

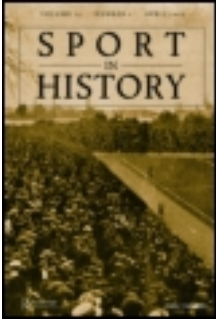
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### Keeping Them Under Pressure: Masculinity, Narratives of National Regeneration and the Republic of Ireland Soccer Team

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# Keeping Them Under Pressure: Masculinity, Narratives of National Regeneration and the Republic of Ireland Soccer Team

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*Since 1988 the Republic of Ireland soccer team has been cast, in Irish media, as both symbol and material example of social, economic and cultural regeneration in Ireland. This paper argues that such claims are narrative discursive constructions, ways of collectively imagining national identity and interpreting recent social change by elevating individuals within the national team to the status of heroic national representatives and conjunctural markers of the tension between tradition and modernity. Two versions of this narrative are identified. The first is the construction of the team in terms of a narrative of postcolonial national 'becoming', which characterised the early years of Jack Charlton's managerial reign, Charlton himself being the key symbolic figure. The second is the more recent figuring of the team as symbol and example of the recent 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom, the key player in which was Roy Keane. In both narratives, aggressively competitive masculinity is romanticised as a gauge of national achievement, and narrative progression is figured as the progressive displacement of outmoded masculinities by new forms. The interplay of constructions of national identity and masculinity reflects the interdependency and contingency of both forms of collective identity.*

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## Introduction

The Republic of Ireland's first ever qualification for major tournament finals, Euro '88, led to an unprecedented level of popularity for Irish soccer, reaching its zenith when 500,000 people welcomed their return from the Italia '90 World Cup. [1] Irish soccer's governing body, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI), faced insolvency in 1985 [2] and historically had been at best second to the team sports of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), [3] but the game's growing popularity and participation levels inspired Irish print and broadcast media claims that the national team was becoming a symbol of national social, economic and cultural renaissance.

This paper critically examines three such claims. Firstly, as a metaphorical nation in competition, the national team symbolized independence and legitimacy. [4] Secondly, it represented a more progressive, inclusive and less monocultural national identity than GAA games: its composition of British-based (and often British-born) players signified a more mature national identity unhindered by inward-looking cultural nationalism or British colonialism's psychic legacy. British-born players represented Ireland's emigrant history and soccer tournaments' global reach facilitated the participation of the 'diaspora' in a symbolically inclusive, geographically complex and multiply hyphenated national identity. [5] More recently, commentators construed this success as a harbinger of the late 1990s economic boom, both symbol and example of pragmatic, nuanced collective adjustment to the changing global economy, despite geographical marginality and historical industrial underdevelopment. [6]

The following critical examination makes certain basic theoretical propositions. Firstly, nations are contingent 'imagined communities' of geographically dispersed and internally heterogeneous populations, [7] 'hegemonic fiction[s] . . . at those moments when an affective unity can be posited against the grain of structural divisions and bureaucratic taxonomies'. [8] Secondly, sport's spatio-temporal containment and simultaneous print- and broadcast-mediated reach actively facilitates the imagining of communal identities, [9] generating 'playgrounds of the imagination' and enabling 'collective emotional investment' [10] in heroic figures as shared symbols. Thirdly, such symbolism is discursively constructed in dramatized, mediated narratives: [11] heroes become 'known' through mediated reputation. Fourthly, the combination of unpredictable competitive outcomes, frequently 'live' mediation and rule-bound measurement of visible, bodily achievements creates 'dramatic

immediacy' and a 'veneer of authenticity' [12] unique to sport. If 'anyone can become a celebrity', a 'name', [13] national sports celebrities seem closer to classical heroism by accomplishing measurable *deeds* [14] recorded as individual and national achievements.

With these theoretical assumptions it will be argued that the above claims are discursive narrative *constructions* which contributed to these national heroes' symbolism of a national identity in transition from traditional cultural nationalism to newly established modernity. Their evolution mirrors the recent popularization of, and shift between, two interpretive frames for understanding Irish national identity. The first is the 'postcolonial' discourse of national identity. Though multifarious, politically and culturally, as Llobera argues, nationalism has various models. Historically, Ireland fits a colonial model of 'small national units that try to break away from an existing multinational state or empire'. [15] Although Ireland's 'postcolonial' claims have been questioned as 'pretensions', given Ireland's possibly regional [16] or liminal [17] rather than colonial place within the British Empire, post-Independence Irish national identity was characterized by a colonial historical narrative and a popular postcolonial sensibility in which national being is still defined by its relationship to the 'colonial' power. [18] Earlier narrative constructions of the team's symbolism reflected this sensibility in their celebrated narrative of national emergence from subordination and, slightly paradoxically, celebrating symbolic *liberation* from this colonial construction of national identity. As Eagleton remarked, the declaration of Irish independence is a 'performative contradiction, qualifying its declaration ... by the very situation in which it is forced to utter it'. [19] More recent constructions reflect the discursive construction of the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' economy, a celebratory image of release from postcolonial fixation and arrival as an 'equal competitor', a legitimate nation in the global economy. Both projected symbolisms also exhibit a recurring narrative of release from the postcolonial symptoms and constrictions of narrowly focused traditional cultural nationalism.

Discourses of national becoming are also closely articulated to discursive constructions of masculinity. While masculinity is generally implicit in studies of national sporting heroes and their media representation, it will be argued that these narratives of national renaissance were gendered, projecting combative male teams as a metaphor for Ireland's economic and social transformation, reinforcing associations of sporting prowess with masculine strength (and superiority) [20] and enabling its symbolism of impermeable national boundaries. As Enloe observes, 'nationalism has typically sprung from

masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope'. [21]

However, it will also be maintained that these narratives of national renaissance are gendered narratives of masculine displacement and collective evolution. Given inevitable competitive decline, national teams' survival as symbolic nations require sporting heroes' eventual dismissal. Male athletes' competitive failure is a failure to maintain the masculine attributes that enabled national heroic status. The players' masculinity in these narratives facilitated fantasies of national cohesion and impermeability, but they were also constructed as the progressive displacement of outmoded masculinities by advanced successors. National sporting heroes are both objects of collective fantasy in victory and threats to collective fantasy given the risk and inevitability of eventual defeat. Where there is extensive debate as to future viability as national representatives, by commoditizing professional athletes, even national heroes, sport facilitates their dismissal.

This leads to three further arguments. Firstly, despite individual sporting figures' eventual elimination, their status as objects of ambivalence and dismissal enabled both the national team's continuity and the tangible experience of national community through extended debate in and through consumption of national media. Secondly, these debates entailed the individual and collective *performance* of masculinity. That is, like national identity itself, masculinity is a culturally constructed, contingent and unstable imagining of difference *performed* through discursive and corporeal behaviour. [22] Narrative projections of national identity, therefore, were predominantly *gendered* performances of masculinity and national identity. And thirdly, narratives of collective national achievement in soccer inspired additional forms of writing, depicting supporters themselves as protagonists of peculiarly 'Irish' heroic narratives.

Thus, these narratives of national renaissance were both gendered projections of national identity as masculinity and gendered performances of masculinity by media commentators themselves.

### **'Beaten 2–0 and it was a good performance, a moral victory': [23] John Giles and the pre-Charlton years**

This phenomenon's relatively recent emergence is highlighted by low levels of popular interest and of downright hostility directed at key players prior to 1986, as detailed in several quasi-histories of the national team. [24] All recount historical failure, principally failure to qualify for any

pre-1988 tournament finals, tracing this failure to several factors: soccer's unequal competition with the GAA; [25] periodic but inconsistent emergence of adequate individual talent; the inevitable migration by better players to British clubs, reflecting Irish soccer's overall weakness and in turn exacerbated by irregular player release for internationals; the growing tendency of Irish supporters, from the 1960s, to follow British teams with Irish players or strong Irish migrant support; 'internal' hindrance by the FAI's persistently amateur, incompetent and factionally divided governance; and the association's low domestic financial and spectator base. The phrase 'moral victory' reflects the corresponding poverty of ambition in international competition. Yet the FAI was the first sporting body representing the Irish Free State following independence from the United Kingdom in 1921, defying the Belfast-dominated, hitherto all-Ireland Irish Football Association. If soccer 'mirrored the political evolutions in Ireland in the twentieth century' [26] more than other sports, and the FAI 'had to fight for recognition' as the nation's symbolic representative in international soccer, [27] through international competitive failure it failed to realize potential political symbolism.

Perhaps most surprising, considering subsequent developments, was the ambivalence afforded Ireland's best player of the 1960s and player-manager from 1973 to 1980, John Giles. Having frequently been accused of allowing club loyalty to supersede his desire to represent Ireland, involvement for solely financial gain and failing to reproduce club form internationally, [28] as a manager he was then attacked for slow, elaborate play, heightening supporters' impatience and failing to realize promised competitive improvements. When, as Shamrock Rovers manager from 1977, Giles could not revitalize the moribund domestic league, he re-migrated to England. Diagnosing that 'familiarity breeds contempt', [29] he later rejected unfair criticism for failing to achieve the hitherto unaccomplished, and the intolerable abuse he and his family endured. [30]

However, as these quasi-histories demonstrate, Giles successfully progressed the national team from systemic weakness, external dependency and incompetent amateur administration towards growing internal control of competitive fortunes through a more professional management structure to enable success, beyond imaginary 'moral victories'. [31] He compensated for inadequate amateur administration, approximating other countries' increasingly professional approach with expertise acquired under Don Revie at Leeds United. Challenging the FAI, he and other rebels secured the ceding of team selection by administrative

'selection committee' to the manager, and negotiated the pragmatic practice of coinciding Ireland's fixtures with England's, easing dependency on English clubs by facilitating player release, and shifting international fixtures from Sundays to Wednesdays, allowing recovery from Saturday fixtures. [32] Refusing demands for faster-paced soccer, he favoured a more 'European' 'passing game' which now compares favourably with Jack Charlton's subsequently brutally effective approach.

Thus while Giles might retrospectively be cast as a conjunctural, modernizing figure, this early vilification may be seen as martyrdom to atavistic insularity and envy of emigrant success, illustrating how later emigrant Irish footballers would become gauges of national achievement disproportionate to soccer's domestic standing because of British soccer's popularity and international soccer's global status. Expectations were unreasonably raised by the imaginative projection of individual accomplishment onto future national achievement. Logically, therefore, national failure can be cast as individual failure, the 'smart arse' [33] as false prophet. Giles's case illustrates both the collective elevation of athletes to abstract national symbolism and their dispensability in failure, so sustaining the abstract ideal of nationhood. The attacks on his personality also illustrate how cultural constructions of masculinity are articulated to concepts of national identity: the winner's inspiring masculine arrogance and self-belief becomes self-serving individualism incompatible with the nation's needs.

### **'Putting them under pressure': masculinity, postcolonial regeneration and the Charlton years**

By contrast, former England international Jack Charlton's management (1986–95) achieved unprecedented popularity. Appealing beyond regular soccer supporters, Charlton's tactics, persistently derided in Britain, were celebrated across Irish media and society. Awarded the freedom of the City of Dublin (May 1994), he was deemed by Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Albert Reynolds to have 'done for Ireland what none of us politicians could possibly achieve'. [34] Embedded within such celebrations of national symbolism as elaborated by Irish media were postcolonial fantasies of masculine achievement, Charlton himself playing a key role.

A controversial selection, [35] Charlton initially met with mixed supporter and media receptions. [36] The turning point was Ireland's Euro '88 qualification and opening 1–0 victory over England, celebrations of which invoked Ireland's well-worn national 'inferiority complex', routinely traced, and now consigned to colonial history: "We've waited



1,000 years for this victory, and it's just fantastic," said [Agriculture Minister] Mr. O' Kennedy'; [37] 'the day that the Republic of Ireland took its place among the aristocracy of international football'; [38] 'Had we not for centuries allowed our brightest and best to fight the battles of every belligerent megalomaniac in Europe. Now we had taken to heart at last, the lessons they had taught us and recruited the sons of our own Diaspora.' [39]

Corresponding quotations of expressions of 'shame and humiliation' in British newspapers [40] illustrate what Tom Humphries later explained as the now pleurably indulged 'irony of English delusions about itself and its relationship with Ireland'. [41] As noted above, if Ireland's 'post-colonial' status is debatable, the sphere of sport demonstrates the endurance of an acute postcolonial sensibility, victory over England continuing to outweigh, in significance, England's/Britain's current international sporting or political status. The victory was celebrated for the same abstract but potentially powerful symbolism that made Giles so vulnerable to attack. Eliding the distance between symbolism and actuality, both the outcome and manner of this victory were widely deemed to mark a symbolic national renaissance.

A major feature was Ireland's quintessentially old-fashioned 'English' tactics routinely derided *in Britain*. Invoking the stereotype of Irish migrant industrial labourers, Pete Davies, for example, accused them of 'play[ing] like an industrial digger'. [42] Charlton insisted on keeping the ball in the opponents' half, entailing 'long' speculative balls forward, rather than tight passing, and pressurizing defenders to force errors on which midfielders could capitalize. [43] Physically demanding, it required extensive running 'off the ball', disrupting and intimidating opposing teams as a platform for any creative work *with* the ball. [44] Success converted the players, [45] then the media. In psychoanalytic terms, it was akin to delighted return *as* the repressed, recovering and transforming a history of discursive constructions of 'Irishness' as 'barbarian' 'otherness' to Britain. [46] Thus former Charlton detractor Con Houlihan poetically described Houghton's rather ugly goal against England in mixed metaphors, poetically entwining tradition and modernity, with a nod towards Charlton's renowned love of fishing: 'Sansom made a mess of his attempted clearance and Aldridge salmoned up and knocked the ball into Ray Houghton's flight path.' [47]

This style also implicitly validated a particular construction of 'hard' masculinity, shifting emphasis from creative ball play to a psychological battle of wills that eclipsed collective technical accomplishment and individual skill. The challenge for players was imposing collective will,

reading and pre-empting opposition intent and nullifying by well-timed interception, tackling replacing passing as a commentary focal point. It literally required additional, strength-sapping labour and stamina whose sustenance, arguably, really was a reflection of Charlton's renowned 'team spirit'. [48] This, too, indicates a postcolonial sensibility. Overlapping discursive colonial constructions of the Irish as barbaric were contradictory historic constructions of 'Irishness' as 'feminine', irrational 'otherness', [49] an image historically adopted and validated in Ireland as 'motherland'. [50] The uncompromisingly bruising masculinity of Charlton's teams, orchestrated by an Englishman turned 'honorary Irishman', powerfully symbolized and apparently embodied a masculinized national renaissance. Even Charlton's arch-enemy Eamon Dunphy revelled in an 'ancient score settled in the most satisfying manner'. [51]

The reorientation from technical ability and achievement to players' masculine battles of will clearly created wider appeal for casually interested viewers. Aesthetically questionable, this style nonetheless generated numerous closely fought contests, often heightened in intensity by the 'home' team's long periods without possession. And the growing ritual of colourful media reports of severe tests of supporters' nerves undoubtedly fuelled their image and memory as nail-biting spectacles in a cultural circuit from lived experience to confirming and enhancing collective identification through mediation as collective event and symbol. Hence Colm Tóibín's account of Ireland's Italia '90 penalty shoot-out against Romania: '[W]e stayed close together as though we were in a war trench rather than a football match. We glanced at each other in worry and terror as each kick was taken.' [52]

Jack Charlton himself became an important thematic variation on uncompromising masculinity and the mediation of Ireland's emergence from a postcolonial mindset. Describing himself as an 'honorary Irishman', [53] Charlton was depicted in Irish media as a quintessentially marginal Englishman. An 'English rogue', 'Lowryesque splinter' and 'nation's totem pole', [54] his incorrigibly working-class manner was construed as a source of endearment in Ireland, [55] marginality within Britain resonating with Ireland's marginality *to* Britain, thus a symbolic renegotiation of a troubled historical relationship. [56] His mediation as the biggest star of the 'team' continued the tradition of the 'decent chap', the 'good Englishman' of Irish liberal fictional representations of 'Ireland's others'. [57]

Charlton's masculinity also paradoxically embodied the amateurism/professionalism tension. Stories of his bridging objective expectations of professional performance with nuanced handling of individual players

contributed to a quasi-paternal and familial image, [58] while his breach of public-relations etiquette through intimidating media confrontation at press conferences protected them from criticism, presenting an image of a dedicated sports professional amateurishly seeing through bogus media 'professionalism'. Whereas Giles, the 'smart arse', may have faced a native 'inferiority complex', Charlton's plain-speaking Geordie, masterminding England's defeat and caring for his players (despite alienating some inherited 'stars') [59] made him untouchable. [60]

While two of Charlton's major journalistic detractors were former players, Eamon Dunphy and Giles himself, their criticisms nevertheless confirmed the agenda of uncompromising masculinity as symbol of postcolonial national achievement. Initially a Charlton supporter, [61] Dunphy famously denounced Ireland's 0–0 draw with Egypt in Italia '90 as 'shameful and embarrassing . . . rubbish', complaining that 'when we have got the ball we are cowardly . . . this game is called football, which means you pass it to each other'. [62] As an RTÉ national television soccer pundit since 1978, Dunphy was a harsh critic of Charlton's immediate predecessor, Eoin Hand, and star players such as Liam Brady. His ambivalence publicly met with open hostility at press conferences, radically raised his popular profile, so that he was equally a butt of crude jokes and provided an irresistible Greek chorus to Charlton's career. [63] Giles also expressed concern at Charlton's tactics, especially in defeat or under-performance. Pointedly aesthetic and technical, their criticisms foregrounded willingness to win by intricate passing as the symbolic embodiment of nationhood. As Dunphy remarked, reiterating comments from his classic *Only a Game?*, 'football is a two-sided game: when you haven't got the ball, when you have got the ball'. [64] Winning convincingly, symbolizing nationhood, requires pressurizing opposition 'off the ball', a *process* of national becoming, *and* the technical ability and teamwork to capitalize *with* the ball. Giles, too, repeatedly chided riskily 'giv[ing] possession away to try and get possession back' [65] by forcing opposition errors. The Greek chorus reached an apotheosis in November 1993 as Ireland required a draw in Belfast against Northern Ireland to qualify for the USA '94 World Cup. Given the FAI's origins, this contest had huge historical and symbolic significance. In a scrappy game, a disappointed Giles solemnly observed: 'We have the physical courage, but the moral courage is just as difficult – take responsibility, get on the ball and try and win the game with good football . . . at least go down trying to play the game in the right way.' [66]

Despite outward tactical disagreements, however, they shared Charlton's vision of uncompromising masculine resolve, 'courage' and

'character' as both football's essence and the measure of national achievement. Dunphy's repeated pronouncements on 'character' as ability to surmount technical shortcomings through collective will, 'cheat fate and get something which you are not entitled to', was closely related to Charlton's philosophy. Football primarily tests masculine resolve and, secondarily, natural and cultivated skill: national achievement equals sporting achievement equals successful imposition of masculine will. Conversely, failure equals failure of masculine *and* national resolve and nerve: 'caving in and getting done'. [67]

This triangular relationship undoubtedly fuelled the national team's symbolism, generating a succession of radio and television parodies which, if anything, reinforced the equation of national identity with masculine achievement. Dermot Morgan's radio satire *Scrap Saturday* highlighted its homosocial and homeoerotic dimensions, depicting Dunphy, pregnant with Giles' baby, enthusing at how 'Gilesy was different from other men' and pondering the likelihood of a 'good delivery' or a 'great delivery'. [68] A multi-layered masculine performance, these parodies were a ludic circuit, actively indulging and celebrating, while spoofing, both national identity's equation with uncompromising masculinity and these personalities' masculine performances.

Another feature of this mediated masculine mythology was its rhetorical differentiation from other, supposedly virulent masculine forms. The embrace of the imperialist 'garrison game', [69] defying the GAA, was deemed to signify a mature advance whose progress was highlighted by the masculine *immaturity* of aggressively 'British' masculinity. Hence British football hooliganism's repeatedly invoked stereotypical image which, during Ireland's five internationals against England from 1988 to 1995, was explicitly contrasted with Irish supporters' good-natured 'innocent' behaviour. This tendency peaked in February 1995 when a 'friendly' in Dublin was abandoned as England hooligans hurled dislodged seats at Irish supporters. A source of immense shame in British reports, the outstanding Irish and British media image showed a boy looking on in dismay. [70] This event became a vehicle for rhetorically challenging British stereotypes of Ireland, encapsulated by journalist Tom McGurk's remark that the event had inverted 'violent Irish' stereotypes. [71] This image was richly metaphorical, directly resonating with a history of both infantilization in British discourses of Ireland and 'Irishness' [72] and the image of abused innocence in Irish political and popular national identity discourses. [73] Hence a combination of *playfully* competitive, uncompromising masculinity and (abused) innocence on the sidelines, extending a by then established theme of

postcolonial rhetorical challenging of assumed subordination, from journalism to theatre: in Bolger's dramatization of a supporter's Euro '88 experiences the protagonist subserviently addresses a patronizing English counterpart as 'sur', slyly intimating that 'sur' is Gaelic for lice! [74]

In another variant, however, the national team's supposed symbolic emergence from crude post-Independence cultural nationalism, whereby Irish identity had been cast in dualistic, simplistically anti-colonial terms, was pursued by its representation as a new Irish masculinity untainted by Republican violence. Thus Kevin Myers's (*Irish Times*) and Colm Tóibín's (*Sunday Independent*) Italia '90 diaries asserted that Irish supporters were 'unlikely to vote Sinn Féin' (Myers) and 'more likely to follow Leopold Bloom's definition of a nation [than that of 1916 Easter Rising leader] Patrick Pearse' (Tóibín). [75] Roddy Doyle expressed euphoric relief that the formerly unusable 'Republic' (given IRA violence), was now 'a beautiful word'. [76] As Eamonn McCann noted, however, such condemnations of avowedly anti-colonial nationalism reflected these writers' revisionist anti-Republican inclinations more than empirical evidence. [77] They also read now as middle-class masculine performances, self-indulgent temporary immersion in the nationally internal 'other' world of working-class men. [78]

A third variation contrasted the Irish supporter culture with Northern Ireland's loyalist paramilitary violence. Observers of the November 1993 match expressed horror at northern supporters' verbal abuse, especially the blatant racism directed at the Republic's 'black' players. This theme extended to the World Cup itself, when joyful reports of Ireland's victory over Italy were juxtaposed with accounts of paramilitaries' murder of Republic supporters watching the game in a Loughinisland pub. Marie Jones later dramatized this juxtaposition, her protagonist mutating from sectarian Unionist to Republic supporter, appalled in November 1993, liberated by the inclusive Irish identity witnessed in New York at USA '94, but returned to a divided *Northern* Ireland by news of Loughinisland. [79]

A further dimension to this masculinized narrative of national evolution cast particular players as heroic symbols of social and cultural transformation by representing emigrant history. Charlton radically exploited FIFA's allowance of international qualification through citizenship eligibility rather than birthplace. Increasingly, Irish media mythologized these players as representatives of the 'diaspora', [80] collectively romanticizing their exemplification of the team's unity of purpose despite their personal backgrounds and family histories representing a history of national fragmentation. Stories of the debut of English-born Terry

Mancini, who couldn't recognize the national anthem, are well known, [81] while players' professed allegiance was occasionally questionable and potentially embarrassing. [82] However, Charlton's Barnsley-born captain Mick McCarthy learning it by heart offers a romantic narrative of reclaimed national identity despite parental emigration and birthplace, while Paul McGrath's shorthand embodiment of this romantic narrative gave an additional dimension to the masculinized narrative of national evolution.

McGrath's heroism lay in his apparent embodiment and resolution of personal contradictions in his play, while emblemizing both team play and national history as the incorporation of historical and spatial fragments. His was also an image of vulnerable masculinity frequently framed by a dialectical relationship with Charlton's tough but quasi-paternal image. Both were depicted in Irish media as 'authentic' figures, easily differentiated in their directness and honesty from constructed celebrity, even as their circulated images became discursive means of collectively negotiating the boundaries of nationhood.

Thus, as exemplified by Roddy Doyle's retrospective, McGrath was deemed a harbinger of a more mature acknowledgment of Ireland's emigrant history and nationalism's inevitable complication by multiply hyphenated multiculturalism: 'He grew up black in a country that is famously tolerant, as long as you're white and Irish.' [83] But McGrath was no disruptive anti-hero. Rather, his potential representation of heterogeneity and difference was progressively tamed and reduced to national sameness in reiterated romantic narratives of his life. Thus, although his biography recalls his childhood racist experiences its subtitle, McGrath's nickname, 'the black pearl of Inchicore', localizes and nationalizes his potentially racialized 'otherness'. McGrath's London birth to an Irish migrant mother and absent Nigerian father, and his disrupted childhood movement between orphanages and foster homes were often recounted, as were his personal shyness, occasional binge-drinking and resulting expulsion from Manchester United in 1989. Dervan's account of infant McGrath and mother returning 'to the Dublin that had rejected her but would provide a home for her son in one shape or another for the next 22 years, until the day he would leave for Manchester', [84] offers a quasi-critique of Ireland's post-Independence economic impoverishment, sustained emigration and poor institutional care. But the biography weaves a story of national essence and anchorage despite spatial and temporal fragmentation.

To add to this damaged biography and the romance of playing prowess for the nation *despite* it, McGrath succeeded with permanently damaged

knees and consequently minimal training. He epitomized the sporting 'natural', subtly bridging amateur ideals and paid professionalism's reality, perfectly resolving the paradox of *payment* for love of playing and the honour of national representation. In Charlton's conspiracy of silence with the media on his absences due to drinking binges, his shorthand intertwining of troubled biography and damaged body (falsely citing visits to his mother and sore knees) [85] romantically invoked the dislocated 'diaspora' in Britain. A post-retirement radio interview introducing him as 'loved by the Irish people, maybe because in him they could see a mirror of themselves', focused entirely on fears of failure, personal humility and shyness, even with Irish team-mates, financial exploitation as a young player in England and Charlton's unwavering support. Charlton's concluding remarks foreground the filial-paternal dialectic of vulnerable Irish migrant masculinity and tough but caring English masculinity: 'I just worry about him . . . I said I'd look after him for the next ten years and I'll do my best.' [86]

This dialectic neatly illustrates the recurring theme in Irish media discourses of a magical, Arnoldian merging of masculine Anglo-Saxon rationality and organization and quasi-feminine Celtic imagination, romantically varying the colonial parent-child discourse, invoking, only to resolve, the problematic of Irish economic failure, migrant history and postcolonial 'inferiority complex'. [87]

In addition to elevating such figures to symbolic masculine representations of Ireland's transition, the team's symbolism also enabled the discursive construction and performance of various masculinities around the core of renegotiated national identity. Here, *supporters* become heroic protagonists, so extending logically from the symbolic form to the national collectivity it represents.

Thus the British-born players enabled direct identification by British-born 'second-generation Irish' supporters and the discursive articulation of 'second-generation' masculine identity through independent media such as the London Irish Republic supporters' fanzine, *On the One Road* (1991–96). Such features as close scrutiny of players' credentials, questioning Irish-born players' commitment, exchanging stories of the FAI's poor treatment of British-based supporters and conflict with Irish-born supporters questioning 'second-generation' supporters' loyalty were ways of discursively articulating distinctive 'second-generation' Irish identities and their anomalies, given Irish migrants' historical submerging within British society. [88] As Bairner argues, the often anti-English tone of writing there confounded arguments for the team's symbolism of a mature, post-nationalist identity. [89] Rather, it may be seen as a

performative articulation of masculinity and explicitly 'postcolonial' national identity, a nuanced articulation of 'second-generation' Irish identity *in Britain*.

A contrasting variation was a journalistic sub-genre chronicling supporters' comical adventures as globetrotting amateurish bunglers. Here the supporter's heroic quest of self- and collective discovery effectively overshadowed the sporting contests. The collection *What's the Story?* romanticizes male Irish supporters as quasi-Olympian amateurs, their characteristically un- or badly planned approaches combining commitment with absence of foresight or economy (financial, familial or corporeal resource allocation), resulting in ingenious improvisation with meagre resources. The supporters who sailed from Naples to Sardinia and Sicily in Italia '90 with no sailing experience and few swimmers are exemplary. [90] As stories of survival, despite economic and bodily wastage, accidental criminality, imprisonment and near death, they narrativize individual masculine-as-national-becoming, a romanticization akin to Irish literature and theatre's recurring 'comic Irishman' whose permanently adolescent persona rhetorically adopted the colonial discourse of the childlike but independent and unpredictable Irishman as 'other', traces of which pervade the writings discussed above. [91]

These interlocking discursive constructions of masculinity, national identity and national regeneration resonated with the growing popularity of academic and popular applications of postcolonial theoretical explanations of Ireland's history, cultural nationalism and national identity in the early 1990s. Explicitly reflecting this, the first Irish soccer retrospective at this time, Eoghan Corry's *Going to America*, crystallized these thematic currents. Corry posited an explicit structural homology between the nation's imagining through the team's symbolism as a unity of dispersed fragments (diverse geographical origins), and a style consisting of a unity of fragments (play disrupted by aggressive tackling), between a reimagining of global space as dispersed nation and the space of the game as linked disruptions. Thus appropriating the *Daily Express*'s 'misfits and mercenaries' insult, [92] Corry connects the tapping of fragmented migrant family histories with Charlton's 'under-elaboration' style as compensations for Ireland's emigrant history and multinational clubs' quasi-colonial 'plunder' of nominally postcolonial countries' players. This style's success also cleverly exposes 'superior' countries' risky passing game with players increasingly dispersed around the dominant European leagues. Corry further connects this narrative with *What's the Story?*'s accounts of economic ingenuity to present a spectrum of interlocking postcolonial masculinities from uncompromising masculinity in play to outwardly



British players reclaiming Irish identity, to enterprising Irishmen abroad for the first time.

### **Keeping them under pressure: 'Celtic Tiger' Ireland and the Roy Keane affair**

A 2004 radio discussion illustrates the sequel to this mythology in Irish media. If its informing myth was the concept of postcolonial awakening, Ireland's late 1990s economic boom provided a new one, that, as a product of native ingenuity and heightened professionalism, the 'Celtic Tiger' economy was intricately connected with the soccer team's earlier renaissance. [93] Effectively eliding the distance between symbolic cultural form and reality, Corry, historian Diarmaid Ferriter and journalist Ronan Furlong enthused that the revival reflected the 'confidence factor engendered . . . once we qualified for Euro '88' (Furlong), that 'people began to think . . . we can go out, compete in markets and put people under pressure' (Corry). [94] Extending the earlier theme of postcolonial awakening, this was an even more radical mapping of sporting achievement as competitive masculinity onto national identity.

The key event informing this conflation was Ireland captain Roy Keane's pre-tournament expulsion from the 2002 World Cup squad by Charlton's successor Mick McCarthy. Resulting from a confrontation over Keane's comments on poor squad preparation in Saipan, [95] their feud inspired blanket Irish media coverage. The Manchester United captain and a renowned competitor, Keane was cast, by his defenders, as embodying a new Irish professionalism deemed incompatible with Charlton's and McCarthy's anachronistic amateurism. In radio and television discussions, he became symbol and material example of Ireland's revived economic fortunes. This mapping of national economy onto individual may be seen as a collective fantasy, whose rhetorical distinction between a supposedly 'old' Ireland of 'it'll do' amateurism and 'new' Ireland of individual and professional competence in each social sphere is routinely peddled by Irish political and economic commentators anxious to depict a newly vibrant 'business culture'. As Kirby argues, this invokes 'binary and even Manichaeian polarities derived from crude forms of modernization theory', [96] insensitive to the Irish economy's complexities and contradictions. The differentiation from Charlton and McCarthy additionally entailed the gauging of national progression as the progressive displacement of outmoded masculinities. Eamon Dunphy, now Keane's ghost biographer, led the attacks, presenting Keane as the very epitome of masculine 'character', eulogized as an aggressive ball-

winner and effective distributor, both the 'complete' footballer/professional and worthy embodiment of national achievement. [97] (Indeed, the eventual 'autobiography' often resembles Dunphy's *Only a Game?* in its confessional career review as a succession of masculine confrontations. Latterly it revisits the Charlton myth to claim that amateurism and incompetence progressively failed the nation his teams represented.) [98]

Dunphy himself had extended beyond sports journalism as the host of the current affairs radio show *The Last Word* (Today FM, 1997–2003), and as a pundit on RTÉ Network Two television World Cup broadcasts and a regular guest on other radio and television programmes he repeatedly reiterated this agenda as a 'national crisis', a metaphor for, and example of, a national economy (the team) failed by inadequate state management (McCarthy and the FAI). Business executive, academic, sport and cultural commentator guests freely speculated as to their own hypothetical managerial strategies, engaging in a new variant of projected masculinity and masculine performance, legitimating their professionalism by association with sport, and equating professionalism with 'robust' masculinity. Thus McCarthy was accused of quasi-feminine sensitivity, allowing Keane's personal attack on him cloud professional judgement. Dunphy also attacked 'happy clappy' [99] supporters prepared to celebrate irrespective of results, invoking the pejorative term 'Paddy' to warn of national embarrassment through British media coverage. [100] His successful rhetoric of 'old'/'new' Ireland as outmoded and emerging masculinities was exemplified by his attack (with history Professor Ronan Fanning!) on Charlton's support for McCarthy and recollection of his own paternal treatment of McGrath (to audience laughter) on RTÉ television's *Late Late Show*. [101] The combined search for suitable analogies extended to equating Charlton and McCarthy with 'abuse of authority' on the scale of the Christian Brothers schools, conjoining postcolonial rejection of Charlton's English paternalism and the nationally retarding entrusting of post-Independence education to the Catholic Church. [102]

This collective fantasy reflected Irish economists' and media commentators' tendency to trace the economic boom to gifted individuals' entrepreneurial activities, obscuring evidence of structural determinants, particularly low corporate taxation, and consequent dependence on foreign capital investment, and distracting from the inequitable distribution of 'national wealth' under the neo-liberal Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrats coalition government (from 1997). [103] It also obscured Keane's professionalism itself, surely a symptom of development as an emigrant player at Manchester United. In these discursive exchanges Keane became both a metaphor for, and literal embodiment of,

neoclassical economics' 'rational, self-sufficient, independent, active, autonomous, strictly individuated and atomistic (white) man'. [104]

But Keane was accused by others of deserting both his team-mates and nation, echoing earlier questioning of his commitment. [105] As the blanket media coverage unfolded, a new metaphor emerged: the team/nation as quasi-family, with Keane as errant son. A television interview in which he justified his refusal to apologize, resisting the extreme rhetorical accusations of disappointing children and falling some way short of courageous Northern Ireland politicians in the peace process, but almost tearfully expressed his desire to play for Ireland, [106] inspired a fresh framing of the affair in radio and television discussions as a metaphorical 'family crisis'. [107] The metaphor inspired a proliferation of personal stories of paternal-filial rifts: disillusioned pro-Keane father/'innocent' confused young son dialectics; or older, pro-McCarthy father/disillusioned pro-Keane grown son dialectics. [108] Varying the 'peace process' analogy, a related and enduring metaphorical frame was the Irish post-Independence 'Civil War', the two sometimes conjoined, echoing Neil Jordan's paternal/filial dialectical film depiction of the boyish *Michael Collins* and national paternal figure Éamon de Valéra. [109]

Ultimately, on Keane's eventual return in April 2004, the two metaphorical frames merged. Ireland's ultimate 2002 tournament exit had ironically led to its being claimed in Irish media as a quasi-victory, given the team's forsaking Charlton's tactics in favour of the 'passing game' characteristic of 'European' teams. As with Keane, this was construed by commentators as indicating a 'new' Irish masculinity, confident of attempting victory by passing, rather than simply forcing opposition errors. [110] But this was also a quasi-familial image, with young players Robbie Keane and Damien Duff offering a symbolic resolution of the distinction between modernity as individual professional excellence and tradition as collective endeavour. [111] McCarthy's successor, Brian Kerr, was already an emerging symbol of the 'new professionalism' and 'new masculinity' in Irish football and society, a professionalism conjoined to a paternal image as former coach of the international youth team (some of whom, principally Duff and Robbie Keane, were now senior players). The two narratives, that of national-as-masculine evolution and displacement of outmoded forms, and of national-as-familial rift, combined as Keane announced his return. The paradoxically 'anarchist and institutionalised' [112] sporting hero, wanting change but in the interests of heightening sport's Taylorization of the human body, combined with the classic sporting narrative of fall and redemption [113] in the *nation's* interests: 'The new regime, with

its . . . eschewal of old Jurassic notions about bonding through alcohol, should be to his liking. He will be the ally that Kerr needs in the transition from the old way of doing things to the new.' [114] And 'if Brian Kerr had been manager . . . in 2002, Roy Keane would not have been the only one . . . with the intention of winning the World Cup'. [115] Ronan Furlong encapsulated the combination of masculine, economic and postcolonial fantasies: 'Nowadays it's Irish people managing multinationals on merit and there was no reason why an Irish manager couldn't be successful. Maybe we just needed the kick that we got from the Charlton era.' [116]

### Conclusions

The Irish national soccer team has provided popularly engaging images of heroic national representatives defeating expectedly superior opposition. Narrative constructions of the national team's evolution have focused on players' masculinity as the basis of collective achievement and national symbolism, and have enabled the discursive construction of masculine identities variously articulated to national identity through related journalistic commentaries and their social circulation. Overlapping or antagonistic, their interplay has nonetheless validated national identity's symbolic equation with masculinity, while the inter-subjective, 'vortex-tual' [117] absorption of different segments of Irish society in broadcast and print media debate has offered tangible experiences of the 'imagined' national community as a 'real' entity.

The gauging of national evolution by the progressive displacement of outmoded forms of masculinity is particularly significant. Thus, in the popular national team histories of the late- and post-Charlton eras, the once maligned John Giles has been critically reinvented as a harbinger of the new professionalism, implementing changes on which Charlton capitalized. Hence this paper's title: masculine sporting symbols of national identity are themselves 'kept under pressure', inevitably displaced by 'newer' masculinities as objects of collective investment.

However, both the 'postcolonial' and 'Celtic Tiger' variations on this discourse should be seen as collective fantasies that somewhat obscure the complexities and contradictions of recent Irish history.

### Notes

- [1] 'Heroes' welcome for team', *Irish Times*, 2 July 1990.
- [2] Peter Byrne, *Football Association of Ireland: 75 years* (Dublin, 1996), p. 131.

- [3] Mike Cronin, *Sport and nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic games, soccer and Irish identity since 1884* (Dublin, 1999), p. 117.
- [4] Although dominant, the GAA's 'native games' were by definition incapable of international contests. See Cronin, *Sport and nationalism*, p. 114.
- [5] Michael Holmes, 'Symbols of national identity and sport: the case of the Irish football team', *Irish Political Studies*, 9 (1994), pp. 91–8.
- [6] Eoghan Corry, *Going to America: World Cup USA '94* (Dublin, 1994).
- [7] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*, revised edition (London, 1991).
- [8] David Rowe, Jim McKay and Toby Miller, 'Come together: sport, nationalism and the media image', in Lawrence A. Wenner, ed., *MediaSport* (London, 1998), p. 120.
- [9] Garry Whannel, *Fields in vision: television sport and cultural transformation* (London, 1992).
- [10] Geoffrey Cubitt, 'Introduction: heroic reputations and exemplary lives', in Geoffrey Cubitt and Allen Warren, eds., *Heroic reputations and exemplary lives* (Manchester, 2000), p. 3.
- [11] Garry Whannel, *Media sport stars: masculinities and moralities* (London, 2002), pp. 52–62.
- [12] David L. Andrews and Steven J. Jackson, 'Introduction: Sport celebrities, public culture, and private experience', in David L. Andrews and Steven Jackson, eds., *Sport stars: the cultural politics of sporting celebrity* (London, 2001), p. 8.
- [13] Daniel Boorstin, *The image* (Harmondsworth, 1961) p. 69.
- [14] Cubitt, 'Introduction', p. 7.
- [15] Josep R. Llobera, *The god of modernity. the development of nationalism in Western Europe* (Oxford, 1994), p. 202. See Cronin, *Sport and nationalism*, p. 38.
- [16] Liam Kennedy, 'Modern Ireland: post-colonial society or post-colonial pretensions', *Irish Review*, 13 (Winter 1992–3), pp. 107–21.
- [17] Colin Graham, "'Liminal Spaces": post-colonial theories and Irish culture', *Irish Review*, 16 (Autumn/Winter 1994), pp. 29–43.
- [18] Geraldine Moane, 'Colonialism and the Celtic Tiger: legacies of history and the quest for vision', in Peadar Kirby, Luke Gibbons and Michael Cronin, eds., *Reinventing Ireland: culture, society and the global economy* (London, 2002), pp. 109–23.
- [19] Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* (London, 1995), p. 129.
- [20] On the discursive construction of 'hegemonic masculinity' (R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* [Berkeley, 1995]) in portrayals of male athletes, see Michael A. Messner, Michele Dunbar and Darnell Hunt, 'The televised sports manhood formula', *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 24 (4) (2000), pp. 380–94. On its articulation to images of national identity see, for example, Rowe et al., 'Come together'.
- [21] Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, beaches and bases: making feminist sense of international politics* (Berkeley, CA, 1990), p. 45.
- [22] The concept of gender performance through discourse is adopted from the work of Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity* (London, 1990).

- [23] John Giles, quoted in Colm Keane, *Ireland's Soccer Top 20* (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 44.
- [24] Byrne, *Football Association of Ireland*; Corry, *Going to America*; Sean Ryan, *The Boys in Green: the FAI International Story* (Edinburgh, 1997); Adam Ward, *Republic of Ireland: Gifted in Green* (London, 1999); Paul Rowan, *The Team that Jack Built* (Edinburgh, 1995); Dave Hannigan, *The Garrison Game: the State of Irish Football* (Edinburgh, 1998); Keane, *Ireland's Soccer Top 20*.
- [25] Until 1971, the GAA forbade players to compete in the 'foreign' games of soccer and rugby.
- [26] Byrne, *Football Association of Ireland*, p. 20.
- [27] Cronin, *Sport and nationalism*, p. 123.
- [28] Rowan, *The Team that Jack Built*, p. 46.
- [29] Ryan, *The Boys in Green*, p. 145.
- [30] *Ibid.*; Rowan, *The Team that Jack Built*, p. 51; John Scally, *Simply Red and Green: Manchester United and Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 148. On Giles's unfair media treatment, see Vincent Browne, 'Good-bye, Johnny', *Magill*, June 1979, pp. 50–2.
- [31] Byrne, *Football Association of Ireland*, p. 79; Ward, *Republic of Ireland*, pp. 148–149; Ryan, *The Boys in Green*, p. 146.
- [32] Rowan, *The Team that Jack Built*, pp. 17–35 and Ryan, *The Boys in Green*, pp. 102–19.
- [33] Giles, quoted in Rowan, *The Team that Jack Built*, p. 50.
- [34] Quoted in Leo McKinstry, *Jack and Bobby: a story of brothers in conflict* (London, 2003), p. 439.
- [35] In an FAI mix-up, he received more votes than preferred candidate, Bob Paisley. Byrne, *Football Association of Ireland*, p. 132.
- [36] For example, *Evening Press* journalist Con Houlihan described his opening defeat to Wales as a 'stinker . . . the pits' (quoted in Rowan, *The Team that Jack Built*, p. 106).
- [37] 'Haughey tells boys in green of his joy at their triumph', *Irish Independent*, 13 June 1988.
- [38] Peter Byrne, 'The longest day and the greatest day: Houghton, Bonner special heroes of wonderful victory', *Irish Times*, 13 June 1988.
- [39] 'Ireland's wild goose chase pays dividends', *Irish Independent*, 13 June 1988.
- [40] Dermot Gilleece, 'Shame and humiliation say British papers', *Irish Independent*, 13 June 1988.
- [41] Tom Humphries, *The Legend of Jack Charlton* (London, 1994), p. 66.
- [42] Pete Davies, *All Played Out: The Full Story of Italia '90* (London, 1990), p. 308.
- [43] See Jack Charlton and Peter Byrne, *Jack Charlton's American World Cup Diary* (Dublin, 1994), p. 114, and Corry, *Going to America*, pp. 25–30, for examples of Charlton's tactical exposition.
- [44] Corry, *Going to America*, pp. 31–4, cites research undertaken at Liverpool University, demonstrating the extra distances covered by Charlton's players.
- [45] Player interviews in RTE One's television documentary *The Charlton Years* (1996).
- [46] See Seamus Deane, 'Civilians and Barbarians', in *Ireland's field day* (London, 1985), pp. 33–42.

- [47] Con Houlihan, *More than a game: selected sporting essays* (Dublin, 2003), p. 160. Eamon Dunphy later eulogized its embodiment of 'virtues ... fundamental to our nature ... willingness to battle harder and longer than our more technically-gifted adversaries' ('A law unto himself', *Sunday Independent*, 12 June 1994).
- [48] For example, Vincent Hogan, 'The spirit is willing: fighting Irish blast Turks into surrender', *Irish Independent*, 18 Oct. 1990.
- [49] On colonial discourses of the Irish as feminine, see David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: colonialism, nationalism and culture* (Manchester 1988), pp. 49–50.
- [50] Richard Kearney, 'Myth and motherland', in *Ireland's Field Day*, pp. 61–80.
- [51] Dunphy, 'A law unto himself'.
- [52] Colm Tóibín, 'Days of miracle and wonder – Ireland at the World Cup', in *The Trial of the Generals: Selected Journalism 1980–1990* (Dublin, 1990), p. 14.
- [53] Speaking on return from Euro '88, 19 June 1988.
- [54] Humphries, *The Legend of Jack Charlton*, pp. 44 and 12.
- [55] 'He has created a labouring team for a labouring people. ... He's made them proud to be Irish' (supporter quoted in Corry, *Going to America*, p. 6).
- [56] The proliferation of name puns illustrates his figural status as symbolic mediator in discursive constructions of English and Irish identities as a traditional hierarchy in transition: Peter Ball, 'A Jack not a King: A Profile of Jack Charlton', *Magill*, March 1986, pp. 48–51; Noel King, 'From a Jack to a King', *Magill*, June 1988, pp. 45–51 etc.
- [57] Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, *Ireland's others: gender and ethnicity in Irish Literature and popular culture* (Cork, 2001), pp. 57–95.
- [58] Mick McCarthy recalled Charlton easing striker John Aldridge's nerves at Euro '88, complaining that if he scored and Ireland progressed, his planned fishing trip would be cancelled (*Captain fantastic* [Dublin, 1990], p. 60). Such paradoxical banter, as Anthony Easthope argues, is a coded sign of mutual affection and solidarity typical of masculine discourse: *What a man's gotta do: the masculine myth in modern culture* (Boston, MA, 1992).
- [59] Most notably Liam Brady and Frank Stapleton. See Rowan, *The Team that Jack Built*, pp. 119–24.
- [60] When he was fined \$10,000 by FIFA for 'bad behaviour' at USA '94, a radio campaign (RTÉ Radio One's *Pat Kenny Show*) raised over IR£100,000 in caller donations to pay it (*Evening Press*, 4 July 1994). Charlton's insistence that water be made available to players during games had already received uniformly supportive Irish media coverage.
- [61] 'Dunphy's diary', *Magill*, Nov. 1985, pp. 52–3.
- [62] Quoted in Michael Ross, 'Public enemy: what did Eamon Dunphy say that made him the most hated man in Ireland?', *Magill*, July 1990, pp. 11–14.
- [63] T-shirts depicted Charlton kicking Dunphy. Roddy Doyle's protagonist in *The Van* (Harmondsworth, 1992) sold penis-shaped sausages called 'Dunphys'. See Colm Tóibín, 'Ireland's war on Eamon Dunphy', in Greg Williams, ed., *The Esquire Book of Sports Writing* (Harmondsworth, 1995), p. 138.
- [64] Ross, 'Public enemy', p. 12. Eamon Dunphy and Peter Ball, *Only a Game?* (Harmondsworth, 1976).

- [65] Studio analysis, Republic of Ireland versus Holland, USA '94 tournament, RTÉ Network 2, 4 July 1994.
- [66] Studio analysis, Northern Ireland versus Republic of Ireland, RTÉ Network 2, 17 Nov. 1993.
- [67] Dunphy and Ball, *Only a Game?*, p. 73.
- [68] *Scrap Saturday*, RTÉ Radio One, 1990–92, highlights in RTÉ CD set, *Scrap the Collection* (RTÉ, 1999). See Scally, *Simply Red and Green*, pp. 152–3.
- [69] Hannigan, The Garrison Game.
- [70] 'Why are they all doing it dad, it's only a game: riot anguish of James age 7', *The Sun*, 17 Feb. 1995; 'The child whose face haunted the world', *Evening Herald*, 16 Feb. 1995.
- [71] *Prime Time*, RTÉ One television, 18 Feb. 1995.
- [72] Cairns and Richards, *Writing Ireland*. On discursive constructions of Ireland as 'abortive offspring', see Eagleton, *Heathcliff*, p. 127.
- [73] See Richard Haslam, "'A race bashed in the face': imagining Ireland as a damaged child", *Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 4 (1) (1999). In a 1995 BBC Radio 4 short story, 'Cormac's Cup Final', a fictional version of this boy is invited to the English FA Cup Final. The crowd chant, 'we're sorry!'
- [74] Dermot Bolger, 'In High Germany', *A Dublin Quartet* (Harmondsworth, 1992), p. 99. This joke appears in Flann O'Brien's novel, *The Poor Mouth* (1941) – see M. Keith Booker, 'O'Brien and the benighted Gaels: linguistic oppression and cultural definition in Ireland', *Discours Social/ Social Discourse*, 3 (1 and 2) (1990), p. 173.
- [75] Quoted in Eamonn McCann, 'The Boys in Green', *Magill*, July 1990, p. 4.
- [76] Roddy Doyle, 'Republic is a beautiful word', in Nick Hornby, ed., *My Favourite Year* (London, 1994), pp. 9–28.
- [77] McCann, 'The Boys in Green'.
- [78] A notable characteristic of Joseph O' Connor's 'The road to God knows where: an Irish World Cup diary', *The secret world of the Irish male* (Dublin, 1994), p. 208: 'A man with a pair of underpants on his face is lying under the piano . . . a sight to gladden the heart of Patrick Pearse.'
- [79] Marie Jones, *A Night in November* (Dublin, 1995).
- [80] RTÉ One television's coverage of the USA '94 'homecoming' (7 July 1994) enthused that 'never have a nation's scattered children and grandchildren provoked so much pride at home' as President Mary Robinson showed the players the candle representing the 'diaspora' in her residence window.
- [81] *Scally, Simply Red and Green*, p. 81.
- [82] For example, Liverpool-born John Aldridge's cartoon image of seeing 'shamrocks' rather than 'pound signs' when asked to play for Ireland (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, 1998], pp. 220–1).
- [83] 'Thank you, Paul', *Irish Times*, 16 May 1998.
- [84] Paul McGrath and Cathal Dervan, *Ooh Aah Paul McGrath: the Black Pearl of Inchicore* (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 16.
- [85] "'Twinge" forces McGrath out', *Irish Times*, 18 Oct. 1990; 'McGrath's knees up!', *Irish Independent*, 17 Oct. 1990.
- [86] *The Final Whistle Blows*, RTÉ Radio One, 18 Sept. 1998.



- [87] However, Hannigan (*The Garrison Game*, pp. 102–18) highlights how some players' careers were more akin to those of emigrant labourers in their shared susceptibility to debilitating injury.
- [88] On 'second-generation Irish' supporters' mixed experiences, see Hannigan, *The Garrison Game*, pp. 119–34.
- [89] Alan Bairner, 'Sportive nationalism and nationalist politics: a comparative analysis of Scotland, the Republic of Ireland and Sweden', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 20 (3) (1996), p. 326.
- [90] David O' Kelly and Shay Blair, *What's the story? True confessions of the Republic of Ireland soccer supporters* (Dublin, 1992), pp. 14–16. They also echo Christy Moore's musical account of Irish supporters at Euro '88, 'Joxer Goes to Stuttgart' (Christy Moore, *Live at the Point* CD, 1994).
- [91] Maureen Waters, *The Comic Irishman* (Albany, NY, 1984).
- [92] Corry, *Going to America*, p. 12.
- [93] From economic recession, high unemployment and mass emigration in the mid-1980s, by 2000 Ireland had the fourth highest per capita GDP in the world (Paul Cullen, 'Statistical snapshot of a world divided by poverty', *Irish Times*, 24 July 2002). For a celebration of 'the Enterprise Isle', see Ray Mac Sharry and Padraic White, *The making of the Celtic Tiger: the inside story of Ireland's boom economy* (Dublin, 2000), p. 255.
- [94] *What If?* RTÉ Radio One, 26 Sept. 2004.
- [95] Tom Humphries, "'People were not happy, but life goes on. Nobody died": Roy Keane interview', *Irish Times*, 23 May 2002.
- [96] Peadar Kirby, 'Contested pedigrees of the Celtic Tiger', in Kirby et al., *Reinventing Ireland*, p. 23.
- [97] The following arguments are elaborated in Marcus Free, 'Preparing to Fall: Consumption, Play and National Identity in Irish Broadcast Media Coverage of the "Roy Keane Affair"', in Ruth Barton and Harvey O'Brian, eds., *Keeping it Real: Irish Film and Television* (London, 2004), pp. 172–184.
- [98] Roy Keane and Eamon Dunphy, *Keane: the Autobiography* (London, 2002).
- [99] *World Cup Preview*, RTÉ Network Two television, 30 May 2002.
- [100] 'Paddy's here to provide the laughs, the cabaret, bit of a sing-song, waddaddaddadda, then bugger off home' (*The Last Word*, Today FM, 23 May 2002).
- [101] RTÉ One television, 24 May 2002.
- [102] *The Last Word*, Today FM, 27 May 2002.
- [103] Colin Coulter, 'The end of Irish history: an introduction to the book', in Colin Coulter and Steve Coleman, eds., *The end of Irish history? Critical reflections on the Celtic Tiger* (Manchester, 2003), p. 18. Other critical works on the contradictions of the 'Celtic Tiger', particularly the perpetuation and growth of 'relative poverty', include Peadar Kirby, *The Celtic Tiger in distress: growth with inequality in Ireland* (Houndmills, 2002).
- [104] Gillian J. Hewitson, *Feminist economics: interrogating the masculinity of rational economic man* (Cheltenham, 1999), p. 151.
- [105] Scally, *Simply Red and Green*, pp. 130–135.
- [106] 'Roy Keane Interview', RTÉ One, 27 May 2002. The 'peace process' metaphor recurred in television and radio discussions.

- [107] For example, guest social psychologist Maureen Gaffney, who made this analogy on RTÉ Radio One's news programme *Morning Ireland*, 27 May 2002.
- [108] See, for example, Roisin Ingle, 'Try telling kids it's only a game', *Irish Times*, 29 May 2002.
- [109] See, for example, Conor O' Callaghan's *Red Mist: Roy Keane and The Football Civil War, A Fan's Story* (London, 2004); Diarmuid Doyle, 'Roy Keane: now there's a subject worth fighting over', *Sunday Tribune*, 18 April 2004. *The little book of 'Keane'* by 'The Unknown Fan' (Dublin, 2002, no page numbers) invoked the ultimate military image of imagined national community, the unknown soldier, describing Keane therein as 'Spartan General'.
- [110] Cultural critic Anthony Cronin made the ultimate elision of history and metaphor, contrasting the 'new kind of Irishman' with the 'flash in the pan' Irish hero of actual military defeats, traditionally recast as 'moral victories' (*The Last Word*, Today FM, 17 June 2004).
- [111] The team's familial image was explicitly conjoined to an actual ('typically' Catholic, Irish) family. RTÉ placed a camera crew with Duff's family in Dublin for their celebration of two family heroes: Duff and Padre Pio, canonized in Rome that day (16 June 2002)!
- [112] Jenni Calder, *Heroes from Byron to Guevara* (London, 1977), p. 184.
- [113] Whannel, *Media sport stars*, p. 154.
- [114] Paul Howard, 'He's back ... This time it's not personal', *Sunday Tribune*, 18 April 2004.
- [115] 'Dion Fanning, 'The last great challenge', *Sunday Independent*, 18 April 2004.
- [116] *What If?* (RTÉ Radio One).
- [117] 'Vortextuality' is Whannel's term for the reporting and consequent heightening of events' significance purely because other media are reporting them – see Whannel, *Media sport stars*, p. 143.