), p. 190.
3. One of the fundamental deficiencies of this particular form of categorisation is its masking of the fact that many second-generation Irish people in England are not white. The ethnic diversity of the second-generation Irish has been most visibly demonstrated by the inclusion of many second-generation footballers of both Irish, and African-Caribbean, descent in the Republic of Ireland football team, for example, Chris Hughton, Terry Phelan and Phil Babb.
4. Liam Ryan, 'Irish Emigration to Britain Since World War Two' in Richard Kearney (ed.), *Migrations: the Irish at Home and Abroad* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1990), p. 60, my emphasis.
5. John Rex, 'Immigrants and British Labour: the Sociological Context', Kenneth Lunn (ed.), *Hosts, Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Responses to Newcomers in British Society 1870-1914* (Folkestone: Dawson, 1980), p. 26, my emphasis.
6. See, for example, Mary J. Hickman, 'A Study of the Incorporation of the Irish in Britain with Special Reference to Catholic State Education' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1989); Philip Ullah, 'Second Generation Irish Youth: A Social Psychological Investigation of a Hidden Minority' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1983).
7. Ullah, 'Second-Generation Irish Youth: Identity and Ethnicity', *New Community* Vol. 12, No. 2, Summer (1985), pp. 310-2.
8. Ullah, 'Second-Generation Irish Youth: Identity and Ethnicity', pp. 310-2.
9. See, for example, Steven Fielding *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England 1880-1939* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993); Harding and Balarajan, 'Patterns of Mortality'; Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, Class, and Identity: the State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury Press, 1995); Bronwen Walter, *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place and Irish Women* (London: Routledge, 2001).
10. Lynn H. Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979); Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain 1815-1914* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991).
11. Tom Barclay, *Memoirs and Medleys: The Autobiography of a BottleWasher* (Leicester: Edgar

Backus, 1934). There are, of course, a number of methodological issues regarding the status of 'life-writing' as evidence of cultural difference. However, it is not my primary concern here to use this autobiography for such purposes. Instead, I am responding to a particular reading of the autobiography, and demonstrating the limitations of this reading. Significantly, both Lees and Davis fail to address this issue, and make an assumption about the autobiography's representativeness. This is especially problematic in the light of the fact that numerous second-generation Irish autobiographies appear to contradict their conclusions. For a range of autobiographical accounts, see Bart Kennedy, *Slavery: Pictures from the Abyss* (London: Anthony Treherne, 1905); Margaret McCarthy, *Generation in Revolt* (London: Heinemann, 1953); Ben Tillet, *Memories and Reflections* (London: John Long, 1931); Joseph Toole, *Fighting Through Life* (London: Rich and Cowan, 1935). See also the testimonies of Jenneba Sie Jullah, and Yvonne Hayes in Mary Lennon, Marie McAdam, and Joanne O'Brien, *Across the Water: Irish Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago, 1988), pp. 207-22. Maude Casey's *Over the Water* (London: Livewire, 1987) offers a fictional, semi-autobiographical, account of the experience of a second-generation Irish teenage girl.

12. Barclay, *Memoirs and Medleys*, pp. 23-4.

13. Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 190.

14. Lewis P. Curtis Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1971), p. 27.

15. Barclay, *Memoirs and Medleys*, p. 5. The endeavour to diminish the significance of anti-Irish prejudice, and particularly 'the revisionist Irish habit of downplaying British anti-Irishness' is, for Terry Eagleton, 'one of the sickest self-deceptions of all' (Eagleton, *Crazy John and the Bishop and Other Essays on Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), p. 310).

16. Barclay, *Memoirs and Medleys*, pp. 6-7.

17. Barclay, *Memoirs and Medleys*, p. 95

18. Barclay, *Memoirs and Medleys*, p. 43

19. Lees, *Exiles of Erin*, p. 190, my emphasis.

20. Davis, *The Irish in Britain*, p. 146.

21. Barclay, *Memoirs and Medleys*, pp. 95, 107. In the early 1920s, Barclay demonstrated an anti-sectarian standpoint, expressing his shame and disgust about the civil war in Ireland: 'Killing one another! Treatyite, Republican, Orangeman, phut!' (p. 139). Perhaps such sentiments indicate the potentiality of an inclusive, diasporic Irishness, that exceeds the nationalist, and latently sectarian, mould of the so-called 'plastic Paddy'.

22. Barclay, *Memoirs and Medleys*, pp. 5-6.

23. Harding and Balarajan, 'Patterns of Mortality'.

24. Harding and Balarajan, 'Patterns of Mortality', pp. 1389, 1392, my emphasis. This was a longitudinal study (followed up from 1971 to 1989) by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (now the Office for National Statistics), of 3075 men and 3233 women aged 15 and over in 1971. The authors explain that, for men aged 15-64, and women aged 15-59, 'mortality of the second generation Irish in every social class and in the categories of car access and housing tenure was higher than that of all men and all women in the corresponding categories', p. 1389. Patrick J. Bracken, Liam Greenslade, Barney Griffin, and Marcelino Smyth, 'Mental Health and Ethnicity: An Irish Dimension', *British Journal of Psychiatry* Vol. 172, February (1998), p. 103.

25. Harding and Balarajan, 'Patterns of Mortality', p. 1392. For a discussion of the problems and possibilities raised by assertions of cultural difference in health provision, see David Kelleher, 'A Defence of the Use of the Terms "Ethnicity" and "Culture"', in David Kelleher and Sheila Hillier (eds), *Researching Cultural Differences in Health* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 69-90.

26. Michael P. Hornsby-Smith and Angela Dale, 'The Assimilation of Irish Immigrants in England', *British Journal of Sociology* Vol. 39, Vol. 4 (1988), pp. 519-44.

27. Hornsby-Smith and Dale, 'The Assimilation of Irish Immigrants in England', p. 521, my emphasis.

28. Hornsby-Smith and Dale, 'The Assimilation of Irish Immigrants in England', p. 530, my emphasis. Most strikingly, the daughters of immigrants from the Irish Republic exceeded the English control sample by two to one for 'higher qualifications' (one or more A-levels or above, including teaching and nursing qualifications). Meanwhile, for 'intermediate qualifications' (any qualifications below A-level), the sons of immigrants from the Irish Republic exceeded the English control sample by almost ten per cent. This particular research was based on a sample of 243 male and 245 female children of immigrants from the Republic of Ireland, and an English control sample of 559 men, and 584 women. The authors used the General Household Survey for 1979 and 1980, carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (now the Office for National Statistics). See Hornsby-Smith and Dale, 'The Assimilation of Irish Immigrants in England', pp. 527-30.

29. Hornsby-Smith and Dale, 'The Assimilation of Irish Immigrants in England'.

30. The post-war wave of immigrants from the Republic arrived in England 'with low levels of educational qualifications' (Hornsby-Smith and Dale, 'The Assimilation of Irish Immigrants in England', p. 534). For instance, '82 per cent of Irish-born British residents in 1961 had left school at 15 or earlier' (Bernard Canavan, 'Story-tellers and Writers: Irish Identity in Emigrant Labourers'

Autobiographies, 1870-1970', in Patrick O'Sullivan (ed.), *The Irish World Wide: The Creative Migrant* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), p. 169). For discussions of the health patterns of the first-generation Irish, see Harding and Balarajan, 'Patterns of Mortality', and Bracken *et al*, 'Mental Health and Ethnicity'.

31. John Haskey, 'Mortality Among Second Generation Irish in England and Wales', *British Medical Journal* Vol. 312, No. 7043, 1 June (1996), pp. 1373-4, my emphasis.

32. Ullah, 'Second-Generation Irish Youth: Identity and Ethnicity'; Hickman, *Religion, Class, and Identity*; Harding and Balarajan, 'Patterns of Mortality'. Moreover, even in instances where the second-generation are not the principal object of analysis, they tend to be alluded to as a 'problem'. For instance, in a discussion about the teaching of Irish history in Britain, Roy Foster implied that the professional development of academic pedagogy in this field had, at least initially, been inhibited by a tendency to 'massage the *susceptibilities* of a second generation emigrant [sic] community' (Peter Gray, 'Our Man at Oxford', *History Ireland* Vol. 1, No. 3 (Autumn, 1993), p. 12, my emphasis).

33. For instance, Philip Ullah, 'Second-Generation Irish Youth: A Social Psychological Investigation of a Hidden Minority'.

34. Simon Frith, 'Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music', in Richard Leppert and Susan McLary (eds), *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 141.

35. I use these terms loosely, here, to denote 'folk', or 'traditional', Irish music on the one hand, and rock or pop music, on the other. I will consider these points in more detail in Chapter Five.

36. MacGowan and Rowland are not strictly speaking 'traditional' musicians in the way that other second-generation Irish musicians, such as Kevin Burke (of Patrick Street), or Alec Finn (of De Dannan), might be. However, I am primarily interested, here, in popular music, and, within this realm, The Pogues and Dexy's Midnight Runners are identifiably Irish in a way that, say, The Smiths, are not.

37. Donald H. Akenson, 'Let's Stop Talking about Irish Emigration: Some Constructive Alternatives', Inaugural Lecture, the Beamish Research Professorship of Migration Studies, The Institute of Irish Studies, The University of Liverpool, 23 November (1998), p. 7, my emphasis.

38. See, for example, Paul Gallagher and Terry Christian, *Brothers: From Childhood to Oasis - The Real Story* (London: Virgin, 1996), p. 131; Paolo Hewitt, *Getting High: The Adventures of Oasis* (London: Boxtree), pp. 67, 69-70, 141, 374; Chris Hutton and Richard Kurt, *Don't Look Back in Anger: Growing up with Oasis* (Simon and Schuster, 1997), p. 165; John Lydon, with Keith Zimmerman and Kent Zimmerman, *Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994); Talking Music, *The Interview: The Smiths Speek* CD 014 (1998). Of course,

to assume that the Irishness of these musicians is somehow contingent on their musical fidelity to a 'traditional' idiom is to accord with an essentialist model of identity.

39. Akenson, 'Let's Stop Talking about Irish Emigration', p. 9.

40. See, for example, Curtis, *Apes and Angels*; Liz Curtis, *Nothing But The Same Old Story: The Roots of Anti-Irish Racism* (London: Information on Ireland, 1984).

41. Ryan, 'Irish Emigration', p. 63.

42. See, for instance, Cal McCrystal, 'Emigration "Poses Huge Danger to Irish Health"', *Observer*, 9 June 1996, p. 3; Owen Bowcott, 'Concern Over Health of Irish Immigrants', *Guardian*, 9 February 1998, p. 2.

43. Clearly the number of 'successful' musicians does not correlate, quantitatively, with the figures presented in these health studies. However, I am making a qualitative point, here, about the way in which these distinctive phenomena have been mediated.

44. See Norah Casey (ed.), 'You Say: The Forum for the Irish in Britain', *Irish Post*, 13 February 1999, p. 14. In addition to its obvious derisiveness, this term is, of course, gender exclusive. As Hickman and Walter have pointed out, 'the masculine imagery of "Paddy" hides the existence of Irish women in Britain, although they have outnumbered men since the 1920s' (Hickman and Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain', *Feminist Review* No. 50 (Summer 1995), p. 5).

45. Mary Kells, 'Ethnic Identity Amongst Young Middle Class Irish Migrants in London', Occasional Papers Series No. 6 (London: University of North London Press, 1995), p. 15.

46. See, for example, Declan Kiberd, 'The *Real* Ireland, Some Think', *New York Times*, 'Arts' Section, 25 April 1999, p. 6. Kiberd uses the term, here, in reference to the responses of Irish audiences to the work of second-generation Irish playwright Martin McDonagh. McDonagh had previously been characterised by Joseph Feeney as '[not knowing] whether he's English or Irish', implying that McDonagh's apparent reluctance to reduce his identity to either category is a problem that should, somehow, be resolved. See Feeney, 'Martin McDonagh: Dramatist of the West', *Studies* Vol. 87, No. 345 (March 1998), p. 26.

47. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Gerry Smyth, 'Who's the Greenest of Them All? Irishness and Popular Music', *Irish Studies Review* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1992), pp. 3-5.

48. Marcus Free, 'Angels With Drunken Faces?: Travelling Republic of Ireland Supporters and the Construction of Irish Migrant Identity in England', in Adam Brown (ed.), *Fanatics! Power, Identity and Fandom in Football* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 224.

49. In the absence of substantial empirical data on the attitudes of Irish-born people to the

second-generation Irish in England, the views recorded in Kells, 'Ethnic Identity'; Free, "Angels with Drunken Faces?"; and the letters page of the *Irish Post*, are the few resources of which I am aware.

50. See, for example, Hickman, 'A Study of the Incorporation of the Irish in Britain'; Ullah, 'Second-Generation Irish Youth: A Social Psychological Investigation of a Hidden Minority'.

51. Akenson, 'Let's Stop Talking about Irish Emigration', p. 9.

52. For instance, the most successful Irish football squad of all-time, which reached the quarter-final stage of the World Cup in Italy in 1990, included twelve players born outside of Ireland. Gerry Peyton, Chris Morris, Chris Hughton, Mick McCarthy, Andy Townsend, Tony Galvin, John Aldridge, and Tony Cascarino were all born in England. David O'Leary and Paul McGrath, although raised in Ireland, were also born in England. Ray Houghton was born in Scotland, and Kevin Sheedy in Wales. Michael Holmes has suggested that 'the football team's success has contributed to a far greater awareness and appreciation of the Irish diaspora' (Holmes, 'Symbols of National Identity and Sport: The Case of the Irish Football Team', *Irish Political Studies* Vol. 9 (1994), p. 58). However, this does not appear to be borne out in Free's study.

53. David Morley and Kevin Robins, 'No Place Like *Heimat*: Images of Home(land) in European Culture' in Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires (eds), *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), p. 27. In the light of the fact that both nation-state *and* diasporic identities are equally constructed, fluid, and porous, perhaps the derisive use of 'plastic' to denote the second-generation Irish is, after all, appropriate. For plastic, like cultural identity, is malleable and artificial. Accordingly, the second-generation Irish should perhaps consider a strategic re-appropriation of this derogatory label.

54. D. O'Brien, quoted in Judy Chance, 'The Irish in London: An Exploration of Ethnic Boundary Maintenance', in P. Jackson (ed.), *Race and Racism: Essays in Social Geography* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), p. 154.

55. O'Brien, quoted in Chance, 'The Irish in London', p. 154. The standpoint expressed here appears to confirm Donogh O'Malley anticipation, in 1966, that 'this century will see the evolution of the Anglo-Irishman [sic] in a new sense - a man with a legitimate pride in his Irish ancestry and contributing his own distinctiveness to English life'. Address by Mr. Donogh O'Malley, Minister for Health, to the National University of Ireland Club, Grosvenor House, London, St. Patrick's Day, 1966, NAI DT 96/6/437 p. 5.

56. Bernard McGrath, 'Angst of the Irish in Britain', *Irish Post*, 24 April 1999, p. 13.

57. This is not to suggest that the discursive construction of such differences has been restricted to this particular Celticist moment, but instead to emphasise that this was an especially prominent instance of such constructions in the realm of cultural criticism. For a discussion of Celticist binary

divisions, see Seamus Deane, *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1880-1980* (Faber and Faber, 1985), pp. 17-27. For a broader historical engagement with constructions of Irishness in Britain, see Curtis, *Apes and Angels*; Curtis, *Nothing But the Same Old Story*; Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*. For a discussion of the particular post-war context in which second-generation Irish identity-formation processes have taken place, see Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity*, pp. 127-33; Hickman, *Religion, Class, and Identity*, pp. 203-49; Walter, *Outsiders Inside*, pp. 162-93.

58. In Ullah's ethnographic survey of the second-generation, the majority of respondents described themselves as 'half English, half Irish' ('Second-Generation Irish Youth: Identity and Ethnicity', p. 312). For a brief discussion of hybridity with specific regard to diasporic identity-formation, see Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (Routledge, 1994), pp. 41-6.

Chapter Two

‘Unthinking Albion’:

British Cultural Studies, ‘White Ethnicity’ and the Irish in England¹

In Chapter One I examined the ways in which the second-generation Irish have conventionally been understood in historical and sociological work on the Irish ethnic group in post-war England. In Chapters Two and Three, I consider the ways in which this generation has been discursively managed in in the field of British cultural studies.

To this end, Chapter Three considers specific discussions of second-generation rock musicians extracted from Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the meaning of style* (1979), and his later essay ‘Digging for Britain: An Excavation in Seven Parts’ (1987);² Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack’: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (1987); Julian Stringer, ‘The Smiths: Repressed (But Remarkably Dressed)’ (1992), and Martin Cloonan, ‘What Do They Know of England?: “Englishness” and Popular Music in the mid-1990s’ (1998).³ I will also make reference to David Hesmondhalgh, ‘Indie: The Institutional Politics and Aesthetics of a Popular Music Genre’ (1999).⁴

It is worth pointing out here that the musicians with whom I am specifically concerned are not the principal object of analysis in all of the above texts. Nevertheless, this body of work, which constitutes the existing literature on these musicians (at least in the field of British cultural studies), has discursively positioned them in the particular context of ethnicity and popular culture in post-war England, and this is therefore the most relevant and appropriate field in which to situate my own project.⁵

In an early critique of Hebdige's *Subculture*, Angela McRobbie explained that 'the subcultural "classics"' should not 'simply [be] dismissed' but instead 'should be reread critically so that questions hitherto ignored or waved aside in embarrassment become central'. McRobbie's particular intention was, as she explained it, to read "'across"' these texts 'to see what they say (or fail to say) about working-class male sexuality'.⁶ In setting out this endeavour, McRobbie, formerly a researcher at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (henceforth the Birmingham Centre), appears to be adopting a particular approach that was practised at the Centre.⁷ John Clarke, also a former researcher at the Centre, has referred to this approach as the 'the practice of critique':

Within this critical practice, the Centre adopted a version of what Althusser termed 'symptomatic reading': the analysis of texts for their 'silences' as much as for their statements with a view to revealing their underlying problematics. Such readings involved 'privileging' developing positions within cultural studies as a vantage point from which to examine and assess other positions.⁸

In Chapters Two and Three, then, I will present an analogous re-reading of the handling of Irish ethnicity in British cultural studies, re-positioning this previously neglected issue at the centre of the discussion, to consider what is said (or, as is more often the case, unsaid) about this issue.

Before I examine the selected texts in Chapter Three, it is necessary to first of all consider, more broadly, the way in which Irish immigration has been discursively managed in British cultural studies, in order to situate these specific texts in their particular critical and intellectual context. To this end, this chapter traces the particular ways in which Irish ethnicity has been handled in

the field of British cultural studies,⁹ suggesting that the Irish in England have been subjected to a kind of disciplinary exclusion from the field's engagement with questions of 'race' and ethnicity.¹⁰ This will enable me, in Chapter Three, to focus specifically on the way in which second-generation Irish rock musicians have conventionally been theorised in British cultural studies, pointing in particular to the field's tendency to subsume these musicians into an all-encompassing, and largely undefined, 'white ethnicity'.

'Policing the Irish': British cultural studies, race, ethnicity and the Irish in England

Questions of race and ethnicity have, of course, been dominant concerns in the field of British cultural studies.¹¹ However, these concerns were, as Stuart Hall has pointed out, relatively late additions to the field's agenda.¹² In fact, prior to the Birmingham Centre's publication of *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* in 1978, and *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and racism in 70s Britain* in 1982 (henceforth *Policing* and *Empire*), class and, to a lesser extent, gender, had been the principal concerns of the Centre specifically, and the field more generally.¹³ And while it is not my intention to conflate the particular project of the Birmingham Centre with the overarching field of British cultural studies, the Centre can, according to Graeme Turner, 'justifiably claim to be the key institution in the history of the field', exercising 'a special influence on the field's development' that 'is beyond argument'.¹⁴ Such claims certainly appear to be substantiated by the fact that many of the authors whose work is referenced or discussed in this chapter (including Gary Clarke, John Clarke, Phil Cohen, Richard Dyer, Paul Gilroy, Dick Hebdige, and Angela McRobbie) have been associated, in various capacities, with the Birmingham Centre.

The Centre was established at the University of Birmingham in 1964, under the directorship of

Richard Hoggart.¹⁵ According to John Clarke, a researcher at the Centre in the 1970s, and one of the co-authors of *Policing*, Hoggart's examination of 'mass culture' and 'the traditional practices of working-class life' in *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) had provided the 'impulse for the creation' of the Centre. Indeed, Clarke has explained that Hoggart's class-based text had a formative role in the development of British cultural studies' initial theoretical positions: 'Given the Hoggarthian inheritance and the wider cultural conditions, it is no surprise that cultural studies first took shape around the problems of the relationship between class and culture'.¹⁶ This emphasis on class in Hoggart's 'Ur-text of British Cultural Studies'¹⁷ was, moreover, shared with what have come to be widely regarded as the field's other 'founding' texts: Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* (1958), and E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) (henceforth *The Making*).¹⁸

Given the particular concerns of these texts, it is perhaps unsurprising that early work in the field offered little consideration of questions of race and ethnicity in general, much less those pertaining to Irish immigration in particular. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that these 'founding' texts responded in distinctive ways to the presence of the Irish in England. Williams, for example, makes no mention of the Irish whatsoever in *Culture and Society* (despite his discussion of Burke and Wilde).¹⁹ Hoggart, on the other hand, fleetingly refers to anti-Catholic (and anti-Jewish) prejudice amongst the English working class.²⁰ However, while he subsequently acknowledges the Jewish presence in the north of England (pp. 147, 352), there is no corresponding recognition of the Irish presence, despite the fact that his discussion of political activism amongst the English working class draws particular attention to the second-generation Irish trade unionist Ben Tillett (p. 319), recommending, as a representative account of this dimension of working class life, the autobiography of the second-generation

Irish Margaret McCarthy (p. 366). (This positing of second-generation Irish people as key representatives of the English working class would, as I demonstrate in Chapter Three, become a recurring practice in British cultural studies).

In contrast to both Hoggart and Williams, Thompson devoted a chapter sub-section of *The Making* to the Irish in nineteenth-century England (a feature that is perhaps symptomatic of the fact that Thompson was a social historian rather than a literary or cultural critic).²¹ Indeed, at the outset of this section, Thompson concedes that ‘One ingredient in the new working-class community has necessarily evaded this analysis: the Irish immigration’ (p. 469), an admission which, though intended to refer specifically to *The Making*, can perhaps also be read as an acknowledgement of the wider absence of an Irish dimension in the ‘founding’ texts of British cultural studies: Hoggart’s and Williams’ texts had been published half a decade prior to *The Making*, and Thompson had previously, in a ‘seminal critique’ of Williams that became ‘a formative text’ for the Birmingham Centre, castigated Williams for, amongst other things, overlooking the historical experience of the Great Famine in Ireland in his account of the 1840s.²²

Significantly, Thompson draws attention, in only the second sentence of this section, to the ‘tens of thousands ... born in Britain of Irish parentage’ (p. 469), and even alludes to second-generation music-making, maintaining that, for this generation, ‘the fiddle [and] the pipe ... were laid aside’ (p. 480). And while this point is perhaps indicative of Thompson’s adherence to the assimilationist thesis (he goes on to suggest that ‘it is not the friction but the relative ease with which the Irish were absorbed into working-class communities which is remarkable’, p. 480), he nevertheless appears to consider those eschewing Irish ‘traditional’

music to be no less constituent of the Irish ethnic group (a view that, as I demonstrate in Chapter Three, few of Thompson's descendants in British cultural studies would subsequently share).

Moreover, despite the specifically class-based focus of *The Making*, Thompson places particular emphasis on the distinctive role that Irish immigrants have played in shaping the English working class (pp. 484-5). Admittedly, this was occasionally expressed in quasi-Celticist terms ('The Irish influence is most felt in a rebellious disposition in the communities and places of work; in a disposition to challenge authority, to resort to the threat of "physical force", and to refuse to be intimidated by the inhibitions of constitutionalism', p. 484), and Thompson's handling of the Irish has certainly not been exempt from criticism. Anthony Gronowicz, for instance, has contended that

Methodologically, Thompson tacks the Irish onto his ebullient romantic depiction of the English working class. One could perhaps object, given the title of his work, that this was not Thompson's concern. Including the Irish would have markedly diminished his case because he would have been forced to reveal how English labor acquiesced in the imperial racism of the empire'.²³

Nevertheless, Thompson does at least recognise the presence of the Irish ethnic group in England, a dimension of his work that has subsequently been largely absent in British cultural studies.

In any case, despite the class-based concerns of the field's 'founding' texts, by the late 1970s

‘the theoretical hegemony of class as the dominant relation to be analysed in cultural studies’ had been vigorously contested, at least within the Birmingham Centre, which had been under the directorship of Stuart Hall for almost a decade. This challenge (which came not only from the publication of *Policing*, but also from an emerging body of work on gender, see note 13), had, according to Clarke, ‘decentred class as the focal problematic of cultural studies’.²⁴

However, this inclusion of ‘other’ questions, particularly those pertaining to race and ethnicity, on the agenda of British cultural studies was evidently not a straightforward exercise. As Hall has recalled, ‘getting cultural studies to put on its own agenda the critical questions of race, the politics of race, the resistance to racism, the critical questions of cultural politics, was itself a profound theoretical struggle, a struggle of which *Policing the Crisis*, was, curiously, the first and very late example’.²⁵ For Hall, this ‘decisive turn’ in the ‘theoretical and intellectual work’ of the Centre (and, in turn, the field more generally), was ‘only accomplished as the result of a long, and sometimes bitter - certainly bitterly contested - internal struggle against a resounding but unconscious silence’.²⁶

Jon Stratton and Ien Ang have suggested that the ‘silence’ identified here by Hall ‘revolved around the implicit racial assumptions of Britishness and British identity’. They go on to explain that many of the progenitors of cultural studies in Britain (referring specifically to Williams and, in parenthesis, to ‘many others’, by which they presumably mean Hoggart and Thompson) ‘did not query the naturalized equation of Britishness with whiteness’.²⁷ This quiescent conflation of race and nation has, of course, been subjected to a substantial critique from black British cultural studies practitioners, most notably Paul Gilroy. As Roxy Harris has pointed out, Gilroy ‘signalled [a] moment of rupture’ in the field ‘when he attacked both

Williams and Thompson for their silences or negative collusions on questions of “race” in *‘There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack’* (1987).²⁸ However, this moment had perhaps been foreshadowed half a decade earlier in the opening paragraph of Gilroy’s preface to *Empire*:

There are many reasons why issues raised by the study of ‘races’ and racisms should be central to the concerns of cultural studies. Yet racist ideologies and racial conflicts have been ignored, both in historical writing and in accounts of the present. If nothing else, this book should be taken as a signal that this marginalization cannot continue. It has also been conceived as a corrective to the narrowness of the English left whose version of the ‘national-popular’ continues to deny the role of blacks and black struggles in the making and the remaking of the working class.²⁹

By drawing attention, in this way, to the ‘naturalized equation’ of race and nation in earlier work in the field, and providing some much overdue consideration of the historical experience of African-Caribbean (and, to a lesser extent, South Asian) immigrants and their descendants, this ‘turn’ towards questions of race and ethnicity served to contest the status of ‘black’ people ‘as Other to a taken-for-granted “white” British imagined community’.³⁰ However, while this project may have been successful in its endeavour to deconstruct the implicit conflation of whiteness and Englishness (and/or Britishness) in previous work, and thereby pointed to a more ethnically diverse sense of Englishness (and/or Britishness), it simultaneously re-inscribed, albeit tacitly, the homogeneity of whiteness in England by taking it at face value. In other words, in the crucial move towards ‘historicising and denaturalising “blackness”’,³¹ the field appeared to take for granted the ostensible homogeneity of whiteness in England, and thereby served to

re-produce an ahistorical and re-naturalised 'whiteness'.

Consequently, in the process of cultural studies' imperative endeavour to construct, in Gilroy's words, 'a more pluralistic, postcolonial sense of British culture and national identity',³² the presence of post-war Irish Catholic labour migrants and their immediate descendants was rendered invisible. Accordingly, if the emphasis on class in the 'founding' texts and initial theoretical positions of British cultural studies had marginalised questions of race, ethnicity and immigration (including, of course, those pertaining to the Irish in England), then in the subsequent effort to foreground these issues, this Irish dimension was, once again, overlooked, and thereby doubly elided.

So, despite the fact that at the time of British cultural studies' 'turn' towards questions of race and ethnicity the Irish ethnic group in England was one of the largest migrant minorities in western Europe,³³ and despite the specificities of their particular historical experience, Irish ethnicity was tacitly included in a taken-for-granted generic whiteness, and thereby excluded from cultural studies' engagement with these questions. For '[just] as "racial", ethnic and national discourses are about processes of inclusion and exclusion, so, too, the disciplines and concepts with which they are studied have their own closures which include and exclude'.³⁴

Recognition of Irish ethnicity

Clearly there are a number of possible explanations for the abiding absence of an Irish dimension in British cultural studies, and I will consider some of these below. However, before I do this, I want to point out that the inclusion of questions of race and ethnicity on the agenda of British cultural studies coincided historically with the development of an Irish dimension in

particular academic and political discourses about ethnicity in contemporary Britain. For instance, during the period in which *Policing* and *Empire* emerged from the Birmingham Centre, the first sustained piece of academic research on the children of post-war Irish Catholic labour migrants was produced in another Faculty at the University of Birmingham. This work was conducted by Philip Ullah, a postgraduate research student in the Department of Psychology in the early 1980s, and was subsequently published in *New Community*, the journal of the Commission for Racial Equality, a periodical with which CCCS personnel would no doubt have been familiar.³⁵

Indeed, in the opening paragraph of his unpublished PhD thesis (1983), Ullah drew particular attention to the absence of an Irish dimension in studies of ethnicity and immigration in post-war Britain. Referring to the (then) current academic concern with second-generation minority groups as a 'growth area' of 'social scientific research', Ullah explained: 'Although this research has been extended to cover the second generation of ethnic minorities other than Asians and West Indians, there remains a conspicuous lack of attention afforded to the children of Irish immigrants'.³⁶

Significantly, this academic endeavour to address the experience of the Irish ethnic group in England corresponded with the development of an Irish dimension in ethnic minority policy-making documents produced by sections of the British Left. Cultural studies in Britain had, as has been pointed out in several accounts, emerged in the context of particular social movements, perhaps most importantly that of the New Left.³⁷ Indeed, the initial absence of questions of race and ethnicity from the agenda of British cultural studies was arguably symptomatic of a corresponding omission on the agenda of the Left (a point that Gilroy

addressed in *'There Ain't No Black In The Union Jack'*).³⁸ Nevertheless, in the early 1980s, sections of the British Left began to demonstrate an interest in the experience of Irish people in England. For instance, in 1983, the Greater London Council (GLC) under the leadership of Ken Livingstone, convened a consultation conference for London's Irish community, and subsequently published a number of reports that addressed the experience of the Irish ethnic group, one of which offered, as Breda Gray has noted, 'the first public institutional acknowledgement of anti-Irish racism'.³⁹ In addition, the GLC, in conjunction with the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), offered financial support for the London-based Irish Video Project, a collective that was commissioned by Channel Four (whose broadcasting remit placed particular emphasis on ethnic minority programming) to produce films about the experience of Irish immigrants in England, including a focus on the second-generation.⁴⁰ As Gray has pointed out, 'by recognizing the Irish as an "ethnic minority"' in this way, the GLC not only 'legitimat[ed] the funding of specifically Irish welfare and cultural projects', but also 'contributed to the visibility of Irishness in England'.⁴¹

Notwithstanding these particular academic and political developments, it certainly seems anomalous that the absence of an Irish dimension during the formative years of British cultural studies coincided historically with an increasing Irish presence in England. In addition to the increase in the sheer volume of Irish immigrants (and their immediate descendants) during this period, a number of social, political and cultural organisations and institutions for Irish people in England evolved throughout the 1970s and 1980s (largely under the umbrella of the Federation of Irish Societies who endeavoured 'to promote the interests of the Irish community in Britain through community care, education, culture, arts, youth welfare and information provision'), including branches of the Gaelic Athletic Association and Comhaltas Ceoltoiri

Eireann, as well as the Irish in Britain Representation Group (1981-), and the Action Group for Irish Youth (1984-).⁴² Such developments were concomitant with the establishment of Irish Centres in cities such as London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester, and the launch of a newspaper specifically for Irish people in Britain, the *Irish Post* (1970-). Moreover, at precisely the same moment as the Birmingham Centre's 'turn' towards questions of race and ethnicity, efforts were being made in nearby English cities to develop Irish cultural studies programmes for the children of Irish immigrants in England.⁴³ And even if the presence of this 'wave' of immigrants, and their English-born children, was less visible than that of other post-war immigrant groups, a series of acts of political violence carried out by militant Irish republicans in the 1970s and 1980s served to heighten awareness, as well as generate anxiety, about the presence of the Irish ethnic group in England.⁴⁴ Indeed, the city of Birmingham, the location in which Cultural Studies had been institutionalised⁴⁵ and which had been an important receptor for post-war Irish Catholic labour migrants was, in November 1974, subjected to a bomb attack that demolished a section of the city, killing twenty-one (and injuring 162) of its inhabitants.⁴⁶ In the traumatic aftermath of these bombings (described by Robert Kee as 'the most savage act of terrorism ever experienced in Britain')⁴⁷ Irish people in Birmingham were subjected to particular forms of differentiation:

Irish organizations and individuals became the targets for abuse and obscene phone calls; stones and a petrol bomb were thrown through the windows of the Irish Centre; an Irish pub ... was badly damaged by another petrol bomb; two lorries belonging to an Irish construction firm were damaged; and a Roman Catholic junior school and a church, the Holy Family in Small Heath, were attacked. At the British Leyland works in Longbridge, where some 3,000 Irish

were employed, there was a walk-out by car assembly workers.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, six Birmingham-based Irish-born men were hastily arrested and wrongly convicted of planting the bomb, before being imprisoned for sixteen years in what became one of the most notorious miscarriages of justice in English legal history.⁴⁹ Also at this time, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) was speedily introduced by the British government, bestowing upon the Secretary of State ‘considerable new powers to control the movement of people between Ireland and Great Britain’, including ‘extensive powers to establish a comprehensive system of port controls’ as well as ‘the power to remove people who are already living in Great Britain to either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland’. And while the powers of the PTA clearly fell short of the immigration controls facilitated by the various Nationality and Immigration Acts that other immigrant groups have been subjected to in the post-war period, the Act (which was renewed in 1976, 1984 and 1989) has nevertheless been described as a form of institutional discrimination: ‘the PTA is a discriminatory piece of law in that it is directed primarily at one section of the travelling public. In effect it means that Irish people in general have a more restrictive set of rights than other travellers. In this sense, the Irish community as a whole is a “suspect community”’.⁵⁰

This claim (that the PTA impacted upon ‘the Irish community as a whole’) certainly appears to gain sustenance from the fact that almost 90% of those detained under the Act between 1974 and 1991 were eventually released without charge.⁵¹ Regardless of the Act’s ostensible objective of targeting people responsible for acts of political violence, in practice it seems to have had detrimental consequences for the lives of ordinary Irish people living and working in England. Sister Sarah Clarke, an Irish-born nun who worked with Irish families in London in

the 1970s, has recalled the ‘horrors’ of the Act’s initial implementation:

People picked up under the PTA had no rights whatsoever in those early days. They disappeared. Eventually, we found out that they could be held for seven days. Police denied that they were holding people. Detainees were questioned at all hours, day and night, and solicitors were not allowed in. It was a very anxious time for the families of those detained.⁵²

According to Clarke, the ‘worst period’ was between 1975 and 1981 (the period, of course, in which cultural studies began to ‘turn’ towards questions of race and ethnicity): ‘Police with dogs, guns and vans swooped on houses in the early hours of the morning, frightening young [and presumably second-generation] children, damaging property and making innocent law-abiding citizens targets of suspicion in their streets and neighbourhoods’.⁵³ The fact of being born and raised in England was evidently insufficient to exempt the second-generation Irish from the peculiarly repressive machinations of this Act, and in 1976 two second-generation Irish teenagers, Vincent and Patrick Maguire, who had been arrested under the PTA, were wrongly convicted of involvement in the 1974 Guildford pub bombings.⁵⁴

The particular manifestations of anti-Irish prejudice that unfolded in the aftermath of such acts of political violence made little attempt to distinguish between Irish-born immigrants and their English-born children. An Irish-born mother in England in the 1970s (recorded for a European Community project on migrant housing conditions) offered a stark illustration of this point, explaining that after the Birmingham bombings, her ‘children could never be allowed to play outside the house’ as ‘they would be attacked by British children and beaten’.⁵⁵ According to

John Gabriel (a Head of Cultural Studies at Birmingham during the 1990s), second-generation Irish people became ‘the object of attacks’ in English schools, particularly in the period ‘during and after IRA bombing campaigns’.⁵⁶ Significantly, this is a point that has been corroborated by many second-generation rock musicians. For instance, Johnny Marr of The Smiths (one of the groups that have been theorised by practitioners of British cultural studies in terms of a homogeneous ‘white ethnicity’), has explained that, during his school days in the 1970s, he was called an ‘Irish pig’ by Mancunian classmates ‘who equated being Irish with explosions’.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, Noel Gallagher of Oasis has suggested that this context was formative in the development of his identification with Irishness: ‘Growing up in the 70s with the bombs and that stuff, it was a very isolated community. There was a lot of flak going towards the Irish over here and that was where I got a sense of my Irish identity’.⁵⁸

At the particular moment of British cultural studies’ initial engagement with questions of race and ethnicity, then, the Irish ethnic group in England was, in many respects, becoming increasingly visible, not least because of the malign consequences of Irish-related political violence. And while post-war Irish immigrants and their immediate descendants, as Jim Mac Laughlin has pointed out, did not experience ‘racial victimisation to the same degree as other racial and ethnic minorities’, they nevertheless ‘[encountered] significant levels of anti-Irish sentiment’, and were subjected to specific processes of ethnic differentiation.⁵⁹ Moreover, at approximately the same time, particular academic and political discourses were endeavouring to provide recognition of Irish experience in England. What the elision of Irish ethnicity in British cultural studies - a field whose ‘energizing impulse’ has ‘historically ... lain in [a] critical concern with, and validation of, the subordinate, the marginalized [and] the subaltern within Britain’⁶⁰ - appears to point to, then, is the rigidity and vigour of the black/white binary

division underpinning the field's 'turn' towards questions of race and ethnicity. Although, as Roxy Harris pointed out in a critique of the field's failure to acknowledge particular aspects of African-Caribbean experience in England, it can be 'difficult and unproductive to attribute motivation in these circumstances',⁶¹ I think that it is useful, here, to trace the particular origins of the exclusion of Irish ethnicity from the agenda of British cultural studies.

'Race' Politics, Research Personnel, and Perceived Peripherality

At the 'Cultural Studies Now and in the Future' conference held at the University of Illinois in April 1990, a major convention that was subsequently recorded in the *Cultural Studies* anthology edited by Grossberg *et al*, Paul Gilroy was asked by one of the conference discussants 'why discussions of race and class in Britain never discuss the Chinese in Britain'. This question, which could arguably have been equally concerned with the exclusion of white ethnic groups, such as the Irish, from the agenda of British cultural studies, elicited an illuminating response from Gilroy, who suggested that 'it's probably got to do with *who owns and manages and controls the spaces* in which such discussions appear and the *particular definition of race politics* that they want to trade in'. He also ventured that the reason some 'experiences aren't addressed or recorded as having any significance is because they're *perceived to be peripheral* to where the real action is supposedly identified'.⁶²

Gilroy's remarks, here, offer a productive aperture from which to consider the absence of an Irish dimension in British cultural studies' engagement with questions of race and ethnicity, and I will discuss his comments with particular regard to the field's first major forays in this area, *Policing and Empire*. My decision to concentrate on these texts is based not only on their status as formative endeavours in the field's canon, but also on the fact that their adherence to

the dominant 'race relations' paradigm has been characteristic of much of the field's subsequent work on race and ethnicity.

In his brief preface to *Empire*, Gilroy broached the issue of research personnel and their 'control of spaces' with specific reference to the relative lack of attention that the authors had paid to the South Asian ethnic group in Britain. Here, he conceded that

[we] have struck an inadequate balance between the two black communities.

We opted to remain *within the bounds of our own historical resources* rather than make pronouncements on things that were unfamiliar. Only one of us has roots in the Indian subcontinent whereas four of us are of Afro-Caribbean origin.

This accounts for the unevenness of our text.⁶³

If we take Gilroy's concession slightly further, then, perhaps the lack of an Irish dimension in *Policing and Empire* can be partly attributed to the apparent absence of first- or second-generation Irish personnel in the collective.⁶⁴ This possibility appears to gain sustenance from a point that Stuart Hall raised at the Illinois conference in 1990. Here, Hall 'implied that neither gender nor race could have been placed on the agenda of the Birmingham Centre without *the physical presence in the Centre* of women and blacks'.⁶⁵ Indeed, it has been pointed out that the development of an Irish dimension in a cognate discipline - British transcultural psychiatry - was facilitated by the endeavours of second-generation Irish academics in that field: 'most of the small literature [on the Irish in Britain] which has emerged' in this area 'has come from Irish researchers ... or second generation Irish or Anglo-Irish scholars from Great Britain'.⁶⁶ This is not to suggest, of course, that non-Irish personnel are in

any way incapable of producing work that acknowledges the presence - or engages with the experience - of Irish people in England. However, in light of Hall's comment that 'The Centre had ... to work with the intellectual raw materials it had to hand [and] chose to specialize in those areas which the small staff felt capable of supervising', we can perhaps infer that individual members of the Birmingham Centre simply did not have research interests in this area.⁶⁷

Defining 'Race' Politics

As I have pointed out, British cultural studies' engagement with questions of race and ethnicity was, at least in part, born of an endeavour to interrogate 'the naturalized equation of Britishness with whiteness'⁶⁸ in earlier work in the field. Accordingly, this undertaking was informed by a very particular definition of race politics that pertained specifically to visible (and largely African-Caribbean) immigrants and their descendants. This definition was, however, hardly peculiar to the field of cultural studies. In fact, it was symptomatic of the dominant 'race relations' paradigm practised by sociologists in post-war Britain. According to Mary Hickman, this paradigm was 'primarily designed to explain patterns of racism and discrimination experienced by migrants from Britain's ex-colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent. Its main premise ... is that racism is about "colour": that is, about visible difference', hence its 'automatic exclusion' of the Irish ethnic group.⁶⁹ In short then, as Hickman and Walter have pointed out, the experience of the Irish in England has been overlooked because they are a predominantly white ethnic group and the dominant paradigm 'is constructed on the basis of a black-white dichotomy'.⁷⁰ The conceptual frame underpinning cultural studies' engagement with questions of race and ethnicity, then, has been circumscribed by a 'colour' - rather than, say, a 'migrant labour' - paradigm.⁷¹ Of course, as Hickman and

Walter recognise, this emphasis on visible difference is ‘understandable at one level because of the systematic racism and discrimination which has characterized the experience of different collectivities of mainly British citizens who have migrated from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan, and their British born children’.⁷²

As these particular historical circumstances - and sociological practices - provided the context in which cultural studies administered its ‘turn’ towards questions of race and ethnicity, it was perhaps inevitable that, in the process of this manoeuvre, the field tended to overlook the ethnic heterogeneity of whiteness in England. Accordingly, if whiteness, as Richard Dyer has pointed out, ‘seems rooted, in common-sense thought, in things other than ethnic difference’,⁷³ then texts such as *Policing* and *Empire* have assumed a face value notion of ‘immigrancy’ as pertaining to ‘black’ people, and ‘indigeneity’ to ‘white’. So, for all their concern with deconstructing the notion of ‘common sense’,⁷⁴ the authors of *Policing* could still claim that ‘immigrants are ... highly visible’,⁷⁵ thereby privileging skin colour as the primary, if not the sole, indicator of ‘immigrancy’.

Significantly, by adhering to the dominant ‘race relations’ paradigm in this way, British cultural studies’ engagement with questions of race and ethnicity has dovetailed neatly with the asymmetrical handling of New Commonwealth and Irish immigration practised by the British state. For as Kathleen Paul has demonstrated, such ahistorical notions about black immigrancy and white indigeneity have tacitly informed government policy on immigration in post-war Britain. Perhaps the most striking instance of this was demonstrated in the government’s concoction, in the 1948 British Nationality Act, of a unique legal status for Irish immigrants as ‘neither subjects nor aliens’, as Paul puts it in her study of race and citizenship in post-war

Britain.⁷⁶ What this effectively meant was that Irish-born people in Britain ‘were to be regarded as neither British subjects nor aliens but as Irish citizens with all the rights of British subjecthood’, a stipulation that was ‘without precedent in legislation dealing with nationality’.⁷⁷

The apparent generosity of the British government in facilitating this peculiarly liminal civil space for Irish labour migrants (which continued despite Ireland’s withdrawal from the Commonwealth and its attainment of republic status in 1949), was not, however, extended to African-Caribbean and South Asian immigrants, many of whom were genuine British subjects.⁷⁸ Instead, post-war immigration from the West Indies, India and Pakistan (which was, of course, numerically exceeded by concurrent immigration from Ireland) was policed by a series of Nationality and Immigration Acts (1948, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1981), despite official recognition that ‘the problems allegedly caused by immigration - overcrowding, strain on social services, and dangers to public health - were the same for both [i.e. New Commonwealth and Irish] groups’. For Paul, what this privileging of white Irish labour migrants over black British subjects points to is a notional conflation of race and nation underpinning immigration policy: ‘Although officials made few references to Irish migrants’ skin color, the lengths to which they went to preserve the labor supply ... suggest that the Irish passed an unwritten test of potential Britishness measured according to a racialized concept of the world’s population’.⁷⁹

In light of such points, it seems curious that cultural studies’ engagement with questions of race and ethnicity appeared to take at face value particular ahistorical notions about black immigrancy and white indigeneity in which the Irish have been ‘undifferentiated as an ethnic minority, part of an undeconstructed whiteness’.⁸⁰ Indeed, such assumptions about the

homogeneity, not to say indigeneity, of whiteness in England appear to have informed the project of texts such as *Policing* and *Empire*.

In fairness to the authors of these texts, though, the absence of an Irish dimension may also originate, at least in part, in an erroneous presumption that Irish immigration was primarily an historical (i.e. nineteenth century) phenomenon, a misconception that was only compounded by an apparent confusion regarding the constitutional status of the Republic of Ireland *vis a vis* Britain. Such problems became particularly manifest when one of the co-authors of *Empire* pointed to a hypothetical connection between the experience of West Indian and Irish people in Britain. Here, Errol Lawrence drew attention to John Rex and Sally Tomlinson's apparent speculation that 'Asians' in post-war Britain face a 'Jewish future', while West Indians will take an 'Irish route'.⁸¹ It appears that this 'Irish route' (which remains undefined in Lawrence's essay) is assumed to have been navigated by Irish migrants in the nineteenth century, providing a precedent against which contemporary immigrants can be measured, and thereby implying that post-war African-Caribbean immigration had no contemporaneous Irish equivalent, despite the fact that Irish immigrants numerically exceeded all other immigrant groups during the post-war period.⁸²

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the Irish are entirely absent when Lawrence subsequently provides a lengthy inventory of contemporary immigrant groups, which significantly includes a number of white ethnicities. Here, he explains that 'In Britain, we have Sikhs, Jamaicans, Italians, Punjabis, Guyanese, Bangladeshis, Antiguan, Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Hindus, Nigerians, Montserratians, Pakistanis, Trinidadians, Sri-Lankians, Ghanaians, Grenadians, Hungarians, Australians, and other [sic] who have migrated to these shores'.

Significantly, in the immediately ensuing sentence, Lawrence positions the Irish in a notional formation of Britishness: ‘it would be purely arbitrary to stop there. What about the Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish and Manx peoples?’ (pp. 135-6). Clearly Lawrence locates Irishness, here, within Britishness (alongside the Scottish and Welsh), overlooking the fact that the twenty-six counties constituting the Republic of Ireland (and previously the Free State between 1922 and 1949) had been independent since 1921, and eliding the political complexity of Britain’s historical relationship with Ireland, points with which he is evidently aware in his earlier essay in the collection. (Here, Lawrence had referred to ‘the continuing struggle for Irish independence’ in 1919 as ‘a constant reminder to the ruling bloc of the difficulties involved in maintaining control over the Empire’. He continued: ‘In Britain too, the natives were in restive mood’ (p. 63), thereby implicitly demonstrating a distinction between Britain and Ireland, even though, at that time, Ireland was not yet independent).⁸³

Moreover, Lawrence appears to restrict his definition of ‘Irish’ to people inhabiting the island of Ireland (rather than the immigrant Irish in Britain) since the other groups amongst which he includes the Irish (i.e. the Scottish, Welsh and Cornish), unlike those listed in his prior inventory of ethnic groups, cannot migrate, in his terms, to the ‘shores’ of ‘Britain’. In other words, it seems that, for Lawrence, the Irish in Ireland are always already located on these putatively British ‘shores’, an assumption that clearly hinders the possibility of acknowledging the immigrant Irish presence in England.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, Lawrence concludes his point with a question that is particularly pertinent, here: ‘on what grounds’, he asks, ‘have the “ethnicity studies” researchers singled out only the darker-skinned “ethnic minorities” as fitting objects of study?’ (p. 136). Regrettably, though,

this thought, which remains rhetorical, is restricted to an endnote, and has subsequently received little consideration in the field.

The Invisible Inclusion of Irishness

As I have pointed out, the specificities of the dominant ‘race relations’ paradigm may explain, at least in part, the absence of an Irish dimension in British cultural studies’ work on race and ethnicity. However, a further problem is presented by the fact that, in some of the field’s major interventions in this area, the Irish presence in England has been intrinsically relevant, not to say centrally important. In other words, while the absence of an Irish dimension may be understandable when the express purpose of a particular project is to engage with, say, African-Caribbean or South Asian experience in England, this becomes problematic when, as has often been the case, the Irish ethnic group in England is immanently relevant to the discussion at hand. However, as I will demonstrate, in these particular instances, Irish immigration is only tacitly acknowledged, and Irish ethnicity is rendered invisible. Gilroy’s remark about perceived peripherality, then, might be worth considering here: ‘experiences aren’t addressed’, he suggests, ‘because they’re *perceived to be peripheral* to where *the real action* is supposedly identified’ (my emphases). By ‘real action’, Gilroy is presumably referring to instances such as the 1973 ‘mugging’ in the Handsworth district of Birmingham that instigated the project of *Policing*, or even the ‘troubles’ in Northern Ireland that were an intermittent concern for the authors of both *Policing* and *Empire*. We can perhaps infer, then, that the experience of the Irish in post-war England was considered to be peripheral to these putative focal points. However, as I will now demonstrate, these particular examples of ‘real action’ had special resonances for the Irish ethnic group in England.

The Irish dimensions of Handsworth

The absence of an Irish dimension in *Policing* is, of course, understandable, as its authors were primarily concerned with the ‘moral panic’ about the culturally constructed notion of the ‘black mugger’ in Britain in the 1970s (pp. 3-28). Accordingly, *Policing* was informed by a very specific definition of race politics, addressing the ways in which ‘Fears and anxieties about other processes were displaced on to black people’, and engaging with theories of deviancy, the state, and ideology.⁸⁵ However, the particular historical event that initiated the project of *Policing* had a peculiarly Irish dimension. In their introduction to the text, the authors explain:

Until we started the study, crime was not a special field of interest to us. We became involved in a practical way when, in 1973, sentences of ten and twenty years were handed down in court to three boys of *mixed ethnic background* after a serious incident in Handsworth, Birmingham, in which a man on the way home from a pub was ‘mugged’ on a piece of waste ground, robbed and badly injured (p.viii, my emphasis).

This man, we later learn (by virtue of a quote from the *Daily Mail*), was Robert Keenan, ‘an Irish labourer’ (p. 91). Meanwhile, one of the boys who attacked him, James Duignan, had, as an infant, migrated with his parents from Ireland to England, a detail which is entirely absent from the text, despite the fact that the authors had implicitly referred to him as ‘ethnic’ in their description of the ‘muggers’, and subsequently quoted from a newspaper report (again the *Daily Mail*) that had made multiple references to Duignan’s Irishness.⁸⁶ Here, the authors emphasise that this news report ‘picked up the familiar themes of race and crime’, quoting the paper’s assertion that ‘All the sentenced youths are *either coloured or immigrants*’ (p. 102, my

emphasis). However, they overlook the report's emphasis on Duignan's Irishness, and its distinction between 'coloured' and 'immigrants' (which clearly served as a tacit acknowledgement of Duignan's ethnicity and, by implication, that of the Irish in England).

Moreover, in the authors' lengthy analysis of letters that had been printed in local and national newspapers in response to the sentences of these boys (pp. 120-38), they quote from a particular letter that included a forthright expression of anti-Irish prejudice in tandem with other racist sentiments. The writer of this letter displays a keen awareness of Duignan's Irishness, suggesting that "by her name the woman who has 12 kids [Duignan's mother: the *Daily Mail* report had indicated that she had twelve children] is an alien too, an R.C. [Roman Catholic], she should be in Southern Ireland [sic] and you and the nigs and pakis back in the Jungle", before concluding: "The 3 of them [the 'muggers'] have no rights in this country, just living off the Welfare State. Oh for Enoch Powell to clear the lot of you, back to your own land" (p. 132). Although the authors of *Policing* record this reader's expression of anti-Irish prejudice, there is little consideration of this dimension, and the authors fail to point out that it was directed specifically at Duignan and his mother.⁸⁷ This is regrettable, not least because an overlooked implication of the letter-writer's racist logic, is that Keenan, the victim of the 'mugging', would also have been considered an 'alien' by this reader, and would therefore have been similarly subjected to their racialist fantasy of Powellite repatriation.

An equally unfortunate consequence has been the fact that the Irishness of both Keenan and Duignan has been concealed further, and in ever more fascinating ways, in subsequent critiques of *Policing*. For instance, Martin Barker has claimed that the book's 'argument begins with the story of Arthur Hills, a pensioner, who was attacked by three young black men on his way home

from the theatre in Handsworth, Birmingham in August 1972'. In this critique, then, Keenan is Anglicised to Hills, while Duignan becomes 'black'.⁸⁸ The apparent mix-up here appears to originate in an erroneous conflation of the details of the Handsworth 'mugging' (provided in chapter four of *Policing*), with those of an unrelated incident at London's Waterloo Station in August 1972 that the authors of *Policing* refer to in the opening sentence of the book's first chapter. However, such confusion may also be symptomatic of a problematic assumption about the racial dynamics of the Handsworth 'mugging', i.e. that the three instigators were black while their victim was white English, an assumption that has only been nourished by, and has implicitly served to maintain, the absence of an Irish dimension in cultural studies' accounts of race and ethnicity in post-war England.

The point to note, though, is that the particular historical incident that instigated British cultural studies' first major endeavour to address questions of race and ethnicity was especially, not to say immanently, relevant to the experience of the Irish ethnic group in England. However, this dimension of the Handsworth 'mugging' evidently failed to coincide with the specific concerns of the authors of *Policing*, perhaps because the text, as Stratton and Ang have pointed out, 'relies on the continued reproduction of a rock-solid white/black dichotomy'.⁸⁹ And while this binary division was, of course, symptomatic of the dominant 'race relations' paradigm, it is perhaps worth pointing out that a major sociological study of race and crime in Birmingham that had been published earlier in the 1970s for the Institute of Race Relations (John Lambert's *Crime, Police, and Race Relations*) had foregrounded the Irish presence in the city, and was permeated with references to both the first- and second-generation Irish.⁹⁰ Admittedly, Lambert's study may have been an exception in this regard, but it was nevertheless a project with which the authors of *Policing* were evidently familiar (it is frequently cited in the text).⁹¹

In light of this, it would appear that the Irish dimensions of the Handsworth ‘mugging’ were considered to be especially inconsequential.

The Northern Ireland crisis

If the Irish dimensions of Handsworth were considered to be peripheral to the so-called ‘real action’, then the post-1969 ‘troubles’ in Northern Ireland were, in contrast, of particular significance for the authors of *Policing* and *Empire*. In fact, if questions of race and ethnicity in British cultural studies have been conceived primarily through the prism of visible immigrant groups, then discourses about Irishness in the field have arguably been eclipsed by issues and events pertaining to the Northern Ireland crisis.⁹² However, despite the fact that, by the mid-1970s, acts of political violence associated with the crisis had been transposed on to English cities (including, of course, Birmingham), thereby generating anxiety about, and amongst, Irish people in England, the field offered no consideration of the crisis from this perspective. So, despite the fact that ‘The evolution of the Northern Ireland crisis is of critical importance’ for the authors of *Policing*, they explain that ‘it concerns us primarily in terms of its impact on the “control culture” at home’ (p. 259). And while the experience of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts amongst Irish people in England would appear to have been intrinsically relevant, here (particularly in light of *Policing*’s concern with the ‘increased reliance on coercive mechanisms and apparatuses already available within the normal repertoire of state power, and the powerful orchestration, in support of this tilt of the balance towards the coercive pole, of an *authoritarian* consensus’ (p. 217)), the authors were evidently more concerned with the significance that the Northern Ireland conflict had for, what they later call, ‘the public mood *at home*’ (p. 296, their emphasis). In *Empire*, meanwhile, the authors seemed particularly interested in the bearing that the conflict had on African-Caribbean

experience in England. Here, they identify a 'shift' that occurred in the 1960s in which 'the threat [to 'the nation'] came to be conceptualized as the "enemy within" rather than a model of subversion from without', explaining that 'The period 1964-70 witnessed three developments which had brought [this shift] about' (the third of these 'developments' being the post-1969 'troubles' in Northern Ireland). For the authors, 'This shift had profound implications for the way black people were perceived'.⁹³ The likelihood that the Northern Ireland crisis, and its related incidents of political violence in English cities, might have had similarly 'profound implications' for the way Irish people in England were perceived is not considered.

Accordingly, even when events pertaining to the Northern Ireland crisis were considered from the perspective of immigrant groups in England, the Irish themselves were elided. This point is clearly demonstrated in the first of Gilroy's discretely authored essays in *Empire*. Here, he suggests that 'the IRA bombing campaign temporarily relegated the blacks to secondary status in popular ideological struggle' (p. 158), while offering no consideration of the experience of Irish people in England at this time, despite the evident increase in expressions of anti-Irish prejudice, the cases of the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, and the Maguire Seven, and the passing of government acts for the management of suspected Irish terrorists in England.

The absence of an Irish dimension here is, however, understandable, particularly in light of *Empire's* express concern with a very specific definition of race politics. Indeed, in his preface to the book, Gilroy refers to 'the two black communities' (p. 7) with which the project was primarily engaged. Despite this particular emphasis, though, Gilroy goes on to consider state-sanctioned control measures that were evidently intended for the policing of Irish people in England. For instance, he draws particular attention to - and quotes heavily from - a news report in the *Guardian* in 1981, in which a Devon builder (who was erroneously assumed to be

Irish) was ‘interrogated for five hours as a suspected [IRA] terrorist’: ‘Mr David Brooke and three friends were leaving London after a Cup-Final visit when an ex-army officer mistook [their car] jack for a machine pistol. He thought their Devon accents were Irish brogue and alerted the police to a possible IRA attack’. Subsequently, when Mr. Brooke

drove out of an Exeter garage with his wife and son, their car was surrounded by over 30 armed police. A helicopter hovered overhead as he was dragged from the driving seat at gunpoint. Armed detectives wearing flak-jackets then raided his home ... [and] ... put a gun to a neighbour’s head and handcuffed him to the steering wheel of his car (pp. 170-1)).

Clearly this particular incident did not directly involve Irish people. Nevertheless, it is perhaps indicative of the fraught and precarious position that Irish people in England occupied at this time, particularly in the context of an IRA bombing campaign. However, despite Gilroy’s decision to draw particular attention to this incident, he fails to consider even briefly this point. Instead, this incident serves to demonstrate apparent similarities between ‘community policing’ in England and the practices of the security forces in Northern Ireland. Consequently, in the sole instance in which the authors of *Empire* document the repressive policing of people perceived to be Irish in England, the Irish are, ironically, absent once again.

If it is unfortunate that, in *Policing* and *Empire*, an Irish dimension emerges only in the context of the Northern Ireland crisis, it is perhaps doubly regrettable that the crisis (and the political violence associated with it) is considered solely in terms of its significance for the ‘public mood’, or its bearing on other immigrant groups, and even people erroneously assumed to be

Irish, as this has the effect of concealing the experience of the Irish in England in a discussion in which they clearly have an intrinsic relevance.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have pointed to particular reasons which, in conjunction, appear to have determined the field's ostensible obliviousness to the Irish ethnic group in post-war England. I have suggested that the field's 'turn' towards questions of race and ethnicity in the late 1970s and early 1980s constituted a particular response, made initially by research personnel at the Birmingham Centre, to a specific set of political imperatives, regarding post-war African-Caribbean and South Asian immigrants, and their British-born descendants. In this context, issues pertaining to Ireland and Irishness were refracted through the prism of the Northern Ireland crisis, and the implications that this had for the development of state technologies of control in British cities. This interest in Northern Ireland was, accordingly, less concerned with issues pertaining to the historical experience of Irish people, than with the implications of the 'troubles' for contemporary political crises within Britain. What this appears to point to, then, is the specific intellectual and political imperatives informing the race and ethnicity framework utilised by practitioners of British cultural studies. In light of the highly disparate contexts that underpinned, on the one hand, Irish immigration, and on the other, African-Caribbean and South Asian immigration, this is, of course, understandable. Indeed, it is perhaps a measure of the intellectual and political difficulties of formulating a framework that could encompass both contexts simultaneously, that such astute scholarly projects apparently failed to see what was often directly in their line of vision. What this effectively constituted, though, was a kind of disciplinary policing of Irish immigration in the field of British cultural studies, particularly in its engagement with questions of race and ethnicity. This

has rendered invisible the presence, not to say the historical experience, of the Irish ethnic group in post-war England.

This lack of attention persisted, at least at the Birmingham Centre, until the mid-1990s, when a number of undergraduate and postgraduate research projects in the (re-named) Department of Sociology and Cultural Studies began to pay specific attention to the Irish experience in England.⁹⁴ The emergence of such projects at this time was perhaps symptomatic of a theoretical shift, initially broached in the late 1980s, towards an engagement with white ethnicities, a development that had in part been initiated by former Birmingham Centre research personnel such as Phil Cohen and Richard Dyer.⁹⁵ The inclusion of an Irish dimension in this work was maintained, moreover, in a number of cultural studies' engagements with race and ethnicity in the early 1990s.⁹⁶

In any case, given the political imperatives underpinning British cultural studies' endeavour to address the experience of visible immigrant groups, not to mention the considerable difficulties that this project evidently involved, it would be churlish simply to castigate the field's principal practitioners for their failure to acknowledge the presence of the Irish in England.⁹⁷ Indeed, if Irish ethnicity has been one of British cultural studies' absences and silences, this omission has perhaps been less by denial or design (a sinister erasure of Irishness), than indifference or default (an insentient elision of an anomalous ethnic group).⁹⁸ Accordingly, I am not suggesting that texts such as *Policing* and *Empire* should *necessarily* have engaged with the experience of the Irish ethnic group (although, in light of the fact that the Irish were frequently relevant to the discussion at hand, it might have been useful to at least acknowledge their *absence*).⁹⁹ My discussion of British cultural studies, then, has primarily been an attempt to identify the

particular critical and intellectual context from which academic discussions of second-generation Irish rock musicians have emerged. In the next chapter, I critically re-read this body of work, examining the ways in which these musicians have previously been contextualised, and the manner in which their ethnicity has conventionally been handled.

Endnotes

1. I am using 'Albion', here, to evoke a specifically *white* (from the Latin *albus*) Englishness. My decision to use the term 'British', rather than 'English', cultural studies is primarily based on the fact that this has been the convention in accounts of the development of the field in Britain. As Kobena Mercer has pointed out, 'when people talk about "British Cultural Studies" they often seem to be involved in the construction of a new mythology which implies a unitary and homogenous field of endeavor' (Kobena Mercer, "'1968": Periodizing Politics and Identity', in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler (eds), *Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 447). Cultural studies, in Britain as elsewhere, has, of course, been a complex and contested field encompassing a diverse range of often disparate intellectual projects. A number of published accounts have endeavoured to chart the development of the field. For bibliographic details of such accounts, see Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler, 'Cultural Studies: An Introduction', in Grossberg *et al*, *Cultural Studies*, p. 15.

2. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979). 'Digging for Britain: An Excavation in Seven Parts' was originally published in *The British Edge* (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1987), pp. 35-69. This is the version to which I will refer in this chapter. However, the essay has subsequently been anthologised, with certain modifications, in Dominic Strinati and Stephen Wagg (eds), *Come on Down? Popular media culture in post-war Britain* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 336-77, and Houston. A Baker, Jr., Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg (eds), *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader* (University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 120-62. I will occasionally make reference to these adapted versions.

3. Paul Gilroy, *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987). Julian Stringer, 'The Smiths: Repressed (But Remarkably Dressed)', *Popular Music* Vol. 11, No. 1 (1992), pp. 15-26. Martin Cloonan, 'What Do They Know of England?: "Englishness" and Popular Music in the mid-1990s', in Tarja Hautamaki and Helmi Jarviluoma (eds) *Music on Show: Issues of Performance* (Tampere: University of Tampere, 1998), pp. 66-72. This article was originally included in a collection of conference papers from the 1995 International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) Conference. The paper was also published, in an adapted form, as 'State of the Nation: "Englishness", Pop and Politics in the mid-1990s', *Popular Music and Society* Vol. 21, No. 2, 1997, pp. 47-70. I will also refer to this version as it included an additional endnote that is of particular significance here.

4. David Hesmondhalgh, 'Indie: The Institutional Politics and Aesthetics of a Popular Music Genre', *Cultural Studies* Vol. 13, No. 1 (1999), pp. 34-61.

5. Clearly I cannot provide in this chapter an exhaustive survey of academic literature on these musicians. However, the texts that I have selected are indicative of the treatment that these musicians have received in the field of British cultural studies.

6. McRobbie, 'Settling Accounts with Subcultures: A Feminist Critique', *Screen Education* No. 34 (Spring 1980), pp. 37-8.

7. The Birmingham Centre is widely considered to be the key institution in the development of cultural studies in Britain. See, for example, Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms', *Media, Culture and Society* Vol. 2 (1980), p. 58; Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, 'Cultural Studies: An Introduction', in Grossberg *et al*, *Cultural Studies*, p. 9.

8. Clarke, *New Times and Old Enemies: Essays on Cultural Studies and America* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 8.

9. Mark Gibson has explained that 'There is a noticeable weariness in some quarters with attempts to trace the history of cultural studies, particularly where that history is British. The theoretical development of the field has now been recounted so many times as to have become almost a catechism' (Mark Gibson, 'Review of Tom Steele, *The Emergence of Cultural Studies 1945-65*', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* Vol. 2, No. 1 (1999), p. 139). However, there has been little consideration, in this narrativisation of the trajectory of British cultural studies, of the handling of Irish ethnicity in the field. In my endeavour to address this point, then, it has been necessary to trace, from this particular perspective, the field's engagement with questions of 'race' and ethnicity, and in turn, to consider, albeit briefly, the development of British cultural studies as a field of scholarly activity.

10. My use of the term 'race', here, is based on the fact that this term has been foregrounded as a unit of analysis in the field of British cultural studies. Although Tariq Modood has suggested that it is 'a waste of ink to put race in scare-quotes', I have done so in this instance to indicate the term's problematic status in academic discourses. However, subsequent references to the term will, in light of its frequent usage in the text, be placed outwith quotation marks. (Modood, unpublished conference paper, quoted in Steve Fenton, 'Counting Ethnicity: Social Groups and Official Categories', in Ruth Levitas and Will Guy (eds), *Interpreting Official Statistics* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 145).

11. In addition to the texts mentioned and discussed in this chapter, see, for example, Dick Hebdige, *Cut 'N' Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music* (London: Comedia/Routledge, 1987); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993); Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1993); Stuart Hall, 'Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities', in Anthony King (ed.), *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System* (London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 41-68; Stuart Hall, 'What Is This "Black" in Black Popular Culture?', in Gina Dent (ed.), *Black Popular Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1992), pp. 21-33; Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1994).

12. Hall, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies', in Grossberg *et al*, *Cultural Studies*, p. 283.

13. Stuart Hall *et al*, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (London: Hutchinson, 1978); Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1982). For material on class, see for example, Phil Cohen, 'Sub-Cultural Conflict and Working Class Community', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* 2 (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1972); John Clarke and Tony Jefferson, 'Working Class Youth Cultures', Stencilled Occasional Paper (Birmingham:

University of Birmingham, 1974); John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class: A Theoretical Overview', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* 7/8 (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1975), pp. 9-74; Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working-Class Boys Get Working-Class Jobs* (London: Saxon House, 1977). For material on gender, see for example, Helen Butcher, Rosalind Coward, Marcella Evaristi, Jenny Garber, Rachel Harrison and Janice Winship, 'Images of Women in the Media', Stencilled Occasional Paper (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1974); Trevor Millum, *Images of Women: Advertising in Women's Magazines* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1975); Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, 'Girls and Subcultures: An Exploration', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* 7/8 (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1975), pp. 209-22; Women's Studies Group, *Women Take Issue: Aspects of Women's Subordination* (London: Hutchinson/CCCS, 1978).

14. Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 76-7.

15. In 1968, Stuart Hall, who had been Hoggart's deputy at the Centre, became acting director, a position which he held until 1979. See Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 51, 72-80; Ioan Davies, *Cultural Studies and Beyond: Fragments of Empire* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 35-48.

16. Clarke, *New Times and Old Enemies*, pp. 10, 2, 11.

17. Sharkey, 'A View of the Present State of Irish Studies', in Susan Bassnett (ed.), *Studying British Cultures: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 119.

18. Hall has explained that these were 'the originating texts, the original "curriculum", of the field' (Hall, 'Cultural Studies and the Centre: Some Problematics and Problems', in Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis (eds), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), p. 16), referring to them elsewhere as the 'seminal and formative texts' that 'constituted the *caesura* out of which - among other things - "Cultural Studies" emerged' (Hall, 'Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms', p. 58). See also Clarke, *New Times and Old Enemies*, p. 2; Simon During, 'Introduction', in Simon During (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 1-4; Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, 'Cultural Studies: An Introduction', p. 9.

19. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (London: Penguin, 1958), pp. 23-39, and pp. 173-5, respectively. This is perhaps surprising in light of Williams' own marginal position *vis a vis* England and Englishness. See Alan O'Connor, *Raymond Williams: Writing, Culture, Politics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), for bibliographical details of Williams' articles on Wales.

20. Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (London: Penguin, 1958), pp. 94, 118. Subsequent page references will be included in parenthesis in the main text.

21. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1963), pp. 469-85. Subsequent page references will be included in parenthesis in the main text.

22. Hall, 'Cultural Studies and the Centre', p. 278. The critique in question can be found in E.P. Thompson, 'The Long Revolution', *New Left Review* No. 9 (1961), p. 29.
23. Gronowicz, *Race and Class Politics In New York City Before the Civil War* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), pp. 263-4.
24. Clarke, 'Cultural Studies', p. 14. See also Hall, 'Cultural Studies and the Centre', p. 38.
25. Hall, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies', p. 283. *Policing* was no by means the first attempt made by cultural studies' practitioners to engage with questions of race and ethnicity. Indeed, Hall had initially broached these issues at the beginning of the 1970s (see, for example, Hall, 'Black Britons: some problems of adjustment', *Community* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1970), pp. 3-5), and subsequent work at the Birmingham Centre had developed this particular concern (see, for example, Dick Hebdige, 'Reggae, Rastas and Rudies: Style and the Subversion of Form' Stencilled Occasional Paper (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1974)). Indeed, the discussion of 'mugging' and race in *Policing* had previously been rehearsed in a number of Birmingham Centre publications earlier in the 1970s. See, for example, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *20 Years* (Birmingham: The Paul, Jimmy and Musty Support Committee, 1973). Nevertheless, as Hall indicates, *Policing* is widely considered to be the first major intervention in this area, a point that has been corroborated in other accounts. See, for example, Graeme Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1996 2nd edition), p. 227.
26. Hall, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies', p. 283.
27. Stratton and Ang, 'On the Impossibility of a Global Cultural Studies: "British" Cultural Studies in an "International" Frame', in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 382.
28. Roxy Harris, 'Openings, Absences and Omissions: Aspects of the treatment of "Race", Culture and Ethnicity in British Cultural Studies', *Cultural Studies* Vol. 10, No. 2 (1996), p. 337.
29. Gilroy, 'Preface', in CCCS, *Empire*, p. 7.
30. Ang and Stratton, 'Speaking (as) Black British: Race, Nation and Cultural Studies in Britain', in Penny van Toorn and David English (eds), *Speaking Positions: Aboriginality, Gender and Ethnicity in Australian Cultural Studies* (Melbourne: Victoria University of Technology Press, 1995), p. 18. In his preface to *Empire*, Gilroy acknowledged the relative lack of attention that the Birmingham Centre had paid to the South Asian ethnic group in Britain. (Gilroy, 'Preface', p. 7). Also at this time, Gary Clarke raised a similar issue in his critique of Hebdige's *Subculture*. (Clarke, 'Defending Ski Jumpers: A Critique of Theories of Youth Sub-Cultures', Stencilled Occasional Paper (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1982), p. 17).
31. Ang and Stratton, 'Speaking (as) Black British', p. 19.

32. Gilroy, 'Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism', in Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler (eds), *Cultural Studies*, p. 190.
33. Patrick J. Bracken *et al*, 'Mental Health and Ethnicity: An Irish Dimension', *British Journal of Psychiatry* Vol. 172 (1998), p. 103.
34. Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, The Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury Press, 1995), p. 4.
35. Ullah, 'The Ethnic Identity of the Second Generation Irish in Britain' (unpublished M.Sc. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1981); 'Second Generation Irish Youth: A Social Psychological Investigation of a Hidden Minority' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1983). Ullah, 'Second-Generation Irish Youth: Identity and Ethnicity', *New Community* Vol. 12 (Summer 1985), pp. 310-20.
36. Ullah, 'Second Generation Irish Youth: A Social Psychological Investigation of a Hidden Minority', p. 1.
37. Hall, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies', p. 283. For a discussion of the New Left and the development of British cultural studies, see Ioan Davis, *Cultural Studies and Beyond*, pp. 11-5, 31-5. The *New Left Review*, which was founded by British New Left personnel in 1960, initially under the editorship of Stuart Hall, has itself offered little consideration of the Irish presence in England. For a brief discussion of the journal's engagement with Irish issues in general, see Robin Blackburn, 'Ireland and the NLR', *New Left Review* No. 212 (1995), pp. 151-5.
38. Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, pp. 43-69.
39. Breda Gray, 'From "Ethnicity" to "Diaspora": 1980s Emigration and "Multicultural" London', in Andy Bielenberg (ed.), *The Irish Diaspora* (London: Longman, 2000), p. 72. The document in question was the *Policy Report on the Irish Community* (London: GLC, 1984). See also *Ethnic Minorities and the Abolition of the GLC* (London: GLC, 1984), *Report on the Consultative Conference on the Effects of the Workings of the Prevention of Terrorism Act upon London's Irish Community* (London: GLC, 1984), *Report of Second London Irish Women's Conference* (London: GLC, 1985), and *Irish Youth: Who Cares?* (London: GLC, 1986). Significantly, Paul Gilroy was, at this time, involved in a number of GLC projects dealing with questions of race and ethnicity. See, for example Paul Gilroy, Tony Bunyan, Claire Demuth and Joe Sim, *Policing London: The Policing Aspects of Lord Scarman's Report on the Brixton Disorders* (London: GLC, 1982); Paul Gilroy, Tony Bunyan, Claire Demuth and Louise Christian, *A New Police Authority for London* (London: GLC, 1983); Paul Gilroy and Claire Demuth, *Racial Harassment in London* (London: GLC, 1984).
40. *The Irish in England* (Channel Four Television, 16 October 1983; 23 October 1983). For a discussion of these programmes, see Ken Lynam, 'Irish Video Project - The Irish in England Tapes', *Irish Studies in Britain* No. 5 (November 1983 - March 1984), p. 15.
41. Gray, 'From "Ethnicity" to "Diaspora"', p. 71.

42. Gray, 'From "Ethnicity" to "Diaspora"', pp. 71, 85.

43. See Tom Arkell, 'Irish Studies in Coventry', *Irish Studies in Britain* No. 3 (Spring/Summer 1982), pp. 15-18; Tom Arkell, 'EEC Irish Studies Project in Coventry', *Irish Studies in Britain* No. 6 (July-December 1984), pp. 17-18. This development was followed by the formation of the British Association for Irish Studies, and the launch of an Irish Studies Centre at the University of Liverpool in 1988. See Mary Hickman, 'The Irish Studies Scene in Britain: Perceptions and Progress', *Text and Context* Vol. 4 (1990), pp. 18-22.

44. For a discussion of IRA bombing campaigns in post-war England, see Tony Geraghty, *The Irish War: The Hidden Conflict Between the IRA and British Intelligence* (London: Harper Collins, 1998). Popular expressions of anti-Irish prejudice during this period are documented in Liz Curtis, *Nothing But The Same Old Story: The Roots of Anti-Irish Racism* (London: Information on Ireland, 1984), pp. 76-94.

45. In 1980, Stuart Hall referred to 'The institutionalization of Cultural Studies ... in the Centre at Birmingham' (Hall, 'Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms', p. 58). The founding of the Centre has subsequently been described as 'The key institutional moment' in the development of the field. (Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg, 'Cultural Studies: An Introduction', p. 9). The University of Birmingham, in Edgbaston, is a relatively short distance from areas like Balsall Heath, Small Heath, Sparkbrook, and Sparkhill which, in the 1960s, were heavily populated by Irish immigrants. See Kaja Irene Ziesler, 'The Irish in Birmingham, 1830-1970' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1989) p. 184.

46. See, for example, Ziesler, 'The Irish in Birmingham', pp. 153-348. According to Ziesler, in the 1960s (the decade in which cultural studies was institutionalised at Birmingham), 'the Irish were Birmingham's largest single immigrant group' (p. 184). Between August 1973 and November 1974, more than thirty IRA bombs had been planted in Birmingham, and in October 1974 there was a series of car bomb attacks in the city. In July 1974, police arrested a Birmingham-born second-generation Irishman, along with three Irish-born men, for a number of terrorist attacks in Birmingham and Manchester. See Ziesler, 'The Irish in Birmingham' (p. 339).

47. Robert Kee, *Trial and Error: The Maguires, the Guildford Pub Bombings and British Justice* (London: Penguin, 1989 2nd edition), p. 50. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the IRA denied responsibility for this particular bomb attack (Gray, 'From "Ethnicity" to "Diaspora"', p. 84).

48. Ziesler, 'The Irish in Birmingham', p. 341.

49. Ziesler, 'The Irish in Birmingham', p. 341. For a discussion of the case, see O. Gilligan (ed.), *The Birmingham Six: An Appalling Vista* (Dublin: Litereire Publishers, 1990), and Chris Mullin, *Error of Judgement: The Truth about the Birmingham Bombings* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1986).

50. Paddy Hillyard, *Suspect Community: People's Experience of the Prevention of Terrorism*

Acts in Britain (London: Pluto Press, 1993), p. 13. The successful renewal of the Act meant that the British government had effectively 'defied a ruling of the European Court of Human Rights which [had] declared it illegal' (Anonymous, 'UK Commentary: the Guildford Four: English Justice and the Irish Community: an interview with Gareth Pierce', *Race and Class* Vol. 31, No. 3 (1990), p. 85). Indeed, the English lawyer Gareth Pierce has explained that 'In almost every aspect of our treatment of Irish detainees we're in breach of international human rights law' (Anonymous, 'UK Commentary', p. 83).

51. Hillyard, *Suspect Community*, p. 5.

52. Sister Sarah Clarke in Mary Lennon, Marie McAdam, and Joanne O'Brien, *Across the Water: Irish Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago, 1988), p. 196.

53. Lennon, McAdam, and O'Brien, *Across the Water*, p. 196.

54. Vincent Maguire, aged seventeen, was sentenced to five years imprisonment while his younger brother Patrick, who was only thirteen at the time of the bombings, was sentenced to four years in youth custody. For a discussion of the cases of the Guildford Four and the Maguire Seven, see Robert Kee, *Trial and Error*. The experience of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts amongst both first- and second-generation Irish people is documented in Hillyard, *Suspect Community*.

55. Quoted in B. J. Whelan and J.G. Hughes, *EEC Study of Housing Conditions of Migrant Workers: Irish Contribution - A Survey of Returned and Intending Emigrants in Ireland* (Dublin: ESRI, 1976), pp. 43-4.

56. John Gabriel, *Racism, Culture, Markets* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 85.

57. Dave Simpson, 'Why Two's Company', *Guardian*, 13 July 1996, p. 30. In a study of ethnic stereotyping amongst English school pupils in the early 1980s, the Irish emerged as 'the least popular minority group'. See Diane Spencer, 'Pupils Show Bias Against Irish', *Times Educational Supplement*, 23 March 1984, p. 10.

58. Martin Doyle, 'The Music Award 2000', *Irish Post*, 23 September 2000, p. 23.

59. Jim Mac Laughlin, 'The Devaluation of "Nation" as "Home" and the De-politicisation of Recent Irish Emigration', in Mac Laughlin (ed.), *Location and Dislocation in Contemporary Irish Society: Emigration and Irish Identities* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997), p. 204. For a discussion of anti-Irish prejudice in England, see Hickman and Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community in Britain* (London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1997).

60. Stratton and Ang, 'On the Impossibility of a Global Cultural Studies', p. 376.

61. Roxy Harris, 'Openings, Absences and Omissions', p. 340.

62. Gilroy, quoted in Cornel West, 'The Postmodern Crisis of the Black Intellectuals', in Grossberg *et al*, p. 701, my emphases.

63. Gilroy, 'Preface', in CCCS, *Empire*, pp. 7-8, my emphasis.

64. It is perhaps worth pointing out that Gilroy makes reference, in his preface to *Empire*, to Robin Wilson, a member of the collective who 'returned to live in Ireland just as we were nearing the end' (CCCS, *Empire*, p. 8). In addition to this point, Angela McRobbie, a prominent Birmingham Centre figure during the late 1970s and early 1980s (albeit one who was not directly involved in work on race and ethnicity) has briefly discussed her own Irish Catholic immigrant background, see McRobbie 'Catholic Glasgow: A Map of the City', *History Workshop Journal* Iss. 40 (1995), pp. 172-80. McRobbie, whose parents were second-generation Irish, grew up in Glasgow in the 1950s and 1960s. Interestingly, in McRobbie's endeavour to narrativise her upbringing in the city, she draws attention to her family's desire to assimilate into Scottishness (pp. 174, 180), suggesting that discrimination towards Irish Catholics in post-war Glasgow was largely determined by issues of class and religion rather than ethnicity (p. 174). For suggestions to the contrary, see Robert Miles, 'Racism and Nationalism in Britain', in Charles Husband (ed.), *'Race' in Britain: Continuity and Change* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p. 296.

65. Stratton and Ang, 'Speaking (as) Black British', p. 17, my emphasis.

66. David Pilgrim, *Psychotherapy and Society* (London: Sage, 1996), p. 76.

67. Hall, 'Cultural Studies and the Centre', p. 15. This is perhaps unsurprising as the Centre 'had only a handful of staff - never more than three', until it became a department offering undergraduate provision in the late 1980s. (Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 77-80). See also Davies, *Cultural Studies and Beyond*, p. 36.

68. Stratton and Ang, 'On the Impossibility of a Global Cultural Studies', p. 382.

69. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, p. 4.

70. Hickman and Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community*, p. 7.

71. At the time of *Empire*'s publication, Robert Miles presented a case for the relevance of the Irish in nineteenth-century Britain in discussions of subsequent immigrant experiences, an argument that was facilitated by his adoption of a 'migrant labour', rather than a specifically 'colour', paradigm. See Miles, *Racism and Migrant Labour: A Critical Text* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982).

72. Mary J. Hickman and Bronwen Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain', *Feminist Review* No. 50 (Summer 1995), p. 7.

73. Dyer, 'White', p. 45.

74. For a discussion of this point, see Martin Barker, 'Stuart Hall, *Policing the Crisis*', in Martin Barker and Anne Beezer (eds), *Reading Into Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge,

1992), pp. 90-3.

75. Hall *et al*, *Policing*, p. 50. Subsequent page references will be included in parenthesis in the main text.

76. Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

77. Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, p. 90. There was, of course, a range of strategic economic and political interests for nourishing such a position, not least 'the need to address a severe shortage of labour for [Britain's] massive reconstruction programme after the Second World War, the significance of Ireland for security issues in the post-war world, and Britain's economic, military and political connections in Ireland and its continuing rule of one part of that island' (Hickman and Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community*, p. 10).

78. Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp. 90-110.

79. Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, p. 107, p. 90.

80. Sabina Sharkey, 'A View of the Present State of Irish Studies', pp. 128-9.

81. CCCS, *Empire*, p. 125. Subsequent page references will be included in parenthesis in the main text. Although Lawrence seems to imply that these terms originate in John Rex and Sally Tomlinson, *Colonial Immigrants in a British City: A Class Analysis* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), the page references he provides do not include any such terms. This study, which focuses on the Handsworth district of Birmingham, does however make reference to the Irish presence in the area.

82. Taken in conjunction, the first- and second-generation Irish in Britain constitute 'the largest migrant minority in Western Europe' (Bracken *et al*, 'Mental Health and Ethnicity', p. 103).

83. This apparent confusion about the constitutional status of Ireland *vis a vis* Britain is of course not peculiar to British cultural studies. Indeed, it has been evident in the field of 'post-colonial' studies more generally. For example, a formative study of post-colonial literatures referred to 'the situation of Irish, Welsh, and Scottish literatures in relation to the English "mainstream"', explaining that 'While it is possible to argue that these societies were the first victims of English expansion, their subsequent complicity in the British imperial enterprise makes it difficult for colonized peoples outside Britain to accept their identity as post-colonial' (Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 33). As Luke Gibbons has pointed out, '[this] remarkable statement (which does not appear to include Ireland as one of those countries "outside Britain") only makes sense if one identifies the Irish historically with the settler colony in Ireland, the ruling Anglo-Irish interest, thus erasing in the process the entire indigenous population' (Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p. 174).

84. While this confusion may be symptomatic of a particular strand of Anglocentricity from

which cultural studies' practitioners (including those of African-Caribbean and South Asian descent) were evidently not exempt, it may also be indicative of the blurred distinction between Britain and the Republic of Ireland that was, at least in part, engendered by the 1948 British Nationality Act.

85. Barker, 'Stuart Hall', pp. 84-5.

86. The first column on the front page introduced Duignan as 'Irish', while the report inside explained that he was 'from Eire', before providing a more detailed profile: 'Jimmy Duignan, a former altar boy, was born in Dublin and came to Britain with his parents 12 years ago. He has 11 brothers and sisters'. (Daily Mail Reporters, 'Storm As Boy Gets 20 Years', *Daily Mail*, 20 March 1973, p. 1; Keith Colling 'Boys Went Mugging For "A Bit of Fun" and 30p', *Daily Mail*, 20 March 1973, p. 13). Duignan's accomplices were Paul Storey, who had a West Indian father and white English mother, and Mustafa Fuat, who was Turkish-Cypriot.

87. Elsewhere in the text, there is a passing reference to anti-Irish prejudice. In chapter six, the authors contend that, in the face of 'the post-war expansion of English capitalism and its dependence on immigrant labour' the English working class has demonstrated an 'assumption of superiority over all other peoples'. The largest group of immigrant labourers in the post-war period was, of course, the Irish. Accordingly, the authors acknowledge the existence of anti-Irish prejudice in this context, explaining that, while this 'assumption of superiority' is 'especially strong with respect to former "natives" - colonised or enslaved peoples, especially if they are black - it includes "wops", "froggies", "paddies", "eye-ties" and "yanks", as well' (p. 147). Once again, the authors mention this Irish dimension only fleetingly, and assuredly exclude Irish labour migrants from their definition of formerly 'colonised peoples', placing them instead with the French, Italians, and Americans.

88. Barker, 'Stuart Hall', p. 81. For other instances of the apparent assumption that the muggers were 'black', see Ang and Stratton, 'Speaking as Black British', p. 20.

89. Ang and Stratton, 'Speaking as Black British', p. 21.

90. John R. Lambert, *Crime, Police and Race Relations: A Study in Birmingham* (London: Institute of Race Relations/Oxford University Press, 1970). See, for example, vi, vii, xx, pp. 15-18, 45, 48, 53-6, 60-5, 67, 79-80, 88-90, 102-6, 123-7, 212-6, 246, 266-9, 286-7. The authors' familiarity with Lambert (who was based at the University of Birmingham when this text was published) was such that he actually co-authored (with three of the authors of *Policing*) an embryonic rendition of the *Policing* project as a Birmingham Centre publication. See John Clarke, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson and John Lambert, 'The Selection of Evidence and the Avoidance of Racism: a Critique of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration', Stencilled Paper (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1974).

91. Hall *et al*, *Policing*, pp. 42, 44, 45, 49-50, 280. This study was subsequently cited by Gilroy in *CCCS, Empire*, p. 154, and 'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack', p. 89.

92. The concern with Northern Ireland in both *Policing* and *Empire* was also evident in other cultural studies' publications at this time. See, for example, Mike Morrissey, 'The British Left and the Crisis in Northern Ireland: What Strategy?', in George Bridges and Rosalind Brunt

(eds), *Silver Linings: Some Strategies for the Eighties* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1981), pp. 68-86. Significantly, an early issue of the journal *Community*, which included Stuart Hall's first engagement with African-Caribbean experience in England, also included an article on Northern Ireland. See Geoffrey Bing, 'Prejudice in Northern Ireland: The Case for Legislation Against Religious Discrimination', *Community* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1970), pp. 13-4.

93. *Empire*, p. 23. The other two developments were, firstly, 'a growth in forms of extra-parliamentary organizations, particularly among the young, which were outside the traditional channels of political participation, e.g. the student movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, and on a wider scale the development of mass-based youth subcultures' and, secondly, 'the development of rank-and-file movements within the trade unions which took up a more combative position in both traditional trade union struggles and in wider political issues' (*Empire*, p. 23).

94. See, for example, Rosemarie Brennan, 'Second-Generation Irish Experience in Birmingham' (unpublished BA thesis, University of Birmingham, 1996); Ann Doyle, 'Unfinished Revolution: Second Wave Irish Folk Music Culture and Identity' (unpublished BA thesis, University of Birmingham, 1994); Clare Roche, 'Home From Home? Irish Women in Birmingham' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1997); Iestyn Williams, 'A Footballing Nation: The Case of the Irish National Team' (unpublished BA thesis, University of Birmingham, 1996).

95. See Cohen, 'The Perversions of Inheritance: Studies in the Making of a Multi-Racist Britain', in Cohen and H.S. Bains (eds), *Multi-Racist Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 9-118; Dyer 'White', *Screen* Vol. 29, No. 4 (1988), pp. 44-64. Significantly, in this work, Cohen and Dyer at least endeavoured to acknowledge Irishness, see Cohen, 'The Perversions of Inheritance', pp. 13, 14, 24, 34, 41, 72-5, 99; Dyer, 'White', p. 46.

96. See, for example, Ali Rattansi, 'Changing the Subject? Racism, Culture and Education', in James Donald and Ali Rattansi (eds), *'Race', Culture and Difference* (London: Sage, 1992), pp. 40-1; Avtar Brah, 'Difference, Diversity and Differentiation', in James Donald and Ali Rattansi (eds), *'Race', Culture and Difference* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 133; Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davies, *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 14-5, 20, 41, 44-5.

97. Hall has pointed out that the authors of *Empire* 'found it extremely difficult to create the necessary theoretical and political space in the Centre in which to work on the project'. (Hall, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies', p. 283).

98. As Kathleen Paul points out in her discussion of the Irish in post-war Britain: 'Formally they were neither subjects nor aliens; informally they appear to have been regarded as neither British nor foreign' (Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, p. 91).

99. For instance, in *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin at least acknowledge their omission of Irish literature. However, their endeavour to provide an explanation for this exclusion hinges upon a problematic assumption about Ireland's historical relationship with Britain, see note 83 above.

**PAGE
NUMBERING
AS ORIGINAL**

Chapter Three

Sounding out the Margins:

Cultural Studies, White Englishness and Second-Generation Irish Rock Musicians

As Simon Frith has pointed out, ‘the dominant forms [of popular music] in all contemporary societies have originated at the social margins - among the poor, the migrant, the rootless, the “queer”’.¹ The field of British cultural studies has, accordingly, paid a considerable amount of attention to this realm of cultural production.² Much of this work has, in turn, been specifically concerned with questions pertaining to race, ethnicity and popular music.³ This body of work has, however, tended to adhere to the practices of the dominant ‘race relations’ paradigm, re-producing the black/white binary division that has rendered Irish ethnicity invisible. This is not to say that musicians of Irish descent have simply been overlooked by practitioners of British cultural studies. In fact, as I will demonstrate, musicians such as John Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis have often inhabited a crucial position in cultural studies’ engagements with questions of race, ethnicity and popular music. However, with few exceptions, these discussions have appeared to be wholly oblivious to the fact that these musicians are the immediate descendants of post-war Irish Catholic labour migrants.

In the body of work that I will discuss in this section, the second-generation Irish in England are, by virtue of the presence of second-generation musicians, clearly included. However, these texts have tended to theorise second-generation Irish musicians in terms of class and ‘indigeneity’, rather than ethnicity or ‘immigrancy’. So, rather than simply overlooking the second-generation Irish, this work has instead overlooked their Irishness, and has posited them

in a putative ‘white ethnicity’ that many of these texts have employed to denote a notional white Englishness. As I will demonstrate in this section, this tacit positioning of the second-generation Irish in an ethnically undifferentiated white working-class, and the textual deployment of second-generation rock Irish musicians as representatives of ‘white ethnicity’ in England, has become the paradigmatic way of handling second-generation Irish rock musicians in British cultural studies.⁴

The critical reception of other immigrant-descended musicians has, of course, been markedly different, and scholarly discussions of second- and third-generation African-Caribbean and South Asian cultural practitioners have tended to privilege questions of race and ethnicity, often at the expense of other considerations. Thus, in a discussion of ‘black’ independent film-making in 1980s Britain (specifically the work of the Black Audio Film Collective and Sankofa), Judith Williamson points out that ‘the formal properties’ of particular films ‘have somehow, in most of the critical discourse surrounding them, been subsumed into their “blackness”’.⁵ In other words, despite the fact that particular films by second and third-generation African-Caribbean and South Asian film-makers have utilised a complex range of aesthetic strategies, such textual features have often been critically eclipsed by a discursive privileging of issues of race and ethnicity. In stark contrast, the field’s reception of second-generation Irish rock musicians has rarely even acknowledged their particular immigrant background. The absence of an Irish dimension in scholarly discussions of such musicians is not, of course, inherently problematic. Clearly an ‘ethnic’ dimension is not necessarily relevant to *every* discussion of *any* cultural practitioner. Moreover, the second-generation Irish musicians with whom I am concerned have rarely engaged with recognisably ‘Irish’ issues, and have tended to eschew identifiably ‘Irish’ musical styles.

Consequently, their work appears to bear little trace of an explicitly 'Irish' dimension, and this has undoubtedly been a fundamental reason for the field's obliviousness to their particular immigrant background.

In the absence of this context, most cultural studies' texts that have engaged with - or made reference to - the musicians with whom I am concerned, have customarily assumed that these musicians are straightforwardly and unambiguously English. Moreover, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, in some of the 'canonical' texts of British cultural studies, and particularly those that have been principally concerned with questions of race, ethnicity and popular music, second-generation Irish musicians have functioned as representatives of a homogeneous white Englishness.⁶ Indeed, where questions of ethnicity have been invoked, it has been in terms of a largely undefined 'white ethnicity' that many of these texts have used to denote this ostensibly homogeneous white Englishness.

Clearly the musicians with whom I am concerned are all English-born and have white skin colour, so to contextualise them in terms of a 'white Englishness' is, of course, hardly erroneous. Accordingly, I am not suggesting that these musicians should not be considered in discussions of 'white Englishness'. Instead, what I want to draw attention to, here, is the fact that this Irish dimension has rarely even been acknowledged in scholarly discussions of these musicians and that, in its absence, this work has assuredly posited second-generation Irish musicians as a kind of white English centre from which to differentiate more ostensibly marginal immigrant-descended cultural practitioners. In doing this, this work has not only assumed that the children of Irish Catholic labour migrants are (necessarily) straightforwardly and unambiguously English (when in fact, as I demonstrated in Chapter One, their relationship

with the host culture has been complex and ambivalent), but it has also overlooked the precarious position that the Irish have historically occupied *vis a vis* whiteness. For instance, Lynda Boose has explained that

If 'race' originates as a category that hierarchically privileges a ruling status and makes the Other(s) inferior, then for the English the group that was first to be shunted into this discursive derogation and thereafter invoked as almost a paradigm of inferiority was not the black 'race' - but the *Irish* 'race'.⁷

Clearly such notions of Irish racial inferiority have been historically specific, and it is imperative that we do not overlook the fact that whiteness is a modality of power to which predominantly white ethnic groups, such as the Irish, have the privilege of access. Nevertheless, as Richard Dyer has pointed out, the Irish have been 'rather less securely white than Anglos, Teutons and Nordics'. Moreover, if, as Dyer has put it, 'some white people are whiter than others', then the Irish have historically provided one of the 'striking instances' of 'maybe, sometimes whites, peoples who may be let in to whiteness under particular historical circumstances'.⁸ And while the particular context of post-war England might have constituted one such historical circumstance,⁹ this point has received little consideration from practitioners of British cultural studies, many of whom, of course, have been primarily concerned with questions of race and ethnicity.

The paradigmatic handling of second-generation Irish rock musicians in British cultural studies is exemplified in Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: the meaning of style* (1979), the field's first major engagement with questions of race, ethnicity and popular music, and which, like *Policing the*

Crisis, has ‘become something of a milestone in cultural studies’.¹⁰ In light of its formative status in the field’s development (it was published only one year after *Policing*), it is perhaps unsurprising that *Subculture* largely adheres to the dominant ‘race relations’ paradigm, and thereby reproduces a black/white binary division that foregrounds visible immigrant groups while simultaneously rendering invisible the presence of white ethnic groups, such as the Irish. Nevertheless, Hebdige introduces in *Subculture* a particular notion of ‘white ethnicity’, and frequently makes reference in the text to a second-generation Irish rock musician, the former Sex Pistols’ lyricist and vocalist John Lydon. It this particular aspect of *Subculture*, then, that provides the kernel of my discussion in the next section.

‘Punky Reggae Party’: *Subculture*, John Lydon and ‘white ethnicity’

In *Subculture*, Dick Hebdige endeavoured to theorise a variety of youth subcultural styles as a set of ‘differential responses to the black immigrant presence in [post-war] Britain’,¹¹ but I am primarily concerned here with his discussion of punk. In a sub-section of the text, entitled ‘Bleached roots: Punks and white ethnicity’, questions of race and ethnicity are clearly foregrounded as a central issue. Here, Hebdige suggests, for example, that ‘the punk aesthetic can be read ... as a white “translation” of black “ethnicity”’ (p. 64), proffering the notion that punk itself constituted a ‘white ethnicity’ (p. 62-5).

In the context of this discussion of punk, Hebdige makes numerous references to John Lydon, who was widely considered to be the principal icon of that particular phenomenon.¹² Lydon is not, of course, the principal object of analysis in *Subculture*’s discussion of punk, which is more specifically concerned with punk style and its relationship with reggae. Nevertheless, Lydon (who is referred to in the text as Johnny Rotten, Lydon’s adopted name as

vocalist/lyricist for the Sex Pistols) pervades the text in a number of important ways, functioning as a representative icon of the broader cultural phenomenon of punk. For instance, a sketch of Lydon (based on a photograph in which a policeman stops Lydon in the street and takes his name)¹³ provides the illustration for the book's title page, and Lydon is subsequently mentioned and alluded to in various ways in the (140 pages of) main text as well as the endnotes.¹⁴

Moreover, Lydon is frequently positioned at a kind of interface in the punk-reggae nexus with which Hebdige is concerned. For instance, introducing Lydon's role in what he later refers to as punk's 'association' (p. 66) with reggae, Hebdige quotes from a music paper in which an acquaintance of Lydon explained that reggae was 'the only music' that Lydon would 'dance to' (p. 28). Hebdige also points out that Lydon 'displayed a detailed knowledge of the more esoteric reggae numbers in a series of interviews throughout 1977' (pp. 28-9). Such points clearly serve to demonstrate the important position that Lydon inhabited in the affiliation between punk and reggae, and it is worth briefly re-tracing the development of this engagement here.

Before doing this, though, I should point out that despite Hebdige's emphasis on 'white ethnicity' in his discussion of punk, and the overarching 'turn', throughout the text, 'from an exclusive emphasis on class to assert the centrality of race in subcultural formations',¹⁵ *Subculture* offers no recognition of the ethnic diversity of whiteness in England. Accordingly, Lydon's particular immigrant background is simply rendered invisible, and remains a kind of 'present absence', to borrow a term from the text.¹⁶ However, by briefly revisiting Lydon's role in the punk-reggae interface, I will demonstrate that Irish ethnicity was a salient dimension of

his public persona, and one that was frequently evoked in his engagement with reggae.

Lydon had initially demonstrated his interest in reggae in a much celebrated radio interview (in which he also displayed a familiarity with Irish traditional music) in the summer of 1977, which received a considerable amount of attention in the music press.¹⁷ In addition, he frequently appeared, at this time, in promotional photos wearing badges that publicised reggae groups, and often discussed his interest in reggae in press interviews (including those in which his Irishness was also mentioned).¹⁸ In fact, the extent of Lydon's association with reggae was such that, in the immediate aftermath of his departure from the Sex Pistols, reports in the music press suggested that he would form a reggae band, and that this hypothetical group's debut performance would be at an anti-racist music festival. Significantly, when a music journalist asked Lydon to confirm these rumours, he responded by playfully positioning his Irishness in a multi-ethnic musical context: 'I'm forming an Irish Cajun Disco Afro Rock band'.¹⁹

Lydon's public association with reggae, though, was perhaps most clearly demonstrated when, in February 1978 (only a few weeks after his departure from the Sex Pistols), he visited Jamaica with Don Letts, a second-generation Jamaican film-maker and disc jockey, described by Hebdige in *Subculture* as a 'black Rastafarian d-j' (p. 29). The ostensible purpose of this highly publicised three-week visit (it was subsequently recorded as a serialised interview in the music paper *Sounds*, as well as in other reports and interviews), was to 'scout' for unsigned Jamaican reggae musicians.²⁰

In these interviews, both Lydon and the *Sounds* journalist, Vivien Goldman, frequently allude to the singer's Irishness. For instance, at one point Goldman announces: 'John's roots are Irish,

and on average twice a day something happens that reminds him of the old sod'.²¹ This emphasis on Irishness is underscored by Lydon's own comments. For example, in a discussion of his alleged mistreatment by the Sex Pistols' management, he indicates that Vivienne Westwood (the then partner of the group's manager Malcolm McLaren) had made an apparently derisive public gesture about his Irishness: 'Just go to her shop now if you don't believe me', he tells Goldman, 'read what she's wrote [sic] on the window about my connections with being Irish'.²²

Significantly, Don Letts' recollections of the trip to Jamaica also make reference to Lydon's Irishness.²³ Moreover, he has framed his relationship with Lydon in terms of their shared immigrant backgrounds, maintaining that 'Irish and Jamaican people are definitely alike in spirit' (a point with which Lydon concurs: 'Irish and Jamaicans definitely have a common bond') and drawing attention to the ways in which Lydon was received in London reggae clubs: 'He could walk into places white people could never go with total immunity'. Letts goes on to explain that 'We all felt like society's outlaws', suggesting 'I think that's why John and I get on so well. In the development of England's history, there was a time when John's mob - the Irish - and blacks and dogs were thrown together'.²⁴

Given that, in *Subculture*, both Letts and Lydon emerge as components in the punk-reggae interface (a detail that has been re-stated in subsequent work),²⁵ it is perhaps significant that Letts should frame his relationship with Lydon in terms of Jamaican and Irish ethnicity, a dimension that has been largely overlooked by practitioners of British cultural studies.²⁶

This is not to suggest that Lydon's engagement with reggae pertained specifically to his

Irishness, nor to imply that there is an inevitable or innate affinity between the second-generation Irish and other second-generation ethnic groups. Instead, what this demonstrates is the fact that this Irish dimension was considered to be significant (both at the time and in retrospect) by Lydon himself, by ethnic minority colleagues in the music industry (such as the Jamaican Letts and the Jewish Goldman), and by his white English band members: the other Sex Pistols apparently called him 'Paddy'.²⁷ In turn, this would appear to suggest that Lydon's position in the white English working class was not as straightforward as Hebdige seems to imply.

In *Subculture*, then, Irish ethnicity is entirely absent and, as a consequence, Lydon is implicitly situated on one side of a binary division between (black) immigrancy and (white) indigeneity, functioning as a straightforward representative of what Hebdige calls the 'indigenous working-class culture' (p. 68). Indeed, there appears to be a quiescent convergence, in *Subculture*, of the terms 'immigrant' with 'black', and 'host' with 'white English', which implicitly racialises both immigration and indigeneity. Accordingly, the term 'second-generation' is tacitly racialised as non-white: Hebdige explains that 'second-generation immigrant youth culture was closely monitored by those neighbouring white youths interested in forming their own subcultural options' (p. 43, my emphases).

This is not to suggest, though, that *Subculture* demonstrates an even-handedness towards visible immigrant groups. For instance, Gary Clarke has pointed out that, in *Subculture*, 'Asians are particularly noted by their absence'. Accordingly, if as Clarke has maintained, Hebdige 'tends to equate black culture with Jamaican culture',²⁸ then there is perhaps a corresponding equation of whiteness with Englishness. Lydon's Irishness, therefore, is

absorbed into an ethnically undifferentiated working-class whiteness, and in the process of *Subculture*'s formative engagement with questions of race and ethnicity, the second-generation Irish appear to have been remaindered, as it were, in the modality of class.

Hebdige's discussion of punk as a 'white ethnicity', and *Subculture*'s tacit positioning of Lydon in this context, has frequently been recounted in subsequent cultural studies' engagements with questions of race, ethnicity and popular music.²⁹ Accordingly, despite the fact that Hebdige would eventually offer recognition of Lydon's Irishness (albeit in passing) in a later essay,³⁰ other accounts have implicitly served to (re) position Lydon in this 'white ethnicity'.

For instance, Paul Gilroy revisits Hebdige's notion of punk as a 'white ethnicity' in his discussion of anti-racist politics in *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*. Here, Gilroy re-formulates Hebdige's argument, explaining that this 'white ethnicity' 'both paralleled and answered the proscriptive blackness of the dread culture to which it was a cryptic affiliation', emphasising the point that punk had rendered 'the hitherto coded and unacknowledged relationships between black and white styles an open and inescapable fact'.³¹

Like Hebdige, Gilroy's discussion of punk draws particular attention to John Lydon (whom he had previously discussed, albeit in passing, in one of his essays in *Empire*).³² Here, he explains that, as 'The Sex Pistols' lead singer', Lydon 'pronounced frequently and at length on the subjects of "race", nation and Britishness', a point he substantiates with reference to an interview in which Lydon had announced that 'There's no such thing as patriotism any more', and declared that 'England was never free' (p. 124). Gilroy also cites Lydon's involvement

with the Anti-Nazi League (ANL).³³ Here, he refers to an ANL leaflet entitled 'NF=No Future' ('No Future' being the refrain of Lydon's 'God Save the Queen' lyric). Gilroy explains that, in the leaflet, Lydon expressed his 'anti-fascist views' (p. 133), which are recorded here in an endnote: 'I despise [the National Front]. No one should have the right to tell anyone they can't live here because of the colour of their skin or their religion or the size of their nose' (p. 151).

Although it does not appear that Lydon referred directly to his Irishness in this leaflet, the ANL activist that conducted the interview in which he made these comments has recalled the meeting in terms of the singer's ethnicity (referring to Lydon as 'a quick-witted Irish-Catholic').³⁴ It is perhaps also significant that Lydon's contribution to the leaflet demonstrated an awareness of the fact that prejudice is not restricted to skin colour. Moreover, the particular comments that he made in this leaflet are remarkably similar to those he made in an interview (to promote the 'God Save the Queen' single) in which he clearly framed his anti-fascist views in the context of his Irishness. Here, Lydon responded to a news report which had implied an affiliation between The Sex Pistols and the National Front.³⁵ Lydon, who was evidently 'disgusted and hurt' by the alleged (mis)appropriation of 'God Save the Queen' by white racists, framed his defence of the lyric in a robust assertion of his Irishness and, for want of a better term, his migrantness: 'I'm Irish, right, and if they took over I'd be on the next boat back. I believe you should be allowed to live where you want, when you want and how you want'.³⁶ Lydon's endeavour to frame his anti-racist stance in terms of his own immigrant background apparently found little favour with white racists, for within a few days of the publication of this interview, he had been physically assaulted by members of the National Front.³⁷ This context, though, is overlooked in Gilroy's account of Lydon who, instead, is implicitly (re)positioned in Hebdige's 'white ethnicity'. Moreover, as I will demonstrate in the

next section, the particular critical paradigm that emerged in these formative engagements with ethnicity and popular music has continued to be practised in more recent work on other second-generation Irish rock musicians.

Lydon, The Smiths, and the uneven excavation of Irishness

As I pointed out in the previous section, Hebdige made a passing reference to Lydon's Irishness in a later essay, 'Digging for Britain: An Excavation in Seven Parts' (henceforth 'Digging'). Significantly, this was not the only allusion to Irishness in the essay. For instance, Hebdige cites Thomas Carlyle's essay 'The Irish', alludes to Yeats' poem 'Easter 1916', mentions Yeats himself, and includes the IRA in his inventory of 'enemies' of Britishness, whilst referring frequently to the crisis in Northern Ireland.³⁸ In 'Digging', then, Hebdige displays an alertness to Irishness that is clearly absent in *Subculture*.

However, the particular manner in which this recognition of Irishness is offered inadvertently serves to (re)produce the previous concealment of this dimension in earlier work. In the essay's seventh, and final 'excavation', entitled 'The Sick Rose ("The Queen is Dead", 1986)' (pp. 61-6), Hebdige offers a discussion of the title track of The Smiths' 1986 album, *The Queen is Dead*. While Hebdige's discussion of 'The Queen is Dead' is primarily concerned with Derek Jarman's promotional video for the track, offering little analysis of The Smiths themselves, it is nevertheless significant that he should choose this particular moment to offer recognition of Lydon's Irishness, introducing the singer (by way of an allusion to Yeats) as 'London-Irish' (p. 63), and thereby modifying his previous positioning of Lydon in *Subculture*. Ironically, though, at precisely the same moment in which the essay provides recognition of Irish ethnicity for one musician, it serves to mask it for another. For while he can smoothly affiliate the 'Dublin-born

and schooled in London' Yeats (p. 63), with the 'London-Irish' Lydon, Hebdige's Yeats-Smiths connection is framed rather differently: 'Morrissey', he explains, 'might qualify for membership of *an English equivalent* of Yeats's "Celtic Twilight" circle'.³⁹ Curiously then, while in *Subculture* Lydon was positioned in terms of a black/white binary division, in 'Digging' Morrissey is taken as 'English' in opposition to the 'Irish' Yeats.

Consequently, although it is Hebdige's project to 'dig for Britain', at precisely the same moment in which he excavates one instance of second-generation Irishness, he inadvertently produces concealment of another. And this uneven acknowledgement of Irishness appears to constrict the subsequent discussion of these musicians in the essay. For instance, when he situates Lydon's 'God Save the Queen' lyric and Morrissey's 'The Queen is Dead' lyric in a particular strand of dissident cultural expression in Britain, the possible significance of these musicians' shared immigrant backgrounds cannot be considered. Instead, Hebdige's tacit positioning of The Smiths in terms of an ethnically undifferentiated whiteness situates the group in a context analogous to that in which he had previously framed Lydon in *Subculture*. Accordingly, when Hebdige identifies a shift between 'white' and 'black' musical styles in Britain in the late 1980s, The Smiths serve as an archetype of the former category: 'Many of the angst-ridden white "indie" bands who modeled their image and vocal style on Morrissey and the Smiths switched in the late 1980s/early 1990s to the black-influenced "dance music" styles derived from black American house music'.⁴⁰ And without disputing Hebdige's overarching argument, the point to note is this critical designation of The Smiths as a kind of paradigm of whiteness, as this has come to characterise the group's reception in the field of British cultural studies. Indeed, as I will demonstrate in the next section, the discursive positioning of The Smiths in a notional 'white ethnicity' has become the dominant context in which the group

have been situated.

Whiteness, The Smiths, and the Remarkable Repression of Irishness

Julian Stringer's article, 'The Smiths: Repressed (But Remarkably Dressed)', was the first (and is currently the only) academic endeavour to position The Smiths at the centre of its analysis. In this regard, it clearly differs from Gilroy's discussion of Lydon, and Hebdige's discussion of both Lydon and The Smiths. However, what it crucially shares with these previous accounts of second-generation Irish musicians is the fact that it is primarily concerned with whiteness and Englishness. Indeed, Stringer appears to invoke these previous discussions when he claims that the very 'meaning of white ethnicity ... comprises the "core and implicit text" of the Smiths' work'.⁴¹

Drawing on Richard Dyer's 'star' theory, Stringer begins his essay by explaining that 'stars can dramatise, by their very ordinary/extraordinariness, the "magical synthesis" of irreconcilable cultural conflicts' (p. 15). Moreover, because stars 'are also placed according to the divisions of gender, race, class, nationality and sexuality, stars can embody or redefine the values invested in specific social types' (pp. 15-16).

Once he has established this theoretical framework, Stringer introduces his discussion of The Smiths, explaining that the group's 'image' is 'characterised by a marked instability'. Here, he draws attention to their 'mix of rock and pop modes, with the concomitant confusion of musical and ideological values', and explains that 'the contradictions embodied in the Smiths' image cannot be resolved very easily'. In fact, for Stringer, the group's 'image strains its social, musical and cultural conflicts way passed breaking point'. In this essay, then, Stringer will

consider ‘how this [ambiguity] is worked through textually and contextually, in relation to the most celebrated yet unstable feature of the Smiths’ star image, its “Englishness”’ (pp. 16-17).

In light of Stringer’s suggestion that The Smiths’ relationship with Englishness is marked by ambivalence (he describes them as ‘the most ambiguously English group of them all’ (p. 21)), and as his analysis of the group focuses specifically on questions of nationhood and ethnicity, the group’s collective immigrant background would appear to have had some relevance to the discussion. However, this dimension is comprehensively overlooked and, in its absence, Stringer positions The Smiths in terms of an indigenous Englishness. He suggests, for example, that the group were ‘respectful of the standardised, linear conventions of *Anglo-Saxon* pop’ (p. 24, my emphasis), maintaining that ‘one can ... trace a suggestive continuum between Johnny Marr’s style and that of other *native* musicians’ (p. 19, my emphasis).

Stringer continues in this vein, suggesting that Morrissey’s ‘star image’ signified ‘the snobby, traditional, eccentric, English gent’, and explaining that, in interviews, Morrissey’s ‘method is to use very clipped, precise enunciation’, while his ‘singing strains for “correct”, clear English diction’ (p. 19). These are, of course, valid and useful observations (although the singer’s public endorsement an IRA bomb attack on the British Cabinet, his frequent requests for the assassination of Margaret Thatcher, and relentless calls for the abolition of the Royal Family perhaps problematise the notion of Morrissey as a straightforward ‘English gent’).⁴²

Notwithstanding this point, though, if ‘star images’ are socially and culturally constructed, then Englishness, as Stringer goes on to point out, is itself ‘an identity that can be challenged and redefined by competing identities’ (p. 20). Indeed, Stringer explains that, in the performance of The Smiths, this ‘cultivated Englishness is highlighted as just an image, a front, something that

can be played around at will' (p. 20). However, while Stringer acknowledges the 'class contradictions' of this 'star image', pointing out that the four members of the group all had working-class backgrounds (p. 19), he fails to mention that this peculiarly 'English' persona similarly belied the fact that the individual members of The Smiths were the immediate descendants of Irish Catholic labour migrants.

It is of course conceivable that Stringer was simply unaware of this dimension. However, in light of the fact that he cites an interview in which Morrissey made reference to his Irish immigrant background, it would appear that this was not the case.⁴³ Moreover, as both Morrissey and Johnny Marr had drawn attention to this aspect of the group's background in a number of interviews, it presumably also constitutes a particular dimension of their 'star image'.⁴⁴ In any case, Stringer clarifies that his particular concern in the article is the relationship of The Smiths to 'English national identity' (p. 20). Significantly, this is the point at which his argument begins to converge most clearly with earlier academic work on second-generation Irish rock musicians. He explains, for instance, that 'It is clear from the start that we are dealing with a totally white-identified national identity' (p. 20), claiming that The Smiths 'never directly embrace the political challenges of multiracial Britain', as their 'focus of attention has always been with white England' (p. 20).⁴⁵ Moreover, for Stringer, the very 'meaning of white ethnicity in the modern national context comprises the "core and implicit text" of the Smiths' work' (p. 21).

Stringer then goes on to point out that 'such fundamentally white records as *Meat is Murder* and *The Queen is Dead*' have not been sufficiently considered in term of whiteness:

Because English culture does not generally see *whiteness as an ethnic category*, white, popular music exists first and foremost as non-racial music. So, the Smiths' records might be about Manchester, about the working-class, and about being English, but they are never perceived as important explorations of *being white* (p. 22, my emphases).

Clearly this is a valid and productive line of enquiry, which (although it is not referenced, here) appears to be at least partly indebted to Richard Dyer's endeavour to engage with whiteness.⁴⁶ As I pointed out earlier, Dyer draws particular attention in his study to the ethnic heterogeneity that constitutes whiteness. Accordingly, if Stringer is to insist (quite correctly) that whiteness is an ethnic category, then he should presumably, *pace* Dyer, also acknowledge the ethnic diversity of this category, particularly in a discussion of immigrant-descended cultural practitioners.

In other words, if it is Stringer's intention to discuss The Smiths specifically in terms of 'white ethnicity', then the group's collective Irish background would appear to be intrinsically relevant. Indeed, an acknowledgement of this context would conceivably have benefited aspects of his argument (not least his point that The Smiths' offered a 'critique of white, English identity' (p. 22)), and would perhaps have yielded fruitful discussions of the 'magical synthesis' that he claims the group offer, as well as the 'acute social tensions' he suggests they 'embody' (p. 25).

Accordingly, while Stringer points out that 'at every turn critics of The Smiths ... ignore' the group's 'white-defined national identity' (p. 20), he similarly, at every turn, overlooks the

group's immigrant background. Consequently, if, as Stringer claims, there is 'a disturbing commonsense logic' (p. 22) in a music journalist's argument that The Smiths' expression of anti-disco sentiment on their 1986 single 'Panic' ('burn down the disco/Hang the blessed DJ') asserted a racial distinction between rock music and dance music (p. 22), then Stringer appears to demonstrate an analogous 'commonsense logic' in his assumption that whiteness in England is ethnically homogeneous. Such an assumption, which had of course been evident in previous academic work on John Lydon and The Smiths, has, moreover, continued to inform more recent engagements with second-generation Irish rock musicians. However, as I will demonstrate in the next section, this tendency has been tempered by a number of important modifications.

Englishness, Popular Music, and the Endnoting of Irishness

In an article on Englishness and popular music in the 1990s, Martin Cloonan offers a brief consideration of both John Lydon and The Smiths. He points out, for instance, that 'A particular form of "Englishness"' was expressed by punk musicians in the late 1970s, referring specifically to John Lydon's lyrics for The Sex Pistols' singles, 'Anarchy in the UK' and 'God Save the Queen', before explaining The Smiths were 'Perhaps the major reference point in 1980s pop Englishness'.⁴⁷ Cloonan also goes on to make passing reference to Oasis (pp. 66, 70). However, despite his citation of a newspaper article that dealt specifically with the Irishness of Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis, he offers no acknowledgement of this particular dimension.⁴⁸

Moreover, when his discussion turns to a consideration of race, ethnicity and popular music, the article begins to intersect with previous discussions of second-generation Irish rock musicians. Here, he points out that 'a range of non-white artists have commented, and continue

to comment, on the state of the nation', referring specifically to bands such as Cornershop and Fun-Da-Mental. Cloonan then explains that 'whilst black English-born (or resident) artists have ... commented about the *condition* of England, they have seldom been held to *represent* it'. In an endeavour to demonstrate this point, Cloonan draws attention to a second-generation Irish musician, Morrissey, pointing out that 'while it is quite possible for *The Guardian* to talk of Morrissey [sic] as "a signifier of our (i.e. England's) broader disorder" ... such signification is rarely accredited to the 6% of the population who form the ethnic minorities' (p. 69).

Cloonan is, of course, quite correct in making this point. Second-generation Irish musicians have functioned, in journalistic as well as academic discussions, as representatives of white Englishness, a position that the descendants of other post-war immigrant groups have seldom held in critical discourses. Moreover, Cloonan's tacit exclusion of the Irish in England from questions of ethnicity is also understandable, particularly in light of the apparent vigour and longevity of the dominant 'race relations' paradigm. Rather than simply disputing Cloonan's argument, then, the point I wish to make here is that, once again, in a scholarly discussion of ethnicity and popular music, a second-generation Irish musician is taken to be representative of a white English 'centre' against which more ostensible marginal musicians can be differentiated.

However, in a modified version of this article, Cloonan included an important endnote that offered recognition of the Irishness of second-generation musicians. In this rendition of the paper, Cloonan explains that

There is nothing inevitable about [the fact that 'black' musicians have rarely

been held to represent England] as Wade has shown how in another context the music of an ethnic minority, namely blacks in Colombia, came to be associated with concepts of the nation. But mainstream pop Englishness has generally been defined by whites who have been born in the country.⁴⁹

In the endnote for this point, Cloonan explains:

However, it is worth noting that the most strident nationalists - such as many campaigners for national language - are often not born in the country they espouse. This is replicated in pop, where some of the most allegedly 'English' of voices have had their roots elsewhere. In punk Johnny Rotten was of Irish descent, and Oasis - often portrayed as both 'English' and part of 'Britpop' - are led by the Gallagher brothers, who are also of Irish descent.⁵⁰

Clearly this acknowledgement is significant in that it marks a shift away from the original paper's (not to say the previous body of work's) elision of Irishness. However, despite the fact that Morrissey is the subject of the particular passage that receives this endnote, Cloonan's acknowledgement of the Irishness of Lydon and Oasis is, ironically, not extended to The Smiths. Like Hebdige's partial acknowledgement of Irishness in 'Digging', then, Cloonan's recognition of Irish ethnicity for Lydon and Oasis serves, albeit inadvertently, to re-conceal this dimension of The Smiths. The rare instances in which Irish ethnicity has been acknowledged in British cultural studies, then, have been uneven, and have thereby served to exclude particular musicians, even at the moment that they are being discussed.

Nevertheless, in Cloonan's paper, Irish ethnicity at least makes a kind of transition from absence to endnote, and in more recent work Irishness has made a further transition, from endnote to main text (albeit parenthetically). For instance, in a discussion of 'independent' music in 1990s Britain, David Hesmondhalgh makes a brief but insightful comment about 'Britpop', stating that 'the narrow nationalism of the term "Britpop" hardly needs comment (though the Irish roots of the two brothers, Noel and Liam Gallagher, at the centre of Oasis, make [their] relationship ... to the phenomenon quite complex)'.⁵¹ Also in the late 1990s, Steve Redhead, of the Manchester Institute of Popular Culture, which has positioned itself as an institutional descendant of the Birmingham Centre, offered a similarly brief acknowledgement of Oasis' Irishness.⁵² Clearly such acknowledgements register an important shift in terms of the recognition of Irish ethnicity in British cultural studies. It remains to be seen, though, how future practitioners of cultural studies will respond to this burgeoning shift in the field's handling of questions of race, ethnicity and popular music.

Conclusion

The apparent reluctance of cultural studies' practitioners to acknowledge the ethnicity of the second-generation Irish has a number of important implications. Primarily, it has rendered invisible the particular ways in which second-generation Irish rock musicians have reconfigured popular culture in England. In addition, it has maintained, albeit tacitly, a narrow conception of second-generation Irish music-making that is restricted to identifiably 'Irish' musicians. More generally, the implicit failure to acknowledge the complex processes of diasporic identity-formation amongst the Irish ethnic group in England has produced a discursive closure that maintains the dominance not only of the black/white binary division, but also of gender and class as modes of analysis in studies of whiteness (thereby subordinating

ethnicity as a dimension of analysis). In light of the evidence presented in this chapter, it is my contention that this framework is no longer serviceable and, in Chapter Five, I will place ethnicity at the centre of the discussion, demonstrating how an analysis informed by this dimension can facilitate innovative re-readings of second-generation Irish rock musicians. However, in the next chapter, I want to consider the contemporary critical reception of these musicians in the British music press.

Endnotes

1. Simon Frith, 'Music and Identity', in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996), p. 122.
2. See, for example, Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), pp. 247-50; Dick Hebdige, 'The Style of the Mods', Stencilled Occasional Paper (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1971); Mike Flood-Page and Pete Fowler, 'Writing about Rock', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* No. 2 (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1972), pp. 139-52; Paul Willis, 'Popular Music and Youth Culture Groups in Birmingham' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1972); Dick Bradley, 'The Cultural Study of Music: A Theoretical and Methodological Introduction', Stencilled Occasional Paper (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1980).
3. See, for example, Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979); Iain Chambers, 'A Strategy for Living: Black Music and White Subcultures', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* 7/8 (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1975), pp. 157-66; Iain Chambers, *Urban Rhythms: Pop Music and Popular Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 139-74; Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of 'Race' and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), pp. 117-35; 153-222; Simon Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK* (London: Macmillan, 1988).
4. Previous 'waves' of Irish immigrants had also been 'mobilized as representational resources' for Englishness (Sabina Sharkey, 'A View of the Present State of Irish Studies', in Susan Bassnett (ed.), *Studying British Cultures: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.128). However, this had been for a rather different purpose, as here the Irish functioned as a 'significant Other in the construction of the British nationalist myth'. (Mary J. Hickman and Bronwen Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain', *Feminist Review* No. 50 (Summer 1995), p. 5).
5. Judith Williamson, 'Two Kinds of Otherness: Black Film and the Avant-Garde', *Screen* Vol. 29, No. 4 (Autumn 1988), p. 110.
6. As Paul Gilroy has pointed out, 'some of the most potent conceptions of Englishness have been constructed by alien outsiders like Carlyle, Swift, Scott, or Eliot'. (Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 11). Moreover, much nationalist music in England has, as Andrew Blake has pointed out, been created by 'outsiders'. (Andrew Blake, 'Re-Placing British Music', in Mica Nava and Alan O'Shea (eds), *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 210). However, the point I am making is that the particular 'outsiderness' of the musicians I am concerned with has largely gone acknowledged, even in analyses that have been expressly concerned with questions of race and ethnicity.
7. Lynda E. Boose, "'The Getting of a Lawful Race": Racial Discourse in Early Modern England and the Unrepresentable Black Woman', in Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (eds), *Women, 'Race', and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 36.

8. Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 12, 51, 19. For a discussion of whiteness and the Irish in post-war Britain, see Hickman and Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness'; Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997). pp. 90-110. Such processes of 'assimilation' have, of course, offered a number of advantageous benefits, what David Roediger has called 'the pleasures of whiteness'. (David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 13).

9. Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp. 90-110.

10. Ioan Davies, *Cultural Studies and Beyond: Fragments of Empire* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 24. Gary Clarke, 'Defending Ski Jumpers: A Critique of Theories of Youth Sub-Cultures', Stencilled Occasional Paper (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1982), p. 13.

11. Hebdige, *Subculture*, p. 29. Subsequent page references will appear in parentheses in the main text.

12. For instance, in 1977, at the height of punk, an article in the *New Musical Express* explained that Lydon was 'the most prominent and archetypal of punk rockers', and labelled him 'Public Punk Number One' (Charles Shaar Murray, 'We didn't know it was loaded ...', *New Musical Express*, 9 July 1977, pp. 28, 29). Although subsequent journalistic claims that Lydon 'single-handedly instigated the [punk] movement' (Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons, *The Boy Looked at Johnny: The Obituary of Rock and Roll* (London: Pluto, 1978), p. 78) seem rather reductive, this is a view that has persisted amongst musicians from that era. For instance, in the early 1990s, founder members of other London punk groups described Lydon as a 'figurehead of punk' and 'the icon for that period' (quoted in Lydon, *Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks No Dogs* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994, pp. 191, 226).

13. *Melody Maker*, 'Street Life', 4 June 1977, p. 1. Significantly, Lydon's Irishness is recorded in the cover article of this issue. See Allan Jones, 'Rotten!', *Melody Maker*, 4 June 1977, p. 52.

14. Hebdige, *Subculture*, pp. 28-9, 61, 64, 90, 92, 93, 98, 106, 109, 112, 142, 151, 156, 157, 161.

15. Clarke, 'Defending Ski-Jumpers', p. 13.

16. While Hebdige may simply have been unaware of Lydon's Irishness, he does refer to a 'series of interviews [that Lydon gave] throughout 1977' (p. 29), a period in which both Lydon, and his interviewers, had made reference to this dimension, see for example, Jones, 'Rotten!', p. 52; Charles Shaar Murray, 'John, Paul, Steve and Sidney: The Social Rehabilitation of the Sex Pistols', *New Musical Express*, 6 August 1977, p. 23. Moreover, Hebdige includes, in his 'Suggested Further Reading' section, texts that drew attention to Lydon's Irishness, for example, Burchill and Parsons, *The Boy Looked at Johnny*.

17. *The Johnny Rotten Show: A Punk and His Music*, Capital Radio, 16 July 1977. For press articles on the radio interview, see Captain Nemo, 'The Johnny Rotten Show', *New Musical*

Express, 23 July 1977, p. 12; Chris Welch, 'Rotten on Stardom, Silly Twats, Money - and Music', *Melody Maker*, 23 July 1977, p. 3; Anonymous, 'A Punk and His Music: An Evening with John Rotten', *Sounds*, 23 July 1977, pp. 9, 30.

18. See, for example, Murray, 'John, Paul, Steve and Sidney', pp. 23, 26. For examples of Lydon's tendency to wear reggae-related badges, see Fred and Judy Vermorel, *Sex Pistols: The Inside Story* (London: Omnibus, 1978), p. 99. See also the front cover illustration of *Record Mirror*, 4 November 1978.

19. Vivien Goldman, 'Man a Warrior: John in Jamaica', *Sounds*, 11 March 1978, p. 22. The anti-racist music festival was a Rock Against Racism concert at London's Victoria Park in April 1978. For a contemporaneous report, see Anonymous, 'Rotten out of Anti-Nazi rally', *Melody Maker*, 22 April 1978, p. 4.

20. For the serialisation, see Vivien Goldman, 'Johnny Cool at the Control: John Lydon in Jamaica', *Sounds*, 4 March 1978, pp. 16-9; Goldman, 'Man a Warrior'. For other reports and interviews, see Anonymous, 'Johnny's Jamaican Jaunt', *Sounds*, 11 February 1978, p. 12, and Chris Salewicz, 'The Poolside Pronouncements of Johnny "No-Tan" Rotten', *New Musical Express*, 18 March 1978, p. 15.

21. Goldman, 'Johnny Cool at the Control', pp. 17-18.

22. Goldman, 'Man a Warrior', p. 21. Lydon fails to specify the particular nature of this evidently anti-Irish gesture.

23. Lydon, *Rotten*, p. 287.

24. Lydon, *Rotten*, 280, 287. This is, of course, an allusion to the discriminatory notices in post-war London hotels from which Lydon's autobiography takes its title.

25. Chambers, *Urban Rhythms*, pp. 190-1.

26. A notable exception in this regard is Simon Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK* (London: Macmillan, 1988). This was an ethnographic research project (based at the Birmingham Centre) on ethnicity and popular music in the city of Birmingham. In the study, Jones draws attention to the family background of Jo-Jo, a second-generation Irish youth who emerges as one of the dominant voices in the text. Jones explains: 'Like many of the Irish families in the area, they had developed close ties with black neighbours by sharing the same survival strategies, living spaces and supportive child-care networks. (The parallel experiences of Irish and black migrant workers generally was an important foundation of much of the interaction between the two communities.)' Later on, Jones points out that some working-class white youths in the city had 'attempted to forge an identity with black people by drawing attention to parallel forms of ethnicity, such as Irishness' (pp. 129-30, 192).

27. Murray, 'John, Paul, Steve and Sidney', p. 23. In 2000, twenty-two years after Lydon's departure from The Sex Pistols, the group's former manager Malcolm McLaren refuted the

suggestion that he and Lydon had 'similar personalities', substantiating this point with reference to Lydon's Irishness. See Stephen Dalton, 'The Great Rock 'N' Roll Rekindle', *New Musical Express*, 6 May 2000, p. 19.

28. Clarke, 'Defending Ski-Jumpers', p. 17. It is perhaps worth pointing out that Hebdige, in *Subculture*, does briefly draw attention (in what Nabeel Zuberi has called 'a troubling passage' (Zuberi, *Sounds English: Transnational Popular Music*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001, p. 53)), to the anti-Pakistani sentiment expressed by an 'alliance' of 'white and black youths' who evidently scapegoated 'alien groups' including 'Asians'. Hebdige suggests that "paki-bashing" can be read as a displacement manoeuvre whereby the fear and anxiety produced by limited identification with one black group was transformed into aggression and directed against another black community'. For Hebdige, Pakistanis were 'Less easily assimilated than the West Indians into the host community', and 'were singled out for the brutal attentions of skinheads, black and white alike' (p. 58).

29. Chambers, *Urban Rhythms*, p. 178; Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, pp. 123-5; Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth*, pp. 95-6.

30. Hebdige, 'Digging for Britain' in *The British Edge* (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1987), p. 63.

31. Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, pp. 122-3. Subsequent page references will appear in parentheses in the main text.

32. Here, Gilroy claimed that in Lydon's lyrics for the Sex Pistols' single 'God Save the Queen' (and specifically the line 'There is no future, in England's Dreaming'), 'the relation of white to black youth took on its most complex form' (Gilroy, in CCCS, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p. 296). Lydon has evidently continued to engage Gilroy's interest. In 1997, for instance, Gilroy explained: 'My antipathy to the British monarchy ... [has] been leavened over the years by heavy doses of The Sex Pistols' "God Save The Queen". I periodically commemorate that long-vanished undercurrent of resistance to the 1977 Royal Jubilee and, as the years go by, listen with greater and greater pleasure to Johnny Rotten's joyfully nihilistic assault on the pathologies of England's interminable dreaming'. (Gilroy, 'Elton's Crooning, England's Dreaming', *Theory and Event* e-journal (http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_&_event/v001/1.4gilroy.html), Vol. 1, No. 4 (1997), no pagination).

33. The ANL was launched in November 1977 'as a broad initiative, drawing together sponsors from right across the spectrum of radical politics with a variety of show business personalities, academics, writers and sports people' (Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, p. 131).

34. David Widgery, *Beating Time: Riot'n Race'n Rock'n Roll* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1986), p. 66.

35. John Blake, 'Rock's Swastika Revolution', *London Evening News*, 7 May 1977, p. 11. This article was illustrated with a large photograph of Lydon and his fellow band members, anchored by a caption explaining: 'The Sex Pistols ... The National Front turn up to cheer

them’.

36. Jones, ‘Rotten!’, p. 52.

37. Widgery, *Beating Time*, p. 64.

38. Hebdige, ‘Digging’, pp. 37, 48, 41, 63, 38, 42, 65. Subsequent page references will appear in parentheses in the main text.

39. This point, which is not included in the original version, is made in the endnotes of the reprinted versions. See Hebdige, ‘Digging for Britain’, in Dominic Strinati and Stephen Wagg (eds), *Come on Down? Popular Media Culture in Post-War Britain* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 376; Hebdige, ‘Digging for Britain’, in Houston. A Baker, Jr., Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg (eds), *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 161.

40. This point is made in an endnote in the reprinted versions, see Hebdige, ‘Digging for Britain’, in Strinati and Wagg (eds), *Come on Down?*, p. 375, and Hebdige, ‘Digging for Britain’, in Baker, Diawara, and Lindeborg (eds), *Black British Cultural Studies*, p. 159.

41. Julian Stringer, ‘The Smiths: Repressed (But Remarkably Dressed)’, *Popular Music* Vol. 11, No. 1 (1992), p. 21. Subsequent page references will appear in parentheses in the main text.

42. See, for example, James Henke, ‘Oscar! Oscar! Great Britain Goes Wilde for the “Fourth-Gender” Smiths’, *Rolling Stone*, 7 June 1984, p. 45; Ian Pye, ‘A Hard Day’s Misery’, *Melody Maker*, 3 November 1984, p. 31; Simon Garfield, ‘This Charming Man’, *Time Out*, 7-13 March 1985, p. 19; Ian Pye, ‘Some Mothers Do ’Ave ’Em’, *New Musical Express*, 7 June 1986, p. 27.

43. Stringer, ‘The Smiths’, pp. 21-2. For the article in question, see Frank Owen, ‘Home Thoughts from Abroad’, *Melody Maker*, 27 September 1986, p. 16.

44. Frank Worral, ‘The Cradle Snatchers’, *Melody Maker*, 3 September 1983, p. 26; Neil McCormick, ‘All Men Have Secrets’, *Hot Press*, 4 May 1984, p. 19; Barry McIlheney, ‘The Thoughts of Chairman Marr’, *Melody Maker*, 3 August 1985, p. 33; Paul Du Noyer, ‘Oh, Such Drama!’, *Q* (August 1987), p. 58.

45. It is perhaps worth pointing out, here, that The Smiths’ final concert was a benefit show for Artists Against Apartheid, and was staged in Brixton, a predominantly African-Caribbean district of London. (Johnny Rogan, *The Smiths: The Visual Documentary* (London: Omnibus Press, 1994), p. 154). The group had previously performed on the same bill as Misty in Roots, a reggae group, at a concert for the Labour-controlled GLC in 1984 (Rogan, *The Smiths*, p. 73), which at that time was co-ordinating an anti-racist campaign in response to the ‘riots’ of 1981. (Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*, pp. 137-43).

46. Dyer ‘White’, *Screen* Vol. 29, No. 4 (1988), pp. 44-64.

47. Martin Cloonan, 'What Do They Know of England?: "Englishness" and Popular Music in the mid-1990s', in Tarja Hautamaki and Helmi Jarviluoma (eds), *Music on Show: Issues of Performance* (Tampere: University of Tampere, 1998), p. 67. Subsequent page references will appear in parentheses in the main text.
48. The article in question was Jon Savage, 'Rough Emeralds', *Guardian*, Second section, 17 March 1995, p. 11.
49. Cloonan, 'State of the Nation: "Englishness", Pop and Politics in the mid-1990s', *Popular Music and Society* Vol. 21, No. 2 (1997), p. 59.
50. Cloonan, 'State of the Nation', p. 67. The implication that Lydon and the Gallaghers have been 'strident nationalists' is not substantiated here.
51. David Hesmondhalgh, 'Indie: The Institutional Politics and Aesthetics of a Popular Music Genre', *Cultural Studies* Vol. 13, No. 1 (1999), p. 52.
52. Redhead, *Subcultures to Clubcultures: An Introduction to Popular Cultural Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 107. For a brief discussion of the Manchester Institute of Popular Culture's endeavour to situate itself in relation to the Birmingham Centre, see Steve Redhead, 'Introduction: Reading Pop(ular) Cult(ural) Stud(ie)s', in Steve Redhead, Derek Wynne and Justin O'Connor (eds), *The Clubcultures Reader: Readings in Popular Cultural Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 2.

Chapter Four

The Critical Reception of Second-Generation Irish Rock Musicians in the British Music Press

In the last chapter, I examined the particular ways in which second-generation Irish rock musicians have conventionally been understood in the field of British cultural studies. In Chapter Five, I will present my own analysis of these musicians, demonstrating how an interpretive frame that acknowledges Irish ethnicity can facilitate innovative readings of these musicians, and their work. However, before I do this, I want to examine the critical reception of these musicians in British pop journalism. Primarily, this is because the music press has been the principal site in which popular music has been mediated, and in which popular musicians and their work have been narrativised and contextualised. Accordingly, despite the fact that the press's primacy has been challenged by the development of music programming on television and radio (and, in more recent years, on the Internet), the print media have continued (as Simon Frith, writing in the mid-1980s, pointed out) to occupy an 'important interpretive role in consumption', and have therefore had 'a determinant effect on the shape of popular culture [and] its distribution of symbolic capital and power'.¹

The music press, then, has played a prominent role in establishing the critical frameworks in which second-generation Irish rock musicians have been received, determining the particular ways in which audiences and readers have conceived of these musicians, and providing the particular contexts in which their work has been understood. This is not to suggest, however, that readers of the music press, and their peer group, simply adhere passively to press opinion. Indeed, as Frith goes on to point out, '[consumers] themselves have a stake in the process of

interpretation, argument, making sense - which is why other people's reviews are so compulsively irritating, why music papers' record and concert critiques get the most passionate reader-response'.² Nevertheless, the press's reception of particular musicians, records and concerts serves, as Angela McRobbie has explained, to '[lay] down the terms and the myths by which we come to recognise the music'.³

Following the discussion in the last chapter, then, the principal questions that I will address in this chapter are: How have second-generation Irish rock musicians been critically received in the British music press? How has the particular issue of Irish ethnicity been discursively managed in music journalism? If, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Irishness has been largely absent in academic discussions of these musicians, then has this tendency also been evident in journalistic discussions? And if so, in what ways has Irishness been *present* in British popular music journalism? I have divided the chapter into two key sections, 'Manifestations of Irishness', and 'The Critical Reception of Second-Generation Irish Rock Musicians'. In the first section, I will consider the various ways in which Irishness has been foregrounded in music journalism, before focusing, in the second section, on the reception of the particular musicians with whom I am chiefly concerned.

The specific publications that I will consider in this chapter are the British weekly music papers, also known as 'inkies'.⁴ Primarily, I will focus on *Melody Maker* (1926-2000), *New Musical Express* (1952-), and *Sounds* (1970-1991). As Roy Shuker has explained, these publications 'have historically emphasised a tradition of critical rock journalism, with their reviewers acting as the gatekeepers for that tradition'.⁵ However, I will also make reference to other types of publication, such as *Record Mirror* (1953-1991), a 'glossy' weekly magazine for the 'teenage

fan', and *The Face* (1980-), a monthly 'style bible', as well as monthly music magazines, such as *Q* (1986-), which have endeavoured to consolidate the critical impulse of the weekly music papers with the presentation format of the monthly 'style bibles'.⁶

In my discussion of these publications, I am specifically concerned with reviews of records and live performances, as well as general news items and interviews. I will also consider feature articles on salient topics. For the purposes of this chapter, publications were monitored from 1976 to 1978 for material on John Lydon, 1983 to 1987 for The Smiths, and 1994 to 1997 for Oasis. Before I examine particular music papers, however, it is necessary to contextualise music journalism as a critical discourse, outlining its particular historical origins and considering the specificities of its critical practices.⁷

A Brief History of the British Music Press

Although *Melody Maker* (*MM*), launched in the mid-1920s, was strictly speaking the first music paper in Britain, it had, in its initial period, functioned primarily as a trade publication for practising musicians, and consequently it was *New Musical Express* (*NME*) that became, in the early 1950s, the first weekly music paper in Britain to be targeted at the burgeoning constituency of teenage pop consumers.⁸

However, despite the fact that *NME* provided the earliest example of what would now be recognised as a weekly music paper, music journalism was, during this period, a relatively straightforward component of the music business, functioning primarily as a promotional tool for industry product, and demonstrating little concern for the development of a critical discourse. Indeed, as Frith has pointed out, the press-industry relationship was, at this time,

highly transparent, with the music papers '[presenting] the industry's own public view of itself ... in a breathy, adman's prose'.⁹

In the shifting political and cultural climate of the late 1960s, however, the British music press began to remodel itself. At this time there was, as Dave Laing has explained, a 'break' from 'the traditional pattern of staffing the weekly music press with young general reporters drawn from mainstream newspapers'. Instead, 'journalists now often came direct from college [a 'background' that, according to Laing, gave the press 'access to academic discourse'] or from London's burgeoning underground and alternative press'.¹⁰

This 'break', which had already been undertaken by sections of the American music press (most notably *Creem* and *Rolling Stone*), became evident in Britain in 1968 when *MM*, the oldest of the British music papers, began, as Frith has explained, 'to go "progressive"': 'Its features got longer, its interviews more serious; the core of the paper became the album and concert reviews'.¹¹ Indeed, by 1971, *MM* was publicising itself as 'the thinking fan's paper', maintaining that 'the scene we report, reflect and interpret is now accepted as a great deal more serious and creative than previously catered for'.¹²

Meanwhile, *NME*, which by 1972 was (according to Neil Spencer, a subsequent editor of that paper) 'an ailing pop sheet looking to refurbish itself in the rock era',¹³ recruited a number of writers from the underground press, including Nick Kent and Charles Shaar Murray.¹⁴ Drawing on the critical idiom of American 'new journalism', and particularly the work of Tom Wolfe and Lester Bangs, the new style of writing at *NME* was, in Frith's terms, 'hip and knowledgeable', demonstrating an 'up-front' 'cynicism about the rock business',¹⁵ that

contrasted starkly with the advertising discourses that had characterised the paper only two decades earlier.

By the early 1970s, then, *NME*'s engagement with popular music was, as Frith points out, 'beginning to stretch beyond the latest chart sensations into a critical vision of rock and its history that went beyond sales figures'. Accordingly, while in the 1950s reviews had been 'little more than news of releases plus predictions of success', now 'album choices' were 'matters of identity and status', and reviews were 'of crucial importance ... [arousing] by far the majority of responses on the music papers' letters pages'.¹⁶

Of the newly appointed writers at *NME*, Charles Shaar Murray appears to have been the most pivotal in steering the paper's subsequent critical direction. According to Jason Toynbee, 'Murray's first premise was that music is a serious affair', and he 'drew', accordingly, 'on several traditions to develop a technique which had both a broad enough range to cope with a proliferation of rock texts, and a sufficiently deep focus to explain rock's emotional effect'. Thus, '[from] post-Leavis literary criticism he took close reading of individual texts, and the idea of canon - early Elvis, blues guitarists, heroes of the avant garde. From film criticism came auteurism ... and also genre analysis'.¹⁷ The paper also developed, during the 1970s, 'a strong political subtext',¹⁸ advocating a 'left-libertarian multiculturalism'.¹⁹ Significantly, as Toynbee points out, 'most contemporary writing on rock ... remains remarkably close to the 1970s model developed by Charles Shaar Murray and his cohort'.²⁰

However, despite the significance and longevity of this 'critical turn', the music press has continued to inhabit a peculiarly liminal position in a complex network of relationships

between industry personnel, professional musicians, and fans/readers, a circumstance that has inevitably circumscribed its ability to offer a stable and autonomous critical discourse. Most notably, the press has maintained an inevitably co-dependent relationship with the music industry, in whose promotional endeavours the press continues to function as a principal component, publicising musicians, records and live performances. Indeed, in the intimate liaisons of press-industry relations, promotional and critical roles have often simply converged. As Frith explains: 'record company press departments recruit from the music papers, music papers employ ex-publicists; it is not even unusual for writers to do both jobs simultaneously'.²¹

Nevertheless, it is worth emphasising that the press is, strictly speaking, institutionally independent of the music business. It is not, for example, a vertically integrated sector of that industry.²² Indeed, it is precisely because of its relative autonomy that the press has been held in such esteem by both its industry and audience readerships. From the perspective of the business, music papers provide, as Frith has explained, 'an early indication of public taste, useful advice on which releases to push, which to drop; and, in this context, it is the writers' independence from record company influence that gives good reviewers their authenticity'. Similarly, for the fans, music journalists 'have to establish their credibility ... their reviews reveal their standards, their individuality'. Accordingly, they 'claim criticism rather than puffery as the essence of their job: their distance from the producers is part of their self-definition'.²³ So although the material that constitutes music journalism (news items, reviews, interviews) is inevitably instigated by record company press departments, and scheduled to promote industry products (records, concert tickets), this material is not simply re-presented passively in the pages of the music press (except, of course, in the form of

advertising). Instead, it is filtered through the prism of a particular set of critical procedures and, in this sense, the press is perhaps best understood, as Toynbee has put it, 'less as a bridge between artists and audiences, than as collaborator in the development of a discourse'.²⁴

In addition to its fundamentally promotional role, then, the music press endeavours to perform a specifically critical function, offering analysis and evaluation of musicians, records, and live performances. Of course, this type of criticism is implicitly promotional, in that it ultimately serves to encourage the consumption of industry products (records, concert tickets), and in this regard, the press, as Roy Shuker has pointed out, '[plays] an important ideological function, distancing consumers from the fact that they are essentially purchasing an economic commodity, by stressing the product's cultural significance'.²⁵ However, this does not necessarily diminish the significance of this criticism *qua* criticism, for as I pointed out earlier, the press has nevertheless played an important role in mediating and contextualising musicians and their work. Indeed, it has arguably performed a kind of pedagogic function for its readership, who in turn act, as Frith suggests, 'as the opinion leaders, the rock interpreters, the ideological gatekeepers for everyone else'.²⁶ It is this aspect of music criticism, then, its role in the process of culturally legitimating²⁷ second-generation Irish rock musicians, with which I am primarily concerned.

I will present my analysis of this material in the second section of this chapter. However, I will first contextualise this discussion by outlining the particular ways in which the British music press has engaged with notions of Irishness. For although the journalistic reception of second-generation Irish rock musicians has rarely considered them from the perspective of Irish ethnicity in England, it is certainly not the case that Irishness has simply been absent from the

discourse of British music journalism. In fact, a recurring preoccupation with issues pertaining to Irishness has been a prominent feature of the British music press.

Part One: Manifestations of Irishness

In this section, I will discuss four key ways in which Irishness has been foregrounded in British music journalism. Firstly, and most obviously, I will consider material on identifiably Irish musicians, including Irish-born rock musicians. This material includes news items, reviews, and interviews. Secondly, I will examine features about politics and popular culture in (usually Northern) Ireland.²⁸ Thirdly, I will discuss expressions of anti-Irish sentiment. Finally, I will consider the reception of ‘identifiably’ Irish second-generation musicians, such as Kevin Rowland of Dexy’s Midnight Runners and Shane MacGowan of The Pogues, as well as the press’s general engagement with the second-generation Irish presence in England. This material includes news items, reviews, interviews, and occasional ‘special features’ on Irish popular music, as well as letters page debates and passing references.

The Critical Reception of Irish-born Musicians

I will begin this section by looking at material on Irish-born rock musicians. The overarching point to note here is that interviews, reviews, and even minor news stories on these musicians have consistently foregrounded notions of Irishness, regardless of the degree of aesthetic fidelity displayed by the musicians to a putatively authentic Irish idiom. Thus, while an early article on Derry punk group The Undertones could point out that ‘musically, it seems the group’s origins are almost irrelevant’,²⁹ issues pertaining to Irishness nevertheless became (as I demonstrate) a prominent feature of their critical reception. Similar practices have continued to be evident in more recent journalistic discourses. For instance, in 2001, an article on the

young Dublin rock group JJ72 in which the band (referring to themselves as ‘West Brits’) are quoted as saying: ‘Irish music means nothing to us’, the journalist’s bold type by-line nevertheless introduces the group as ‘Ireland’s biggest rock export since U2, no blarney!’, whilst describing them elsewhere as ‘Celtic cuties’.³⁰ In contrast to the critical reception of second-generation rock musicians, then, which has tended to marginalise their Irishness, journalists have incessantly drawn attention to this dimension of Irish-born musicians.

Undoubtedly the most high profile Irish rock band during the period that I am concerned with has been the Dublin group U2.³¹ The critical reception of this group in the British music press has, since the early 1980s, been consistently infused with notions of Irishness.³² Indeed, as Martin Cloonan has pointed out, ‘[it] seems impossible, in Britain at least, to read about U2 without them being described as Irish’.³³ This persistent foregrounding of Irishness in writing on U2 has masked the complex national and religious backgrounds of the group’s individual members. For although drummer Larry Mullen had a conventional Irish Catholic upbringing, the group’s vocalist and lyricist, Bono, whose parents were ‘mixed’ (i.e. Catholic and Protestant), was initially raised in the (Protestant) Church of Ireland, while guitarist the Edge was born in London to a Welsh Presbyterian family. Meanwhile, Adam Clayton, the group’s bass player, was born in Oxfordshire, and had an English Protestant background.³⁴ Such biographical complexities have customarily been overlooked in the group’s reception in the British music press. And while this dimension of the group’s background has occasionally received consideration in cultural criticism in Ireland,³⁵ one of the few people in Britain to publicly draw attention to this point has been Morrissey, who recounted that ‘U2 are always portrayed as being famously Irish’, before announcing: ‘this is the great unsaid: aren’t half of the band English?’³⁶ In doing this, Morrissey appears to be implying that there is an analogy

between the critical 'portrayal' of U2 as 'famously Irish', and the reception of The Smiths as quintessentially English (despite the national-ethnic complexities of their respective backgrounds - a point that I will develop later in this chapter).

In turn, Bono has offered recognition of the Irishness of second-generation rock musicians,³⁷ while expressing his bafflement at critical preoccupations with this dimension of U2 ('It is curious that U2 are seen as this "Irish" thing. So much emphasis is placed on it'), particularly as their music is, in his terms, 'very "un-Irish" in the accepted sense'.³⁸ And while Bono's bewilderment here is perhaps rather disingenuous,³⁹ the point to note is that, for music journalists, the Irishness of U2 has not been contingent on the proximity of the group's performance to an identifiably Irish aesthetic. In other words, while the group's records have, like those of John Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis, rarely expressed recognisably Irish issues, and seldom engaged with identifiably Irish sounds and styles,⁴⁰ this has not had the effect of tempering the apparent critical concern for this dimension.

Moreover, U2 are not the only Irish-born musicians to have been discursively managed in this way. Indeed, most high profile Irish rock musicians, including Horslips, Thin Lizzy, The Boomtown Rats, The Undertones, Sinéad O'Connor, and The Cranberries, have been critically mediated in a similar fashion. As Noel McLaughlin and Martin McLoone have pointed out, 'rock press discourse' has, 'through countless reviews and feature articles, continually [reiterated] and [reconfirmed]' this Irish dimension, thus: 'Sinéad O'Connor's "fiery Irish temper", the "banshee-style wailing" of Dolores O'Riordan, U2's "Irish spirit", and so on'.⁴¹ The extent of this journalistic proclivity to emphasise Irishness has been such that even brief news items have routinely drawn attention to this dimension. For instance, when Thin Lizzy

and The Boomtown Rats simultaneously announced their individual plans to tour Britain in the summer of 1978, the front cover of *MM* described this prospect as an 'Irish invasion' (despite the fact that Thin Lizzy included, at various stages of the band's career, musicians from England, Scotland and North America).⁴² Similarly, in short reviews of relatively obscure groups, such as the Virgin Prunes, the musicians' national origins could evidently not pass without mention (again despite the fact that key members of this particular group were not from a conventional Irish Catholic background).⁴³

Many of these musicians have, of course, colluded (to varying degrees) with this critical tendency by placing special emphasis on their Irishness in interviews, records, and live performances. The relationship between critic and musician on this particular issue, then, has often been marked by a peculiar ambivalence. For instance, while a group such as The Undertones could occasionally assert their Irishness with overblown expressions of nationalist sentiment (a member of the group once announced to *Sounds*: 'I'm proud to be Irish. Dead right, fuck I'd hate to be English'),⁴⁴ they also objected, with no small degree of frequency, to the apparently incessant journalistic emphasis on this dimension: 'We've been doing all these interviews', explained Feargal Sharkey, the group's lead singer, to *Record Mirror*, pointing out that '[every] time we've stressed that our songs have nothing to do with the troubles'. However, as Sharkey recounts, 'every time the feature has been written up, it's the same old thing - calling us barbed wire boys, things like that. It's pathetic'.⁴⁵ Similarly, Thin Lizzy frontman Phil Lynott, who had often made special reference to his Irishness in press interviews, could also claim that he had simply resigned himself to the press's apparent insistence on this dimension: 'It doesn't bug me', the singer explained to an *NME* journalist in 1980, 'if you go away and write "He's the Irish romantic lover type of rock star" because I'm so used to reading that. I

think “OK, that’s the interview he wants””.⁴⁶

Notwithstanding the particular dynamics of the critic-musician relationship on this matter, though, this Irish dimension has consistently been foregrounded in press material on Irish-born rock bands, regardless of the national-religious-ethnic complexities of individual musicians, or the degree of their adherence to an identifiably Irish aesthetic. This special emphasis on Irishness does not simply point, however, to a critical preoccupation amongst British music journalists with Irishness *qua* Irishness. Instead, it is symptomatic of the privileging of nationality *per se* as a discursive category in the British music press. For as Martin Cloonan has pointed out, ‘it seems to matter to the writers and readers’ of the music press that specific bands ‘come from particular Nations or Nation-States’.⁴⁷ Considerable attention has been paid, then, in the discourse of British music journalism, to specifically national forms of difference, and this has meant that particular (non-English born) musicians have tended to be critically anchored by their (ostensible) national origins, hence the incessant foregrounding of Irishness in material on U2, The Undertones, and Thin Lizzy, and the relative absence of this dimension in discussions of English-born rock musicians of immediate Irish descent. Before addressing this absence in the second section, I want to consider further the music press’s engagement with notions of Irishness.

Politics and Popular Culture in Northern Ireland

The *NME*, in particular, has displayed a particular concern with Northern Irish issues, usually regarding politics, but inevitably including popular music and popular culture more generally.⁴⁸

However, this engagement with Northern Ireland has not restricted itself to Northern Irish politics and culture. Indeed, a considerable amount of the press’s interest in this area

manifested itself in the 'English band on Irish tour' feature, which appears to have been an especially popular editorial policy in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The visit of The Clash to Belfast in 1977 was arguably the paradigmatic feature of this kind, providing the template for subsequent articles on English rock groups in Northern Ireland.⁴⁹ These features typically focused on Northern Ireland itself, and were clearly informed by an assumption that the *mise-en-scene* of Belfast, in particular, provided a kind of 'military chic' for promotional photos of visiting rock bands. In these articles, then, Northern Ireland does not merely serve as a coincidental backdrop for features on specific musicians. On the contrary, the simple fact of being in this particular location is habitually foregrounded by both journalists and musicians. There is, typically, an emphasis on the peculiar conditions of everyday life in a high security environment (police checks, bomb scares, military presence). Thus, much of the space in The Clash article is devoted to images of the band in Belfast, photographed in close proximity to military installations and security personnel, and anchored by the (visiting) journalist's emphasis on such points.⁵⁰ At the same time, particular reference is made in such articles to the attributes of the indigenous 'character' (highly receptive audiences, exceptional congeniality of locals).⁵¹

The press's engagement with Northern Ireland was not, however, presented solely through the refracted prism of visiting English rock bands. Indeed, there was much consideration of the politics of the Northern Ireland crisis, especially in the *NME*. For instance, in 1980 an issue of this paper devoted its entire letters page(s) to the subject of Northern Ireland, and printed a variety of viewpoints.⁵² This decision was clearly an editorial response to a series of letters printed in two previous issues, the first of which had complained about the paper's lack of

coverage of Northern Irish issues:

NME writers who regularly give off about violations of human rights ... tend to ignore the Irish situation. They complain about police harassment of minorities in England yet ignore the daily obscenities perpetrated by the so-called 'security forces' in the ghettos of Belfast and Derry.⁵³

One of *NME*'s associate editors, Charles Shaar Murray, subsequently explained that the succession of readers' letters that this complaint engendered had 'completely swamped all other topics', thus the paper's decision to devote two of its pages to printing these interventions.⁵⁴ Despite this endeavour to acknowledge the readership's variegated response to this subject, readers' complaints about *NME*'s handling of the Northern Ireland crisis continued throughout the 1980s. For instance, in 1983, the paper printed a letter which criticised the views of *NME* journalist Tony Parsons (and former *NME* writer Julie Burchill) on this issue ('when discussing Ireland, Parsons and Burchill are formally on the side of the establishment') a point that was reiterated the following year.⁵⁵ At this time, the letters page also included complaints about *NME* journalist Paolo Hewitt's apparent reluctance to discuss the situation in Northern Ireland. (Hewitt had explained that 'Northern Ireland is a complex matter and one that I wouldn't comment on').⁵⁶ In response, one reader suggested that Hewitt's position 'summed up British attitudes to N [sic] Ireland. Paolo wouldn't comment on it, brushing it away as a complex issue [.]. The British media neither knows nor wants to know fuck all about N [sic] Ireland'.⁵⁷ Such letters were, in turn, subjected to their own critical rejoinders a few weeks later.⁵⁸

Despite the considerable tensions that this engagement had evidently engendered amongst sections of *NME*'s readership, the paper continued to respond critically to key moments in Anglo-Irish relations. For instance, in the immediate aftermath of the IRA bomb attack on the Conservative cabinet in October 1984, the paper included a lengthy article on Northern Irish politics, offering a broadly sympathetic account of Irish republicanism, and suggesting that Sinn Féin's politics were 'roughly in the same camp as Livingstone's GLC' (which is significant as the latter was arguably a touchstone for *NME*'s own political standpoint at this time).⁵⁹

Several letters were printed in response to this article, including three complaints from a Unionist perspective, and a single Republican endorsement. Significantly, Sean O'Hagan, the journalist who presided over the letters page that week, responded defensively to the objections, but offered no comment on the letter of support. In the following week's issue, the paper printed another three letters of complaint.⁶⁰

As the paper's handling of Irish political issues was clearly contested amongst the paper's readership, it is perhaps worth pointing out here that while the paper did not explicitly attach itself to a specific ideological position on the Northern Ireland crisis, its broadly left-wing multi-culturalist agenda was perhaps more sympathetic to the experience of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland. Accordingly, while the paper's journalists occasionally utilised terminology that would be offensive to Irish nationalists (for instance using the term 'mainland' to refer to Britain),⁶¹ they also offered robust endorsements of Irish nationalist sentiment, even during periods of heightened tension about Northern Ireland. In 1983, for example, the paper printed a review of a London concert by The Wolfe Tones which claimed that the performance

was 'the most exciting' that the journalist had witnessed since (bizarrely) 'The Doors at the Roundhouse in 1968'. Indeed, the usually sardonic *NME* could apparently only find praise for this group: 'The Wolfe Tones enter to jubilant welcome and proceed to justify it'. The review concluded: 'Truly, the shamrock is still growing on the grave of James Connolly'.⁶²

Sections of the paper's readership, however, were not as sympathetic as this journalist to The Wolfe Tones' expression of Irish nationalist sentiment, and a letter of complaint accused the *NME* of endorsing 'emotional patriotism'.⁶³ But this did little to temper the paper's interest in the group, for within a couple of years, the *NME* had printed a favourable review of a record by The Wolfe Tones, which argued that the band provided 'a source of strength and identity' in songs 'laced' with 'an overwhelming assertion of national identity and pride'.⁶⁴ Once again, the *NME*'s endorsement of this group appeared to upset sections of the paper's readership, at least one of whom demanded that it should offer an apology.⁶⁵

Such objections evidently had little bearing on *NME*'s editorial policy, as the paper went on to publish a special 'Irish issue' in 1986, featuring several articles on Northern Ireland, including interviews with nationalist and unionist politicians, an interview with boxer Barry McGuigan, and a letter of complaint about *NME*'s apparent failure to properly consider an Ulster Unionist perspective.⁶⁶ In the following weeks, the paper printed letters both praising the paper's coverage of Northern Ireland, and objecting to the apparently disproportionate amount of attention paid to this subject.⁶⁷ But again, the paper continued its engagement with this subject, and even printed an article about the lack of coverage that Northern Ireland had received in the British media.⁶⁸

Anti-Irishness

The *NME*'s highly politicised handling of the Northern Ireland crisis was scarcely evident in the rest of the British music press. Indeed, in stark contrast to *NME*'s ostensibly keen sensitivity towards Irish issues, attempts to engage with Irishness in other music papers were often characterised by the casual expression of anti-Irish sentiment. This particular tendency appears to have been especially evident in *Sounds* during the late 1970s, a period in which the paper had, ironically, produced a special issue on racism and popular music advocating the adoption of an anti-racist stance amongst its readership.⁶⁹

Evidently, though, the paper's endeavour to combat racist attitudes amongst British youth did not extend to expressions of anti-Irish prejudice. For instance, only a few months prior to this special issue, *Sounds* had printed (in its letters page) an image of an 'Irish' skateboard (the item in question had four square shaped wheels).⁷⁰ And though a reader's objection to this 'joke' was included in the letters page of a subsequent issue, this apparently had little effect on the paper's editorial policy, as the following week's issue included an interview with The Boomtown Rats that began with an upfront (if rather fey) expression of anti-Irish sentiment: 'I've never been hot to trot for Irish people, much less Irish rock bands'.⁷¹ Moreover, a few months later, a brief news story in the paper referred to the same band as 'the Gaelic Bog Trotters'.⁷²

These were evidently not isolated instances. Previously, in a review of the Dublin group The Radiators From Space, *Sounds* had appeared to deride the very notion of Irish people playing popular music: 'Irish punks? Will it start "One, tree, faw, two"?'⁷³ A similar assumption about the apparent incongruity of Irishness and popular music had underpinned one of the paper's

reviews of the Irish folk rock group Horslips. This piece (which began by announcing ‘the return of the Mad Paddies’), explained that Horslips ‘have a very simple way of *compensating for being Irish*. They never let you forget the fact’. The review continued in this vein (‘where else can you witness two real live frantic, frenzied “duelling paddies”?’), before concluding: ‘I’d give the loonies five stars, but they’d probably try to pawn the review for a Guinness somewhere’.⁷⁴

If this review’s intended jocularly had been anticipated by its title’s allusion to anti-Irish humour (‘Hear the one about a group of Irish superstars ..?’), a practice employed by *Sounds* on more than one occasion,⁷⁵ then this was perhaps symptomatic of the prevalence of anti-Irish jokes in Britain in the late 1970s. In a study of language and humour published at this time, the authors maintained that

[the] most pervasive humour theme in Britain today, almost certainly, is centred upon the supposed simple-mindedness of the Irish population. Irishmen feature as fools in a vast number of so-called ‘Irish’ jokes; these jokes would be more appositely labelled ‘*anti-Irish*’. On the surface at least, the success of the most modern Irish jokes depends upon a salient stereotype concerning the low intellectual prowess of the Irish.⁷⁶

Clearly this particular stereotype appears to have informed much of the anti-Irish sentiment that I have identified here. However, a more forthright expression of enmity towards Irish people subsequently emerged from the less likely source of a former *NME* journalist (a paper that had, of course, clearly disavowed anti-Irish prejudice).⁷⁷ In the early 1980s, Julie Burchill, who had been a staff writer at *NME* in the late 1970s, and who has subsequently been credited with

playing an influential role in the development of British music journalism, published a number of articles in *The Face* that unambiguously denigrated Irish people and culture.⁷⁸ These articles, which generated a number of complaints in the letters pages of other music papers, including *NME*, eventually received a sharp critical riposte from Dexy's Midnight Runners' frontman, Kevin Rowland, in *The Face*.⁷⁹ However, this evidently did little to temper Burchill's contempt for Irish people, for only a year later she felt compelled to announce: 'I hate the Irish, I think they're appalling'.⁸⁰

Recognising the second-generation

It is clearly significant that one of the most vocal responses to this music journalist's flagrant expression of anti-Irishness came from a second-generation Irish musician, and in this final section of 'Manifestations of Irishness', I want to examine the music press's engagement with the second-generation Irish. I will begin this section by looking at material on identifiably Irish second-generation musicians, such as Kevin Rowland and Shane MacGowan. However, while a considerable amount of interview and review material on these musicians clearly foregrounded Irishness as a salient issue, I am going to focus specifically here on the particular handling of them (and the second-generation Irish in general) in other kinds of journalistic discourses, such as special features on Irishness and popular music, letters page debates, and passing references.⁸¹

Music papers in Britain have often produced special issues that draw particular attention to a specific aspect of popular music. *MM*, for instance, has run dedicated issues on women in popular music, and on American rock music.⁸² Similarly, *NME* has produced special issues on Scotland, and on 'world music'.⁸³ Meanwhile, both *MM* and *NME* have also published special

issues on Irishness and popular music, and I will discuss one of these issues here specifically in terms of its engagement with second-generation Irish musicians.⁸⁴

In 1987, *NME* ran a special issue entitled 'Gael Force', replete with a front cover close-up shot of Shane MacGowan's facial profile, anchored by the strapline 'From The Pogues to U2 - A Chancer's Guide to Gaelic Pop'.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, the issue's (relatively long) four-page feature article offered an idiosyncratic engagement with Irish (and Scottish) popular music in an expressly jocular and self-deprecating prose style, which was perhaps symptomatic of the adoption of a notionally 'Celtic' (whimsical, picayune), as opposed to a putatively 'Anglo' (sombre, prosaic), discursive position.

Indeed, the editorial introduction of the 'Gael Force' piece, anchored by an image of Irish writer Brendan Behan, draws attention, in a self-consciously jocose manner, to 'pop history's 'wilful denial of the rock'n'role of Gaelic genius' (p. 28). This graphic allusion to Behan, which appears to have been informed by his pop cultural rehabilitation, in the early 1980s, by Dexy's Midnight Runners and The Pogues, clearly invokes a particular set of assumptions about Irishness (conjuring notions of creativity, lawlessness, and alcoholism), that is, of course, readily compatible with a hedonistic tradition within popular music culture.⁸⁶

Such notions are underlined when the authors establish, in the opening section of the article, a kind of Celticist binary division between Englishness and 'Gaelicness', positing, against a 'more straightlaced' Englishness, the notion of a Gaelic 'wayward genius', an anti-hero with 'total disrespect for the system' (p. 28). This leads into the second section 'Bevvy Merchants', which begins: 'Pissed and proud, this is the story of positive drinking'. Significantly, this

section introduces, again via an allusion to Behan, The Pogues ('Let's face facts, some people need bevvv like an engine needs oil'), explaining that Shane MacGowan 'could drink the Dordogne dry on a good night' (p. 29).

Both The Pogues and Dexy's re-emerge in later sections, including one entitled 'Quare Fellas' (the title of a previous *NME* article on Behan, see note 86), which begins with two epigrams, one from each group, both referring to Behan. The authors go on to explain that Behan has been 'a guiding light' for both groups, but point out that Shane MacGowan 'comes closest to the Behan lifestyle, moving twixt Camden Town and King's Cross, dazed, drunk and inspired' (p. 30).⁸⁷

Although the article displays a recurring preoccupation with these particular groups, it does make a passing allusion to John Lydon (as 'an Irish punk', p. 29), and a discrete section is included on the second-generation Irish, called 'Celtic Soul Brothers', a title borrowed from a Dexy's song. Indeed, a photo of Dexy's frontman Kevin Rowland appears above this section, and the authors refer to his group's 'Celtic identity', making reference to a promotional video that featured Rowland 'journeying back to the country of his parents and paying homage at the graveside of William Butler Yeats in County Sligo'. Continuing this discussion, the authors (re)introduce The Pogues as 'Celtic Soul Brothers incarnate', before concluding with a list of 'Honorary Celtic Soul Brothers' that acknowledges a variety of second-generation rock and pop musicians, including John Lydon and Boy George, as well as the third-generation Elvis Costello, and the relatively unknown Cathal Smyth of Madness. However, while the ellipses that conclude this section clearly indicate that this inventory is not intended to be definitive, there is no mention whatsoever of The Smiths, despite the considerable amount of critical

concern that the *NME*, and the rest of the music press, had demonstrated for this group throughout the mid-1980s. Once again, then, at the very moment in which acknowledgement of Irish ethnicity is provided for one set of musicians, it is simultaneously concealed for another. In other words, the Irishness of The Smiths is further concealed by the fact that they are overlooked even when recognition of Irish is being offered.

If there has been an uneven recognition of Irishness in 'special issue' articles such as 'Gael Force', then this is perhaps symptomatic of the fact that the music press has, despite its various engagements with issues pertaining to Irishness, rarely offered any consideration of the presence of the second-generation Irish in England. There are, however, a number of notable exceptions (that arguably prove the rule of regularity). For example, in an interview with Irish folk singer Christy Moore in 1986, the *NME* referred, in passing, to 'the many expatriate and second generation Irish present' at one of the singer's concerts in London.⁸⁸

More substantially, a few months later Sean O'Hagan took umbrage, in the *NME*, with 'those who ... dismiss The Pogues as nothing more than a bunch of stereotypical second generation Paddies', pointing out that the group speak 'to - and for - a whole subculture that history and culture ignores'. Here, in an interview with The Pogues, members of the group go on to consider the unambiguous display of Irishness that characterised their own live performances, maintaining that 'it can be really healthy, seeing this strong assertion of Irish identity which is so obviously suppressed most of the time. Irish people living in Scotland or England don't get that much chance to assert their cultural identity'.⁸⁹

While it is perhaps unsurprising that such points found expression in the *NME*, it certainly

seems ironic that one of the music press's most detailed considerations of the second-generation Irish appeared in an issue of *The Face* in the mid-1980s. And though this engagement emerged (somewhat predictably) in the context of an interview with The Pogues, the interview was prefaced with a relatively substantial discussion of the second-generation in which the journalist identified, in an Irish pub in London, 'youngsters with the uniform of any young Londoner and accents wider than the Holloway Road out to enjoy a culture that's been carried intact across the Irish Sea', before explaining:

A Saturday night out in Cricklewood or Kilburn, Camden Town or Kentish Town is a night out amongst the ethnic community that time forgot but the Special Branch didn't. Immigrants from Ireland and their second-generation offspring have been part of the fabric of Britain's major cities for so long now, such an integral part of our urban character that we don't notice how successfully they've maintained their separate identity in every city they've settled.

Referring specifically to the second-generation, the journalist explained:

Their experience is a London one: the Sex Pistols and Sergio Tacchini, Soho and shitty comprehensives just like anybody else. But it's flavoured with a peculiarly durable respect for the old ways which brings them out in their thousands on a Friday and Saturday night to waltz and jive to imported showbands in vast velveteen dancehalls.⁹⁰

While such journalistic observations about second-generation experience have undoubtedly been rare, more frequent engagements with the second-generation have been evident in letters

page debates. Indeed, such debates were often generated by (ostensibly) second-generation Irish readers, addressing questions of Irishness and popular music from a specifically second-generation perspective. For instance, in a 1983 issue of the *NME*, the letters page recorded the differential responses of particular readers to the paper's previous endorsement of Irish accordion player Dermot O'Brien.

One of these letters, which appeared to be from a second-generation Irish person in Manchester (he recalled hearing O'Brien's records 'belting out of our front room', and explained: 'My father has endless LPS by this light-fingered accordion maestro'), revealed that O'Brien's records 'are as familiar to me as any of today's chart records', before concurring with the paper's view of O'Brien ('Lets [sic] put this unsung hero where he really belongs!'). Another letter, however, offered a rather different response, expressing an aversion to the allegedly regressive dimension of the music of 'O'Brien *et al*' (whose 'main audience includes the likes of the old fellas you can see asleep drunk in their meals in any cafe on the Kilburn High Road on any Sunday afternoon'), and offering an apparently inter-generational critique ('For how much longer does Irish youth have to put up with Irish romanticism from their elders'), before explaining his own involvement in establishing an apparently anti-essentialist record label for Irish musicians in England: 'Kabuki Records was set up in London to help Irish bands, who can see beyond all this false romanticism crap. That's why we called the label Kabuki (a Japanese word), not Shamrock or Molly Malone Records'.⁹¹

Similar issues were broached later that year when a reader's letter took issue with Shane MacGowan's intra-second-generation critique of Kevin Rowland's 'Celtic Soul Brother' persona. In an interview with the *NME*, MacGowan had referred to the 'pathetic attempt' that

Dexy's Midnight Runners had 'made to incorporate some kind of Celtic bit - with the fake wearing of dungarees and berets and growing stubble and walking round without any shoes and straw hanging out of their hair', explaining that this was 'such a fuckin' insult to the whole thing'.⁹² At least one of the paper's readers appeared to object to MacGowan's assumed role as a kind of arbitrator of Irishness in popular music, drawing attention to the Irish background of a number of Dexy's musicians: 'Why does Shane MacGowran [sic] of the Pogues think he holds the monopoly on Irishness? I should think that with names like O'Hara, Kilkenny and Brennan, Dexys have some right to introduce an Irish element into their looks'.⁹³ Significantly, the paper went on to print a number of letters pertaining to The Pogues' engagement with Irishness, including one which asked: 'did MacGowan choose to neglect his teeth because this was the appropriate action for an Irish folk singer?', a seemingly flippant remark that arguably betrays a desire to deride the second-generation's identification with Irishness.⁹⁴

Elsewhere, a second-generation Irish writer at *NME*, Danny Kelly, drew attention to his Irishness at the beginning of an interview with The Pogues: 'Aeons ago, as a child, I was taken to a wedding in Ireland. There all the airs and ballads and jigs and reels I'd heard on my parents [sic] Dansette were played and sung, live and lively. First by a swaying band and later, long into the night, by my relatives and "their side"'. Significantly, the article's by-line referred to Kelly as a 'Born-again Celtic soul brother'.⁹⁵

Part One: Conclusion

In this section, I have demonstrated that issues pertaining to Ireland and Irishness have been an important concern for both journalists and readers of the British music press. And while questions of Irishness have been handled in a variety of ways in different papers at particular

times, the point to note is that such questions clearly *mattered*. In other words, Irishness as a means of categorisation was invested with considerable significance, and issues pertaining to Irishness had special resonances for both journalists and readers, a point which is perhaps best demonstrated by the extent of their contestation. The question I want to consider in the second part of the chapter, then, is (in light of the considerable engagement with Irishness in this material): how has the music press critically received second-generation Irish rock musicians? How does their discursive handling in popular music journalism correlate with the unambiguous foregrounding of Irishness in this other material?

Part Two: The Critical Reception of Second-Generation Irish Rock Musicians

The most notable aspect of the critical reception of musicians such as Lydon, The Smiths, and Oasis is the fact that it has bestowed upon them a kind of canonical status.⁹⁶ Prestigious anniversary issues of *NME*, *MM* and *Q* have, for example, typically featured these musicians on the cover (and have thereby authenticated them as canonical figures).⁹⁷ Meanwhile, critical coverage of these musicians has often emphasised the ‘classic worth’ of their records.⁹⁸ However, despite the fact that this process of canonisation has generated a considerable amount of critical commentary on these musicians, the bulk of this journalistic material has tended to overlook their Irishness.⁹⁹

The absence of an Irish dimension in this critical reception could of course pertain, at least to some degree, to the way in which these musicians have presented themselves to the press (and the fact that their work appears to bear little trace of an identifiably ‘Irish’ dimension - a point that I will address in Chapter Five). However, it is also, I think, symptomatic of the highly

routinised critical procedures of popular music journalism, not least the field's habitual concern with issues of nationhood and regionality, in which homogeneous social formations (English/Irish; northern/southern) have been discursively produced.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, while questions of race and ethnicity have often been prominent in material on musicians of African-Caribbean and South Asian descent, the particular immigrant background of the second-generation Irish has tended to be marginalised by a special emphasis on nationality and region.¹⁰¹

In addition to this particular journalistic tendency, the overarching concerns of the music press, have (despite the critical 'turn' outlined at the beginning of this chapter) been informed by a concern with the simple and the familiar (rather than the complex and ambivalent - which an engagement with Irish ethnicity in England would arguably involve).¹⁰² Consequently, as Frith and Savage have pointed out, 'even the most extraordinary icons of popular culture [such as Madonna or Michael Jackson]', tend, in popular journalistic discourse, to be '[rendered] ... into the banal terms of everyday experience'.¹⁰³

'[The] dominant mood' of popular music criticism, then (as Frith, writing in the mid-1980s, explained), has been concerned less with 'exploration, discovery [and] opening up meanings', than with 'closing down sense [and] slotting goods and styles into established frameworks'. Consequently, Frith suggests that an insistence on 'instant categorisation' has become 'the critical norm' of music journalism.¹⁰⁴ And this desire to hastily bestow particular 'tags' upon specific musicians and records (a prominent feature of music press discourse) has undoubtedly been significant in the press's handling of second-generation Irish rock musicians.

Perhaps the most salient consequence of this categorising impulse (in tandem with the press's overarching gravitation towards simplicity and familiarity), has been the critical desire to classify musicians (on the basis of neatly forged binary divisions) as straightforwardly and unambiguously *one thing or the other* (e.g. black/white; Irish/English). Thus, the fact that Bob Marley's father was a white English army captain may, as Kari Kallioniemi has suggested, have been a point that music journalists found difficult to reconcile with the received notion of Marley as an archetypally black Jamaican.¹⁰⁵

To take this point slightly further, perhaps the music press found it difficult (particularly in light of the dominant connotations of Irishness that have circulated in popular discourses - whether drunken and violent, or poetic and otherworldly), to conceive of musicians like Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis in terms of Irishness. In other words, the absence of an Irish dimension in critical discussions of these musicians may have been informed by an essentialist conception of what actually constitutes Irishness (or a narrow index of Irish authenticity based on musical fidelity to an ethnically correct aesthetic).

In any case, for Frith, this kind of 'constant attempt to put music in its place - a place defined by its contribution to a predefined position on class or race or sex - conceals the fact that pop culture, like everything else, is riddled with contradictions'.¹⁰⁶ In this context, I now want to draw attention to the fact that the critical reception of second-generation Irish rock musicians in the British music press has had the effect of concealing the complexity of the musicians' backgrounds as the immediate descendants of post-war Irish Catholic labour migrants. However, rather than simply exploring the implications of this elision, I want to pay particular attention to the specific ways in which these musicians *have* been received in the British music

press.

Perhaps the most salient aspect of the music press's engagement with Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis has been its almost incessant emphasis on their Englishness. This privileging of nationality pertains, at least in part, of course, to the fact that these musicians have engaged, in various ways, with notions of England and Englishness (a point that I will address in Chapter Five). Moreover, in the context of what Dave Laing has called 'the global hegemony of the United States in popular culture',¹⁰⁷ musicians like Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis are inevitably, and understandably, perceived as English. Journalistic claims about these musicians' Englishness, then, may operate principally in opposition to Americanness (and perhaps also Europeanness) rather than Irishness. Indeed, even a (former) music journalist with such a well-documented record of anti-Irish expression as Julie Burchill could maintain in the mid-1990s that being English meant not being American or European (rather than not being Irish).¹⁰⁸

This particular emphasis on Englishness is, though, also indicative of the significance of the nation-state as a unit of analysis in popular music journalism.¹⁰⁹ And if cultural criticism more generally has depended, as Thomas Docherty maintains, 'upon an attitude which is, tacitly, nationalist in fact and origin',¹¹⁰ then there has perhaps been an orientation, in British music journalism specifically, towards the expression of nationalist sentiment, thus Tony Mitchell's reference to the 'nationalist British music press'.¹¹¹

This impulse was particularly evident during the so-called 'Britpop' period in the mid-1990s.¹¹² Numerous special articles appeared at this time on the question of Englishness and Britishness

in popular music.¹¹³ For instance, in Spring 1995, immediately prior to the summer of Britpop, the magazine *Livewire* published a special issue on Englishness and popular music. And while this issue's front cover made reference to Britishness, the article, which was entitled 'Listening to England' (a conflation typical of Britpop) endeavoured (according to its by-line), to trace 'the lineage of the quintessential English pop band'.¹¹⁴ In doing this, the article made particular reference to, amongst others, John Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis. (Interestingly, then, while special issues on Irishness and popular music have drawn attention to second-generation musicians like Kevin Rowland and Shane MacGowan, corresponding engagements with Englishness have gravitated towards this other strand of second-generation Irish music-making). Significantly, these musicians had all, in different ways, drawn attention to their Irishness during the mid-1990s. Lydon had, for instance, published his autobiography, titled *No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs*, in 1994, and offered, in the text, a vivid reconstruction of second-generation Irish identity-formation processes, recalling his attendance of London-Irish social clubs, and his personal experience of anti-Irish prejudice ('When I was very young and going to school, I remember bricks thrown at me by English parents amidst jeers such as "dirty Irish bastards!"'), whilst dramatising the difficulties of maintaining an identification with both Irishness and Englishness, and pointing to the uncertainty and ambivalence that this can engender.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile Morrissey had made reference, at the beginning of 1995, to the 'Irish defiance' that he had inherited from his parents,¹¹⁶ and his former songwriting partner, Johnny Marr, went on to discuss his own subjection to expressions of anti-Irish sentiment (specifically being 'branded an "Irish pig"') in an interview in which he expressed a particular aversion to the 'nationalism' of Britpop.¹¹⁷

Similarly, Noel Gallagher had responded to press reports (in the midst of Britpop) that Oasis

would record a song for the England football team with a robust assertion of the group's Irishness ('Over my dead body ... we're Irish'),¹¹⁸ and subsequently authorised a biography of the group that explicitly situated them in a diasporic Irish context.¹¹⁹

These second-generation rock musicians, then, clearly expressed a self-ascriptive identification with Irishness during this period. There was, however, scarcely any acknowledgement of this point in journalistic material on Britpop, which instead posited these musicians as quintessentially English. Thus, despite the emphasis on Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis in an article like 'Listening to England', no mention whatsoever is made of this Irish dimension. 'Not until 1976 and the Punk Rock movement', explains the journalist Jon Wilde at the beginning of the article, 'did England truly find its voice in popular music', before referring to The Sex Pistols' single 'God Save the Queen', and specifically Lydon's lyric 'There is no future in England's Dreaming'.¹²⁰ He then goes on to discuss The Smiths, explaining that Morrissey 'was responsible for strip-mining a new vein of English sensibility which reached its zenith on the 1986 LP *The Queen is Dead*': 'In the course of the Smiths' all too brief five-year career, Morrissey fashioned himself as a hybrid of John Betjeman, George Formby and Alan Bennett, interlacing his work with mutually illuminating strands of nostalgia, disappointment, loneliness and self-doubt' (p. 18). Finally, Wilde suggests that Morrissey is not 'the last of the line of English lyricists', pointing out that Oasis, amongst others, 'have focused on the riddle that calls itself England' (p. 19).

Another such feature article on Englishness and popular music had appeared in *NME* in January 1988.¹²¹ Here, the journalist Mark Sinker claimed that The Smiths (who had disbanded six months previously) were one of only three groups in the 1980s (the others being Madness and

The Fall) ‘who sang for or of England, in irreducibly English accents, with a music that could only come from the urban heart of England’. Sinker went on to refer to these groups’ ‘unchallengeable parochialism, their *sense of place*’, before claiming that ‘a central invocation of ... lived localised memory, has formed the core and more importantly the implicit texts of their work’. In his specific discussion of The Smiths, he claimed that ‘Suicide and flight from foreign influence’ ‘seemed to be the life and motivation’ of the group, suggesting that Morrissey had engaged with ‘a landscape that’s already everywhere vanished. (Dusty Victoriana, leafy cemeteries, double-decker buses ...)’. This led into a brief discussion of Derek Jarman’s promotional videos for The Smiths’ tracks ‘Panic’ and ‘The Queen is Dead’, in which Sinker claimed that both Morrissey and Jarman ‘argue for retreat to the unspoiled garden of sex, the castle that’s the secret bedroom home of every Englishman’.¹²²

Notwithstanding the particular assertions that are offered in these articles, I want to point out that this positioning of The Smiths in terms of a quintessential Englishness (a practice that has become the critical consensus in both scholarly and journalistic material on the group), only became a prominent aspect of the group’s critical reception towards the end of their career, specifically in the aftermath of *The Queen is Dead* album, and the ‘Panic’ single, in the summer of 1986 (the group had disbanded by August of the following year). Critical reviews of *The Queen is Dead*, for example, made several allusions to nationalism in general and Englishness in particular. For instance, whilst the review in *MM* was called ‘National Anthems’, the *NME* review (titled ‘Long Live the King!’), maintained that the singer’s ‘cultural obsessions’ were ‘blatantly and quaintly English’, and that the album’s title track ‘[referred] as much to Morrissey’s nostalgic yearning for a certain lost Englishness as to the redundancy of the monarchy’.¹²³

This theme was recurrent in the group's reception throughout that year. A review of the group's final concert, for example, referred to The Smiths' 'avowedly Anglo-Saxon stock folk rituals', and, despite acknowledging the 'sublime African feel' of Marr's guitar playing, claimed that the group (who were performing that night in Brixton for Artists Against Apartheid) 'ignore the existence of any life outside white England'.¹²⁴ Indeed, by the time that the group had disbanded a few months later, the *NME* could claim that The Smiths had '[aspired]' to a 'myth of English purity'.¹²⁵

Oasis, whose original members all came from a similar working-class Manchester-Irish background to The Smiths, have been received in an analogous manner. For example, only a few months after the publication of the group's authorised biography (which clearly foregrounded their Irishness), the *NME* insisted that the Gallagher brothers were 'as English as Yorkshire pud'.¹²⁶ Also at this time, Michael Bracewell (in a book length rendition of the Sinker/Wilde thesis) described Oasis as 'heirs to the dusty throne of national pop', explaining the particular influence of (the third-generation Irish) John Lennon on the Gallagher brothers in peculiarly national terms: 'the kernel of Britishness in Britpop - an example of England's nostalgia for Englishness'.¹²⁷

This particular stress on nationality could, we might reasonably assume, be informed by a self-ascriptive identification with Englishness amongst these musicians. However, this possibility would appear to gain little sustenance from the fact that these musicians have, as I have pointed out, frequently drawn attention to their Irishness (often in the face of Anglocentric appropriation in popular music discourses).¹²⁸ Such articulations of Irish difference have,

however, often been met with an apparent desire, amongst music journalists, to deride (as well as elide) the second-generation's identification with Irishness.

For instance in a review of former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell's debut album in *Q* magazine, Stuart Maconie explained: 'Halliwell is of Spanish descent and is *more justified* in her excursion into Samba than Shane MacGowan is for his half-baked Irishness'.¹²⁹ Curiously, then, it seems that (for this journalist) having one Spanish parent ensures Halliwell's Spanish 'authenticity', while having two Irish parents merely invalidates MacGowan's Irishness. Similarly derisive gestures have also been evident in the press's handling of other second-generation Irish musicians. For instance, in an issue of *Sounds* in the late 1970s (which at this time was not, of course, averse to expressions of anti-Irish sentiment), a brief news item described Lydon as one of 'the world's ... leading professional Irishmen'.¹³⁰ Later that year, *Sounds* printed a cartoon featuring a character called O'Rotten that was clearly intended to resemble Lydon.¹³¹

And while in such instances second-generation Irishness is met with derision, elsewhere it has been dealt with by elision. This certainly appeared to be the case in a feature on Morrissey that was published in *Q* magazine. This article drew heavily on an interview with the singer previously published in the *Irish Times*, entitled 'Paddy Englishman', in which Morrissey talked at length, for the first time in his career, about his Irishness, discussing his socialisation in 'a strong Irish community' in Manchester, and referring to his personal experience of anti-Irish prejudice. He even announced, in this interview, that his next album would be called *Irish Blood, English Heart*.¹³²

However, in the abridged version of the article that appeared in *Q* magazine, such points were entirely absent. Instead, this version (which was re-titled “‘I Am A Victim!’”) focused on a brief section of the original interview in which Morrissey had discussed a court case regarding the payment of royalties to former members of The Smiths.¹³³ Meanwhile, the rest of the British music press offered no response at all to the original interview.¹³⁴

A similar elision appeared to be evident in an interview with Noel Gallagher in *Q* magazine in 1997, in which the songwriter had described himself as ‘Irish, Catholic and working-class’. In a pull-out quote used to illustrate this article, however, Gallagher’s triumvirated identity was reduced to simply ‘Catholic and working-class’.¹³⁵ And while this particular example may simply have been informed by practical considerations (regarding issues of layout and space), a critical tendency to emphasise the Catholicism of the second-generation (clearly evident in earlier material on Oasis: ‘This band of Catholic extraction have a bad case of the Protestant Work Ethic’, suggested *Select* magazine in 1994),¹³⁶ has frequently manifested itself in material on other second-generation Irish musicians.

For instance, in an interview with John Lydon in *RM* in 1976, the journalist drew attention to his religion (‘Kicked out of Catholic school’), while *NME*’s review of The Sex Pistols’ debut album made reference to the singer’s ‘Catholic schooling’.¹³⁷ Reviews of Public Image Limited’s debut album (Lydon’s immediate post-Pistols project, henceforth PIL) a year later also remarked upon Lydon’s Catholicism, usually with reference to his lyrics for the track, ‘Religion’, a diatribe against the Catholic Church.¹³⁸ However, although Lydon had also mentioned, in this song, the *Irish Post* (the principal newspaper for the Irish in Britain), this is a point which was not remarked upon in the reviews.¹³⁹

This Catholic dimension was similarly pronounced in the critical reception of The Smiths. This was perhaps most notable in an interview with Morrissey in *NME* in 1985 which focused on the singer's Catholicism (whilst simultaneously overlooking his Irishness). This concentration on Morrissey's religion was graphically dramatised on the paper's front cover, which featured the singer with stigmata and halo, anchored by the strapline 'Feast of Steven'. The interview's by-line, meanwhile, described Morrissey as the 'Pope of Pop', and included several questions about his Catholic upbringing, the Catholicism of his parents, and the consequences of this on his adult life.¹⁴⁰

While this emphasis on religion might suggest that Catholicism was a dimension that the musicians (and their publicists) felt comfortable discussing, it could also point to a discursive conflation of Irishness and Catholicism, a point that appears to gain sustenance from a comment, made by Charles Shaar Murray in *NME* in 1979, that Lydon, Bob Geldof and Elvis Costello were '[sufferers]' of 'what we doctors generally refer to as A Catholic Education'.¹⁴¹ However, this apparent desire to underscore the Catholicism of the second-generation whilst simultaneously overlooking their Irishness has, as Mary Hickman has pointed out, also been part of an incorporationist project in which Irishness is downplayed in favour of a stress on Catholicism. Hickman maintains that this particular strategy has underpinned state education policy on Catholic schools in England which have endeavoured 'to transform the [second-generation] Irish into useful citizens, loyal subjects ... and good Catholics'.¹⁴²

While I do not wish to conflate the institutional strategies of the Catholic education system with the critical machinations of a journalistic discourse, a useful analogy can perhaps be made, here,

with regard to the narrative incorporation of these musicians into a specifically English popular music canon. For the discursive construction of such canons 'typically involves', as Sabina Sharkey (in a discussion of Irish writers and the English/British canon) has pointed out, a 'suppressing [of] difference' that '[results] in aspects of these incorporated authors' works being played down in the interests of incorporation into the canon'.¹⁴³ Indeed, 'the essential canonizing gesture', as Aijaz Ahmad has pointed out, has been '[the] subordinating or even foreclosing of certain kinds of questions [and] the foregrounding of others', a point which might help explain, at least to some degree, the relative absence of an Irish dimension in the critical reception of these musicians.¹⁴⁴ But regardless of the particular reasons for this absence, the point to note is that it has facilitated their absorption into a specifically English pop narrative, hence the fact that feature-length discursive articles on Englishness and popular music in the British music press have been able to depend upon this strand of second-generation Irish music-making.

This discursive privileging of nationality amongst music journalists has been matched, as I suggested earlier, with a concomitant concern with another dimension of identity: regionality, a point that is neatly encapsulated in Nick Kent's claim, in *The Face*, that The Smiths were 'stoically English (specifically Northern)'.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, as Sara Cohen has pointed out, a special emphasis on regionality has been a prominent characteristic of the British music press, who 'focus upon "local scenes" because of their concern with notions of authenticity. The linking of particular artists with particular places identifies them with roots and presents them as real people embodying artistic integrity and honesty'.¹⁴⁶ This apparent desire to engage with regionality and local 'scenes' can be traced back to critical coverage of The Beatles in the early 1960s.¹⁴⁷ Significantly, a great deal of attention in this 'local' focus, particularly between the

late 1970s and the late 1980s (the period which encompassed the formation and disbanding of The Smiths, and immediately prior to the emergence of Oasis), was on the city of Manchester.¹⁴⁸

In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that critical coverage of groups from the city has tended to emphasise their regionality at the expense of other dimensions of identity. So just as U2 cannot receive critical commentary without at least some reference to their Irishness, discussions of groups like The Smiths and Oasis have rarely passed without mention of their northernness.¹⁴⁹ Issues pertaining to Irish ethnicity in England, then, have in most journalistic material on these groups, been critically eclipsed by a discursive privileging of nationality (Englishness) and regionality (northernness).

Music journalists have, however, often registered the ethnicity of other white second-generation rock and pop musicians in England. For instance, a review of a record by The Smiths in *NME* in 1984 was preceded by a brief discussion of the pop duo Wham!, that drew attention to the fact that the group's singer, George Michael, was 'of Greek stock', while also registering Andrew Ridgeley's (the group's guitarist) 'teaspoonful of Asiatic blood', emphasising that '[a] teaspoonful is quite sufficient to make you grow up feeling a little ... *other*'. However, the journalist's apparent sensitivity towards the immigrant background of these musicians is entirely absent in the subsequent commentary on The Smiths.¹⁵⁰ Also at this time, Culture Club's frontman, Boy George, was described, in a discussion that ran adjacent to a review of The Smiths, as an 'Irishman'.¹⁵¹

This kind of differential handling of the ethnicities of white English-born rock and pop

musicians raises an interesting point about the significance of region in British music journalism. For the fact that Boy George was (like George Michael) from the London metropolitan area perhaps meant that his Irishness was (from a southcentric perspective) a more pertinent form of difference than that of The Smiths, who, for a metropolitan media culture, were marked, above all else, by their provincialism.

In contrast, then, the Irishness of John Lydon was acknowledged with relative frequency. For instance, in an interview with the *NME* in 1977, Charles Shaar Murray explained that Lydon was ‘an Irishman by roots’ (adding that he ‘therefore likes his Guinness’),¹⁵² while a later interview in *Sounds* announced: ‘John’s roots are Irish’.¹⁵³ During the following year, a journalist in *NME* referred to Lydon as ‘a fellow Irishman’ of James Joyce, after the singer had, in passing, criticised Joyce’s *Ulysses*.¹⁵⁴ This engagement with Lydon’s Irishness appears to have gained no small degree of sustenance from the relatively high public profile that his parents seemed to maintain at this time. For instance, in 1977 *Sounds* printed an interview with Lydon’s mother, Eileen (originally published in the family’s local paper, the *Islington Gazette*), in which the journalist succinctly framed Eileen Lydon’s defence of her son’s behaviour (‘Surely it’s better to let out your anger with a few swear words than with violence’) with both coded and explicit references to her Irishness (‘blazed this Irish-born mother of four’).¹⁵⁵ Similarly, in an interview with *RM* shortly after Lydon’s departure from The Sex Pistols, his parents’ Irishness was foregrounded when, in the middle of the interview, his mother and father both unexpectedly appeared. Lydon’s mother was immediately introduced as ‘a soft-spoken Irish woman’, while his ‘Irish father’ was ‘equally respectable’.¹⁵⁶

Lydon’s Irishness also received recognition in Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons’ collection of

journalistic essays on punk, *'The Boy Looked at Johnny'*. Here, the authors introduced Lydon (whose image provided the graphic for the book's jacket-sleeve) in a highly caricatured manner, comically exaggerating his Irishness, by imagining him '[shambling] down the street in his Sunday best, safety-pins holding together his tasty Oxfam threads, spitting on any passing hippie as he wandered to confession whistling an Irish jig'.¹⁵⁷

Lydon's Irishness continued to be registered (if anything with a greater degree of frequency) during his post-Pistols career as vocalist/lyricist for PIL. And while such acknowledgements were often expressed in a rather indirect form, they also took the form of explicit references. So, while a review of PIL's debut album could describe Lydon as 'a spiky haired kid from Finsbury Park with bad teeth who wouldn't admit to his liking for Yeats' (whilst comparing him with Joyce's 'Irish "artist" hero', Stephen Dedalus),¹⁵⁸ a review of a later album, *The Flowers of Romance* (1981) claimed that 'Lydon's Irish roots flower all over'.¹⁵⁹

References to Lydon's Irishness inevitably became a prominent feature in reports of his infamous visit to Ireland in 1980. Lydon was in Ireland to see his elder brother Jimmy's group, the 4" Be 2"s, perform live, a plan that was unceremoniously terminated when Lydon was arrested on an assault charge and sentenced to three months in Dublin's Mountjoy jail.¹⁶⁰ An article about the trip in *NME*, prefaced with a bold type by-line that referred to 'the Lydon's sentimental journey back to their Ireland home', explained that the 4" Be 2"s Irish concerts 'would have surely been one hell of a homecoming had one more member of the clan [i.e. John Lydon] been up there onstage alongside his brother'.¹⁶¹ A subsequent report in the *NME* about Lydon's successful appeal of the assault charge referred to the singer as 'the Irish anti-Christ of 1976', before explaining that, whilst in Dublin, he had purchased 'three records of Pope John's

Irish tour'.¹⁶²

Lydon's Irishness, therefore, has been acknowledged with relative frequency in the British music press, and this acknowledgement appears to have been facilitated by the fact that his regional locationality happened to coincide with that of the metropolitan music press. In other words, the fact that Lydon was from London (rather than, say, Manchester or Dublin) meant that there was, for a metropolitan music press, sufficient discursive space to consider more subtle forms of difference than simply regionality and nationality. In contrast, then, journalistic references to the Irish backgrounds of the individual Smiths have been far less common. There have, of course, been a few minor exceptions (which, again, prove the rule of regularity), and even these have made only passing reference to this dimension. For example, in an early interview with *MM*, the journalist explained that '[like] the other Smiths [Morrissey] was born in Manchester of Irish parents', before registering the 'Anglo-Irish ancestry' of his 'voice'.¹⁶³ Ironically, a very similar point was made in one of the group's last ever interviews, when *Q* magazine suggested that Morrissey's conversational style demonstrated a tendency toward 'the dramatic, phrased in a picturesque and slightly Irish manner'.¹⁶⁴

The reception of Oasis has certainly drawn attention to their Irishness more frequently than The Smiths (albeit less than that of Lydon). However, it is necessary to note the particular contexts in which such acknowledgements have been made. For example, in an early interview with *NME* (entitled 'The Bruise Brothers'), it is only after a particularly abusive (and momentarily violent) exchange between the Gallagher brothers that we are informed that Oasis are 'second generation Irish catholics [sic]'.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, in a later piece in *Select* magazine, entitled 'Chaos. Drink. Noise. Drugs. Songs ...', the journalist notes that 'Oasis are of predominantly Irish

Catholic background'.¹⁶⁶ In a different context, when Noel Gallagher performed a solo acoustic ballad in an outdoor stadium in Manchester, the *NME* evidently felt it was appropriate to make reference to 'the Irish folk music of Noel's childhood'.¹⁶⁷ In other words, it seems that this Irish dimension can be more readily acknowledged when second-generation musicians behave in a manner that broadly corresponds with popular stereotypes of Irishness in England.

Notwithstanding these particular variations and occasional exceptions, though, the fact that there were fewer references to, say, the Irishness of The Smiths than that of Lydon, arguably points to a discursive privileging of regionality in material on (specifically white) non-metropolitan English-born groups. This has perhaps had the effect of relegating Irishness, as a relative form of difference, in journalistic material on musicians like The Smiths. So, while the complex ethnic-religious background of an Irish-based group like U2 was largely overshadowed by a discursive emphasis on a specifically national form of difference (i.e. Irishness), the similarly complex background of the individual members of, for example, The Smiths, was largely subsumed by an equivalent stress on regionality (whether generically northern or specifically Mancunian). Thus, while a regional profile of London in a *Q* special issue on British popular music could draw attention to 'the rebel-song tradition of the north London Irish community that created Johnny Rotten', no such gesture was made towards The Smiths or Oasis in the issue's Manchester section.¹⁶⁸

In addition to this habitual emphasis on nationhood and region, the differential handling of Irishness in material on second-generation rock musicians may also pertain to a more mundane form of routinised critical practice. For it seems that particular musicians, in their formative periods, tend to become associated with a specific set of issues and concerns that are habitually

revived and reanimated whenever a new record is released, or a new tour announced. And once that record or tour has received a sufficient amount of critical coverage in news, reviews and interviews, the musicians are, as Frith has pointed out, simply 'put back in the files until the next tour [or album], when the same sorts of question from the same sorts of people get the same sorts of answer'.¹⁶⁹ What this appears to suggest, then, is that if issues pertaining to, say, Irishness, are discursively foregrounded in critical coverage of a group's formative period, then such issues will continue to receive consideration in subsequent press material, often with little regard for the position taken by the musicians on such questions. (And similarly, if such issues are largely absent in formative press coverage, it seems likely that they will continued to be overlooked in subsequent critical material).

Conclusion

While the British music press has, in many respects, been preoccupied with notions of Irishness (evidenced in the reception of Irish-born rock musicians, the periodic fascination with Northern Ireland, and the occasional expression of anti-Irish sentiment), it has at the same time been relatively oblivious to the Irish dimension of second-generation rock musicians. However, while there has been a differential handling of Irish issues in particular papers during specific periods (thus the broadly sympathetic approach to an Irish nationalist agenda in *NME* during the 1980s, and the flagrant anti-Irish sentiment expressed in *Sounds* in the late 1970s), there has also been a differential treatment of particular musicians, that appears to be based on questions of aesthetic style (recognition is more frequently offered to Rowland and MacGowan than to Lydon, The Smiths, or Oasis), as well as region (Lydon's Irishness receives more acknowledgement than that of The Smiths or Oasis). Moreover, while bands like Dexy's Midnight Runners and The Pogues have been the focus of journalistic discussions about

Irishness and popular music, musicians such as Lydon, The Smiths and Oasis have conversely been recruited for analogous engagements with Englishness and popular music. In the next chapter, I consider this latter strand of musicians, and particularly The Smiths, from a specifically second-generation Irish perspective.

Endnotes

1. Simon Frith, 'Introduction' in Craig McGregor, *Pop Goes the Culture* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), p. 2.
2. Frith, 'Introduction', pp. 1-2.
3. Angela McRobbie, 'Settling Accounts with Subcultures: A Feminist Critique', *Screen Education* No. 34 (Spring 1980), p. 46.
4. As Roy Shuker has explained, this is 'because of their use of cheap news print which would sometimes come off on the readers' hands'. (Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 79).
5. Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music*, p. 79.
6. '[“Style bibles”] emphasize popular music as part of visual pop culture, especially fashion'. (Roy Shuker, *Key Concepts in Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 199). Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music*, p. 80.
7. As Steve Jones has explained, 'little has been published about popular music criticism in popular music scholarship, journalism and mass communications scholarship', and 'musicologists and sociologists alike appear to have ignored popular music criticism as a site for academic study' (Jones, 'Re-Viewing Rock Writing: The Origins of Popular Music Criticism', *American Journalism* Vol. 9, Pt. 2-3 (1992), p. 88).
8. Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 166. For a discussion of magazines specifically for musicians, see Paul Théberge, 'Musicians' Magazines in the 1980s: The Creation of a Community and a Consumer Market', *Cultural Studies* Vol. 5, No. 3 (1991), pp. 270-93.
9. Frith, *Sound Effects*, pp. 166-7.
10. Laing, *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985), p. 107. It might be useful to briefly draw attention here to the particular social profile of music press personnel in Britain since the early 1970s. For despite the relative prominence of a few writers from Jewish (Vivien Goldman, Charles Shaar-Murray) and Italian backgrounds (Paolo Hewitt), as well as a number of high profile gay (Jon Savage, Steven Wells) and female (Julie Burchill, Caroline Coon) journalists, the bulk of British music critics appear to have been white (there have been very few African-Caribbean and South Asian writers), male, ostensibly heterosexual, and largely middle-class, with a heavy southcentric bias (perhaps an inevitable consequence of the fact that the majority of music papers have, like the music industry itself, been geographically located in the London metropolitan area). Nevertheless, there have been a number of relatively well-known Irish music journalists on British music papers, including a few second-generation writers (most notably Danny Kelly and Lucy O'Brien). However, the majority of these journalists have come from Northern Ireland (Stuart Bailie, Gavin Martin, Dave McCullough, Barry McIlhenny, and Sean O'Hagan).

11. Frith, *Sound Effects*, pp. 169-71.

12. Quoted in Frith, *Sound Effects*, pp. 171-2. Significantly, this 'critical turn' appeared to be endorsed by readers of the music press, for by 1972, *Melody Maker*'s circulation had reached 200,000, doubling its circulation of 1968 (p. 171).

13. Neil Spencer, 'Preface', Charles Shaar Murray, *Shots from the Hip* (London: Penguin, 1991), ix.

14. Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia, Pinning Up Grunge: the Music Press and Generic Change in British Pop and Rock', *Popular Music* Vol. 12, No. 3 (1993), p. 290; John Street, *Rebel Rock: The Politics of Popular Music* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 84. In his history of the underground press, Nigel Fountain emphasises *NME*'s 'move to absorb the talent of the underground' at this time. (Fountain, *Underground: The London Alternative Press 1966-74* (London: Routledge, 1988) p. 183).

15. Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 172. Spencer, 'Preface', x.

16. Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 173.

17. Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia', pp. 290-1.

18. Spencer, 'Preface', x.

19. Dick Hebdige, 'Digging for Britain: An Excavation in Seven Parts', in *The British Edge* (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1987), p. 44). For a brief discussion of politics and the popular music press, see John Street, *Rebel Rock*, pp. 83-8.

20. Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia', p. 296. Clearly this is not to suggest that British music journalism has been a static or homogeneous critical practice. There have inevitably been particular differences between, for example, *MM* and *NME*. See Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 172.

21. Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 173.

22. The economic interests of press and industry, for instance, are not necessarily convergent. As Jon Stratton has pointed out: 'It is not of direct pecuniary importance' to the music press 'whether a record sells or not'. Instead, for a music paper, 'what is important is the number of copies it sells'. (Stratton, 'What is "Popular Music"?', *Sociological Review* Vol. 22, No. 2 (1983), p. 294).

23. Frith, *Sound Effects*, pp. 173.

24. Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia', p. 299.

25. Shuker, *Key Concepts in Popular Music*, p. 200.

26. Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 165. For a discussion of the music press's pedagogical role, see Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia', pp. 296-98. The music press's readership tends to be relatively young, usually within the 13-24 age range for the weekly papers, and 18-35 for the monthly magazines (Tony Barrow and Julian Newby, *Inside the Music Business* (London: Blueprint, 1995), p. 128). Nevertheless, despite their apparent youth, such readers are at least perceived to be well-educated: a *MM* journalist suggested in 1987 that the music press's readership is made up of 'students, ex-students, and those destined to be students'. (Simon Reynolds, 'How Soon Is Now?', *Melody Maker*, 26 September 1987, p. 28). While this may suggest that there is a particular class formation amongst the readers of the music press, it is also worth pointing out that this readership has been predominantly male. For instance, a National Readership Survey in 1990 demonstrated that over 80% of readers were male. (Selina Webb, 'The Missing Misses', *Music Week*, 6 April 1991, p. 21).

27. I take this term from Shuker, *Key Concepts in Popular Music*, p. 198.

28. In common with the field of British cultural studies, the music press has displayed a particular interest in issues pertaining to Northern Ireland. Indeed, such issues have often dominated the music press's engagement with notions of Irishness. The Northern Ireland crisis was also a particular concern of the British underground press, to which music journalism has, of course, been partly indebted. For a brief discussion of the underground press and Northern Ireland, see Fountain, *Underground*, pp. 97, 134-9, 162, 167.

29. Sheila Prophet, 'Overtones of the Undertones', *Record Mirror*, 11 November 1978, p. 13.

30. Tim Jones, 'JJ72: Gasping For Air', *Record Collector* (September 2001), pp. 42, 40; Tim Jones (ed.), 'News For The Record', *Record Collector* (September 2001), p. 6.

31. The group released their debut single in 1979 and have continued to record and tour, in their original line-up, ever since. For biographical material on U2, see Eamon Dunphy, *Unforgettable Fire: The Story of U2* (London: Viking, 1987). For scholarly discussions of the group, see Gerry Smyth, *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 159-87; John Waters *Race of Angels: Ireland and the Genesis of U2* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1994).

32. For instance, in one of the very first interviews with U2 in the British music press, Paolo Hewitt suggested that the 'romanticised vision' of Bono, the group's vocalist and lyricist, was a 'trait of his rich Irish heritage' (Paolo Hewitt, 'Getting Into U2', *Melody Maker*, 13 September 1980, p. 10). For an inventory of press articles on U2, see Dave Bowler and Bryan Dray *U2: A Conspiracy of Hope* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1993), pp. 310-4.

33. Martin Cloonan, 'Pop and the Nation-State: Towards a Theorisation', *Popular Music* Vol. 18, No. 2 (1999), p. 202.

34. Dunphy, *Unforgettable Fire*, pp. 5-62. Music journalists have often erroneously assumed that all of the members of U2 come from Catholic backgrounds. See, for example, Stuart Cosgrove and Sean O'Hagan, 'Gael Force: Two Nations Under A Groove - An A to Z of Partisan Pop', *New Musical Express*, 2 May 1987, p. 30.

35. In an early live review of U2 in the Dublin magazine *Hot Press*, the group's music was light-heartedly described as 'Church of Ireland rock 'n' roll'. (Declan Lynch, 'U2 Treats U', in Niall Stokes (ed.), *The U2 File: A Hot Press U2 History 1978-1985* (Dublin: Hot Press, 1985), p. 15. This dimension of the group was also acknowledged in what appears to be the first scholarly endeavour to engage with U2, published in the now defunct Irish cultural studies journal, *The Crane Bag*. See Barbara Bradby and Brian Torode, 'To Whom Do U2 Appeal?', *The Crane Bag* Vol. 8, No. 2 (1984), p. 76.

36. Brian Boyd, 'Paddy Englishman', *Irish Times*, 'Arts' section, 20 November 1999, p. 5.

37. See Waters, *Race of Angels*, p. 190.

38. Paul Hewson, 'The White Nigger', in Richard Kearney (ed.), *Across the Frontiers: Ireland in the 1990s* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1988), p. 188.

39. The singer routinely drew attention to the group's Irishness during live performances throughout the 1980s. See, for example, U2's performance at Live Aid (BBC1 13 July 1985).

40. There are a few notable exceptions, particularly in what is now considered to be the band's earlier work, for instance the Gaelic-titled track, 'An Cat Dubh', on their debut album, *Boy* (Island, 1980), the use of uilleann pipes in 'Tomorrow', on *October* (Island, 1981), and the use of a fiddle in 'Sunday Bloody Sunday', the lyrics of which were informed by the political crisis in Northern Ireland (*War*, Island, 1983).

41. McLaughlin and McLoone, 'Hybridity and National Musics: The Case of Irish Rock Music', *Popular Music* Vol. 12, No. 2 (2000), p. 181.

42. John Orme, 'Lizzy, Rats Tour Dates', *Melody Maker*, 13 May 1978, p. 1. When these bands went on to dominate the *RM* readers' poll for 1978, the front cover of the results' issue announced: 'The Luck of the Irish' (*Record Mirror*, 6 January 1979, p. 1). For a discussion of Thin Lizzy, see Mark J. Prendergast, *Irish Rock: Roots, Personalities, Directions* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1987), pp. 37-47

43. Amrik Rai, 'Positively Nurd Street', *New Musical Express*, 20 August 1983, p. 41. The Virgin Prunes' members came from a diverse range of ethnic-religious backgrounds in Dublin, including Irish Catholic, Welsh Presbyterian, and Plymouth Brethren. See Dunphy, *Unforgettable Fire*, pp. 21, 57-8, 74-6.

44. Dave McCullough, 'Teenage Hicks', *Sounds*, 12 April 1980, p. 16.

45. Prophet, 'Overtones of the Undertones', p. 13. For other instances of the band's objection to the critical imposition of such journalistic categories, see Dave McCullough, 'Teenage Kicks', *Sounds*, 30 September 1978, p. 17; Paul Rambali, 'In Every Dream Home An Undertone', *New Musical Express*, 26 April 1980, p. 34.

46. Paul Du Noyer, 'Romeo, Romeo, Wherefore Art Thou At, Romeo?', *New Musical Express*,

5 July 1980, p. 23. For examples of Lynott's desire to foreground his Irishness, see Harry Doherty, 'Ireland's Own', *Melody Maker*, 8 January 1977, pp. 8-9; Harry Doherty, 'Lizzy/Rats/Doherty/Belfast: Need We Say More?', *Melody Maker*, 24 June 1978, p. 10.

47. Cloonan, 'Pop and the Nation-State', p. 202.

48. This was particularly evident in the 1980s. See, for example, Gavin Martin, 'How to Commit the Perfect Crime', *New Musical Express*, 8 October 1983, p. 12; Sean O'Hagan, 'Planet Ulster', *New Musical Express*, 10 May 1986, p. 23; Stuart Cosgrove and Sean O'Hagan, 'The Killer Instinct', *New Musical Express*, 10 May 1986, pp. 26-7. The paper even recommended to their readers a cassette recording of the poems of Seamus Heaney and Tom Paulin (Abe Smith, 'Poetry Goes Live ...', *New Musical Express*, 21 January 1984, p. 11), and gave a very favourable review of Seamus Deane's *A Short History of Irish Literature* (Graham Caveney, 'Print', *New Musical Express*, 25 October 1986, p. 43).

49. For the visit of The Clash, see Giovanni Dadomo and Caroline Coon, 'Clash in the City of the Dead', *Sounds*, 29 October 1977, pp. 25-7. This Clash visit was frequently alluded to in subsequent features. For example, in an article on The Adverts in Belfast, the journalist rhetorically asked her photographer 'can we park outside Stormont and get some shots just like the Clash?' (Jane Suck, 'Vicarious Thrills and Pol-A-Ticks: Crossing the Irish Sea with The Adverts', *Sounds*, 18 February 1978, p. 16). A similar allusion ('the lads from Clash were nowhere to be found') made in a later news item on Elvis Costello in Belfast was also indicative of the enduring impact that that visit had in the popular music press (Allan Jones, 'What the El!', *Melody Maker*, 25 March 1978, p. 3).

50. In one photograph the band are seen to be subjected to a security check from the RUC whilst under the watchful eye of the British Army. Meanwhile, *Sounds* journalist Caroline Coon begins the article by emphasising the city's 'eroding invasion of privacy', explaining that 'Belfast is one long nervously obsessive [sic] security check. You can't cross a road, drive down the street, walk into a shop or hotel without passing through an elaborate system of flashing lights, concrete and steel barricades, high barbed wire fences or road blocks'. (Dadomo and Coon, 'Clash in the City of the Dead', pp. 27, 25).

51. For instance, in a feature on The Specials and The Beat in Northern Ireland, attention is drawn to the 'over-appreciative crowd': 'More bands should play places like Belfast. The audience is great, probably better than most of the audiences we've played to in England!' (Adrian Thrills, 'And We'll All Take A Ride!', *New Musical Express*, 24 January 1981, p. 36).

52. Charles Shaar Murray (ed.), 'The Irish No-Joke', *New Musical Express*, 4 October 1980, pp. 62-3. Significantly, the editorial comment concluded 'that the solution to the Irish "problem" must be an Irish solution. What happens in Ireland should be a matter of concern to England, but interference and occupation should not be the means by which this concern should be expressed' (p. 63).

53. Paul Rambali (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 30 August 1980, p. 54. See also Monty Smith (ed.), 'Gasbag Now!', *New Musical Express*, 20 September 1980, p. 58.

54. Murray, 'The Irish No-Joke', p. 62.

55. Paolo Hewitt (ed.), 'Labour Party Bag', *New Musical Express*, 29 October 1983, p. 58.
Paolo Hewitt (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 10 March 1984, p. 58.

56. Hewitt (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 10 March 1984, p. 58.

57. Penny Reel (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 7 April 1984, p. 42; Paolo Hewitt (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 28 April 1984, p. 51.

58. Paolo Hewitt (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 19 May 1984, pp. 58-9.

59. Andrew Tyler, 'Bomb Culture', *New Musical Express*, 3 November 1984, pp. 29-32 (quote is from p. 29). *NME* had previously published an interview with Livingstone, see Andrew Tyler, 'Dread Ken: A Capital Leader', *New Musical Express*, 9 April 1983, pp. 16-7, 43.

60. Sean O'Hagan (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 17 November 1984, p. 62. Andy Gill (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 24 November 1984, p. 58.

61. See, for example, Gavin Martin, 'Ireland In An Acid Bath', *New Musical Express*, 15 November 1986, p. 25. The paper was subsequently chastised for its use of this term by sections of the paper's readership. See Lucy O'Brien (ed.), 'Flagbag', *New Musical Express*, 3 January 1987, p. 38.

62. Penny Reel, 'Brave Boys of the Old Brigade', *New Musical Express*, 6 August 1983, p. 41. Also at this time, the paper recommended that its readers should view Channel Four's coverage of Gaelic sports (Ian Penman, 'On the Box', *New Musical Express*, 3 September 1983, p. 38), a cultural activity that has historically been associated with Irish nationalism.

63. Gavin Martin (ed.), 'Gasserbag', *New Musical Express*, 20 August 1983, p. 50.

64. Paolo Hewitt, 'Cry Wolfe! The Beloved Country', *New Musical Express*, 26 October 1985, p. 37.

65. Stuart Cosgrove (ed.), 'Glamour Bag', *New Musical Express*, 9 November 1985, p. 62.

66. Stuart Cosgrove, Sean O'Hagan and Gavin Martin, 'Those Petrol Emotions', *New Musical Express*, 10 May 1986, pp. 24-5; Cosgrove and O'Hagan, 'The Killer Instinct', pp. 26-7; Gavin Martin (ed.), 'Britannia Bag', *New Musical Express*, 10 May 1986, p. 54. McGuigan had been the subject of an article in the paper a few months earlier, see Danny Kelly, 'McGuigan Force', *New Musical Express*, 5 October 1985, pp. 2-3.

67. See, for example, Steven Wells (ed.), 'Big Baad Bag', *New Musical Express*, 21 June 1986, p. 54.

68. See, for example, Denis Campbell, 'Manifesto!', *New Musical Express*, 24 January 1987, p. 21. Denis Campbell, 'A Deafening Silence', *New Musical Express*, 21 March 1987, p. 34.

69. Phil Sutcliffe, Caroline Coon, Vivien Goldman, Jon Savage, Pete Silverton, 'It Can't Happen Here', *Sounds*, 25 March 1978, pp. 25-33.
70. Anonymous, 'Irish Skateboard', *Sounds*, 19 November 1977, p. 55.
71. Sandy Robertson, 'Do You Sincerely Want To Be Rich?', *Sounds*, 17 December 1977, p. 17. For the letter of complaint, see Gerro Chains, 'Irish Ire', *Sounds*, 10 December 1977, p. 59.
72. Anonymous, 'Rat Again (Like We Did Last Week)', *Sounds*, 8 July 1978, p. 10. Similar expressions occasionally emerged in *MM* at this time, although perhaps in a more benign manner than in *Sounds*. For instance, a brief news article in the paper in 1978 referred to Thin Lizzy and The Undertones as 'fellow Paddies' (Anonymous, 'Lizzy Snub Shock', *Melody Maker*, 9 December 1978, p. 10).
73. Alan Lewis, 'Singles', *Sounds*, 7 May 1977, p. 24.
74. Robin Katz, 'Hear the One About a Group of Irish Superstars .. ?', *Sounds*, 19 March 1977, p. 28 (my emphasis).
75. For example, in an 'English band on Irish tour' feature, the by-line explained: 'XTC roam Ireland in search of the ultimate joke'. (Phil Sutcliffe, 'Sausage City Rebels', *Sounds*, 21 October 1978, p. 23).
76. Anthony J. Chapman, Jean R. Smith and Hugh C. Foot, 'Language, Humour and Intergroup Relations', in Howard Giles (ed.), *Language, Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations* (London: Academic Press, 1977), p. 147.
77. The transparency of the paper's position on anti-Irish prejudice was such that one of its readers, complaining about another reader's expression of anti-Welsh sentiment in the letters page, could ask: 'would you ... have printed [the] letter if it had taken the piss out of Rastafarians, feminists, or the Irish?' (Andy Gill (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 7 May 1983, p. 46).
78. See, for example, Julie Burchill, 'Julie Burchill', *The Face* (March 1983), p. 68; Julie Burchill, 'Greenland Revisited', *The Face* (August 1983), pp. 62-5. John Street has pointed to the significance of Burchill's influence on British music journalism. See Street, *Rebel Rock*, p. 85.
79. Kevin Rowland, 'Kevin Rowland Replies to Julie Burchill', *The Face* (September 1983), pp. 62-3. For other complaints about Burchill's anti-Irishness, see, for example, Hewitt (ed.), 'Labour Party Bag', p. 58; Penny Reel (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 7 April 1984, p. 42.
80. Lindsay Shapero, 'Red Devil', *Time Out*, 17-23 May 1984, p. 27. The expression of such comments has been an important component of Burchill's journalistic persona. Nevertheless, I think it is significant that such a high profile journalist has, on more than one occasion, singled

out Irish people in this manner.

81. For material on The Pogues, see Gavin Martin, 'Pogue Mahone', *New Musical Express*, 15 January 1983, p. 36; Gavin Martin, 'Mahone Ranger's Handbook', *New Musical Express*, 13 August 1983, p. 22; David Quantick, 'Pogue Mahone: Kentish Town Bull and Gate', *New Musical Express*, 24 September 1983, p. 42; David Quantick and Sean O'Hagan, 'For a Few Ciders More', *New Musical Express*, 11 August 1984, pp. 11, 38; Robert Elms, 'Pogue in the Eye', *The Face* (March 1985), pp. 30-2, 35; Danny Kelly, 'Pogues Gallery', *New Musical Express*, 17 August 1985, pp. 24-6; Andy Strickland, 'Pogue Mania!', *Record Mirror*, 21 September 1985, pp. 52-3; Adrian Thrills, 'L'Uomo Pogue', *New Musical Express*, 4 January 1986, p. 8; Mat Snow, 'The Sweet Smell of Success', *New Musical Express*, 22 March 1986, pp. 18-21; Sean O'Hagan, 'Wild Rovers' Return', *New Musical Express*, 21 March 1987, pp. 24-5; Stuart Bailie, 'The Pogues', *Record Mirror*, 19 December 1987, pp. 40-1; Gavin Martin, 'Once Upon A Time in the West', *New Musical Express*, 2 January 1988, pp. 22-3, 31; Paul Lester, 'The Pogues: The Last Gang in Town', *Melody Maker*, 25 March 1989, p. 8. Keith Cameron, 'Pogues on the Ropes', *Sounds*, 29 July 1989, pp. 20, 45. Dexy's rarely gave interviews with the music press, opting instead to publish occasional manifestos in specific music papers. See, for example, Dexy's Midnight Runners, 'Searching for the Young Soul Rebels', *New Musical Express*, 26 July 1980, p. 9. In any case, the press's engagement with Dexy's was less obviously preoccupied with notions of Irishness. See, for example, Roy Carr, 'Dexy's: Funky Butt Fassst!', *New Musical Express*, 12 January 1980, p. 16; Phil Sutcliffe, 'The Dexedrine Gang', *Sounds*, 19 January 1980, pp. 12-3; Ian Ravendale, 'From the Vaults', *Sounds*, 5 April 1980, p. 43; Pete Lock, 'Breaking Down the Walls of Art-Ache', *Sounds*, 10 May 1980, p. 20; Danny Baker, "'Oo You Patronising, John? ...'", *New Musical Express*, 26 July 1980, p. 28; Gavin Martin, 'A Folk Hero of the 80s: The Kevin Rowland Interview', *New Musical Express*, 3 July 1982, pp. 24-6, 53; Lesley White, 'Fact and Fiction', *The Face* (September 1982), pp. 30-4; Sean O'Hagan, 'Tangled Up In Blue', *New Musical Express*, 7 September 1985, p. 31; David Quantick, 'Too-Rye-Eh?', *New Musical Express*, 23 November 1985, p. 51.

82. *Melody Maker*, 'Special On Women in Rock', 10 November 1973; *Melody Maker*, 'State of the Union: The Complete Guide to the New American Rock', 13 April 1985.

83. See *New Musical Express*, Scottish issue, 3 January 1987; *New Musical Express*, World Music issue, 5 September 1987.

84. *Melody Maker*, 'U2: Who Will Follow?', 8 February 1986; *New Musical Express*, 'Gael Force', 2 May 1987; *New Musical Express*, 'Blowing Up A Gael', 2 June 1990.

85. Stuart Cosgrove and Sean O'Hagan, 'Gael Force: Two Nations Under A Groove: An A To Z of Partisan Pop', *New Musical Express*, 2 May 1987, pp. 26-31. Subsequent page references will appear in parentheses in the main text.

86. *NME* had previously published a feature article on Behan, using the same illustration as the one in 'Gael Force', to mark the twentieth anniversary of his death in March 1984. See David Quantick, 'The Quare Fellow', *New Musical Express*, 24 March 1984, p. 52. Significantly, the by-line of this article had framed Behan in terms of Kevin Rowland's contemporaneous interest

in the writer ('Who was this loud-mouthed Irish drunk and why does Kevin Rowland keep going on about him?'), and the article was punctuated with references to Behan in Dexy's Midnight Runners' songs. The article appears, then, to have been an attempt to contextualise Behan for Dexy's audience (although Shane MacGowan has claimed that it was his endorsement of Behan that led to the publication of the article, see Victoria Mary Clarke and Shane MacGowan, *A Drink with Shane MacGowan* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 2001), p. 215). In any case, the *NME* quickly received complaints from its readers about the 'sympathy' for 'Catholic nationalism in Ireland' that the article had allegedly expressed. See, for example, Penny Reel (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 7 April 1984, p. 42. A subsequent reader's response to this letter was, in turn, printed later that month. (Paolo Hewitt (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 28 April 1984, p. 51).

87. The article generated a variety of responses from *NME*'s readership. An issue of the paper a few weeks later printed six letters about the article, including complaints about its alleged nationalist sentiment, and its 'Catholic orientated contents'. (Sean O'Hagan (ed.), 'Angst', *New Musical Express*, 23 May 1987, p. 46). A similar objection was expressed in the letters page the following week. (Paolo Hewitt (ed.), 'Angst', *New Musical Express*, 30 May 1987, p. 58).

88. Martin, 'Ireland In An Acid Bath', p. 25.

89. O'Hagan, 'Wild Rovers' Return', pp. 24-5. An *NME* reader had castigated this dimension of The Pogues' live performance in the letters page of a previous issue, apparently on the basis that it had endorsed sectarian sentiment. Significantly, the paper's editorial response was to defend the group's 'celebration of "Irishness"', and to suggest that the letter-writer, rather than the group and its audience, was guilty of sectarianism. (Sean O'Hagan (ed.), 'Utensil', *New Musical Express*, 17 January 1987, p. 42). In turn, the letters page editor received a considerable amount of 'hate mail' from readers. See O'Hagan, 'Wild Rovers' Return', p. 25.

90. Elms, 'Pogue in the Eye', pp. 30-1.

91. Andy Gill (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 7 May 1983, pp. 46-7. For the paper's recommendation of O'Brien, see Penny Reel, 'Singles', *New Musical Express*, 23 April 1983, p. 16.

92. Martin, 'Mahone Ranger's Handbook', p. 22.

93. Don Watson (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 3 September 1983, p. 42. It is perhaps worth pointing out here that some of these surnames were concocted for the benefit of Dexy's public persona during their 'Celtic Soul Brothers' phase. See *Young Guns Go For It: Dexy's Midnight Runners* (BBC2, 13 September 2000).

94. Penny Reel (ed.), 'Gasbag', *New Musical Express*, 25 May 1985, p. 78.

95. Kelly, 'Pogues Gallery', p. 24.

96. This canonisation has occurred across a range of different sites, amongst audiences, professional musicians, and cultural critics. The critical canonisation of second-generation

musicians is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that two of the most significant analyses of recent popular music in England, Jon Savage's *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991) and Michael Bracewell's *England is Mine: Pop Life in Albion from Wilde to Goldie* (London: Harper Collins, 1997) take their titles from a Lydon lyric and a Smiths' lyric respectively. In a poll of record-buyers in the late 1990s, Lydon, The Smiths, and Oasis all featured in the top twenty-five albums of all-time (Martin Wroe, 'The Top 100 Albums', *Observer*, 6 September 1998, p. 13). Meanwhile, professional musicians, in what might be called an 'industrial' canon, have produced albums of cover versions of Smiths and Oasis songs, including *The Smiths are Dead* (Columbia, 1996) and *The Royal Philharmonic plays Oasis* (Music Collection, 1997). In addition, a number of Smiths and Oasis cover bands have toured in Britain, most notably These Charming Men and Nowaysis.

97. Morrissey was the cover star of the fortieth anniversary issue of *NME* ('Special 40th Birthday', 9 May 1992), while Noel and Liam Gallagher graced the seventieth anniversary issue of *Melody Maker* ('1926-96: 70th Anniversary', 27 April 1996). The cover page of the 'The 90s Issue' of *Q* magazine (the final issue of the decade/century/millennium) featured a close-up profile of Liam Gallagher, anchored with the strapline 'The Voice Of The 90s' (*Q* (December 1999)). Gallagher was also the cover star of *NME*'s fiftieth anniversary issue ('Fifty Years of Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll!', 20 April 2002), which announced The Smiths as the paper's 'Greatest Artist of All Time' (p. 66). Meanwhile, John Lydon, provided the jacket-sleeve image for Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons' collection of journalistic essays on punk, *The Boy Looked at Johnny: the Obituary of Rock'n'Roll* (London: Pluto, 1978).

98. For instance, an article on The Smiths in the *NME* maintained (in a discussion of the group's first few singles), that '[for] an opening salvo, perhaps only the first four Sex Pistols singles ... come close in terms of their *classic* worth.' (Adrian Thrills, 'Long Live the King!', *New Musical Express*, 14 June 1986, p. 29 (original emphasis)).

99. In this sense there is a notable correspondence between the theorisation of second-generation Irish musicians in British cultural studies, and their reception in the British music press. This is perhaps unsurprising for, as Jason Toynbee has pointed out, 'music press discourse has informed academic writing about pop as text' ('Policing Bohemia', p. 299). Moreover, a number of music journalists in the 1980s and 1990s had apparently encountered cultural studies, to varying degrees, in the form of higher education courses (Toynbee, 'Policing Bohemia', p. 296).

100. The apparent proclivity amongst music journalists to adhere to particular narrative routines and critical categories is presumably informed by the working practices and professional constraints of music journalism, not least the pressure of writing to the 'moment' against a tight deadline. (Spencer, 'Preface', viii, xi). For Simon Frith, '[there] are obvious reasons why pop-cultural commentary in Britain is inadequate'. Notwithstanding 'the problem of space', there is also 'the pressure of pop as news [and] the constant competition to anticipate the new thing first'. (Frith, 'Introduction', p. 3).

101. The foregrounding of questions of race and ethnicity in material on second- and third-generation African-Caribbean and South Asian musicians has dovetailed with the relative absence of an English/British dimension in their critical reception. As Martin Cloonan has

pointed out, '[comments] such as Dave Hill's description of Soul II Soul's Jazzie B as "an English entrepreneur" ... and *NME*'s claiming that "Britishness" drips from Fun-Da-Mental ... are notable mainly for their scarcity'. (Cloonan, 'What Do They Know of England?: "Englishness" and Popular Music in the mid-1990s', in Tarja Hautamaki and Helmi Jarviluoma (eds), *Music on Show: Issues of Performance* (Tampere: University of Tampere, 1998), p. 69).

102. This tendency is perhaps symptomatic of the fact that music journalism, even its more 'serious' varieties, has been circumscribed by a specifically youthful, and not terribly cerebral, set of concerns (hence the particular attention paid to issues of style and sexuality, and the varying degrees of interest in recreational drugs and industry gossip). The journalist Dylan Jones has stressed the importance of this dimension of popular music criticism: 'good rock journalism should highlight the power, the glory and the depravity of rock music, not just the theory. It should concentrate on the flavour of rock, not just the aftertaste. It's all very well getting in a tizzy over the "validity" of David Bowie's *Station to Station*, but what kind of drugs was he taking when he recorded it? And whose drugs?' (Jones (ed.), *Meaty, Beaty, Big and Bouncy: Classic Rock and Pop Writing From Elvis to Oasis* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996), p. 9). Clearly this set of concerns is informed, in no small measure, by the particular readership of the music press, see note 26 above.

103. Simon Frith and Jon Savage, 'Pearls and Swine: Intellectuals and the Mass Media', *New Left Review* No. 198 (March/April 1993), p. 113.

104. Simon Frith, 'Introduction', pp. 2-3. This is perhaps an inevitable effect of the popular music industry which arguably depends upon the placing of products into discrete and easily identifiable units for the purposes of marketing and consumption.

105. Kari Kallioniemi, "'Put The Needle on the Record and Think of England": Notions of Englishness in the Post-War Debate on British Pop Music', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Turku, 1998), pp. 301-3. For a brief discussion of the ethnocentric parameters of critical discourses, see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), pp. 96-9.

106. Frith, 'Introduction', p. 6.

107. Dave Laing, *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985), p. 2.

108. Julie Burchill, 'England. Whose England?', *New Statesman and Society*, Special supplement, 24 February 1995, p. 39.

109. Cloonan, 'Pop and the Nation-State', p. 202. This characteristic of the music press is perhaps symptomatic of cultural criticism in general which, for Thomas Docherty, is 'tied firmly to the place-logic of the nation-state'. (Docherty, 'Tragedy and the Nationalist Condition of Criticism', *Textual Practice* Vol. 10, No. 3 (1996), p. 493).

110. Docherty, 'Tragedy and the Nationalist Condition of Criticism', p. 479.

111. Mitchell, *Popular Music and Local Identity: Rock, Pop and Rap in Europe and Oceania* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p. 19.

112. 'Britpop' reached its apotheosis in the summer of 1995, when *MM* published a five page feature on key Britpop groups and records (providing a chronology and set of historical icons for 'Britpop'), and *NME* printed an article about the Blur-Oasis chart battle entitled 'The Battle of Britpop'. See David Bennun, Paul Lester, Taylor Parkes, Dave Simpson, and Ian Watson, 'Britpop', *Melody Maker*, 22 July 1995, pp. 29-33; Andy Richardson, 'The Battle of Britpop', *New Musical Express*, 12 August, pp. 28-30. Although the term Britpop gained particular currency in the mid-1990s, it had nevertheless been used in earlier periods. For instance, Charles Shaar Murray had used the term in an article on the Sex Pistols in 1977. (Charles Shaar Murray, 'John, Paul, Steve and Sidney: The Social Rehabilitation of the Sex Pistols', *New Musical Express*, 6 August 1977, p. 23).

113. In addition to the articles listed above, an eleven page feature article in *Select* magazine in 1993 had asserted the concept of a specifically 'British pop' (essentially in opposition to what the authors identified as the hegemony of American rock). See Stuart Maconie, 'Who Do You Think You Are Kidding, Mr Cobain?', *Select* (April 1993), pp. 60-71. Shortly afterwards an article on pop engagements with London appeared in the *NME*. See Stephen Dalton, 'Ditty Old Town', *New Musical Express*, 22 May 1993, pp. 12-3. These articles appear to have anticipated the discourse of Britpop a couple of years later.

114. Jon Wilde, 'Listening to England', *Livewire* (February/March 1995), pp. 14-9.

115. John Lydon, with Keith Zimmerman and Kent Zimmerman, *Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994), pp. 249, 13, 274, 14.

116. Anonymous, 'Questionnaire', *Q* (January 1995), p. 322.

117. Dave Simpson, 'Why Two's Company', *Guardian*, 13 July 1996, p. 30.

118. Noel Gallagher, quoted in Eugene Masterson *The Word on the Street: The Unsanctioned Story of Oasis* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1996), p. 56.

119. Paolo Hewitt, *Getting High: the Adventures of Oasis* (London: Boxtree, 1997). For a discussion of this biography, see Sean Campbell, 'Review of Paolo Hewitt, *Getting High*', *Popular Music* Vol. 18, No. 1 (1999), pp. 158-60.

120. Wilde, 'Listening to England', pp. 15-6. Subsequent page references will be included in parenthesis in the main text.

121. Mark Sinker, 'Look Back in Anguish', *New Musical Express*, 2 January 1988, pp. 14-6. Significantly, in an interview with The Pogues in the same issue, a journalist asked Shane MacGowan: 'Doesn't England have anything to compare to the traditions of Scotland and Ireland?', to which MacGowan replied: 'Not to that extent'. (Martin, 'Once Upon A Time in the West', p. 23).

122. Sinker, 'Look Back in Anguish' p. 14. This Englishness thesis has certainly been nourished by Morrissey's various engagements with Englishness/Britishness during his solo career. This has perhaps facilitated some critical re-visioning of The Smiths' past through the refracted prism of Morrissey's present. While I do not wish to address Morrissey's solo career in this thesis, his apparent wish to assert a particular form of Englishness might be understood as a desire for ethnic certainty that could be the Janus face of Shane MacGowan's overstated Irishness.

123. Nick Kent, 'National Anthems', *Melody Maker*, 14 June 1986, p. 31; Adrian Thrills, 'Long Live the King!', p. 29.

124. Donald McRae, 'The Smiths' Anti-Apartheid Benefit', *New Musical Express*, 3 January 1987, p. 28. Another review of this concert emphasised the group's whiteness: 'The Smiths are one of the great *white rock* bands', whose 'music is about as albino as you can get'. (Simon Reynolds, 'Not for Sale in S.A!', *Melody Maker*, 20/27 December 1986, p. 20).

125. Gavin Martin, 'Angst', *New Musical Express*, 26 September 1987, p. 58.

126. Steve Sutherland, 'See! Hear! Now!', *New Musical Express*, 20 September 1997, p. 40.

127. Michael Bracewell *England is Mine: Pop Life in Albion from Wilde to Goldie* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 229. In fairness to Bracewell, his thesis does make at least some concession to this Irish dimension. In a passage in which he appears to be on the verge of acknowledging the immigrant strain that has reconfigured the cultural fabric of English 'pop life', he explains: 'It would be ironic that Wilde and Morrissey, both Anglo-Irishmen, would be England's underground analysts at either end of the century' (p. 226). Notwithstanding Bracewell's erroneous application of the term 'Anglo-Irish', though, he fails to consider the implications of this assertion for his thesis, and is reluctant to offer even a brief consideration of why it might be that these exilic Irishmen should become 'England's underground analysts'. For a brief discussion of Bracewell's handling of second-generation Irish rock musicians, see Sean Campbell, 'Review of Michael Bracewell, *England is Mine*', *Journal of Popular Music Studies* Vols. 11&12 (1999/2000), pp. 193-6.

128. As I pointed out in the Introduction, some of these musicians may have colluded, to varying degrees, with this critical appropriation.

129. Stuart Maconie, 'Pungent Spice', *Q* (August 1999), p. 100, my emphasis.

130. Significantly, the item began: 'If you had the luck of the Irish, you'd wish you were English instead', a line from John Lennon's 1972 song 'The Luck of the Irish'. However, other than the fact that Lennon was also an English rock musician of Irish descent, this allusion appears to have had little relevance to the news item. (Anonymous, 'If you had the luck of the Irish ...', *Sounds*, 8 July 1978, p. 10).

131. Anonymous, 'The Electrick Hoax', *Sounds*, 9 December 1978, p. 50.

132. Brian Boyd, 'Paddy Englishman', *Irish Times*, 'Arts' section, 20 November 1999, p. 5.

The Irish dimensions of this interview generated an enormous response on 'fan'-based websites about Morrissey. See <http://www.morrissey-solo.com>, 'Paddy Englishman'. Website accessed 30 November 1999.

133. Ben Mitchell (ed.), "'I Am A Victim!'" *Q* (January 2000), p. 18. In an issue of *Q* over a year later, and seemingly *apropos* of nothing, a brief news item announced that Morrissey's next album would be '[entitled] Irish Blood, English Heart', and explained that 'the yet-to-be-recorded long-player explores his hitherto untapped Irish ancestry'. The news item also quoted briefly from the Irish dimensions of the original interview. (Gareth Grundy (ed.), 'Morrissey's Back!', *Q* (March 2001), p. 18).

134. It is perhaps worth considering here that (despite the music press's varying degrees of interest in matters pertaining to Ireland and Irishness), the absence of an Irish dimension in such instances might simply demonstrate plain indifference amongst music journalists about this particular issue. Indeed, it would seem reasonable to infer that this absence might have been informed, to some degree, by a certain narrowness of perspective amongst music journalists, who have been predominantly white, (southern) English, and middle-class. See note 10 above.

135. Phil Sutcliffe, 'The Oasis Diaries', *Q* (September 1997), pp. 88, 91.

136. Andrew Perry, 'Chaos. Drink. Noise. Drugs. Songs ...', *Select* (December 1994), p. 82.

137. Barry Cain, 'Johnny knows he's not mad ...', *Record Mirror*, 11 December 1976, p. 6; Julie Burchill, 'Albums', *New Musical Express*, 5 November 1977, p. 31.

138. Public Image Limited, 'Religion 1' and 'Religion 2', *Public Image* (Virgin, 1978).

139. See, for example, Simon Frith, 'Public Image: Music In A Vacuum', *Melody Maker*, 9 December 1978, p. 41; Tim Lott, 'Shattering An Image', *Record Mirror*, 9 December 1978, p. 14; Pete Silvertown, 'All Grown Up and Nowhere To Go', *Sounds*, 9 December 1978, p. 30.

140. Danny Kelly, 'The Further Thoughts of Chairman Mo', *New Musical Express*, 8 June 1985, pp. 24, 28. Morrissey had previously been described as 'the Pope of Pop' in other music press material, see for example, Antonella Black, 'Sorrow's Native Son', *Sounds*, 20 April 1985, p. 20.

141. Charles Shaar Murray, 'Gumchewin' wordslingin' shadewearin' backcombin' sneakersportin' poemwritin' novelscrawlin' voweltwangin' vodkaswillin' chargeblowin' JOHN COOPER CLARKE', *New Musical Express*, 7 July 1979, p. 32.

142. Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), p. 200.

143. Sabina Sharkey, 'A View of the Present State of Irish Studies', in Susan Bassnett (ed.), *Studying British Cultures: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 116.

144. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 124.
145. Nick Kent, 'The Band with the Thorn in its Side', *The Face* (April 1987), p. 46.
146. Sara Cohen, 'Identity, Place and the "Liverpool Sound"', in Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), p. 118.
147. See, for example, Chris Roberts, 'The Beat Boys!', *Melody Maker*, 23 March 1963, pp. 8-9. Carl Belz has suggested that 'the English fad' initiated by the commercial success of The Beatles 'provoked a general consciousness of the national or regional origin of a group or individual'. For Belz, '[this] was the first time in the history of rock that such a consciousness had emerged' (Belz, *The Story of Rock* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 122). The discursive privileging of region, in particular, continued (albeit in varying degrees) into the 1990s, and was explicitly demonstrated in an April 1983 issue of *NME* (on the eve of the release of The Smiths' debut single) in which the singles page was organised into twenty-six regional categories (Reel, 'Singles', p. 16). Significantly, the first four categories were Irish place names. More recently, a special issue of *Q* magazine in 2000 on British popular music was punctuated with profiles of specific regions. See Stuart Maconie *et al*, 'The 100 Greatest British Albums Ever!', *Q* (June 2000), pp. 60-95).
148. See, for example, Paul Morley, 'They mean it M-a-a-a-nchester', *New Musical Express*, 30 July 1977, pp. 6-7; Bob Dickinson, 'The Scene ... It's Not So Hum-Drum', *New Musical Express*, 28 September 1985, pp. 24-5; Paul Morley, 'Oh, How We Laughed', *New Musical Express*, 15 February 1986, pp. 14-5; Dave Haslam, 'It's Raining Pop!', *New Musical Express*, 6 September 1986, pp. 10-1; 13; Mat Snow, 'From Manchester to Memphis', *New Musical Express*, 21 February 1987, p. 45; Steven Wells, 'It's A Mad Madchester', *New Musical Express*, 2 December 1989, pp. 32-3. During this period, national consciousness about a north/south regional divide (with Manchester functioning as the paradigmatic northern city) had been heightened by shifting social, political and economic circumstances, including the 1984 Miners' Strike, increasing unemployment in northern regions, and an economic boom in the south-east. And while the press has occasionally been concerned with the development of other local 'scenes', such as that of Bristol in the mid-1990s (see, for example, David Bennun and Everett True, 'The Future Sound of Bristol', *Melody Maker*, 21 January 1995, pp. 23-9), the particular emphasis on a north/south divide has continued. See, for example, Johnny Cigarettes, 'Let's Get Ready to Rumble!', *New Musical Express*, 30 September 1995, p. 26.
149. The particular association of The Smiths with northern England was such that when a rare photograph of Morrissey standing alongside his Dublin-born mother backstage at the Manchester Free Trade Hall appeared in the *NME*, it was anchored with an ironic photo album commentary in highly caricatured Mancunian dialect: "'Ooo, and a right good 'oliday that were ... and here's our Steven and 'is Mam, yer Auntie Elizabeth' (Anonymous, 'T-zers', *New Musical Express*, 24 March 1984, p. 59).
150. Tony Parsons, 'Singles', *New Musical Express*, 25 August 1984, p. 18.
151. Barry McIlheney, 'Tokyo Olympics', *Melody Maker*, 11 February 1984, p. 15.

152. Murray, 'John, Paul, Steve and Sidney' , p. 23.
153. Vivien Goldman, 'Johnny Cool at the Control: John Lydon in Jamaica', *Sounds*, 4 March 1978, p. 17.
154. Chris Salewicz, 'Johnny's Immaculate Conception: Putting The Nation On The PiL', *New Musical Express*, 23 December 1978, p. 22.
155. Anonymous, 'Jaws', *Sounds*, 4 June 1977, p. 9. For the original article, see Robert Eddison, 'Johnny's Top of the Pops With Me Says Mrs Rotten', *Islington Gazette*, 27 May 1977, p. 13.
156. Andrew Courtney, 'The Trouble with Johnny', *Record Mirror*, 6 May 1978, p. 19.
157. Burchill and Parsons, *The Boy Looked at Johnny*, p. 32. Although this is a book, rather than an article, it was authored whilst both Burchill and Parsons were working as journalists at the *NME* and, like a journalistic article, it is contemporaneous and written in the style of their published work for *NME*. Indeed, it draws on work that previously appeared in *NME*.
158. Silvertown, 'All Grown Up and Nowhere To Go', p. 30.
159. Lynden Barber, 'Beyond the Obvious', *Melody Maker*, 4 April 1981, p. 19.
160. In light of Lydon's arrest and sentencing, it is perhaps unsurprising that this trip to Ireland received a considerable amount of attention in the music press. See, for example, Adrian Thrills, 'Will Johnny Be Rotten in Jail?', *New Musical Express*, 11 October 1980, pp. 3-4; Anonymous, 'We Fought The Law', *Sounds*, 11 October 1980, p. 10. The *MM* news item explained: 'The Lydon family comes from Ireland and one of John's reasons for going was to visit relatives in Cork'. (Anonymous, 'John Lydon Jailed For Three Months', *Melody Maker*, 11 October 1980, p. 5).
161. Adrian Thrills, 'In Search Of An Ireland Paradise', *New Musical Express*, 18 October 1980, pp. 17-8. In the interview, the journalist explained that Jimmy Lydon 'is a London Irishman and exceedingly proud of the fact' (p. 17).
162. Bill Graham, 'Wild Man of Punk Goes Free', *New Musical Express*, 13 December 1980, p. 6.
163. Frank Worral, 'The Cradle Snatchers', *Melody Maker*, 3 September 1983, p. 26.
164. Paul Du Noyer, 'Oh, Such Drama!', *Q* (August 1987), p. 58.
165. John Harris, 'The Bruise Brothers', *New Musical Express*, 23 April 1994, p. 49.
166. Perry, 'Chaos. Drink. Noise. Drugs. Songs ... ', p. 82.
167. Gavin Martin, 'Round Are Wa-Hey!', *New Musical Express*, 4 May 1996, p. 41. This

journalist also pointed out that Liam ‘proves himself a noble descendant of those other Anglo Irish [sic] end-of-their-tether vocalists - John Lydon and John Lennon’ (p. 41).

168. Maconie *et al*, ‘One Nation Under a Groove’, pp. 88, 68.

169. Frith, *Sound Effects*, p. 173.

Chapter Five

Re-thinking Second-Generation Irish Music-Making in England:

The Case of The Smiths

I think I had the best of both places [Dublin and Manchester] and the best of both countries [Ireland and England]. I'm 'one of us' on both sides

Morrissey¹

I don't consider myself to be either [Irish or English] ... I hate nationalism of any kind. I feel absolutely nothing when I see the Union Jack, except repulsion ... and I don't feel Irish either. I'm Mancunian-Irish

Johnny Marr²

[Music] can stimulate inter-cultural understanding at a deeply personal level, with the result that a person is no longer a member solely of one culture

Catherine Ellis³

In 'America! America!', Delmore Schwartz's fictive negotiation of second-generation Jewish-American experience in mid-twentieth century New York, the central protagonist Shenandoah, a short-story writer, considers the ostensible lack of relevance that his Jewish immigrant upbringing has had for his urbane, metropolitan literary endeavours. Reflecting on the 'separation' that he felt from his parents and their immigrant peer group, he '[shrugs] away his unease by assuring himself that this separation had nothing to do with the important thing, which was the work itself'. However, as Shenandoah continues to reflect on the ethnic sensibilities of his immigrant parents and their friends he begins

to feel that he was wrong to suppose that the separation, the contempt, and the gulf had nothing to do with his work; perhaps, on the contrary, it was the center; or perhaps it was the starting-point and compelled the innermost motion of the work to be flight, or criticism, or denial, or rejection.⁴

In this chapter, I want to suggest that the performance of The Smiths can be understood as a particular second-generation Irish musical ‘route’ in the pop cultural context of 1980s England. In this sense, I will be suggesting that the aesthetic strategies mobilised by the group, whilst ostensibly having little resonance with notions of Irishness in England, might be re-considered from a perspective analogous to that proffered by Schwartz’s Shenandoah.

Rather than taking the ostensible lack of an Irish dimension in the performance of The Smiths as grounds for overlooking the group’s immigrant Irish background, then, I want to consider exactly what it was that they did *instead*, for as Stuart Hall has pointed out, ‘it is only through the way in which we represent and imagine ourselves that we come to know how we are constituted and who we are’.⁵ Accordingly, what I want to suggest is that the particular musical ‘route’ that The Smiths took, rather than being understood as a negation of Irishness, might be more usefully conceived as *constituting* a particular second-generation Irish aesthetic strategy, operating synchronically with Shane MacGowan’s Pogues and Kevin Rowland’s Dexy’s Midnight Runners, and diachronically with John Lydon and Oasis. What this comparative approach provides is a means by which to map the diverse musical ‘routes’ traversed by the second-generation Irish, facilitating the development of productive ‘inside readings’⁶ of the variegated aesthetic forms mobilised by this generation in their negotiation of the complex relationship between ‘where you’re at’ and ‘where you’re from’.⁷

If second-generation Irish identity-formation processes have been marked, as Arrowsmith and Ullah have suggested, by notions of uncertainty, ambivalence and indeterminacy,⁸ then the performance of The Smiths, rather than attempting to resolve the apparent tensions posed by a putative Irish/English dilemma by vigorously asserting an essentialist Irishness (in the manner of, for example, MacGowan), or overstating an easy assimilation into Englishness (which Morrissey appeared to do in his later solo career), offers a dramatisation of this condition of ambivalence and uncertainty itself, particularly with regard to notions of home, return, belonging and origins.

Rather than adopting a stable and secure position on either side of a neatly forged binary division, then, the group instead conveyed a desire for transgression and anti-segregationism, whilst maintaining an unequivocally dissident sensibility - particularly regarding hegemonic forms of Englishness - and positing themselves as eccentric outsiders on the margins of 1980s British popular culture. This marginal standpoint was informed, moreover, not by an identifiably Irish-in-England set of interests or concerns, but by a more broadly conceived affiliation with a range of radical positions that coalesced in opposition to the Thatcher administration, including Ken Livingstone's GLC, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, British coal miners, animal rights activists, vegetarianism, feminism, and republicanism. In light of this point, I want to suggest that The Smiths, rather than displaying a narcissistic preoccupation with Irishness *qua* Irishness (exemplified in the regressive and potentially disabling practice of negating 'where you're at' whilst naively celebrating 'where you're from'), instead mobilised a speaking position that might be called a 'critical outsidership', by which I mean that they developed a radical critique of hegemonic forms of Englishness from a marginalised perspective, rather than offering a straightforward assertion of Irish difference.

Moreover, I will argue that this decision to eschew an identifiably Irish speaking position might be understood as a strategic manoeuvre - in the political and cultural context of 1980s England - to offer an effective dissident gesture.

In taking the performance of The Smiths (as well as the other musicians outlined above) as the principal object of analysis, I will be considering a diverse range of primary texts, including song lyrics and music, as well as interviews, photographs, promotional videos and tour programmes, for as Richard Dyer has demonstrated, 'all official ... and semi-official publicity about a star', including 'interviews, profiles [and] critical biographies', operate in conjunction with 'records, videos, posters and promo photos', towards the 'the building of a star image'.⁹ Such texts and practices are of course shaped by a range of different contexts - commercial, aesthetic, ideological - so rather than inferring that certain signs can somehow reveal an unmediated 'truth' about a particular performer, I will instead take such practices as self-conscious performance strategies, rather than as 'authentic' expressions of an individual's life experience. And while such practices do not necessarily produce signs with commensurate status, it is my contention that pop meanings are conceived across a diverse constellation of musical and para-musical sites. I will therefore endeavour to identify the production of such meanings across a variegated set of performance practices.

The majority of scholarly engagements with popular music, however, have tended to overlook the music itself.¹⁰ A fundamental difficulty that has undoubtedly inhibited endeavours in this area has been the fact that 'the sounds of music do not obviously refer outside themselves to the world of objects, events and linguistically encodable ideas'.¹¹ However, while 'the medium of music' appears to have little or no 'meaning in and of itself', it nevertheless 'offers up

potentials and *possibilities* for the construction and investment of meaning'.¹² In this chapter, then, I seek to identify, with the assistance of musicologically informed analyses of The Smiths, some such 'potentials' and 'possibilities'.¹³

Clearly my analysis of such texts will not be an attempt to tease out a prescribed essence of Irishness in the performance of The Smiths, not least because popular music has been characterised, as Tony Mitchell has pointed out, by 'a constant flow of appropriations in which origins ... are often difficult, if not impossible, to trace' ("English" song', for A.L. Lloyd, has been "saturated" with Irish melodic influences since the eighteenth century').¹⁴ Moreover, popular culture, as Stuart Hall has explained, 'is not at all, as we sometimes think of it, the arena where we find who we really are, the truth of our experience'. Instead, '[it] is a theater of popular desires ... of popular fantasies' in which 'we discover and play with the identifications of ourselves'.¹⁵ Nevertheless, as Hall has emphasised elsewhere, 'we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture ... We are all, in that sense, *ethnically* located'.¹⁶ And while popular music, as Nabeel Zuberi has pointed out, 'doesn't reflect reality', it nevertheless 'stages desires that spring from real social, political and economic conditions'.¹⁷ This chapter will endeavour to locate The Smiths in terms of the particular (and largely overlooked) immigrant background from which the group emerged, demonstrating that this context provides a useful perspective from which to consider their work. In light of this particular focus, it is useful to begin by outlining salient biographical details of the group's members.

'It's time the tale were told': a short biography of The Smiths

The Smiths were formed in Manchester in May 1982 when Johnny Maher, an eighteen-year

-old guitarist, approached Steven Morrissey, who was then twenty-two, with a view to forming a songwriting partnership (with Morrissey as lyricist/vocalist and Maher conceiving musical ideas and arrangements). After early collaborations between the pair proved fruitful, Maher (who elected, shortly after the group's formation, to switch his name to Marr) drafted in a rhythm section, recruiting an old school friend and former musical partner, Andy Rourke (eighteen), to play bass guitar, and enlisting Mike Joyce (nineteen) as the group's drummer.¹⁸

The group played their debut concert in October 1982, and later signed for the independent London-based record label, Rough Trade, with whom they remained throughout their recording career. The Smiths went on to record four studio albums (with three reaching number two in the British album charts, and one making the top spot), and sixteen singles (most of which reached the British Top 30), whilst performing approximately two hundred concerts in Britain, Ireland, Europe and North America, before disbanding in August 1987.¹⁹

Morrissey and Maher were responsible for co-writing all (and co-producing many) of the group's songs, and were audibly foregrounded in Smiths' recordings and live performances. Indeed, it would later transpire that the pair actually constituted the legal definition of The Smiths. Attention will accordingly be focused on them in this chapter, and I shall henceforth refer to the pair as Morrissey and Marr, the names that they adopted after the formation of The Smiths.²⁰

Morrissey's parents, who were both from Dublin, had settled in the Hulme and Moss Side districts of Manchester in the mid-1950s, where Morrissey (born 1959) was raised in an extended Irish family of uncles, aunts and grandparents living on the same street.²¹ Morrissey

has explained: 'I grew up in a strong Irish community', adding: 'We were quite happy to ghettoise ourselves as the Irish community in Manchester, the Irish stuck rigidly together and there'd always be a relation living two doors down, around the back or up the passage'.²² This Irish dimension 'steeped', as Morrissey has put it, 'into everything I knew growing up': 'I was very aware of being Irish and we were told that we were quite separate from the ... kids around us - we were different to them'. If this consciousness of Irish difference was reinforced by family trips to Dublin, it was undoubtedly heightened by Morrissey's subjection, in Manchester, to particular forms of anti-Irish prejudice, not least being labelled 'Paddy' at a time when, as the singer has recalled, 'it was a bitter and malevolent slur'.²³

The fact that Morrissey was designated with this particular label seems rather incongruous in light of his apparent reluctance, during his formative years, to adhere to the normative codes of a putative 'Paddy' stereotype (with its heavily masculinised connotations of physical violence and excessive alcohol consumption),²⁴ a point that evidently caused some consternation amongst his Irish Catholic peer group, one of whom later recalled:

We were first generation [sic] Irish all from strong Catholic backgrounds, all in culture shock. We knew the macho world of Irish pubs. Most of our fathers worked in the building trade. You were told all the time that you were *men*. You've got this fellow [Morrissey] wandering around with you and he seems feminine. It was a bit bewildering. When somebody didn't act the accepted norm, it set them apart.²⁵

Eschewing this 'macho world of Irish pubs' (with which Morrissey's father, a manual labourer,

was presumably not unfamiliar), Morrissey instead became interested, under the tutelage of his librarian mother, in Irish authors, especially Oscar Wilde: 'She instilled Oscar Wilde into me' he would later explain.²⁶ And while Morrissey has pointed out that 'most of the people I ever cared about in literature came from Ireland', his particular area of interest was undoubtedly the work of Wilde: 'I've read everything he wrote and everything written about him and I still find him totally awe-inspiring'.²⁷ However, despite his apparent interest in literature, Morrissey passed only three of the four 'O' Level exams that he took at Stretford Technical School, having previously attended Catholic primary and secondary schools in Hulme and Stretford (where many of his teachers had been Irish).²⁸

While he received no further formal education,²⁹ Morrissey did go on to publish some of his own literary endeavours, not least in the form of concert reviews and letters to the music press (he frequently attended the Manchester performances of visiting punk groups such as the Sex Pistols), but also articles in punk fanzines and, perhaps most notably, in his short biographies of film star James Dean, and rock group the New York Dolls. Perhaps more significantly, Morrissey was, like Shane MacGowan and Kevin Rowland, also involved at this time (albeit fleetingly) with various punk groups, most notably as vocalist and lyricist for The Nosebleeds (c. 1978).³⁰

Johnny Marr's parents left their home in Athy, County Kildare in the early 1960s and, like the Morrisseys, lived amongst an extended Irish family on two adjacent terraced streets in Ardwick, a working-class district of Manchester.³¹ Marr (born 1963) has explained that he was, during his formative years, 'surrounded by Irish culture' (emphasising that 'it does rub off'), an aspect of his upbringing that was underscored by the family's frequent trips to Ireland.³² Moreover,

Marr was, like Morrissey, subjected to particular forms of anti-Irish prejudice, and evidently ‘became accustomed to being branded an “Irish pig” at school and on the terraced streets of his native Ardwick’: ‘I had to put up with an awful lot of snide remarks and false media reports about the Irish in England. I certainly did feel very different from the rest of my friends’.³³

While the major source of employment amongst the Mahers was manual labour and construction, Marr’s parents were also involved in promoting musical events in the city, and the extended family’s musical skills were regularly displayed at weekly parties in the Maher household.³⁴ In light of Marr’s claim that ‘[it] was a typical traditional Irish musical family in every sense’,³⁵ it would seem that such occasions were marked by a particular emphasis on Irish music. Similar weekly musical events were also a prominent feature of Shane MacGowan’s upbringing. As MacGowan’s mother has explained: ‘[Shane] absorbed all that ... traditional Irish music and singing ... through his pores when he was at a very formative age ... and it has had a tremendous influence on him’.³⁶ However, while such events in the MacGowan household appear to have been characterised by the performance of Irish music specifically, corresponding occasions amongst the Mahers evidently involved an engagement with a diverse range of musical forms.³⁷

Accordingly, while such gatherings in the Maher household may well have provided a forum in which to assert Irish difference, and thereby served as a form of boundary-maintenance (a point that Martin Stokes has made with regard to the musical practices of the Irish in England),³⁸ it is perhaps also worth considering that Marr’s particular musical habitus, rather than furnishing a restricted interest in Irish music exclusively, instead equipped him with a more catholic taste for musical expression *per se*. For if music does indeed act as a marker of individual and

collective forms of difference, it can also, as Stokes rightly suggests, 'be used as a means of transcending the limitations of our own place in the world, of constructing trajectories rather than boundaries'.³⁹

This possibility appears to gain sustenance from the fact that Marr's upbringing was not characterised by an aggressive repudiation of the 'host' environment, nor a rigid adherence to Irish difference. On the contrary, his parents were (unlike those of, say, MacGowan), 'very happy', as he has put it, 'to be in Manchester', and '[brought him] up', moreover, 'to be suspicious of people who do the "old country blarney" thing',⁴⁰ a term that might be taken as shorthand for the adoption of narrow, regressive and essentialist forms of ethnic identification amongst the Irish in England. And in light of Marr's apparent aversion to the more 'kitsch' varieties of Irish music in England (he has explained that his 'first ever exposure to music came from seeing not very good Irish showbands play in Manchester'),⁴¹ it would not be unreasonable to infer that he, like Noel Gallagher, felt 'stifled' by the social and aesthetic constraints of the 'traditional' Irish music scene in Manchester,⁴² and perhaps conceived of his burgeoning musicality, instead, as a 'medium', in the words of John Shepherd, for 'the expansion of individual and cultural horizons'.⁴³

In any case, it was during weekly musical events at the Maher household that Marr's father, who sang and played the accordion, began to teach his son the harmonica, an instrument that Marr would subsequently use to signal the beginning and end of The Smiths' recording career (a harmonica riff can be heard in the opening bars of the group's debut single, as well as in the fading coda of their final album).⁴⁴ And while such occasions served as Marr's primary encounter with musical performance, his specific interest in the guitar was cultivated on

frequent trips to Kildare where an Irish uncle would demonstrate guitar-playing skills whilst performing Irish ballads and popular songs.⁴⁵

Interestingly, Marr's early engagement with this particular instrument manifested itself in a fixation with the Irish blues guitarist, Rory Gallagher, 'whose album sleeves and posters', in the words of The Smiths' biographer Johnny Rogan, 'lined the walls of [the teenage Marr's] bedroom'. Marr's first electric guitar was, moreover, 'a Rory Gallagher stratocaster copy, and he followed the Ballyshannon bluesman's concerts with hawkish vigilance'.⁴⁶ Also at this time, Marr developed a keen interest in folk music, paying specific attention to Martin Carthy, an English folk singer/guitarist of Irish descent, whose 'novel approach to the acoustic guitar accompaniment of traditional songs', as Hardy and Laing have pointed out, 'owed much to the Irish virtuoso uilleann-piper Seamus Ennis, whose playing Carthy tried to translate into guitar techniques'.⁴⁷ Indeed, Marr has explained that during the late 1970s, while Morrissey was attending to an interest in punk music, he was listening instead to the work of Carthy.⁴⁸

Despite his obvious interest in musical performance, though, Marr received no formal musical training, and fared little better than Morrissey in his school examinations, leaving his Catholic secondary school at sixteen with few qualifications. However, during his time at school Marr had formed a group with Rourke called The Paris Valentinos (c. 1977-79) who performed cover versions of Thin Lizzy and Rory Gallagher songs. Interestingly, the pair also played guitars at local Sunday Folk Masses in exchange for the use of Church rehearsal space for their various rock projects. After leaving school, Marr continued to be involved (usually alongside Rourke) with various rock bands, most notably White Dice (c. 1979-81), before moving in a dance/funk direction with The Freak Party (c. 1981-82), in the period immediately prior to the formation

of The Smiths.⁴⁹

As I have already explained, it was shortly after this point that the guitarist elected to switch his name from Maher to Marr, a decision that was evidently based on the fact that people in England had experienced difficulty in pronouncing the name correctly, but also because a member of an earlier Manchester group, The Buzzcocks, had had the same name.⁵⁰ There has, of course, been a long tradition of popular musicians adopting stage names, a tendency that has been particularly prominent amongst immigrant-descended performers.⁵¹ Indeed, many rock and pop musicians of Irish descent have changed their names, most notably Dusty Springfield (Mary O'Brien), Johnny Rotten (John Lydon), Elvis Costello (Declan McManus), Chas Smash of Madness (Cathal Smyth), and Boy George (George O'Dowd). Yet even if Marr's name change was informed by practical considerations rather than a desire to 'pass' as English, it nevertheless had the effect of veiling the guitarist's Irishness.

Rourke (born 1964) was raised by an Irish father in Ashton-upon-Mersey (and later Sharston), after his English mother had separated from Rourke's father (a self-employed businessman), and left the family home. Rourke attended the same Catholic secondary school as Marr, and like the guitarist, left at sixteen with few qualifications. He subsequently found work in a timber yard whilst engaging (usually with Marr) in various rock, pop and funk projects.⁵² Joyce (born 1963), meanwhile, had grown up in Fallowfield with a father from Galway and a mother from Portarlinton, County Kildare. In common with the other Smiths, Joyce had left his Catholic secondary school at sixteen, and (with the exception of a few flute lessons) had no formal musical training. Nevertheless, he went on to record and tour with a local punk group, the Hoax (c. 1978-1981), before joining a Manchester-based Northern Irish punk group, Victim

(c. 1981-1982).⁵³

Irishness, pop and politics in early 1980s Britain

While a founder member of Oasis has explained that the reason that group ‘came together was because we were Irish Mancunians and working class’,⁵⁴ Marr has not specified the extent to which he was actually conscious of the fact that he had assembled, in The Smiths, a group of second-generation Irish Catholics. Nevertheless, members of the group would subsequently draw attention (albeit in an inconsistent and contradictory manner) to their collective Irish upbringing.⁵⁵ For instance, in one of The Smiths’ earliest interviews with a national music paper, Morrissey indicated that each member of the group was second-generation Irish, while in an interview to promote the group’s debut album, he explained: ‘obviously, with having Irish parents as everyone in the group has, we’re all deeply imbedded [sic] there [in Ireland]’,⁵⁶ a point that was underlined by the group’s extensive concert tours of the Irish Republic, which took in not only the established circuit of venues in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway (itself fairly untypical for visiting rock bands of this period), but also smaller towns like Waterford, Dundalk, and Letterkenny.⁵⁷

Notwithstanding this point, though, it certainly seems clear that during 1982, the year in which Marr brought The Smiths together, questions of national identity and ethnic difference in England had been heightened by particular events, not least Britain’s military engagement in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict (and the attendant assertion of British patriotism in popular discourses), but also the so-called ‘race’ riots that had swept across England, including the Greater Manchester area, during the summer of 1981.⁵⁸ Moreover, issues pertaining to Irishness in particular had been foregrounded at this time in the realms of both politics and

popular culture. Most notably, the early 1980s had been marked by a succession of IRA bomb attacks in English cities and the deaths of ten Irish republican hunger strikers in 1981 inevitably heightened public consciousness of this particularly fraught moment in Anglo-Irish relations.⁵⁹ While the visit of the Pope to Britain in 1982 served to raise the profile of Roman Catholics in England, the majority of whom were, as Terry Eagleton has pointed out, of Irish descent,⁶⁰ this evidently did little to quell popular expressions of anti-Irish prejudice. Indeed, in October 1982, the month in which The Smiths played their debut concert, the London *Evening Standard* printed a flagrantly anti-Irish cartoon (a mock film poster advertising ‘The Irish: The Ultimate in Psychopathic Horror’), that went on to ‘gain’, as Martin McLoone has pointed out, ‘a degree of notoriety among the Irish communities in Britain’ for ‘exacerbating the anti-Irish prejudice with which they were already trying to cope’.⁶¹

As I demonstrated in Chapter Four, expressions of anti-Irishness were also evident in popular music discourses during this period.⁶² Indeed, Kevin Rowland, whose group Dexy’s Midnight Runners had the most commercially successful British pop record of 1982, made a public intervention in *The Face* about that magazine’s alleged trading in anti-Irish sentiment.⁶³ Moreover, the ‘Celtic’ persona that Rowland adopted in 1982 was, as the singer would later explain, born of a desire to assert his Irishness in the face of the socially negative status that he felt had been bestowed upon it: ‘I had a need, in me’, he recalled, ‘to find a way of saying that “I’m Irish and I’m not shit”’.⁶⁴ And while Rowland’s endeavour to redesignate Dexy’s as ‘Celtic’ historically coincided with the emergence of MacGowan’s Pogues,⁶⁵ one of the other major British pop groups of 1982, Culture Club, also featured a second-generation Irish frontman, Boy George (George O’Dowd), a point that had informed the name of the group, and which received mention in *The Sun* in October 1982, when the group were at the number one

spot in the British singles chart.⁶⁶

Even the third-generation Irish musician Elvis Costello (Declan McManus) felt compelled to foreground his Irishness at this time. In a 1982 discussion about British nationalism published just a few weeks before The Smiths' debut concert, Costello explained:

You can point fingers and say, 'These are the people who are the source of all your problems: it's the black people' ... I'm English, but my ancestry is Irish, and they used to say the same about the Irish as well. My wife's Irish. Sooner or later, we'll probably have to leave England - because I'm sure the people of England will try and send the Irish back.⁶⁷

Indeed, such was the prominence of the figure of the second-generation Irish rock musician at this time that it even received fictional dramatisation in the character of Finn, a singer in a Manchester punk group, in Trevor Griffiths' teleplay *Oi For England*, which was broadcast on British television in April 1982, only a few weeks before the initial meeting of Morrissey and Marr.⁶⁸

In light of these considerations, then, it would seem likely that the individual members of The Smiths would have been conscious, at least to some degree, of the group's collective Irish background during this formative period. In any case, it is this dimension of the group that I wish to pursue further in this chapter. However, this is not simply because of the apparent gesture, in The Smiths' founding moment, towards a particular form of (ethnic) commonality (made explicit in the foregrounding of kinship - albeit in a peculiarly Anglo-Saxon form - in the

band's name).⁶⁹ Instead, it is because this gesture seems all the more remarkable in light of the fact that the group's subsequent performance, as The Smiths, was characterised (as I will demonstrate) by an ambivalent sensibility in which notions of home, belonging and origins were marked by uncertainty and instability. Indeed, this sensibility, in conjunction with the group's transgressive impulse, offered an implicit repudiation of any exclusivist desire for fixed and stable forms of boundary maintenance. These are the points, then, that I wish to explore in my analysis of The Smiths. Prior to this, however, the particular nature of the group's performance requires some contextualisation.

Sounding Out The Smiths

[We] all grow up with *something*, but we can choose just about *anything* by way of expressive culture

Mark Slobin⁷⁰

The former Suede guitarist Bernard Butler (who is also second-generation Irish) has claimed that there is a 'huge Irish influence' in The Smiths' music, pointing out that there was 'a lot of melancholy' in Marr's guitar playing.⁷¹ The Irish cultural critic John Waters has taken this point even further, suggesting that

The Smiths' dark introspection, tragic narcissism, ironic world-view and swirling tunefulness fashioned a profound, existential connection with those of us born [in mid-twentieth century Ireland], a connection which it is impossible to explain in other than mystical terms.⁷²

Notwithstanding the validity of such points (which often steer precariously close to essentialist conceptions of Irishness and thereby serve to counter the assumption that The Smiths were quintessentially English with the notion that they were in fact archetypally Irish), it is clear that Morrissey and Marr, rather than mobilising an identifiably Irish aesthetic, embarked instead on a highly innovative, and remarkably eclectic, venture into the terrain of ‘independent’ guitar-based rock.⁷³

There were, nevertheless, stylistic traces of musical forms associated with the Irish in post-war England, most notably folk (and, to a lesser extent, country and western).⁷⁴ Indeed, for Stringer ‘the all-engulfing sound of folk-rock’ was ‘everywhere apparent’ in The Smiths,⁷⁵ a characteristic of the group’s music that was undoubtedly enhanced by Marr’s use of ‘folk’ guitar tunings,⁷⁶ not to mention his decision to perform a mandolin solo on ‘Please, Please, Please, Let Me Get What I Want’ (the music for which he conceived whilst reflecting on his childhood amongst the extended Maher family in Ardwick).⁷⁷

But even in light of these considerations, it is clear that the aesthetic of The Smiths was, as I suggested earlier, located within a particular rock idiom. It was certainly not the group’s project, for example, to hybridise ‘traditional’ Irish musical styles in the manner of contemporaneous second-generation musicians such as Shane MacGowan (whose post-punk reconfiguration of Irish folk music articulated a peculiarly London-Irish experience), or Kevin Rowland (who endeavoured to fuse Irish music with northern soul).⁷⁸

Eschewing such an ostentatious display of Irishness, the principal musical codes that the group mobilised were derived from an eclectic range of sources (in his analysis of the group, Stringer

emphasises Marr's 'pluralist approach' to popular music).⁷⁹ And while, as John Peel has claimed, The Smiths '[appeared] to have not been influenced by anything that preceded them',⁸⁰ these sources would arguably include: the 'neo-folk' of 1960s American west coast bands like The Byrds ('This Charming Man'); 'English folk revival' guitarists such as Bert Jansch and Martin Carthy ('Back to the Old House'; 'Reel Around the Fountain');⁸¹ 1950s American rock and roll ('Nowhere Fast', 'Shakespeare's Sister');⁸² the rhythm and blues templates of 1960s English rock bands such as the Rolling Stones ('I Want the One I Can't Have'); the funk techniques of bands like Chic ('Barbarism Begins at Home'); and the fusing of standard rock patterns with jazz ('Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now'), and high-life ('Ask') inflections.⁸³

Despite such eclecticism, Marr typically concocted an unmistakably 'clean' and 'bright' guitar sound (there was, for instance, little of the distortion effect typically associated with post-punk and new wave bands),⁸⁴ but one that was nevertheless heavily laden with chorusing and reverberation (via a back-line of Fender Twin Reverb and Roland Jazz Chorus amplifiers), and characterised (on record) by the multi-layered textures of numerous (electric and acoustic) guitar overdubs.⁸⁵

In terms of his particular style, Marr endeavoured to perform both lead and rhythm parts simultaneously, so rather than simply strumming a succession of power chords, he instead tended towards the plucking of individual strings, arpeggiating passing and auxiliary notes.⁸⁶ However, while Marr's guitar-playing was customarily marked by high register quasi-soloistic phrasing ('This Charming Man', 'Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now', 'Ask'), he performed very few conventional guitar 'breaks' (a reticence that may have been informed by an 'indie'

repudiation of the highly masculinist ‘cock rock’ conventions of 1970s stadium rock groups).

Marr’s guitar tracks, which were usually tuned a couple of semitones higher than concert pitch,⁸⁷ were accompanied by Rourke’s (conventionally tuned) bass parts, which tended towards independent melodic lines (most pronounced in tracks like ‘This Charming Man’, ‘Rusholme Ruffians’, and ‘Barbarism Begins at Home’), that were untypical of post-punk, new wave and ‘indie’ bands, and perhaps owed something to his previous involvement with funk and dance music. Nevertheless, Rourke’s melodies served, at the same time, ‘to reinforce certain elements of the kit’s basic pattern’, an ‘aspect of the bass’s role’ that Moore draws particular attention to in his analysis of rock ‘style’.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, Joyce largely adhered what Moore has called ‘the “standard rock beat”’⁸⁹ (presumably deviating little from his previous drumming in Manchester punk groups), on a basic kit, utilising hi-hat, crash and ride cymbals, as well as snare and tom-tom drums, but making scarce use of extra percussion (such as cow-bells), and only on occasion using brushes (‘Stretch Out and Wait’). Nevertheless, Joyce has claimed that his drumming for The Smiths developed contrapuntally with Rourke’s bass playing, suggesting that this was a key factor in the distinctiveness of the group’s sound: ‘I’d always be going against what Andy would be playing ... It’s considered wrong to play *against* the bass player, but that was what people first latched on to. It made The Smiths sound different from other groups’.⁹⁰

The final point to acknowledge regarding The Smiths’ instrumentalists is the high degree of musical competency that they displayed, especially Marr and Rourke, whose performances tended towards ‘sophistication’ rather than ‘simplicity’ (to borrow the terms that Moore uses to

identify two co-existing impulses in popular music).⁹¹ The group's songs were, moreover, highly crafted and meticulously produced, in stark contrast to the markedly primitivist 'do-it-yourself' ethic of the punk aesthetic, a point to which Marr himself has drawn attention.⁹² At the same time, though, the group steered clear of the excessive displays of technical virtuosity associated with the 'progressive' rock acts of the early 1970s against which punk had attempted to define itself.

An equally (if not more) prominent texture in The Smiths' sound was, of course, Morrissey's vocal performance which tended towards the 'studied ordinariness lacking in range and resonance' that Moore identifies in Morrissey's fellow Mancunian 'indie' vocalist, Tim Booth of James, and was characterised by a low to middle register 'spoken-sung' form of delivery, with little utilisation of technical effects, other than reverberation.⁹³ Perhaps the most salient aspect of Morrissey's vocal, though, was its '[straining]', as Stringer has put it, 'for "correct" [and] clear English diction',⁹⁴ a feature that has certainly not been an inevitable preference amongst English rock vocalists (nor indeed for second-generation Irish singers: MacGowan, at precisely the same time, was developing an identifiably Irish form of enunciation). Morrissey's gravitation towards a specifically English singing voice is likely to have been informed, at least to some degree, by his previous engagement (as a fan, critic, and musician) with late 1970s punk music (which had been marked by a proliferation of 'local' voices).⁹⁵

However, despite this apparent adherence to the punk aesthetic which, as Moore has suggested, gave singers 'licence to deviate from the norms of rock singing style',⁹⁶ the lucidity and precision of Morrissey's vocal phrasing clearly deviated from the 'low-status pronunciations' and 'nonstandard grammatical forms' that Peter Trudgill has identified as characteristic of

punk vocalists.⁹⁷ Moreover, the ‘emotive connotations’ of Morrissey’s vocal tone were markedly different from those of, say, John Lydon;⁹⁸ the former delivered the bulk of his song words in a manner that was characterised by ‘restraint and calm’.⁹⁹

In common with most English rock singers, though, Morrissey had received no formal vocal training, and displayed the kind of “‘untrained” (“natural”) voice’ that, for Moore, ‘is important in the ideology of rock as signifying “authenticity”’,¹⁰⁰ an issue to which I will return later.

Morrissey’s vocal delivery was, moreover, punctuated with idiosyncratic gestures, most notably his use of what Stringer has described as ‘a number of indulgent or excessive traits that [were] redundant to the job of simply getting the words across’. These included: ‘a specific form of attack and delay, whereby lines are sung with a quick or drawn out emphasis, then held [and] sustained through melisma’, ‘a constant use of irony, both through tone and phrasing’, and ‘the use of wild falsetto’.¹⁰¹

Of course, Morrissey was also responsible for writing the lyrics that he delivered in Smiths’ songs, and it is worth emphasising here that his song words were an important component of the group’s performance. Morrissey’s singing was, as I have demonstrated, clearly foregrounded in the group’s performance (for Stringer, The Smiths’ songs ‘were painstakingly written around Morrissey’s voice’),¹⁰² and was marked by a clear and precise enunciation of song lyrics that were also transcribed on the inner sleeves of all of the group’s albums.

While the particular meanings of song words may, as Frith has maintained, be less significant in the work of a rock *auteur*¹⁰³ (which, to the extent that such terms are useful, we might consider Morrissey to be), whose ‘approach’, as Dave Laing has suggested, is

‘determined not by the unique features of the song but by [the auteur’s] personal style, the ensemble of vocal effects that characterise the whole body of his [sic] work’,¹⁰⁴ the peculiar characteristics of Morrissey’s vocal performance drew special attention to his song words. For as Hubbs has pointed out, the relative absence of ‘melodic motion’ in the singer’s vocal style (in other words, ‘the static quality of his melodies’) bestowed a ‘declamatory emphasis’ on Morrissey’s ‘distinctive lyrics’.¹⁰⁵ Thus, The Smiths’ song words merit specific attention in any analysis of their performance.

Admittedly, the meanings of a particular song do not, as Peter Winkler has pointed out, reside ‘entirely in the lyrics’.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, while it would be problematic to focus solely on song lyrics (which are, of course, audible ‘sounds’ and sonic ‘gestures’ as much as transcribed ‘words’ and semantic ‘utterances’),¹⁰⁷ ‘it would equally’, as Winkler goes on to explain, ‘be a mistake to ignore them’.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, as Frith has pointed out, ‘[popular] music is a song form; words are a reason why people buy records’.¹⁰⁹ I will therefore consider the group’s song lyrics, albeit in the broader context of vocal gestures and musical setting, as well as interview comments and other forms of para-musical signification.

In terms of lyrical themes and images, Hubbs has identified, in Morrissey’s song words for The Smiths, a recurring engagement with, amongst other things, the tropes of ‘despair’, ‘betrayal’ and ‘alienation’, as well as ‘self-mockery and -deprecation’.¹¹⁰ For his part, Morrissey has claimed that the principal literary sources from which he drew included the works of Oscar Wilde and the Salford-Irish playwright Shelagh Delaney.¹¹¹ And regardless of the extent to which it is possible to identify such influences in Smiths’ song words, it is certainly worth noting that these writers became prominent figures in the performance of The Smiths. For

during the period in which MacGowan and Rowland were aligning themselves with Brendan Behan,¹¹² whom they evidently found to be a useful template for Irish cultural expression in England, Morrissey was turning to a different kind of Irish-in-England literary source, launching an analogous project to attach himself to Wilde and, to a lesser extent, Delaney, by alluding to such writers in a variety of ways in interviews, promotional photos, videos, record sleeves as well as song lyrics.¹¹³

Perhaps the most important point to make about The Smiths' song words, at the outset, is their intentional conflation of Morrissey, the singer, with the songs' putative speaker or persona (the 'I'). As Hubbs has noted, the group's song lyrics were 'characterized by [Morrissey's] singular first-person perspective',¹¹⁴ and the singer frequently maintained that 'the songs are about my own life', insisting that 'I speak from direct experience', and claiming that his lyrics would 'always be autobiography'.¹¹⁵ And while such a discursive conflation of biographical experience with lyrical expression should not, of course, be taken at face value, this conflation was clearly a prominent component of the group's performance.

A further dimension of The Smiths' persona that is worth mentioning, is their visual style which, as Zoe Williams has pointed out, 'was far more complex and controversial than the standard indie uniform of grubby black items and ill-hewn hair'.¹¹⁶ At a time when Rowland was dressing his group as 'raggle-taggle' gypsies, and The Pogues were developing what MacGowan would later term 'Paddy Chic',¹¹⁷ Morrissey was authenticating himself as a different sort of outsider ('standing up', as Marr would later explain, 'for the gawk'),¹¹⁸ wearing oversized shirts, beads, broaches, (functional) NHS spectacles, and a (non-operative) hearing aid (referring to this as 'disability chic'), whilst accessorising with daffodils and

gladioli (in homage to Wilde)¹¹⁹ and, during live performances, making an ungainly effort at a sort of dancing (Stringer points to the ‘neurosis’ that ‘is caught in the sight’ of the singer’s endeavours here).¹²⁰

While such flamboyancy clearly deviated from the sombre hues that characterised most post-punk English rock musicians (exemplified by the Mancunian group Joy Division), The Smiths also eschewed the make-up, dyed hair and showy apparel associated with early 1980s pop culture, and gravitated instead towards what Sean O’Hagan has called a ‘resolute ordinariness’.¹²¹ Indeed, in an early interview with the paradigmatic 1980s ‘style bible’, *The Face*, Marr explained: ‘We’re trying to encourage people to forget their cool - so much has been made of this cool thing’, while Morrissey announced: ‘We are really making [a] ... fundamental request ... for people to display their weaknesses’.¹²²

At the same time, though (and despite Marr’s claim that the group ‘wanted to ditch everything that people superficially think is rock and roll’),¹²³ The Smiths were heavily informed by the sartorial aesthetics of an ‘authentic’ rock tradition, adhering to an attire of denim, suede, and turtle necks that dovetailed neatly with Marr’s penchant for iconic rock guitars, most notably the Rickenbacker 330, Gibson 355, and Gretsch Chet Atkins.¹²⁴ This brings me to the final general point about the performance of The Smiths, before offering my own analysis of the group, which is their mobilisation of a rock authenticity.

Perhaps the most appropriate starting point, here, is the name ‘The Smiths’, a moniker whose ‘peculiarly English connotations gave the lie’, as Rogan has put it, ‘to its membership’s full-blooded Irish extraction’.¹²⁵ And while the group’s collective adoption of an archetypal

English surname (a name that Morrissey rather naively - or perhaps disingenuously - claimed that 'nobody could put any possible connotations on'),¹²⁶ might be read as a 'passing' gesture (particularly in light of Maher's concomitant switching to Marr) it seems that, for the group at least, this name was an attempt to convey a kind of neo-realist resistance in the face of the proliferation of extravagantly named synthesizer-rock bands in the early 1980s, such as Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, A Flock of Seagulls, and Blue Rondo A La Turk, the group that The Smiths 'supported' at their debut concert.¹²⁷ In this context, 'The Smiths', as Morrissey explained, 'sounded quite ... down to earth'.¹²⁸

The Smiths' antipathy to such groups was, however, not registered solely at the level of nomenclature. Indeed, for Morrissey, the group's sound was itself a repudiation of the emergent 'synth-rock' aesthetic. Thus, in an early interview he announced that The Smiths were 'an argument against' the 'entire non-human feel with the use of synth in so much [contemporary] music'.¹²⁹ As Moore has pointed out, 'the "mainstream" of rock culture' in the early 1980s 'seemed to be flowing not with guitars, but with synthesizers', and in this context, as Richard Middleton has explained, 'the work of committed *guitar*-based performers ... was actively taken to signify commitment to the "classic" values of rock tradition'.¹³⁰ The 'classic' values to which Middleton alludes, here, are of course imbued with notions of authenticity, and the attendant values of sincerity and integrity, all of which were discursively foregrounded by The Smiths on a regular basis:

It was not uncommon, for example, for Morrissey to insist that 'everything we say and do, we mean', describing the band's output as 'real music played by real people', 'with real heart and soul'.¹³¹ This was clearly a point with which Marr concurred: 'we really mean what we say',

‘[we] don’t put on any act, we don’t adopt a persona that says, “We are The Smiths.” *We just are*. This is *us*, there’s no great mystique’.¹³² While contemporaneous second-generation musicians such as MacGowan and Rowland were constructing a particular type of ethnic authenticity, then, The Smiths were mobilising a different sort of pop authenticity, one that Stringer has called ‘the realist aesthetic of rock ideology’.¹³³

If it was indeed the project of The Smiths to offer such a realist sensibility against the grain of a flamboyant 1980s pop culture, the group might also be understood as an implicit response to the ‘roots rock’ that, for Moore, was co-terminous with the emergence of ‘synth’ bands, especially if we locate, as Moore does, The Pogues in this context,¹³⁴ and expand this to include Dexy’s ‘Celtic’ phase. For in 1982, the year that The Smiths and The Pogues played their debut concerts, and in which Dexy’s adopted their ‘Celtic’ persona, the first Womad (World of Music and Dance) Festival, which served to showcase a diverse range of ‘ethnic’ or ‘world’ musics, was launched.¹³⁵ As MacGowan has recalled, ‘the only alternative’ at this time to the hegemony of synth-rock was provided by ‘world music bands ... playing South American music and African music’, a development that was evidently instrumental in MacGowan’s decision to engage with Irish traditional music: ‘I just thought, well, if people are being ethnic, I might as well be my own ethnic’.¹³⁶ In this context, then, the contrarily coincident musical strategies adopted by The Pogues and The Smiths (remarkably, both groups played their debut concerts on exactly the same evening in October 1982)¹³⁷ might be taken as an illustration of the distinction, proffered (albeit in a different context) by American music critic Nat Hentoff, between, on the one hand, an ‘historical authenticity, based largely on ethnicity and “roots”’, and, on the other, a ‘personal authenticity’, grounded instead on notions of ‘self-expression’.¹³⁸

This clearly raises a crucial point about the fundamentally different nature of the performance of The Smiths and The Pogues. For while MacGowan's band offered a vigorous assertion of a collective form of Irish difference (indeed, as Eamonn McCann has pointed out, 'MacGowan was the first voice ... that arose from within [the London-Irish] to give defiant and poetic expression to a community which had never really felt able to proclaim itself'),¹³⁹ Morrissey and Marr appeared instead to dramatise and animate, often in quite subtle and complex ways, particular sensibilities associated with second-generation Irish experience, at the level of the personal, and in a manner that facilitated commonalities with other types of social marginality. In this sense, The Smiths' songs functioned in a manner that, rather ironically, was not dissimilar to a particular strand of exilic Irish street ballads in Victorian Manchester. As Eva has pointed out, the 'sense of geographical, emotional and psychic displacement' that was projected in such songs resonated with an audience far beyond the city's Irish districts, '[appealing] to a pervasive sense of social and cultural dislocation'. For Eva, then, such songs offered 'a metaphor for a general sense of alienation' and 'chimed' with a variegated 'sense of social dislocation and insecurity'. Consequently, while other strands of exilic Irish song offered 'an assertion of difference, of the distinct and separate identity of the Irish in a foreign and hostile land', this strand projected 'a sense of displacement that was shared with English listeners'.¹⁴⁰

This provides a useful precedent for understanding the way in which The Smiths' grounding in notions of 'personal authenticity' and 'self-expression', rather than 'historical authenticity', 'ethnicity' and "roots", facilitated their capacity to 'articulate' (in the sense outlined by Keith Negus)¹⁴¹ with the condition of social marginality in general, rather than with Irish difference in particular. However, while it is clear that The Smiths did not speak from an identifiably Irish

articulating position ('It is rare', as Rolston has explained, 'for the "authentic" statements' of rock musicians 'to be grounded in communities of resistance'),¹⁴² this is not to say that the group's Irishness was not a salient issue for second-generation Irish fans of their music. Indeed, Oasis songwriter Noel Gallagher has recalled his initial reaction to The Smiths in terms of a shared Irishness: 'I came from an Irish background and so did this geezer Johnny Marr and it would be like, "There's another thing I can relate to."' ¹⁴³ More recently, and perhaps more surprisingly, the apparently high proportion of working-class Latino Smiths' fans in East Los Angeles have foregrounded the group's Irishness in a similar manner.¹⁴⁴

Notwithstanding such points, though, it seems that the realist rock aesthetic of The Smiths did not 'articulate' with notions of Irishness in the manner of a group like The Pogues. Indeed, it might be worth considering that The Smiths' adherence to this particular aesthetic may have inhibited their potential to engage directly with recognisably Irish issues. For as Rolston has pointed out with specific regard to the failure of rock musicians to engage with Irish political issues, such matters have 'not easily been incorporated into a genre which relates to more transitory, less articulate forms of rebellion'.¹⁴⁵

The point to note, though, is that Morrissey and Marr, in their performance as The Smiths, refused to attach themselves to an identifiably 'Irish' speaking position. However, as I have argued, rather than simply disregarding the group's Irishness on this basis, their performance might instead be considered as a particular second-generation Irish aesthetic strategy. My particular emphasis on the collective Irishness of The Smiths, then, is intended to provide a starting point for a discussion about the way in which the group's work exceeded the limits of (Irish) essentialism and (English) assimilation. And I have found it useful, in this regard, to

draw upon Eamonn Hughes' work on Irish literary expression in England, in which he draws attention to the relative absence of fiction 'about Irish-Britain in the sense of a located and, at some level, stable and secure, community which sees itself as Irish-British and which requires cultural articulation'.¹⁴⁶ In its place, such fictive endeavours have been marked, as Hughes explains, by a concern 'with individual figures for whom either Ireland itself or the state of Britain and the British, rather than a recognisable Irish-British community, is the point of reference'.

He continues, with reference to particular literary negotiations of Irish experience in Britain:

This is not the world of open aggression which has to be openly confronted and dealt with; it is instead a world in which the continuously jarring effects of living in ... a culture like and yet unlike one's own have to be internalised. It is not a question of having ... to adopt an aggressively defensive stance against blatant attack; it is instead the feeling of being continuously off-balance.

Consequently, as much of the fiction of Irish-Britain has '[registered] the effects of migration at the level of consciousness', any attempt to engage with the cultural expression of the Irish in Britain should, for Hughes, 'take into account' not only the 'public stance of being Irish-in-Britain', but also 'the private consciousness; the feeling that one lives in an out-of-kilter world'. In this context, Hughes points to the ways in which Irish literary expression in Britain has often registered 'the consequences of [the experience of being Irish in Britain] ... at the level of the idea of that most private of spaces, "home"', pointing out that '[the] contemporary fiction of Irish-Britain' is 'obsessed with ideas of home'.

Moreover, for Hughes, ‘the dominant line of Irish-in-Britain writing’ (in which he includes Goldsmith, Sheridan, Sterne, Boucicault, Wilde, Shaw and Beckett), has been ‘characterised by paradox, inversion, contradiction and irony’, rather than a set of identifiably Irish issues. And while ‘[it] has ... been said that these are features of some supposed Irish mentality’, for Hughes, ‘it [makes] much more sense to say that these features arise from, or are at least reinforced by, the experience of being Irish-in-Britain’.¹⁴⁷

Clearly it would be naive to assume a straightforward correlation between historical forms of literary expression and contemporary forms of musical endeavour. Nevertheless, I do think that Hughes’ intervention offers a particularly fruitful point of departure from which we might consider a number of key tropes in the performance of The Smiths. To this end, I will now turn to consider the group’s mobilisation of notions of ambivalence and uncertainty, particularly with regard to the tropes of home, return, belonging and origins.

Songs of ambivalence and uncertainty

In his study of the second-generation Irish, Ullah draws attention to ‘the ambivalence which was contained in [the] everyday lives’ of this generation, pointing to ‘the ambivalent status which places them at the meeting point of two cultural, social and political worlds’, and suggesting that a particular source of this condition might be ‘the job of assimilating conflicting demands on their allegiances to both English and Irish cultures’.¹⁴⁸ Significantly, such notions of ambivalence and uncertainty have also been identified as dominant tropes in particular forms of second-generation Irish cultural production. For instance, in his discussion of second-generation literary texts, Arrowsmith draws attention to the ‘ambivalence’,

‘uncertainty’, ‘instability’, and ‘indeterminacy and confusion’ that have characterised such fictive endeavours. Indeed, Arrowsmith suggests that ‘the sheer confusion of identity’ is ‘the experience most often documented by the literature of second-generation Irish-Englishness’, identifying, in particular literary negotiations, a ‘disorientating and contradictory relationship to any sense of identity’, and the ‘figuration of ... confused identity through the indeterminacy or absence of “home”’.¹⁴⁹

Similar tropes have also been identified in the work of second-generation Irish rock musicians. Jon Savage has suggested that an ‘ambivalence towards their roots is present in the work of both the Smiths and Oasis’, pointing in particular to ‘an aspirant will to succeed, to move on up and out, to go further than their parents were allowed to go, allied to a fierce pride and anger about their background’.¹⁵⁰ And Savage’s point, here, provides a useful aperture from which to begin my analysis of The Smiths. For as Savage intimates, rather than articulating a straightforward desire to transcend the constraints of one’s ‘roots’, or expressing a sentimental wish to return to some kind of fixed and secure origin, The Smiths’ engagement with notions of home, return, belonging and origins, is marked only by ambivalence and uncertainty. While the group’s engagement with such issues may not be explicitly located in notions of Irishness, second-generation Irish cultural expression has, as Arrowsmith has pointed out, tended to offer a ‘negotiation of an Irishness [that] always [bears] the traces of other discourses’, such as gender, class and region.¹⁵¹ Thus, if some of the group’s song words considered in this chapter appear to be ostensibly concerned with, say, a north-south regional divide in England, I want to suggest that the sentiments expressed in such songs offer a way of conceptualising the group’s overarching sensibility towards notions of ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ *vis a vis* Irishness, as well as, say, northernness.

In 'Back to the Old House', a sparsely arranged slow-paced lament in 3/4 time in which Morrissey's plaintive spoken-sung vocal is accompanied only by Marr's delicately picked acoustic (connoting a 'folk' sensibility) on which the latter arpeggiates a 'complex guitar figure',¹⁵² the first-person speaker repeatedly insists, in the opening lines: 'I would rather not go/back to the old house', before referring, in the higher register of the bridge, to the 'too many bad memories there'.¹⁵³

If this lyrical repudiation of a former 'home' seems incongruous with the song's ostensible 'folkiness' (for Moore, 'the acoustic ... "folksy" style' of a song like Jethro Tull's 'Ears of Tin' serves to 'symbolize the protagonist's longing, backward glance'),¹⁵⁴ it is subsequently undermined (at least at the level of lyrical signification) in the song's final verse, when Morrissey, with little discernible shift in vocal tone, and no modulation in register, range or key, initiates a lyrical *volte-face*, unveiling a previously unexpressed desire for 'return' (albeit tempered with an acknowledgement of the futility of this yearning): 'I would *love* to go/back to the old house/but I never will'. And if such a lyrical about-turn points towards ambivalence rather than closure, then this is only underscored by Marr's unresolved coda, in which he restores the song's opening section, but only to eventually fade on a (D) major 7th chord overlaid with the guitarist's hammering-on the note (D from C#) that would at least offer harmonic (if not thematic) resolution.

The apparently contradictory impulses in 'Back to the Old House' towards notions of 'home' and belonging were, significantly, congruent with Morrissey and Marr's contemporaneous comments on the group's 'roots'. For instance, in an interview published in December 1984,

Morrissey explained: 'It was really easy to lose my past, because I was so determined. I wanted to move on and forget'.¹⁵⁵ However, in another interview published that same month, the singer referred to 'the roots of the group' as something 'you can't really get away from', a point with which Marr concurred: 'I don't think it's a matter of rising above it. To lose the thread of it would be quite dangerous. It's part of our lives. We can't lose it. I don't want to not be associated with it'.¹⁵⁶

If such contradictory remarks about the group's 'roots' resonated with the paradoxical impulses about 'home' that were animated in 'Back to the Old House', then this kind of indeterminacy was also evident in other Smiths' songs that engaged with similar themes. In 'Is It Really So Strange?' (a steady-paced pastiche of 1950s American rock and roll), for instance, the speaker offers a first-person account of a ceaseless geographical journey between his intended destination and original point of departure. Thus, the opening lines of each of the three verses detail the particular direction in which the song's narrating subject is ostensibly headed ('I left the North/I travelled South'; 'I left the South/I travelled North'; 'I left the North again/I travelled South again').¹⁵⁷

In the course of the song, then, the respective sites of 'home' and 'away' are gradually conflated, until the speaker (who steadily becomes more 'confused') ultimately repudiates, in the song's final lines, the very notion of a secure 'return' to any originary location: 'And I realised, I realised/That I could never/I could never, never go back home again'. The only stable conclusion that the song's persona is able to arrive at on this journey, then, is a sputtering acceptance of the fact that 'home' is a place that cannot be securely restored.

And if the ostensible certainty of this potentially sombre observation is somewhat tempered by the track's relatively light-hearted tenor (furnished by Morrissey's intermittent comic utterances and Marr's persistent sliding between major and dominant seventh chords), it is subjected to a more significant counterpoint when the song closes unambiguously on its 'home triad' ('[the] chord on the key-note of a song'): in this instance a ringing open E chord (in tandem with a punctuating crash cymbal).¹⁵⁸ For if, as Sheila Whiteley has suggested, such key notes have 'strong connotations of home-centredness',¹⁵⁹ then the putative respite offered by the stability of this particular coda would appear to contradict the speaker's (simultaneous) thematic repudiation of home.

A similar quandary takes shape in 'London.'¹⁶⁰ Here, Marr's uncharacteristically repetitive staccato riff (signalled by an unexpected burst of guitar 'feedback') on a single, low register root note (bottom E tuned to F sharp), and filtered through an equally atypical distortion effect, serves, in conjunction with Joyce's unremitting snare drum shuffle, to animate the train journey recounted by the song's speaker, who is ostensibly concerned with his (second-person) addressee's uncertainty about leaving home.¹⁶¹ This incertitude is consistently foregrounded by the singer's lyrical hook ('Do you think you've made/the right decision this time?'), repeated at the end of each verse, and notably, in the song's final lines.

And if the addressee's anxiety about relocation is only heightened by Morrissey's intermittent groaning (as well as the guitar's incessant stuttering), it is simultaneously counterposed with the sheer exuberance of the track's unusually fast pace (connoting the visceral pleasures of departure), and Morrissey's emphatic allusion to 'the Jealousy in the eyes/Of the ones who had to stay behind' (a 'grieving' 'family' whose claustrophobic domesticity is intimated by the

flattened, compacted sound of Marr's unusually 'dry' guitar track). However, if this serves to dramatise the addressee's desire for embarkation, then this is in turn tempered by the solemnity of the track's instrumental coda. Here, the endless circularity of Marr's arpeggiated (largely minor) chord sequence - only exacerbated by an accelerated shift in tempo for the final bars - refuses (in the absence of any thematic resolution) to provide harmonic closure (the track simply fades out). (In this respect, the song's denouement serves to parallel the melodic contours of Morrissey's overarching vocal performance, which, as Hubbs points out, 'sets its own narrow confines and paces back and forth within them, frequently retracing its own path').¹⁶²

Consequently, if 'the musical scale ... with its intervals, progressions and modulations' is indeed 'capable', as Gerry Smyth has suggested, 'of creating impressions of home [and] travel', then in songs like 'London' there appears to be little attempt to return to the 'key which constitutes its "home"',¹⁶³ nor indeed to reach one that might signify a putative point of arrival.

The indeterminacy and incertitude of 'home' that is projected in such tracks is manifested elsewhere in the group's material as a kind of repudiating gesture towards all forms of domestic accommodation. Thus, the derision towards an apparently unsatisfactory 'rented room in Whalley Range' in 'Miserable Lie', the melodramatic renunciation of an evidently unwelcoming 'home' in 'There is a Light that Never Goes Out', and even the potentially comic incongruity of the speaker's reservation at the 'Y ... WCA' in 'Half a Person'.¹⁶⁴

Perhaps more significant in this regard, though, is the unease that Morrissey's speaker expresses towards his immediate milieu in the opening line of 'Never Had No-One Ever':

‘When you walk without ease/On these/the very streets where you were raised’.¹⁶⁵ Here, Morrissey’s vocal, prompted by the kit’s awkwardly accented introduction (that sets the track’s rather languid pace), is dramatised by ‘the kind of “blue” or “dirty” notes’ that, for Stringer, Morrissey usually ‘studiously avoids’.¹⁶⁶ If this serves to convey anxiety, it is only compounded by Marr’s circular sequence of minor seventh chords in taut 12/8 time,¹⁶⁷ as well as the singer’s subsequent allusions to ‘outsiderness’ (‘I’d hate to intrude’).

Significantly, Morrissey’s lyrical ideas for this song were, according to the singer, informed by the marginality he had experienced as a second-generation Irish youth in Manchester:

It was the frustration I felt at the age of 20 when I still didn’t feel easy walking around the streets on which I’d been born, where all my family had lived - they’re originally from Ireland but had been here since the Fifties. It was a constant confusion to me why I never really felt ‘This is my patch. This is my home. I know these people. I can do what I like, because this is mine.’ It never was. I could never walk easily.¹⁶⁸

Morrissey’s contextualisation of his song words in terms of this particular tribulation resonates with similar comments made by contemporaneous second-generation Irish cultural practitioners. For instance, Brian Keaney, a second-generation Irish writer who grew up in England at the same time as Morrissey, explained in 1985 that his semi-autobiographical fictional short stories were an attempt to

describe what it feels like to be growing up slightly at odds with your

surroundings ... as a boy I felt not entirely *at ease* with either my Irish parents or my English companions. I think this is something that a lot of children of immigrants feel.¹⁶⁹

This sense of being out-of-kilter with one's environment (a sensibility that, for Hughes, has been prominent in Irish cultural expression in England) was certainly a frequent preoccupation of the narrating subject in Smiths' songs. Perhaps most notable in this regard was Morrissey's repeated high falsetto shriek ('I'm just a country-mile behind/the world') during the frenetically-paced, thrashed-out coda of 'Miserable Lie', in which the singer's uncontrolled straining connotes not so much effeminacy, as sheer anguish and anxiety. Indeed, in sharp contrast to Morrissey's second-person addressee in 'These Things Take Time', to whom he emphatically declares: 'you know where you came from, you know where you're going, and you know where you belong', the speaker in Smiths' songs seems to only feel at home in the state of melancholia itself, mournfully casting himself as 'Sorrow's native son' in 'Pretty Girls Make Graves'.¹⁷⁰

This is not to suggest, though, that The Smiths' engagement with notions of home and belonging was characterised only by a kind of fatalistic alienation. For it is also possible to identify, in the group's song lyrics, a playful mocking of the notion of fixed or stable origins, not least in the speaker's allusion to 'the Eskimo blood in my veins' in 'Stretch Out and Wait', but also in the narrating subject's 'discovery', in 'The Queen is Dead', that 'I'm the 18th pale descendant/of some old queen or other'.¹⁷¹

This playful engagement with questions of ancestry occasionally appeared, however, to be

informed by a desire to veil the specificities of the speaker's origins, hence the rather dead-pan announcement, at the beginning of 'How Soon is Now?', in which Marr's declamatory guitar intro signals an ostensibly revelatory moment from Morrissey, who sombrely imparts: 'I am the son and heir', before pausing and concluding: 'of nothing ... in particular'.¹⁷² Significantly, the reticent impulse that is dramatised here clearly resonated with the singer's public comments about his biographical origins. For instance, when Morrissey was asked, while on a Smiths' concert tour of Scotland, if it was his 'Celtic blood' that had enticed the group north of the border, he replied, with characteristic elusivity (and not a little jocundity): 'no, no, no. I've got no blood anymore', before trailing off, 'no blood ... all drained'.¹⁷³

Meanwhile, in another interview, when Morrissey was asked to specify his middle name, his response ('Patrick') was, according to the interviewer, 'barely audible'. Moreover, Morrissey went on, in the interview, to deride this name, particularly in its identifiably Irish variation: 'What use does one make of a middle name?', he asked rhetorically, before offering, in a rather curt manner: 'Paddy?'.¹⁷⁴

And while the singer's apparent exasperation here was likely informed by the socially negative status of this particular name that Morrissey had encountered during his formative years in Manchester, such gestures were also symptomatic of what Hubbs has called Morrissey's 'rather complex and elusive subjectivity'.¹⁷⁵ Interestingly, Hubbs suggests that, in this regard, Morrissey bore a particular resemblance to Oscar Wilde.¹⁷⁶ Indeed one of Morrissey's most prominent lyrical engagements with Wilde, in The Smiths' song, 'Cemetery [sic] Gates',¹⁷⁷ appears to offer a useful way of conceiving of the group's refusal of a stable subject position *vis a vis* Irishness and Englishness. In the opening lines of this song (whose ostensibly morbid

location sits rather incongruously with Marr's joyous high-life overdubs and buoyant rhythm section accompaniment) Morrissey makes an explicit identification with Wilde: 'Keats and Yeats are on your side', he informs his addressee, 'While Wilde is on mine', a lyric that is revisited (and revised) in the final moments of the song, when Morrissey resolves: 'Keats and Yeats are on your side/*but you lose*/because Wilde is on mine', intimating a closure that is underscored by Marr's return, in the track's fading coda, to the song's sanguine three-chord opening. The point to note, though, is that Morrissey's speaker spurns both Keats (an archetypally English poet) and Yeats (who is at least perceived to be quintessentially Irish) whilst championing Wilde, an author who has not been easily accommodated in either category.

What the absence of a stable subject position in the performance of The Smiths appeared to furnish, then, was a transgressive impulse that (despite Marr's insistence on the group's adherence to a 'gang mentality'),¹⁷⁸ pointed to a desire for boundary-transgression. Thus, in an early interview, Morrissey drew attention to the group's Irishness before insisting: 'I want to produce music that transcends boundaries', claiming elsewhere that 'the main blemish on this country [England] is the absolute segregation which seems to appear on every level, with everything and everybody'.¹⁷⁹ Clearly this is an interesting comment from someone who was raised in an Irish Catholic enclave of an English city, for rather than situating himself in terms of an essential Irishness, or an assimilated Englishness, there is instead a repudiation of the very notion of boundary-maintenance. This particular sentiment manifested itself, moreover, in a variety of ways in the group's performance, not least in the plaintive lament that served as a prelude to 'Miserable Lie', one of the group's earliest songs, in which Morrissey offered, over Marr's slow-paced arpeggiation of descending chords, a mournful expression of sorrow at the

apparent failure of a socially transgressive relationship: 'So, goodbye/please stay with your own kind/and I'll stay with mine'.

And if such song lyrics pointed to the narrating subject's desire for boundary-transgression, then this yearning was clearly encoded during the group's live performances. For instance, a striking allusion to the transgression of socially prescribed boundaries signalled the beginning of the group's concerts, which commenced with a recorded version of Prokofiev's 'March of the Capulets', a highly spectacular sequence from his *Romeo and Juliet* ballet suite that heralded the group's imminent arrival on stage, and thereby served to heighten the sense of expectation in the auditorium.¹⁸⁰ And if the mythical narrative to which this musical excerpt alludes is imbued with romantic notions of boundary transgression at the level of kinship, then a similarly symbolic dissolution of boundary markers was dramatised at the performance's coda, when audience members were informally granted unrestricted access to mount the stage, enabling them to dance uninhibitedly alongside the band members.¹⁸¹

This feature of The Smiths' live performances (which was relatively untypical of indoor rock concerts of the period) again demonstrates the group's desire to repudiate divisive categories, in this case, the spatial distinction between stage and auditorium. This was evidently an important component of the live show for the band members themselves. Indeed, The Smiths' former tour manager, Stuart James, has explained that 'if there wasn't a stage invasion, the group would think that the gig wasn't good, even if their playing had been excellent'.¹⁸²

So, while the performance of The Smiths was often marked by notions of ambivalence and uncertainty (particularly with regard to notions of home, belonging and origins), and was often

characterised by a kind of melancholic withdrawal or narcissistic alienation, the group also displayed, in their desire to repudiate boundary divisions, a conceivably more enabling gesture. Indeed, this gesture might be taken as a demonstration of what, for Frith, 'is most interesting about music', that is 'its blurring of insider/outsider boundaries'¹⁸³ (a point that could serve as a useful description of The Smiths' overarching project *vis a vis* Irishness in England).

This desire to blur 'insider/outsider boundaries', in tandem with the group's 'complex and elusive subjectivity', arguably served to facilitate their mobilisation of a dissident sensibility that I have called a 'critical outsidersness'. In other words, rather than restricting their dramatisation of marginality to the tropes of narcissism, nostalgia and alienation, there was also evident, in the group's performance, an endeavour to mobilise 'outsiderness' in a more enabling manner. As John McLeod has pointed out in a discussion of post-colonial cultural production, authors such as Salman Rushdie have (while clearly operating in a context very different to that of second-generation Irish rock musicians) made 'a virtue from necessity and [argued] that the displaced position' associated with migrancy 'is an entirely valuable one', suggesting, for example, that members of migrant groups might be 'in a better position than others to realise that all systems of knowledge, all views of the world, are never totalising, whole or pure, but incomplete, muddled and hybrid'. Consequently, while the experience of migrancy 'may well evoke the pain and loss of not being firmly rooted in a secure place', it simultaneously facilitates 'a world of immense possibility with the realisation that new knowledges and ways of seeing can be constructed'.¹⁸⁴

Significantly, it seems that The Smiths were very much conscious of the fact that such marginality can usefully facilitate critical perceptiveness. 'When you're detached and sealed

off', Morrissey explained, 'you have a very clear view of what's going on. You can stand back and you can look and you can assess'.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, this outsider perspective perhaps helps explain Stringer's claim that The Smiths were 'unquestionably' 'one of Britain's more overtly political groups'.¹⁸⁶

While the group did not withdraw entirely from making comments on Anglo-Irish relations ('I certainly don't think that in England there's any desire, politically, to make life any easier in Belfast', explained Morrissey),¹⁸⁷ The Smiths did not endeavour to project, through their mobilisation of marginality, the nostalgic politics of an exilic Irish nationalism (often associated with the so-called 'plastic Paddy' figure). Instead, the group developed a radical critique of hegemonic forms of Englishness, making affiliative gestures towards a range of marginal positions within Britain.

These included those articulated by Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council, who at that time were producing policy documents on a range of marginalised social groups in England (including, of course, Irish migrants) as well as co-ordinating an anti-racist campaign in response to the 'riots' of 1981;¹⁸⁸ the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; British coal miners; and 'Red Wedge' (a left-wing Labour-sponsored platform that had radical views on, amongst other things, Northern Ireland). Meanwhile, the band played (what was to become) their final concert for Artists Against Apartheid,¹⁸⁹ an endorsement that was underlined by The Smiths' refusal to retail their records in South Africa.¹⁹⁰ There were also endorsements of vegetarianism, animal rights, and feminism. In this sense, then, the group appeared to affiliate themselves with a range of radical positions that coalesced in opposition to the Thatcher administration.

Indeed, Thatcher (as well as the monarchy) became a particular locus around which the group expressed its dissent towards hegemonic forms of Englishness. In 1984, for example, Morrissey explained that

The entire history of Margaret Thatcher is one of violence and oppression and horror. I think that we must *not* lie back and cry about it. She's only one person, and she can be destroyed. I just pray that there is a Sirhan Sirhan somewhere. It's the only remedy for this country at the moment.¹⁹¹

Such comments, whilst undoubtedly being melodramatic, were also rather prescient, for later that year Thatcher became the object of an assassination attempt by the IRA (in the Brighton bomb attack of October 1984). And while, as Hubbs has rightly pointed out, 'one probably ought to exercise sufficient skepticism' when considering Morrissey's habit of making such contentious public pronouncements, particularly in light of their 'obvious myth- and money-making potential',¹⁹² it is unlikely that even the most desperate of record company publicists would have appreciated Morrissey's particular response to the attack, in which he applauded the IRA, in the immediate aftermath of the incident, for being 'accurate in selecting their targets', and expressing his 'sorrow' that Thatcher had 'escaped unscathed'.¹⁹³

Such comments would certainly have been an unlikely promotional strategy at this time, as the group were scheduled to perform in Northern Ireland only a few weeks later. Indeed, the singer's polemicism evidently generated a considerable amount of anxiety in The Smiths' camp. As Stuart James, the group's tour manager at the time, has explained: 'When they went to Ireland, with the Troubles, they were worried about more extreme attitudes because they had

affiliated themselves with the IRA'. The degree of trepidation amongst the group was such that, as James has pointed out, they 'changed hotels a couple of times' because of a perceived 'threat'. Accordingly, when the tour culminated with a performance at Belfast's Ulster Hall, there was apparently 'a degree of tension in the air following the hotel switches and concern with security'.¹⁹⁴

Despite this experience, though, The Smiths continued their assault on Thatcher, electing to call their next album 'Margaret on the Guillotine', a title that, as Morrissey has pointed out, the group were forced to 'ditch' before the record was completed.¹⁹⁵ (And while the reasons for this change of plan remain unspecified, Jo Slee has explained that when the track 'Margaret On A Guillotine' subsequently appeared on the singer's debut solo album, the 'question of Morrissey's clandestine affiliation with a radical terrorist organisation [presumably the IRA] was raised with the Manchester police', and Special Branch visited his house for a recorded interview).¹⁹⁶ Rather than withdrawing their desire for the dissident gesture, though, the group simply switched targets, re-naming the album *The Queen is Dead*, a title that, for Morrissey, was a 'very obvious reference' to 'drowning the monarchy'¹⁹⁷ (a notion that is underscored by the yearning, of the title track's narrating subject, to see 'her very Lowness with her head in a sling'). Such anti-monarchist sentiment had been an especially prominent component of the group's public persona. For instance, in a 1985 interview with the London listings' magazine, *Time Out*, Morrissey explained: 'I despise royalty. I always have done', before referring to the English royals as a 'fascist' institution (and thereby evoking John Lydon's 'God Save the Queen' lyric, in which the monarchy are described as a 'fascist regime').¹⁹⁸ Later on, he maintained that '[the] very idea of the monarchy and the Queen of England is being reinforced and made to seem more useful than it really is', before going on to express his dislike of the

monarch in curiously ‘Oirish’ terms: ‘We don’t believe in leprachauns [sic], so why should we believe in the Queen?’.¹⁹⁹

Such sentiments were also manifest in the group’s song lyrics, not least in the comedic opening line of the second verse of ‘Nowhere Fast’ (‘I’d like to drop my trousers to the Queen’), but perhaps most notably in the aforementioned title track to the group’s third studio album, *The Queen is Dead*, which, as Simon Reynolds and Joy Press have pointed out, was a ‘consciously intended ... sequel’ to The Sex Pistols’ ‘God Save the Queen’, a track that had served as an ‘anti-national anthem’ during the Queen’s Silver Jubilee celebrations in the summer of 1977.²⁰⁰ Moreover, this track was, as Savage has pointed out,

the only serious anti-Jubilee protest, the only rallying call for those who didn’t agree with the Jubilee because they didn’t like the Queen, either because like John Lydon, they were Irish, or ... because they resented being steamrollered ... by a view of England which had not the remotest bearing on their everyday experience.²⁰¹

And while Morrissey had been involved in anti-Jubilee demonstrations in 1977,²⁰² it appears that his song lyrics for ‘The Queen is Dead’ were informed by more arch concerns than simple anti-royalism. Indeed, Morrissey described the track on its 1986 release as ‘a kind of general observation on the state of the nation’.²⁰³ The track’s song lyrics, though, offer little in the way of a coherent response to either the nation in general, or the monarchy in particular. However, if we take Laing’s suggestion that ‘the political effects of a musical utterance are first and foremost a factor within the particular politics and balance of forces *within* music’,²⁰⁴ then we

might suggest that what the track offers, particularly in its formative moments, is a parodic attack on British patriotism.

The song begins with a sampled excerpt of the English actress Cicely Courtneidge's markedly RP-rendition of 'Take Me Back to Dear Old Blighty',²⁰⁵ a patriotic First World War song. This gradually segues, however, into the sound of Marr's feedbacking guitar and Joyce's rapidly-paced tom-tom pattern. In this sense, the track appears to serve as an example of what Mark Slobin has called 'codeswitching',²⁰⁶ in this case between patriotic music-hall ('Blighty') and quasi-psychedelic proto-punk (Marr has explained that he was endeavouring to replicate the sound of groups like MC5).²⁰⁷

Slobin provides (in a discussion of migrant Jewish music-making in the United States) 'a clear-cut example of sharp, stark codeswitching' that offers a useful analogy for 'The Queen is Dead':

A Jewish-American comedy number of the late 1940s ... begins with ... a perfectly standard recitation of Longfellow's hoary all-American poem 'The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere' The diction and dialect ... are standard, slightly pompous American English. Suddenly, the nationalistic reverie is broken by a brief silence and a highly dramatic codeswitch to a band playing an Eastern European Jewish dance tune.²⁰⁸

Clearly 'The Queen is Dead' does not switch to a recognisably ethnic idiom in the manner identified here by Slobin. Nevertheless, the track's parodic reconfiguring of a well-known patriotic song clearly indicates a desire to critically engage with hegemonic forms of

Englishness, a point that was certainly substantiated by the song's contemporaneous reception. For as Jo Slee, who worked closely with the group at the time, has recalled, the song '[provoked] a flourish of quasi-nationalistic consternation', with audience members 'heckling the placard [bearing the title of the song] with which Morrissey opened the live shows', and tabloid newspaper reports claiming that the group had 'showered abuse at the royals' in this 'sick' song.²⁰⁹ Meanwhile, a live performance at Preston Guildhall was terminated during the group's rendition of this track, when a maliciously thrown object struck Morrissey's head. Marr later explained that a member of The Smiths' stage crew 'had blood all over his arms': 'Believe me, I was pretty scared; I finished the song and got off'.²¹⁰

Such incidents inevitably recall Lydon's subjection to similar attacks in the aftermath of 'God Save the Queen'. Indeed, shortly after the publication of an interview in which Lydon had responded to alleged white racist (mis)readings of 'God Save the Queen' with a robust assertion of his Irishness, he was physically assaulted by members of the National Front.²¹¹ Despite the violent responses that tracks such as 'The Queen is Dead' and 'God Save the Queen' have engendered, they can hardly be considered as sectarian expressions of anti-English hostility. As Lydon has explained: 'You don't write "God Save the Queen" because you hate the English race [sic], you write it because you love them and you're fed up with them being mistreated'.²¹² Similarly, Morrissey has emphasised that '[there] are very few aspects of Englishness that I actually hate', suggesting instead that 'I see the narrowness, and love to sing about it'.²¹³ What such comments appear to point to, then, is a particular strand of second-generation Irish music-making that has offered, most strikingly, a critique of Englishness from a marginal standpoint, rather than a straightforward assertion of Irish difference.

Significantly, this strategy - of critically engaging with the 'host' culture rather than nostalgically yearning for the 'home' culture - is evidently not without precedent in Irish musical expression in England. In a discussion of exilic Irish street ballads in late nineteenth century Manchester, for example, Eva explains that while a prominent strand of such songs served to 'dramatise the exile theme for first and second generation Irish listeners', these tunes co-existed with another strand that projected 'the exile's bitter attack on England's rulers'.²¹⁴ It would appear that the sensibilities of the latter may have prefigured some of the concerns of second-generation Irish rock musicians almost a century and a half later.

The Importance of Not Being 'Irish'

The decision of such musicians to eschew an identifiably Irish speaking position might be understood as a strategic manoeuvre in their endeavour to offer an effective dissident gesture. For The Smiths' refusal to rigidly fix themselves to a specific identity-category arguably facilitated a more potentially subversive speaking position than simply anchoring themselves to an explicit Irishness, as the former position is conceivably less easy to classify, control and contain. In other words, if MacGowan had offered an unequivocal public endorsement of an IRA assassination attempt on a British Prime Minister in the immediate aftermath of the event (notably he did not) it would likely have been received as a predictable 'mad Irish' response. Indeed, even MacGowan's group, The Pogues, whose Irishness was nothing less than upfront, often expressed a reticence about engaging with Irish political issues: 'It is not worth the aggro ... You'd be surprised how heavy it is. We get grief just because we play Irish songs!', explained one member, before MacGowan concluded: 'They think that because you do "Paddy

On The Railways”, that you’re an active service unit!’²¹⁵

Similarly, Dexy’s Midnight Runners, whose 1985 album *Don’t Stand Me Down* was motivated by Kevin Rowland’s desire ‘to do something for Ireland’,²¹⁶ ultimately made a decision to downplay this dimension. Rowland subsequently explained: ‘I bottled out of some of the original Irish titles on the album, and I cut out some lyrics about hunger strikes. I thought the press would crucify me’.²¹⁷

Thus, a track whose working title had been ‘My National Pride’ was re-titled ‘Knowledge of Beauty’, because Rowland ‘thought it was too strong’:

The line ‘Knowledge of beauty in these days rare’ was originally ‘they rot in prison cells over there’. It was about people in jail in Ireland. It felt like too much of a statement. I thought I was going to get slaughtered.²¹⁸

Rowland’s apprehension here has in recent years been verified by British music critics, one of whom suggested that the singer’s ‘urge to reconcile himself with his Irish roots’ on this album was ‘perceived in [1980s] England as tantamount to wearing a balaclava and carrying a machine gun’.²¹⁹ In this context, then, perhaps The Smiths’ apparent reluctance to consistently foreground their Irishness might have been informed by a desire to ensure the credibility of their pronouncements on hegemonic forms of Englishness. In other words, if there was indeed an attempt, in the performance of the group, to occasionally ‘pass’ as English (a straightforward desire to assimilate would presumably not involve public endorsements of IRA attacks on the British Government, nor vigorously expressed anti-monarchist sentiments), then perhaps this

particular strategy facilitated the articulation of a 'radical' viewpoint that, had it been expressed from a recognisably Irish speaking position, might have been less effective as it could have been received as an entirely predictable gesture and, for that reason, taken less seriously.

In addition to this point, it is perhaps worth considering Jon Savage's suggestion (made in a 1983 article on popular music and social marginality) that 'pop works ... not by specifics or slogans, but by hints and inferences loose enough for the imagination to leap in and resonate'. With specific reference to sexually ambiguous pop musicians of the period, including Culture Club's Boy George, Savage explains that 'The audience's tolerance of divergence only goes so far, and usually evaporates when things get a bit real', pointing out that avowedly 'queer' bands, such as Soft Cell, 'paid the price of flaunting their divergence'.²²⁰ A similar point has been made with regard to mobilisations of Irishness in the work of second-generation musicians. For instance, Rolston, with specific reference to Paul McCartney's 'Give Ireland Back to the Irish' and The Pogues' track 'Birmingham Six', has explained: 'there were negative consequences for those who broke from the herd'.²²¹ Thus, McCartney's record was subjected to broadcasting restrictions at the BBC, whilst The Pogues track became one of the first media texts to be censored by the British Government's 1988 Broadcasting Ban.²²²

So, if The Smiths appeared to circumnavigate the conventional signifiers of Irishness that would have anchored them to a specifically Irish speaking position, then this arguably allowed them to credibly express radical political views without being accused of regurgitating the sentimental clichés of an exilic Irish nationalism. What the adoption of this aesthetic strategy (which ostensibly abandoned any identifiably Irish codes and conventions) facilitated, then, was the articulation of a viewpoint that many Irish-born immigrants, and their English-born

descendants, would conceivably not have felt comfortable expressing publicly. Indeed, Morrissey's father (who unexpectedly appeared at a Smiths concert in Dublin shortly after Morrissey's endorsement of the Brighton bomb attack) expressed his 'shock' at his son's comments, before adding, tellingly: 'He says things I wouldn't dare say'.²²³

Conclusion

Diaspora theorists such as Avtar Brah have pointed to the ways in which post-war diaspora settlements have re-shaped contemporary Englishness, suggesting that 'African-Caribbean, Irish, Asian, Jewish and other diasporas' have intersected 'with the entity constructed as "Englishness", thoroughly re-inscribing it in the process'.²²⁴ If diasporic Irish forms, like those of other diasporas, have indeed contributed to this re-inscription of the English cultural fabric, then perhaps the performance of The Smiths can be understood as a particular second-generation Irish thread in the reconfiguration of popular music in England. And, whilst being mindful of the kind of Celticist assumptions that have often characterised discussions of the bearing that Irish immigration has had on Englishness - not least E.P. Thompson's account of the 'Irish influence' on the English working-class²²⁵ - it is difficult to overlook Savage's claim that there has been 'little' in English popular music 'to match the wit and gleeful, lacerating revenge of the Sex Pistols' "God Save The Queen", Dexy's Midnight Runners' "Dance Stance" [and] the Smiths' "The Queen Is Dead"". ²²⁶

Rather than simply disregarding the Irishness of these musicians on the basis of their apparent infidelity to a putative Irish aesthetic, or endeavouring to consolidate their work with essentialist conceptions of 'traditional' song, what Savage's comment points to is a distinctive strand of second-generation Irish music-making in England that cannot simply be reduced to

either (Irish) essentialism or (English) assimilation. What recognition of this point offers is a means by which to conceptualise the diverse range of aesthetic forms mobilised by the second-generation Irish, enabling us to map - more adequately - the complex musical 'routes' that they have traversed.

Endnotes

1. Brian Boyd, 'Paddy Englishman', *Irish Times*, 'Arts' section, 20 November 1999, p. 5.
2. <http://www.jmarr.com> ('Q&A', March 2001).
3. Catherine Ellis, *Aboriginal Music: Education for Living* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1985), p. 15.
4. Delmore Schwartz, *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities* (1938) (New York: New Directions, 1978), pp. 19-20. I am grateful to Jon Savage for drawing my attention to this collection of short stories.
5. Stuart Hall, 'What Is This "Black" in Black Popular Culture?', in Gina Dent (ed.), *Black Popular Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1992), p. 30.
6. I take this term from Seamus Deane's discussion of Irish literature and the English/British literary canon in 'The Field Day Enterprise'. Here, Deane maintains that the critical relocation of Irish literature is 'not merely an exercise in regaining Swift, Berkeley, Goldsmith, Burke, Shaw, Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, and so forth from the neighbouring fiction of English or British literature'. Instead, for Deane, such a project would involve 'a recuperation of these writers into the so-called other context, the *inside reading* of them in relation to other Irish writing, in order to modify and perhaps even distress other "outside" readings that have been unaware of that context and its force.' (Deane, 'The Field Day Enterprise', in Jessica Munns and Gita Rajan (eds), *A Cultural Studies Reader: History, Theory, Practice* (London: Longman, 1995), p. 438, my emphasis).
7. I am borrowing these terms from Paul Gilroy, who takes them from rap artist Rakim. See Gilroy, 'It Ain't Where You're From, It's Where You're At: The Dialectics of Diaspora Identification', *Third Text* No. 13 (1990/91), pp. 3-16.
8. Aidan Arrowsmith, 'Writing "Home": Nation, Identity and Irish Emigration to England', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Staffordshire, 1998), pp. 214, 219, 220, 221, 236, 237; Philip Ullah, 'Second-Generation Irish Youth: Identity and Ethnicity', *New Community* Vol. 12, No. 2 (1985), pp. 317-19.
9. Julian Stringer makes this point about Dyer's work in Stringer, 'The Smiths: Repressed (But Remarkably Dressed)', *Popular Music* Vol. 11, No. 1 (1992), p. 15.
10. For a brief discussion of this point, see Simon Frith, 'Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music', in Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (eds), *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 145.
11. John Shepherd, 'Music as Cultural Text', in John Paynter, Tim Howell, Richard Orton and Peter Seymour (eds), *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought* Vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 130-1.

12. Shepherd, 'Music as Cultural Text', p. 143.
13. The analyses on which I will draw are Stringer, 'The Smiths', and Nadine Hubbs, 'Music of the "Fourth Gender": Morrissey and the Sexual Politics of Melodic Contour', in Thomas Foster, Carol Siegel and Ellen E. Berry (eds), *Bodies of Writing: Bodies in Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 266-96. I will also make reference, in my analysis of musical performance, to Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text. Developing a Musicology of Rock* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), and Dave Laing, *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985).
14. Tony Mitchell, *Popular Music and Local Identity: Rock, Pop and Rap in Europe and Oceania* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p. 8. A.L. Lloyd cited in Phil Eva, 'Home Sweet Home? The "Culture of Exile" in Mid-Victorian Popular Song', *Popular Music* Vol. 16, No. 2 (1997), p. 132.
15. Hall, 'What Is This "Black" in Black Popular Culture?', p. 32.
16. Hall, 'New Ethnicities', in Kobena Mercer (ed.), *Black Film, British Cinema* (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1988), p. 29.
17. Zuberi, 'Listening to Britain: Popular Music and National Identity 1979-1996' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1996), p. 205.
18. Johnny Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr: The Severed Alliance* (London: Omnibus Press, 1992).
19. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 149, 162-3, 275-86, 304-37.
20. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 169, 233.
21. Rogan, *The Smiths: The Visual Documentary* (London: Omnibus Press, 1994), pp. 10-5.
22. Boyd, 'Paddy Englishman', p. 5. This allusion to 'ghettoisation' is corroborated by Anne Higgins, a second-generation Irish woman from Manchester who has explained that in the 1940s (admittedly a couple of decades prior to Morrissey's childhood) Irish Catholics in the city 'were under a kind of sense of siege'. (Mary Lennon, Marie McAdam, and Joanne O'Brien, *Across the Water: Irish Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago, 1988), p. 146).
23. Boyd, 'Paddy Englishman', p. 5.
24. Mary J. Hickman and Bronwen Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain', *Feminist Review* No. 50 (Summer 1995), p. 12.
25. Mike Moore, cited in Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 69.
26. Elissa Van Poznak, 'Morrissey: The Face Interview', *The Face* (July 1984), p. 32. See also Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 71; David Fricke, 'Keeping Up with the Smiths', *Rolling Stone*

No. 484 (1986), pp. 32-3. Morrissey's relationship with his Irish-born mother is particularly interesting in this regard, for as Jim Mac Laughlin has pointed out, 'women's role as primary carers of children often forces them to face decisions not only about their own ethnic identity but also that of their children', a 'strain [that] is particularly strong in Irish communities [in England] where Irish women may be experiencing extra pressure due to the fact that they wish to make their children relate positively to their roots at times when political violence often makes this particularly difficult' (Jim Mac Laughlin, 'The New Vanishing Irish: Social Characteristics of "New Wave" Irish Emigration', in Mac Laughlin (ed.), *Location and Dislocation in Contemporary Irish Society: Emigration and Irish Identities* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997), p. 155).

27. Neil McCormick, 'All Men Have Secrets', *Hot Press*, 4 May 1984, pp. 18-9.

28. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 39-49, 50-79, 80-3; Boyd, 'Paddy Englishman', p. 5. The fact that many of Morrissey's teachers were Irish is not insignificant, for as Terry Eagleton has explained with regard to the Catholic school that he attended in post-war Manchester: '[It was] a benighted Irish Catholic outfit that was unconsciously transmitting its profound sense of cultural alienation to its children' (Eagleton, 'A Different Sense of Who I Was', *Irish Reporter* No. 13 (1994), p. 15).

29. This would be the case for all of The Smiths (as well as John Lydon and Noel and Liam Gallagher) and in this sense these musicians deviate from an identifiable tradition in post-war British rock culture: the attendance of art school, an institution that, for Dave Laing, 'occupies a special place in the history of rock music in Britain'. (Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, p. 122). For further elaboration of this point, see Simon Frith and Howard Horne, *Art Into Pop* (London: Methuen, 1987).

30. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 74, 82, 97, 101-2, 105, 108, 158; Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 96; Ann Scanlon, *The Pogues: The Lost Decade* (Omnibus Press, 1988), p. 13; John Aizlewood, 'Thankfully Not Living in Yorkshire it Doesn't Apply', in Aizlewood (ed.), *Love is the Drug* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 21.

31. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 112-4; Talking Music, *The Interview: The Smiths* (Speak, 1998).

32. www.jmarr.com March 2001 'Q & A'; Barry McIlheney, 'The Thoughts of Chairman Marr', *Melody Maker*, 3 August 1985, p. 33; Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 114; Talking Music, *The Interview*.

33. Stephen Dalton, 'Getting Away With It', *Uncut* (April 1999), p. 52; Brian Boyd, 'Johnny, We Never Knew You', *Irish Times*, 'Arts' section, 8 May 1999, p. 6

34. Talking Music, *The Interview*.

35. McIlheney, 'The Thoughts of Chairman Marr', p. 33.

36. *The Great Hunger: The Life and Songs of Shane MacGowan* (BBC2, 4 October 1997).

37. Joe Gore, 'Johnny Marr', *Guitar Player* (January 1990), p. 71. Dalton, 'Getting Away With It', p. 52. This is not to overlook the unequal power relations that often structure the complex relationship between 'ethnic' and 'popular' idioms, nor to deny that a gravitation towards the styles of the dominant can betray something of an assimilationist impulse. For a discussion of this point, see Martin Stokes, 'Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music', in Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), p. 4.
38. Stokes, 'Introduction', p. 3.
39. Stokes, 'Introduction', p. 4.
40. www.jmarr.com March 2001 'Q & A'. MacGowan has explained: 'my parents were really unhappy [to be in England] ... and I could tell [they] were really unhappy', a point that is corroborated by MacGowan's father, who claims that he 'never really settled in England'. (*The Great Hunger: The Life and Songs of Shane MacGowan* (BBC2, 4 October 1997)).
41. Boyd, 'Johnny, We Never Knew You', p. 6. Lydon has been similarly unsentimental about the Irish music of his childhood: 'The Irish like their country and western music played badly on accordions and violins' (Lydon with Keith Zimmerman and Kent Zimmerman, *Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994), p. 28).
42. Paul Gallagher and Terry Christian, *Brothers: From Childhood to Oasis - The Real Story* (London: Virgin, 1996), pp. 78-9.
43. Shepherd, 'Music as Cultural Text', p. 147.
44. Gore, 'Johnny Marr', p. 71. 'Hand in Glove' (Rough Trade, 1983); 'I Won't Share You' (*Strangeways, Here We Come*, Rough Trade, 1987).
45. Gore, 'Johnny Marr', p. 71. McIlheney, 'The Thoughts of Chairman Marr', p. 33; Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 114.
46. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 117.
47. McIlheney, 'The Thoughts of Chairman Marr', p. 33; Carol McDaid, 'He Chopped Up a Piano with Dylan', *Observer*, 20 May 2001, p. 14; Phil Hardy and Dave Laing, *The Faber Companion to 20th-Century Popular Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995, revised edition), p. 153.
48. McIlheney, 'The Thoughts of Chairman Marr', p. 33.
49. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 114-30; Rogan, *The Smiths*, pp. 22, 23.
50. Boyd, 'Johnny, We Never Knew You', p. 6; Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 162-3.
51. Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, pp. 42-3, 50.

52. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 114, 124.

53. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 144-9.

54. Robert Yates, 'Looking Back in Anger', *Observer*, 'Review' section, 7 March 1999, p. 3. The individual members of Oasis had had varying degrees of involvement with Irish music in Manchester before the group formed in the early 1990s. See Gallagher and Christian, *Brothers*, p. 131; Paolo Hewitt, *Getting High: the Adventures of Oasis* (London: Boxtree, 1997), pp. 67, 69-70, 141; Chris Hutton and Richard Kurt, *Don't Look Back in Anger: Growing Up With Oasis* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1997), p. 165.

55. Although Bill Rolston has recently suggested that it is 'unwise in market terms' for Irish musicians 'to ignore their origins' (Rolston, "'This Is Not A Rebel Song": The Irish Conflict and Popular Music', *Race and Class* Vol. 42, No. 3 (2001), p. 53), Irishness was, in early 1980s Britain, less straightforward as a marketable commodity.

56. Frank Worral, 'The Cradle Snatchers', *Melody Maker*, 3 September 1983, p. 27; McCormick, 'All Men Have Secrets', p. 19.

57. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 316-29. Morrissey later recalled: 'I remember The Smiths going to places like Letterkenny and Coleraine and the crowds were fantastic'. He also explained: 'We were never able to play Derry with The Smiths', implying that the group had wished to perform in that city (Boyd, 'Paddy Englishman', p. 5).

58. Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), pp. 51-9; pp. 72-113. Significantly, the riots received considerable attention in the popular music press at this time. See, for example, *New Musical Express*, 11 July 1981.

59. For a discussion of these issues, see Tony Geraghty, *The Irish War: The Hidden Conflict Between the IRA and British Intelligence* (London: Harper Collins, 1998).

60. Terry Eagleton, *The Gatekeeper: A Memoir* (London: Allen Lane, 2001), p. 11. Interestingly, the Pontiff's appearance in Manchester coincided with Marr's initial meeting with Morrissey. See Katie Neville, 'The Post Cool School', *The Face* (February 1984), p. 33.

61. Martin McLoone, *Irish Film: The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), p. 61.

62. See, for example, Julie Burchill, 'Julie Burchill', *The Face* (March 1983), p. 68; Julie Burchill, 'Greenland Revisited', *The Face* (August 1983), pp. 62-5.

63. Kevin Rowland, 'Kevin Rowland Replies to Julie Burchill', *The Face* (September 1983), pp. 62-3. For a discussion of Dexy's commercial success in 1982, see *Young Guns Go For It* (BBC2, 13 September 2000).

64. *Young Guns Go For It* (BBC2, 13 September 2000).

65. A member of The Pogues explained that this was ‘a really bizarre coincidence’ (Scanlon, *The Pogues*, p. 9), but Dexy’s had, prior to their ‘Celtic’ turn, engaged with notions of Irishness in a variety of ways. For instance, the group’s debut single, ‘Dance Stance’, had been conceived as a response to expressions of anti-Irish prejudice, while the cover of their debut album, *Searching for the Young Soul Rebels*, featured a photograph of a young Belfast boy, who had ‘been evacuated after the British army moved in during the late sixties’ (Aizlewood, ‘Thankfully Not Living in Yorkshire it Doesn’t Apply’, pp. 23-4). There were, however, fundamental aesthetic differences between the respective projects of MacGowan and Rowland. As a music journalist at the time noted, ‘what the Pogues are doing in their punchy, wholly revitalised pub folk format is worlds apart from the lavish showband revue of Dexy’s Midnight Fiddlers’ (Gavin Martin, ‘Mahone Ranger’s Handbook’, *New Musical Express*, 13 August 1983, p. 22). Also, in marked contrast to MacGowan, who often appeared to be ‘the drunken Paddy re-incarnated’ (*The Great Hunger: The Life and Songs of Shane MacGowan*, BBC2, 4 October 1997), Rowland invoked a puritanical alcohol ban on the members of his group (*Young Guns Go For It*, BBC2, 13 September 2000). For a scholarly discussion of The Pogues, see Noel McLaughlin and Martin McLoone, ‘Hybridity and National Musics: The Case of Irish Rock Music’, *Popular Music* Vol. 12, No. 2 (2000), pp. 190-2. See also Kieran Keohane, ‘Unifying the Fragmented Imaginary of the Young Immigrant: Making a Home in the Post Modern with the Pogues’, *Irish Review* 9 (1990), pp. 71-9

66. The group’s drummer, Jon Moss, has explained that the name ‘Culture Club’ was an attempt to convey the multi-ethnic make-up of the group, which included an ‘Irish transvestite’ (O’Dowd), as well as ‘a Jew, a black man’ and ‘an Anglo-Saxon.’ (Moss cited in Boy George with Spencer Bright, *Take It Like A Man: The Autobiography of Boy George* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1995), p. 159). Judy Wade, ‘Mister (or is it Miss?) Wierdo’, *The Sun*, 21 October 1982, p. 16.

67. Greil Marcus, ‘Elvis Costello Explains Himself’, *Rolling Stone*, 2 September 1982, p. 15. Significantly, The Smiths would later allude to Costello, who has been described as an ‘artist of the Irish diaspora’ (Peter Murphy and Candice Ward, “‘The Irish Thing’: A Conversation on the Australian and American Irish Diaspora’, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* Vol. 98, Nos. 1-2, p. 123), when Marr used a guitar with the words ‘Elvis Costello’ clearly embedded in large, mother-of-pearl font on its fretboard. See *Top of the Pops* (BBC1, 30 August 1984).

68. Trevor Griffiths, *Collected Plays For Television* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), pp. 27, 29.

69. Morrissey had previously considered calling the group ‘Smiths’ Family’ (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 142). As Laing has pointed out, there has been ‘a tendency [in popular music] to present groups as “families”, to trade on an association between musical and domestic harmony’ (Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, p. 43).

70. Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993), p. 55.

71. Kit Aitken, 'String Driven Thing', *Uncut* (December 1999), p. 84. Butler has described himself as 'second-generation Irish' (John Mulvey, 'Rogue Man Star', *New Musical Express*, 10 January 1998, p. 43).
72. Cited in Rogan, *The Smiths*, p. 10. Waters' sentiment, here, appears to correspond with Paolo Hewitt's claim that Irish fans of Oasis 'instantly [relate] to the Irish elements of Noel [Gallagher]'s music'. (Hewitt, *Getting High*, p. 259).
73. For a discussion of 'independent', or 'indie', music, see David Hesmondhalgh, 'Indie: The Institutional Politics and Aesthetics of a Popular Music Genre', *Cultural Studies* Vol. 13, No. 1 (1999), pp. 34-61.
74. See, for instance, Marr's guitar riff in the opening moments of 'Girl Afraid' ('Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now', Rough Trade, 1984). Martin Stokes has referred to the 'Country and Irish' music that is popular amongst the Irish in England. (Stokes, 'Introduction', p. 3).
75. Stringer, 'The Smiths', p. 19.
76. For a brief discussion of Marr's application of such tunings, see Gore, 'Johnny Marr', p. 72. For details of the use of 'folk' guitar tunings in Irish traditional music, see Fintan Vallely, *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), pp. 161-2.
77. www.jmarr.com 2000 'Q & A'. 'Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want' originally appeared on the b-side of 'William, It Was Really Nothing' (Rough Trade, 1984). And while this particular instrument is certainly not unique to Irish music (indeed, Marr's solo hardly displays a recognisably 'Irish' performance style), it nevertheless seems interesting that, on the group's first tour of the Irish Republic, The Smiths began their live performances with a rendition of this song (something which they had never previously done, and subsequently did on only one occasion). (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 313-33).
78. For a discussion of these interventions, see McLaughlin and McLoone, 'Hybridity and National Musics', pp. 190-2; *Young Guns Go For It: Dexy's Midnight Runners* (BBC2, 13 September 2000).
79. Stringer, 'The Smiths', p. 19.
80. *South Bank Show* (ITV, 18 October 1987).
81. These terms are borrowed from Moore's discussion of folk in *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 96. Marr drew particular attention to his engagement with these sources (McIlheney, 'The Thoughts of Chairman Marr', p. 33; Gore, 'Johnny Marr', p. 72). 'This Charming Man' (RT 136, 1983); 'Back To The Old House', 'Reel Around The Fountain' (*Hatful of Hollow*, Rough 76, 1984).
82. Marr has discussed and demonstrated this influence on his playing. See *Granada Reports*, Granada Television, 21 February 1985. 'Nowhere Fast' (*Meat is Murder*, Rough Trade, 1985); 'Shakespeare's Sister' (Rough Trade, 1985).

83. Gore, 'Johnny Marr', pp. 72-3. For a discussion of 'high-life' music, see John Collins, 'The Early History of West African Highlife Music', *Popular Music* Vol. 8, No. 3 (1989), pp. 221-30. 'I Want the One I Can't Have', 'Barbarism Begins At Home' (*Meat is Murder*, Rough Trade, 1985); 'Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now' (Rough Trade, 1984); 'Ask' (Rough Trade, 1986).

84. Notable exceptions include 'What She Said' (*Meat is Murder*, Rough Trade, 1985); 'Panic' (Rough Trade, 1986); 'London' ('Shoplifters Of The World Unite', Rough Trade, 1987); 'Sweet and Tender Hooligan' ('Sheila Take A Bow', Rough Trade, 1987).

85. Gore, 'Johnny Marr', 68-74; *Top Ten Guitar Heroes* (Channel Four, 24 March 2001). Many tracks were performed primarily on acoustic (and semi-acoustic) guitar. See, for example, 'Back to the Old House', 'Please, Please, Please, Let Me Get What I Want', and 'Stretch Out and Wait' ('Shakespeare's Sister', Rough Trade, 1985). Marr also used harmonica on 'Hand in Glove' and 'I Won't Share You', mandolin on 'Please, Please, Please, Let Me Get What I Want', and piano on 'Oscillate Wildly' ('How Soon Is Now?', Rough Trade, 1985), 'Asleep' ('The Boy With The Thorn In His Side', Rough Trade, 1985), and 'Last Night I Dreamt Somebody Loved Me' (*Strangeways, Here We Come*, Rough Trade, 1987).

86. Marr has discussed and demonstrated this point. See, for example, *Granada Reports* (Granada Television, 21 February 1985).

87. Gore, 'Johnny Marr', p. 73.

88. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, pp. 36-7.

89. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 36. It is perhaps worth pointing out that certain tracks involved no percussion at all ('Back to the Old House').

90. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 155.

91. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 105.

92. *South Bank Show* (ITV, 18 October 1987).

93. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 133. 'Register and range describe simply the relative height and the spread of the pitches used in a song' (Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 43).

94. Stringer, 'The Smiths', p. 19.

95. Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, pp. 57-8; Frith, *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p. 127. As Laing points out, '[prior] to punk rock, British accents in British rock music had been in a small minority' (*One Chord Wonders*, p. 26).

96. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 46.

97. Peter Trudgill, *On Dialect: Social and Geographical Perspectives* (Oxford: Basil

Blackwell, 1983), pp. 154-5.

98. As Richard Middleton has pointed out, Gino Stefani's notion of 'emotive connotations' refers to 'the agreed affective implications of musical events'. Thus, 'punk is associated with aggression', while 'singer-songwriters' are equated 'with confessional intimacy'. (Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990), p. 232). Morrissey's vocal certainly appeared to gravitate towards the latter.

99. Stringer, 'The Smiths', pp. 19-20. Indeed, Morrissey tended to utilise the kind of 'confidential and "gentle" vocal tone' that, for Laing, was fundamentally disavowed by most punk vocalists. (Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, p. 116).

100. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 42.

101. Stringer, 'The Smiths', pp. 19-20.

102. Stringer, 'The Smiths', p. 16. Marr typically developed musical ideas on guitar, which were subsequently passed (via audio cassette) on to Morrissey, who would then conceive of song lyrics and vocal melodies. Interestingly, the song words that he used were often written before he had actually listened to the music, which again points to the significance of lyrics in The Smiths' performance. See John Harris, 'Trouble at Mill', *Mojo* (April 2001), pp. 58-9; *Top Ten Guitar Heroes* (Channel Four, 24 March 2001).

103. Frith, *Music for Pleasure*, p. 123. Frith takes this term from Dave Laing's study of Buddy Holly (Laing, *Buddy Holly* (London: Studio Vista, 1971)).

104. Laing, *Buddy Holly*, pp. 58-9. Laing suggests that '[the] musical equivalent of the *metteur en scene* [as opposed to an *auteur*] is the performer who regards a song as an actor does his part - as something to be expressed, something to get across. His aim is to render the lyric faithfully. The vocal style of the singer is determined almost entirely by the emotional connotations of the words' (pp. 58-9). For Frith, 'Laing's point is that the appeal of rock *auteurs* is that their meaning is *not* organized around their words', and he thus argues that 'song words matter most, as words, when they are *not* part of an *auteurial* unity, when they are still open to interpretation' (Frith, *Music for Pleasure*, p. 123).

105. Hubbs, 'Music of the "Fourth Gender"', pp. 272-3. In his discussion of punk vocalists, Laing suggests that 'by excluding the musicality of singing, the possible contamination of the lyric message by the aesthetic pleasures offered by melody, harmony, pitch and so on, is avoided' (Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, p. 54).

106. Winkler, 'Randy Newman's Americana', *Popular Music* Vol. 7, No. 1 (January 1988), p. 1.

107. Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 186. See also Frith, *Music for Pleasure*, p. 120.

108. Winkler, 'Randy Newman's Americana', p. 1.

109. Frith, *Music for Pleasure*, p. 120.

110. Hubbs, 'Music of the "Fourth Gender"', p. 289.

111. *South Bank Show* (ITV, 18 October 1987). Terry Eagleton, who was raised in a working-class Irish family in Salford, has explained, with particular reference to Delaney, that 'the Irish emigré influence was evident' in his hometown. (Eagleton, *The Gatekeeper*, p. 54).

112. Rowland occasionally made reference to Behan in his song lyrics for Dexy's songs. See, for example, 'Dance Stance' (Oddball Productions, 1979); 'Reminisce (Part Two)' (*Don't Stand Me Down*, Mercury, 1985). The band also graphically alluded to Behan in press adverts (*Sounds*, 22 March 1980, p. 33). The Pogues, meanwhile, included a rendition of Behan's 'The Auld Triangle' on their debut album, *Red Roses For Me* (Stiff, 1984), and referred to Behan in the song lyrics of various tracks. See, for example, 'Streams of Whiskey' (*Red Roses For Me*, Stiff, 1984); 'Thousands Are Sailing' (*If I Should Fall From Grace With God*, Pogue Mahone, 1988).

113. Morrissey frequently drew attention to his interest in Wilde. See, for example, McCormick, 'All Men Have Secrets', pp. 18-9; Van Poznak, 'Morrissey: The Face Interview', p. 32; Fricke, 'Keeping Up with the Smiths', pp. 32-3. See also Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 71. In the group's 1985 tour programme, Morrissey listed Wilde as his 'favourite person'. (The Smiths, *Meat is Murder* (London: Smithdom, 1985), no pagination). The singer often appeared in promotional photos surrounded by Wilde texts, or wearing t-shirts featuring the author (see, for example, Rogan, *The Smiths*, pp. 87, 83). Posters of Wilde, and Delaney, appear on the streets of Salford in the promotional video for 'I Started Something That I Couldn't Finish' (*The Smiths: The Complete Picture*). Delaney's image also featured on the sleeves of Smiths' records ('Girlfriend In A Coma', Rough Trade, 1987; *Louder Than Bombs*, Rough Trade, 1987). For an inventory of references to both Wilde and Delaney in Morrissey's song lyrics for The Smiths, see 'Original Sources for Morrissey's Lyrics' (<http://www.oz.net/~moz/nicked.htm>).

114. Hubbs, 'Music of the "Fourth Gender"', p. 269.

115. John Wilde, 'The Smiths', *Jamming!* No. 17 (1984), p. 18; Allan Jones, 'Trial By Jury', *Melody Maker*, 16 March 1985, p. 26.

116. Williams, 'The Light That Never Goes Out', *Guardian*, 'Weekend' magazine, 23 February 2002, p. 41.

117. Aizlewood, 'Thankfully Not Living in Yorkshire it Doesn't Apply', p. 34; Victoria Mary Clarke and Shane MacGowan, *A Drink with Shane MacGowan* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 2001), p. 213.

118. *South Bank Show* (ITV, 18 October 1987).

119. See Rogan, *The Smiths*, p. 56; Mark Cooper, 'Smithspeak', *No. 1*, 13 March 1984, p. 8;

Gary Leboff, 'Goodbye Cruel World', *Melody Maker*, 26 September 1987, p. 26. For a discussion of Morrissey's sartorial interests, see Iain Webb, 'This Handsome Devil', *New Musical Express* ('Undress' Supplement), 26 May 1984, pp. 4-5. For a photographic record of such interests, see Rogan, *The Smiths*, pp. 52, 66, 69, 87. For a discussion of the Wildean dimension to the daffodils, see David Bret, *Morrissey: Landscapes of the Mind* (London: Robson Books, 1994), p. 29; Rogan, *The Smiths*, pp. 35, 45, 53.

120. Stringer, 'The Smiths', p. 22. See Rogan, *The Smiths*, pp. 75, 97; *Top of the Pops* (BBC1, 31 May 1984).

121. O'Hagan, 'Look Back In Angst', *Observer*, 'Review' section, 7 April 2002, p. 9.

122. Katie Neville, 'The Post Cool School', p. 33.

123. *South Bank Show* (ITV, 18 October 1987).

124. See, for example, Rogan, *The Smiths*, pp. 47, 62, 79, 125, 126, 130-1.

125. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 142-3.

126. Graham Smith and Dylan Jones, 'Alias Smith and ...' *Record Mirror*, 8 September 1984, p. 12.

127. Rogan, *The Smiths*, p. 38. For a brief discussion of 'synthesizer rock', see Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, pp. 133-6.

128. Smith and Jones, 'Alias Smith and ...', p. 12. Marr has concurred with this account. Referring to the proliferation, in the early 1980s, of 'synthesizer duos' with 'eighteen syllable names', the guitarist explained: 'we just turned the whole thing around and we called ourselves The Smiths' (*South Bank Show* (ITV, 18 October 1987)).

129. Wilde, 'The Smiths', p. 17. Such assertions were clearly informed by the notion of the guitar as an 'authentic' instrument for unmediated self-expression.

130. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 133; Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990), p. 90.

131. Worral, 'The Cradle Snatchers', p. 27; Allan Jones, 'The Blue Romantics', *Melody Maker*, 3 March 1984, p. 25; Ian Pye, 'Magnificent Obsessions', *Melody Maker*, 26 November 1983, p. 24. For similar comments, see Simon Garfield, 'This Charming Man', *Time Out*, 7-13 March 1985, p. 19; Jonh Wilde, 'Morrissey's Year', *Jamming!* (December 1984), p. 24.

132. Allan Jones, 'Johnny Guitar', *Melody Maker*, 14 April 1984, pp. 10-1.

133. Stringer, 'The Smiths', p. 17.

134. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, pp. 146-153.

135. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 150. Significantly, The Pogues would later perform at the Womad Festival, see Joe Merrick, *London Irish Punk Life and Music ... Shane MacGowan* (London: Omnibus Press, 2001), p. 152.
136. *The Great Hunger: The Life and Songs of Shane MacGowan* (BBC2, 4 October 1997).
137. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 313; Scanlon, *The Pogues*, p. 9.
138. Hentoff cited in Steve Jones, 'Re-Viewing Rock Writing: The Origins of Popular Music Criticism', *American Journalism* Vol. 9, Pt. 2/3 (1992), pp. 102-3.
139. *The Great Hunger: The Life and Songs of Shane MacGowan* (BBC2, 4 October 1997). This was underpinned by the group's decision to perform at venues such as the Camden Irish Centre, where they recorded an early promotional video (Scanlon, *The Pogues*, pp. 35, 41). Although Dexy's recorded the video for 'Celtic Soul Brothers' at an Irish club in London (see *Young Guns Go For It: Dexy's Midnight Runners* (BBC2, 13 September 2000)), Rowland appeared less interested in presenting himself as a representative of Irish people in England.
140. Phil Eva, 'Home Sweet Home?', pp. 139, 142, 144.
141. Negus, who defines 'articulation' as a process in which two elements that do not necessarily belong together become connected, points to the way in which meanings are produced at the moment of 'articulation' between the sites of production and consumption (i.e. band and audience). For if production can be connected to consumption in this way, then band and audience can be said to 'articulate'. See Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996). pp. 133-5.
142. Rolston, 'This Is Not a Rebel Song', p. 65.
143. Paul Lester, 'Titanic!', *Uncut* (March 2000), p. 62.
144. *LA Pool Party* (BBC1 24 November, 2001).
145. Rolston, 'This Is Not a Rebel Song', p. 64.
146. Eamonn Hughes, "'Lancelot's Position": The Fiction of Irish-Britain', in A.R. Lee (ed.), *Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction* (London: Pluto, 1995), p. 144.
147. Hughes, 'Lancelot's Position', pp. 144, 152-4.
148. Ullah, 'Second-Generation Irish Youth', pp. 317-9.
149. Arrowsmith, 'Writing "Home"', pp. 214, 237, 236, 220, 221, 219-20, 237, 214.
150. Savage, 'Rough Emeralds', p. 11.

151. Arrowsmith, 'Writing "Home"', pp. 237-8.
152. Stringer, 'The Smiths', p. 19.
153. The first recording of the track was originally broadcast as part of a session on the *John Peel Show* (BBC Radio One, 21 September 1983), and this is the version that I discuss here. The track was frequently performed live in concerts to promote the group's debut album (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 316-19).
154. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 92.
155. Wilde, 'Morrissey's Year', p. 26.
156. Biba Kopf, 'A Suitable Case for Treatment', *New Musical Express*, 22/29 December 1984, p. 7.
157. The first recording of this track was originally broadcast as part of a session on the *John Peel Show* (BBC Radio One, 17 December 1986). The track was performed live at all of the group's concerts to promote *The Queen is Dead* album (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 329-33).
158. Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (London: Pimlico, 1995, 2nd edition), p. 366. While Morrissey makes a number of playful allusions to Elvis Presley's vocal style (complemented by Marr's Scotty Moore style bending and 'twanging' of notes), his lyrics includes the lines: 'I lost my bag in Newport Pagnell', and 'I got confused - I killed a nun'. For a brief discussion of the different functions of the dominant seventh chord, see Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 168.
159. Sheila Whiteley, *The Space Between the Notes: Rock and the Counter-Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 125.
160. The first recording of the track was originally broadcast as part of a session on the *John Peel Show* (BBC Radio One, 17 December 1986). The track was performed live at all of the group's concerts on the English tour to promote *The Queen is Dead* album (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 331-3).
161. Interestingly, in Moore's discussion of Jethro Tull's 'Ears of Tin' (mentioned earlier in the chapter), he points out that while that particular track utilises an acoustic, 'folksy' style to convey the narrating subject's nostalgic yearning for 'his Scottish island', it also uses 'riff-based rock for his heading for the cities of the mainland' (Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text*, p. 92).
162. Hubbs, 'Music of the "Fourth Gender"', p. 280.
163. Gerry Smyth, *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 160.

164. The first recording of 'Miserable Lie' (a track that dates back to the group's third live performance) was originally broadcast as a part of a session on the *John Peel Show* (BBC Radio One, 31 May 1983). A re-recorded version later appeared on the group's eponymously-titled debut album (Rough Trade, 1984), and they frequently performed the track live until the end of 1985 (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 313-328). 'There is a Light that Never Goes Out' was included on the group's third studio album, *The Queen is Dead* (Rough Trade, 1986), and the group regularly performed this track live from the beginning of 1986 until their final concert (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 328-333). 'Half a Person', meanwhile, was originally broadcast as part of a session on the *John Peel Show* (BBC Radio One, 17 December 1986). The track later appeared on the b-side of 'Shoplifters of the World Unite' (Rough Trade, 1987).

165. This track was included on *The Queen is Dead*, and featured regularly in live performances to promote that album (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, 331-3).

166. Stringer, 'The Smiths', p. 19.

167. R. Day, *The Queen is Dead* (Woodford Green: International Music Publications, 1988), p. 13.

168. Frank Owen, 'Home Thoughts from Abroad', *Melody Maker*, 27 September 1986, p. 16.

169. Brian Keaney, *Don't Hang About* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 104, my emphasis).

170. The first recording of 'These Things Take Time' (which dates back to the group's third live performance) was originally broadcast as a part of a session on the *David Jensen Show* (BBC Radio One, 4 July 1983). The track was frequently performed live at concerts to promote the group's debut album (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 313-22), and was released on the twelve-inch single of 'What Difference Does It Make' (Rough Trade, 1984). 'Pretty Girls Make Graves' was included on the group's debut album, *The Smiths* (Rough Trade, 1984), and was performed live regularly in concerts to promote the album (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 314-22).

171. 'Stretch Out and Wait' was originally released on the twelve-inch single of 'Shakespeare's Sister' (Rough Trade, 1985). The track was frequently performed live (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, 323-331). 'The Queen is Dead' was the opening track on *The Queen is Dead* and featured in all of the live sets to promote that album (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 329-33).

172. 'How Soon is Now?' was originally released as an extra-track on the twelve-inch single 'William, It Was Really Nothing' (Rough Trade, 1984). A key track in The Smiths' canon, it was eventually released as a single in its own right (Rough Trade, 1985), and was performed live regularly (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 321-333). For a discussion of Marr's guitar intro, see Gore, 'Johnny Marr', 72; *Top Ten Guitar Heroes* (Channel Four, 24 March 2001).

173. *The Tube* (Channel Four, 25 October 1985).

174. Van Poznak, 'Morrissey: The Face Interview', p. 32.
175. Hubbs, 'Music of the "Fourth Gender"', p. 267.
176. Hubbs, 'Music of the "Fourth Gender"', p. 267.
177. This track is featured on *The Queen is Dead* album, and featured in all of the live sets to promote this album (Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 329-33).
178. *South Bank Show* (ITV, 18 October 1987).
179. Worrall, 'The Cradle Snatchers', pp. 26-7; Barney Hoskyns, 'The Smiths: These Disarming Men', *New Musical Express*, 4 February 1984, pp. 13, 41. While such comments may be considered naive, utopian and possibly self-serving (especially from a marketing point of view), my point is that they suggest an anti-segregationist standpoint.
180. The sequence can be heard briefly at the beginning of the group's live album, *Rank* (Rough Trade, 1988), and is clearly foregrounded in the televised excerpt of the group's performance at Glasgow Barrowlands on 25 September 1985. See *The Tube* (Channel Four, 25 October 1985).
181. This was a feature of the band's concerts as early as 1983. See, for example, Barney Hoskyns, 'Ridiculous and Wonderful', *New Musical Express*, 1 October 1983, p. 36; Dave McCullough, 'The Smiths ICA', *Sounds*, 15 October 1983, p. 53. See also the televised version of their concert at Derby Assembly Rooms on 7 December, 1983 that was broadcast on *The Old Grey Whistle Test* (BBC2, 9 December 1983). A review of the opening night of the English tour to promote *The Queen is Dead*, meanwhile, noted 'a stage invasion of major proportions'. (Dave Sexton, 'The Smiths, Sands, Carlisle', *Record Mirror*, 25 October 1986, p. 64). For examples of this 'stage invasion' on later dates of the tour, see video recordings of the shows at Wolverhampton Civic Hall (15 October 1986) and Nottingham Royal Concert Hall (21 October 1986). (Video tapes in possession of the author).
182. Stuart James cited in Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 225. What this component of the live show actually constituted, of course, was little more (and yet no less) than a symbolic blurring of boundaries between 'star' and 'fan'. In other words, while this moment served to dramatise an apparent refusal of the putative stage-auditorium distinction, the relatively clear economic discrepancies that underpinned the performer-spectator relationship in this context were scarcely dissolved by such a 'carnavalesque' feature. For a brief discussion of this point, see Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, pp. 84-5.
183. Frith, 'I Am What I Am', *Village Voice*, 3 August 1993, p. 82.
184. John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 214-5.
185. Jones, 'Blue Romantics', p. 35.

186. Stringer, 'The Smiths', p. 16.
187. George Byrne, 'The Manchester Martyr', *Hot Press*, 11 April 1986, p. 24.
188. Gilroy, 'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack', pp. 137-43.
189. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, pp. 313, 316, 321, 320, 328, 262. For a discussion of Red Wedge, see John Street, 'Red Wedge: Another Strange Story of Pop's Politics', *Critical Quarterly* Vol. 30, No. 3 (Autumn 1988), pp. 79-91.
190. Byrne, 'Tune Smith', p. 21. However, despite the gestures that the group had made towards the Anti-Apartheid movement, and the fact that their earlier concert for the GLC had been co-headlined by the reggae group Misty in Roots (Rogan, *The Smiths*, p. 54), the group's position on questions of 'race' was marked by some troubling comments that Morrissey made about black music in 1986 (Owen, 'Home Thoughts From Abroad', p. 16). Marr later offered an unequivocal response to subsequent press accusations that the group had implicitly endorsed racist sentiment (Danny Kelly, 'Exile on Mainstream', *New Musical Express*, 14 February 1987, p. 44). Notwithstanding Marr's seething riposte, though, it seems that 'race' was an issue that The Smiths handled in an, at best, rather clumsy manner. And while journalists have occasionally alluded to Morrissey's Irishness in an apparent attempt to alleviate him from accusations of racism (Dave Simpson, 'Still Doing It His Way', *Guardian*, 12 November 1999, p. 25), it is quite clear that the simple fact of being Irish, or indeed being a second-generation Irish person with first-hand of experience of anti-Irish prejudice, does not necessarily preclude someone from harbouring or expressing racist thoughts or opinions.
191. James Henke, 'Oscar! Oscar! Great Britain Goes Wilde for the "Fourth-Gender" Smiths', *Rolling Stone*, 7 June 1984, p. 45. In the group's 1985 tour programme, meanwhile, both Morrissey and Mike Joyce listed Thatcher as their 'Villains'. (The Smiths, *Meat is Murder*, no pagination).
192. Hubbs, 'Music of the "Fourth Gender"', p. 266.
193. Ian Pye, 'A Hard Day's Misery', *Melody Maker*, 3 November 1984, p. 31.
194. Cited in Rogan, *The Smiths*, p. 98; Rogan, *The Smiths*, p. 98.
195. Glyn Brown, 'Laughter in Paradise!', *Sounds*, 14 June 1986, p. 16.
196. Jo Slee, *Peephohism: Into the Art of Morrissey* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1994), p. 85.
197. Brown, 'Laughter in Paradise!', p. 16.
198. Simon Garfield, 'This Charming Man', p. 19.
199. Ian Pye, 'Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em', *New Musical Express*, 7 June 1986, p. 27. In the group's 1985 tour programme, meanwhile, Morrissey listed his 'High Point of Career' as 'Not

meeting Royalty', while Marr selected the Queen as one of his 'Villains'. (The Smiths, *Meat is Murder*, no pagination).

200. Simon Reynolds and Joy Press, *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion and Rock'n'Roll* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1995), p. 48. Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, p. 38.

201. Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), pp. 352-3.

202. Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr*, p. 94.

203. Bruce Dessau, 'Rebel Without A Cause', *City Limits*, 12-19 June 1986, p. 12.

204. Laing, *One Chord Wonders*, xii.

205. For a discussion of received pronunciation, see Martin Montgomery, *An Introduction to Language and Society* (London: Routledge, 1995, 2nd edition), pp. 70-5.

206. Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds*, p. 87.

207. MC5 'represented a political strand of the underground music of the sixties and prefigured the concerns of the punk movement of the seventies' (Hardy and Laing, *The Faber Companion to 20th-Century Popular Music*, p. 629).

208. Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds*, p. 87.

209. Slee, *Peepholism*, p. 41.

210. Kelly, 'Exile on Mainstream', p. 45; Rogan, *The Smiths*, p. 150.

211. David Widgery, *Beating Time: Riot'n Race'n Rock'n Roll* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1986), p. 64. In the National Front attack, Lydon suffered two severed tendons, and received a machete cut to one leg (Savage, *England's Dreaming*, p. 366). For Lydon's assertion of Irishness, see Allan Jones, 'Rotten!', *Melody Maker*, 4 June 1977, p. 52. Lydon would later maintain that the police had raided his house, at this time, on account of his Irishness: 'One time they saw what they thought was an Irish flag in the window, which was actually just three curtains stuck together because the blind had fallen down, and they raided the place because they thought I was in the IRA'. (Caroline Sullivan, 'Still Shooting from the Lip', *Guardian*, 15 January, 1996, Second section, p. 7).

212. Sean O'Hagan, 'Guerrillas In Our Midst', *Observer*, 'Review' section, 20 February 2000, p. 2.

213. Simon Reynolds, 'Songs of Love and Hate', *Melody Maker*, 12 March 1988, p. 33.

214. Eva, 'Home Sweet Home? The "Culture of Exile" in Mid-Victorian Popular Song', *Popular Music* Vol. 16, No. 2 (1997), p. 135.

215. Robert Elms, 'Pogue in the Eye', *The Face* (March 1985), p. 32.
216. Daryl Easlea, 'Don't Stand Me Down', *Record Collector* (April 2002), p. 51.
217. Chris Roberts, 'Grand Stand', *Uncut* (May 2002), p. 76.
218. Easlea, 'Don't Stand Me Down', p. 51.
219. David Hutcheon, 'Rides Up With Wear', *Mojo* (May 2002), p. 118.
220. Jon Savage, 'Androgyny: Confused Chromosomes and Camp Followers', *The Face* (June 1983), p. 23.
221. Rolston, 'This Is Not A Rebel Song', p. 65. McCartney's former songwriting partner, John Lennon, who occasionally drew attention to his own 'decidedly Irish heritage' (Ray Coleman, *Lennon* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), p. 18) during his Beatles' career (Ritchie Yorke, 'Ringo's Right We Can't Tour Again', *New Musical Express*, 7 June 1969, p. 3), also began to engage with Irish political issues at this time. See, for example, 'Sunday Bloody Sunday', and 'The Luck of the Irish' (*Some Time in New York City*, Apple, 1972). Such gestures were underpinned by Lennon's active involvement with Irish Republican politics in the early 1970s. See Liam Clarke, "'Pro-IRA" Lennon Spied On By FBI', *Sunday Times*, 5 October 1997, p. 10.
222. See Martin Cloonan, *Banned! Censorship of Popular Music in Britain 1967-92* (Aldershot: Arena, 1996), pp. 115-6, 17, 129.
223. Rogan, *The Smiths*, pp. 97, 78.
224. Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 209.
225. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working-Class* (London: Penguin, 1963), p. 484.
226. Savage, 'Rough Emeralds', p. 11.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined some of the key ways in which the second-generation Irish in England have been mediated and contextualised in academic and journalistic discourses. To this end, the thesis has, in large part, been a critical dialogue with particular aspects of Irish Studies, British Cultural Studies, and the discourse of popular music journalism. Much of this dialogue has, in turn, been refracted through the prism of specific themes and issues, especially those pertaining to assimilation, essentialism, and ‘white ethnicity’. However, I have also engaged with the question of musical ‘routes’, examining the particular aesthetic strategies that have been mobilised by second-generation Irish rock musicians in England.

Central to this thesis has been a desire to challenge the invisibility of the second-generation Irish in academic and journalistic discourses; to highlight the diversity and complexity of second-generation Irish experience and identity-formation processes; and to point to the productive and diverse ways in which second-generation cultural practitioners have reconfigured popular culture in England. Much of the imperative for this project inevitably came from my own experiences growing up in an Irish Catholic family in the north-west of England in the 1970s and 1980s. And in this sense, the thesis is clearly informed by an endeavour to problematise some of the simplistic assumptions about Irishness that have gained currency in British popular discourses, and to draw attention to some of the less obvious ways in which the Irish ethnic group has contributed to the ‘host’ culture.¹

As Sabina Sharkey has pointed out,

Where they [the Irish in Britain] have no profile ... both their needs and their contribution to the community can be ignored. Their agency can be discredited and their statements about the needs of vulnerable sections of their community such as the elderly, homeless or the mentally ill can be decried on the basis that there is no research to support any claims of special needs.²

While there are now a number of valuable studies to support such claims of disadvantage and discrimination,³ this thesis can, I hope, form part of a corresponding endeavour to demonstrate the ‘agency’ and ‘contribution’ of the Irish ethnic group in England.⁴

But the project has, I think, a capacity to resonate beyond the specific interests and concerns of the Irish ethnic group. Perhaps most obviously, the thesis serves as a demonstration of the complex processes of cultural identification that arguably characterise *any* inter-ethnic context, while also pointing to the ethnocentric parameters that have undoubtedly shaped a great many critical discourses about *all* forms of cultural production.⁵

Perhaps more important than this, though, is the potential significance that such a project might have in the endeavour to conceive of a genuinely multi-ethnic Britain. For as Avtar Brah has pointed out, in such a multi-ethnic context, ‘where several diasporas intersect - African, Jewish, Irish, South Asian, and so on - it becomes necessary to examine how these groups are similarly or differently constructed *vis-a-vis* one another’.⁶ As I have demonstrated, second-generation Irish rock musicians have often been constructed in terms of an ostensibly homogenous white Englishness, against which more identifiably immigrant-descended rock and pop musicians have been positioned, differentiated, and, in the case of Britpop, excluded.

It is perhaps unsurprising that many second-generation African-Caribbean and South Asian musicians have expressed particular concerns about the racial connotations of Britpop. For instance, Aniruddha Das of Asian Dub Foundation has argued that 'Britpop is an attempt to reassert a sort of mythical whiteness. In that respect, I'd say it's implicitly racist'.⁷ Similar criticisms of 'Britpop' have, of course, also been made by musicians of Irish descent. For instance, in 1996, the former Smiths' guitarist Johnny Marr expressed his 'despair' about the 'nationalism' of Britpop in an interview in which he recalled his personal experience of anti-Irish prejudice.⁸ Marr underlined this point by expressing a particular antipathy towards the Union Flag, the principal signifier of Britpop.⁹

However, despite the fact that musicians of Irish descent, such as Marr, have articulated an aversion to Britpop, they have nevertheless been critically appropriated as key Britpop figures, and have therefore been a crucial component in its construction of a 'mythical whiteness'. For instance, during the summer of 1995, at the height of Britpop, Marr's former group The Smiths (who had disbanded in 1987) were conscripted for what *Melody Maker* called 'the Home Guard of Britpop', while Marr, specifically, was honoured as a 'Britpop icon'.¹⁰ Accordingly, if Britpop was indeed implicitly racist, then this was arguably due not only to its exclusion of musicians of African-Caribbean and South Asian descent, but also its symmetrical *inclusion* of second-generation Irish musicians. In other words, Britpop's incorporation of the descendants of post-war Irish Catholic labour migrants suggests that its principles of exclusion were determined less by the historical fact of having an immigrant background, than by a discursive conflation of race and nation.

This convergence of race and nation has not, of course, been restricted to discourses about popular music. In fact, for Walter, such '[exclusionary] ideas about "race" lie at the heart of British national identity':

The term 'immigrants' has a racialized meaning which makes it synonymous with black skin colour ... Shared whiteness is thus a central reason for Irish inclusion. The power of racialized exclusion on grounds of skin colour would be seriously weakened if ... divisions in the white population were exposed.¹¹

Clearly Walter's point here recalls the practices of the dominant 'race relations' paradigm (and thereby the origins of the absence of an Irish dimension in critical discourses about ethnicity and popular music). However, it also raises crucial questions about Britpop's assertion of a 'mythical whiteness'. For instance, in the face of Britpop's tacit construction of a monolithic 'white Englishness', perhaps an acknowledgement of Irish ethnicity in England could, by drawing attention to the immigrant-descended heterogeneity of this ostensibly homogeneous category, make visible the racialising logic that underpinned Britpop's mechanisms of inclusion.

Such an assertion of second-generation Irish difference could, then, provide a useful strategy for the deconstruction of monolithic identity categories such as 'British' or 'white English', demonstrating the immigrant-descended heterogeneity that has reconfigured the cultural fabric of these ostensibly homogeneous categories.

This endeavour to problematise the putative homogeneity of whiteness in England has

undoubtedly been nourished by a discernible shift regarding the recognition of Irishness in critical discourses about popular music and ethnicity. The British music press has, as I demonstrated in Chapter Four, conventionally overlooked the particular immigrant background of second-generation Irish musicians whilst simultaneously privileging questions of ethnicity in discussions of musicians of African-Caribbean and South Asian descent. This practice has, however, undergone significant modifications in recent journalistic discourses.

In the summer of 2000, for instance, *Q* magazine ran a special theme issue, replete with glossy Union Flag cover, entitled 'The 100 Greatest British Albums'. In an apparent endeavour to quell simplistic celebrations of a racially exclusive Britishness, the issue included an ethnically-sensitive editorial essay, entitled 'One Nation Under A Groove'. Indeed, a pull-out quote from this article, used to illustrate the text, emphasised that 'Britain's multi-ethnic mix and links with the Commonwealth have contributed to a potent shebeen of home-grown music'. In the actual text itself, though, this assertion was punctuated with a parenthetical recognition of Irish ethnicity, that read: 'Britain's multi-ethnic mix (wherein the immigrant Irish have proved most crucial, from The Beatles to Oasis) ...'.¹²

Clearly this acknowledgement marks a striking deviation from previous journalistic discourses about ethnicity and popular music, for rather than being omitted (or at best marginalised) the Irish are in this instance privileged as the 'most crucial' ethnic group. And while the significance of this assertion may be somewhat diminished by its parenthetical status (not to mention its omission from the truncated pull-out quote), it nevertheless serves as a gesture towards prising open the narrow parameters of the dominant paradigm, particularly as this special issue had demonstrated throughout a particular sensitivity towards Irish ethnicity in

England. For instance, a brief review of The Pogues explained: 'Being white of skin and Western European of culture, Britain's Irish are the invisible immigrants. Young Irish men in English bars need their culture however. Shane MacGowan articulated the aspirations and disappointments of the London Irish, fuelled by drink and despair'.¹³ Notwithstanding the obvious mobilisation here of an essentialist conception of Irishness, this handling of MacGowan is markedly different to the magazine's derisive treatment of the singer's engagement with Irishness only ten months previously (when it had derided his 'half-baked Irishness'). Perhaps even more surprisingly, in an evaluation of The Beatles' *Revolver* (1966), the record that the magazine had selected as the greatest British album of all-time, the group was described as 'third or fourth generation Irish-English'.¹⁴

This burgeoning development of an Irish dimension in journalistic discourses might, moreover, be indicative of a potential shift in current thinking about ethnicity in contemporary Britain. For instance, in the recent Runnymede Trust sponsored report on *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, the commissioners (including, significantly, Stuart Hall) clearly endeavoured to incorporate an Irish dimension, demonstrating an awareness of the presence of the Irish ethnic group, as well as an understanding of their particular historical experience.¹⁵ While this report has been widely received as a critical repudiation of the racial connotations of conventional notions of Britishness,¹⁶ it might also be understood, in the context of the issues raised in this thesis, as a corrective to similarly conventionalised assumptions, held within academic and journalistic discourses, about white ethnic homogeneity. The conceivable paradigm shift that this might engender, could perhaps facilitate a fuller understanding of the complex and diverse contours that constitute Britain's multi-ethnic margins, providing a means by which to trace the intricate inter-ethnic threads traversing this 'diaspora space', and illuminating the complex

processes that underpin all forms of identity-formation and cultural production.

Endnotes

1. For a discussion of the problematic notions of Irishness that have circulated in British popular discourses, see, for example, Lewis Perry Curtis Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1971); Liz Curtis, *Nothing But The Same Old Story: The Roots of Anti-Irish Racism* (London: Information on Ireland, 1984).
2. Sabina Sharkey, 'A View of the Present State of Irish Studies', in Susan Bassnett (ed.), *Studying British Cultures: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 116.
3. See, for example, Mary Hickman and Bronwen Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community* (London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1997).
4. As I pointed out in the Introduction, even in pedagogically-driven multi-culturalist endeavours whose express purpose has been to highlight the largely overlooked contribution of immigrants and their immediate descendants, the second-generation Irish have either been absent, or taken as straightforward representatives of the 'host' culture.
5. Paul Gilroy, for example, has drawn attention to instances of African-Caribbean diasporic cultural production that 'exceed the frameworks of national or ethnocentric analysis' offered by 'ethnically cleansed canon-building operations'. (Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), pp. 33, 145).
6. Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 189.
7. David Stubbs, 'Combat Rock', *Uncut* (August 1998), p. 45.
8. Dave Simpson, 'Why Two's Company', *Guardian*, 13 July 1996, p. 30.
9. Brian Boyd, 'Johnny, We Never Knew You', *Irish Times*, 'Arts' section, 8 May 1999, p. 6.
10. David Bennun, Paul Lester, Taylor Parkes, Dave Simpson, and Ian Watson, 'Britpop', *Melody Maker*, 22 July 1995, pp. 32-3.
11. Bronwen Walter, 'Gendered Irishness in Britain: Changing Constructions', in Colin Graham and Richard Kirkland (eds), *Ireland and Cultural Theory: The Mechanics of Authenticity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 93.
12. Stuart Maconie *et al*, 'The 100 Greatest British Albums Ever!', *Q* (June 2000), pp. 83-4.
13. Maconie *et al*, p. 61.
14. Maconie *et al*, p. 93.
15. Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report* (London: Profile Books, 2000), pp. 20-1, 31-2; 61, 63, 64, 139. The Irish dimensions of the report were largely informed by the contributions of Mary Hickman and

Bronwen Walter (p. 364).

16. See, for example, Trevor Kavanagh, 'Curse of the Britain-Bashers', *The Sun*, 11 October 2000, pp. 12-3; Alan Travis, 'British Tag is "Coded Racism"', *Guardian*, 11 October 2000, p. 1; Richard Ford, 'The Argument For Becoming Nation Without A Name', *The Times*, 12 October 2000, p. 6.

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