

**‘Vagabonds of the Western World(s):
Continuities, Tensions and the
Development of Irish Rock Music,
1968-78’**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or any other person, for the purpose of obtaining any other qualification.

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Abstract

This study examines the compositions and performance practices of three Irish rock musicians professionally active during the ‘classic’ rock period of 1968-78. The primary research question focuses on establishing the intellectual and artistic depth of the musicians’ respective works. Using theories of popular musicology, hybridity, the national, of space, place and the black Atlantic, the research argues that Irish rock musicians crafted a unique musical culture which responded both to critical international cultural transformations, and to the contemporary realities of Irish political, cultural and social life.

The research initially provides a detailed assessment of the infrastructural realities facing rock musicians in Ireland. This evaluation historicizes and contextualizes the subsequent analyses, which focus on various dimensions and outcomes of rock practice. Analytical investigation begins with examination of key texts’ hybrid nature; it is argued that these texts simultaneously combine a range of international and indigenous Irish musical ideas. The study then focuses on rock musicians’ complex and ambivalent responses to prevailing ideas of Irish national culture and imagining. Subsequently, I concentrate on the processes and implications of artists’ interfacing Irish and black cultural ideas in rock performance and composition.

Primarily, the study signals the intellectual profundity of ‘first-wave’ Irish rock music and practice. It also offers a prototypical methodology for the critique of Irish rock; it is hoped that such a method can be utilised in order to ameliorate popular music cultures’ exclusion from serious debates about the validity and achievements of contemporary Irish culture.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are due to the many actors who assisted with this enquiry into Irish rock and popular music. Liam Leonard introduced me to much of the music included in the analysis. Dr John O'Flynn was supportive in getting the thesis underway at Mary Immaculate College. His suggesting original avenues of research (notably the inclusion of Phil Lynott in the analysis) helped to establish the scope and depth of the work. Dr Eugene O'Brien also became a key figure in the research process. His support for the idea of investigating and establishing rock's intellectual dimensions was indispensable, as were his abilities in defending my right to work within this area.

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Outside of the academy, several people came to the fore with observations, recollections and critical perspectives relevant to the thesis. They include musicians, managers, technicians, singers, participants in various music scenes and cultural events, as well as family, friends and acquaintances of Irish rock's principal personalities. It would take considerable time to acknowledge everyone, and I abbreviate such recognition by offering sincere thanks to all who assisted with my analysis. I do want to mention Mr. Michael O'Dwyer's unparalleled gift: he freely recounted many hours' worth of anecdotes, facts and recollections about the evolution and impact of rock culture in Limerick, in Ireland and internationally during the 1960s and 1970s.

A final word of thanks to my personal and professional network (Tiaquin (JKGP), Tullamore, Strabane, Portlaoise, Louth, Limerick, Kildimo): those who were invariably there to help me survive and master the doctoral process. Go n-eirí linn go léir.

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CD Track Listing

1. Beatles (1968) 'Being For the Benefit of Mr Kite!', *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Parlophone.
2. Neil Young (1973) 'Time Fades Away', *Time Fades Away*, Reprise.
3. Big Bill Broonzy (1932) 'Stove Pipe Stomp', *The Young Big Bill Broonzy 1928-35*, Yazoo.
4. Kingston Trio (1961) 'Lemon Tree', *The Very Best of the Kingston Trio*, Capitol.
5. Howlin' Wolf (1961) 'The Red Rooster', single A-side, Chess (1804).
6. Jimi Hendrix (1967) 'EXP' (excerpt), *Axis: Bold As Love*, MCA.
7. Buddy Holly (1958) 'Valley of Tears' (excerpt), *Buddy Holly*, Brunswick.
8. Larry Williams (1958) 'Slow Down', *Dizzy Miss Lizzie* single B-side, Specialty (626).
9. Dr. Strangely Strange (1970) 'Mary Malone of Moscow/Sign on My Mind (excerpts), *Heavy Petting*, Vertigo.
10. Rory Gallagher (1971) 'Laundromat' (excerpt), *Rory Gallagher*, RCA.
11. Rory Gallagher (1971) 'Just The Smile' (excerpt), *Rory Gallagher*, RCA.
12. Van Morrison (1974) 'Streets of Arklow' (excerpt), *Veedon Fleece*, Warner Bros.
13. Van Morrison (1974) 'You Don't Pull No Punches But You Don't Push the River' (excerpt), *Veedon Fleece*, Warner Bros.
14. Thin Lizzy (1973) 'Mama Nature Said' (excerpt), *Vagabonds of the Western World*, Decca.
15. Thin Lizzy (1973) 'Slow Blues' (excerpt), *Vagabonds of the Western World*, Decca.
16. Thin Lizzy (1973) "Vagabond of the Western World" (excerpt), *Vagabonds of the Western World*, Decca.
17. The Clancy Brothers (1961) 'Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye' (excerpt), *The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem*, Tradition.
18. Thin Lizzy (1973) 'Little Girl in Bloom' (excerpt), *Vagabonds of the Western World*, Decca.
19. Rory Gallagher (1975) 'Out On the Western Plain' (excerpt), *Against the Grain*, RCA.

20. Rory Gallagher (1994) Improvisation (Melody), Les Nuits Celtiques, l'Orient, France. *The Inheritance of the Celts* (DVD), Quantum Leap, 2002.
21. Rory Gallagher (1974) 'Walk on Hot Coals' (excerpt), *Irish Tour*, RCA.
22. Thin Lizzy (1971) 'Old Moon Madness' (excerpt), *New Day* EP, Decca.
23. Brian Downey/Thin Lizzy (1976) 'Sitamoia' (excerpt), *Remembering Part I*, Decca.
24. Thin Lizzy (1976) 'Emerald' (excerpt I), *Jailbreak*, Vertigo.
25. Thin Lizzy (1976) 'Emerald' (excerpt II), *Jailbreak*, Vertigo.
26. The Band (1969) 'Up on Cripple Creek' (excerpt), *The Band*, Capitol.
27. Rory Gallagher (1974) 'Goin' To My Hometown'. *Irish Tour '74* (DVD), SonyBMG.
28. Thin Lizzy (1974) 'Philomena', *Nightlife*, Vertigo.
29. Thin Lizzy (1977) 'Dear Lord', Bad Reputation, Vertigo.
30. Van Morrison (1971) 'Old Old Woodstock' / 'Starting a New Life' (excerpts), *Tupelo Honey*, Warner Bros.
31. Van Morrison (1973) 'Hard Nose the Highway' (excerpt), *Hard Nose the Highway*, Warner Bros.
32. Van Morrison (1973) 'Purple Heather' (excerpt), *Hard Nose the Highway*, Warner Bros.
33. Taste (1970) 'It's Happened Before It'll Happen Again' (excerpt), *On the Boards*, Polydor.
34. Van Morrison (1970) 'I've Been Working' (excerpt), *His Band and the Street Choir*, Warner Brothers.
35. Jimi Hendrix (1966) 'Stone Free' (excerpt), *Hey Joe* single B-side, Polydor.
36. Thin Lizzy (1972) 'The Rise and Dear Demise of the Funky Nomadic Tribes' (excerpt), *Shades of A Blue Orphanage*, Decca.

Abbreviations

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| BBC | British Broadcasting Company |
| BPM | beats per minute |
| CBS | Columbia Broadcasting Systems |
| GAA | Gaelic Athletic Association |
| GPO | General Post Office |
| IFM | Irish Federation of Musicians |
| IRA | Irish Republican Army |
| OED | Oxford English Dictionary |
| UDA | Ulster Defence Association |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| USA | United States of America |
| RTÉ | Radio Teilifís Éireann |

Portions of this thesis have been presented as academic papers in the following format:

‘Witness the Mixness: Hybridity, Identity and Irish Popular Music’ was presented at the Shannon Consortium Postgraduate Conference, Limerick, Ireland (October, 2007).

‘Heterodoxy as Strategy: Hybridity, Authenticity and Irish Popular Music’ was presented at the Society for Musicology in Ireland Postgraduate Conference, University College Dublin, Ireland (January, 2008).

‘Emerging Patterns: The Development of Irish Rock Culture, 1968-78’ was presented at the VIIth International Conference of the Spanish Association of Irish Studies (AEDEI), A Coruña, Spain (May, 2008).

‘Emerging Patterns: The Development of Irish Rock Culture, 1968-78’ was also presented at the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) UK and Ireland Branch Conference, Glasgow (September, 2008).

‘Crisis and Continuity at Home: The Case of Irish Rock’ was presented at the Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin Postgraduate History Conference, University College Dublin (May 2009).

‘Vagabonds of the Western World(s): Space and Location, Hybridity and Irish Rock’ was presented at the International Association for the Study of

Popular Music (IASPM) US Branch, University of San Diego, USA (June, 2009).

‘A Family Affair? Lineage, Cultural Inheritance and Irish Rock Music’ was presented at the New Voices in Irish Criticism Postgraduate Conference, University of Limerick (May, 2010).

‘Vagabonds of the Western World(s): Continuities, Tensions and the Development of Irish Rock Music, 1968-78’ was presented at the Popular Music in Ireland Conference, St. Partick’s College Drumcondra, May 2011.

Portions of this research, and the critical opinions informing it, appear in the following publication:

‘Emerging Patterns: Irish Rock Music, 1968-78’ in Clark, David and Rubén Jarazo Álvarez (eds.) (2010). *In the Wake of the Tiger: Irish Studies in the Twenty-First Century*. Netbiblo: Weston, Florida.

Chapter One

Done or Failed to Do? A Framework for the Study of Irish Rock

Introduction

This thesis examines Irish rock music, with a particular focus on ‘first-wave’ artists and the works produced by them between 1968 and 1978. I use the term ‘first-wave’ to describe the hybrid culture created by musicians who established a commercial and cultural presence both in Ireland and internationally, in the late 1960s and 1970s. Specifically, the research will identify and critically scrutinize commonalities and divergences in the compositions and performance practices of three globally profiled popular musicians: Rory Gallagher, Van Morrison and Phil Lynott.

Reflecting critical themes current in Irish and cultural studies, the analysis utilises musicology, hybridity and identity theory, and hypothetical models of space, place and the national to investigate ‘first-wave’ Irish rock music and its related performance practices. The thesis will argue that the music produced by these artists is exercised by serious intellectual, political and cultural concerns. Presenting Irish rock as a musical culture in tune with Anglo-American ideas of democratisation, internationalism and embodiment, the study proposes that Irish rock musicians were nonetheless preoccupied with Irish socio-political and cultural realities. It illustrates that the tensions arising in musicians’ preoccupation with received notions regarding Ireland, Irishness and Irish subjectivity are preserved in, and

expressed through, their music and lyrics. The study aims to demonstrate that Irish rock had a complex, changing and mutually affective relationship with a range of popular cultural forms obtaining on the island during the same period. These included literature, cinema, and indigenous (traditional) and folk musics. In particular, the study will demonstrate that quotation from, and adaptation of, indigenous musical forms was a key component of the musicians' compositional strategies. It will also trace the reciprocal and rhizomatic confluence of black and Irish cultures in the hybrid Irish rock text, arguing that such texts signify the ongoing interchange of Irish cultural ideas with those of what Paul Gilroy terms 'the black Atlantic'.

While later Irish rock groups – The Pogues, Sinéad O'Connor and U2, for example - have been afforded some critical space in investigations of popular music within Anglo-American and Irish culture (Bradby and Torode, 1985; McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000; Smyth, 2005; Cogan, 2005), two of the three artists studied here have not been investigated as part of any serious critique of music in Irish culture to date. This lacuna is striking, given the disproportionate critical and commercial success achieved by Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison respectively, throughout lengthy professional careers. To give one brief example: in 1970, the Donegal-born guitarist Rory Gallagher, front-man of the blues-rock trio Taste, performed with the latter group at the Isle of Wight Pop Festival. The event attracted over five hundred thousand music fans to the island, making it the largest of its kind ever held (Isle of Wight Festival, 2011). In performing there, Gallagher shared a stage with several of the most prominent and influential acts in rock and popular music (including Jimi Hendrix, Sly and the Family Stone, The Doors, The Who, Joni Mitchell, Kris Kristofferson, Jethro Tull, Leonard Cohen and Miles Davis) at a time

when rock was reaching its peak as a principal transformative agent in Anglo-American culture and social life (Britannica, 2010). These facts locate an Irish musician at the epicentre of a globally visible cultural dynamic; despite this (and despite his achievement of international accolades and recording sales totalling millions of units (Rory Gallagher: The Official Website, 2011)), Gallagher's compositions and performance practices are as yet largely unnoticed by scholars of Irish cultural and musical history.

Investigating rock's intricate relationship to other Irish and international popular music cultures, the thesis aims to identify rock's significance as both an agent and indicator of socio-cultural change in Ireland during the late 1960s and 1970s. With respect to research parameters, the key objectives are:

- to establish a critical language for the analysis of Irish rock music, using popular musicology, hybridity theory and contemporary cultural theories of space and location.
- to present a detailed critique of Irish rock musicians' public identities by scrutinizing it through the lens of contemporary cultural theory.
- to investigate critically two central figures from Irish and international popular music culture as yet under-researched in scholarly writing about the topic: Rory Gallagher and Phil Lynott.
- to access and collate accounts and contributions from living musicians, thus preserving a 'hidden history' of Irish rock culture.
- to address the problematic absence of a scholarly body of work on Irish rock music in the fields of Irish Studies, Irish

Music Studies and International Popular Music Studies, despite the critical and commercial success of Irish rock musicians globally.

- to challenge and where necessary deconstruct essentialist readings and narratives of Irish rock's practices and subjectivities.
- to describe the cultural and infrastructural realities facing practicing musicians in Ireland prior to and during the classic rock era, principally by detailing the resources available to them, in terms of infrastructure, media, performance spaces and management.
- to contextualise the development of rock by investigating three key parallel popular cultures with which rock maintained reciprocal (and in the case of the showbands, ambivalent) relationships: the showbands, the beat groups and the ballad groups.

The research does not present a history of Irish rock *per se*, although reference to the histories and historiography of Irish rock is included in the literature review. Instead, the main focus of the study is critical investigation of the intellectual trajectories encoded in rock texts and musicianship. Like the artistic remit of the music studied, the themes which the thesis investigates are broad and diverse, but the various chapters and approaches converge in the work's focus on a central research question: is there an intellectual dimension to Irish rock music, and how is it represented? Through close listening to the sounds of rock, investigation of its related performance practices and scrutiny of the political and cultural preoccupations of its principal practitioners, the study will demonstrate that a central feature of popular musical production in Ireland between 1968 and 1978 was a cultural intelligence, a political awareness and a subjective complexity comparable to that of any other discipline developing on the island of Ireland during the period. The research design combines the

collection and analysis of participants' accounts (principally in Chapter Two) with the use of analytical strategies developed in popular musicology, and theoretical models from contemporary cultural and critical theory (Chapters Three, Four and Five). It is intended that this inter-disciplinary approach will enable apposite illustration of the intellectual force of the music described herein.

The thesis aims to draw Irish rock music into debates which are ongoing in analyses of Irish literature, history, film and social life (Rockett et al, 1987; Lloyd 1993; Gibbons, 1996; Mulhern, 1998; Tovey and Share, 2000), but do not as yet include popular music. These debates analyse and critique Irish cultural production in various contexts and from a range of perspectives, including: the cultural and political implications of representation; identity and otherness in Irish culture (also Cullingford, 2001); critical regionalism and Irish cultural responses to Anglo-American popular culture; social change and the complexities of nation and state; the 'others' of Irish culture (subjectivity, sexuality, ethnicity and race in Irish culture and the Irish diaspora); postcolonial geography, including Irish cultural cartographies and economies; the interfacing of Irish culture with poststructuralist and other theoretical trajectories – postcolonialism, feminism and other theories of alterity (O'Brien, 2002; Flannery 2007; Cleary 2007). The tendency to exclude rock and pop music from these serious critiques of Irish culture is something I explore in detail later in this chapter; I argue for the inclusion of popular music culture in future analyses, because of its global prominence, its complex relationship to the national, and its progressive propositions regarding the openness of Irish identities.

Some of the basic facts regarding the development of Ireland's rock culture and its key personalities are established and preserved in a limited number of local, national and international publications (*Hot Press*, *New Spotlight*, *Mojo*, *The Grove Dictionary of Popular Music*), and in collections of personal reminiscences (O'Keefe, 2002; Mac Anna, 2004; Hodgett and Harper, 2004; McAvoy and Chrissp, 2005; O'Halloran, 2006).¹ Largely journalistic in format, these contributions have been vital in collating essential information about the beginnings and evolution of Irish rock. Their strongest attribute derives from the proximity of their creators to rock culture itself: principally, they were journalists covering the emerging culture, or participants in it.² As such, they offer tremendous insight into the mechanics of Irish rock culture – how it emerged, how musicians grappled with limited technology and ill-equipped performance spaces, how they interacted with other popular music cultures on the island, how musical communities were built and maintained, and how individual participants' entire lives were dedicated to, lived through, and lost to professional and popular musicianship in Ireland.³ Their contributions will be appropriately cited in the chapters that follow.

From an academic perspective, the main limitation of this format is the absence of critical distance in the collecting, analysis and presentation of information. McLaughlin's analysis of the representation of rock and

1 Much, however, remains to be done in researching and collating even rudimentary information about the culture, its historical particularities and influence. Biographical details about its principal participants are scarce, and almost nothing is definitively known about the technical processes through which Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison learned or were taught to perform and compose rock music

2 See, for example, Rambles 2005.

3 See The Jivenaires, 2004 for a typical example of this approach, and in particular http://www.jivenaires.com/scrapbook/jivenaires_genesis.html. A more rock-focused, comparative account is located at GMS Productions, 2011; also irishrock.org (2010). Accessed 4/11/2010.

showband musicians in *Hot Press* highlights the fact that such ‘histories’ are shaped by the ideological values of their respective writers; a negative consequence of this is the transformation of poorly researched opinions into published ‘facts’, and the sedimentation of these into accepted narratives of rock’s evolution, relevance and influence (McLaughlin, 1999).

Historical surveys of Irish rock such as those undertaken by Clayton-Lea and Taylor (1992), Mark J. Prendergast (1987) and Campbell and Smyth (2005) give a more critically-oriented reading of Irish rock’s evolution. Prendergast’s work stands out as a detailed contribution, appropriately contextualising the cultural location of first-wave Irish rock music. His analysis of Rory Gallagher, for example, identifies the musician’s style as simultaneously inhabiting and emanating from a hybridised confluence of Irish, international and other regional cultures:

When most beat groups were doing the elliptical circuit of Ireland...Gallagher’s achievement was to develop through all the normal Irish music circles and reach the dizzy heights of international acclaim. Unlike most Irish musicians, his inspiration came from the blues — the black American variety from the Mississippi Delta where music had served to replenish a tortured spirit...[w]hile Clapton and Hendrix were heavily into the ‘drug culture’ and the exotic imagery of the times, Gallagher was a purist...long solos, serious, complex lyrics and large festivals...Rory Gallagher epitomised the world youth consciousness of the late sixties and early seventies.

(Prendergast, 1987: 29)

However, the ‘short history’ approach often suffers because of the brevity of space afforded to each musician. To take again the example of Rory Gallagher: in all three publications noted above, Gallagher’s complete musical oeuvre, influence and legacy is discussed in two to three pages, despite the fact that his recorded and broadcast output from 1968 -78 includes nine studio and four live albums, numerous public performances

on Irish, British, American and European television and radio, and an internationally-released feature film. There is minimal analysis of his ongoing interaction with black American musical cultures, and no detailed discussion of key elements of his extraordinary instrumental technique, his hybrid compositional method, or his complex relationship to Irish national culture and Northern Irish politics. Exacerbating this, the kinds of issues, observations and criticisms raised by musicological analysis are not addressed in detail by any of these surveys. Thus, while they are astute in identifying the key contributors to Irish rock, the absence of apposite methodological scrutiny combines with a lack of interpretative critique to compromise the overall critical value of extant histories of Irish rock.

Academic work around the genre represents a small and slowly expanding field of enquiry (Bradby and Torode, 1985; Bradby, 1994; Mills, 1993; Clancy and Twomey, 1997; McLaughlin, 1999; Power, 2000; McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000; Smyth, 2004; Cogan, 2006; Cleary, 2007) and further academic work is underway (Campbell, 2011; McLaughlin and McLoone, forthcoming). Clancy and Twomey (1997) have explored developments in the indigenous Irish popular music industry; their economically-focused research was part of a wider analysis of Irish industrial performance between the 1960s and 1990s (O’Malley and Eggeraat, 2000: 56). In historicizing the evolution of the popular music industry in Ireland, Clancy and Twomey refer to the three rock musicians on whom the current study focuses:

Up to the mid 1970s, recordings made in Ireland concentrated on traditional music and poetry and were confined purely to the domestic market. During this period, Irish artists, many of whom wrote their own music and who had aspirations to international success in rock music, were forced to leave Ireland both because of the dominance of the showbands and also because of the absence of the infrastructure in

Ireland to support their development. Well-known examples include Rory Gallagher, Van Morrison and Thin Lizzy.

(Clancy and Twomey, 1997:3)

Clancy and Twomey outline some of the principal issues facing rock musicians in Ireland between 1968 and 1978. These include the absence of infrastructure on which to base international success; the cultural dominance of the popular showbands and the traditional repertoire in shaping public musical tastes; the absence of any economic relationship between rock practice and music business in Ireland of the time. Such issues are taken up in Chapter Two, which contextualises the industrial development of Irish rock, and examines rock musicians' relationship with, and responses to, the fledgling popular music industry on the island.

Clancy and Twomey's analysis is characteristic of the majority of critical research into Irish music, in that its principal focus has been the second 'wave' of Irish groups – those primarily influenced by the American New Wave, the British (and later international) punk movement and the various forms, semiotic systems and styles of postmodern, pop and post-pop cultures. An important example of this type of work is McLaughlin's (1999) analysis of Irish pop music. His study covers the thirty-year period of the 1960s to 1990s, though analysis of first-wave musicians is comparatively limited; his primary critical focus is artists of the 1980s, including U2, Sinead O'Connor and Gregory Gray. Investigating pop's relationship to the national, McLaughlin's analysis of U2 is centred on scrutiny of the group's representational economies. Using techniques derived from critical media theory, he deconstructs sedimented and essentialised notions of 'Irishness' – musical, semantic and narrative – challenging the view that these are

necessarily the conceptual basis for Irish popular musical performance.⁴ McLaughlin's work sets important precedents for the study of Irish popular music, by illustrating the representational complexities pertaining to musical performance, and by deconstructing any essentialising tendencies in describing the relationship between rock and the national.

Gerry Smyth has initiated critical exploration of first-wave groups; his recent short history *Noisy Island* (2005) examines the 'distinctly Irish response' to rock and popular music (Smyth, 2005). Focusing on biography and on scrutiny of cultural production in the context of national culture, nationalist imagining and socio-cultural change, Smyth illustrates that Irish popular music combines international preoccupations and practices with the 'signs of local Irish cultural inheritance' (Smyth, 2005: 54). In attempting to cover a vast array of musical styles, the 'first-wave' section, which focuses on several of the major acts (Taste, Granny's Intentions, Gallagher, Morrison, Lynott, Horslips, Skid Row, and Éire Apparent), is brief;⁵ however, some key ideas which Smyth introduces are expanded in later chapters of the current study. For example, the reciprocalities and conflicts Smyth identifies between showband, folk and Irish rock cultures is a theme developed in Chapters Two and Three. Other ideas Smyth proposes in *Noisy Island* are challenged here: in particular, his reading of Rory Gallagher's musical output as that of a 'conduit' rather than an 'auteur' (Smyth, 2005: 37) does, in my view, an injustice to Gallagher's active strategies of

4 I present a fuller analysis of McLaughlin's published work (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000) below and in Chapter Three.

5 As with McLaughlin's work, reference to the first-wave of Irish rock serves in Smyth's analysis as something of a precursor to lengthier analysis of later styles: punk, post-punk and 1980s and 1990s pop and rock.

composition and performance, and masks the more intricate resonances of the guitarist's cultural politics. I take up these issues in detail in Chapter Four, but note here that the current thesis aims to elongate and deepen the initial and insightful explorations of the first-wave found in Smyth's work.

Bradby and Torode have conducted a lyrically-focused textual analysis to propose that the U2 song 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' embodies the group's preoccupation with religious culture and experience (Bradby and Torode, 1985). In so doing, they de-naturalise the manner in which the group invoke a pan-nationalist politics of inclusion or offer meaningful political critique. Bradby and Torode challenge the stable meanings which have developed (and perhaps fossilized) around the group as a consequence of their highly-publicised cultural politics and political interventions. Their scholarly focus on lyrical content is taken up in the present study, in particular in Chapter Four, where an investigation of musicians' relationships to both national and nationalist cultural positions examines lyrical texts in some detail.

U2's cultural location as the oft-quoted 'biggest band of the 1980s'⁶ has meant that what little work has emerged has tended to focus on their output and cultural significance, often to the detriment of other voices.⁷ As McLaughlin and McLoone state, U2's critical and commercial achievements prompted:

...a number of academic and semi-academic studies...and an almost continuous process of appraisal in Ireland's influential rock magazine

⁶ Bradby attributes the label to *Rolling Stone* magazine; see Bradby, 1989: 109.

⁷ See also Cogan, 2005; Waters, 1994; Dunphy, 1988.

Hot Press. Given the impact that the band has had, this level of attention is hardly surprising. The quality of this work may be variable but it has had the effect, nonetheless, of disguising the wider musical context in Ireland, and of marginalising discussion of other acts and other musical strategies[...]

(McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000: 184)

One objective of the current research is to address this investigative imbalance, by focusing on three musicians whose works and performance strategies form part of the ‘wider musical context’ of popular music practice in Ireland. Accepting McLaughlin and McLoone’s observation, the study scrutinises diverse musical acts that preceded, but also informed and influenced, the later recordings of U2.

The remaining four sections of this introductory chapter illustrate the thesis’ overall structure, and initiate the arguments developed within it. First, I demonstrate the cultural context out of which rock music emerged, with reference to international cultural and musical transformations, and to changes obtaining on the island of Ireland; I also provide a working definition of Irish rock music. Second, I introduce the three musicians on whose works and subjectivities the study is primarily focused. Third, I contextualise the study of Irish rock within the broader field of Irish (cultural) Studies. Fourth, I describe the thesis’s structure chapter by chapter, identify the central and secondary research questions, and demonstrate the methodological approach utilised.

Rock in Context I: International Transformations

Irish rock music developed largely as a response to cultural and musical developments obtaining in Ireland, the UK and US beginning in the late 1950s (Chambers, 1981; O'Halloran, 2006; Smyth and Campbell, 2005). This thesis will focus on 1968-78, a period largely coterminous with the 'classic' era of Anglo-American rock. I cautiously adopt the designation 'classic' in describing the rock music emerging in this period; as the user-generated website urbandictionary.com illustrates, such classification is highly subjective and contentiously debated on the basis of personal preference (Urban Dictionary, 2010). The 'classic' designation is useful, however, in so far as it describes a spectrum of related musical styles which evolved into a sophisticated, influential and ubiquitous cultural language in the Anglo-American world and its cultural satellites during the later 1960s and 1970s.

Rock music synthesised African-American blues, rock 'n' roll, and diverse black and white American folk and protest music (Chambers, 1985; Clarke, 1989; Gammond, 1991; Heatley, 1993); this fusion took place in the context of post-WWII societal transformations which included the onset of consumerism, the explosion of teenage and leisure culture, the expansion of print and broadcast media, and an increasing rejection of entrenched social values by emerging youth subcultures. While these sea-changes occurred initially in the United States and United Kingdom, they later transferred to Ireland, to Europe and the wider world; as rock's economic potential was identified and exploited, so its cultural influence proliferated (Manuel, 1988; Heatley, 1993).

Initially, rock was a derivative musical form, largely indistinguishable from its parent cultures – rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll, blues, rockabilly, and

the religious and pop music of the 1950s (Chambers, 1985; Gammond, 1991: 495). During the 1960s, rock music underwent an explosive evolution. Technological innovations, the influence of several pioneering musicians, the commodification of popular music and the proliferation of star culture were principal factors leading to the emergence of rock as a culturally dominant genre in Anglo-American popular culture by the later 1960s and early 1970s. Transformations in recording and production technology which contributed to this growth included the development of multi-track recording, and the advancement of sophisticated production and post-production techniques in the recording studio. The mass-production of instruments and amplification was also crucial to the popularity of emerging rock styles.

Crucially, rock culture also developed cultural and mythological dimensions: musicians and critics nurtured narratives of roots/routes in ‘black’, folk and protest music, canonising both its principal progenitors (Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent, Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters), and exponents (Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Led Zeppelin, Cream, Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones and numerous other individuals and groups). Musically, through absorption of western classical harmonic and structural motifs and jazz-based techniques such as improvisation and modal approaches to composition and performance, rock expanded out of its blues, folk and popular roots into an articulate and occasionally virtuosic musical language (Everett, 1993; Moore, 2001; Walser, 1998; Heatley, 1993). Simultaneously, the exploitation of rock’s commercial and industrial potential (distribution, publishing, sales) enabled unprecedented distribution of rock texts to a widening audience across a range of previously divided social cleavages.

Practically, rock as culture and industry differed from other popular music of the time in that it apportioned lesser value to singles (a mode of musical production developed by Anglo-American commercial interests during the 1950s and exemplified both by ‘race records’ and early rock ‘n’ roll recordings). The evolution of the long-playing record (LP) allowed musicians greater creative freedom, as more material could be recorded onto the LP’s surface; fig.1 illustrates the manner in which albums grew exponentially in length, and even the double-LP became a common format during the period. This practical transition was coterminous with a change in the aesthetic focus of rock narrative, implicit in the shift from a preoccupation with romantic narrative (typical of many rock ‘n’ roll and R&B singles) to the articulation of more intellectual, philosophical, political and epistemological concerns. What emerged was an exploratory musical style, accompanied by lyrical exploration of alienation, contemporary and community life, expressions of individual identity and sub-cultural allegiance (Pink Floyd, King Crimson, Van Morrison, Mike Oldfield, The Mothers of Invention, The Beatles, David Bowie, Genesis).

| Artist | Album Title | Year of Release | Recording Length |
|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Buddy Holly | <i>The ‘Chirping’ Crickets</i> | 1957 | 28:27 |
| The Beach Boys | <i>Surfin’ Safari</i> | 1962 | 24:53 |
| The Beatles | <i>Please Please Me</i> | 1963 | 32:45 |
| Jimi Hendrix | <i>Are You Experienced?</i> | 1967 | 40:12 |
| Jimi Hendrix | <i>Electric Ladyland</i> | 1968 | 75:47 |
| The Beatles | <i>The Beatles</i> | 1968 | 93:35 |

Figure 1: Expansion of album lengths between 1957 and 1968.

It is apposite to note that as a culture, rock incorporated a range of complex signifiers and narratives. These included an appeal, and later a challenge, to folk-based notions of musical ‘authenticity’ (typified by the careers and compositions of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, The Band, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young and the Blues revivalists). American musicians in particular followed the lead of the prominent folk musicians Woody Guthrie, Huddie Ledbetter (Lead Belly) and Pete Seeger (whose guitar famously ‘kills fascists’) in exploring the intersection of music and social/political commentary.⁸ Rock provided ideological challenges to dominant social and political structures, voiced through counter-cultural revisionism of one sort or another: the music informed and responded to shifts in public consciousness, critiquing rigid categories of class and race, and questioning the authority of largely inflexible political structures in determining the social and political outcomes of individuals’ lives in post-war consumer society. The proposition of an individualistic self-assertion which challenged inherited social roles was the ideological means by which sections of rock culture engaged with and confronted established commercial and political interests: Jefferson Airplane, The Doors, Sly and the Family Stone, Grateful Dead, The Who, Mothers of Invention, Country Joe and the Fish and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young are typical of the numerous groups who married rock sounds to an optimistic cultural politics of proactive social change.

⁸ See <http://www.google.ie/imgres?imgurl=http://www.mentalfloss.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/fascists.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.mentalfloss.com/blogs/archives/5505&usg=ShPyDofChXCn4q8pStpT4P4NBDs=&h=306&w=245&sz=23&hl=en&start=3&um=1&itbs=1&tbnid=XFTGARq7qmwrM:&tbnh=117&tbnw=94&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dthis%2Bguitar%2Bkills%2Bfascists%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26tbs%3Disch:1>; accessed 26/6/10.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, rock's aesthetic and social concerns were counterbalanced by musicians' commercial interests, and those of their management and recording companies. The tendency in popular versions of rock history has been to downplay the economic dimensions of rock as production, and essentialise the relationship between executive and artistic actors as antagonistic. This has the effect of rendering invisible musicians' awareness and exploitation of, and their challenge to, rock's industrial/commercial status. In fact, rock music must be understood as a stylistic domain in which the tension between art and commerce operates as a defining feature, with musicians living out the contradictions between producing music as art and music as commodity (Cole, 2002; Heylin, 2003; Richards and Fox, 2010).⁹ As I discuss below and in more detail in Chapter Two, this has implications for the manner in which rock, and Irish rock in particular, is represented and understood.

The stylistic range and ideological depth of versions of rock music varies considerably, and it is therefore difficult to assign technical or aesthetic generalisations to the continuum of musical subcultures identified with the designation 'rock'. However, briefly examining the musical strategies and performance practices of two key acts from the 'classic' rock period helps to illustrate the aesthetic thrust of rock cultures, and contextualises the compositions and performance practices of the Irish musicians on which the analysis will subsequently focus.

For many commentators, The Beatles are pivotal actors in the extraordinary evolution which rock music underwent beginning in the mid-1960s

⁹ Negus' research has illustrated the interfacing of culture and industry in rock production; see Negus, 1999.

(Everett, 2001).¹⁰ Assisted by the democratisation of cultural production enabled by the skiffle boom (and by Lonnie Donegan in particular), the group initially achieved mainstream visibility and chart success in the United Kingdom with commercially-oriented singles ('Please, Please Me'; 'From Me To You'; 'She Loves You'). As Beatlemania took hold in the United Kingdom, advance sales of the 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' single exceeded a million units (Oxford Music Online, 2010).

Focusing increasingly on self-penned compositions, the Beatles' music grew in technical complexity; under the aegis of Brian Epstein, and in collaboration with the producer George Martin, their musically hybrid recordings combined Anglo-American popular styles, European and Indian classical music, jazz, music hall and folk music. The recordings produced in these collaborative sessions exploited emerging technologies (including reverse taping, the use of sound effects, and two-, four- and multi-track recording).¹¹ In describing the songs as 'essays in innovation and diversification', one critical survey states that the group succeeded in:

...embracing the cartoon psychedelia of 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds', the music-hall pastiche of 'When I'm Sixty-Four', the circus atmosphere of 'Being For The Benefit Of Mr Kite', the eastern philosophical promise of 'Within You, Without You' and even a modern morality tale in 'She's Leaving Home'. Audio tricks and surprises abounded, involving steam organs, orchestras, sitars, and even a pack of foxhounds in full cry at the end of 'Good Morning, Good Morning'. The album closed with the epic 'A Day In The Life', the Beatles' most ambitious work to date, featuring what Lennon

10 The Beatles' early recordings pre-date the 'classic rock' era by some years, but their album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* is understood to be a defining work of that period in stylistic, technological and commercial terms, see <http://www.warr.org/beatles.html>. Accessed 5/11/10.

11 Geoff Emerick, the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* recording engineer, recalls that '[t]he Beatles insisted that everything on *Sgt Pepper* had to be different'. That album's gatefold sleeve, which incorporated a photographic montage of public figures, ornaments and objects, signifies visually the mixing of style and genre which informed the music contained in it. See Lewisholm's liner notes to the 2009 remastered CD, p.4.

described as ‘a sound building up from nothing to the end of the world’. As a final gimmick, the orchestra was recorded beyond a 20,000 hertz frequency, meaning that the final note was audible only to dogs. Even the phonogram was not allowed to interfere with the proceedings, for a record groove was cut back to repeat slices of backwards-recorded tape that played on into infinity.

(Oxford Music Online, 2010)¹²

At the intellectual level, The Beatles’ consciously hybrid music demonstrates the tensions occurring between rock culture and versions of national imagining. A prototypical Englishness/Britishness is interrupted by the simultaneous and rhizomatic¹³ presences of American, Indian and other cultural, linguistic and musical signifiers, which illustrate rock’s proclivity for operating outside, and therefore challenging, the rigid parameters of a homogenous national identity (Regev, 1992; Zuberi, 2001).¹⁴ The hybrid musical contexts and certain narrative descriptions foregrounded in several songs indicate the group’s ambivalence towards, and critique of, received versions of ‘British’ identity and culture (CD Track 1).¹⁵

12 See also recording engineer Emerick’s technical descriptions, quoted in Lewisholm’s liner notes to the 2009 remastered CD, p. 2-4.

13 The terms is Deleuzean, but is becoming more commonly used in critical analysis; see for example Gilroy, 1993.

14 In *Sgt Pepper’s*, a range of ‘English’ linguistic idioms are interspersed in the various songs ('Good Morning'; 'It's time for tea and meet the wife'; 'May I enquire discreetly'; 'scrimp and save'; 'clutching her handkerchief'); a series of English musical styles are utilised; cultural pursuits and institutions associated with English national identity (fox-hunting, the motor trade, the English army, newspapers, attending school, the theatre and the circus) are consistently referenced, and a number of English locations appear (the House of Lords, the Isle of Wight). Two other English locations, Strawberry Fields and Penny Lane, provided the spatial and imaginative framework for two further compositions recorded during the *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* sessions. 'Strawberry Fields Forever' and 'Penny Lane' were released as singles in anticipation of the album release; see Lewisholm’s liner notes to the remastered CD version of the work, released 2009.

15 A key example of such ambivalence on *Sgt. Pepper’s* is ‘She’s Leaving Home’; the narrative details how an empowered female protagonist challenges familial and gendered expectations of passivity by rejecting middle class society: ‘Quietly turning the backdoor key/Stepping outside she is free/ She (We gave her most of our lives)/is leaving (Sacrificed most of our lives)/home (We gave her everything money could buy)/She’s leaving home after living alone/For so many years’. The Beatles, ‘She’s Leaving Home’, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, 1967.

Contemporaneously, in the US, Neil Young was crafting musical avenues which reflected his migrant and exilic experiences in Canada and the United States. Young's output from the 'classic' rock period follows the two overarching trajectories central to rock as a popular form: one develops from his aptitude in acoustic-based folk music, the other from his ability in contemporary popular forms including (instrumental) rock and roll (McDonough, 2002; Whalley, 2010).¹⁶ Neil Young's career illustrates the tension between fixity and constant transition, expressed in terms of musical style and public identity, consistently explored in rock and popular music culture. Similar to Bob Dylan, (and, as I demonstrate, to Phil Lynott and Van Morrison), throughout the 1970s, Young re-shaped his public persona, responding to and anticipating changes both in musical tastes, and patterns of music consumption. I discuss this in relation to Irish rock in the thesis's third and fifth chapters.

In important respects, Young's crossing of the physical border between Canada and America was symbolic of the border-crossing, in terms of musical style and public subjectivity, undertaken by many rock musicians during the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁷ Young adroitly exploited the cultural similarities between the two states – like Van Morrison, Rory Gallagher and Phil Lynott, he sang in English, and was adept in utilising the emergent

16 Similar to Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Rory Gallagher, Young's ability to compose and improvise on electric and acoustic guitar in a range of musical styles accelerated his escalation to the forefront of rock musicianship. Young's musical style grew out of the explosion of interest in guitar music occurring throughout the Anglo-American cultural matrix from the 1950s through to the later 1970s; as I illustrate below, the evolution of the guitar as a fashionable, practical and desired instrument led to its absorption into a range of popular music genres from the early decades of the 20th century. See also *Don't Be Denied*, Ben Whalley's BBC4 documentary on Young's career. Excerpts available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/musictv/neilyoung/>; accessed 23/8/10.

17 Young relocated to Los Angeles after initial success on the folk/songwriter circuit in Toronto, Canada.

narratives and signifiers of Anglo-American 1960s youth culture.¹⁸ Indicative of rock's ambivalence to national imagining, and its intervention in political realities, is the fact that Young's music and public identity often involves critique of popular constructions of 'America', of American social, economic and foreign policy. In Chapter Four, I will examine in detail how Irish rock musicians similarly explored and expressed ambivalence towards Ireland, its various cultural hegemonies, and its ongoing political preoccupations.

Young's career and music illustrates the manner in which rock cultures fundamentally adopted and re-shaped folk music's preoccupation with performative validity. In contrast to the Beatles, who discontinued touring in August 1966, Young maintained a focus on high-profile touring, releasing live material throughout the 1970s (*Time Fades Away* (1973), *Live Rust* (1978), *Rust Never Sleeps* (1979)), completing difficult national and international tours and performing at festivals including Woodstock and The Band's Last Waltz (CD Track 2).

This emphasis on touring responded to a key preoccupation of rock culture with live performance. The case of first-wave Irish rock demonstrates this preoccupation succinctly. As both Rory Gallagher and Phil Lynott appeared

18 Young's public career began with the pop-folk group Buffalo Springfield, whose oeuvre oscillated between acoustic ballads and folk-rock anthems ('Nowadays Even Clancy Can't Sing'; 'I Am a Child'; 'For What It's Worth') and more formally experimental, hybridized and orchestrated folk-rock suites ('Broken Arrow'; 'Expecting To Fly'). Through a productive partnership with Stephen Stills, Buffalo Springfield provided Young with a musical and artistic framework for developing the folk and rock directions which culminated in substantial mainstream success and critical acclaim, both as a solo artist (*Harvest*; *After the Gold Rush*; *On The Beach*; *Tonight's the Night*) and as a member of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. Moving on, Young began experimenting with improvisational rock as a leading member of the outfit Crazy Horse; the group's signature sound derived from extended electric guitar improvisations by Young and Danny Whitten over a rock rhythm section of drums, bass and guitar ('Like A Hurricane'; 'Cowgirl in The Sand'; 'Cortez The Killer'; 'Down By The River').

to understand, public recital functions as an important mechanism through which a rock artist achieves and maintains cultural capital; in Gallagher's case, a professional focus on public performance led to the release of two live albums, two filmed documentaries with live recordings as their centrepiece, a number of high-profile appearances at festivals and on tours (Isle of Wight, Montreux; Small Faces, Deep Purple, Blind Faith) and numerous televised performances for British and German television and radio (BBC, Old Grey Whistle Test, Rockpalast). Live concerts enabled musicians to communicate directly with audiences, counterbalanced the emphasis on technologies of production in musical performance, and provided an alternative listening context to the primarily individual practice of privately consuming recorded music (Cole, 2002; Inglis, 2006). The primacy of live performance in audiences' understanding and appreciation of rock music is indicated in the controversy surrounding Thin Lizzy's *Live and Dangerous* LP (1978), with band members and producer Tony Visconti disagreeing on, and some critics and fans objecting to, studio-based editing of various tracks following the original performances.¹⁹

Rock in Context II: The Guitar in Popular Music

The modern guitar has precursors in the near East and early Modern Europe (Chapman, 2000; Coelho, 2003); four and five-course antecedents existed in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and Chapman notes that these instruments were popular among wealthy European

19 See John Sutherland's liner notes to the *Live and Dangerous* album; also <http://www.cduniverse.com/search/xx/music/pid/1099225/a/Live+And+Dangerous.htm>; accessed 22/9/09; also Visconti (2007).

families.²⁰ The six single-stringed versions emerged in Europe at the close of the eighteenth century, and were popularised in the following century as a number of musicians, composers and teachers created a repertoire and initiated developments in technical method. The Napoleonic wars precipitated the movement of the instrument from Southern Europe to the major musical centres of Vienna, Paris and London (Chapman, 2000: 14-31). Both the Spanish guitarist Segovia and his protégé John Williams developed polyphonic performance techniques in the European classical tradition; this was a key aspect of a widening repertoire of classical guitar music from Europe and the Americas. Acknowledging Segovia's influence, and the importance of classical style and perspective in developing his musical vision, Rory Gallagher has stated:

I'm almost, if you will, into the classical approach to the guitar like Segovia had of getting everything you can out of the guitar by the use of all the fingers and all the means you can get.

(Rory Gallagher, quoted in Rosen, 1974: n.p.)

When I was a kid, I said 'I cannot play this thing' [the guitar]. But you step over that psychological bridge. Ok, you may never be Segovia. But you have to get cheeky with your fright, you know?

(Rory Gallagher, quoted in Muise, 2002:1)

A BBC documentary entitled *The Story of the Guitar* (2008) historicizes the growing popularity of guitar music in the twentieth century. Focusing on Anglo-American developments, it demonstrates that as early as the 1920s, the American artist Maybelle Carter had performed country songs on a Gibson L-5 guitar; blues musicians, including Robert Johnson, used Gibson L-1s in the same decade (Chapman, 2000:49). A nationwide American obsession with Hawaiian ukulele music during the same period further

20 A four-course guitar was one with four sets of doubled strings, much like a modern mandolin. This contrasts with the modern guitar, which has six single strings of diverse pitches (EADGBE in standard tuning); see 'Early History', Chapman's insightful overview, in Chapman, 2000.

boosted the popularity of plucked string instruments, while the ‘Singing Cowboy’ figure, typified by Gene Autry and Leonard Franklin Slye (Roy Rogers), led to the appearance of guitars in several films (Muise, 2002; Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, 2011).

The fact that it could be tuned and played in myriad ways enabled the development of a range of diverse styles and modes of performance. Charley Patton, Robert Johnson, Big Bill Broonzy and other Mississippi musicians utilised the acoustic guitar to accompany blues songs, developing variants of fingerstyle, picked and slide guitar traditions in a variety of tunings as they did so (Shadwick, 2000); Huddie Ledbetter, Woody Guthrie, Bess Hawes and Bob Shane were among those who popularised its use as a rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment to folk and protest songs (The New York Times, 2009; Britannica, 2011; Kingston Trio, 2011) (CD Tracks 3,4).

The guitar could be mass-produced and distributed with relative ease, and transported effortlessly by end-users; therefore it was absorbed into various musical cultures, notably those of the numerous African-Americans migrating across the American south and into the northern cities. The introduction of the guitar into the cultures of the black Atlantic²¹ led to the flowering of a conceptually vibrant and technically diverse continuum of blues traditions among African-Americans in the 1920s (Jones, 1963; Palmer, 1987; Shadwick, 2000).

Blues describes a range of acoustic musical styles fusing elements of the earlier practices, including field shouts, work and folk songs, ragtime and

21 The term describes a range of African-derived (thus ‘black’) cultures and cultural locations based on interchange, via the Atlantic, between Africa, the Caribbean, Britain and the United States; I expound and critique the idea in detail in Chapter Five.

gospel. It developed initially in the Southern United States (in particular in the north Mississippi Delta) and the American south east, before spreading to the industrialised north as a cultural consequence of the Great Migration. In itself, blues culture represents one of the major global musical innovations of the twentieth century; blues also provided one of the essential musical foundations of the emerging Anglo-American rock culture (Jones, 1963; Shadwick, 2000; Van der Bliek, 2007). The movement of African-Americans into the northern cities (and Chicago in particular), and the subsequent cultural flows emerging between north and south popularised certain country blues forms, and simultaneously precipitated the development of electric blues styles (B.B. King, Freddie King, Howlin' Wolf, Buddy Guy, Earl Hooker), as the acoustic forms were transformed through technical innovations, notably the evolution of the electric guitar (Keil, 1966; Wheeler, 2004) (CD Track 5).²²

At the same time, the guitar was being absorbed into performance practices associated with Anglo-American folk and protest singers migrating to California ahead of the droughts of the 'Dust Bowl' and Great Plains regions during the years of the Depression. Its portability was central to its use in the musical culture which grew out of and expressed the misfortunes faced by many migrants. Additionally, the instrument came to play an important role in the union hall-focused labour movements and the folk club gatherings (hootenannies) organised in the major American cities.²³

22 The guitar was also incorporated into the jazz culture which migrated north from the port city of New Orleans, from Kansas City and its environs; Charlie Christian adopted the electric guitar for the American jazz combo, and amplification meant that it found a place in the popular jazz big bands. Concurrently, Django Rheinhardt was popularising the instrument in Europe by mixing jazz and gypsy musics. The guitar was fundamental to the evolution of modern forms of country music, utilised by proponents of that genre for its melodic, rhythmic and harmonic potential.

23 The Almanac Singers, Red Dust Players and Kingston Trio are notable examples here: see The New York Times Company (2011).

The presence of the guitar in both black and white American cultures was crucial to the rock music's eventual entrance into mainstream popular culture. *The Story of the Guitar* documentary notes that the international chart success of Bill Haley's R&B-influenced 'Rock Around the Clock' (a US and UK No.1 single in 1955) inspired many teenagers to purchase guitars; in *TSG*'s first segment, U2 guitarist The Edge likens ownership of a guitar to possession of "a motorbike or a gun" for teenagers in the 1950s and 60s (BBC, 2009). The comparative simplicity of the instrument for performing popular music – skiffle, R&B, basic blues and folk styles, for example – and the instrument's considerable potential for the execution of specialised techniques made the guitar attractive to both novice and specialist players. In Britain, Bert Weedon's *Play in a Day* guitar tutor, first published in 1957, presented guitar-playing techniques in a simplified, accessible manner. Technological developments in electric guitar circuitry, amplification and solid-body design by Les Paul, Leo Fender, their associates and competitors led to the popularisation and mass-production of the electric guitar; this extended the performative and sonic potential of the acoustic instrument significantly (Chapman, 2000). For example, through amplification, the electric guitar became louder and more controllable in terms of performative volume; melodic patterns (and solos) could now be performed while accompanied by full rock rhythm sections. Smaller and slimmer neck and body profiles made the electric instrument easier to play during lengthy performances (Wheeler, 2004; 55-69). Adjustable components such as bridges, string saddles and string trees contributed to greater accuracy of tuning. Lighter string gauges allowed for a greater range of musical effects (string bends in particular), while accessories such as the

whammy bar (vibrato arm) enabled a phenomenal range of pitch variations on certain models. Pick-up switch selection, tone controls and the use of solid bodies adapted the tonal profile of the instrument, allowing the player to develop greater diversity between rhythmic and melodic performance styles. The addition of auxiliary effects such as distortion, fuzz, wah, tremolo, echo, phasing, octave and delay expanded the timbral potential of the instrument; the manipulation of sustain and feedback was another means by which the electric guitar developed beyond the sonic possibilities of its acoustic antecedent (CD Track 6).²⁴

Similarly to American, British and other musicians, Irish artists were affected and influenced by the evolution and popularity of the guitar. Lynott and Morrison were proficient on the instrument, and Gallagher was internationally acknowledged as a masterful performer of electric and acoustic styles. Lynott's exposure to the guitar-based music of Jimi Hendrix and Frank Zappa provided a template for early Thin Lizzy compositions; similar to Hendrix, Lynott's primary instrument was a Fender guitar (in Lynott's case it was an electric Precision Bass (P-Bass). As I discuss in Chapter Three, Lynott himself developed a unique and articulate style on bass guitar, in which melodic, as well as rhythmic and harmonic content, is often foregrounded. Reworking the guitar-led soundscapes popularised by Allman Brothers, Wishbone Ash and Deep Purple, Lynott consistently

24 Bob Dylan's challenge to the expectations of folk music, combined with musicians' interest in instrumental, electrified music (Dick Dale, The Ventures, Lonnie Mack, Hank Marvin and The Shadows) also paved the way for the electrification of rock; Dylan confounded audiences at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival by 'going electric', performing a 15-minute set backed by a blues band featuring electric guitars and an amplified rhythm section. See Inglis, 2006:16-28 and Heylin, 2000: 201-22. See also Martin Scorsese's biographical picture, *No Direction Home* (2005). We can conclude, then, that the popularisation of the guitar was a key factor enabling the phenomenal prominence of rock music and culture during the 1960s and 1970s.

formed groups with guitarists of significant ability (Eric Bell, Gary Moore, Scott Gorham, Brian Robertson, John Sykes, Steve Jones, Midge Ure). While Thin Lizzy's sound transformed significantly during the 1970s, evolving from the Hendrix/Cream/Taste-influenced trio of 1969-73 to the twin-lead heavy-rock attack of the Robertson/Gorham incarnation, the primary focus on the guitar remained constant throughout the band's duration.

Van Morrison's use of the guitar ranged from its location as an integral part of his songwriting processes, to live performance; with respect to the latter, his Montreux performance from 1973 is typical, in that he capably plays both rhythm and blues-based lead guitar on a semi-acoustic instrument.²⁵ During the 1970s, Morrison also exploited the guitar's symbolic capital, utilising it to augment an image of himself as mendicant folk musician. This representation was cultivated musically on songs from *Astral Weeks* and *Veedon Fleece*, and visually on the sleeve of *St. Dominic's Preview*. The guitar plays a key role in the rhythmic layer of compositions on both *Astral Weeks* and *Veedon Fleece* – 'Sweet Thing', 'Cypress Avenue', 'Streets of Arklow' and 'You Don't Pull No Punches, But You Don't Push the River' are clear examples of the use of the guitar to invoke a class of gestures related to contemporary folksong.²⁶ On the *St Dominic's Preview* sleeve, Morrison is pictured alone on the steps of a church, looking into the distance while

25 According to an interview given by Morrison to *Rolling Stone*, he also played guitar with at least one popular group, Deanie Sands and the Javelins, in the early years of his professional career. See Traum, (1970).

26 Traum's portrayal of Morrison in the *Rolling Stone* feature also centres on the guitar as a legitimising symbol of the wandering folk musician: 'Van Morrison sits on the edge of the bed and absently picks an old Gibson [guitar]. He is moody, his eyes intense and his smile sudden; his Belfast accent is thick but musical, statements often lilting into a half question mark. The only child of a Scottish dockworker and his Irish wife, Van left home at the age of 15 and has been on the streets or on the road ever since'. See <http://www.rocksbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=2406&SearchText=van+morrison>; accessed 11/11/2010.

strumming a wooden guitar. The image, with its juxtaposition of signifiers of spirituality and those of the solitary travelling musician, resonates with meaning, conveying a sense of Morrison's creative connection to higher states of being associated with the religious, as well as the 'natural' world of musical expression. The guitar itself, an American-made Martin 'dreadnought' model, also invokes an international musical community, since key players of the American folk and folk-rock movement – Stephen Stills, Neil Young, Paul Simon, Joan Baez and Roger McGuinn – all performed with Martin guitars.²⁷ The presence of the Martin guitar in the photograph illustrates Morrison's awareness of the signifying conventions of Anglo-American rock, and therefore simultaneously locates Morrison within the community of 'authentic' folk-rock musicians.

Rory Gallagher was initially attracted to the instrument by close listening to recordings of Lonnie Donegan and Huddie Ledbetter (Lead Belly), and watching the films of Elvis Presley and Gene Autry; in those of the latter especially, the guitar featured prominently. He progressed from learning chords on a plastic ukulele to playing acoustic and electric guitar in a range of styles and using an array of tunings. Gallagher's professional image was primarily shaped by his continuous use of a 1961 Fender Stratocaster electric guitar, purchased after a showband musician sold it to a shop in Cork city; the instrument was used throughout his recording and performing career.²⁸ One of the most versatile and sought-after instruments in twentieth

27 See <http://www.martinguitar.com/artists/famous.php>; accessed 7/7/10. Rory Gallagher also used a Martin D-35 rosewood acoustic guitar to perform acoustic numbers; see Acoustic Magazine, 2011.

28 See Fender Custom Shop, 2010; see also <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/204186/Leo-Fender?anchor=ref667036>; and http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libraryproxy.mic.ul.ie/subscriber/article/epm/53334?q=fender+stratocaster&hbutton_search.x=0&hbutton_search.y=0&hbutton_search=search&source=omo_epm&source=omo_t237&source=omo_gmo&source=omo_t114&search=quick&pos=11&start=1#firsthit. All accessed 7/11/10.

century popular music, Gallagher's association with the Stratocaster transcended that of a majority of players, in that he came to be symbolically associated with the instrument. In a 1995 interview, Gallagher described the importance of his particular Stratocaster:

Well, this guitar is part of my psychic makeup. It's my best friend. I love playing it, I play it every day. It's not like B.B. King, who's had, like, a hundred Lucilles²⁹. I've only got one Strat, and it hasn't got a name or whatever. I mean, where I came from at the time, to own a Stratocaster was like, it was monumental, it was just impossible, you know... I love playing it...like when I get lonesome, I play my guitar.

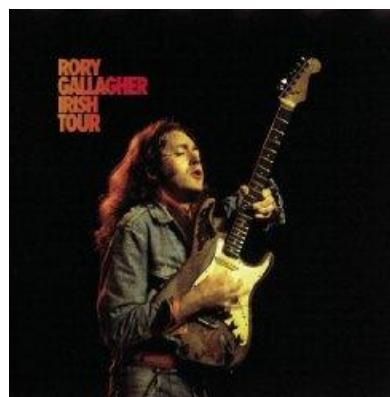
(Gallagher, in Minhinnet, 1995)

Gallagher's preference for Fender guitars (Stratocaster and Telecaster were both utilised) continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s, outlasting the company's decline in status among practising musicians following its takeover by CBS (Columbia Broadcasting Systems) in 1965. Consequently, Rory Gallagher is the only Irish artist (and one of only a handful of musicians of internationally) to have a signature Stratocaster designed by the Fender Custom Shop to match the specifications of his 1961 instrument; this was released posthumously, in limited numbers (Fender Custom Shop, 2010).

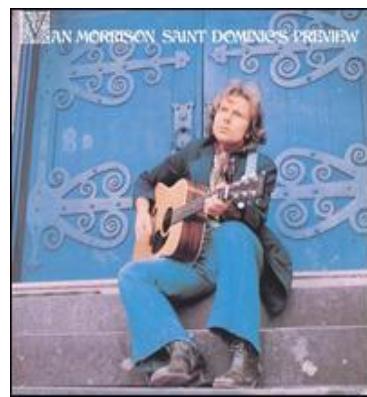
29 A key element of B.B.King's performative mythology is that the name 'Lucille' is given to each of his guitars, generally variants of the Gibson ES-355 (and previously ES-335) hollowbody models. In contrast to Gallagher, whose career has primarily (but not exclusively) been based on the use of a single Stratocaster (serial 64351) (Rory Gallagher The Official Website, 2011), King states that "I've had many guitars ... and I always call them Lucille"; see <http://www.worldblues.com/bbking/prairie/lucille.html>; accessed 7/10/2010.



Lynott with customised P-Bass³⁰



Gallagher with 64351³¹



Morrison with Martin guitar³²

Rock in Context II: Ireland, Irish Culture and Society in the 1960s

Irish rock culture developed as a result of the complex international (and ‘inter-national’) transitions outlined above, but concurrent social economic and cultural changes obtaining on the island during the 1950s and 1960s were also critical to its growth. There is a general tendency to equate Ireland of the period with stasis, due to the well-documented economic inertia which permeated social life in the Republic, and to the deepening ethnic divisions which ignited the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland. The key historical, economic and political changes in both political jurisdictions have been capably charted by historians and others in related research fields (Lee, 1989; Foster, 1988; Ellis, 2007; Cleary and Connolly, 2005). I avoid lengthy rehearsal of the principal narratives here, but present a brief synopsis of central transformations, in order to establish the political,

30 Utah Street Networks, 2010.

31 Rocksbackpages.com, 2010.

32 Rolling Stone, 2010; see also

http://www.tonycuckson.com/friends/storytelling_friend_van_morrison.html, which has a second photograph from the same session. Both accessed 9/11/2010.

economic and cultural conditions, specific to Ireland, out of which the first wave of rock culture emerged; I also argue here that while both jurisdictions were beset by economic and political difficulties, culturally, the period was one of intense and productive activity.

With respect to the Republic of Ireland, the period 1968-78 was a transformative one. The Irish Republic had been declared in 1949, but partition remained a critical and unresolved issue.³³ The effort to rebuild the United Kingdom following World War II, coupled with the demand for services in British domestic settings, persuaded numerous Irish men and women to emigrate there, draining skilled and unskilled labour resources (O'Keefe, 2002; Lynott and Hayden, 2011). Domestically, major changes occurred as a result of new social and economic policies, developing infrastructure and a more international focus by government ministers.³⁴ In addition, the prolonged influence of the Catholic church on social life, and the varied and increasing effects of internationalisation and modernisation on cultural production and lifestyle, affected social life considerably.³⁵

33 The quest for complete independence from Britain continued to dominate economic and social policy during the 1950s, with protectionism – primarily manifest as high trade tariffs – defining Irish international trade. Tensions between the reality of a twenty six-county state and the idealised vision of an island free from any British political influence led to an intense border campaign by the IRA in the late 1950s; this was a precursor to the primarily urbanised violent struggles of the later 1960s onwards. See M.L.R. Smith, 1995.

34 T.K.Whitaker's recommendations led to the adoption of the *First Programme for Economic Expansion*, which abolished tariffs for international industries, and worked to attract foreign investment. Indicative of increasing confidence in its international status, Ireland joined the United Nations, and sought membership of the European Union.

35 The 1937 Irish constitution had consolidated the commanding position of the Catholic Church in determining social affairs and establishing majority moral attitudes in the Republic. That socio-cultural life was strongly shaped by Catholic social teaching and religious values is evidenced by the popular ecclesiastically-led campaigns against cultural activities such as jazz music (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000; Gibbons, 1996), the long-standing public ban on dancing during the Lenten season in the 1950s and 1960s (O'Keefe, 2002), and various religious orders' influence in the administration of primary and secondary schooling. The religious hierarchy's opposition to changes in healthcare, proposed during the tenure of the 13th Dáil in the early 1950s, is also indicative of the Church's extensive political and social influence in the Republic; see Horgan, 2000; Lee, 1989.

Culturally, a principal emphasis was dissemination of the narratives and values of Irish nationalism and Catholic religiosity among the majority population.³⁶ One outcome of the changes resulting from the Second Vatican Council (1962-5) was a re-organisation of ecclesiastical power, which extended the influence of regional Catholic churches, notably through their figureheads, the bishops. Through them, the postconciliar Church retained and exercised its position as a dominant social agent in the Irish Republic.

Indicative of the manner in which the Church affected the development of first-wave rock culture in the Republic, the Limerick rock musician Cha Haran also states that beat and rock group performances in Limerick city were shut down at the behest of local clergy due to fears that ‘close dancing’ was being performed there (Haran, 2009). A formative Horslips show in Navan, Co. Meath was also prevented from taking place by the local parish priest because a play on the word ‘aphrodisiac’ was used in the concert’s advertising poster. Keyboard player and songwriter Jim Lockhart recalls:

We did a poster that said ‘Horslips Funky Ceilidhe and the Afro-Dizziac Light Show’. And we hired the hall in Navan and put these posters around the place. And the PP [Parish priest] saw them and completely freaked out...and banned it – banned us from the hall...it was like, ‘Priest bans rock band from Rugby Hall’. Suddenly we were in all the papers.

(Jim Lockhart in Linnane, 2005; author’s transcription)

Catholic and Protestant orders were also central in the organisation and management of reformatories, institutions for childcare and rehabilitation, and industrial schools.

³⁶ For example, educational policy afforded compulsory status to Irish language instruction at primary and secondary school; see, O’Buachalla, 1984.

We went through a stage where the influence of the Catholic Church was particularly strong. That had an impact in terms of the disapproval that was voiced, from the pulpit, and by priests in general, of any displays of earthy sensuality.

(Niall Stokes, in Heffernan, 2000; author's transcription)³⁷

Both Coghe (2004) and Muise's (2002) biographies detail Rory Gallagher's corporal punishment at Cork CBS, a religious secondary school, upon the authorities' discovering that he was performing rock 'n' roll in a showband:

The Christian Brothers...were furious that a pupil of theirs should be seen in public with musicians playing rock-and-roll – the devil's music that preyed on the youth of Ireland...the Brothers took out all their hatred [on Gallagher] by means of beatings with a blackthorn stick.

(Coghe, 2004: 21)

Donal Gallagher: One night I'd spotted that his leg had festered and gone septic...They'd caned him, basically...That was their sort of temperament at the time.

(Gallagher, quoted in Muise, 2002: 4)³⁸

This contrasts strongly with English musician Eric Clapton's experiences of schooling and its effects on his creative development. While scorned and ridiculed for being 'into clothes' and for buying records, Clapton recalls institutional support for his emerging creativity:

There was one teacher at St Bede's [Secondary Modern School] who seemed to recognize that I had...artistic skills, and he went out of his way to try to help me...he was known to be a strong disciplinarian and he was very austere, but he was extremely kind to me, which got through to me on some level.

(Clapton and Sykes, 2007: 19-20)

³⁷ David Heffernan's 2000 television series on Irish popular music history was entitled 'From A Whisper To A Scream: The Living History of Irish Rock'; henceforth referred to in the current research as *FWTS*.

³⁸ Dublin born rock singer Rocky DeValera (Ferdia McAnna) concurs with this position, detailing the opposition posed by some Irish educational institutions to the development of individual creativity: 'I hated Coláiste Mhuire...I felt trapped in the world of the Brothers, where even Gaelic was used as a weapon...if [i]t meant resorting to physical punishment to beat the alien attitudes and language out of a boy, then so be it'. McAnna, 2006: 112.

Attending Hollyfield School, Surbiton, Clapton recalls opportunities to develop his creativity further:

Hollyfield was different in that, though it was a regular secondary school...on a couple of days a week we would do nothing but art, figure drawing, still lifes, working with paint and clay. For the first time in my life I actually started shining...it was a much wilder environment with more exciting people.

(Clapton and Sykes, 2007: 20)

Ecclesiastical control of Irish social life was offset by an increase in external cultural influences, in consumerism and the proliferation of related technologies, including media and communication networks. The role of television in instigating social change was significant. The historian J.J. Lee has stated that:

The coming of Irish television in 1961, too, widened the opportunity to adopt a more searching attitude towards the serene wisdom of old age. Television programmes took viewers on voyages of discovery of Irish society. Many did not like what they saw.

(Lee, 1989: 405)³⁹

O'Halloran's research on the 1960s beat scene in Ireland has shown that music-related programmes were limited, but *Teilifís Éireann*'s variety show, *Curtain Up*, and *The Showband Show*, *Like Now* and *Pickin' The Pops* provided early exposure for Dublin-based beat groups including The Greenbeats, The Caravelles and The Viscounts (O' Halloran, 2006: 28).

39 Luke Gibbons has critiqued early Irish television, illustrating that its early focus was not 'current affairs and documentary' but 'marginal areas such as light entertainment' (Gibbons, 1996). Home-produced talk-show programmes such as *The Late Late Show* were important because they were flexible enough to be able to give 'innovative coverage' to heretofore untouched issues of personal and private morality. Gibbons' later conclusions are more optimistic with respect to the new media: 'Television played a major part in bringing the effects of...global initiatives into the living rooms of many Irish people, thus clearing away many of the cultural cobwebs which had accumulated since the founding of the state'. Gibbons, 1996: 77.

Northern Ireland was affected by a series of political, socio-economic and transitions in the post-war years. British legislative changes, including the 1949 Ireland Act (which responded to the Republic of Ireland Act of 1948), had the effect of solidifying partition in the region, principally because of the “near-unanimous” unionist majority in the Belfast Parliament (Wilson, 1989: 221; Maguire, 2009). This legislative exchange between jurisdictions precipitated the deterioration of inter-cultural relations between nationalist and unionist communities in Northern Ireland in the later 1950s and 1960s, entrenching positions on both sides of the religious divide (Murphy, 1978; Smith, 1995). Such sedimenting of political opinion was exacerbated by a violent campaign by militant republicans along the Northern Irish border between 1956 and 1962, and prolonged by the intimidation of Catholics by loyalist paramilitary groups (Maguire, 2009: 231). Catholics also faced significant discrimination resulting from Unionist control of local councils in many parts of the province (Murphy, 1978; McAvoy and Chrissp, 2005).

Essentialising Northern Ireland as a location of sectarian strife disguises the fact that the post-war years were economically buoyant, and in many ways, culturally productive for the region (Hughes, 1991). While a notable decline beset established manufacturing industries following World War II (linen, ship-building, heavy industry), a successful shift towards tertiary enterprise (public service and service industries) ensured comparative prosperity across the region (Maguire, 2009). Culturally, Northern Ireland’s strong infrastructural ties with the United Kingdom ensured that flows emanating in the major British cities were transferred to the region’s major urban centres. Musically, innovations obtaining in the major cities of the United Kingdom were experienced in Northern Ireland; this included an influx of

technology, cultural products, and, importantly, popular musical acts. In contrast to the Republic, where the showbands were the primary, and in many cases, sole form of live popular entertainment widely available to music consumers, aspiring Northern Irish beat and rock musicians were exposed to concerts by prominent rock acts such as Led Zeppelin, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Fleetwood Mac and The Animals (McAvoy and Chrissp, 2005; Brain Damage/Johns, 2011).⁴⁰ In addition, the revival of interest in African-American blues brought key figures such as Champion Jack Dupree and John Lee Hooker to Belfast city. The stationing of American troops in the province during wartime had augmented the influx of recorded American popular music; similarly to listening communities in the Republic, consumers also had access to American Forces Network programming (which included rhythm and blues and blues recordings), to Radio Luxembourg and offshore pirates such as Radio Caroline.⁴¹

Ní Uallacháin (2003) has argued that the indigenous Northern Irish traditions of folksong and music were largely unknown to the majority population. In the introduction to a compendium of Northern Irish songs, singers and traditions, she states:

There are...many from all religious backgrounds and none who, for various reasons, not least the political and social circumstances of the place in which they lived, were denied the opportunity to know intimately the people and past that connected them. One leading Irish contemporary poet wrote that his education in Belfast gave no suggestion that he lived on the island of Ireland and in the province of Ulster: 'little or no Irish history; little or no Irish literature; no Irish art; no Irish music.

(Ní Uallacháin, 2003:15)

40 See <http://novdec1967.blogspot.com/>; accessed 26/06/2011.

41 Rory Gallagher discusses the importance of these radio stations in a *Late Late Show* interview with Gay Byrne: located <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfCWIFvtrx0>; accessed 12/10/2010.

This fact helps to account for the limited absorption of traditional (instrumental Irish dance music) idioms into the rock music emerging from Northern Ireland. However, research by Fintan Vallely and more recent work by David Cooper establishes that traditional music was popular in both Catholic and some Protestant communities throughout the region (Vallely, 2008: 12-17; Cooper, 2009: 65-100); both Van Morrison himself, and his biographer Johnny Rogan have alluded to the fact that the McPeakes, an extended family group playing instrumental Irish music, were a key aspect of Morrison's early musical upbringing (Rogan, 2006: 282; Traum, 1970).

Therefore, Northern Ireland, and Belfast in particular, can be described as a unique cultural location *vis a vis* the mixing of musical traditions. Both Morrison and Rory Gallagher were participants in an energetic blues-based sub-culture that developed in Belfast city and other urban centres during the 1960s, responding to the presence of living blues culture in the form of visiting musicians, and accessing the extensive range of recorded material available to them through the radio and in record shops.⁴²

In terms of cultural production, Ireland was the site of significant and transformative activity in a number of complementary fields in the period

42 Asked by a *Rolling Stone* interviewer to explain how 'someone from Belfast [got] into American country blues', Van Morrison explained that: 'We get in both live and from records. Memphis Slim has been in Belfast; Jesse Fuller, Champion Jack Dupree, John Lee Hooker's been there. They've got folk clubs and rock clubs there, but it's got nothing to do with the English scene. In fact, I'd go so far as to say it doesn't have much to do with the Irish scene either, it's just Belfast.' Morrison in Traum, 1970.

immediately preceding the development of first-wave rock. This phase included a new wave of literary endeavour, with Samuel Beckett consolidating his position as an international literary figure, publishing the *Malone* novels, producing *Krapp's Last Tape* and *The Unnamable* during the 1950s, and winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in the following decade. Brendan Behan also emerged as a renowned writer, following the staging of his play *The Quare Fellow* (1954) in Dublin and London, and the publication of a novel, *Borstal Boy* (1958). Behan is especially significant with respect to the rock tradition, as references to both his ostentatious public character and his influential writings appear in texts by The Pogues, Thin Lizzy, and Bob Geldof:

In Manhattan's desert twilight, in the death of afternoon
We danced hand in hand down Broadway, like the first men on the moon
And 'The Blackbird' broke the silence, as you whistled it so sweet
And in Brendan Behan's footsteps I danced up and down the street.

(Philip Chevron, verse II, 'Thousands are Sailing', *If I Should Fall From Grace With God*, 1988)

Ah, sure Brendan, where have you Behan?
Looking for a girl with green eyes
My dark Rosaleen is my only cailín
That Georgie knows best.

(Philip Lynott, 'Black Rose (A Rock Legend)', *Black Rose*, 1979)⁴³

The achievement of quality in cultural endeavours was not limited to Dublin, as the cases of Frank O'Connor (Cork) and Aran Islander Breandán Ó hEithir (bilingual editor, writer, broadcaster and political analyst) illustriously demonstrate. Emerging authors of the period (notably Edna

43 The Bob Geldof composition 'Thinking Voyager II-Type Things' also contains the Behan-focused lyric 'So rise up Brendan Behan/ And like a drunken Lazarus/

Let's traipse the high bronze of the evening sky/Like crack-crazed kings'; released on the 1990 album *The Vegetarians of Love*. Behan participated in an eminent Dublin-based literary and artistic circle that included Patrick Kavanagh, Brian O'Nolan (Flann O'Brien), Anthony Cronin and the painter Patrick Swift.

O'Brien and John McGahern) also began to interrogate the realities faced by women in Ireland; such questioning was undertaken at a time when censure of a majority of literary and artistic works by conservative governments and the Catholic Church was customary (Ó hEithir, 1986).⁴⁴

Interfacing between the traditional repertoire and European classical music, the composer Seán Ó Riada earnestly explored 'traditional' instrumental Irish musical ideas in classical contexts. Such an approach informed his acclaimed compositions for the film *Mise Éire*; the controversial and influential Gaiety Theatre concerts he and his group Ceoltóiri Chualann performed were attended by practising popular and folk musicians including Donal Lunny (Emmett Spiceland, Planxty) and Luke Kelly of The Dubliners (Glatt, 2005). Niall Stokes has described the manner in which Ó Riada took Irish (traditional) melodies 'out of the backwater in which they had been isolated', giving them 'finesse in terms of interpretation and...treatment' (Stokes, *FWTS*). Lunny describes Ó Riada's musical achievement succinctly:

He made people see...that there was dimension to this music, that there was cultural depth that just went back for centuries. So...he just made connections that hadn't been there before.

(Donal Lunny, *FWTS*; author's transcription)⁴⁵

With respect to other forms of popular music, an island-wide network of dancehalls was constructed to enable the development of an ubiquitous and unique 'showband' culture (Power, 1990; O'Keefe, 2002). From its inception in Northern Ireland, the showband phenomenon replaced the orchestras and ceilí bands as the principal form of live popular musical

44 See 'Irish Literature' in Britannica, 2010.

45 See also Micheál Ó Súilleabhair (2004), 'Ceol na nUasal: Sean Ó Riada and the Search for a Native Irish Art Music', UCC.

entertainment across the island. Based on a commercial philosophy which prioritised entertainment and accompaniment for popular dancing culture (O'Halloran, 2006), the showbands also instigated a limited form of indigenous industrial enterprise, since recording, production and distribution of showband music occurred in Ireland throughout the 1950s and 1960s (Clancy and Twomey, 1997; irishrock.org, 2011; GMS Productions, 2011). Additionally, showbands achieved limited media coverage, through a weekly magazine, *Spotlight*, and exposure on national broadcast media in the Republic (*The Showband Show*). The showbands achieved significant commercial success and enjoyed enormous popularity in both rural and urban Ireland, north and south of the border (Power, 1990; McLaughlin, 1999).

The Irish beat groups appealed to innovations which characterised the London and Liverpool beat scenes in the early 1960s: compared to the showband, a stronger emphasis was now placed on musical creativity and improvisation. In Irish beat culture, emerging groups sought to emulate (both musically, and in terms of aesthetic disposition) the African-American traditions and icons of blues, jazz, rhythm 'n' blues and rock 'n' roll. This precipitated as a stronger focus on musical improvisation, on self-penned composition, and on individuality with respect to personal subjectivity and public identity (Prendergast, 1987; O'Halloran, 2006; irishrock.org, 2011).

The visit of the Beatles to Dublin and Belfast, which took place on November 7th 1963, was a key moment in establishing a dedicated audience for beat and rock groups on the island. Accounts of their Adelphi concert's aftermath paint a very different picture from the traditional image of

conservative pre-modernity often attached to representations of Ireland in the 1960s. The *Irish Times* reported at least '50 cases of people fainting', as well as detailing injuries sustained by concert-goers. O' Halloran summarises the event:

At the finale, with the crowd baying for encores, any semblance of control that the ushers had disappeared when scores of fans rushed to the front of the auditorium, hurling programmes and anything else they could lay their hands on at the stage. Hundreds of Beatlemaniacs burst through the doors of the cinema, swarming through the 2,000 strong horde...250 Gardaí tried vainly to control the seething masses and could not stop a mini-riot breaking out which spilled over into O'Connell Street, with cars being overturned and set alight...[a] similar scenario would be played out the following night when the [Beatles] appeared at the Ritz Cinema in Belfast.

(O'Halloran, 2006: 21)⁴⁶

This 'British Invasion' was a factor which combined with other significant changes in Ireland's musical landscape to provide the conditions from which Irish rock would emerge: the particularities of the Irish case, and a range of transformations at the Anglo-American centre, combined to produce the cultural and structural frameworks out of which Irish rock was to develop. Before introducing the key figures the thesis investigates, I want to establish a working definition of Irish rock, and to map Irish rock and popular music's location within the academic field of Irish (cultural) Studies.

46 See also O'Shannon and Kelly's article in *The Irish Times*, November 8th, 1963.

'Irish Rock': Chronology and Definition

McLaughlin and McLoone's prescient examination of Irish rock has established that one can no longer appeal to essentialised representations of 'the Irish' as inherently or peculiarly musical (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000). This conclusion guides current critical thinking, indicating as it does the need for a more scholarly approach to investigating Ireland's disproportionate success in popular music production. Smyth's observation that the island generates an 'endless supply of successful pop and rock acts' (Smyth, 2005:1) may be considered optimistic, but the sentiment informing it is an astute one: despite its diminutive population and relatively isolated geographical location, Ireland has and continues to produce a series of successful musical acts.

The current thesis aims to examine three such artists: Van Morrison, Rory Gallagher and Phil Lynott. I account for the choice of artists in a subsequent section, but note at this point that my selection comprises musicians who form part of what I term the 'first wave' of Irish rock music. The designation 'first wave' is one with chronological and cultural resonances. I apply the term in referring to the musicians achieving international commercial success and/or critical acclaim during classic rock's tenure as a principal musical style in the Anglo-American cultural matrix: that is, between the years 1968 and 1978. The year 1968 is a significant one for Irish rock culture. Rock and beat music had established itself as a culture in Ireland prior to this, as the presence of audiences for these popular sub-styles shows (Smyth and Campbell, 2005; O'Halloran, 2006; Linnane, 2006; McAvoy and Chrisp, 2005). However, it is retrospectively evident that 1968 was a

year of substantial critical and commercial achievement for Irish rock acts, in both national and international contexts. Van Morrison, transferring to the Warner Brothers label after previous collaborations in New York, released *Astral Weeks*, a jazz-influenced and blues-inflected work informed by biographical experiences in Belfast, and consistently placed in ‘best of’ rock and pop categories. In November 1968, Rory Gallagher’s residency with the blues-rock trio Taste at The Marquee (a prominent London beat club) was augmented by a supporting performance at the Cream farewell concert at Royal Albert Hall, London. In Ireland, Phil Lynott made his earliest recordings throughout 1967, 1968 and 1969, performing collaboratively with the rock groups Skid Row and Orphanage, and experimenting with early versions of Thin Lizzy material. It is useful, then, to view 1968 as a defining year in which Irish musicians established themselves as active participants in the global and domestic rock culture.

The upper limit of the current study, 1978 is significant because throughout that year, a range of emerging musical styles challenged and eventually displaced Anglo-American ‘classic’ rock as the foremost musical culture in mainstream America, Britain and their cultural satellites. This transition was triggered by a shift in musical sensibilities, with punk and New Wave artists (New York Dolls, Blondie, Ramones, Sex Pistols, The Clash) adopting a markedly antagonistic position towards the ‘classic’ rock tradition of the early 1970s (Heatley, 1993; Hebdige, 2005, Clarke and McGowan, 2006). It was during 1978, in Ireland as elsewhere, that a process of ideological, sociological and aesthetic transformation resulted in the impetus of rock being overtaken by that of punk, causing the rupture between the first and second ‘wave’ of Irish rock. With the punk/New Wave scene developing both in Dublin and Belfast around Stiff Little

Fingers, The Boomtown Rats, The Undertones, The Vipers, Radiators from Space, The Blades and U2 (Smyth, 2005; MacAnna 2006) in that year, 1978 demarcates the chronological limit of the ‘first wave’ of Irish rock, and sets the chronological limit of the current enquiry.⁴⁷

The selection of artists for this study – Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison – is based on personal musical aptitudes, and with a consideration of current scholarship on Irish rock. As a practising popular musician, I have acted as both a consumer and producer of rock music; this is a central part of a multi-faceted musical identity which also involved learning and performance in classical music, traditional Irish dance and aspects of the Irish folk repertoire. As a teenager, I was involved locally in various rock practices: performing music alone and with embryonic groups in friends’ garages, home taping, acquiring sheet music and guitar tablature and attending amateur and professional performances in pubs, halls and concert venues. I developed my knowledge of and interest in rock through visits to America, and while living in the UK for an academic year. There, a multitude of rock magazines and tapes, CDs and LPs, videos and DVDs, biographies, commentaries on and histories of this genre not available to me in Ireland were accessible. Reviewing these international experiences now, I must state that Irish rock did not appeal as strongly to me as the more prominent (and more heavily mythologised) American and British guitar rock, jazz-rock and funk-rock groups of the 1960s and 1970s – The Who, Jefferson Airplane, Jimi Hendrix, Grateful Dead, Return to Forever, Little Feat, Miles Davis, Neil Young, The Band, Joni Mitchell, or Santana. I do

⁴⁷ There are limited occasions on which it is appropriate to discuss musical texts, events or perspectives developing outside of the chronological period 1968-78; for example, Lynott’s composition *Roisin Dubh* (1979) is an important dimension of my argument concerning the use of Irish traditional music in rock contexts, as is Morrison’s *Irish Heartbeat* (1987).

recall attending a garage sale in Presidio, San Francisco in the summer of 1996, and picking up, along with some second-hand B.B. King and jazz records, the 1976 *Calling Card* album by Rory Gallagher. Gallagher's death the previous year had brought his name to the attention of a generation of Irish youth, although his music was still unknown to a majority of younger musicians, since it was so rarely broadcast on the principal radio stations in the Republic of Ireland. (This situation was exacerbated by the unavailability of several items of his back catalogue, a situation which obtained until very recent negotiations by Gallagher's brother and manager Donal rectified it). It was several years and a few Gallagher albums later (2005) that a Japanese Gallagher fan gave me a copy of Tony Palmer's *Irish Tour '74* film; this gives quite an explicit insight into Gallagher's aesthetic, ideological and political perspectives, illustrating his knowledge of blues and roots music, his undisputed technical abilities and his cultural impact in Ireland and abroad. Gradually, a majority of Gallagher recordings have become available, including his early work with the guitar trio Taste. The publication of bassist Gerry McAvoy's memoir (*Riding Shotgun: 35 Years On the Road with Rory Gallagher and Nine Below Zero*, 2005) provides an informative, candid and humourous addition to this expanding array of available Gallagher recordings.

Van Morrison's musical oeuvre is ubiquitous in Irish popular culture, and numerous covers of his compositions 'Brown Eyed Girl' and 'Gloria' are performed by cover bands across the country. Morrison's art maintains its position as a music of choice among college audiences in Ireland. As an undergraduate, I shared a house with several music fans, and remember hearing Van Morrison as one of a wide range of 'classic' and contemporary rock artists - Bob Dylan, John Cale, The Velvet Underground, Palace Brothers, P.J. Harvey - while living there. Listening to *Astral Weeks* late at

night in an old, cold and supposedly haunted house in Galway was an intense experience; I recall waking sometime during the night to the unnerving, cacophonous sounds of the string section on ‘Sweet Thing’, which at the time exacerbated the terror of my confused state. Although I missed his performance at Leisureland, Salthill in 1995, I connected with the driving R&B on Morrison’s 1994 live album *A Night in San Francisco*, practising and playing along with Georgie Fame’s organ parts from the songs ‘I’ve Been Working’, ‘I Forgot that Love Existed’ and ‘Did Ye Get Healed?’ in my room.

I subsequently encountered Morrison’s live performance in Martin Scorsese’s biographical portrait of The Band, *The Last Waltz*. This feature film captured Morrison, in a spangled one-piece suit, singing ‘Caravan’ from *Moondance* (1970), accompanied by The Band and a grandiose horn section. His show-stopping performance combined humour, theatricality, and genuine artistic ability, and I recall the pride I felt on witnessing how a Belfast native and Irish man outshone some of the biggest acts in American and British popular music that night at the Winterland Ballroom, San Francisco. The Band’s drummer, Levon Helm, describes Morrison’s contribution to this major event in rock history and mythology:

By now it was after midnight and the crowd was subdued. The momentum of the show had been lost halfway through Joni [Mitchell]’s set...Van Morrison (in a maroon suit) made his entrance amid much cheering – this was Van’s first appearance onstage in more than two years – and *The Last Waltz* was suddenly revived with a spectacular version of ‘Caravan’. John Simon conducted The Band and the horns as Van burned through his great song – “Turn it up! Little bit louder! Radio!” – complete with kick-steps across the stage at the end. Van turned the whole thing around, God bless him for being the showman that he is.

(Helm and Davis, 1993: 264-5)

I later encountered various Morrison albums – *Tupelo Honey*, *Moondance*, *Veedon Fleece*, - and filmed performances – at the Montreux Jazz Festival in '74 and again in 1980 - before embarking on a more analytical survey of his music, beginning with the early Them and Bang recordings, and working through his expansive catalogue of solo material.

Morrison reports that his diverse musical influences include jazz, blues, rhythm and blues artists such as Lead Belly, Bessie Smith, Ray Charles and Jackie Wilson (Onkey, 2006); less well-known, perhaps, is his admiration for the Irish classical singing tradition, encountered via his father's record collection. Morrison identifies the Irish tenor John McCormack as 'part of the picture' of his complex musical identity, and names McCormack as a key motivation for his recorded collaboration with the Chieftains, *Irish Heartbeat* (1987) (Morrison, FWTS). A further connection to the classical tradition is apparent in that Sandy Row, a closely-knit Protestant community in Belfast (mentioned in Morrison's composition 'Madame George'), was the location of a butcher's shop, where locals, and possibly Morrison himself, enjoyed performances by a renowned tenor, the 'Singing Butcher', James Johnston, who returned to work there after a successful performance career. Also located in Sandy Row was Hewitt's, a nationally prominent specialist in the production of the lambeg drums used by Scots-Irish and Orange marching bands. While his family were not deeply involved in Protestant culture, as a Belfast-born Protestant living in the city Morrison would have been familiar with the Ulster marching band tradition. Although he was not 'born into' the performance tradition of Irish folk and instrumental music – neither his mother or father played traditional Irish music (Heylin, 2004) – Morrison claims a long-standing familiarity with this music, as he accompanied his mother to informal sessions by

prominent Belfast musicians the McPeakes from an early age. Equally, Phil Lynott and Rory Gallagher drew on a diverse constellation of musical styles, including the Irish folk and balladeering tradition, with its attendant social, historical and psycho-social functions; I discuss this in detail below, as part of an investigation of Bhabha's theory of liminality and its relevance to rock musician's perceptions of the national.

I had been aware of the existence of Phil Lynott and Thin Lizzy since the 1980s, since a primary school friend had given me a tape of the band some time in 1986 or 1987. Lynott's death had been publicised widely in the Irish and international media; I recall reading a passage detailing the event (and on Hendrix's influence on Lynott) in a secondary school Irish textbook. However, as with Gallagher, Lynott remained curiously absent from mainstream airplay in Ireland, and his music made little impact on me as a teenager more or less restricted to what was being broadcast on the national stations. Again, while at college, I was introduced to *Live and Dangerous* for the first time. My interest in Lynott really sparked as part of the current study, when I began to research the group's back catalogue. By exploring interviews, live performances, recordings and biographies, I discovered that Lynott's music contained an extraordinary depth and resonance in terms of its influences, which included Irish folk, rock and R&B, psychedelic rock, Irish and native American mythology, Irish and American political concerns. Lynott's and Thin Lizzy's contribution to popular music tends to be equated with to the group's commercially successful works – the albums *Jailbreak* and *Live and Dangerous*, and the hit singles 'The Boys Are Back in Town', 'Running Back', and 'Don't Believe A Word'. While these represent a spectacularly successful dimension of Lynott and the group's abilities, they certainly do not signify the totality of their creative output. Of further interest to me, a mixed-race Irish man, is the manner in which Lynott

addresses the issue of racial identity throughout his recorded output – from early songs ‘Black Boys on The Corner’, to ‘Fight or Fall’ on the Jailbreak Album, ‘Johnny The Fox Meets Jimmy The Weed’ on the similarly titled album, through to ‘Ode To A Black Man’ on the *Solo in Soho* project, creating both tension and harmony between two apparently disparate aspects of his public subjectivity. A key motivation for discussing Lynott in this study will be to undertake a more searching evaluation of his contribution to international and Irish popular music culture than those typically advanced in rock magazines, internet articles and album liner notes.

The decision to focus on Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison was influenced by the professional longevity and international status of these three musicians. While detailed narratives of Irish rock’s formation acknowledge the vital contributions of a series of blues, folk and rock groups (including Mellow Candle, Bluesville, Skid Row, Dr Strangely Strange, Éire Apparent, Granny’s Intentions, and the ‘Celtic rock’ group Horslips), the majority of these musical pioneers were professionally or artistically inactive by the early 1970s (Hodgett and Harper, 2005; Clayton-Lea and Taylor, 1989; Prendergast, 1987).⁴⁸ In contrast, Phil Lynott, Rory Gallagher and Van Morrison maintained internationally visible professional careers of significant length: fifteen, twenty-five and forty-five years respectively. In addition, while most of the ‘early’ rock musicians and groups produced a very limited number of albums, singles and related cultural products, the artists investigated here have each produced several studio and live albums, along with televised broadcasts and film-based performances, providing

48 The website irishrock.org features an expanding list of beat and rock musicians and groups of the 1960s and 1970s; see irishrock.org, 2011.

significant material for analysis.⁴⁹ In choosing to focus on just three artists, I avoid sacrificing critical detail and depth; survey-oriented approaches to popular music cultures often forgo critical detail in an effort to involve as wide a range of artists as possible. At the same time, focusing on three musicians in the study provides greater potential for identifying continuities between them, allowing more accurate speculation to be made about the commonalities which typify Irish rock.

I now wish to clarify my use of the term ‘Irish rock’. O’Flynn (2009) has examined how ideas and issues of Irishness can inform popular music practice and its reception in Ireland. Examining ‘traditional’ and a limited number of pop contexts, O’Flynn concludes that the ‘Irishness’ of Irish music is predominantly based on ‘sonic features’ – it is recognizably Irish because of musical features and constructions (O’Flynn, 2009:196-7). The difficult issue of drawing Irish rock into these debates, and adjusting conclusions based on rock composition is something I undertake in the analytical chapters of the current study. As I demonstrate in Chapter Three, rock musicians did draw on ‘Irish’ musical features in composition; these include the use of Irish melodic content, of tonalities and timbres associated with various Irish musical cultures, and the adoption of modal approaches to performance and improvisation. O’Flynn also questions whether and how Irish music culture reinstates or rejects dominant, essentialist and homogenizing tendencies in representing Ireland and Irish culture; I take up

⁴⁹ Horslips are something of an anomaly here, in that they produced several albums; however, as the thesis will focus on acts acclaimed both critically and commercially in national and international contexts, the limited international commercial success of Horslips means that the group will be referred to in a comparative capacity only in this study’s various chapters. An investigation of the group’s significant contributions to Irish rock, in terms of management and in terms of proposing a hybrid musical aesthetic, form part of the analysis presented in Chapters Two and Three respectively.

this issue with respect to rock in Chapter Four, which deals explicitly with rock's relationship to the national, both in terms of culture and politics.

As Noel McLaughlin notes, the designation 'Irish rock' has been utilised in journalistic and academic parlance for several years; following Simon Frith, he perceptively argues that the explosion of U2 to global recognition was pivotal in sedimenting notions of what Irish rock was and is understood to be (McLaughlin, 1999). McLaughlin's analysis of Irish rock has focused on the popular music of the 1990s, and his proposal of what Irish rock 'is' develops from two fundamental premises. Firstly, in asking 'what exactly is Irish about Irish rock?' (McLaughlin, 1999: 63), McLaughlin locates the 'Irishness' of Irish rock in the relationship between popular music and the national. Secondly, McLaughlin is suspicious of 'centring Irish music on the sounds of traditional music' (McLaughlin, 1999: 67); in other words, he wants to deconstruct an essentialist position which identifies Irish traditional (instrumental and vocal) music as the necessary foundation of all Irish musical culture, and rock in particular. McLaughlin's main concern is to challenge folk-based notions of Irishness and Irish music, and to confront a range of cultural stereotypes imposed from the outside and now internalised both in music-making practices and in scholarly writing about Irish rock (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000). His analysis illustrates how such essentialisms dangerously exclude a range of alternative musical styles, positions and subjectivities by monopolising and canonising the cultural location of certain groups and styles, while silencing other forms of cultural expression. In my opinion, McLaughlin's position is a useful starting point for defining Irish rock. However, I feel that a satisfactory definition needs to attend in a more careful way to the complexities of the nation, firstly, and to rock's intricate relationship with a range of indigenous folk and traditional

music, secondly.⁵⁰ Politically, there are (at least) two ‘Irelands’, and an analysis of rock which excludes an appropriate focus on Northern Irish musical cultures is open to understandable criticism.

For the purposes of this thesis, I employ the term ‘Irish rock’ to describe a range of musical and performative practices involving the synthesis (mixing) of Anglo-American and indigenous musical styles and sub-cultural values. Irish rock adapts the formal and aesthetic characteristics of Anglo-American rock, and may also draw from styles of popular, classical and traditional music unique to the island of Ireland. While adopting the cultural concerns and stylistic practices of Anglo-American rock, Irish rock can also engage with specifically ‘Irish’ concerns: this regional variation of Anglo-American musical style makes concomitant reference to narratives of Irish social and political history and can also refer to the island’s literary, mythological and cultural traditions.

Accepting that any definition of ‘Irish’ is potentially restrictive and can be challenged, for the current study, I base my definition of ‘Irish’ on three aspects. The first is nationality: in this study, ‘Irish’ rock musicians are those who were born on the island of Ireland, in either political jurisdiction, or those born abroad to Irish parents, but socialised primarily on the island of

50 If we uncritically follow McLaughlin’s argument, ‘Irish rock’ can be essentialised as the musical by-product of a liberal Irish socio-cultural identity, emerging primarily in the Irish republic during the 1980s, and encapsulated in the music and aesthetic of the rock/pop group U2. U2 is a group ostensibly ‘from’ Dublin, in so far as their collective identity, their business and industry interests (night clubs, hotels, recording studios) their mythology (having roots/routes in Ballymun, associations with the Lipton Village collective, with The Virgin Prunes and rivalry with The Blades) and their institutional support (via the Dublin-based rock magazine *Hot Press*) are based in and occur through the city. This is something of a simplification, and while it fits McLaughlin’s purpose – the deconstruction of external essentialisms regarding ‘authenticity’ and folk music in defining 1980s rock music, it clearly cannot adequately deal with the greater complexities of Irish rock music, performance and subjectivity in the 1960s and 1970s.

Ireland. Second, I consider artistic orientation: I examine popular artists who have engaged with a continuum of Irish musical cultures as a key aspect of their own music-making and performance practices. Third, reflecting Ireland's status as a point of interchange between indigenous and diasporic communities, I examine those artists whose professional and aesthetic foci involve ongoing interaction with Ireland, through migration from and to the island.

I accept that a wider definition of 'Irish' can and, where appropriate, should include second-generation Irish, and those living in the diaspora (Campbell, 2004); I also accept that some musicians who contributed significantly to the development of rock music in Ireland have no connection to the country through nationality – Adam Clayton, bassist with U2, Charles O'Connor, instrumentalist with the Celtic-rock group Horslips, and Ian Whitcomb, co-founder of the Dublin beat group Bluesville are cases in point. However, for the purposes of this study, I am primarily interested in the experiences of musicians whose social experience was shaped through socialisation on the island of Ireland, and whose creative and professional development involves significant immersion and participation in Irish and Northern Irish socio-political cultures and institutions. I therefore limit my definition, and my analytic focus, to musicians whose connections to Ireland are maintained through the criteria listed above.

McLaughlin has explored how U2 have both engaged with and challenged expectations that they should participate in and sing/write about Irish political issues. While the first- wave rock musicians make limited explicit references to key political and social issues of Irish origin, their songs and

their actions often contain implicit references and responses to narratives of Irish social and political history. Rory Gallagher's decision to perform in Belfast throughout the early 1970s was overtly political, coming at a time when the city was beset by sectarian violence. Gallagher's bassist Gerry McAvoy (the only Belfast Catholic in the Rory Gallagher band), recalls that the group's 1971 performance at the Ulster Hall was the first concert to be staged in the city since the outbreak of The Troubles in 1969 (McAvoy and Chrisp, 2005:106). As I illustrate in Chapter Four, the Gallagher Band's decision to perform in Belfast, at a time when it was a no-go area for major acts, was politically significant. Gallagher continued to perform in Ulster throughout the 1970s, despite ongoing security risks which culminated in the 1975 Miami Showband atrocity.⁵¹ While averse to the highly-publicised political campaigning exercised by U2 and Sinéad O'Connor, the thesis will argue that first wave Irish rock maintains a socio-political dimension, as it responds to political and social realities obtaining across both of the island's jurisdictions. Finally, Irish musicians have made explicit reference to the Ireland's literary, mythological and cultural traditions. Phil Lynott directly engaged with Irish mythic cycles, refashioning the narratives of Cúchulainn and Na Fianna, Ireland's legendary warriors, in contemporary musical and thematic settings. Lynott's interest in Ireland's poetic traditions is obvious, both in his lyrical imaginings, and in the publication of two of his own books of verse. His songwriting frequently addresses questions of Irish political and cultural nationalism; this tendency is investigated in detail in Chapter Three. Critiques of Van Morrison's music seek to establish parallels between him and the Irish poetic tradition, as typified by the writing of

51 The atrocity occurred on 31st July, 1975. In O'Keefe's account, a bomb being planted in the Miami Showband's van by the Ulster Volunteer Force exploded prematurely. The group then came under machine-gun fire, resulting in the deaths of the musicians Tony Geraghty, Fran O'Toole and Brian McCoy. See O'Keefe, 2002:88-89; also Travers, 2007.

W.B. Yeats. While Morrison has been quick to state that lyrically, his work owes as much to the rhythms of speech in Belfast as it does to anything else, he has also acknowledged these links to the poetic tradition. As I discuss below, Lynott, Morrison and Gallagher make continued reference to the many ‘others’ and ‘otherness’ common in oral and literary culture: the fairground, wandering peoples, gypsies and vagabonds.

Irish Rock and Irish Cultural Studies

The critical and commercial success of Irish popular musicians (and, during 1968-78, of Phil Lynott, Rory Gallagher and Van Morrison in particular) represents a complex phenomenon, rich in historical, sociological and cultural significance. It involved an interfacing of Irish and international musical impulses, culminating in the creation of what McLaughlin and McLoone (2000) term ‘critical regionalism’ – a range of hybrid musical styles which challenged the ‘closed spaces’ of a restrictive nationalism on the one hand, and resisted easy assimilation into Anglo-American cultural currents on the other (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000:1-5).

The sheer complexity of rock subjectivities, the depth of its hybridising tendencies, and the critical potential of investigating the ‘routes’ of Irish rock in parallel cultures such as those of the black Atlantic, make first-wave artists a fascinating and necessary topic for close analysis. It is surprising that so few comprehensive studies of Irish popular music exist, given the ubiquitous presence of Irish rock and pop groups in global and local cultural practices, and the widespread consumption of Irish rock texts throughout and beyond the Anglo-American cultural matrix (Bradby and Torode, 1984; Clayton-Lea and Taylor, 1992; Waters, 2004; Smyth, 2005; Smyth and

Campbell, 2005; O'Flynn, 2009). This absence suggests that within Irish and Irish Music Studies, a majority of Irish rock musicians' histories, achievements and subjectivities have been problematically overlooked. For the scholar of popular music, the disquieting question raised by such an absence forms a practical point of entry into the study of Irish rock: how and why could musicians of considerable international stature (as Van Morrison, Rory Gallagher and Phil Lynott unquestionably are) remain outside the remit of a scholarly tradition which claims to embrace multiple narratives of 'Irish' cultural expression, whether diasporic, local or international?

There is no short answer to this question; a satisfactory solution requires close scrutiny of a range of historical, cultural and infrastructural particularities obtaining in the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland during the last forty years. As Smyth (2005) comprehensively details, lip service is often paid to Ireland's achievement of global visibility and esteemed status with respect to its music, and popular music is continually referred to in rhetorical discourses about Ireland's perceived success in becoming a globalised, productive and civilised consumer society (Smyth, 2005:2-5). At the same time, rock's challenge to socio-cultural orthodoxies, to essentialist narratives of national coherence, its perceived appeal to subconscious psychosocial drives - sexuality, sensuality, emotionality, and pleasure for example (McLaughlin, 1999) – have meant that the genre has challenged hegemonic formations of national, social and political identity upheld by empowered social actors in both political jurisdictions.

In contemporary Irish Studies, the absence of a scholarly focus on popular music is remarkable. It is accounted for in part by the sedimentation of cultural enquiry into three areas: feminist scholarship, revisionism and postcolonial studies (Cullingford, 2001; Cleary, 2009:4-5). Describing the fraught nature of interaction between these groupings, the cultural theorist Joseph Cleary notes that these formations, manifest in a range of variants, ‘represent themselves in fundamentally adversarial terms’, with each of the positions considering its ‘opponents as ‘potentates of the establishment’’ (Cleary, 2009: 4). This has meant that much critical energy has been diverted into the maintenance of increasingly hardened academic positions – the ‘intellectual circus’ of which Cleary is justifiably wary – a side-effect of which has been the stalling of Irish Studies’ expansion into new areas of cultural inquiry.

It is easily forgotten that intellectual and cultural debate... is monopolized in modern Ireland (as elsewhere of course) by reasonably well-to do middle-class men and women [whose]...shared experiences and interests surface in relatively standardized languages of argument and analysis, repeated reworkings, via a rather narrow band of methodologies, of relatively small sets of key authors and topics, and reciprocated tolerances for certain modes of licensed ignorance.

(Cleary, 2007: 4)

While there are exceptions to this general inclination – recent editorial work by Flannery (2007) and Tynan et al (2009) are notable for the manner in which they seek to open Irish Studies to new modes and fields of scholarship, to new texts and authors – the general tendency is to re-visit standard narratives, authors, actors and critical positions. Such intellectual recycling has made it difficult for the study of popular music to gain institutional currency and support in Ireland.⁵² As a result, only a limited

⁵² Echoing Cleary’s assertion that Irish universities are exclusively selective in promoting and rewarding a narrow band of intellectual endeavour (Cleary, 2007: 5) is the reality that there exists in the Irish Republic a very limited number of institutions through which dedicated popular

number of institutions focus on popular music practice and analysis. O'Flynn's research into music and Irish identity recently asserted:

Although general modules on popular music are found in most degree programmes, the overall status of music outside classical and traditional canons remains peripheral, with the first lectureship in popular and jazz music established only as recently as 2001 at University College Cork.

(O' Flynn, 2009: 45)

What seems to be happening is that popular music practice in Ireland is proceeding without a structured interchange between its practices and academic scholarship. This may be indicative of the academy's ongoing refusal to 'take ownership' of Ireland's diverse popular music cultures in the same way that key institutions have embraced traditional music and dance (O'Suilleabhan, 2003:194). It is worrying that while internationally, 'the academic literature on popular music has exploded' (Shuker, 2005: xiii), Irish Studies' engagement with popular music cultures has been quite limited in scope and depth. This situation contrasts strongly with that of Irish Film Studies, which, through the efforts of a dedicated cluster of intellectuals (W. John Hill, Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons, James MacKillop, Emer Rockett) has successfully aligned itself with the established fields of literary analysis and historical enquiry (Bradby, 1995). Unlike Film Studies, then, popular music has yet to be integrated into meaningful debates about cultural production, practice and signification within Irish Studies.

music research can be undertaken. At the time of writing, few of the major universities offer degrees or diplomas in the area of popular music; there are limited systematic assessment mechanisms for formal study, minimal written curricula, and a comparatively small body of literature on Irish popular music exists, despite the international critical and commercial status of its practitioners, texts and performative practices.

The current investigation makes some attempt to demonstrate certain avenues through which Irish Studies might effectively grasp the considerable intellectual and critical potential in the island's popular music. It utilises methodological approaches already established in postcolonial, revisionist and feminist theory – hybridity and identity theory, critiques of the national, of space and place – in hypothesising a number of routes through which popular music can be aligned with current modes of cultural analysis. Like revisionist history, Irish rock challenges essentialist narratives of national purity and exclusivity, questioning the limits of 'Irishness' and often prising open the closed spaces of conservative versions of Irish identity (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000); this is considered in detail in Chapters Three and Four. In common with postcolonial positions, Irish rock interrogates the effects of interfacing global and local cultural impulses in the context of Ireland's colonial past; I consider this propensity and its implications at length in Chapter Three, which focuses on analysis of key first-wave Irish rock texts.

This investigation of Irish rock is also in tune with the broader feminist perspectives essayed in Irish Studies. It is noteworthy that the first wave of rock music did not produce a major female figure whose works and public subjectivities could be focused on in this study. This is not to suggest that women did not play key roles in the development of first-wave Irish popular music. In particular, female artists of significant stature emerged through the folk and folk-rock genres; the achievements and influence of Gay Woods, Clodagh Simonds, Máire ní Bhraonáin, Alison O'Donnell, Annie Briggs and others needs to be acknowledged, and could prove an essential topic for future analyses.

Many women made vital contributions to rock culture by supporting and inspiring the male figures who achieved prominence during the first wave; without Violet Morrison (Heylin, 2004; Rogan, 2002), Monica Gallagher (Coghe, 2002; Muise, 2002) and Philomena Lynott (Lynott and Hayden, 1996, 2011; Putterford, 2002), first-wave rock musicianship may not have developed in such a meaningful and influential manner as it did. Furthermore, rock musicians' challenge to established orthodoxies of 'Irish' subjectivity exposed them to the processes of 'Othering' which have historically marginalised many Irish women as artists and cultural producers. The investigation of rock subjectivities in Chapter Five draws on the meaningful challenge to the representative and socio-cultural orthodoxies enabled by feminist deconstructions of Irish patriarchy; this appropriation enables an examination of how musicians challenged the limits of Irish identity explored by mixing regional and international cultural accents.

Rock Music and Irish Music Studies

The published scholarship which has emerged around Irish music has engaged primarily with classical and 'traditional' cultures. With respect to Irish art music, Harry White is credited with extensive investigation of key political positions and the effect of an Irish musical tradition on them during last three hundred years. Identifying the role of such music in the island's infrastructural and cultural development throughout 1770-1970, White's work *The Keeper's Recital* is a systematic appraisal of early modern musical thought in Ireland. White explores its function in the development of both sectarian culture and cultural autonomy; he also argues for music's

symbolic role, manifest in the expression of Celticism, and in the nationalist, colonialist and revivalist cultural movements. In accounting for the fact that music failed to ‘generate a durable aesthetic’ comparable to that which stimulated the Literary Revival, White proposes that there is a general lack of infrastructural support for the development of music in Ireland. In his discussion, White focuses on key figures working in and between the ‘classical’ and ‘folk’ traditions - O’Carolan, Bunting, Moore, Petrie, Hyde, Stanford, and Sean O’Riada. However, his analysis ends with the death of Sean O’Riada in 1971, and it makes no scope for discussion of the popular music traditions emerging from as early as the 1950s, or how art music interfaced with them. White’s work, welcome in so far as it approaches a central aspect of Irish music-making with critical acumen and scholarly insight, can be criticised for the manner in which it neglects various popular music practices, despite such music’s also asserting a complex response to nationalism, political and cultural history, or ‘Celtic’ and ‘Irish’ identities (Smyth, 2005; Bradby and Torode, 1985). Marie McCarthy’s investigation of musical transmission in Irish culture notes that a majority of music education in twentieth century Ireland took place outside of formal academic contexts (McCarthy, 1999: 137-9); this was certainly the case for popular musicians such as Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison. The case of rock music in Ireland demonstrates how very differently popular music has developed, is learned and is transmitted across the island. In contrast to both classical and traditional music, with their respective systems of extrinsic rewards, competition, standardisation, historicism and national focus (McCarthy, 1999: 136), a majority of rock musicians prioritised popular styles through informal learning, based primarily on listening to recordings and through oral transmission.

For scholars of traditional Irish music, key research issues and debates have included the establishment of academic legitimacy for instrumental Irish music and Irish dance culture (O'Connor, 1991; Ó Súilleabháin, 1999, 2003, 2004; Vallely, 1999, 2008; Cooper, 2007). They have also engaged with and occasionally challenged the limits of ‘Irishness’, in so doing establishing what can or should be included in or excluded from the designation ‘Irish’ music. The composer and scholar Micheál Ó Súilleabháin states that:

It is [the] ability of music and of arts in general to encode connections which links its intelligence with the intelligence at the heart of politics, and at the heart of identity itself...Music...can at times reside at the crossroads of becoming where the dynamic of cultural change is being created. The current debate about the speed and nature of change within traditional music is a strong case in point.

(Ó Súilleabháin, 2004: 27)

As with any emerging field, these issues have been hotly contested (O’Flynn, 2009:1), with the debate centring on the position of traditional music within global/local and national cultural flows. This is a particularly relevant argument to the popular music position, as it illustrates with the manner in which ‘traditional’ music has encountered, been transformed by, and then altered a range of musical languages through modernization and engagement with the Anglo-American cultural matrix. In contrast to the art music position outlined earlier, recent research into traditional Irish music has broadly welcomed intellectual overlap between traditional and popular music. Nuala O’Connor’s research has focused on describing the mutual exchange between traditional forms of Irish music and song and emerging popular musical forms in the United States (O’Connor, 1991). While McLaughlin and McLoone (2000) have been critical of how a celebratory view of Irish traditional music can lead to a regressive equation of ‘Irishness’ with traditional forms of music, O’Connor has established a

critical basis for discussing the mutual exchange between traditional Irish music and popular music which occurred in the United States. While her work (and the accompanying film ‘Bringing It All Back Home’ by Philip King) eschews some of the finer critical arguments propounded by McLaughlin and McLoone, her position on cultural exchange echoes that proposed by popular musicians themselves. Interviewed for the Martin Scorsese documentary *No Direction Home*, the folk (and rock) musician Bob Dylan discusses the inspirational effect of The Clancy Brothers, with whom he fraternized in New York’s Greenwich Village, on his developing musical style and public identity:

Liam [Clancy] was profound...beside all of his rebel songs and his acting concerns, he would have all these incredible sayings...What I heard in the Clancy Brothers was...rousing rebel songs, Napoleonic in scope and they were just these musketeer types characters, and then on the other level you had the romantic ballads that would just, you know, sleigh-riding the tracks, the sweetness of Tommy Makem and Liam, I mean it was like take a sword, cut off your head and then weep, that is sort of what they were about.

(Bob Dylan, in Scorsese, 2005; author’s transcription)

Dylan’s comments suggest that Irish folk and traditional music provides a rich source of inspiration for diverse practising popular musicians.⁵³ While O’Connor has suggested that there is significant overlap between traditional and popular music cultures in Ireland, O’Flynn’s recent study of Irish music is the first to tentatively propose a more inclusive composite model of co-

⁵³ While a complete investigation of this influence is beyond the remit of the current research, one can point to compositions by a number of central figures in rock culture which directly incorporate Irish folk song and instrumental music – Johnny Cash, Mike Oldfield (‘Mount Teidi’, ‘Taurus II’), Kate Bush (‘Jig of Life’), Mark Knopfler (‘Cal’), and production work by Frank Zappa with the Chieftains. See also Campbell, 2011.

existing traditional, popular and classical music practices in Ireland (O'Flynn, 2009).⁵⁴

I now make introductory reference to the artists this study examines – Rory Gallagher, Phil Lynott and Van Morrison. In significant ways, the influence of these musicians has been considerable and lasting, with respect to later Irish artists and groups (U2, The Boomtown Rats, Brian Kennedy, Sinéad O'Connor), and in the wider discourse of rock as an intercontinental musical phenomenon.

Phil Lynott

Philip Parris Lynott was born of Brazilian and Irish parents and was socialised in Crumlin, a working-class suburb of Dublin (Putterford, 2002; Lynott and Hayden, 2011). Supported by his mother Philomena and his extended family, he began performing publicly as a teenager in The Black Eagles, a local beat group which performed alongside pop-oriented showbands in Dublin ballrooms, and on the beat group circuit in the capital. Following immersion and participation in both the beat and folk scenes in Dublin (primarily with the bands Orphanage and Skid Row), and formative musical experiences in the UK, Lynott formed Thin Lizzy with the drummer Brian Downey and Belfast guitarist Eric Bell.⁵⁵ Lynott's early compositions display a preoccupation with Celtic mythology, the humorous, and the fantastic. The songs of which the early Thin Lizzy's

54 In O'Flynn's analysis, rock music, and first-wave rock in particular, is comparatively underrepresented; see O'Flynn, 2009.

55 Eric Wrixon, the fourth original member, left the group prior to the recording of the eponymous debut in 1970/71; see irishrock.org, 2011.

albums are comprised were characterised by complex rhythmic textures, comparatively elaborate post-production, and numerous references to the absurd and the literary ('Dublin' (1970); 'Old Moon Madness' (1970); 'Look What the Wind Just Blew In'(1971); 'The Rise and Dear Demise of the Funky Nomadic Tribes' (1972)).

In 1973, Lynott's group recorded a rock arrangement of the traditional ballad 'Whiskey in the Jar'; this single propelled Thin Lizzy to commercial success in the UK, by means of album sales and an appearance on *Top of the Pops*. Guitarist Eric Bell's subsequent departure, and the arrival of Californian Scott Gorham and Glaswegian Brian Robertson, prompted a significant change in the group's musical direction, towards a harder but more streamlined, commercial sound. This transition began as early as the *Nightlife* (1973) and *Fighting* (1974) albums, but solidified with the albums *Jailbreak* (1976), *Johnny the Fox* (1977) and *Live and Dangerous* (1978).

Similarly to Jimi Hendrix, Lynott learned the power of image in the media. Like Hendrix, he paid particular attention to his onstage persona and that of his group, which was demarcated in the global noise through its distinctive logo, and unique, twinned lead guitar sound. Lynott's public subjectivity alternated between rakish, aggressive machismo and melancholic romanticism; the tension between these polarities was channelled into composition, and produced some of his most impressive works. Lynott was also acutely aware of the transitional nature of popular musical tastes: as interest in blues-rock waned in the later 1970s, Lynott's artistic affiliations with punk and emerging New-Wave artists (Boomtown Rats, U2, and the Sex Pistols) kept him in the public imagination well into the 1980s. As

biographer Mark Putterford (2002) details, the excesses and physical demands of his hectic lifestyle, combined with ongoing drug-use, led to Lynott's death in 1986.

Having absorbed the twin-guitar sound popularised in the UK by Wishbone Ash and in the US by The Allman Brothers, Thin Lizzy developed this approach into a signature performative technique. Phil Lynott's hybrid fusion of psychedelic rock, rock 'n' roll, heavy rock and melodic soul produced a commercially viable hard rock sound. As Ireland's first major 'rock star', Lynott utilised media exposure as a strategy for increasing his group's commercial appeal, drawing parallels between the excesses of the rock lifestyle and the superhuman exertions of Irish mythological heroes. Lynott's musical contribution to classic rock and a range of musical cultures is significant; Thin Lizzy's brand of heavy rock discarded much of the musical excess associated with progressive rock, and influenced the development of emerging musical forms, including thrash metal (Metallica), punk and alternative rock (Ramones, Smashing Pumpkins).

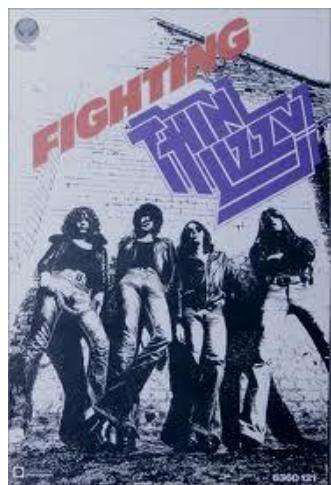


Figure 2: Comparison of Thin Lizzy's *Fighting* album cover and publicity photograph (1975) with Ramones' *The Ramones* (1976)⁵⁶

Metallica have acknowledged the influence of Thin Lizzy on their hard rock and heavy-metal sound and style (Hetfield in Dwyer, 2011). In the Philip Lynott-focused special issue of *Hot Press* magazine (2011), Metallica's lead singer and principal lyricist James Hetfield acknowledged that:

I always wanted to cover 'Honesty is No Excuse' which is one of the early songs that not many people – especially in America – know about... [Metallica bassist] Cliff Burton was a huge fan of early Lizzy, the first album and especially *Shades of a Blue Orphanage*.

(Hetfield in Dwyer, 2011: 54)

The impact of Lynott's songwriting style on Hetfield is clear, both in terms of musical and lyrical content.⁵⁷ The following examples illustrate the close relationship, in aspects of lyrical style, existing between the two artists:

If it's later than you realised,
Check with the stars and the skies
A scream and a bite
Old moon madness has struck again
A howl in the dark light,
A flash of teeth bright white.

(Phil Lynott, 'Old Moon Madness', *New Day EP*, 1971)

Bright is the moon high in starlight
Chill in the air cold as steel tonight
We shift, call of the wild
Fear in your eyes
It's later than you realized.

(James Hetfield, 'Of Wolf and Man', *Metallica*, 1991)

When will it end, when will it end?
The bells toll
For those about to die

56 Images sourced at thinlizzyguide.com, 2011; the un-herd music (2011); wikipedia.org (2011).

57 Visual and thematic comparison between the album artwork of Thin Lizzy's *Thunder and Lightning* (1983) and Metallica's *Ride The Lightning* (1984) are further examples of this influence.

The battle's over the war is won
But this soldier of fortune he will carry on
He will carry on when all hope is gone
He will carry on
He's trained to kill and kill he will
As we march along
Singing just another soldier's song
Just another soldier's song

(Phil Lynott, 'Soldier of Fortune', *Bad Reputation*, 1977)

For a hill men would kill
Why? They do not know...
For whom the bell tolls
Time marches on
For whom the bell tolls
Take a look to the sky just before you die
It's the last time you will
Blackened roar, massive roar, fills the crumbling sky
Shattered goal fills his soul with a ruthless cry.

(James Hetfield, 'For Whom The Bell Tolls', *Ride The Lightning*, 1984)

Figure 3: Examples of lyrical and thematic similarities between compositions by Phil Lynott/Thin Lizzy and James Hetfield/Metallica.

Rory Gallagher

Liam Rory Gallagher, known professionally as Rory Gallagher, was a renowned Irish guitarist who rose to international prominence in the later 1960s and early 1970s. A talented multi-instrumentalist, Gallagher was competent in a range of popular musical styles; in particular, his virtuosic abilities as a blues and blues-rock performer have led to international recognition (Wheeler, 2004; Hodgett and Harper, 2004; Rory Gallagher; The Official Website, 2011; Fender Custom Shop, 2011). Born in Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal in the Irish northwest, Gallagher's family moved first to Derry, and then to the southern city of Cork. Primarily self-taught on guitar, by the age of sixteen he was a member of the Fontana Showband, playing the popular US, UK and country 'n' Irish hits of the day

in ballrooms across Cork, Kerry and Limerick, with international appearances in London and Spain (Coghe, 2004). Seeking to expand his musical horizons, Gallagher encouraged his group (later renamed The Impact) to play more progressive material (Muise, 2002).

Realising the limitations of the showband format, Gallagher's exploration of the beat scene in Cork led to the formation of Taste, a blues-rock guitar trio, which moved first to Belfast, and later to London. Under the management of Eddie Kennedy, Taste went through a line-up change and subsequently achieved critical and commercial success, appearing alongside Joni Mitchell, Miles Davis, The Who, The Doors and Jimi Hendrix at the Isle of Wight Festival in 1970 (McAvoy and Chrissp, 2005: 63).

Following artistic, managerial and financial disagreements, Taste disbanded, after which the Rory Gallagher Band was formed. This group expanded from a three (Gallagher, Wilgar Campbell, Gerry McAvoy) to a four piece (Gallagher, Rod de'Ath, Lou Martin, Gerry McAvoy) between 1970 and 1973. The musical chemistry of the latter group is evident on the albums *Against The Grain* (1975) and *Calling Card* (1976), and the *Irish Tour* live album of 1974. A filmed documentary of this Irish tour illustrates Gallagher's understanding of acoustic and electric blues forms and conventions, and his group's ability to fuse various musical genres in live performance (Palmer, 1974). At one point, Gallagher's electric guitar accompanies Lou Martin's piano in an impromptu version of Mozart's 'Rondo alla Turca'. The live concert also showcases Gallagher's awareness of current trends in traditional Irish music, as he performs 'Going to My Hometown' on mandolin, an Italian instrument popularised in Irish dance

music by the folk musicians Andy Irvine and Johnny Moynihan during the 1960s.

Gallagher's interest and ability in the performance practices and narratives of blues and blues rock led to high profile engagements, including recording sessions with Muddy Waters and Jerry Lee Lewis; Gallagher also performed with his group at the first international Rockpalast television broadcast from West Germany in 1976 (Rockpalast Archiv, 2011). His international reputation was primarily built on live performance, with American and European tours, television appearances and radio performances (Old Grey Whistle Test, BBC, Beat Club, RTÉ) ongoing throughout the classic rock period. Gallagher's contribution to Irish rock has been significant, in terms of developing a domestic audience for rock, and because an Irish performer and composer achieved prominence in international popular musical culture during the 1970s. In addition to international and Irish tours, he headlined the first rock festival held in Ireland, at Macroom, Co. Cork (1977).

Gallagher's death in 1995 prompted a revival of interest in his work and reappraisal of his legacy and musicianship; while the academy has been slow to acknowledge his musical achievements, his profile continues to receive attention in popular media and among practicing musicians. Dedicated memorials include the annual Rory Gallagher Festival at Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal; this was complemented in 2011 by the release of a new album (*Notes From San Francisco*, 2011). Appraisals and plaudits from major international popular musicians including the guitarists and songwriters

Slash, Johnny Marr, Brian May, Andy Summers, Edge and Joe Bonamassa have also been critical in expanding Gallagher's profile.

Van Morrison

George Ivan Morrison, professionally known as Van Morrison, is a key figure in contemporary Irish popular music. He has achieved commercial success, primarily with Them (two British top ten singles in 1965), and garnered international critical acclaim as a solo artist. The scholar Mark Prendergast notes that Morrison's mother was a jazz singer and his father a 'staunch collector of the blues' (Prendergast, 1987:113); his idiosyncratic character has been noted by numerous rock journalists and biographers (Goldberg, 1970; Traum, 1970; Yorke, 1975; Heylin, 2002). Morrison's early musical experiences were unique. In his showband days (with The Monarchs and The Olympics), he performed in Ireland, the UK and Germany, and was a professional-level musician by the time of his celebrated residency at the Maritime Hotel, Belfast in the mid-1960s. Reacting to the commercialism which came to be associated with single-oriented 'pop' and crossover groups, Them developed a hard-edged rhythm and blues sound and surly, withdrawn image which paid little heed to mercantilism or considerations of profitability. Consequently, Them achieved significant cultural capital among practising musicians ('Gloria' is one of the most covered compositions in the rock repertoire) and specialist audiences, at the expense of lasting commercial success (Heylin, 2002).

The demise of Them fuelled Morrison's desire to record original material; with the support of producer Bert Berns, he was initially successful in the

US with the decidedly commercial single ‘Brown Eyed Girl’. With Warner Brothers, Morrison achieved considerable artistic success, fusing stream-of-consciousness lyricism with innovative musical arrangements reflecting his diverse musical roots. Albums of note from this period include *Astral Weeks*, *Too Late to Stop Now*, *Moondance*, and *Veedon Fleece*; *Astral Weeks* frequently appears at the top of ‘greatest rock/pop album’ lists. Morrison’s work as a solo artist (and in particular his musical explorations with the Caledonia Soul Orchestra) is regularly cited in rock histories as some of the most enduring and acclaimed in the rock genre. Developing from a background in blues music, Morrison fused a poetic sentimentality (largely based on his childhood in Belfast, and on his later experiences as a migrant, professional musician), with a proficiency in African-American musical forms – soul, blues and R&B - creating a compelling musical hybrid with international appeal.

Morrison was inducted into the Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1993, and into the virtual Songwriters’ Hall of Fame in 2003. Developing long-standing musical associations with Robbie Robertson and The Band, Morrison famously performed at The Band’s Last Waltz at the Winterland Ballroom, San Francisco in 1976. Later, in collaboration with the Chieftains, Morrison would also look more closely at ‘traditional’ Irish sounds and instrumentation. Discussing Morrison’s musical identity, McLaughlin and McLoone state:

He [Morrison]... has maintained a strong sense of his roots while at the same time exploring – and extending considerably – the international rock idiom’.

(McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000: 4)

All three artists on whom the thesis critically focuses emerged from the Irish beat ‘scene’ – a successful and primarily urban-based

subculture which foregrounded rock'n'roll, blues and R&B during the 1960s. Morrison and Gallagher also undertook professional apprenticeships on the Irish showband circuit (Morrison with the Monarchs and the Olympics; Gallagher with the Fontana, later renamed The Impact), before embarking on careers as group leaders (Taste, Them) and later as solo artists. Lynott sang professionally in the beat group The Black Eagles, with Orphanage and Skid Row before founding and achieving critical and commercial success with the hard-rock group Thin Lizzy. Rory Gallagher's emergence from the Belfast beat scene led to international success, initially with Taste (with whom he performed at Cream's farewell concert, Royal Albert Hall, 1968, and at The Isle of Wight Festival in 1970).

The Cultural Location of Irish Rock

While I now recognise that 1960s and 1970s rock is a single category in an exhaustive constellation of musical styles, I find it, and its Irish variant in particular, one worthy of serious analysis. Irish rock is a musical culture synthesising both Irish and Anglo-American musical motifs; it is an amalgamation of varying impulses; it is rich in semantic, sociological and ideological meanings (Tynan, 2009). Discussing the semantic potential of 'passages', the scholar Maeve Tynan describes such passages as signifying a break with the past, but a simultaneous revisiting of tradition; she identifies the manner in which 'passages' evoke 'the transversal of boundaries, translations and transitions, border crossings and mutations, close readings and appropriations' (Tynan, 2009:1).

Such a perspective can be applied to Irish rock, and indeed, several of Tynan's terms can be used to describe the cultural location of this particular music culture. Irish rock practice involves the transversal of conceptual, cultural and national boundaries; it entails the mapping of rural and urban Irish modes of experience onto international musical forms, and the mutual transition of both. As such, it gives rise to a multiplicity of interpretations, and represents both a clean break with various 'pasts', and a reworking of existing traditions of artistic expression, social commentary and aesthetic enterprise.

The complexity of Irish rock is notable, and any appeal to a single theoretical strand or framework for analysing such an elaborate cultural phenomenon is problematic. One could use musicology to approach Irish rock, focusing on the technical intricacies involved in the composition and/or production of a series of compositions. (Gloag and Beard, 2005; Moore, 2001; Middleton, 1990). Alternatively, one could approach this music via identity theories, focusing on musicians' and audiences' identities, and on the implications of rock consumption and reception for Irish cultural practice (Frith, 1998; Smyth, 2009). Irish rock equally lends itself to semantic interpretation of the kind usually undertaken in contemporary cultural and Postcolonial Studies, whereby texts are subjected to deconstructive analysis in order to reveal both the limitations of authorship, and the multiplicity of intended and alternative interpretations inherent in them (Gilroy, 1993; Said, 1973; McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000). To account for the manner in which Irish rock musicians drew on a diverse and international range of musical influences, to delineate the implicit and explicit political inferences expressed through the music, and to illustrate the challenge to cultural stasis achieved by Irish rock through an appeal to

an innovative, inclusive and cosmopolitan sense of Irishness requires a specialized theoretical perspective. Therefore, the research combines theoretical approaches and analytical tools from sociology, musicology, Popular Music Studies, Irish and Postcolonial Studies. Employing a multi-disciplinary approach enables meaningful intellectual engagement with Irish rock, a complex cultural phenomenon for which no critical tradition has been established to date (Smyth, 2005:2). It also gives greater scope for authoritatively analysing the diverse music and performance practices developed by Morrison, Gallagher and Lynott in their individual careers. Differences arise in these artists' music as a result of variations in national, racial and social identity, in musical education and aptitudes, in personal tastes, influences and performative predilections. Adopting a multi-disciplinary approach enables a more concise analysis around the key concepts of hybridity, identity and space and place with respect to each artist. For example, while a musicological examination allows us to clearly see the presence of 'certain Irish roots attitudes' in the compositions and guitar styles of Rory Gallagher and Phil Lynott (Holdship, 1984), Van Morrison's appeal to Irishness is more aptly studied through lyrical analysis and an interrogation of the manner in which his vocal delivery absorbs and reflects earlier Irish singing traditions and styles. This combination of theoretical approaches grants an authoritative perspective on the diverse expressions of Irish identity within first-wave Irish rock.

Method and Structure of the Analysis

The study comprises three central strands of enquiry, based around the concepts of hybridity, space and place, and identity. In concrete terms, the

thesis explores the intellectual dimension of rock music and musicianship, primarily by focusing on the relationship between Irish rock and a range of Ireland's 'other' musical traditions. It also examines the role of space and place in Irish rock, and considers how rock responds critically to received notions of 'Irish' identity, and to essentialised conceptualizations of 'blackness' in Irish culture.

Drawing on the theories of hybridity and critical regionalism proposed in the context of popular music by McLaughlin (1999), McLoone and McLaughlin (2000) and others, I attempt to illustrate that 'first wave' Irish rock represents a deliberate and effective interfacing of 'local' and 'global' cultural impulses: I utilise musicology (and in particular Allan Moore's rock-specific variant of that discipline) as an analytical tool to illustrate how Irish rock incorporates themes and motifs from a range of older 'traditional' music. My intention is to re-assess early Irish rock's relationship with the traditional folk and instrumental music of Ireland, examining whether and how Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison drew on such cultures at differing stages and in differing ways. In addition to the use of rhythmic motifs common in Irish dance music (triplet, dotted rhythms, jig and reel time signatures and phrasing), Phil Lynott appealed to traditional songs of soldiery (evident in the reworking of 'Whiskey in the Jar'), as a key feature of his compositions throughout the 1970s. The 1977 album *Bad Reputation* opens with the song 'Soldier of Fortune', which, with its refrain of 'as we march along/singing just another soldier's song/another soldier's song' recalls not only the tradition of soldiery songs, but can also be read as an invocation of, and response to, the Irish Republic's national anthem, Amhrán na bhFiann (in English, 'Soldier's Song'). Such textual complexities are worthy of sustained critical attention. Rory Gallagher's

appeal to ‘certain Irish roots attitudes’ (Gallagher, interviewed in Holdship, 1984) is evident in his use of various open guitar tunings associated with ‘traditional’ Irish and Celtic/folk accompaniment styles; it is also visible in his use of modal phrasing and dotted rhythms in solo passages, and in the performance of certain songs on mandolin, an instrument popular in Irish instrumental music. While Van Morrison did not explore ‘traditional’ Irish sounds systematically until the later 1980s (collaborating at that time with The Chieftains on *Irish Heartbeat*), it is possible to identify in his 1970s work appropriations from certain Irish popular musical styles, such as the oral song tradition, showband music, classical and popular songs. Morrison is thus read as ‘inhabiting a [musical] space’ between Irish popular music and Anglo-American rock (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000; brackets added). This discussion of Irish rock and ‘traditional’ music is undertaken while remaining aware of McLaughlin’s astute observation that ‘traditional’ (instrumental and/or folk) Irish music is not the ‘unchanging bedrock’ of Irish popular musical culture. McLaughlin seeks to deconstruct essentialised notions of ‘Irishness’ established as an aspect of nineteenth-century colonialist discourse. In his view, such depictions have been internalised in discourses about Irish popular music making, and are still evident in popular and semi-academic portrayals of Irish music practice:

The various musics of Ireland were homogenised and categorized as an ‘ethnic’ music, a process that was begun by the Protestant Anglo-Irish Ascendancy in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. if such ideas were originally imposed on Ireland and the Irish from the outside, they have now become internalised...rock press discourse in both Britain and Ireland, through countless reviews and feature articles, continually reiterates and reconfirms these tropes – Sinead O’Connor’s ‘fiery Irish temper’, the ‘banshee-style wailing’ of Dolores O’Riordan, U2’s ‘Irish spirit’, and so on.

(McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000:1)

One response to such essentialised and problematic representations has been to equate certain forms of Irishness – I refer here especially to rural, traditional ('pre-modern') facets of Irish social and cultural identity – with backwardness, cultural stultification and ideological conservatism. While this position may be read as a pre-emptive rejoinder to the potentially detrimental reassertion of older and restrictive political and social positions, it has also had the effect of masking positive associations between contemporary artistic forms, such as rock music, and pre-existing cultural formations. This seems to be a common position in a society which has undergone the depredations of colonialism, and subsequently made the transition from colony to nation state (McLoone and McLaughlin, 2000; Said, 1973). A detailed discussion of hybridity, Irish rock and the presence of traditional music in it is undertaken in Chapter Three.

Subsequently, I examine Irish rock through the critical lens of contemporary theories of space and place. For Whiteley, Bennett and Hawkins, music's relationship to space and place 'is about exploring discourses about national culture and identity' (2004:4). Taking musical production as a starting point, Whiteley et al are interested in showing how music embodies discourses specific to the localities in which they are created. Developing Webb's position (he notes that popular music involves the 'interaction between place, individual subjectivity, creativity and production' (2004: 67)), we can infer that the specificities of 'place' – rural or urban locality, nation, diaspora – seep into, and impact on, the style of music produced by a given artist at a particular time. Using this observation as a theoretical basis, I will examine the ways in which first-wave Irish rock is shaped by the particularities of space and place. This is a complex issue, since the practice of rock musicianship takes place across a range of rural, urban, national and

international spatial settings. Such examination of space and place renders visible the various ways in which Irish rock musicians responded to the ‘pressures and dynamics of political and economic circumstances’ faced by them in varied geographical spaces, and how their encountering of different ‘spaces’ produced different music at different times in their careers.

From this starting point, I will investigate the import and meaning of space and place as it is articulated in first-wave Irish rock. The term ‘space’ has many connotations in academic writing: I develop two which are of particular relevance to this study. Geographical space can refer to physical or imaginary locations represented in popular music lyrics. I will detail and account for the process of naming and referencing Ireland’s geophysical locations in Irish rock texts, and discuss the political implications of invoking space and place in Irish music. In a consideration of the Irish rock text as a utopian space, I will also read Morrison, Lynott and Rory Gallagher’s music as an idealised, musical ‘space’ which affords each artist a location for romantic, psychosocial imagining. Key junctures where such analysis will be applied include the several representations of a disappearing Belfast in the work of Van Morrison; the ongoing creation of an idealised ‘Wild West’ in the music of Gallagher and Lynott, and Rory Gallagher’s continuing appeal to the mythology of the wanderer throughout his recorded output.

The study’s third major focus considers Irish rock with respect to ‘black’ identities by reading ‘first wave’ Irish rock as an informed engagement with African-American music, performance practices and identities. Developing the ideas of cultural interchange proposed by Paul Gilroy, the thesis

investigates Irish rock's critical borrowings from black cultures, including blues, rhythm and blues, jazz, rock and their posterior forms. The thesis challenges the tendency in academic writing to ignore cultural corollaries between Irish and black cultures; it also challenges the view that Irish rock's only resource in terms of primary cultural influence was that which emerged at the Anglo-American cultural centre. In his analysis of popular music and national culture, Noel McLaughlin asserts that 'Irish rock has received scant attention within the academy...In one sense, the 'absence' of discussion of Irish rock appears specifically to arise from an assumption that rock music, as an international form, bears few traces of the locality of its production' (McLaughlin, 1999: vi).

McLaughlin feels the lack of scholarly attention to Irish popular music stems from the absence of visible signifiers of 'Ireland' or 'Irishness' within Irish rock music. In one sense, this is an accurate appraisal; a typical Rory Gallagher song, it may be argued, bears a more immediate resemblance to a blues-rock composition by Cream, The Band or Little Feat than it does to a 'traditional' 'Irish' song. Such resemblance is evident in the use of major, minor and seventh chords, in the use of chord progressions based on I, IV, V patterns, in the use of the blues or pentatonic scale as the dominant musical motif in solo passages, in the presence of a dominant, centralised 'authentic' vocal, and through the inclusion of guitar-based techniques – string bending, dynamic manipulation of harmonics, repetition of identifiable rock-based 'riffs' - in distinctive verse/chorus segments. However, a more studied approach to Irish rock suggests implicit references to Irish musical cultures can be found throughout the rock music created by Morrison, Lynott and Gallagher; I examine some concrete examples of this in a later chapter on hybridity and Irish music. McLaughlin notes that:

Historically, rock culture...has been resistant to attempts at analysis by those perceived to be outside of its centre, as frequently cultural theorists, sociologists and others within the academy are regarded as outsiders perpetually doomed to incomprehension.

(McLaughlin, 1999: vii)

I can identify with McLaughlin's assertion here, as I encountered such apathy on occasion during my own research.⁵⁸ Such prejudiced views of the academy's worth in discussing rock are exacerbated by the realities of academic discourse and practice; even a well-intentioned rock musician would struggle to negotiate, much less assimilate, a complex position on rock and popular music such as that essayed by Theodor Adorno (2002), Richard Middleton (1990), Allan Moore (2001), Philip Tagg (2002) or Angela McRobbie (1987) - key points of reference for much contemporary academic writing around popular music.

The current study intends to narrow the conceptual gap between an admittedly cerebral academic culture on the one hand, and a sceptical, exclusivist performance culture on the other, with positive outcomes for both. It is intended as an academic complement to a renewal of public interest in the works and significance of first-wave rock musicians. For example, 2011 saw the hosting of a major retrospective exhibition on the life and work of Phil Lynott in Dublin, and the publication of an updated version of Philomena Lynott's life story (Lynott and Hayden, 2011; Philip Lynott Exhibition, 2011).⁵⁹ In 2010, *Ghost Blues*, a new biographical feature film on Gallagher was broadcast, complementing 'Against the Grain', the

58 Part of my inquiry into the music of Rory Gallagher and the Cork music scene from which Taste emerged in the mid-1960s involved signing up to a well-known open-access internet forum and initiating a discussion thread on Gallagher. One contributor to the thread criticised my doing so, referring to this academic work as an attempt to gain 'a PhD in Rorygallagherology'. In this case, the difficulty is not one of 'reducing the audience to derogatory 'punters'' (McLaughlin, 1999: viii), but of convincing consumers and practitioners that a knowledgeable academic (and practicing musician) might actually have something insightful to say about rock music.

59 <http://www.philiplynottexhibition.com/index.php>; accessed 4/5/2011.

2005 six-part RTÉ radio series on the artist. Also in 2010, a new statue was unveiled in Gallagher's birthplace (Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal), while the Rory Gallagher festival in the same town is now an annual music-focused event. Van Morrison also returned to the artistic spotlight in 2008-9 with 40th anniversary performances of *Astral Weeks* at the Royal Albert Hall and Madison Square Garden; these concerts were subsequently released into the DVD market.⁶⁰

The remaining chapters discuss Irish rock in detail. I intend to illustrate and excavate the musicological, symbolic and intellectual dimensions of the compositions and performance practices of three internationally profiled rock musicians. Chapter Two presents a detailed survey of the early rock industry in Ireland. Using archival material and interviews with a participant in rock culture and a prominent studio engineer, it argues that the lack of infrastructure, management and distribution networks was instrumental in prompting first-wave musicians' migrations from Ireland to the Anglo-American centre. It critically examines the role of an existing professional music culture – that of the showbands – in the development of Irish rock, illustrating that while it was limited in terms of aesthetic, aspects of performance and technological innovations which it brought into Ireland were central in rock musicians' emerging careers. This survey proceeds on the basis of key terms, including production and distribution, critical media and management. Chapter Three establishes Irish rock music as a hybrid cultural form of significant complexity. The musicology-focused analysis of which the chapter is comprised demonstrates the range of indigenous and international musical cultures synthesised by Irish musicians within their

60 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2009/feb/15/van-morrison-astral-weeks-live>; accessed 4/5/2011.

compositions. The hypothesis that traditional Irish music was a central element of a multi-faceted compositional strategy is advanced and defended. Chapter Four examines the role of the national, and of space and place in Irish rock. It interrogates rock musicians' ambivalence towards national imagining. It locates Irish rock in a tension with respect to the national, demonstrating that like literature, theatre and film, rock both consolidates and critiques versions of the national. With respect to space and place, the chapter examines the means by which geographical and utopian spaces are represented in the Irish rock text, and deliberates on the meanings of such representations. I argue that the creation of utopian spaces answers musicians' need for idealised spaces within their creative imagination – a need answered, in Irish rock, by ongoing references to mythological landscapes, and to the 'wild west'. With respect to geographical space, I argue that consistent reference to specific locations serves to authenticate the narrative creations of individual artists, helping them to mark out a unique space within the international rock idiom. Chapter Five examines Irish rock's appropriations of black (predominantly African-American) musical and performative culture. Developing the ideas of cultural interchange proposed by Paul Gilroy, it excavates Irish rock's critical borrowings from black cultures, including blues, rhythm and blues, gospel and jazz. The chapter challenges the tendency to ignore cultural corollaries between Irish and black cultures, locating Irish musicians' absorption of African-American musical idioms within a wider framework of cultural exchange occurring between Ireland and black Atlantic cultures over the past two centuries. It also draws comparisons between these cultures by referencing the theories of nomadism proposed by Rosi Braidotti and Gilles Deleuze. The concluding chapter discusses the cultural location of first-wave Irish rock, deliberating on aspects of its relationship to later variants of

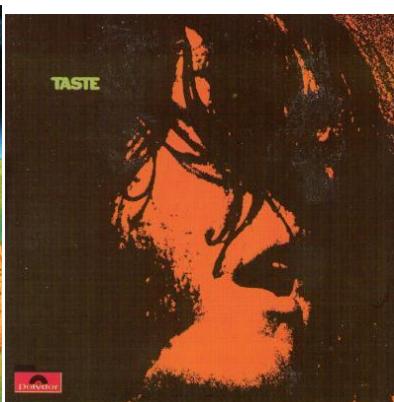
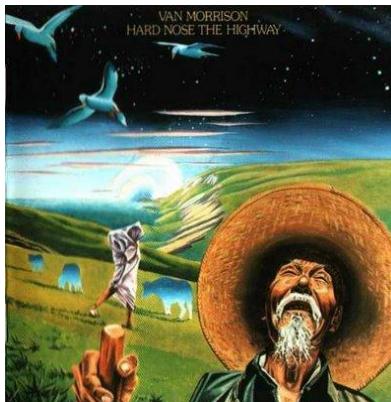
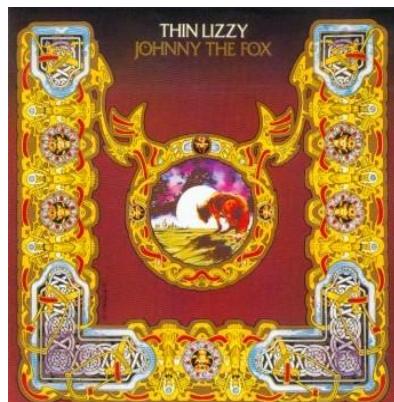
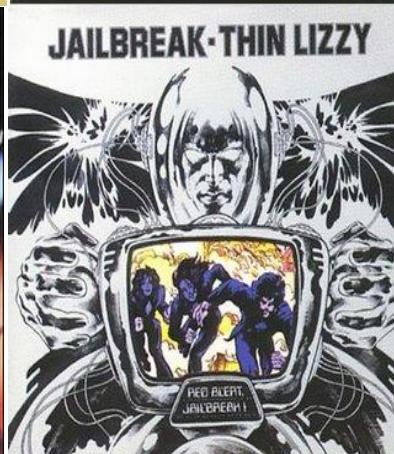
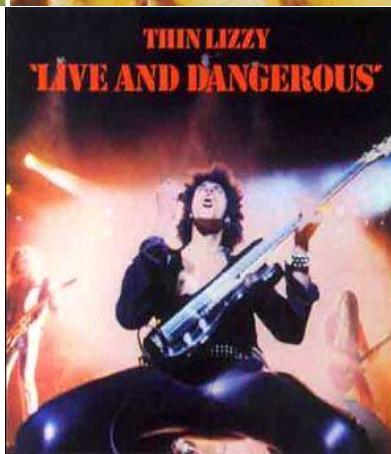
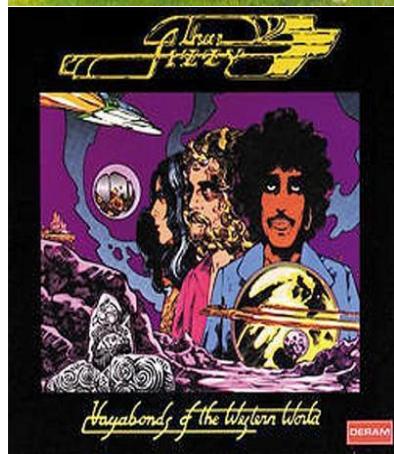
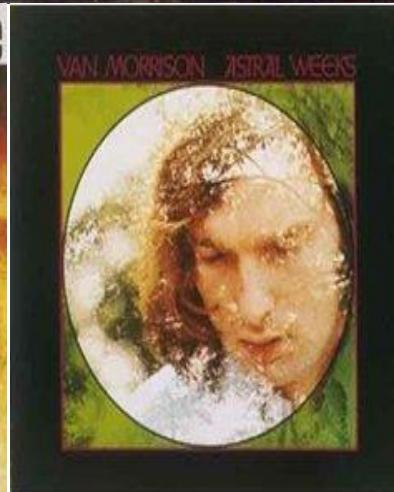
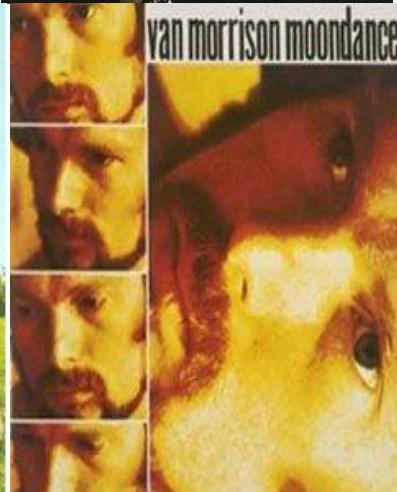
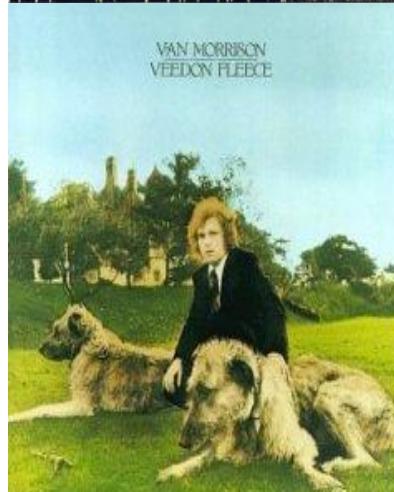
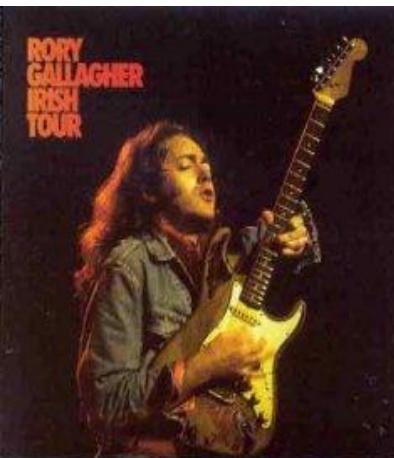
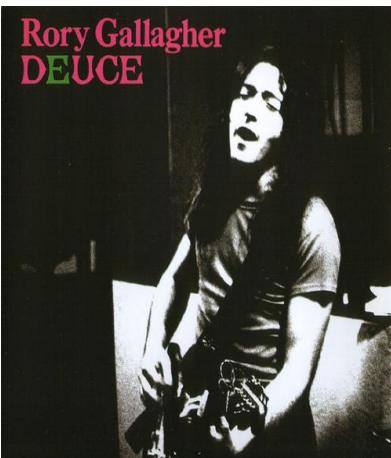
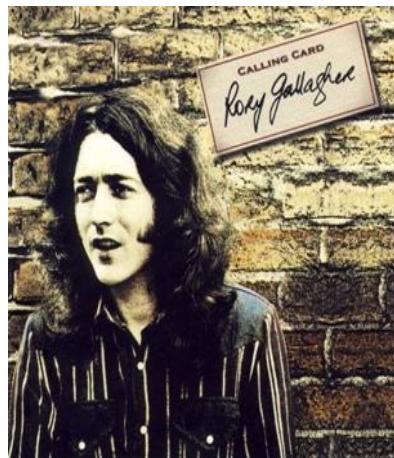
Irish popular music, primarily the punk and New-Wave influenced work of The Pogues, U2 and Sinéad O'Connor.

The cultural theorist Gerry Smyth articulates the critical potential of listening to Irish societies:

By *listening* to contemporary Irish society –rather than looking at it or reducing it to one or another series of statistical abstractions—we may come not only to a stronger sense of where we have come from and where we are, but also, in the political struggles that are conducted over the relations between music, noise and silence, of where we might be going.

(Smyth, 2004: 1)

This thesis takes up Smyth's challenge to scrutinise the music produced by Irish musicians between 1968 and 1978. I signal the intellectual depth of Irish rock, by demonstrating that its endurance as a globally recognised musical culture is as much a product of its symbolic, political and ideological significance as its commercial appeal. Second, I actively address the invisibility of popular music in contemporary theorizations of Irish culture, and provide a starting point for including rock music in emerging debates about Irish culture and social life across a plurality of Irish communities, both on the island and in the diaspora.



Chapter Two

Dweller(s) on the Threshold: A Critical Overview of the Irish Rock Industry, 1968-78

Introduction

This chapter investigates the developing Irish rock industry during 1968-78, a transformative period in the evolution of Irish popular music culture. A key objective is to propound the theory that Irish musicians' professional emigration to the Anglo-American centre was as much a result of push factors specific to Ireland – the absence of technologies of production, for example – as any other factor. In addition, the chapter will signal the contribution to rock culture made by progressive actors within Ireland's limited popular music infrastructure, arguing that key individuals operating within it provided technological and managerial resources which rock musicians creatively utilised in furthering their respective careers.

The research will seek to provide an accurate 'snapshot' of the cultural and infrastructural realities facing Irish musicians.⁶¹ This line of enquiry is important, since it interrogates sedimented assumptions about the development of rock in Ireland. For example, the view that the showbands and the rock groups were polar opposites in terms of musical direction, commercial status and aesthetic focus is often propounded as a common

⁶¹ I am adapting O'Flynn's use of the 'aerial photograph' to provide a detailed portrayal of intersecting Irish music cultures; this appears in O'Flynn, 2009: 24.

founding myth of rock culture; this myth will be analysed in detail here. To my knowledge, the role of the ballad boom in informing aspects of musical style in the burgeoning rock movement has not been explored appropriately, I make detailed reference to it here (in anticipation of a fuller exploration of the folk influence in Irish rock in Chapter Three). Furthermore, I demonstrate the challenges encountered by rock musicians in music production by describing the limited media, distribution networks and recording and performance spaces available to rock musicians in Ireland during the late 1960s and 1970s.

In terms of structure, the chapter deals initially with the musical cultures of the showbands, the beat groups, and the folk-focused ‘ballad boom’. It then describes the status of the Irish rock industry in the classic rock era, with respect to four key headings: production and distribution, management, critical media and performance spaces. These terms are analytically defined in the opening paragraphs of the respective sections.

Irish Rock and Its Precedents (I): The Showband

By 1968, several strains of popular music co-existed in both of Ireland's political jurisdictions. The showbands maintained their position as the dominant popular musical culture of the 1960s, drawing enormous support (and generating substantial profits for top groups and management) through a network of purpose-built dancehalls across the country. As the 1960s progressed, the beat groups established themselves as a growing, popular alternative cultural phenomenon in Irish cities and towns (O'Halloran, 2006: 21). While the showbands were the major popular format across rural

Ireland, north and south, The Caravelles, The Kingbees, Bluesville and the Greenbeats were beat groups developing a new market and audience for R&B-based music in Dublin city centre, and in the nearby towns of Dun Laoghaire and Dundalk; similarly, Granny's Intentions appeared regularly at the Cavalier and the Go-Go clubs in Limerick (O'Halloran, 2006). In Belfast, an energetic blues scene was populated by rhythm and blues groups including Them, Taste, and The People; in the major centres and elsewhere, older traditions of Irish folk-song were being explored following the similar explosion of interest in those genres in the US and UK. Albeit in various ways, these different sub-cultures absorbed myriad aesthetic and professional practices from the popular music cultures of both the United States, including the Liverpool and London beat, pop and rock scenes, and various folk traditions. With regard to music as industry, recording and distribution practices, advertising and promotion, were imported into Ireland, enabling the development of commercial and cultural elements of both the pop market and the various beat and rock scenes. Subsequent developments within, and interactions between these cultures provided the conceptual awareness and practical framework necessary for the development in Ireland of an initially limited popular music industry. This fledgling enterprise provided the foundation for the highly specialized and successful popular music culture which exists on the island today.

As established in Chapter One, first-wave Irish rock emerged as a result of international changes, and in response to particular cultural conditions obtaining in Ireland during the late 1950s and 1960s (McLaughlin, 1999: 77-79; Lee, 1989; Gibbons, 1996). In terms of the music culture, investigative surveys of the period recount that the most popular form of musical entertainment was that provided by hierarchically managed groups of

travelling musicians collectively known as showbands (Prendergast, 1987; Clayton Lea and Taylor, 1992; Power, 1990; Smyth, 2005; O'Halloran, 2006; McLaughlin, 1999). The showbands modernised the role of the orchestras, the parish dance and ceilí bands, and operated through an island-wide network of ballrooms (Power, 1990). Typically comprised of six to eight musicians, the majority of showband groups performed Irish, Dixieland, country 'n' Irish and chart material from the US and UK (Power, 1990: 24; McLaughlin, 1999). At the peak of this popular phenomenon, highly professional outfits such as the Royal Showband and Clipper Carlton performed to crowds of up to four thousand patrons at some 450 rural and urban locations in both political jurisdictions (Power, 1990:19). Power describes the remit of the showbands, a phenomenon which emerged and thrived during an era of limited technological and infrastructural development, and of extensive social control:

The showbands' *raison d'être* was to entertain, pure and simple, and 'send 'em home sweating'. Musical abilities were secondary to the stage spectacle. Songwriting flair was redundant because of audience desire to hear copycat chart hits and dance music. There were extremes of musicianship: brilliant players competed on the same circuit as an army of three-chord trick merchants.

(Power, 1990: 23)

Power's analysis illustrates the significant economic capability of the top showbands:

A simple calculation, based on the Consumer Price Index, reveals the comparative scale of the [showbands'] profits in '67... Two thousand dancers on a busy night at ten shillings (50p) a head paid £1,000 gross: a top band could expect to take 60 per cent - £600 which in today's money [1990] would be £7,130.33...The average industrial weekly wage in '67 was £12.47.

(Power, 1990: 21-22)

Power's calculations demonstrate that the island was capable of sustaining a popular dance culture, in which live performing musicians were central actors, during the early 1960s. The phenomenon generated an attendant entrepreneurially-led industry, based on the management and marketing of the groups, and spin-off enterprises such as record production, manufacturing, distribution and sales, the sale and maintenance of instruments, transportation and logistics, and the ongoing construction of dancehalls.

The general tendency in historicizing Irish rock has been to disparage showbands, on a number of grounds. The primary reason for this is the fact that the showbands monopolised the practice of popular musical performance across the island during the 1960s. Muise's (2002) biographical study of Rory Gallagher reports that representatives of The Irish Federation of Musicians (IFM), the organization which controlled the showbands in the Republic, sought to prevent Gallagher from accepting engagements for his three-piece group Taste at the Arcadia Ballroom in Cork during 1966. This was done by means of an extraordinary general meeting, and occurred in spite of Gallagher having completed a musical apprenticeship in the Impact Showband (Muise, 2002:2-4). In Northern Ireland, the showband tradition, upheld by the Northern Ireland Musicians' Union saw to it that 'bands must be comprised of at least four musicians', effectively preventing the increasingly popular three-piece groups from performing at major venues in the late 1960s (McAvoy and Chrisp, 2005:42). Exacerbating this was the reality that the majority of groups tended towards a musical conservatism, prioritising the re-production of UK and US hits over articulating a creative Irish response to such music (Prendergast, 1987; Geldof, *FWTS*). The economic potential accruing to showband

performance was such that several rock and beat musicians opted to join one; therefore, the showbands are arraigned for stalling the development of beat and rock music in Ireland (Clayton-Lea and Taylor, 1992; Geldof, *FWTS*; Stokes, *FWTS*). Phil Lynott described the financial appeal of the showbands, stating in a 1972 interview in *New Spotlight* magazine that he had considered joining one:

At the time I was in two minds about it, but I'm glad I didn't. Showbands have destroyed some of the finest musicians in the country and the guys themselves know it...Even Eric Bell [Thin Lizzy guitarist]...will tell you it almost drove him crazy playing for two years in The Dreams. Paul Ashford...was an absolutely fantastic bass player but the bread made him join a showband.

(Lynott, 1972, quoted in Clayton-Lea and Taylor, 1992: 9)

The signified implication of this line of argument is, of course, the existence of a polarising dichotomy, with the financially-motivated showbands on the one hand, and the creative and (economically) disadvantaged beat and rock groups on the other. There is obvious truth in Lynott's statement: the evidence provided by participants in the hierarchical, patriarchal and institutionalised realities of showband culture challenge any tendency towards a romantic revisionism *vis a vis* this particular culture and its relationship to rock. However, a polarised essentialising of the relationship between showbands and rock groups renders invisible the intricate relationship existing between the two cultures, and ignores the mechanics and outcomes of first-wave rock musicians' negotiation of, and engagement with, showband culture.



Superstar Van Morrison strikes a showband pose with fellow members of the Monarchs – pictured bottom, second from left

Van Morrison with The Monarchs Showband⁶²



Rory Gallagher with The Fontana Showband⁶³

While Phil Lynott avoided direct participation in showband culture and performance,⁶⁴ Van Morrison and Rory Gallagher performed on the showband circuit in the early stages of their careers. They are the most prominent of a number of high-profile personnel beginning with, and later crossing over from, showbands into rock music: other musicians following a similar professional trajectory include Eric Bell, John Wilson, Richard McCracken, Brush Shiels and Henry McCullough (Irishshowbands.net, 2011; Irishrock.org, 2011).

Morrison states that performing in a showband was the only avenue available to aspiring professionals in Ireland during the 1950s and 1960s:

⁶² Iangallagher.com, 2011

⁶³ Reurie.nl, 2011; see also rorygallagher.com, 2011.

⁶⁴ Lynott's first band with Brian Downey, The Black Eagles (1966), did perform 'the chart hits of the day, including pop, soul and R&B'; in this regard, The Black Eagles might be described as a creative response to the showband format. By the time Orphanage had formed in 1969 (Lynott, Downey, Pat Quigley, Joe Staunton), the showband format had been rejected as an influence in defining the group's musical direction. Eric Wrixon and Eric Bell's departure from the Northern Irish showband scene also illustrates their experience of creative frustration as showband performers; their migration to the beat scene in Dublin enabled the formation of the original line-up of Thin Lizzy. See <http://www.irishrock.org/irodb/bands/blackeagles.html>; and <http://www.irishrock.org/irodb/bands/orphanage.html>; accessed 24/4/2011.

Well, that's how one got work, you know, at that point, if you were a professional musician....you had to work with somebody. The showbands were, you know, probably the only entity in Ireland that were getting work.

(Van Morrison, *FWTS*; author's transcription)

As a teenager, Morrison performed on saxophone and as a vocalist in The Monarchs, The Avonaires and The Olympics showbands. In Ireland, the majority of his musical experience with these low-profile groups was limited to country and western, Irish standards and other 'light' entertainment; however, Morrison was able to exploit this as an early opportunity for the development of his stagecraft. Interviewed for *From A Whisper To A Scream*, Morrison recalls that:

They [showbands] just weren't doing covers: it was like a whole show. They did comedy, they did Top Ten...they did jazz, you know, they did impersonations. It was something that they could have done in Las Vegas. It was a very professional show. It wasn't just a matter of, like, guys like doing steps and wearing suits. It was in a couple of levels above that.

(Van Morrison, in *FWTS*; author's transcription)

Morrison completed a tour of Scotland and England with The Monarchs in 1962; his first experience as a recording artist occurred when the showbands recorded and released a single in Germany the following year (Rogan, 2006). The Monarchs also acquired professional engagements in Heidelberg, Frankfurt and Cologne; these overseas experiences were formative, as an arduous schedule of nightly performances introduced Van Morrison to the rigours of professional musicianship. The Monarchs' R&B-based performances in Germany would have been musically derivative, but while there, Morrison gained first-hand access to the African-American musical cultures he had grown up listening to: jazz, blues and rhythm 'n' blues. This exposure provided a new avenue of musical interest; ultimately,

his developing ability in performing these styles raised his standing in The Monarchs. A fellow musician, the guitarist George Jones, reports that in Germany, Morrison influenced the group's oeuvre through his capabilities in performing black music:

For the first time in his life, [Van] met American coloured GIs who dug soul, blues and all the music he was weaned on. Van drifted away every day to get near coloured guys who talked the same language as him – ‘Yeah, man, it’s crazy, let’s dig it’ – all that caper. He suddenly became a big influence on The Monarchs. We started to play all this soul music and we began to like it. Van really achieved a childhood ambition by playing for coloured guys.

(Rogan, 2002:63)

Morrison's biographer Johnny Rogan concludes that the artist's time in a number of minor showbands was a 'tough but invaluable apprenticeship', where, as a 'valued but far from indispensable member' (Rogan, 2006: 55-70), he developed his musical personality and honed aspects the performance practices he later utilised in his hybridising explorations of rock, folk, jazz and rhythm and blues.

Prior to founding the guitar trio Taste with Kitteringham and Damery in 1966, Rory Gallagher was a member of The Fontana Showband, which performed in Cork, Kerry and Limerick in the early 1960s. Muise (2002) states that The Fontana performed regularly at the Arcadia Ballroom in Cork city, opening for the premier showbands, and for visiting UK groups The Animals and The Searchers. Gallagher creatively reworked the traditional showband format. Supported by musicians who sensed his musical ability and supported such revisions, Gallagher induced several transformations within The Fontana. These changes allowed the group to challenge widely accepted limitations of showband performance culture. Dan Muise's research (2002) indicates that Gallagher changed the group's

name to the more beat-oriented ‘The Impact’, and transformed its image to reflect the growing popularity of beat music. Gallagher is credited with acquiring overseas management for the group, and during the Lenten season, when showband activity was prohibited in Ireland, they travelled to perform in the UK and Spain. The challenges to the institutionalised scope and function of a showband initiated by Gallagher did not go unnoticed by showband management:

As opening act to the top bands, Rory [Gallagher] regularly provoked the wrath of dance hall managers and promoters by working the crowd into such a frenzy that they would stop dancing to watch him. The Impact also risked losing work by upstaging headline acts such as The Royal and The Dixies.

(Muise, 2002:6)

Fellow Impact member Dan O’Keeffe states that ‘Rory would have preferred to have his own group, but couldn’t, so he worked from the inside out’ (O’Keeffe in Muise, 2002). Interviewed in 1972 by RTÉ, Gallagher recalled that the showbands were a point of evolution for beat and rock music, because in many cases, members of such groups, while limited in terms of the artistic choices open to them *vis a vis* performance, were in tune with developments in the emerging beat culture (Gallagher, FWTS).

In 1966, inspired by cultural transformations witnessed first-hand in London, Hamburg and Madrid, Gallagher took advantage of increasing beat-group activity in Cork city to form The Taste, a guitar-based three-piece group. However, showband culture continued to impact on his musical life. For emerging beat groups in Ireland, the difficulty of negotiating with ‘The Fed’ – the Irish Federation of Musicians – was significant. This organisation auditioned and controlled the showbands, imposing levies and administering rights *vis a vis* performing at various

public venues. The IFM also guaranteed union rates for performing musicians.

The Irish Federation of Musicians controlled both sides of the live music business, regulating the bands not only in format but also in the size of the lineups. The set lists consisted of the top songs of the day, as well as country and western and Irish standards. The IFM believed it took between seven and nine musicians to properly interpret the music. They insisted on total compliance to their rules from all the venues and enforced this with the threat of being blacklisted. In return for this were guaranteed more money by receiving union scale. Since there were no exceptions, every group of musicians obeyed.

(Muise, 2002:4)

Cha Haran, a member of Limerick beat group Granny's Intentions, recalls that in the mid 1960s, 'we'd been invited to play at Cruises Hotel in Limerick by Miriam Wood. We got there to be told that 'the Fed' wouldn't let us play!' (Haran, 2009). Taste's three-musician format, and the choice of material they sought to perform, challenged IFM rulings on the number of musicians required to interpret and present material in live venues, and the type of material it was appropriate to play. According to Donal Gallagher, the IFM, concerned to protect its monopoly on public performance at prominent venues, challenged The Arcadia's proposal to stage Taste as a live act during 1967. Muise (2002) recounts that:

The controversy split the union locally...[a]n extraordinary meeting [of the IFM] was called at the Metropole Hotel one Sunday. If Taste agreed to do an audition for The Federation, they would consider giving the gig their blessing. Rory was insulted. "I've been in a showband long enough and I've proven myself. I'm not going to do an audition for anybody". The union backed down and the performance went ahead. It was a significant victory.

(Muise, 2002:7)

We can conclude that the showbands groups played a limited but formative role in the musical development of first-wave Irish rock musicians. In their

undeniable musical conservatism, the showbands represented a point of crisis, of ideological and cultural struggle, which eventually forced aspiring musicians to explore other musical avenues for achieving critical and commercial success. There was certainly no means for Lynott, Morrison or Gallagher to explore and develop their creative sensibilities in the showbands, as the limited musical remit of the culture would have retarded the evolution of their technical (vocal and instrumental) abilities. At the same time, Irish musicians also benefitted from limited exposure to and immersion in showband culture, by acquiring critical skills in stagecraft, touring and recording. The establishment of a showband-focused production base in Ireland gave rock musicians some access to recording and production facilities in the urban centres, and to their attendant technologies; I discuss this in detail in the following section. The premier showbands could boast a level of musicianship which would have rivalled or surpassed that of most contemporary British and American bands and beat groups; in point of fact, showbands regularly included musicians rigorously trained through institutions such as the Army School of Music.⁶⁵ Rock musicians' exposure to such technical ability in Ireland would have been constructive with respect to their own development, and it is tempting to argue that the differing levels of instrumental technique achieved by Rory Gallagher and Phil Lynott during their professional careers can be traced in part at least to the fact that the former performed with a showband, while the latter did not. Conversely, it seems plausible that Lynott's avoidance of direct involvement with showband culture enabled him to develop a unique approach to musical composition which was, conceptually, melodically and

65 The Saints Showband, for example, included participants from the regional army bands; O'Keefe, 2002:10-12.

lyrically, more creatively oriented than that achieved by Gallagher during the same period.

My intention here is not to conform to a “straights” vs ‘hip youngsters’ dichotomy between showbands and rock culture as essayed in many journalistic accounts of Irish rock. Similarly to Noel McLaughlin (1999), I argue here that an appropriate way to understand the complex relationship between showbands and rock musicians is to focus on the manner in which the majority of musicians in the latter group negotiated the realities of showband culture. Adopting this perspective allows us to conclude that Irish rock musicians gained much from showband culture, either through serving apprenticeships in it (as Gallagher and Morrison did), or by using the culture as a point of opposition from which their own music sprang (Shiels, Lynott, Geldof, Hewson). In terms of its impact on earlier popular cultures (those of the dance bands and the orchestras, for example), and in its successful negotiation of cultural exposure for its proponents in an age of stringent social conservatism, the showbands laid important precedents for the beat and rock groups of the 1960s. In so doing, the showbands performed a progenitor role for first-wave Irish rock musicians similar to that played by skiffle groups in the United Kingdom, and rhythm and blues and rock ‘n’ roll bands in the United States. In short, Irish rock groups’ negotiation of showband culture, their use of the existing music-oriented infrastructure (a limited media, recording facilities, performance spaces) initiated by it, their appeal to managerial models developed through it, and ultimate rejection of its creative limitations nurtured the evolution of Irish rock culture, leading to the eventual outcome of international acclaim for some artists.

Irish Rock and Its Precedents (II): The Beat Scene

Rock musicians' emergence from showband culture, their subsequent challenge to it, and the growth of an audience for Irish rock culture was enabled by the development from the early 1960s of an urban-based 'beat music' scene. As with the rock/showband relationship, the beat/showband interchange was complex, with participants from both cultures performing in the other simultaneously (O'Halloran, 2006). However, key differences obtained between the cultures, and I articulate some of the more important of these in order to demonstrate the contribution of the beat groups to the creation of lasting roots/routes for rock music in Ireland.

The beat scene centred on a series of clubs in Belfast, Derry, Dublin city and county, Galway, Cork and Limerick. Niall Stokes summarises the key transformations which defined Irish beat music:

The beat scene...was full of energy. There were a lot of very good bands. So Irish beat groups were...picking up on the influence of Tamla Motown and Soul. I think they were beginning to realise that it was about something deeper. That there was a deeper well that if they could plug into, there was a kind of a primal power that they could become participants in...a sense that this was about casting off a set of received values. The most visible success in that era was undoubtedly Them, with Van Morrison as lead singer.

(Stokes, FWTS, author's transcription)

Musically, the principal point of reference picked up by the Irish beat groups was rhythm and blues. This continued a trend established by similar groups in the United Kingdom: The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Tridents and later The Yardbirds were typical in their reworking of the musical motifs of

early American rhythm and blues groups, and the crossover artists influenced by them: Eddie Cochran, Buddy Holly, and Gene Vincent (Carson, 2001).

A key appeal of rhythm and blues was its energetic nature, primarily manifest in its foregrounding of rhythm (bass, drums, rhythm guitar and/or piano); compared to styles such as blues or jazz singing, where the function of the music was primarily harmonic support for a virtuosic vocal, the stylistic focus was decidedly rhythmic, with vocals often contributing to this element. Variants as diverse as those produced by the jazz saxophonist Louis Jordan, the guitarist Chuck Berry and the pianists Little Richard and Ray Charles were unified by an insistent, foundational rhythm, overlaid with blues-based musical figures and progressions. Similar to their English counterparts, Irish groups, including Bluesville, Them, The Greenbeats, The Intentions and The Creatures were able to master the performative conventions of rhythm and blues, primarily through close listening to imported recordings.⁶⁶ Describing the impact of the new musical style upon its inception at the Belfast club Rado, Heylin states that:

At a time when word of mouth was all there was, it took only a matter of weeks for these Friday-night sessions to become weekly infernos of fevered rhythm and blues, to crowds whose size exceeded not only expectations but also every safety law in town...[the guitarist] Arty McGlynn...felt that there was a 'totally different energy than you had in a parochial hall or an Orange hall or a civic centre. It was a social revolution – a different mentality – people that wanted out of the system.'

(Heylin, 2002: 68-71)

66 These recordings would have been similar to those to which British blues/rock musicians were exposed; see Carson, 2001: 16-18.

McGlynn illustrates that there was also a social dimension prompting the influx of beat-oriented culture. In the United States, the growing popularity of black music in white culture in the late 1950s signalled dissatisfaction among adolescents with respect to sedimented cultural norms, received ideas regarding social roles, and narratives of socio-economic and racial difference obtaining across the social spectrum.

In the Irish case, while the racial dimension of such a challenge was comparatively minute, performing blues and rhythm and blues-based musical forms was symbolic of the casting off the received values of an older and more conservative culture. Rory Gallagher's televised performance on the RTÉ *Pickin' The Pops* programme in 1965 is representative of Irish youth culture's musical challenge to the conventions of an older traditionalism. I want to briefly investigate this performance here, because it illustrates one way in which Gallagher used his knowledge of beat music to aurally and visually rupture the representative conventions of showband performance in the Irish media.

During his *Pickin' the Pops* performance, Gallagher and the members of the Fontana performed a rhythm and blues track, deviating from their planned showcase of a Buddy Holly song. Power (1990) describes the events:

Teilifis Eireann Studios, Dublin, April 1965. Rory Gallagher causes a big upset on *Pickin' The Pops*....by dropping a pre-arranged Buddy Holly number, 'Valley of Tears'. Instead, he plays a Larry Williams rhythm-and-blues classic, 'Slow Down'. A panel of guests, invited to predict showband disc hits and misses, is shocked at the sight of a rocker with long hair breaking the rules. The studio audience loves it.

(Power, 1990: 368-9)

It is instructive to reflect on the differences between the pre-arranged song that the group rejected, and that which they performed. ‘Valley of Tears’ is a slow tempo (circa 83 bpm) ballad-style track, with instrumentation (organ, guitar, bass and drums) providing an unobtrusive supporting role for the foregrounded, controlled vocal. Thematically, the song is about heartbreak and redemption, with the singer asking to be taken to the Valley of Tears following a traumatic amorous experience. There are biblical/religious and literary resonances evident throughout the song: these occur in the title, in the suffering and implied redemption (or ‘afterlife’) of the protagonist, and in the organ parts, which aurally reference gospel and hymnal music (CD Track 7).⁶⁷

The song with which Gallagher and The Impact chose to replace ‘Valley of Tears, Larry Williams’ ‘Slow Down’, could be described as the antithesis of the Holly track. In the latter work, the instruments assume a primary role: the vocal is placed deeper in the mix, while the driving rhythmic layer of bass, drums, piano, tenor saxophone, and rhythm guitar is foregrounded. The original Williams recording contains a 24-bar saxophone solo, illustrating rhythm and blues’ propensity to act as a structural foundation for instrumental improvisation (CD Track 8).⁶⁸

Conceptually, the literary and the biblical references of the former song are replaced with vivid description of the intense emotions and passionate

67 This religious focus is evident in the lyric: ‘Soft words have been spoken, so sweet and low/But my mind is made up, and I must go/Spend the rest of my days dear, without any cares/Everyone understands me in the valley of tears’. See Fats Domino and Dave Bartholomew, ‘Valley of Tears’, *Buddy Holly*, 1958.

68 This contrasts with ‘Valley of Tears’, in which instrumental soloing is limited to a brief eight-bar organ solo; the solo itself is primarily a repetition of the vocal melody.

dynamics of a youthful relationship. While the protagonist in ‘Valley of Tears’ is incapable of initiating action to offset or improve the emotional trauma he faces, the character in the Williams track is active in the shaping of the emotional outcomes of his relationship. In contrast to the Holly vocal, he is a principal initiating actor in the unfolding narrative, both as a participant in the relationship and as witness to his partner’s infidelities.

Come on pretty baby won’t you walk with me?
Come on, pretty baby won’t you talk with me?
Come on pretty baby, I’ll give one more chance
Try to save our romance
Slow down, baby now you’re movin’ way too fast
You better gimme little lovin’, gimme little lovin’
Brrrrrr - if you want our love to last.

I used to walk you home, baby, after school
Carry your books home, too
But now you got a boyfriend right down the street
Baby what you’re tryin’ to do?
You better slow down!
Baby, no you’re movin’ way too fast
You gotta gimme little lovin’, gimme little lovin’
Ow! If you want our love to last.

Larry Williams, ‘Slow Down’ (1958) Specialty 626

Furthermore, the vocal deliveries are highly contrastive; while the Holly composition is a study in control and understatement, Williams’ vocal contains shouts, screams and percussive vocalisations, delivered in a hoarse, rasping style.

It seems likely that in replacing the Holly composition with the Williams song, the Fontana sought to present the more uncontrolled, elemental and ‘primal’ approach favoured by beat culture and referred to by Stokes above. This can be read as a public critique of the restrictions imposed on performers playing the *Pickin’ The Pops* programme, whose remit was,

essentially, to maintain showband conventionality. The event illustrates that some Irish musicians, having explored beat music and its antecedents, were dissatisfied with performing solely in the received format of the showbands; they expressed this by subverting the demands and norms of the showband-focused Irish recording industry at a nationally-focused media event. The group also confounded the expectations of an Irish television audience, and were able to illustrate that musically, the performative and thematic conventions of the beat groups (Stokes' 'deeper well') had been absorbed by practising Irish popular musicians.⁶⁹

In tune with transitions in the United Kingdom, Irish beat groups essentially dispensed with the sizeable brass and woodwind sections which had assisted in defining the principal showband sound. Following the lead of The Comets, The Crickets and The Shadows, the typical beat group was comprised of bass, drums, lead guitar, rhythm guitar and/or organ/piano. The downsizing in group numbers enabled beat groups to play in smaller venues outside of the ballroom circuit; O'Halloran's study of Irish beat music finds that these groups performed primarily in comparatively limited spaces such as basements, cellars and small clubs (O'Halloran, 2006).⁷⁰ Compared to the showbands, who were distanced physically from their audience by playing on elevated stages in large halls, the beat groups stressed and exploited the proximities of musical performance, by creating a culture in which experiential intimacy was vital: the diminutive size of the spaces in which they worked eroded the distance between performer and

69 The event is an early indication of Gallagher's complex interaction with communicative and broadcast media, which continued with the release of the *Irish Tour '74* documentary and the live broadcasts of the German *Rockpalast* concert series.

70 Participant Alan Dee of The Chessmen states that 'If a club wasn't a cellar, well then it wasn't a club'; quoted in Prendergast, 1987:18.

audience. Furthermore, the emphasis on instrumental improvisation foregrounded in beat culture gave aspiring musicians the opportunity to hone skills in that area; both Rory Gallagher and Van Morrison completed residencies at The Maritime Hotel's Club Rado in Belfast. Barry Devlin, bassist with Celtic-rock group Horslips, illustrates how, with respect to the eventual development of Irish rock and blues-rock culture (typified in the later 1960s by Skid Row and Taste), the beat scene symbolised a transitional moment:

That was the period when there was a transition happening between the beat thing, where you had a rhythm guitar and a lead guitar, where they were moving into where they were being influenced by Hendrix and where...you had lead, bass and drums: the three, the rock three piece.

(Barry Devlin, FWTS, author's transcription)

Furthermore, beat culture provided professional opportunities for aspiring musicians, since managers in search of acts who could generate commercial success similar to that achieved by the Beatles and Rolling Stones regularly visited or administered the beat clubs. Rory Gallagher's initial success as a blues-rock artist with Taste and the Rory Gallagher band followed his encountering manager Eddie Kennedy at Rado; Van Morrison's professional relationship with Mervyn and Phil Solomon developed following his successful performances with Them at the Maritime Hotel (Heylin, 2002).

Irish Rock and its Precedents (III): The Folk Boom

A third major musical strand obtaining in Ireland and influencing the development of an indigenous rock culture was folk music and balladry.

This involved the performance and recording of an assortment of Irish, English, Scottish, American and other folk and instrumental music, in both acoustic and electric contexts.

The growing popularity of folk music in Ireland during the period was partly a consequence of the cultural and artistic developments occurring in folk music throughout the United Kingdom and the United States (as illustrated in Chapter One). The musicians central to folk's development in Ireland were strongly influenced by the works of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, The Weavers, Ramblin' Jack Elliott and Bob Dylan (Irvine, 2010). As with both showband and beat culture, the acceptance of the style in Ireland was also precipitated by the particularities of the Irish case: for example, the transatlantic success of The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem was enabled by the existence of diasporic Irish communities anxious to renew and maintain cultural links with the homeland (O'Flynn, 2009:28; O'Connor, 1990).

The availability of performance spaces for folk musicians in locations such as coffee and public houses supported the genre's development in Irish urban centres. Clannad's harpist and vocalist, Máire ní Bhraonáin, has stated that:

There was a thriving grassroots music scene in Dublin. Folk music was becoming more hip...the boys⁷¹ and I found ourselves with a set of regular folk club gigs in The Coffee Kitchen [Molesworth St.] and The Swamp, two gigs that were becoming extremely popular...through these gigs we were offered further opportunities to do some of the summer festivals and in May of 1972 we had an invite to go across to Brittany to one of the large European events.

71 Ciarán O'Braonáin, Pól O'Braonáin, Noel O'Dúgáin, Pádraig O' O'Dúgáin.

(Ní Bhraonáin and Little, 2000: 69)⁷²

Illustrating the stylistic range of The Coffee Club gathering referred to by Ní Bhraonáin, Andy Irvine, a principal member of both Sweeney's Men and Planxty recounted that:

[T]here on a Friday night I could earn ten bob by singing my Woody Guthrie songs. I was also playing the mandolin at this time, and was influenced by Johnny Moynihan, whose musical taste was as quirky as mine. We sang long ballads that we learned from the Child Collection; we sang songs from the radio ballads that Ewan McColl, Peggy Seeger and Charles Parker had made for the BBC; we sang old-timey songs from the American tradition and we sang and played songs and tunes that we heard on Radio Éireann, collected and presented by Ciarán MacMathúna and his like.

(Irvine, 2010)⁷³

The ability of folk musicians to exploit burgeoning management and commercial structures meant that key groups achieved significant public exposure in Ireland and abroad. The Dubliners' version of 'Seven Drunken Nights' was a Top Twenty hit in the United Kingdom in 1967 (Smyth and Campbell, 2006), while Emmet Spiceland (of which Donal Lunny was a member) performed modern versions of traditional folk songs at high-profile national events such as the GAA All-Ireland finals. A progressive publicity and marketing campaign led to that group's charting at No.1 with 'Mary Of Dungloe'.⁷⁴ In addition, the Irvine-Moynihan-Woods incarnation of Sweeney's men achieved an Irish Top Ten single with 'Old Maid In the Garret' / 'The Derby Ram', recorded at Eamonn Andrews Studios in Dublin. Under the management of Roddy Hickson and Gerry McDonagh,

72 The musician and producer Donal Lunny, a participant in the folk music scene developing around Slattery's pub on Capel St., Dublin, notes that the clubs 'were such a healthy element. They were platforms where people could, you know, stretch their legs to try things out, to sing, to perform'; see Lunny, *FWTS*.

73 <http://www.andyirvine.com/bio/bio-3.html>; accessed 21/11/2010.

74 See <http://www.irish-showbands.com/images/folk/bjxemmetspiceland68.htm>; accessed 22/11/2010.

Sweeney's Men also recorded their eponymous debut for the British folk label Transatlantic.⁷⁵ The rising popularity of folk music among Irish audiences illustrates the manner in which folk and popular music intertwined, both musically and economically, in Irish and other cultural contexts.

Combined with the advances in musicianship enabled by the composer Sean O'Riada and his group Ceoltóirí Chualann,⁷⁶ folk and traditional music maintained a high cultural profile in Ireland in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Given the visibility of folk music in Irish culture, it is not surprising that key elements of folk music were absorbed into the music and performance practices of Irish rock musicians. For example, the emphasis on the literary, which Van Morrison and Phil Lynott repeatedly explored in their own compositions, has resonances in folk music – Sweeney's Men and The Dubliners both took their names, and aspects of their lyrical styles, from the creations of the Irish literary imagination.⁷⁷ Irish rock artists' use of the song as a vehicle for the description, idealisation and critique of local life adapts a key attribute of the folk song. I discuss this in detail in Chapter Four, in a consideration of space and place in the Irish rock text, but offer one brief example here, that of the Lynott composition 'Dublin'. Against a melancholic soundscape, created by the use of minor chords played on reverberated guitar and electric piano, Lynott's lyric adopts principal conventions of poetic verse (rhyming scheme, assonance, rhetoric), while

75 See Colin Harper's (2004) liner notes to *The Legend of Sweeney's Men* compilation compact disc.

76 A key aspect of O'Riada's achievement was to create an intricate hybridised style, 'defined by its character as music for 'attentive listening' rather than communal dancing' (O'Flynn, 2009: 28).

77 In the cases of nomenclature, from Flann O'Brien and James Joyce respectively.

evoking the tropes of emigration, longing and loss customarily captured in traditional folksong:⁷⁸

After our affair, I swore that I'd leave Dublin
And in that line, I'd left behind
The years, the tears, the memories and you, in Dublin

At the quays, friends come and say farewell
We'd laugh and joke and smoke
And later on the boat, I'd cry over you, in Dublin

How can I leave the town that brings me down
That has no jobs, is blessed by God
And makes me cry? Dublin
And at sea with flowing hair, I'd think of Dublin
Of Grafton Street and Derby Square
And those for whom I really care and you
In Dublin.

Phil Lynott, 'Dublin' *New Day EP* (Decca F13208), 1971

I allude to the Irish folk and traditional 'scenes' here because I want to signal that folk music provided some of the thematic material, structural prototypes and narrative contexts found in first-wave Irish rock songs. In particular, Phil Lynott seems to have been strongly influenced by the centrality of the song in folk music, as his own compositions draw on musical and thematic elements previously developed by traditional musicians, by folk groups such as Sweeney's Men and by the absorption of folk and traditional idioms by psychedelic folk and folk-rock groups,, such as Dr. Strangely Strange and Mellow Candle (Hodgett and Harper, 2004). In the style developed by Dr. Strangley Strange during the late 1960s, the instrumental signifiers of Irish traditional music (fiddle, whistle, mandolin,

78 Consider, for example, 'My Dearest Dear', 'Leaving of Liverpool' or 'Dark Eyed Sailor', which reference both the romantic, the emigrant and the sea songs aspects of traditional folksong, as Lynott's composition does; he returned to this trope in later compositions, such as 'Philomena' on the *Fighting* (1975) album.

banjo) are developed as improvisational instruments, and mixed into original arrangements featuring classical, choral, rock, English and American folk and psychedelic musical styles ('Kilmanoyadd Stomp', 'Mary Malone of Moscow', 'Planxty Roland', 'Sign of My Mind') (CD Track 9). Similar to Lynott and the early Thin Lizzy, the group had a strong interest in the late 1960s American west coast sound (see Fig. 5), which often fused folk idioms and psychedelic rock; the Irish groups energetically explored the cultural attitudes adopted by the emerging psychedelic culture.⁷⁹

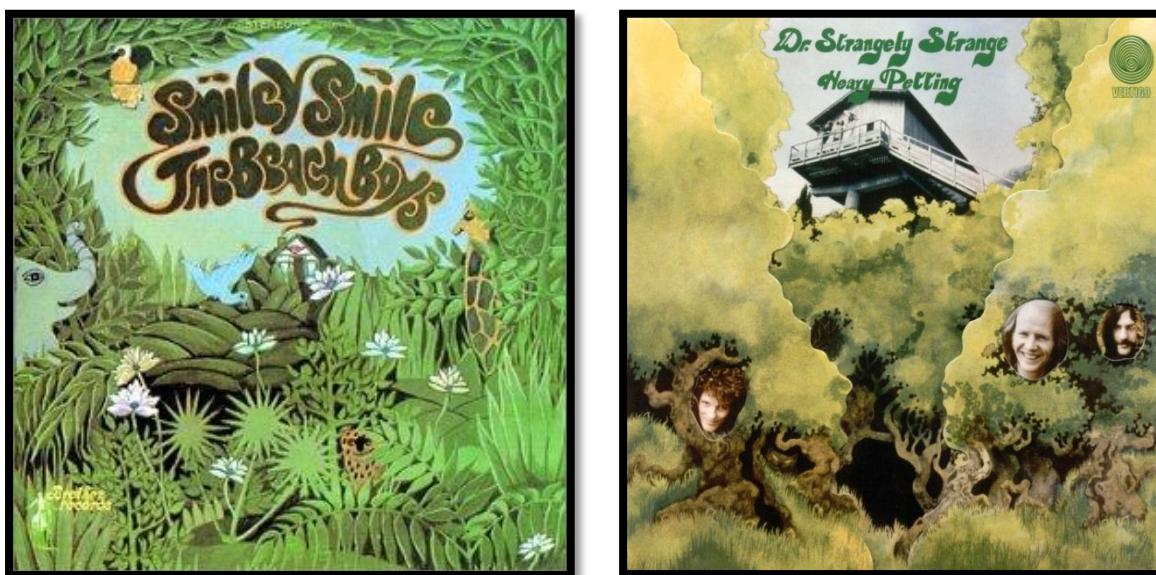


Figure 4: Visual influence of The Beach Boys' *Smiley Smile* (1967) on Dr. Strangely Strange's *Heavy Petting* (1970).⁸⁰

The influence of the folk-rock style on Phil Lynott's artistic development is clear. Lynott's proximity to the band was enabled by their rehearsing at The

79 Illustrating the complexity of musical influence informing the group's compositional style, Dr. Strangely Strange member Tim Goulding states that: 'To the age of sixteen I was only interested in classical music, and then I started to listen to the likes of [jazz musicians] Thelonius Monk and Charlie Mingus. Soon Little Richard had my pulse racing and of course the Rolling Stones and the psychedelic music of the Beatles. Come the Summer of Love (1967) the west coast American sounds were filtering through to Dublin on "plastic slices" featuring Country Joe and The Fish, Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead and many more. Steve Miller was a big favourite with his breathy bluesy delivery and stream of consciousness production'. <http://www.timgoulding.com/music/interview.shtml>; accessed 5/9/2011.

80 Note the various similarities between the album covers: the arboreal scene; correlation of building with titles; hidden animal/human characters; aural correlation of 'Strangely Strange' and 'Smiley Smile'.

Orphanage, a Sandymount house owned by a girlfriend of member Tim Goulding. This has been described as a location where ‘beat and folk musicians, including Lynott, would come and go’.⁸¹ Lynott’s pre-Thin Lizzy group, also called Orphanage (which included former Sweeney’s Men member Terry Woods), was envisioned as a ‘loose lineup with members coming and going’.⁸² This reflected the practices of Dr. Strangely Strange, whose second recording, *Heavy Petting*, featured performances from a number of folk and rock musicians, including Andy Irvine, Johnny Moynihan, the guitarist Gary Moore and bassist Brush Shiels; folk musicians Terry and Gay Woods also briefly performed with the group.⁸³

Lynott certainly tapped into the sonic outcomes of Dr. Strangely Strange’s folk-rock fusions. His tendency to reference Irish placenames and locations (Dublin, Clontarf, ‘Éireann’, Cork, Kerry) in lyrical composition resonates with a similar convention on the Dr. Strangely Strange albums *Kip of the Serenes* (1969) and *Heavy Petting* (1970); ‘Going To Poulaphouca’, ‘Tale of Two Orphanages’ and ‘Gave My Love an Apple’ refer to Irish streets and locations in the same manner. It is likely that Lynott’s use of unusual time signatures and melodic material from the folk repertoire was partly influenced by a comparable strategy on the Dr. Strangely Strange recordings. A lyrical parallel between Thin Lizzy and Dr. Strangely Strange concerns the invocation of the redemptive figure of Mary:

Mary, won’t you help me?
The going’s getting heavy again
Sacred row is the place for me and the fir is the place for the wren.

81 <http://www.irishrock.org/irodः/bands/orphanage.html>; accessed 23/11/2010.

82 <http://www.irishrock.org/irodः/bands/orphanage.html>; accessed 23/11/2010.

83 <http://www.myspace.com/drstrangelystrange>; accessed 23/11/2010; also <http://gaywoods.homestead.com/DrStrangelyStrange.html>; accessed 23/11/2010.

Dr Strangely Strange, 'Mary Malone of Moscow', *Heavy Petting* (1970)

Who's going to help you
When you feel you've had enough?
Mother Mary, this time it's rough

Thin Lizzy, 'She Knows', *Nightlife* (1974)

Lynott acknowledged Dr. Strangely Strange's influence in 'Brought Down' on the album *Shades of a Blue Orphanage* (1972); that composition laments the demise of the group through its inclusion of the lyric 'what a shame/there's no more Dr Strangely Strange'. The same album featured the harpsichord and mellotron playing of folk-rock musician and Mellow Candle member Clodagh Simonds; she and her group were Deram Records labelmates with Thin Lizzy when Mellow Candle recorded *Swaddling Songs* in 1972.

Popular Music Production and Distribution in Ireland

The chapter's second section investigates the infrastructural facilities available to rock musicians in Ireland. It does so in order to describe the practical circumstances faced by aspiring musicians with respect to critical aspects of rock production: production and distribution, management and media. Drawing on interviews with musicians and a prominent studio technician working in recording facilities during the 1950s and 1960s, I argue that Ireland was comparatively underdeveloped with respect to sound recording and production technologies, though Irish rock musicians were able to avail of facilities oriented towards the showband enterprise, in establishing themselves as internationally prominent professionals. As McCann (2005) notes, the 'fascinating lives of particular people' are central to the understanding of key aspects of the development of popular music

culture (McCann, 2006:57). Therefore, I integrate personal recollections from two musicians who participated in the Irish rock scene during the period examined. Cha Haran was a member of the 1960s Limerick-based beat group Granny's Intentions; he provided a detailed and informative interview for this research during 2009. Jim Lockhart was the keyboardist with the popular and critically acknowledged 'Celtic rock' group Horslips. Horslips were active throughout the 1970s, and played a pivotal role in establishing the infrastructural framework of the Irish rock industry.⁸⁴

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, production is 'the action or an act of producing, making, or causing anything'; it also connotes 'the manufacture of goods for sale and consumption' and refers to 'the action or process of producing a play, record, film, etc.'⁸⁵ Developing these designations, for the purpose of this thesis, by 'production' I refer to the complex practice of composing, recording and producing rock music, and the mechanical reproduction of such music in readiness for distribution as a commercial and artistic product. As Burgess notes, production includes the collaborative interchange of labour by artist, engineer, producer, and executives (Burgess, 2001; also Negus, 1992, 1997). It embodies intricate processes involving technology, musicianship, economics and legal dimensions occurring both in the studio and within record company structures (Negus, 1999: 24-30; Visconti, 2007).

84 Mr Lockhart was contacted through Raidio Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ). Through telephone discussions with him and with the group's bassist, Mr Barry Devlin, I learned that a documentary film, *Return of the Dancehall Sweethearts*, focused on the Irish music industry at key junctures in its development. Mr Lockhart also provided further information on recording studios and the rock scene in Dublin during the 1960s and 1970s via e-mail correspondence.

85 See OED online;
http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50189370?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=production&first=1&max_to_show=10 accessed 25/7/10.

The *OED* also illustrates that distribution relates to ‘dispersal’, ‘apportionment and allotment’.⁸⁶ In the context of the current study, distribution refers to the practices, processes and mechanisms of publicly promoting and selling commercial musical recordings. Distribution involves physical infrastructure: processing and production plants, transport and communication networks. It also has a legal dimension, since it involves negotiation between producers, distributors and commercial outlets; distribution also includes the advertising and promotion of musical recordings.

O’Halloran’s research finds that during the early years of Irish rock culture, there existed basic recording facilities for beat (and later rock) groups in the major urban centres (O’Halloran, 2006:74-8). Bluesville and The Kingbees, two established groups from the Dublin beat scene, recorded singles at Eamonn Andrews and at Ardmore Studios (a Wicklow film studio) respectively; previously, Bluesville had recorded a number of tracks at a basement studio in Merrion Square, owned by Peter Sellwood. The creative dimension of beat music, which led to groups composing and performing their own material, coupled with the ongoing commercial concerns of the showbands (which had perceptively recognised and exploited the economic potential of recording), illustrates that the need for studio access in Ireland was increasing throughout the 1960s.

86 See OED online,
http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50067464?query_type=word&queryword=distribution&first=1&max_to_show=10&single=1&sort_type=alpha: accessed 26/7/10.

The small studios which did exist in Dublin originally developed to produce commercial sound recordings for radio. Eamonn Andrews Studios on Henry St. was a typical example of such a facility. Originally known as Broadcasting Theatrical Productions, it produced ‘sponsored programmes for Radio Éireann, and was not built to record groups’ (O’Halloran, 2006). However, the Dublin studios increasingly sought to engage with the showbands, because these were a lucrative sector of popular music business in Ireland (Power, 2000). An advertisement for the Andrews facility published during the period was directly oriented toward the showband market (O’Halloran, 2006:77). O’Halloran’s research finds that technologically, the Eamonn Andrews studios were comparatively rudimentary. Equipment was limited to ‘eight channels for the instruments going to one channel on the mixing desk’ (O’Halloran, 2006:77). Over time, the remit of the facility did expand to include popular music groups, and facilities did improve. Eamonn Andrews was used by key folk and folk-rock groups during the period, including Clannad and Sweeney’s Men.⁸⁷

Avondale Studios was a small studio opened by Ciaran Breathnach in 1965, (originally located in the EMI Building on Lower Dominic St, and later in Herbert St., Dublin). Technical engineer Paddy Gibbons recalls recording there with Phil Lynott in 1968 and 1969.⁸⁸ Gibbons states that when commercial recordings were finished for the day, he would experiment with rock and beat material. Maximum session times for beat groups were between two to three hours. Recording facilities at Avondale were limited to three microphones connected to a recording desk. Guitar and bass were

87 http://www.u2setlists.com/various_dates.shtml; accessed 10.02.09.

88 Lynott recorded at Avondale with Skid Row in 1968, and with Orphanage in 1969. Dave Fanning also reports that in the mid 1990s, the music publication *Hot Press* released a CD of demo recordings made by Phil Lynott at Trend Studios, an 8-track recording facility adjacent to Baggott Street; Drive Time, RTE Radio, Friday January 5th, 2007. <http://www.rte.ie/arts/2007/0105/lynottp.html>; accessed 09.02.09.

connected directly to the desk. Using two-track machines, Gibbons created phased effects in musical recordings through the painstaking process of copying material from one two-track machine to another, and subsequently altering the playback speeds of these recordings while bouncing it to a third recorder.⁸⁹ The situation in Belfast was similar to Dublin. Heylin (2002) quotes Peter Cromie's description of 'the one and only studio in Northern Ireland', in which Them recorded their first demo tape:

We couldn't record during the day. We were above a solicitor's office, so we had to wait until he'd gone home. We had a Revox.⁹⁰ [It was] very simple. Five mics, no EQ, no compression.

(Cromie, quoted in Heylin, 2002: 74)

In developing recording capabilities, Irish studios could draw on very limited, but equally invaluable, indigenous expertise. Paddy Gibbons, responsible for recording some of Phil Lynott's earliest work with Orphanage, recalls in interview that Captain Bill Stapleton, an ex-Irish army engineer and the founder of Silverpine (Ardmore) Studios, built effective recording and post-production devices to record showbands, beat and rock groups; Stapleton also worked as an engineer on various recording and broadcast projects, and trained upcoming engineers (Gibbons, 2009).⁹¹ Accordingly, some development did occur in Dublin during the 1970s: Trend Studios, adjacent to Baggott St, had 8-track recording facilities

89 Gibbons spoke in an interview with Dave Fanning, *Drive Time*, RTE Radio, Friday, January 5th, 2007; <http://www.rte.ie/arts/2007/0105/lynott.html>; accessed 09.02.09.

90 A recording machine manufactured by the Swiss Company Studer; the machine was probably a two-track Revox E-36, or possibly Revox G36; see <http://www.reeltoreel.de/worldwide/HistoryE.htm>; <http://audiotools.com/vr2r.html>, and <http://koti.mbnet.fi/siliconf/JukkaTolonen/ga/revox/revox.html>; accessed 10.02.09.

91 See http://clancybrothersandtommymakem.com/cbtm_d18_recorded_live.htm; http://dxarchive.com/ireland_a_to_z_irish_pirates_tipperary.html; <http://www.cinematographers.nl/PaginasDoPh/deasy.htm>; accessed 10/5/2011.

installed there, and were used by Phil Lynott and Skid Row during this period.⁹²



Figure 5: Recording equipment built by Capt. Bill Stapleton, Silverpine Studios; author's photographs.

However, in a recent interview, keyboardist Jim Lockhart noted that the status of recording facilities in Ireland during the 1970s was 'not very healthy' (Lockhart, 2009).⁹³ The fact that the tiny Eamonn Andrews Studios was still a key facility for recording in 1978, when the emerging U2 recorded tracks there, shows that recording facilities on the island remained in a state of underdevelopment.

92 New Spotlight rock critic Pat Egan noted that 'Skid Row's 'Dublin City Girls'...does prove that the sound is there in Eamonn Andrews studios if the right musicians go in to get it out'. See <http://www.barrymccabe.com/newspotlightmagazine/>; accessed 14.02.09.

93 Telephone interview, 09/02/09. Lockhart's group Horslips overcame the ongoing lack of multi-track facilities in Ireland by recording their first album, *Happy To Meet, Sorry to Part*, using a mobile 24-track recording unit rented from The Rolling Stones. This event, which received significant media coverage, allowed the group to strategically present themselves as the first Irish rock group to use mobile recording, and thus develop the existing structures of Ireland's rock industry. Of the acclaimed 'first wave' Irish rock acts, Horslips were unique in recording some of their later albums in Dublin studios. In addition to Jeff Beck's Escape Studios, Kent, Richard Branson's The Manor in Oxfordshire, and Rockfield Studios in Monmouth, Wales, Horslips used Lombard and Westland Studios, Dublin, for recording later albums such as *The Book of Invasions*.

The situation which obtained in Ireland *vis a vis* access to production suites compares poorly with the United Kingdom and US during the same period, where a growing number of technologically advanced studios existed to service the needs of popular music groups (Branson, 1998; McDermott, 1995). For example, a 1973 advertisement for Richard Branson's Manor Studios in Oxfordshire lists extensive facilities, including 4-, 8- and 16-track recording, 20 channel mixing desk, EQ, Dolby noise reduction, quadrophonic monitoring, grand piano, and echo facilities.⁹⁴ From the time of his earliest UK recordings at DeLane Lea Studios, London, 1966, Jimi Hendrix had access to 4-track recording facilities (McDermott, 1995: 22); by 1968, Hendrix had access to eight- and twelve-track recording at the Record Plant and Hit Factory in New York. London studios also had additional specialised equipment to record rock and pop groups, including condenser and drum microphones and guitar effects units, and could deliver complex post-recording production techniques, such as phasing and panning, with relative ease (McDermott, 1995). In Hendrix's case, his manager Chas Chandler had access to a variety of recording studios where production work could be carried out even when the DeLane Lea studios were occupied. Richard Branson notes that during 1972, Mike Oldfield could '[make] over 2,300 recordings' at Manor Recording studios, in the production of *Tubular Bells* (Branson, 1998: 105). This compares favourably with Irish studios, where rock musicians had access to two to three hours of recording time in the cramped conditions of domestic recording facilities (O'Halloran, 2006, 77).

Based on this evidence, it seems logical to suggest that throughout the 1960s and 1970s, major Irish artists intent on producing works technically

94 Liner notes to *Tubular Bells*, 25th Anniversary Edition, 1998.

comparable to those being produced at the forefront of rock culture would favour recording facilities in the United Kingdom and United States. While it cannot be assumed that this was the only factor leading internationally profiled Irish rock musicians to record music outside of Ireland, it is clear that available recording facilities were limited in number, size and technological capability, and this lack was a ‘push’ factor influencing first-wave musicians to record abroad. Accordingly, the majority of albums recorded by first-wave musicians in the classic rock era were recorded in the United States or the United Kingdom (figure below).

| Artist | Album/Year | Recording Location |
|----------------|---|--|
| Horslips | <i>Happy To Meet, Sorry To Part/ 1972</i> | Longfield House, Tipperary |
| Horslips | <i>The Táin/ 1974</i> | Lombard Studios, Dublin |
| Clannad | <i>Clannad 2</i> | Eamonn Andrews, Dublin |
| Rory Gallagher | <i>Rory Gallagher/ 1971</i> | Advision Studios, London |
| Rory Gallagher | <i>Blueprint/ 1973</i> | Marquee Studios/Polydor Studios, London |
| Rory Gallagher | <i>Tattoo/ 1973</i> | Polydor Studios, London |
| Van Morrison | <i>Astral Weeks/ 1968</i> | Century Sound Studios, New York |
| Van Morrison | <i>Tupelo Honey/ 1971</i> | Wally Heider/Columbia Studios, San Francisco |
| Van Morrison | <i>Veedon Fleece/ 1974</i> | Caledonia Studios, California /Mercury Studios, New York |
| Thin Lizzy | <i>Shades of a Blue Orphanage/ 1972</i> | DeLane Lea, London |

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Thin Lizzy | <i>Jailbreak</i> /1976 | Ramport, Battersea |
| Thin Lizzy | <i>Johnny the Fox</i> /1976 | Ramport, Battersea |

Figure 6 (Sample) spread of recording studios used by Irish rock musicians, 1968-78

Management

For the purposes of this chapter, I follow descriptions from published literature by equating ‘management’ with the administration and professional supervision of a musical act by an individual or group (Negus, 1999). Fink refers to management as one of the recording artist’s key ‘long-term associates’ (Fink, 1989: 91-100). In exchange for a managerial fee and/or other material and related benefits, acts gain access to a manager’s industrial and legal expertise, contacts and executive capabilities. A manager liaises between recording, publishing and distribution companies, and between producers and artists; s/he is often afforded primarily responsibility for interfacing between artists and the business-oriented aspects of musical culture: organising clients’ performances and touring schedules, financial administration, hiring and co-ordinating road crews, overseeing recording contracts, royalty provision, promotion and publicity work (Cole, 2001; Chris Welch, 2003; Negus, 1992; Fenster and Swiss, 1999). Astute management is critical to the commercial success of any major rock act, and the actions of a manager can also affect an artists’ status in terms of their relationship to audiences and critics (Negus, 1999; Ro, 1999). In classic rock culture, managerial styles varied considerably, but were generally based on meritocratic principles (Taylor, 2004).

The first business and management practices relating to popular music in Ireland were those defined by the showband culture (O'Halloran, 2006: 76-78). Describing the Saints Showband, a typical professional group of this kind, O'Keefe details the role of Pat Noone, the manager:

A manager was appointed to look after the affairs of the band...Pat did a great job in a very competitive market, and made an effort to personally attend as many gigs as possible. He was also responsible for the UK and USA tours and the 'Showband Show' appearance of the band.

(O'Keefe, 2002: 31)

As a member of Taste, Gallagher had experienced hierarchical management structures typical of rock culture under Eddie Kennedy. I argue that Kennedy is an important figure in the discourse because it was in partnership with him that Gallagher negotiated a cross-channel move, and achieved initial exposure on the rock circuit. To date, minimal facts are known about Kennedy; investigation of over two hundred interviews, reviews and appraisals of Gallagher's career reveal little information about Kennedy's background, experience or management strategy.⁹⁵ This is a significant lacuna in Irish rock history, given that Kennedy also managed Them, another Irish group that achieved international success and critical acclaim (and provided a mediating point between showbands and the international rock culture for Van Morrison). Following Taste's acrimonious split, Gallagher was unwilling to discuss details regarding Kennedy in any depth. Rogan (2002) describes him an entrepreneurial figure, a Belfast-based dance instructor attracted to music management after witnessing Van Morrison's Maritime performances. Harper (2004: 228) records that subcultural interest in Taste in the twilight of the beat boom

95 Two archives, those at [RoryOn.com](http://www.roryon.com/articles.html) and Rock's Back Pages, totalling approximately 220 articles, were searched. <http://www.roryon.com/articles.html>; accessed 27/11/2010; <http://www.rocksbackpages.com/results.html?SearchText=rory+gallagher&Term=phrase&Year=0&Arti st=0&Writer=0&Subject=0&Publication=0&Page=1>; accessed 27/11/2010.

convinced Kennedy to contact Mervyn Solomon, a record wholesaler with ‘real music business contacts in London’. Subsequently, Kennedy managed Taste, negotiating for the group following their initial move to London. Muise (2002) and McAvoy and Chrissp (2005) suggest that Kennedy was a shadowy figure, replacing original Taste members Damery and Kitteringham with two of his own clients, Wilson and McCracken; they also state that Kennedy misappropriated the band’s finances (McAvoy and Chrissp, 2005: 41).⁹⁶ Whatever the circumstances, Kennedy steered Taste to extraordinary critical success and public acclaim in Europe. Lauded in the press by John Lennon, Taste rose to prominence in the UK and on the continent, achieving Top Ten singles, headlining major tours, and performing at the Isle of Wight in 1970.

In the spring of 1969 Taste hit even greater heights when they not only broke the London Marquee’s attendance record previously set by Jimi Hendrix but were also chosen as the support act for Cream’s famous farewell gig at the Royal Albert Hall...Taste were to tour the USA and Canada supporting Eric Clapton’s new supergroup, Blind Faith....[t]he band, or so it seemed to the fans, could do no wrong.

(McAvoy and Chrissp, 2005:41)

The subsequent demise of Taste led Gallagher to revise his management arrangements. He initially managed himself, and subsequently (if unofficially) ceded management responsibilities to his brother Donal (Muise, 2002). Gallagher reported to *Record Mirror* magazine that his experiences as a showband musician gave shape to the post-Taste strategy of self-management:

Since the days when I used to play in showbands in Ireland and we could not afford a manager or an agent, I used to go to the gigs with my little black book...that was all the administration we needed. I don’t really mean any disrespect to my previous manager...you ought to be able to book yourself into a hotel.

⁹⁶ Harper states that Gallagher’s interaction with Kennedy has involved ‘protracted litigation’ against ‘Kennedy and his heirs’; see Harper in Hodgett and Harper, 2004: 235.

(Gallagher in Altham, 1971)

Perhaps Gallagher's comments here offer an overly simplistic account of his formative experiences of management strategies, but what is notable is that similarly to aspects of his performance style, the antecedents of his professional outlook as a rock musician have roots in his early experiences in the showbands.



Figure 6: Promotional Posters for Taste concerts and Isle of Wight Festival appearance (1970)⁹⁷

Advanced business models, developed in response to transformations at the Anglo-American cultural centre, would not be practised in Ireland until the 1970s. U2 and Horslips are two key examples of groups who transformed the antiquated practices of music management of rock and popular music in Ireland. Under the management of Michael Deeny, Horslips developed radical and favourable strategies for licensing and distribution of recorded material. First, they financed the release of two singles, and used the revenue created to fund the recording of their first album. Second, they negotiated advantageous arrangements with major labels with regard to licensing and distribution.

⁹⁷ Rorygallagher.com, 2011; soundonsound.com, 2011.

Developing existing ties between himself and Horslips,⁹⁸ Paul McGuinness and Deeny had organised the first rock concert at the RDS (Royal Dublin Showground). Eschewing contemporary trends, Deeny rejected proposals from popular folk-rock labels at the time, securing licensing contracts instead with major labels RCA and Atlantic records. A model of touring and recording was established, in which touring was used to finance recording, and recordings used to open new markets, which would subsequently be toured. Using this model, the group built up considerable markets in Ireland, the UK and Europe. McElhatton (2005) concludes:

All eleven albums were recorded, produced, pressed and promoted by [Horslips'] own label in conjunction with the majors on a strictly partnership basis. Distribution abroad was handled by the majors under licence. The contracts they signed with Horslips were so heavily favourable to the band that even mandatory clauses such as the 'reasonable technical standard' clause (a clause that stipulates that bands deliver tapes of listenable quality to their companies) were omitted at the band's insistence.

(Linnane, 2005; author's transcription)

Pat Egan wrote about Horslips' managerial success in *New Spotlight* in 1973:

Nice to see Horslips coming in for so much good press across the water, they are certainly spreading a very cool image for Irish teenagers and deserve all the support home fans can give them now when they really need it. The new album is being nicely timed for the Christmas market...While I haven't always seen eye to eye with the group's manager Michael Deeny, I think the way he is handling the band not only at home but in Britain is nothing short of perfect. I won't be in the least bit surprised if they break through across the water.

(Egan, 1973)

98 In *Return of the Dancehall Sweethearts*, McGuinness states that he and Deeny had previously operated a mobile disco together; he first encountered Horslips when he worked as an extra in the Harp Lager commercial in which they initially performed as a group.

Deeny's success was subsequently emulated by McGuinness, whose business strategies were crucial to U2's unprecedented commercial success during the 1980s and 1990s. Paul McGuinness concurs regarding Deeny's managerial ability:

In many ways, Horslips and Michael [Deeny] led the way for me...Michael changed everything in the Irish music scene...No one could deny that their business model and their acumen was second to none.

(McGuinness, in McElhatton, 2005; author's transcription)

Such business acumen was vital in an era in which record companies gained a negative reputation for the manner in which record deals were negotiated. Ian Whitcomb of the Dublin beat group Bluesville reflected on the group's achieving a top ten US Hit with the song 'You Turn Me On':

The money that I made off that record is made through the publishing...I haven't seen any money from sales of that record since 1965, nothing.

(Ian Whitcomb, quoted in O'Halloran, 2006: 60)

Critical Media

In offering the designation 'critical media', I refer to a range of media dedicated to presenting, disseminating, analysing and critiquing popular music, divided broadly into print and broadcasting categories. Print media are largely comprised of periodically (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly) published specialist magazines, which range from self-published fanzines to nationally-distributed publications. These magazines, which had their antecedents in classical analysis and musicology (Fink, 1989: 202-8) developed in conjunction with burgeoning popular musical styles, and sought to develop a critical language which described the cultural, symbolic

and political intricacies of popular music. Publications such as *Rolling Stone*, *Creem* and *Crawdaddy* in the US, *New Musical Express*, *Record Mirror* and *Record Collector* in the United Kingdom offered analysis of musicians' recordings, public image, cultural orientation and identity. These publications were critical in establishing the principal norms of the Anglo-American rock aesthetic, in influencing musical directions and shaping consumers' musical tastes. Print media also includes space afforded to rock and popular music in national broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. Broadcast media includes radio and television; both radio, and later, television played crucial roles in the dissemination, popularity and marketing of rock and popular music. Dedicated radio programmes shape public taste by breaking new acts, as British DJs John Peel and Kid Jensen did on their respective BBC Radio 1 and Radio Luxembourg radio shows (Putterford, 2002).

For rock musicians, the significance of radio as medium was central: it was a primary means of broadcasting musical recordings, and therefore central to any artist's own development through the expansion of audience. As I discuss below, McLaughlin and McLoone have deliberated on the significance of radio in forming Van Morrison's musical identity.

Radio both reflected and influenced popular taste, with directors, promoters, researchers, DJs, and consultants shaping station format, chart rankings and programming (Fink, 1989: 150-155; Negus, 1999: 115-9). Radio broadcast is seminal in the internationalisation of evolving sounds: its transcendence of geographical and political boundaries means that popular music can migrate across a range of borders, including national ones (Malm and Wallis, 1992). For example, radio was key in the development of

reggae's international status, because Jamaican artists, upon hearing the sounds of Chicago soul via American radio stations, were influenced to appropriate vocal and musical idioms from the latter musical style.⁹⁹ Illustrating the importance of radio to the recording artist Johnny Cash, Miller notes that as a youth, Cash explored an expanding series of musical cultures broadcast across the southern United States through radio:

JR [Cash] began listening to the radio every chance he got...On Sundays, he would look for the songs he was used to hearing in church while, at other times, he would surf the airwaves checking out the already considerable list of stations broadcasting to the pre-television masses, WWVA out of Wheeling, West Virginia, WSM (home of *The Grand Ole Opry*, the most popular country music show and the spiritual heart of country music in years to come) from Nashville, Tennessee and XERL, Del Rio, Texas.

(Miller, 2003: 21)¹⁰⁰

What I have sought to illustrate here is that with respect to popular music, critical media describes the totality of media utilised to promote and present rock music: a range of diverse publications, radio and television broadcasts (Regev, 2000; O'Halloran, 2006). During the 1960s, little existed in Ireland in terms of rock-oriented critical media. O'Keefe has detailed the radio and television programming available to Irish audiences and musicians.

The first real indication that there were other things happening music-wise out there in the larger world was the Top Twenty broadcast by Radio Luxembourg – 'The Station of the Stars' – on 208 on the medium wave. It aired on Sunday nights from 10pm to twelve midnight and became required listening for those with the means to tune into it. It created a buzz and excitement that the regulated and strictly controlled youngsters of Ireland, of whom I was one, wanted to be part of.

99 When added to the (indigenous) sounds of rocksteady and nyabinghi, and (international) rock instrumentation and production values, a globally accessible musical style was created. See Bradley, 2000.

100 Participating in performances broadcast on radio was instrumental to Cash's popularity as a professional musician; appearing initially on *The Louisiana Hayride* and, following the success of early compositions including 'I Walk The Line' and 'Folsom Prison Blues', on *The Grand Ole Opry* earned Cash a significant listening public. Radio was an important foundation for Cash's achievement of superstar status as a solo artist in the early and middle 1950s (Miller, 2003, 65-68).

(O'Keefe, 2002:18-19)

In contrast, rock groups in the US were legitimized, supported and promoted by publications such as *Crawdaddy!*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Creem*. These publications provided analysis, commentary and criticism of pop and rock acts. In *Crawdaddy!* magazine, in-depth profiles of popular musicians and critical reviews of new releases were published alongside political analysis and travel writing. In terms of Irish rock, these magazines were instrumental in building the public profile of Van Morrison. While Morrison sought to differentiate his 'Caledonian Soul' from the emerging rock 'canon', his commercial success was secured partly by the attention paid to him by rock journalists establishing a sophisticated critical language to describe and legitimise rock music. Features on Morrison ran in several key American publications, including *Creem*, *ZigZag*, and *Rolling Stone*. A typical interview with Morrison from 1970 expounds his 'mythic' qualities through allusions to his migratory background, while announcing his critical importance as a musician:

Van Morrison sits on the edge of the bed and absently picks an old Gibson. He is moody, his eyes intense and his smile sudden; his Belfast accent is thick but musical, statements often lilting into a half question mark...Van left home at the age of 15 and has been on the streets or on the road ever since... Van is 24 now; he will probably be one of the most important singers of our time.

Traum, 1970

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, *New Musical Express* (NME) and *Melody Maker* helped establish the parameters of the rock aesthetic, critiqued popular taste, and supported the development of rock mythology based around key musicians. Again, Morrison was to the fore, and was featured throughout the 1970s in *NME*, *Melody Maker*, and *Cream*. Richard Williams' description of a Morrison concert locates Morrison's music and performance in the context of African-American musicianship – Ray

Charles, blues piano, jump blues saxophone. The effect is to confer a strong sense of authenticity, in terms of the musicians' performative abilities, and their knowledge of the blues tradition, onto the performance.

Jeff Labes' rhapsodic blues piano, rippling against the strings, introduces Ray Charles' 'I Believe To My Soul', one of the musical high-points of the entire concert. The stop-time breaks, leaving space for Van's vocals, are incredibly precise and dramatic. They play 'These Dreams Of You' exactly as they did at the Fillmore East in 1970 complete with Shroer's raucous alto solo – he looks just too damn young to play in such a mature, old-time style. The ghosts of a hundred Harlem jump altoists rise and applaud.

(Richard Williams, 1973)

Critical pieces on Rory Gallagher were published in *NME*, *Melody Maker*, *Sounds*, *Record Mirror* and *Guitar Player* during the 1970s. Gallagher did not enjoy the same level of acclaim as Morrison in the American rock press; in surveying key publications of the time, I found no evidence of sustained critical attention to his recordings or performances. In a piece which described Gallagher's debut solo album as 'positively moribund', celebrated critic Lester Bangs stated:

The scam is that once there was this fairly jiveass-hotsy Irish bluzroc trio called Taste. Their first album on Atco had a couple of songs with titles like 'Blister On the Moon' but didn't live up to them and when you saw an eight minute version of 'Catfish' listed on the backside you knew you didn't wanna fork over your hard earned shoe shekels anyway.

(Bangs, 1972)

The British press, arguably more familiar with his material, his reputation as a live attraction and his musical emphasis on the blues tradition, were more supportive of Gallagher. British rock media helped develop Gallagher's image as a hard-working musician, basing several pieces on his musical personality, his technical ability, and his scepticism of the excesses of rock musicianship. Salewicz's portrait of Gallagher displays these tendencies clearly:

Rory has had just about every music business cliché laid on him. Rockin' Rory, the man who can't turn a gig down and who always arrives in check shirt and plimsolls, carrying his battered guitar. The musician who ousted Clapton from his residency as Britain's No.1 guitarist... when I spoke to him he'd just got back [from the US] and had — hard-working geezer that he is — gone straight into the studios to cut his next album.

(Salewicz, 1973)

In Ireland, little established media culture existed to publicise developing rock and popular music. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the principal dedicated music publication was the Cork-based magazine *Spotlight*. This magazine was established in 1963, was renamed *New Spotlight* in the later 1960s, and ran until 1981. Cha Haran explained that the publication was focused primarily on the showbands. In Haran's estimation, a review or critical piece in *Spotlight* was 'worth 500,000 posters' in terms of securing concerts and garnering publicity. (Haran, 2009). His observation is supported by O'Halloran's research, which found that the publication grew from a print run of one thousand black and white copies (first issue, 1963) to a circulation of 20,000 colour copies within just two years (O'Halloran, 2006:12). By 1967, the magazine had transformed from a monthly to a weekly publication, and sales in 1973 peaked at 47,000. There were sceptical reviews of the Beatles releases in early issues, but no sustained attempt was made by the publication to cover the beat and rock phenomenon until the later 1960s and 1970s. Irish blues musician Barry McCabe describes the magazine in its socio-cultural context:

I was around 15 years old and had just started to play the guitar. National radio (RTE) played very little music and practically all the music they did play was - well, not rock music, let's put it that way...so *Spotlight* (or *New Spotlight* in my case) was basically the ONLY source for any music info [sic]. It came out every Thursday... it had a Letters page called 'Sound Off', it had a short news page (or pages) called 'Scene', Larry Gogan's 'Disc Preview', it had articles, it had a 'charts' page and to me at that time the most important page of all was Pat Egan's 'Heavy Sounds'. This was my only way to find out

what was going on in the rock world and my only way to get info about Rory Gallagher.

(McCabe, 2009)

While the primary focus remained on the showbands, *Spotlight* did begin to feature Irish folk, ballad, rock and beat groups as these became more popular in the late 1960s. It ran features on The Creatures in August and September 1966, and later on The Who, The Monkees and Elvis, capitalising on portrayals of the beat and rock'n'roll groups as rebellious and shocking.¹⁰¹ From 1970, *New Spotlight* ran features on major rock acts including Rory Gallagher, Thin Lizzy, Skid Row and Horslips. Pat Egan used the 'Heavy Sounds' column to discuss the developing Irish rock scene. Egan's critique covered all aspects of the rock industry, including music, business, inept distribution practices by the major labels in Ireland, and the lack of interest in accommodating rock acts by RTE, the national broadcasting company:

It's now two weeks since the first rock press advertisements promoting [Thin Lizzy album] *Vagabonds Of The Western World* were published. The initial interest has now waned so much that there can be no doubt the delay has cost the band dearly. ... A new Rory Gallagher album is due for release in Britain later this month. Polydor in Dublin are aware of this but chances are that Irish fans will be kept waiting and that sales will be lost. Why can't record companies plan in advance and make it their business to please the customer?

(Egan, 1973)¹⁰²

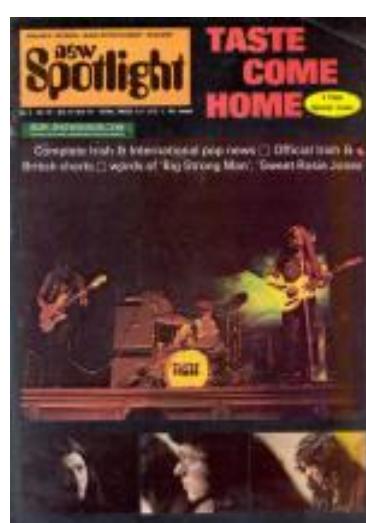
101 For example, the January 1969 issue contained a 'Who 'Shock' Interview'; the April issue ran a 'Creatures Shock!' article, while the November issue featured an article entitle 'Clubs and Drugs! The Truth!'; see <http://www.irish-showbands.com/spotlightcovers66.htm>. Accessed 16/11/2010.

102 See also Egan, Pat in *New Spotlight - Ireland's National Music Entertainment Weekly* - Vol. 7 No. 16 October 11th 1973.

Smaller publications with limited runs did appear during the late 1960s, and focused more exclusively on the beat and group cultures. These included *Hitsville* and *Gun*; a 1968 issue of the former featured contributions from Pat Egan, and included articles on Thin Lizzy, Granny's Intentions, Orange Machine and The Strangers. There is no evidence to suggest that these magazines ran for more than a few issues, or were widely popular among musicians or audiences. The national broadsheet newspapers covered the more sensational aspects of the beat and rock phenomenon; the *Irish Times* reported on the Beatles' 1963 performances in Dublin and Belfast, noting that a riot broke out in the streets of Dublin following their concert at the Adelphi.



*Gun Magazine*¹⁰³



NewSpotlight: Taste (1969)¹⁰⁴



NewSpotlight: Thin Lizzy (1973)¹⁰⁵

103 http://www.thinlizzyguide.com/discography_info/releases_magazine.htm. Accessed 16/11/2010.

104 <http://www.irish-showbands.com/spotlightcovers70.htm>. Accessed 16/11/2010.

105 <http://www.irish-showbands.com/spotlightcovers73.htm>. Accessed 16/11/2010.

Performance Spaces

Shumway's analysis identifies the performative as a 'locus of rock authenticity' (Shumway, 1999:188). His investigation, which focuses primarily on recording spaces and the performance of personality, asserts that the aesthetic of live performance is one which is central to rock culture. Adapting his critical focus somewhat, I want to investigate the spaces that were available for first-wave Irish rock performance, and for the interaction of audiences and artists central to rock culture, its narratives and mythologies.

A network of ballrooms distributed throughout the island was primarily used by the showbands. Cha Haran asserts that beat groups would have had some opportunity to play in these venues as support acts (Haran, 2009). The folk musician Andy Irvine recalls playing support gigs at such venues (Irvine, 2011); Putterford (2002) details early ballroom gigs by Phil Lynott's pre-Thin Lizzy group The Black Eagles. McAvoy and Chrisp's account of the burgeoning rock scene in Northern Ireland states that hotels, clubs and ballrooms constituted a network of performance spaces available to beat, blues and rock groups. While beat groups were more limited than the showbands in terms of access to larger performance spaces, an acceptable number of venues did exist in Northern Ireland. Hodgett and Harper state that 'in Rory [Gallagher's] era, a band could play three nights a week in Belfast with other gigs around the province' (Hodgett and Harper, 2005: 228).

Early rock groups also negotiated access to tennis clubs, parish halls and other public spaces for practice and performance. For example, the emerging Horslips performed in a Dublin art gallery, the Langois Gallery on Crow St. before they ‘ventured out doing odd art schools and colleges’ (Hodgett and Harper, 2005:215). Horslips’ first official concert was scheduled for a rented rugby hall in Navan, Co Meath. The Savoy Theatre hosted Rory Gallagher in 1972; footage from the venue shows that theatres were fully seated (RTE, 1972). As changing tastes began to erode exclusivist tendencies on the ballroom circuit, rock acts gained increasing access to the performance spaces heretofore reserved for the showbands. By 1974, and despite the ongoing mistrust of electric guitars and rock and beat music by established music cultures (O’Keefe, 2002) Rory Gallagher had successfully infiltrated the showband circuit with his rock and blues act. This is evident in the *Irish Tour* ‘74 concert footage, where Rory and manager Donal Gallagher contemplate the completion a successful show at a venue which had never previously hosted a rock act (Palmer, 1974).

Throughout the 1970s, Dublin city was notable for the absence of a purpose-built arena for the hosting of rock performances. The National Stadium, used primarily for boxing competitions, was made available for bands to perform in, with Gallagher, Thin Lizzy and Horslips giving concerts there throughout the decade. Narrating an (authorised) version of Horslips’ history, Maurice Linanne reflected on the lack of a purpose-built facility in Dublin: (reference)

Remember, this was 1972. Dublin didn’t have any purpose-built concert venues, or any concert venues at all. At this point, The Point (Depot) was an abandoned railway yard. The Olympia and The Ambassador were a theatre and a cinema respectively. Vicar Street was...well, a street. The National Concert Hall was still full of engineering students.

(Linnane, 2005)

Linnane's account negatively exaggerates the lack of available venues for rock musicians. It seems appropriate to state than during 1968-78, an extensive network of small and medium-sized public facilities existed in Ireland, enabling certain musicians and groups to perform both in the urban centres and throughout the country. This network of clubs, theatres and ballrooms helped bands achieve nationwide success in Ireland, and Rory Gallagher, Horslips and Thin Lizzy repeatedly toured Ireland when UK, European and US tours finished. Such Irish tours were a guaranteed source of income and exposure for rock groups. This network of performance spaces meant that popular musicians could access local populations, and allow the rock aesthetic and culture to permeate into rural, as well as urban Ireland. For many rock artists, Rory Gallagher, Phil Lynott and Van Morrison among them, an extensive network of ballrooms, clubs, hotels and halls could be used advantageously in developing their performance practices and musical styles.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a detailed 'snapshot' of the indigenous Irish rock industry as it existed between 1968 and 1978. The initial section examined three parallel musical cultures – those of the showband, the beat group and the folk boom – and demonstrated the influence of each on the emerging rock culture. With respect to the showbands, the research demonstrates that this musical style was important as a professional precedent for both Rory Gallagher and Van Morrison, allowing them to gain stage experience and to develop the technical aspects of their

performance practices. While Phil Lynott did not participate in a showband, his beat group The Black Eagles did perform support concerts on the showband circuit; furthermore Lynott did utilise technologies of production initially designed for the showbands, by recording at the small Dublin studios originally established to service these groups. At the same time, the showbands' inability to foster members' creative tendencies, or to develop an imaginative response to the chart and popular material they reproduced, meant that Lynott, Morrison and Gallagher all found it necessary to distance themselves from the showband format.

The chapter examined the role of the beat groups in importing key musical elements central to rock musicianship into Ireland. Principally, the beat groups embodied a significant musical transformation, in that they focused primarily on adapting the energetic sounds of rhythm and blues and its related styles; they are rightly viewed by O'Halloran (2006) as a progressive musical culture, in that they challenged the performative and aesthetic conventions of showband music. The beat groups embodied a parallel culture, providing a musical outlet for musicians and audiences whose tastes were not catered for by the showbands. While there was some overlap in terms of musical disposition and commercial focus, overall, the beat groups placed a stronger emphasis on musical value, covering songs which had less to do with US and UK chart placings, but related more to the participants' developing musical interests. The Irish beat scene represents the first creative response to Anglo-American transformations; Bluesville's achievement of a US Top Ten hit with 'You Turn Me On' (1965) and Them's similar success with the Big Joe Williams cover 'Baby Please Don't Go' and the Morrison-penned hit 'Gloria' (1964-5) illustrates that an understanding of the aesthetic and commercial conventions of these musical

styles had been achieved by beat musicians in Ireland by the mid 1960s (O'Halloran, 2006: 47-62). By participating in the beat scene, Gallagher (Taste), Lynott (Black Eagles, Orphanage) and Morrison (Them) were able to develop the creative and improvisational aspects of their individual musical styles; their tenure in these groups led to their engagement with the legal, administrative and contractual realities of the music business, as all three accepted recording and management deals during or subsequent to their time as beat culture participants (Heylin, 2004; Putterford, 2002; Coghe, 2000; Rogan, 2006).

The chapter has also demonstrated that a third culture that significantly influenced Irish rock's unique development was that of folk music. By detailing certain specifics of the folk boom, I illustrated that its constituent styles – folk, folk rock and progressive folk - helped to shape the principal lyrical and stylistic conventions of Irish rock. Both Van Morrison and Rory Gallagher maintained an interest in developments in folk music, with Gallagher initially drawn to the folk-influenced performance styles of Martin Carthy and Davy Graham, and later performing instrumental Irish tunes on guitar. Morrison's early solo albums rework the narrative functions of traditional folksong, in the foregrounding of oral narrative, the description of common folk tropes including emigration, the musical portraiture of local experience, and the detailing of emotional states. A number of the musical directions Phil Lynott developed came about as a result of his participation in folk culture, both as a professional musician, and as a keen observer of folk-influenced progressive subcultures. This is evident in the narrative, lyrical and musical styles Lynott used in his rock

compositions; I discuss this in greater detail in Chapter Three, which focuses on such appropriations in detail.¹⁰⁶

The chapter's second section detailed the realities of the 'local' rock infrastructure. One can conclude that in terms of recording facilities and critical media, the island lacked anything resembling structured services and amenities, with a few small studios and one dedicated publication comprising the majority of activity in these areas. In terms of management, Ireland fared better, as figures with experience in the showband tradition, and new entrepreneurs such as Deeny and McGuinness, exploited the economic opportunities previously developed by the beat groups, and embodied in the promotion of rock culture. Ireland's distinct cultural location during the period allowed management strategies oriented favourably towards those rock groups with the ability to utilise them. Finally, the island did not have a purpose-built venue for rock performance during the period studied. Instead, a network of ballrooms, hotels, theatres, clubs and halls were available to beat and rock acts, in both political jurisdictions.

With respect to production and distribution, limited production and pressing facilities did exist in Ireland; however, there is little evidence to suggest that these were extensively utilised by, or capable of accommodating, the emerging rock culture. Given the primacy of various

106 As far as I can ascertain, Lynott did not play on the *Heavy Petting Dr. Strangely Strange* sessions; however, the engineer Paddy Gibbons, who recorded Lynott's Orphanage sessions, recalls that the musician was unique in coming up with musical ideas in which folk and traditional Irish music would be mixed with idioms from the rock repertory.

technologies in the recording and re-production of rock music (and the prevalence of various technologies even in live performance; Horner and Swiss, 1999), it seems prescient to argue that Irish rock musicians were fundamentally limited with respect to studio space and recording facilities. The studios which did exist were primarily oriented towards the showbands, though Eamonn Andrews studios in particular was accessed by beat, rock and folk musicians.¹⁰⁷ Early recordings made by Morrison and Lynott did take place in Ireland; research could not locate any similar recordings by Rory Gallagher.¹⁰⁸

Concerning critical media, the conclusion resulting from the research is that Ireland had very limited resources for the published/broadcast support of the emerging rock culture. The only national-level publication in which rock music featured was the showband-oriented *New Spotlight*; as the magazine favoured Irish acts of any genre over international ones, Irish rock musicianship was afforded a niche in its remit. State-funded and controlled television and radio rarely featured, much less promoted rock music during the period; there was certainly nothing comparable to the BBC, the offshore or European-based pirates (Luxembourg, Caroline), in terms of institutional support for, or focus on, an evolving rock culture. However, the increasing inability of the British and Irish governments to regulate broadcast content from outside Irish and Northern Irish borders was useful to Irish rock musicians, since it provided access to a widening palette of musical ideas and cultures. In terms of performance spaces, the enquiry established that

107 While rudimentary when compared to US and UK facilities, production details from various recordings illustrate that a number of influential recordings took place in Irish studios between 1967 and 1972, including those made by Sweeney's Men (1967), Skid Row (1968), and Clannad (1972).

108 It seems plausible that early recordings of the Kitteringham/Damery/Gallagher lineup of Taste were made while the group were in Cork and Belfast; if available, these could be analysed in future research.

there was a dearth of purpose-built spaces for rock consumption. However, beat and rock musicians did negotiate access to the showband circuit; the experience of the beat groups proved that a range of alternative musical venues – parish halls, tennis and rugby clubs, colleges, tea-houses, basements, and cellars could be utilised for musical purposes. From the perspective of management, while indigenous styles were those developing through showband culture, key musicians and management figures capably and advantageously utilised available resources and developed astute management strategies, enabling Irish bands to produce, distribute and perform popular music in Ireland, and then to move abroad. Belfast's economic, political and cultural ties with the United Kingdom were central to both Gallagher and Morrison's professional development, since they accessed management structures placed there as part of subsidiary structures developed by the major UK labels.

The underdeveloped status of rock infrastructure suggests that it would have been extremely difficult for recording rock musicians to have based themselves exclusively in Ireland. Referencing Cloonan's three-tier model of Nation-State-popular music relationships, it is clear that the Irish republic falls somewhere between authoritarian and benign types, in that popular cultural expression was closely controlled, while institutional support for rock culture was minimal. Northern Ireland fared slightly better, since it was subject to broadcasting and censorship laws enacted on the British mainland, but could benefit from the comparative lack of state intervention in cultural production (Cloonan, 1999:203-4).

For first-wave artists with international ambitions, the scarcity of facilities on the island acted as a push factor; as Phil Lynott stated in an RTÉ documentary, ‘to do what I wanted to do, I had to leave Ireland’ (Lynott in Healy, 1996). It is also plausible that the disadvantaged status of the early Irish rock industry accounts for certain stylistic conventions in the music itself: since musicians worked primarily outside of Ireland, with non-Irish professionals (producers, engineers, management), it is hardly surprising that first-wave rock features few immediately visible signifiers of Irishness or Irish identity. The contrastive case of Horslips is instructive, I submit, in that their album *Happy To Meet, Sorry to Part* was recorded in Tipperary. This is not to suggest that Irish traditional idioms, or any of a range of Irish cultural signifiers were not used creatively by first-wave musicians; indeed it is to the examination of just such usage, as part of a wider strategy of hybrid musical creation, that the thesis now turns.

Chapter Three

Hybridity and Irish Rock Music

When you grow up in Ireland, you hear [Irish] music all over the place: in school bands, in the street on Easter Sunday – everywhere. So I suppose it did have an unconscious effect. The way Irish songs are written, the structure, the tunings, and the lyrics, all affect me, making me different from an English guitarist, who hasn't been exposed to this kind of thing. My main drive comes from the American thing, but the tunings and the way I phrase things will often have that old Celtic flavour.

(Rory Gallagher in Hedges, 1977)

Introduction

This chapter investigates the process and outcomes of first-wave Irish rock musicians' creation of hybrid musical texts. In seeking to illustrate a tendency towards hybridisation in composition by Irish rock musicians between 1968 and 1978, I examine specific texts, using techniques developed by popular musicologists such as Allan Moore (Moore, 1993) and Richard Middleton (Middleton, 2000).¹⁰⁹ These scholars apply popular and new musicology to 'describ[ing] the musical techniques particular to rock' (Stokes, 1994: 120). Their investigation of the rock text identifies the music itself as a point of 'primary' focus; they concentrate on explicit details of musical structure so as to counterbalance what they perceive as an excessive focus on the social contexts of production. In so doing, they move away from the perspectives essayed by proponents of the cultural studies

¹⁰⁹ See also Bohlman, 1994; Tagg, 1994; Walser 1997.

position (typified, according to Walser, by Simon Frith (1996), Lawrence Grossberg (1990) and others; Walser, 2003; 20-21).

Investigating Irish rock texts from a musicological perspective affords a greater understanding of the musical codes built into various recordings; it enables awareness of certain musical complexities which can be overlooked when the sole analytical focus is the cultural context of musical production. For example, musicological analysis can more pointedly demonstrate musical continuities in Irish, rock and jazz music, such as the use of modal approaches in all three styles; this, in turn, can help account for Irish musicians' ability in absorbing black musical practice (see Morrison, quoted in Onkey, 2006: 164).

This approach seems practical, given my two main objectives in exploring Irish rock's hybrid status; these objectives relate to the thesis' central question regarding the intellectual depth and musical profundity of first-wave Irish rock. First, I want to investigate the diversity of musical influences cited by composing Irish rock musicians during 1968-78: scrutiny of the three studio albums *Rory Gallagher* (1971), *Vagabonds of the Western World* (1973) and *Veeden Fleece* (1974) demonstrates the range of Irish musician's performative and cultural vocabularies during the classic rock period. Second, I will test the theory that traditional Irish music was a significant influence on the compositional and performative strategies employed by first-wave Irish rock musicians. This is done by examining diverse instances of adoption and adaptation of Irish instrumental and folk music by Rory Gallagher, Van Morrison and Phil Lynott respectively. I hope to illustrate aspects of the musicians' attempts, struggles and

limitations in integrating various musical styles, including those particular to Irish music.

The term ‘hybrid’ is utilised here to describe rock texts which draw on and synthesize diverse cultural discourses, thereby inhabiting, or growing out of, what Homi Bhabha identifies as a liminal or (independent) ‘third’ space between parent musical cultures. Discussing British-Asian popular music making practices, the cultural theorist Rehan Hyder has noted that hybridity is a useful concept for analysing the intricacies of popular music-making, because it recognises musicians’ capacities ‘to adapt and absorb a range of cultural inputs in new circumstances’ (Hyder, 2004: 15). The first section of this chapter will illustrate, and critically respond to, the complexities of the term ‘hybridity’, so as to establish the appropriate parameters for my use of the concept. I will describe the potential and difficulties of utilising hybridity theory with reference to the literature, and in particular to critical work by Robert Young and Homi Bhabha. Young’s position is of interest because he is so critical of the manner in which hybridity has been co-opted by racialism and social theories of western dominance, and also because he directly examines the portrayal of the Irish (‘Celtic’) ‘race’ in Matthew Arnold’s treatises on culture. Bhabha’s work is central because his concept of hybridity identifies it as a creative force through which developing forms of syncretic subjectivity emerge from the liminal spaces between cultural binaries. Importantly, his ideas on mixing can also be practically applied to the Irish rock text: I will demonstrate that these texts illustrate the musical manner and value their creators’ drawing on diverse musical styles, structures and conventions.

The fact that a multiplicity of ‘hybrid’ meanings can be read onto the rock text (musical, conceptual, linguistic, significatory), and the fact that the analysis cannot benefit from face-to-face interviews with the musicians who composed them, means I proceed on the basis of my own subjective knowledge of a range of Irish and Anglo-American musical styles and on the histories, cultural and linguistic idioms associated with these styles. Developing Roland Barthes’ proposition that ‘the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author’ (Barthes, 1967), and aware of the centrality of both musical structure and lyrical meaning in the rock text, my interpretation of these compositions focuses primarily on aspects of structure and textuality. Given the number and diversity of studio and live albums produced by Lynott, Morrison and Gallagher, in-depth analysis of the mechanics and meanings of hybrid composition analysis would be the subject of a substantial research project in itself. Constraints of space and the difficulty of drawing together the music of three extraordinarily diverse artists necessitates focusing only on those texts which seem to me to be the most effective instances of musical hybridity evident in the works they composed between 1968 and 1978. A more eloquent analysis might have integrated the focus on disparate musical sources and the use of Irish traditional and folk music in Irish rock, but I keep them separate here, for two reasons. The first is structural simplicity; this approach allows me to deal with each artist in turn and in a methodical manner. Second, in the case of Rory Gallagher in particular, the recorded works on the eponymous album do not coincide with the artist’s overt exploration of Irish musical idioms; while I will illustrate that ‘Irish’ phrasings were evident in his work from the time of his first solo recording, these became more pronounced (and evident) on the *Irish Tour ’74* and later recordings, and I want to focus on these later performances in some detail.

Hybridity in Cultural Theory

In the discipline of postcolonial theory, hybridity becomes a tool of incisive investigative potential; it has been called upon to deconstruct or critique the narratives, institutions and outcomes of colonialism, and to propose the reactivation of formerly silenced ‘subaltern’ voices within the neo-colonial world system (Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1988; Gilroy, 1987, 1993, 2000). In the hands of astute postcolonial theorists, hybridity theory has been instrumental in guiding European and Anglo-American poststructural thought into a thorough exploration of liminality, progressive theories of the subaltern, and engagement in meaningful critique of Orientalist discourse – three mainstays of the postcolonial critical project (Said, 1972; Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1989).¹¹⁰ In other contexts, hybridity has been applied to theorisations of diaspora: in the work of Kalra, Kaur and Hutnyk, it functions as a seminal agent determining the dynamics of cultural interchange within the diaspora, becoming ‘logically entwined within the co-ordinates of migrant identity and difference, same or not same, host and guest’ (Kalra, Kaur and Hutnyk, 2005: 70-2). Extending the remit of hybridity as an analytical strategy in cultural critique, Jan Nederveen

110 The etymological origins of the term ‘hybridity’ can be found in the Latin term *hibrida*. It appears as early as the seventeenth century, but its common use does not occur until the nineteenth century, when, in several instances, it is used, primarily in botany and zoology, to describe the offspring of separate species. It is listed in Webster’s Dictionary of 1828, and used interchangeably with ‘mongrels’ in Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*. The concept of hybridity has its roots in eighteenth-century biological sciences, where it emerged in the study of genetics and botany (Young, 1995). The term *hibrida* initially referred to the offspring of different species produced by cross-breeding. Hybridity appeared at a time when scientific enquiry was harnessed to the impulse of colonial expansion and, later, to narratives of nationalist exclusivity. From a nineteenth-century Western cultural perspective, Young states that the term ‘hybridity’ embodied negative connotations, based on the fear of mixing European and non-European bloodlines. As Young (1995) describes, the term developed negative connotations, through its association with prevailing Eurocentric racial theories during the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, its philological dimensions were explored by Bakhtin and others; it was co-opted by cultural theorists in the post-colonial moment as a strategy for deconstructing essentialising binaries in contemporary cultural discourse. This has led to the use of hybridity theory in studies of multi-culturalism and globalization.

Pieterse utilises hybridity as conceptual tool for analysing the processes of globalisation; he has traced the development of hybridity from its negative connotations in genetics to its enriching potential in cultural politics (Nederveen Pieterse, 2009:77). He alludes to both the potential, and the challenges, of theorizing hybridity, in his observation that:

A theory of hybridity would be attractive. We are so used to theories that are concerned with establishing boundaries and demarcations among phenomena...that a theory that instead would focus on fuzziness and mélange, cut 'n' mix, criss cross and crossover, might well be a relief in itself. Yet, ironically, of course, it would have to prove itself by giving as neat as possible a version of messiness, or an unhybrid categorization of hybridities.

(Nederveen Pieterse, 2009: 78)

Homi Bhabha adapts the concept in order to theorise the existence of a liminal space from which post-national subjectivities challenge the temporal and spatial limits of the nation state. Bhabha develops his theory as a personal and political response to 'that moment of the scattering of the people' (1994:139). In Bhabha's work, hybridity is a political response to hegemonic, monolithic and ultimately exclusory nationalist narratives of political, social and cultural difference. For Bhabha, hybridity's conceptual utility derives from its production of a practical and cognitive process by which the dominant discourses of a given colonial project, and the cultural means by which such domination was enacted – institutions, publications, practices – can be de-stabilized (Bhabha, 1994:207-9). Bringing these discourses into a hybridized context with the cultural narratives of previously marginalised groups, the colonized 'Other' can in fact re-frame the colonizer/colonised relationship, challenging the epistemic violence of colonialist and orientalist discourse.¹¹¹

111 As Robert Young, discussing Homi Bhabha, writes: 'An example of the different kind of framing that Western culture receives when translated into different contexts would be...a Christian missionary trying

On a philosophical level, one needs to be careful of an uncritical celebration of hybridity as a catch-all political position or as cultural strategy. A view of the hybrid as a safe retreat, as a simple ‘fusion’ of binaries hides the complexities of hybrid subjectivity or, with respect to music, the intricacies of hybridity as process. Rather, I argue that the ‘in-between state’ of hybridity constitutes an irregular strategy of uneasy mixing. For the artist, it is a difficult process which involves negotiating between, and attempting to balance what can be incompatible binaries; fashioning a coherent form out of unfamiliar impulses, codes, nodes and flows; developing interpretative literacy in the technical and symbolic economies of multiple cultural languages; managing the psychological contradictions in double-thinking and then giving form and expression to new cultural ideas. In this regard, I am proposing that one reads the first-wave rock text as Irish musicians’ attempts to coerce synchronously experienced musical genres, political realities, ontological questions and articulations of subjective experience into some kind of structural, iterative unity.¹¹²

Looking specifically at cultural mixing in British pop(ular) music, Nabeel Zuberi argues that the primacy of the hybrid style is the manner in which it interrogates the present with reference to various pasts (Zuberi, 2001: 4); the

to teach Indian Hindus about the Christian communion service: the missionary is quite confounded when he finds that the vegetarian Hindus react with horror to the idea of eating Christ’s body and drinking his blood. Suddenly it is the white English culture that betrays itself, and the English missionary who is turned into a cannibalistic vampire’. Young, 1995: 162.

112 Recent work by Smyth on the spatial aspects of cultural production has focused on how hybridity theory reproduces the negative binarism between centre and periphery, self and other (Smyth, 2009:85-7); I concur with his proposition that the hybrid text is aptly represented as a rhizomorphic, uncertain, liminal entity which draws on, interrogates and re-works elements of antecedent cultural forms.

hybrid concept also acts as a safeguard against the extremes of national monoculture and ethnic absolutism (Zuberi, 2001:192). Zuberi's intellectual intent is to illustrate how popular music, a 'low' culture associated with the 'flotsam and jetsam of everyday life' – contributes to the development of national identities and British self-perceptions (Zuberi, 2001: 3-4). My concern here is less with the intersection of popular culture and the national (I deal with this topic at length in Chapter 4), but with investigating how the signifiers of various Anglo-American, African-American and Irish musical styles are consciously and unconsciously mixed in the Irish rock text. In examining this, I am following a method established by Jocelyne Guilbault (2007), whose analysis of Trinidadian calypso proceeds with a primary investigation of that music's hybrid status.¹¹³

Irish Culture and Theorizations of Hybridity

The use of hybridity theory finds precedents in British representations of Ireland and Irish culture. In a lengthy analysis of Matthew Arnold's writings on culture ('Culture and Anarchy', 'On The Study of Celtic Literature') Robert Young reveals how Hebraism and Hellenism, the two antithetical 'points of influence' of English culture, were established by Arnold as opposing tendencies in a dialectical process culminating in 'epochs of expansion' and 'concentration' (Young, 1995:61). Inspired by an

113 Guilbault details the *metissage* of African and other musics embodied in contemporary calypso: 'From its inception, calypso emerged through a migratory circuit of peoples and commodities and a radical asymmetry of power. This complex traffic allowed musical knowledges and practices to mingle, fuse and transform each other. [This]...produced the conditions of possibility for calypso's emergence as a constitutively hybrid product. African musical practices on colonial plantations such as calypso drew from and creatively combined an array of musical traditions, blending a variety of influences from Africa, Europe and the Americas'. Guilbault, 2007: 29. Similar to Guilbault's establishment of the roots/routes of calypso, I am motivated to demonstrate some of the key stylistic constituents of the Irish rock text.

1854 essay (Renan's 'The Poetry of The Celtic Races'), Arnold's proposition of the hybrid origins of Englishness suggested that English identity was composed of both Saxon and 'Celtic' elements. Doing away with the political, sociological and historical complexities of English conquests of Ireland, Wales and Scotland, Arnold's suggestion was that 'the Celtic' lived on in the English race as a result of ancient intermingling of Celtic-Briton and Saxon blood.

In Young's analysis, Arnold was progressive in proposing any kind of space for Celt in the English racial make-up. However, he also notes that Arnold propagated a version of 'Celticism' in which the Irish, Scots and Welsh were represented as imaginative, feminine, and antithetical to the Saxon element of Englishness. Music is directly invoked in the portrayal of the Celtic 'race' as typified by 'vague sadness'; they are the producers of 'penetrative notes that go to the very heart' (Young, 1995:70):¹¹⁴

The 'modern' anthropological notion of cultures without the inevitable implication of racial difference could only emerge with the eventual decline of polygenist thinking at the end of the 19th century: only then could a culture be seen as discrete, different and determining, without carrying the implication that the people who created it were permanently inferior.

(Young, 1995: 49-50)

And yet, the portrayal of the (Celtic) Irish continues to set out the cultural location of the Irish in western cultural discourse. This has been picked up

114 Arnold's depiction of the Celt – and nineteenth-century English depictions of the Irish conducted through the prism of racial difference enabled by the appeal to hybridity - contrast strongly with the type of hybridity being proposed contemporarily in Ireland by the writer, lawyer and publisher Thomas Davis. Like Arnold, Davis' sphere of expertise was cultural; through writings on literature, poetry, balladeering and politics, Davis' ostensible project was the development of an inclusive Irish national identity. What is surprising is that hybridity, in Davis' case, suggests the possibility of accommodating diverse cultural traditions in Ireland, rather than segregating them, as in Arnold's work.

by McLaughlin and McLoone, who, in their discussion of hybridity in Irish rock, support Young's thesis of the interlinking of culture and race in the construction of imperial versions of racial difference. Contending that a range of cultural and racial stereotypes assigned to the Irish stem from the era in which Arnold was composing his treatises on 'Celtic' culture, they state:

[T]he powerful link between the Irish and musicality (along with a host of other, considerably less attractive traits) was finally consolidated in the Victorian era at the height of the British imperial project... Irish music by this stage was constructed as a specific ethnic category....Music, therefore, became a feature of 'race', taking on properties for the coloniser that appeared to transcend the passage of time, that remained fixed and unchanging...[I]f such ideas were originally imposed on Ireland and the Irish from the outside, they have now become internalized.

(McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000: 1)

What needs to be established, then, is whether and how the concept of hybrid mixing might be used in analysing Irish rock, without invoking or re-confirming essentialist assumptions about the existence of an inherent 'Celtic' mystique, on the one hand, or rehearsing narratives about the marginalisation of Irish music on the other (Smyth, 2009: 88-101).

Developing Young's focus on subjectivity, race and ethnicity, it can be inferred that Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison were 'hybrids' in an array of senses. Gallagher's mother was from Cork, an area of the Republic with strong historical and cultural links to Irish nationalism and the struggle for political independence. His father was from County Derry, Northern Ireland; areas of that county maintained a Catholic demographic majority, but significant historical links to Unionism and the loyalist tradition

obtained there also.¹¹⁵ Gallagher himself was born in Donegal (in Ireland's geographical north), but grew to maturity in Cork (south); his musical apprenticeship involved both political jurisdictions, beginning as it did in the ballrooms of Cork, Kerry and Limerick, and developing further in the blues and R&B scenes in Belfast. Lynott represents the hybrid in an equally complex way: on his own body are inscribed the discourses of Irish, English and Brazilian intercultural, national and ethnic contact. Stemming from this, an intricate series of hybrid cultural and racial narrative associations arise, involving the discourses of Irish nationalism, Celtic mythology, African-American political ideology, Anglo-American middle-class rebelliousness, Christianity, and the romance of the 'west'. Van Morrison's early experiences of hybridity were cultural and racial – while Rogan has challenged Morrison's lyrical suggestion that he first encountered blues music at 'the age of three', what is known is that his childhood was steeped in a range of cultural discourses and musical styles – blues, R&B, jazz, instrumental Irish music, Irish classical singing, Protestant marching band, and folk singing – which informed his developing musical personality.

The relevance of Bhabha's arguments to Irish rock may not be immediately apparent, especially if the culture as practiced in its first wave is surveyed without an appropriate critical grounding in the actualities of Ireland's social, cultural and political realities. In keeping with Bhabha's view of the later phase of the modern nation as 'one of the most sustained periods terms

115 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/2590023.stm; accessed 31/5/2011; http://www.nisranew.nisra.gov.uk/census/Census2001Output/UnivariateTables/uv_tables1.html; accessed 31/5/2011; http://www.wesleyjohnston.com/users/ireland/past/protestants_1861_1991.html; accessed 31/5/2011; <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/ireland/article601144.ece>; accessed 31/5/2011; <http://www.nisranew.nisra.gov.uk/Census/pdf/Key%20Statistics%20ReportTables.pdf>; accessed 31/5/2011.

of migration within the West' (Bhabha, 1994:1), Irish rock gained from both outward migration from the island – Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison emigrated from Ireland to pursue professional opportunities abroad – and the inward movement of technologies of production, ideologies and social values which led to the development of the genre. Furthermore, the analysis of Irish rock in the light of Spivak's theory of the subaltern shows that it is logical to propose Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison as representative of the liminality of Irish cultural expression. This expression of an alternate voice – McLoone and McLaughlin's 'critical regionalism' – illustrates these artists' importance, if we are to posit Irish culture(s) as forms of expression in which challenging differences can be accommodated. In addition, Bhabha's argument with respect to liminality allows us to account for these artists' invisibility with respect to the totalizing narratives of national and colonial exclusivity essayed and practiced in the Republic and Northern Ireland during the 1970s; these narratives which could not conceptually accommodate the combination of national and international cultural discourse interwoven in the transcendental folk of Morrison, the blues and blues rock of Rory Gallagher, or the rock/Irish instrumental fusion performed by the black and Irish Phil Lynott.

McLaughlin, McLoone and the Case of Irish Rock Music

In an important evaluation of Irish rock music, Noel McLaughlin and Martin McLoone suggest that Irish rock texts' hybrid nature activates a form of 'critical regionalism' – a creative response to internalized stereotypes of the Irish as a race of inexplicably musical Celts on the one hand, and to the sophisticated and highly complex interplay of discourses of

centre and periphery embodied in the popular music text on the other. Echoing the findings of Young with regard to the racialisation of Irishness in nineteenth century cultural discourse, they note that the ‘natural proclivity for music and song’ associated with Ireland and the Irish reverberates with the constructions of the Celt as the irrational, romantic, Celtic ‘other’ of imperial, Britain. Problematically, such ideas still inform contemporary appraisals of Irish musicians and their art in British and Irish rock media:

Music...became a feature of ‘race’, taking on properties for the colonizer that appeared to transcend the passage of time, that remained fixed and unchanging...if such ideas were originally imposed on Ireland and the Irish from the outside, they have become internalized and today bear the traces of a particular nationalist political and cultural history...rock press discourse in Britain and Ireland, through countless reviews and feature articles, continually reiterates and reconfirms these tropes – Sinead O’Connor’s ‘fiery Irish temper’, the ‘banshee-style wailing’ of Dolores O’Riordan, U2’s ‘Irish spirit’ and so on.

(McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000:1)¹¹⁶

Such internalizing of the ‘colonial gaze’ – the appropriation of essentialised versions of Irish musicality - has consequences with respect to the role of the national in the articulation of discourses of cultural difference. McLoone and McLaughlin point to the problematic way in which the national is ‘imbued with the ideology of the oppressor’ in the period following decolonization, thereby censuring and attenuating the effectiveness of a national resistance to cultural domination. This is evident in the manner by which internal minorities are subsequently repressed, and in the appropriation of essentialist modes of cultural discourse at the national level (McLoone and McLaughlin, 2000: 2). Countering this is the possibility of expressions of ‘strategic essentialism’ in the postcolonial moment: that is,

116 See also Smyth, 2009: 84-6.

the registration of a ‘politics of commitment’ which opens up the possibility of alliances between groups uninhibited by essentialised notions of race, nationality, or gender.

The expression of ‘Irishness’ in the musical text is an extremely complex issue. The popular musician is faced with the task of negating those romantic versions of Irishness which essentialise Ireland as resistant to historical change, while at the same time attending to the commercial and aesthetic necessity of marking difference in the global market place by mobilising certain forms of Irish cultural discourse:

The contradiction here represents a considerable epistemological, theoretical and political conundrum and one that seems to preclude the development of a cultural strategy that will not be impaled on one or other horn of the dilemma.

(McLoone and McLaughlin, 2000: 2)

Identifying in Irish rock a mixing of local musical traditions and cultural idioms from the Anglo-American cultural matrix, McLaughlin and McLoone suggest that Irish rock involves intricate dialogue between centre and periphery which negates both the cultural imperialism paradigm, and the traditional ‘imperial versus colonised’ position. The implication is that the rock musician, caught in a tension between local and centre, utilises resources from both, to escape from the limitations of conservative national culture on the one hand, and the vacuity of global capitalism on the other. McLaughlin and McLoone’s comments raise a number of critical issues around the implications of hybridity. The article rightly attacks simplistic portrayals of the Irish, and contests the appeal of over-simplistic delineations of Irish persons as irrational dryads with fiery tempers. For McLaughlin and McLoone, hybridity is a necessary strategy because it

allows Irish artists to incorporate distinctly Irish idioms, tropes, narratives and cultural signifiers into rock songs, without necessarily activating regressive stereotypes.

Concerned that much of the literature which supports the idea of hybridity ‘offers no critical approach’ in terms of concrete textual analysis, McLaughlin and McLoone examine a selection of Irish rock texts which they feel represent the most successful attempts at hybridity, where success is equated with the provision of a unique and challenging re-working of national cultural expectations. In presenting a balanced view of Irish popular music cultures, they choose to include artists from both political jurisdictions, as well as artists from the diaspora – Horslips, Van Morrison, and Paddy-A-Go-Go. Additionally, the inclusion of Sinead O’Connor opens the door to a brief but pointed discussion concerning the representation of women in Irish musical and popular culture.

While McLaughlin and McLoone’s focus on bands which are ‘not U2’ might be well-intentioned, I think that this does serve to sweep away a lot of the contextual complexities associated with the group. U2 are an extremely difficult band to approach critically. The willful synthesis of religious and political dogma in their music, the lack of identifiable signifiers of ‘Irishness’ (such as the use of traditional Irish music), and their professed ahistoricism with respect to national Irish culture relative to preceding popular musical cultures in Ireland negatively colours many attempts to provide a balanced analysis of their music. However, to posit U2’s music - which fused various international musical genres (punk, new wave, rock, electronica), not to mention its synthesis of a range of notions and imaginings of Irishness and

identity which detail Ireland's emigrant history, and its links to America and the wider world - as a less successful 'hybrid' is problematic.¹¹⁷

McLoone and McLaughlin proceed, by means of an arguably simplistic distinction between art and commerce (the 'internationally successful rock act' U2 (bad) versus the 'most enduring and critically acclaimed' Van Morrison (good)), to insightful examination of the music of the Belfast musician Van Morrison. The key to understanding Morrison's music, they argue, is to uncover the 'vestiges of a recognisably 'ordinary' working-class lifestyle' in his compositions. Listening to *Astral Weeks*, *Veedon Fleece*, *A Period of Transition* or any of Morrison's other albums from the 1970s, I cannot wholly agree with this assertion, which seems to romanticise Morrison as some kind of champion of working class consciousness, its values and subjectivities. It can be argued that it was the actuality of working-class life in Belfast – the shipyards, the menial labour of factory life, the sectarian political ideology of unionism, the limited potential for the expression of personal and social identities – which initially motivated Morrison to emigrate from Belfast as a professional musician and creative artist. While his music does refer to the geographical and social realities of

117 While I cannot claim to be a fan of U2's music, I think that it challenges both 'nationalist and internationalist expectations of what Irish music should be' (McLoone and McLaughlin, 2000: 16). For example, the absence of notably 'Irish' instrumentation and musical idioms prevents U2 from being recuperated into dominant discourses about 'Irishness' – the fate, in McLoone and McLaughlin's analysis, of 'Celtic-rock' group Horslips. Equally, U2 have managed to retain an 'Irish' identity, despite adopting at various points in their career American, European and global 'personalities', and without ever utilising accepted narratives of Irish history, mythology or language. Thirdly, U2's economic success, achieved through a synthesis of management and marketing strategies which exploited both the particularities of the Irish rock industry and international trends, suggests that whatever (justifiable) misgivings one might have concerning their aesthetics, politics and performance practices, their particular form of musical hybridity achieves one of the key functions inherent in musical stardom – to be successful. A fuller discussion of U2, in various socio-cultural and critical contexts and with reference to first-wave rock will be provided in the thesis' conclusion.

Belfast and Ireland (along with urban and rural America), the political, cultural, philosophical and ideological motivations of these references are more complex than that enabled by simple reflection on working class life. Morrison's early compositions identify and express the aesthetic potential (a very un-working class activity) of a range of activities: a girl dropping something on her way home from school ('Cypress Avenue'), watching the trains from a Belfast bridge, or walking through the streets of an Irish town ('Streets of Arklow'). 'Cypress Avenue', with its physical locations of the mansion, the railroad, the river, its horse and carriages and evocative, impressionistic female figures, invokes a typology of gestures more in tune with a romantic than a working class aesthetic. I attend to analysis of hybridity in Morrison's album *Veedon Fleece* in a later section, but respond to McLaughlin and McLoone's speculation by suggesting here that a key to understanding Morrison's music is to identify in it an affective process of evoking diverse biographical experiences from working class Belfast, middle-class America (Woodstock, San Francisco, New York) and rural Ireland, largely by lyrical means. These are viewed through the prism of a romantic (spiritualist/transcendent) aesthetic, and take shape through the hybrid use of vibrant American musical forms: blues, jazz, country and contemporary folk. Morrison's skill lies in his ability to weave these elements together into convincing compositions which resonate with both Anglo-American and Irish audiences.

A key example is 'Listen to the Lion': against variations of the IV-I and V-IV-I chordal progressions typical of blues and gospel music, Morrison's lyrics reference powerful narratives of exile, searching and voyaging. These reverberate strongly with American and Irish tropes of journeying, including the voyage of the founding pilgrims from Europe to the New World, and

the similar crossing made by Irish emigrants during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Resolving to summon his imaginative and spiritual powers by ‘listen[ing] to the lion inside of me’, the song begins with Morrison’s description of love and its transcendental effects. In addition to the religious connotations of love, which Morrison invokes by reference to the ‘search [of] my very soul’ his quest includes, it will be remembered that love also functions as a key signifier in popular Anglo-American counter-culture: the slogan ‘Peace and Love’ was the dominant slogan of the youth-focused countercultural movement.

Morrison’s narrative subsequently shifts into the past tense, recalling the details of a mythological quest based on sailing and discovery. There are obvious references to both Scots-Irish and American cultural discourses, in the references to Caledonia and the Golden Gate. The reference to Denmark is unclear, but given rock’s tendency to allusive referencing (a key feature of Morrison’s lyrical strategy) it may be a suggestive link to British and international popular musical culture (Denmark St is a London location with historical links to British and American rock, and to British jazz and rhythm and blues); it might also reference the migration to Denmark of several prominent American jazz musicians, including Dexter Gordon, Thad Jones and Ben Webster during the 1960s and 1970s.¹¹⁸ In the latter sections of ‘Listen to the Lion’ Morrison adroitly includes a range of signifiers which resonate with his intended audience on both sides of the Atlantic. References to historical and imagined quests are linked by the act of sailing:

118 See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2007/aug/04/popandrock.sydbarrett>; accessed 2/6/10; <http://www.visitdenmark.com/uk/en-gb/menu/turist/inspiration/detkulturelledanmark/musikscenen/jazz.htm>; accessed 31/5/2011.

And we sailed, and we sailed
Away from Denmark, way up to Caledonia,
Away from Denmark, way up to Caledonia,
And we sailed...all around the world
Looking for a brand new start, looking for a brand new start.
And we sailed...away from the Golden Gate.

(Van Morrison, 'Listen to the Lion', *St Dominic's Preview*, 1972)

Throughout the 1970s, Morrison continued to foreground this hybrid compositional strategy by appealing to a discrete range of geographically, conceptually, and culturally resonant signifiers. The lyrics of 'St Dominic's Preview' illustrate the artist's preoccupation with invoking 'heavy connections' between Irish, European and Anglo-American mythologies, literary and musical traditions:

Chamois cleaning all the windows
Singing songs about Edith Piaf's soul
And I hear blue strains of *No Regredior*¹¹⁹
Across the street from Cathedral Notre Dame
Meanwhile back in San Francisco
I try hard to make this whole thing blend
As we sit upon this jagged
Story block with you my friend
And it's a long way to Buffalo
It's a long way to Belfast city too
And I'm hoping that Joyce won't blow the hoist
'Cause this time, they bit off more than they could chew.

(Van Morrison, 'St. Dominic's Preview', *St. Dominic's Preview*, 1972)

McLaughlin and McLoone have speculated on Morrison's appeal to Irish cultural forms, and give a good account of Morrison's appeal to Irish musical culture (though his interest in the island's literary and poetic

119 In researching the possible meaning of *No Regredior*, I established that there is no commonly-known hymn or musical piece of that name. It is perhaps a corruption of Edith Piaf's famed recording, 'Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien' (1960). The Latin verb 'regredior' means to return, to go or come back; its military connotation is 'to retreat'. A possible referent, then, is the Unionist idiom of 'No Surrender'; a further impressionistic reference to the Unionist tradition occurs by means of an image from the song's subsequent verse: 'All the orange boxes are scattered/ Against the Safeway Supermarket in the rain'. The potential intersections with, and influences of Unionism on Morrison's work have been articulately argued by his controversial biographer Johnny Rogan; see Rogan, 2006.

traditions is not explored). They are careful to state (correctly in my view) that Morrison's collaboration with The Chieftains is one of a number of musical directions the artist has taken, and does not represent his discovery of some deep-rooted sense of Irishness. Morrison himself has discussed the collaboration, stating in an interview that it was the vehicle for exploring a long-standing interest in Irish classical singing, and particularly the recordings of the tenor John McCormack.¹²⁰

Although they touch on the appeal to Irishness in *Veedon Fleece* (discussed in detail below), McLoone and McLaughlin have not explored how Morrison's Protestant Irish heritage was conceptualised and invoked a previous creative project, that of the Caledonia Soul Orchestra. The group's name is a signifier of the manner in which Morrison's hybrid music drew on two diverse, complementary strands of his musical and social identity – one which developed from his biographical experiences in Ireland (and his Ulster-Scots identity), and the other which stemmed from his life-long exposure to American popular culture.¹²¹

Irish Rock as Hybrid Process: Some Examples

The current research draws on McLoone and McLaughlin's position on hybridity, but focuses less on issues of subjectivity. Instead, it investigates

120 While he downplayed the relevance of The Chieftains in the recording (he stated that 'whether I did it with The Chieftains was neither here nor there' when interviewed for *From A Whisper to A Scream*), Morrison's maintainance of a strong collaborative friendship with the Chieftains' harpist Derek Bell (1935-2002) counteracts his trivialising of the partnership.

121 In response to this lacuna, I will consider the role of 'Caledonia' with respect to Morrison's musical identity in Chapter Five.

the structural dimensions of the hybrid musical text – in other words, on what is occurring musically in engaging a hybrid strategy. I focus here on three rock albums, by Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison respectively: *Rory Gallagher* (1971), *Vagabonds of the Western World* (1973) and *Veedon Fleece* (1974). I argue that the texts of which the albums are comprised can be understood as a synthesis of various cultural traditions. The albums audibly incorporate signifiers of, and motifs from, a range of disparate popular musical traditions. As I describe below, they are hybrid in terms of instrumentation, song structure, tonality, and in the use of varied production techniques—multi-tracking, live recording – to achieve a range of aural significations.

Rory Gallagher: *Rory Gallagher* (1971)

Rory Gallagher was the eponymous ‘solo’ debut Gallagher produced following the demise of the blues-rock trio Taste. By 1971, Gallagher’s repertoire had extended to include Irish and American folk music, African-American blues, and, eventually, elements of what he considered to be ‘Celtic’ and ‘African’ musical traditions.¹²² *Rory Gallagher* opens with ‘Laundromat’, a blues-rock composition based around a distinct, intricate and repeated guitar motif. Indicative, possibly, of ‘certain Irish roots attitudes’ (Gallagher in Holdship, 1984) are the rhythmic and melodic characteristics of the motif. Similar to conventional Irish melodies, this is based on the A minor pentatonic scale, makes use of dotted rhythms, and

122 Gallagher explains this manner of theorising such traditions in an interview for ITV television: see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfAc8QbafAk>; accessed 15/5/2011.

incorporates an introductory tuplet; as shown below, the motif can be read as a modal melody using Dorian mode of A.

'Laundromat', Introductory Motif

Rory Gallagher



The album recording of 'Laundromat' is unusual in that the opening motif is played three times on electric guitar before drums and bass enter; this eschews the preference for 2, 4 or 8 as a standard repetitive device in rock musicianship (Derek and The Dominos' 'Layla' (1970) or Deep Purple's 'Smoke on the Water' (1972) are examples of this tendency). This unusual signature in Gallagher's composition potentially signifies his ability to subvert and rework the conventions of rock composition. It can also be read as an attempt to mix Irish, Anglo-American and African-American musical idioms in what was his opening musical statement as a solo artist (CD Track 10).

While utilising the first, fourth and fifth degrees of the scale as the song's basic chordal progression, Gallagher references the intricacy developed in the blues rock tradition by alternating between major and minor variants of

the I-IV-V in interchanging segments of ‘Laundromat’. In the verses’ A section, the minor variant is used; in the B section, the major appears. In addition, Gallagher embellishes chord spellings in the A section, substituting the basic A min - D min – E – A min progression with Am - D min - Em9 – A min9, thereby effecting a more jazz-inflected and suspenseful delivery of the popularised blues form. In the B sections, the composition explicitly recalls an earlier rock ‘n’ roll tradition, as it moves between VI and I (D7 – A, accentuated by McAvoy’s walking bassline) before building tension by remaining static on the V chord (E7) for a 8 full bars. Drums and bass provide rhythmic accompaniment and harmonic foundation for both rhythm and lead guitar; recalling the blues-rock drumming styles of Ginger Baker and Mitch Mitchell, Wilgar Campbell’s performance features both melodic (tom and snare fills, cymbal crashes and washes) and rhythmic (kick, snare and hi-hat) aspects. ‘Laundromat’ also includes a ‘space’ for solo guitar; over bass and drums, Gallagher performs a versatile improvisation, based on the minor blues scale. The guitarist’s predilection for using triplets as a foundational rhythmic figure appears in the opening bars of the solo.¹²³

‘Just the Smile’ invokes a different musical tradition – that of British (and Irish) folk music. This sonic signification of this genre is achieved through the use of a fingerpicked (and strummed) acoustic guitar in ‘dropped D’ tuning (that is, with strings tuned to DADGBE). The use of a tuning in which the three lowest strings form an open chord allows for harmony to be maintained in the bass strings, while the treble register can be used for melodic improvisation.¹²⁴ This approach recalls the droning, resonant styles

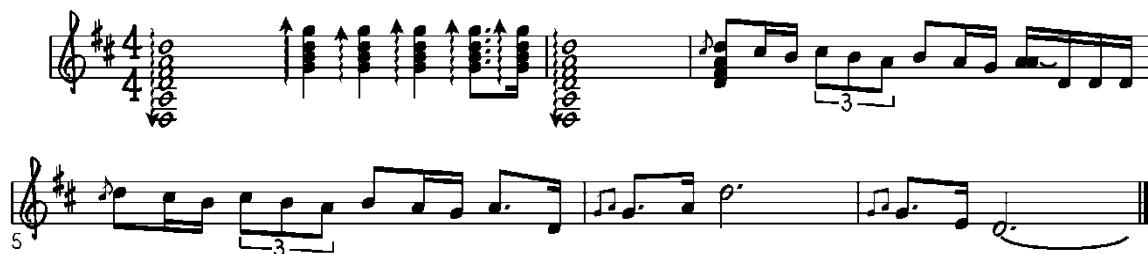
123 I discuss this in detail with reference to ‘Walk on Hot Coals’ below.

124 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Carthy; accessed 16/5/2011.

enabled by open tuning of the folk guitarists John Renbourn and Davy Graham.¹²⁵ In addition, the use of an accented percussive right hand attack, which accentuates the melodic line (and anticipates and underscores the vocal melody), draws on the style developed by the British folk musician Martin Carthy. The track's 'folk' feel is accentuated by the use of percussion, on which Wilgar Campbell performs intricate rhythmic patterns (CD Track 11).

JUST THE SMILE (INTRO)

RORY GALLAGHER



In its referencing of folk music, 'Just the Smile' provides an aural and stylistic contrast to 'Laundromat'; Gallagher then moves from the aural terrain of British folk to a minor blues-based composition, 'I Fall Apart'. The use of G minor here represents a break from typical compositional methodology in rock musicianship; in standard tuning, the key is a difficult one for the guitarist to play in and improvise over. It is plausible that Gallagher's use of G minor was intended to illustrate his ability to compose and perform in unconventional keys, or to recall or signify a jazz vocabulary, since Bb (relative major) is a key common in the jazz traditions.¹²⁶ This would be in keeping with Gallagher's interest in jazz

¹²⁵ Open guitar tunings include DADGAD, DADF#AD, or any of a range of alternate tunings based on D and G major chords, as opposed to the standard EADGBE tuning.

¹²⁶ See Gallagher's comments on jazz style at <http://www.roryon.com/rgfr482.html>; accessed 16/05/2011; his performative knowledge of jazz included saxophone playing and performance; see the

guitar and the genre's wider contexts (Marten, 1987).¹²⁷ The song's initial section is based on Gmin, F and Eb, and performed with clean electric guitar, interspersed with overdriven guitar parts. Following the second verse, chorus and improvisation, the track moves into a second section which features a descending and repeated VI-V-IV progression; insistent repetition of that progression on bass and overdriven guitar, augmented by terse military-style drum patterns, add a sense of urgency, and builds an aural tension which is maintained until the song ends. The use of triplets occurs in the initial guitar solo at bars 7, 8, 10, 22 and 26, and forms a major structural component of the bridging section which leads into the track's final and dynamic improvisation.

Signifying the expansive use of diverse musical idioms, *Rory Gallagher* then changes musical direction, as the guitarist performs 'Wave Myself Goodbye' on acoustic guitar, with simple piano accompaniment. Here, the generic influence is acoustic blues, evident in the composition's minimal instrumentation, the expression of sentiments of love and loss, the use of blues-based chord progressions (IV-I-IV-I-IV-I-I-V-I in the verse; V-VI-I in the middle section) and of bent third, fifth and seventh ('blue') notes in the guitar parts. Underlining the album's hybrid permutations, Gallagher returns to a blues-rock sensibility, delivering 'Hands-Up', a composition characterised by terse, forceful vocal phrases, a driving rock rhythm and an insistent, repetitive bass line. The instrumental sections of 'Hands Up' are

Taste Beat Club Sessions, for example http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0_NvpLGmUw; accessed 12/5/2011.

127 See Marten, 1987: <http://www.roryon.com/guitarist.html>; accessed 16/5/2011. There is no recorded evidence of Gallagher's having engaged musically with the leading Irish jazz guitarist of the 1970s and 1980s, Louis Stewart, though internet sources show that Gallagher was aware of and acknowledged Stewart's work; see comments/review of Stewart's album *Overdrive*, made by former Gallagher roadie John f. Norris at <http://www.amazon.com/Overdrive-Louis-Stewart/dp/B00005MKWG>; accessed 19/12/2011.

founded on a descending pattern (Am-G-F-E) maintained on bass and drums, and are interesting because of the use of distinct guitar styles.¹²⁸ In contrast to ‘I Fall Apart’, ‘Hands Up’ concludes not by an abrupt and complete final chord, but by being faded out; the use of such a technique at the production stage implies the potential for lengthier improvisations, signifying a valued ability in rock and jazz. ‘Sinner Boy’, a signature Gallagher song, opens with a country-influenced I-IV motif, before moving into a conventional blues-rock structure. The solo section incorporates call-and-answer slide guitar lines, performed on open-tuned electric guitar, and parallel movement of vocal and guitar – a key feature of blues performance (Palmer, 1987) - in its final section. ‘For The Last Time’, is an early example of a key element of Gallagher’s developing musical identity: the use of minor blues as a structured point of departure for lengthy improvisation (‘A Million Miles Away’; ‘I Fall Apart’; ‘Seventh Son of a Seventh Son’; ‘Walk on Hot Coals’; ‘Can’t Believe It’s True’). Here, Gallagher uses clean, raked chords on electric guitar, accompanied by bass and drums to accompany a melancholy lyric. The song’s notable section is a lengthy solo improvisation, performed over a repeated G minor⁷ chord. This solo section runs to 68 bars– allowing Gallagher to explore the possibilities of blues improvisation. In ‘It’s You’, Gallagher addresses the country tradition. In terms of both instrumentation and delivery, this song incorporates visible signifiers of country music – tremolo-picked mandolin, slide guitar (which, in this sonic context, recalls the lap-steel guitar), a delicate, upbeat tempo, and a bassline of alternating root and fifth notes.

128 The initial solo section utilises octaves, referencing a performance style popularised by Wes Montgomery, and by Jimi Hendrix in the blues/rock genre; Hendrix’ influence is evident in the fuzzed tone Gallagher uses to perform the solo. The second improvisation utilises the treble register of the overdriven guitar, achieving a cleaner sound; it is more melodic in aspect, with Gallagher accessing the upper ranges of the guitar’s fretboard.

The song features an accompanying shift in sensibility to sentimentality for a lover – the only song on the album to feature such a sentiment. ‘I’m Not Surprised’ returns to the expression of love and loss, and revisits the style of ‘Wave Myself Goodbye’ – a medium tempo blues number, with piano and acoustic guitar accompaniment. The final track, ‘Can’t Believe It’s True’ revisits the blues-rock territory which Gallagher had previously explored with Taste. The sonic referents here are the California jam bands Jefferson Airplane, Grateful Dead – Gerry McAvoy’s blues-based basslines recall the style of West-Coast bassists Phil Lesh and Jack Casady.

Having demonstrated some of the musical relationships, signifying practices and cultural quotations in *Rory Gallagher*, I want to suggest that the recording is a work in which many of the stylistic influences informing Gallagher’s musical identity are intelligently mixed. *Rory Gallagher* is decidedly hybrid in its synthesis of musical codes derived from Irish music, folk, blues, jazz, rock ‘n’ roll and blues rock. Gallagher’s hybrid recordings signify the complex histories of cultural exchange informing Irish popular musical production in rock’s first wave. They also denote the diasporic dimension of Irish cultural production, which drew on indigenous and international ideas enabled by technological mediation (recording and broadcasting) and by Gallagher’s physical movement between Ireland and the territories of the Anglo-American ‘centre’. What this indicates is that in popular music, Irish cultural production was informed by a compositional strategy which foregrounded the ‘fuzziness and mélange’ which Nederveen Pieterse establishes as a cornerstone of a hybrid strategy; in so doing, Irish rock reflects similar tendencies in diverse musics, including those of the black Atlantic and other non-western cultures (Manuel, 1987; Gilroy, 1993; Santoro, 1997).

Van Morrison: *Veedon Fleece* (1974)

Gallagher's main musical motivation was to align his recordings and performance style with the American folk and blues traditions (and to display his ability to both emulate and develop these musical forms). In contrast, *Veedon Fleece*, Van Morrison's eighth studio album, has been described by Campbell and Smyth as his 'extended re-engagement' with the island of Ireland (Campbell and Smyth, 2005). Morrison's biographer Clinton Heylin notes (Heylin, 2002:278-81), and a filmed critique of Morrison's work confirms, that the majority of the songs presented on *Veedon Fleece* were inspired by and written during a visit to the island in October 1973.¹²⁹ This trip occurred during tumultuous change in Morrison's professional and personal circumstances; it followed the dissolution of his marriage, the end of his exploration of an idyllic American way of life (*Tupelo Honey, His Band and the Street Choir*), and the disbanding of the Caledonia Soul Orchestra. Interestingly, Morrison's 're-engagement' did not involve a return to the Belfast of *Astral Weeks*; it is notable that there are no references to Cyprus Avenue, the Sandy Row of 'Madame George', or Belfast city's back streets. However, this investigation notes the significant parallels to the earlier work in terms of its meditative temperament, artistic direction and instrumentation. Morrison notably eschewed R&B and soul – favoured genres for musical exploration on previous albums (*It's Too Late To Stop Now, St Dominic's Preview, His Band And the Street Choir*) – adopting country, jazz, blues and Irish folk music as stylistic referents. *Veedon Fleece* represents a meditative engagement with a decidedly rural, romanticised

129 The documentary referred to is *Van Morrison: Under Review: 1964-74*. Sexy Intellectual, 2008.

and unique vision of Ireland, utilising American and Irish musical vocabularies and cultural signifiers – linguistic, conceptual, idiomatic – to construct a hybridised, intertextual narrative. On the album's cover, Morrison is pictured with two Irish wolfhounds, sitting amid the lush greenery of Sutton House in the Irish Republic's Dublin Bay. Following Bhabha, we can posit *Veedon Fleece* as significant in that its interfacing of American and Irish musical cultures enables Morrison to propose a construction of 'Ireland' which is part experienced and part imagined. This is critical regionalism of a very meaningful category: Morrison inhabits a liminal position with respect to Ireland, one through which he discovers new aspects of the island, and articulates regarding his relationship to it. I will focus here on musical and cultural hybridity within the work, since both are key to understanding the imaginative and textual depth of *Veedon Fleece*.

The album's opening track, 'Fair Play To You', is performed in the relaxed style of a jazz waltz, both in terms of timing – 3 crotchet beats per bar at a slow tempo – and instrumentation: upright bass, piano and brushed drum parts. Jazz music is clearly referenced through the use of pedalled bass motifs, the use of the IM(7)-II^m(7) progression, with the minor seventh chord consistently resolving to the tonic. Against this Anglo-American musical texture (with its references to both American and British jazz), Morrison's gentle rhymes, based on contrasting short and elongated vowel sounds, are delivered in a soft and melodic vocal style. Lyrically, he evokes an 'Ireland' of his imagination, through use of the laudatory Hiberno-English idiom 'Fair play to you', and reference to the Irish landscape (the 'blue' lakes of Killarney), as well as to the island's controversial literary figure, Oscar Wilde. This portrayal is an evocatively hybridised one: the image of the Irish landscape and the Irish writer Wilde is juxtaposed with

references to American literary figures (Poe and Thoreau),¹³⁰ fragments of romantic narrative, and quotations from Irish and Anglo-American collective cultural memory. In particular, the characters of Geronimo and the inclusion of The Lone Ranger's refrain 'Hi-Ho Silver' signify both Anglo-American constructions of the 'Old West', and the later representations of that period, its preoccupations and realities, in film and popular literature. 'Linden Arden Stole the Highlights' provides an impressionistic portrait of the song's solitary subject, recalling the portrayal of Madame George on *Astral Weeks*. Musically, the song's minimal accompaniment is performed on piano and bass, with an arrangement of strings entering for the fifth and sixth verses. Again, Morrison invokes both the romance of cowboy narrative, and the mannerisms and symbolic economy of Irish cultural archetypes.

Morrison's narrative recounts Arden's adventures, in a manner strongly suggestive of the American cowboy culture: that culture's heroic individual, an archetype of tough virtue, is ambiguously represented here, as his religiosity, love of children and individual courage is counterbalanced by his alcoholism. Luke Gibbons has stated that:

The invocation of the west as the source of heroism, mystery and romance goes back at least to antiquity...[i]n modern times, however, Ireland and the United States would seem to be the outstanding examples of countries in which the myth of the west has been elevated to the level of a national ideal.

(Gibbons, 1996: 23)

130 Continuing the tendency towards hybridity in the work, Morrison's reference to the three literary figures invokes three diverse literary traditions: those of transcendentalism, aestheticism and American romanticism.

Similar to the hero of numerous ‘Wild West’ narratives, Arden is pitted against an unidentified, numerically superior group (the ‘posse’), with whom he fearlessly engages ‘face to face’. The song’s final image, that of Arden ‘living with a gun’ provides a conceptual segue into the following track, which opens with a repetition of the same lyric. There are continuities, too, in instrumentation, with piano and bass foregrounded, accompanied by acoustic guitar. ‘Who Was that Masked Man’ avoids the adolescent humour and energetic movement of the similarly titled ‘Who Drove the Red Sports Car’ (1967); following the arpeggiated piano introduction, the track cycles on IV and V chords. The unsettling absence of the tonic (I) chord suggests the eschewing of musical resolution. Morrison performs the song in a ‘disembodied’ style, employing a falsetto range which has no precedent in his studio output. In a musical sense, then, ‘Who Was That Masked Man’ involves Morrison himself assuming a mask, that of an alternative vocal identity.

‘Streets of Arklow’ is notable for its invocation of a ‘traditional’ Irish soundscape, achieved through the use of recorder on the track. With respect to Irish traditional music, Jim Rothermel’s recorder lines are noticeably atypical: they are wholly improvised, and reflect his experience in jazz contexts. However, by utilising the range of tin (penny) whistle, and duplicating the variations of pitch characteristic of slow airs and uileann pipe performance (the use of ‘bent’ notes, for example, occurs frequently in piping music), he successfully evokes Irish traditional music. Morrison’s voice, which had taken the album’s first three songs in relatively high pitches, drops to brooding depths as he recounts the tale of wandering in the Wicklow village (CD Track 12):

Streets of Arklow (Vocal and Recorder)

Van Morrison/Jim Rothermel

The invocation of Irish folk music continues with ‘You Don’t Pull No Punches But You Don’t Push The River’. The track is built around a brisk 6/8 rhythmic figure; as with many Irish folk songs, the vocals open with a rhythmic lilt.¹³¹ The opening motif obviously references Irish music: when notated as in the figure below, the melodic similarity to a typical jig is palpable; furthermore, the melodic basis is pentatonic, as is common in much Irish instrumental music (Breathnach, 1971: 10-11). However, a jazz influence is also evident, in that the two phrases comprising the introductory motif contain critical melodic and rhythmic variations. The most prominent of these is the emphasised substitution of a fourth (third quaver, bar 1) for a fifth (third quaver, bar 5) (CD Track 13):

¹³¹ Compare also Lynott’s ‘Vagabond of The Western World’ (1973) and Gallagher’s arrangement of ‘Out On The Western Plain’ (1975), which use similar devices.

VOCAL INTRO, YOU DON'T PULL NO PUNCHES BUT YOU DON'T PUSH THE RIVER

PITCHES ARE APPROXIMATE

VAN MORRISON

The musical links to ‘Streets of Arklow’ can be found in instrumentation – both songs begin with solo acoustic guitar, and build to climaxes utilising string arrangements for dramatic timbral effect. Both songs are in the same key (E minor), and make similar use of musical colour by varying major and minor chords to create affective textures. Both contain improvised woodwind parts: the recorder and flute sections of the respective compositions counterbalance the structured rhythmic patterns and chord arrangements, and, importantly, act as a countermelody to Morrison’s vocal. Into this musically hybrid context, Morrison references a spiritualist aesthetic, by referring to the poet William Blake, and to the Roman Catholic religious order The Sisters of Mercy. Blake’s preoccupation with aesthetics, with the transcendental and with romanticism is reflected here in Morrison’s own drawing on the imaginative and the mythological as central aspects of his artistic sensibility.¹³²

132 Blake’s artistic reputation has developed on the basis of his poetry and his artworks: key themes emerging from both these strands of Blakean art include the interrogation of aesthetic principles (the sublime and the beautiful); the exploration of his British and classical heritage, in terms of mythology and artistry; and philosophical meditations on the contradictory states of human existence. Blake’s works are contextualised as a precursor to the Romantic movement in English literature, because of their rejection of Kantian notions of rationalism and reason as the sole determinant of human actions. In contrast to Kantian propositions, Blake emphasised the primacy of imagination, mysticism and the transcendental.

‘Bulbs’ moves away from an improvised musical context to a more structured one. The key referent here is Anglo-American country music, evident in the predominance of major key, the use of tonic and fifth on consecutive first and third beats in the bass, the presence of ‘whining’ double-stopped and clean electric guitar parts typical of country music, and the theme of travel and migration. The track’s opening lines provide a point of contrast to ‘Fair Play to You’ by using American linguistic idioms - ‘kicking off from centre field’, ‘down for the game’, ‘one shot deal’ – setting the song in an alternative cultural context, and highlighting the confluence of linguistic styles in the work. Morrison’s vocal lines depart from regular pitch and tone, and include growling, scatting and non-verbalised vocal emanations. The trope of movement and migration finds its contrast in ‘Cul de Sac’, where the lyrical theme concerns returning, stasis and homecoming. Once more, Morrison performs in a waltz context, though the jazzier improvisations which characterise ‘Fair Play to You’ are eschewed for a more clear-cut country waltz feel. Contrasting with this, vocally, Morrison becomes more expansive, developing the vocal suggested in ‘Bulbs’ by scatting rhythmically, shouting, growling, screaming and shrieking. The relaxed country-blues feel is maintained on the love song ‘Comfort You’: instrumental improvisations are taken by acoustic guitar, and the $\frac{3}{4}$ waltz tempo is used. The optimistic V-IV-I chord sequence is typical pop song material (‘Church’ (1970) Stephen Stills; ‘With a Little Help from My Friends’(1967) by the Beatles, and Morrison’s own ‘St Dominic’s Preview’ (1972); this, along with a rather conventional string arrangement and repetitive outro, provides the musical foundation for Morrison’s romantic lyric. ‘Comfort You’ gives way to the more philosophical ‘Come Here My Love’, where a ‘folk’ sound typical of James

Taylor, Joan Baez or Paul Simon is foregrounded. Here, Morrison's contemplative vocal is accompanied by chordally indeterminate finger-picked acoustic guitar. Finally, in 'Country Fair' Morrison returns to a form of expression rooted in external experience. The musical segue from 'Come Here My Love' is provided by steel-string acoustic guitar; notable instrumentation in the track includes an introspective, droning guitar line, and continuous, modally-influenced improvisation on both bass and recorder – a class of gestures popular in jazz at the time of release.¹³³

On *Veedon Fleece*, Morrison's hybridised musical strategy is an attempt to synthesise American and Irish (folk) musical forms, entwining structural, rhythmic, melodic, lyrical and narrative ideas from diverse musical styles. Hybrid mixing occurs on unconscious and conscious levels. In typical Morrison style, the project is ambiguous in its aims, its appeal and its meanings; while it is unusual (in the context of Morrison's 1970s output) in the overt exploration of Irish sounds, its impressionistic references to a range of musical vocabularies, literary traditions and cultural practices are characteristic of the artist's overall oeuvre.

Phil Lynott: *Vagabonds of the Western World*

Similarly to *Veedon Fleece*, Thin Lizzy's *Vagabonds of the Western World* makes explicit use of diverse components to create musical and structural hybridity. It was the third studio album by the group, released in September

133 Joe Zawinul's instrumental 'Jungle Book', released on the Weather Report album *Mysterious Traveller* in the same year as *Veedon Fleece*, utilizes similar instrumentation and performative style.

1973. Recorded at Tollington Park Studios, London, and composed primarily by Phil Lynott, the album features R&B, blues, psychedelic and hard rock; along with the contemporaneously produced singles ‘Whiskey in the Jar’/ ‘Black Boys on the Corner’ and ‘Randolph’s Tango’/ ‘Broken Dreams’, *Vagabonds of the Western World* illustrates the group’s absorption of, and ability in, a widening palette of musical influences. The songwriting style is complex, and musically, the album is characterised by rhythmic and melodic intricacy. Particularly notable is the manner in which Phil Lynott’s bass performs both harmonic and melodic functions on various tracks.

‘Mama Nature Said’, the opening track, begins with Eric Bell’s slide guitar figure, accompanied by a syncopated rhythm on hi-hats, with which Lynott’s bass then joins. Aurally, this introduction recalls David Bowie’s ‘Jean Genie’ (1972) and Wishbone Ash’s ‘Blowin’ Free’, (1972) in terms of tempo (evident in the use of triplets in the bass figure), and in the manner in which an instrumental crescendo acts as a point of departure for the lead vocal. Lynott’s bass line enters at bar 4, following a bar-long rhythmic change from 4/4 to 5/4, and contains the chromatic melodic motif around which the composition is based. Similar to Gallagher’s soloing style (and Morrison in ‘You Don’t Pull No Punches But You Don’t Push The River), the use of triplets as a feature of Lynott’s introduction is notable, while the ascending, chromatic movement from D-Eb-E-F suggests an awareness of classical musical ideas (CD Track 14):

Bass Introduction, Mama Nature Said

Phil Lynott, Thin Lizzy

‘Mama Nature Said’ does not employ a typical verse/chorus structure. Instead, the primary vocal is performed over an unusual cyclical chord pattern (F Eb Am Dm Bb C# F C Dm E Eb F); following an instrumental break, this pattern is repeated for verse II, and then again as a basis for Eric Bell’s guitar solo. The sonic referent here is progressive rock, where standard harmonic content and rhythmic structures are regularly abandoned in favour of more experimental performative approaches (Mothers of Invention, Frank Zappa, Yes, Genesis, ELP).

Putterford (2002) describes ‘The Hero and the Madman’ as a reflection of the romanticism of Lynott’s ‘rich imagination’ (2002: 74). The track opens with a typical minor rock riff on bass, accompanied by acoustic guitar, kit drumming and percussion. Bell’s use of the wah pedal (an effect which, by alternating an amplified guitar’s frequency, creates a ‘spacey’, crying timbre) recalls the performance style of Jimi Hendrix. Here, the wah creates atmospheric tension which complements both the ‘windy’ sound effects heard in the bridge between verses, and emphasizes the images and narrative of the hero as recounted by Kid Jensen. The layered vocals of the

chorus include a bizarre vocal effect, heard centrally in the recording, achieved by manipulating the pitch of, and then overdubbing, an original vocal line – the referents here are Frank Zappa and Jimi Hendrix, both of whom had utilised similar techniques on earlier recordings ('EXP'; 'Cosmik Debris'; '1983'). Bell's guitar solo is fluent and expressive, based on the minor blues scale.

The key sonic referents of 'Slow Blues' are electric blues and 1960s funk. The signification of funk is most obvious in the use of the syncopated 'one' (breakbeat) in the drums and instrumental parts (bass and guitar), and the presence of 'a relentless 'groove'' (Borthwick and Moy, 2004: 23) following the track's introductory segment:

Slow Blues, B Section Bars 1-10

Phil Lynott, Brian Downey

The musical score consists of two staves: Rhythm Guitar (top) and Bass Guitar (bottom). Both staves are in 4/4 time and use a bass clef. The key signature changes from B-flat major (two flats) to A major (no sharps or flats) at bar 5. The Rhythm Guitar part features eighth-note chords and eighth-note bass lines. The Bass Guitar part provides a steady eighth-note bass line. The score is divided into three sections: bars 1-4, bars 5-8, and bars 9-10, separated by vertical bar lines.

Further signifiers of funk are the percussive string muting in Bell's clean (undistorted) guitar parts; both the rhythm and solo guitar lines find resonances in and echo the work of James Brown guitarist Jimmy Nolen, Parliament-Funkadelic's Eddie Hazel, and Ernie Isley. The 'clean' production used on the track overall also references early funk- no distortion or phased effects are evident (in contrast to 'The Hero and the Madman' and 'The Rocker'). Departing from conventional funk (James Brown, Sly Stone), the track's overall tonality is minor, rather than seventh- or ninth-based; 'Slow Blues' contains an unusual C section which uses 6/8, an atypical time signature in the rock context (The Beatles' 'Norwegian Wood' (1965) and Gary Moore's 'Still Got The Blues (For You)' (1990) are two of a limited number of examples), but common in Irish instrumental music (jigs, double jigs, polkas). The song's outro section includes a cadenza-like blues-based solo by Bell, leading to the closing C minor chord.

'The Rocker' eschews the rhythmic, melodic and harmonic complexity evident in a majority of the album's tracks; in so doing, Lynott's hoarse, assured vocal and Bell's exploratory guitar solo – two key features of the classic rock composition - are foregrounded. The key musical referent here is hard rock: the electric blues of Jimi Hendrix, The Who and the Jeff Beck Group are sonic referents. In terms of timbre, the class of gestures is decidedly human – these are typified by the 'authentic', raspy vocal and the 'live' improvised guitar solo. These significations of an 'authentic' masculinity are complemented, rather than challenged, by the use of two studio effects – multitracking of vocal parts and the use of phased guitar tracks. Phasing is produced by processing (modulating) the recorded audio signal, creating a sweeping aural effect; Campbell and Smyth suggest that the 'heavily phased A6 chord at 2.33' included in the track 'manages to

invoke the pop romance of The Beatles alongside the brooding rock presence of Jimi Hendrix' (Campbell and Smyth, 2005:46). Lynott's authoritative vocal, heard centre, recalls the delivery of The Who's Roger Daltrey ('We're not Gonna Take It', 'Baba O'Riley'), and also that of Rod Stewart ('Every Picture Tells A Story', 'Gasoline Alley') in its hoarse delivery from both chest and throat, and in its range. There are further resemblances to Stewart's work in terms of narration, with Lynott's 'The Rocker' echoing the Stewart/Wood composition 'Every Picture Tells A Story' in recounting the adventures and fortunes of an idealised, sexualised male protagonist.¹³⁴

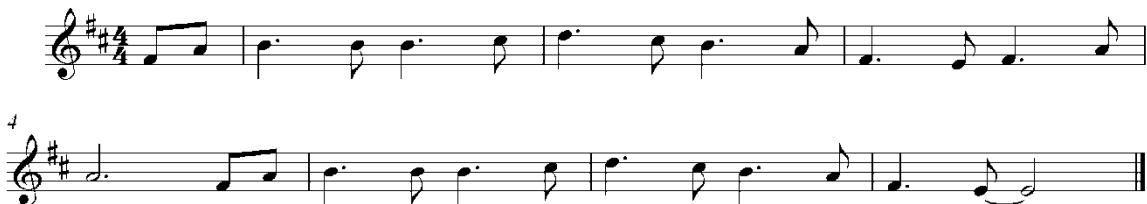
'Vagabond of the Western World' draws on Irish 'traditional' instrumental and folk music; this is placed in a hybridised context with rock instrumentation and rhythm. The track incorporates two lilting refrains common in Irish folk songs and lullabies. The first, 'too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ra-lay' is found in 'Jug of Punch', 'Courting in the Kitchen', 'The Spanish Lady', 'That's An Irish Lullaby' and the Scottish Radio Ballad 'Come All You Gallant Fishermen'; the second, a variation on the commonly uttered 'diddle eye', also appears in several folk songs ('Under the Scotsman's Kilt', 'The Night Visit/As I Roved Out', 'Rare Old Mountain Dew') The lilt which introduces the song is accompanied by Brian Downey performing on tom-tom drums in a style similar to that associated with the bodhrán, a traditional Irish drum: Downey's use of such drumming to echo the Irish bodhrán style is discussed in detail below. The song's key is B minor, the

134 Guitarist Eric Bell has stated that Thin Lizzy's early London performances included supporting both Rod Stewart and the Faces, and Jeff Beck's group Beck, Bogart and Appice; this helps account for the similarities in performance style and vocal delivery described in the analysis; see Eric Bell, interviewed for the *Thin Lizzy Up Close and Personal* DVD and Book Set, p.13.

relative minor of D, in which a significant proportion of Irish music is written. The track's signature motif is based on the B natural minor scale, or, in modal terms, the Dorian mode; again, there is a notable proximity to Irish instrumental music in the use of this mode. The presence of introductory quavers, and the use of a dotted time signature increases the similarity to an Irish or Scottish instrumental song. In fact, 'Vagabond of the Western World' follows the melodic contour of the Irish folk song 'Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye' (CD Tracks 16, 17):

Vagabond of The Western World, Introductory Motif

Phil Lynott/Thin Lizzy



Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye

Traditional Arr. Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem



The narrative theme included in the Thin Lizzy composition draws on the tradition of rakish, roving and vagabond songs common in Ireland and Scotland; examples include 'The Jolly Beggar', 'The Vagabond', 'The Gentleman Soldier', 'The Blacksmith', and 'You Rambling Boys of Pleasure'. The song also references the J.M.Synge play *The Playboy of the Western World*, though Lynott's portrayal of the vagabond both reflects and rejects Synge's portraiture of Christy Mahon, the pathetic, fragile

protagonist of *Playboy of the Western World*. Synge's play ends with Christy's dramatic exit, as he vows to rove for the remainder of his life:

Ten thousand blessings upon all that's here, for you've turned me a likely gaffer in the end of all, the way I'll go romancing through a romping lifetime from this hour to the dawning of the judgment day.

(Synge, 1996)

Lynott's narrative starts from the point at which Synge's ends, by describing the roving of its protagonist, his urbane, carefree, opportunistic romancing, and its effects on his chosen lovers.

'Little Girl in Bloom' is an atypical track, with few referents in classic rock or related genres. The piece's introduction is dominated by a static, I-VI patterned bass line. A further unusual feature is the presence of double-tracked guitar – this first occurs at the introduction, where Bell's guitar, feeding back, produces an atypical major 2nd interval over Lynott's bass. Lynott uses G-Em-D-Em as the verse pattern, and C-B-Em-C-B-Em-D-C in the chorus; the use of the second E minor chord in the verse, and the C (fourth degree in the key of G) in the chorus eschews a sense of resolution. In my view, this lack of resolution is used to reflect the song's subject matter: that of an impending wedding brought about by a young woman's pregnancy. Bell's unusual note choices for the track's guitar solo include the use of the mixolydian scale (major with flattened seventh) as a point of entry into an expansive solo. In the outro section, the presence of triplets signifies the use of a rhythmic figure common in traditional Irish music, while the presence of double-tracked guitar prefigures the twin-guitar sound of the later, four-piece Thin Lizzy:

Outro, Guitar Solo, 'Little Girl in Bloom'

Eric Bell

Timings are approximate

Electric Guitar I

Electric Guitar II

E. Gtr.I

E. Gtr.II

E. Gtr.I

E. Gtr.II

E. Gtr.I

E. Gtr.II

E. Gtr.I

E. Gtr.II

The subsequent track, ‘Gonna Creep Up on Ya’ features a return to hard rock in the style of Led Zeppelin. The song is a startling point of contrast to ‘Little Girl In Bloom’; the use of the American linguistic idiom in the title suggests a conceptual dissimilarity with the previous song, where the visual imagery (specifically cricket) had suggested an English cultural scene. The song’s threatening title is accentuated by the aggressive bass introduction, performed in a minor key and based on tonic and seventh. The bass is joined by drums after four measures, guitar after sixteen, and, unusually, the vocals after eighteen; the drum track features accentuated crashes and embellished drum fills recalling the aggressive performance styles of Ginger Baker and Keith Moon. The vocal differentiates between a softly sung chorus and a forcefully delivered verse; Bell improvises over the bass/drums’ I-VII pattern with wah guitar. ‘A Song For While I’m Away’ suggests the melodic terrain (‘pop romance’) of the Beatles, both in the use of a ‘Beatlesque’ chromatically descending chord sequence (E-D#-D-C#-C-B-A-E), and in the use of orchestration. The track adopts the 6/8 rhythm used previously on ‘Slow Blues’; again, the Irish instrumental tradition is invoked by the use of such a rhythm. The descending chord progression provides the foundation for Eric Bell’s guitar figure, which echoes the classical tradition through the use of root and inverted arpeggios. This invocation of classical music is complemented by the presence of string arrangements and woodwind parts, underscoring Lynott’s interest in classical music; this interest had previously been explored on the tracks ‘Shades of A Blue Orphanage’ (1972), ‘Sarah – Version 1’ (1972) and ‘Honesty Is No Excuse’ (1971).

What is evident is that the compositional hybrid, as created by Lynott, involves the mixing of different musical and literary inflections. A literary

connotation is evident in the title, which draws on J.M. Synge's 'Playboy of the Western World'. The final track, 'A Song For While I'm Away', provided the title to Lynott's first published book of poetry (1974). In addition, the use of spoken narration and chorus line in 'Hero and The Madman' develops as an internal dialogue. The inclusion of 'The Legend of the Vagabond' on the album sleeve points to a temporal hybridity: musically, this is found in the interweaving of legend, folksong, classical and contemporary popular musical styles within the album. Visually, it is represented in Jim Fitzpatrick's composite album artwork, in which scenes from ancient Irish history – triskele and curvilinear stone decorations and standing stones – are incorporated into a comic-book portrait of the group and scenes of interplanetary travel.

In addition, *Vagabonds of the Western World* extends and develops Lynott's preoccupation with the musical and lyrical representation of emotional experience; along with issues of paternity and maternity, attraction, rejection and romance provide principal thematic material throughout the work. Lynott had written songs based on personal experiences of emotion and romance throughout his career to 1973 ('Look What the Wind Just Blew In' (1971) was a typical example, referencing his relationship with Gail Barber (Bailie, 1996)). With respect to this, it is notable that a particular pattern obtains across the LP's two sides, in terms of the gender of the protagonist or main character particular to each song:

| Vagabonds of the Western World Track | Central Character | Gender |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1. 'Mama Nature Said' | Mother Nature | feminine |
| 2. 'The Hero and The Madman' | the (male) hero | masculine |
| 3. 'Slow Blues' | the (female) lover | feminine |
| 4. 'The Rocker' | the rocker | masculine |
| 5. 'Vagabond of the Western World' | the vagabond | masculine |
| 6. 'Little Girl in Bloom' | the little girl | feminine |
| 7. 'Gonna Creep Up on Ya' | the (male) creep | masculine |
| 8. 'A Song For While I'm Away' | the (female) lover | feminine |

Figure 7: Representation of Gender in *Vagabonds of the Western World* (1973)

This makes it plausible to suggest that Lynott composed the work as a song cycle; at the very least, the representation of gender points to the possibility that *Vagabonds of the Western World* incorporated some deeper structural concerns.¹³⁵ Recent published articles contend that Lynott had fathered a child prior to the album's release, and this lends credence to the hypothesis

¹³⁵ Note in particular here that the representation of gender is reversed on sides A (tracks 1-4) and B (tracks 5-8) as presented on the original LP.

that the work reflects his personal experience in some way.¹³⁶ What can be said with certainty is that the work's narrative reflections take place across a wide range of musical settings, and utilise a mixture of stylistic idioms, instrumentation and timbres.

Irish Rock and Indigenous Irish Musics

McLaughlin has effectively argued that Irish instrumental music does not provide the 'unchanging bedrock' on which the island's popular music cultures are built (McLaughlin, 1999). In my view, he assumes this position in order to deconstruct imposed, hackneyed representations of Irish popular musicians as inescapably beholden to fossilized cultures of folk and traditional music. Accepting McLaughlin's argument, I voice my own contention that the use of Irish instrumental music in first-wave popular and rock contexts is under-researched to date.

Referencing Homi Bhabha's theory of liminality, Hyder has developed the earlier ideas of Peter Manuel, who views musical syncretism as a '[frequent] consequence of cultural contact' (Manuel, 1988: 20). As Manuel's analyses of a range of non-western popular musics illustrate, syncretism is one of a number of possible outcomes to cultural transformations such as diaspora, urbanisation and the 'co-habitation of diverse ethnic groups' in the post-industrial world system. The powerful tensions borne of the practice of musical synthesis are not particular to the case of Ireland, and Maneul's

136 <http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/music/lynott-sons-joy-as-phils-family-recognise-him-2272443.html>; <http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/music/festivals/phils-boy-back-in-town-to-see-lizzy-2660974.html>; accessed 31/5/2011.

description of hybridity in South African *makwaya* is instructive in illustrating both the musicological syncresis involved in its production, and the political ambivalence the new music's fusion of 'European and native features' engenders among the socially mobile classes (Manuel, 1988: 107).

Similarly, Irish rock is a musical style which also invokes wider cultural and historical complexities through the act of composition. As McLaughlin and McLoone, Marie McCarthy (1999) and Harry White (1998) describe, in Ireland, musical production has grown out of, alongside, and as a critical response to, the island's imperial, colonial, national and post-national histories, and to essentialising portrayals of the Irish as essentially musical. It will be remembered that Irish subjectivities have endured both imperial and capitalistic forms of domination in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively. In the Irish case, the stripping away of the cultural and psychological value of traditional musics (an outcome of the imperial project in the propositions of Frantz Fanon (Fanon, 2008) and LeRoi Jones (Jones, 1963)) is exacerbated both by the harnessing of certain musical forms to the nation-building process, and the conservatism of some of the music's practitioners and institutions; all of this has implications for the manner in which Irish traditional music is perceived, utilized and presented (Smyth, 2009: 88-92). Recalling a cosmopolitan musical upbringing during the 1960s in Donegal, the popular (and traditional) musician and Clannad vocalist Máire ni Bhraonáin (Moya Brennan) incisively captures this dilemma:

I was involved in all sorts of music, but my main instrument was the Irish harp. I loved to play, but I also had a certain complex about it...I admired the famous players like Mary O'Hara and Deirdre O'Callaghan, but it was just so 'Irish country girl' at a time when everyone was heavily into the Beatles and the Rolling Stones...I

wouldn't have dreamt of getting up on the stage with it...[m]y excuse always was that the harp was too difficult to tune.

(Brennan and Little, 2000: 55-6)

Ní Bhraonáin describes the centrality of the Irish harp in her developing musical identity, and the simultaneous psychological (dis)location she experienced when performing and associating with traditional Irish music: such music is equated with an anachronistic, irrelevant past. It seems logical to argue that this situation is exacerbated because of the colonial project's downgrading of the native culture: the de-colonised subject recoils from indigenous cultural forms as a psychological response to the diminishing status of native culture during the imperialising process. The interpretation and use of traditional music also involves negotiating difficult discourses of national and ethnic inclusiveness and exclusivity which do not necessarily translate easily into contemporary hybridising tendencies.

The most obvious case of appropriation from Irish folk and instrumental music is that of Horslips, of whose compositions several developed or incorporated instrumental Irish music, re-presenting works from the three principal song categories of ancient Ireland: geanraí, golraí, suanraí (joyous strain, lamenting strain, sleeping strain; Horslips, 2010).

The revival of Irish folk and ballad music (discussed in Chapter Two) contributed to the early development of Irish rock culture. The establishment of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in the 1950s had raised the critical profile of traditional music significantly, as had Sean O'Riada's work with Ceoltóirí Chualann in the 1960s (Glatt, 2005). Folk and ballad music came to prominence in popular music circles through the chart success of the Dubliners, whose 'Seven Drunken Nights' was a surprise hit in the United Kingdom in 1967 (Campbell and Smyth, 2005).

Simultaneously, the Clancy Brothers were building an audience for Irish folk singing and balladeering in the United States, influencing the burgeoning folk and rock movements (most notably Bob Dylan, who describes his Greenwich Village encounters with the group in the Scorsese documentary *No Direction Home*) at a time when there was no strong market for the Irish traditional sound in America. The critical success of the British folk groups Pentangle, Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span was mirrored in Ireland with the emergence of The Dubliners and Sweeney's Men, and later, Planxty, Clannad, The Bothy Band and DeDannan, Paul Brady and Andy Irvine. The compulsion to fuse Irish traditional sounds with the Anglo-American discourses of rock has been documented in the recorded output of Horslips, whose fusion of glam and instrumental rock with Irish music gained a national and international audience. Similarly, early Clannad projects (and especially the album *Clannad 2*, produced by Donal Lunny) palpably synthesise Irish singing and instrumental music with rock production and instrumentation.

In a related and important argument, cultural theorists Gerry Smyth and Sean Campbell have argued that the major contributions of traditional and folk music to Irish rock have been ‘technique, tradition and attitude’ (Campbell and Smyth, 2005: 23). It is worth deliberating on this assertion, as it provides a starting-point for analysis of the methods through which Irish rock has drawn on aspects of Irish folk music. The *OED* defines ‘technique’ as a ‘way of carrying out a particular task, especially in the execution of an artistic work or scientific procedure’. This definition infers that the appropriation and application of a given technique is a deliberate procedure: a scientific or artistic ‘task’. In the case of Irish rock, the ‘task’ of the most capable musicians has been to reference Irish traditional music

through Anglo-American cultural discourse, without plagiarising or essentialising the original source material. McLaughlin and McLoone have described effective instances of such acquisition by The Pogues and Sinéad O'Connor. It is a matter of some concern that the guitarist Rory Gallagher's meaningful appropriation of Irish folk instrumentation and techniques is overlooked in their authoritative analysis. This occurs principally because they do not incorporate musicologically-focussed analyses in their critique, and also because, as I illustrate, Gallagher's appeal to Irishness was undertaken outside of the established 'routes' of traditional music.

As described above, Gallagher referenced Irish and folk music as early as his eponymous debut album through the use of open tuned guitar. This continued with his second album, *Deuce*, which opens with 'I'm Not Awake Yet', a composition based on 6/8 (jig) time. As the *Irish Tour 1974* documentary shows, Gallagher's exceptional ability on electric and acoustic guitar was augmented by proficiency on a range of other string instruments, including four and five-string banjo and mandolin. Originally an Italian string instrument, the eight-course mandolin was, by the 1970s, an instrument which featured significantly in Irish folk and ballad musical styles, having been popularised in these contexts by Andy Irvine, Mick Moloney and Barney McKenna of the Dubliners. While he did not perform Irish dance tunes during the 1970s, Gallagher used the mandolin to perform the composition 'Going To My Hometown' at his live shows, signifying a conceptual affinity with Irish instrumental and folk music. The primacy of this tradition in his musical identity is evidenced in his inclusion of live versions of the track on both the *Live in Europe* release (1972), and in the film documentary of his 1974 Irish Tour. Gallagher preferred to view Irish music as one genre in a constellation of musical styles – African, American,

Irish - of which his musical identity was comprised. Indeed, Gallagher's use of the mandolin in the track is somewhat unusual, in that he utilises seventh chords and chord progressions (I-IV-I-V-IV-I) characteristic of the blues tradition in various performances of the song ('Me and My Music', RTE Studios, Dublin 1977; City Hall, Belfast 1973; Rockpalast, 1976). Furthermore, the mandolin performance is placed in an interestingly hybridised context by the inclusion of bass, piano and drums in the performance.

As the 1970s progressed, so did Gallagher's ability in the fingerpicking and slide styles of southern Delta blues. Gallagher used various open G and D-based tunings in guitar performance; these tunings were common among both African-American and white blues players, and were popularised in English folk contexts in the 1960s by John Renbourn, Martin Carthy and Davy Graham. Gallagher utilised these tunings to perform both blues and Irish tunes, including the Lead Belly composition 'Out on the Western Plain', and the Irish traditional tune 'She Moved Through The Fair'. These technical developments gave fuller expression to Gallagher's long-standing, if rarely acknowledged interest in Irish music, and in its related genres: country, zydeco and bluegrass. In an interview, Gallagher referenced Irish folk music as a key aspect of his hybrid guitar technique:

I sometimes tune my bottom E string down a full tone to D, and I've got various tunings that I borrow from great blues players like Muddy Waters, Lead Belly, and Earl Hooker, or folk players like Davy Graham, Martin Carthy or Bert Jansch.... [w]hat I think I've done is developed this kind of tuning which is mine. It's bluesy, it's folkish, and Celtic as well, and sometimes on stage I'll take this tuning and go into an Irish tune called 'She Moves to the Fair', which you can play great in that particular tuning.

(Gallagher, quoted in Minhinet, 2005)

Gallagher's version of the Lead Belly song appeared originally on the 1975 *Against the Grain* LP. The album version combines techniques and idioms from both blues and folk traditions – open tuned guitar, syncopated rhythms, and the simultaneous performance of lead and bass parts on the instrument. Gallagher stated that this fusion of styles, while drawing on blues, resonated with his own vision regarding the expression of a 'Celtic' musical style (CD Track 19)¹³⁷:

¹³⁷ Note how vocal differentiation is achieved by Gallagher through initial use of humming and later verbalisation in the above example.

OUT ON THE WESTERN PLAIN

BARS 1-6: TIMINGS ARE APPROXIMATE: BLUES-BASED 'FREE' TIME

LEADBELLY ARR. RORY GALLAGHER

ACOUSTIC GUITAR

VOICE

A. GTR.

VOICE

A. GTR.

VOICE

A. GTR.

VOICE

A. GTR.

VOICE

The track became a live favourite, and as such developed significantly in Gallagher's repertoire throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In a performance of 'Out on the Western Plain' at the Festival Interceltique in Brittany, 1994, Gallagher accentuated the 'Irish' elements of his improvisational technique

by spontaneously segueing, at the piece's conclusion, into a performance which utilised the tonality and rhythm of an Irish jig (CD Track 20):¹³⁸

Improvisation (Melody), Les Nuits Celtiques, August 9th, 1994

Rory Gallagher

The musical score consists of five staves of guitar notation. The first staff is labeled 'Guitar' and has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 6/8 time signature. The second staff is labeled 'Gtr.' and has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The third staff is labeled 'Gtr.' and has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The fourth staff is labeled 'Gtr.' and has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The fifth staff is labeled 'Gtr.' and has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. Measure numbers 6, 11, 16, and 20 are indicated above the staves. The music features sixteenth-note patterns with various rests and grace notes.

On the song 'Country Mile' (*Calling Card*, 1976), Gallagher's electric guitar technique is distinctly 'Irish', invoked by playing jig-style triplets in 6/8 over the 4/4 country-rock rhythm. Gallagher uses muted pick-strokes to create a banjo-like effect throughout the piece: this technique is accentuated in the outro section. A similar technique was also used in live performance. In the extended guitar solo of 'Walkin' on Hot Coals' (from the 1974 album *Irish Tour*) the triplets reappear almost as a fully-fledged jig over Rod de'Ath's 4/4 drum beat between 5:02 and 5:33. The solo also incorporates the

¹³⁸ Gallagher's performance at the Lorient Festival Interceltique was included in the 2002 film *Inheritance of the Celts*, directed by Gerald di Puglia.

syncopated time-signatures common in Irish music; this was a distinctive feature of Gallagher's lead guitar style (CD Track 21):

WALK ON HOT COALS GUITAR SOLO (1974)

RORY GALLAGHER

The musical score for 'Walk on Hot Coals' Guitar Solo by Rory Gallagher. The score is for electric guitar and consists of six staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'ELECTRIC GUITAR'. The subsequent staves are labeled 'E. GTR.' with measure numbers 4, 7, 10, 13, and 15. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs, typical of Gallagher's lead guitar style.

In a 1984 interview, Gallagher proposed that:

...the trouble with a lot of rock players is all they listen to is rock...They should listen to a little jazz and folk music as well. Not that there's any rule, but it's fun to play a solo that's actually more like a jig or jazz phrasing....playing against the time, in independent time or in mandolin strokes.

(Gallagher, interviewed by Holdship, 1984)

The idea of suggesting 'Celtic' flavourings by drawing motivic ideas from Irish dance music was something Gallagher revisited throughout his career.

He clearly discussed this, and a range of stylistic and formal parallels between Irish and blues, in an interview with the Northern Irish guitarist Vivian Clark:

Even when I'm playing a fairly straight kind of blues number, or a rock number, that jig thing will creep in. Or, you might use and oblique kind of suspended chord, or a modal chord that would be very Celtic, and then blues and Irish music has [sic] a lot of singing, a lot of wailing. There's a lot of bending of notes in the singing, and when...playing the uileann pipes, that's not that far from bending notes on a slide or something. And the fact that they're both folk musics. There's a lot of stories in the songs, and there's a lot of melancholy, a lot of minor key things, so there is a parallel.

(Gallagher in Campbell, 1991)

Returning to Smyth and Campbell's reference to 'technique, tradition and attitude', it is instructive to examine how 'tradition' features in the work of Phil Lynott. Tradition implies the transmission of culture from generation to generation as a key aspect of the term (McCarthy, 1999); in the context of folk and popular music, such transmission occurs largely through informal immersion in a given musical culture; in this manner, a musician acquires the sensibilities, vocabularies and specificities of a given musical tradition. Biographer Mark Putterford notes that Phil Lynott's introduction to traditional Irish music occurred in the late 1960s, when Lynott and Terry Woods (of Sweeney's Men and later The Pogues) performed Irish folk songs as a duo in various London folk clubs. A Deep Purple tribute album performed by Thin Lizzy included a 'small collection of oddities' including a 'Hendrix-influenced interpretation of Danny Boy' (Putterford, 2002: 59). Moreover, it was Thin Lizzy's performance of 'Whiskey in The Jar' which aided their ascent into rock legend status. Originally intended as a B-Side (to Lynott's original composition 'Black Boys on the Corner'), the Decca label released the song as a single, which reached No. 1 in Ireland, and No. 6 in the UK. Putterford concludes:

[Thin] Lizzy's version of 'Whiskey In The Jar' was as far removed from the quaint Gaelic original as Eric Bell's piercing electric guitar...could make it. Indeed, one critic declared that a British equivalent might be a reggae version of 'Greensleeves'.

(Putterford, 2002: 68)

I suggest that Putterford's assumption that a 'folksy image' was something Lizzy tried to 'flush from their system' is an overly-simplistic reading of the sophisticated ways Lynott used Irish and 'Celtic' influences to inform his creativity. While Irish music was only one facet of Lynott's polyphonic musical identity, key Thin Lizzy tracks adapt folk material. Both guitarist Eric Bell and drummer Brian Downey refer specifically to the influence of traditional music in the composition of various tracks by Thin Lizzy. Inspired by Lynott's interest in The Chieftains, Eric Bell adapted the mandolin and uileann pipe parts of folk songs for the electric guitar, while Brian Downey utilised patterns typical of the traditional Irish bodhrán drum (Bell, interviewed in BBC 2011). The track 'Old Moon Madness' from the *New Day* EP is based on a 6/8 jig rhythm, and both reads and sounds like an Irish jig (CD Track 22):

OLD MOON MADNESS – INTRODUCTORY MOTIF

PHIL LYNOTT/THIN LIZZY

In particular, note that the above is modal – Lynott uses the mixolydian scale (E F# G# A B C# D E), beginning on E. This is stressed by the use of

the flattened 7th as a focal point in the melody at bars 3 and 11, which is resolved to the tonic in the repetition (bars 7 and 15). This potentially indicates Lynott's awareness and application of the modal conventions of Irish folk music in his own compositions.

Following the departure of guitarist Eric Bell in 1973, Belfast musician Gary Moore was employed to fill the vacant guitarist's role prior to the crystallisation of the 4-piece line-up. Moore's tenure in the band led to a renewed interest in absorbing and performing instrumental Irish music in the rock context. At one 1974 concert, the band played a piece which incorporated 'Rakish Paddy', an Irish reel, and mixed in similarly styled, improvised pieces. The group also performed an unreleased Brian Downey composition, 'Sitamoia', which once again referenced Irish instrumental music. 'Sitamoia' includes a class of gestures which feature centrally in the traditional repertoire: in addition to Downey's 6/8 rhythm on tom-tom drums, Lynott's percussive vocal repeats a six-syllable refrain 'gilleganairgead'; in the live version of the song, Moore's instrumental parts creatively use triplets, and incorporate the typical 'leading' (sixth) quaver of the Irish jig (CD Track 23).¹³⁹

SITAMOIA – VOCAL MELODY

BRIAN DOWNEY

139 See http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=sitamoia&search_type=&aq=f; accessed 10/2/10.

The track ‘Emerald’ (1976) also incorporates the 6/8 rhythm typical of Irish jigs. The guitar riff which bridges the verses is reminiscent of Horslips’ ‘Celtic rock’ compositions, in which Irish melodic content is very obviously mixed with rock motifs (CD Track 24):

EMERALD, BRIDGE 1

PHIL LYNOTT/THIN LIZZY

We can also compare the opening lyrics of ‘Emerald’ with two well-known folk songs, ‘McAlpine’s Fusiliers’ and ‘Jackets Green’:

Down from the glen came the marching men
With their shields and their swords
To fight the fight they believe to be right
Overthrow the overlords.

Phil Lynott, verse I, ‘Emerald’, *Jailbreak*, 1976

Down the glen came McAlpine’s men
With their shovels slung behind them
‘Twas in the pub where they drank their sub...

Dominic Behan, verse I, ‘McAlpine’s Fusiliers’, *Capitol Showband featuring Des Kelly*, 1967

...’Till down the glen rode Sarsfield’s men,
and they wore the jackets green.

‘Jackets Green’, traditional

The introductory bars of the track's instrumental bridge section once again reference the Irish jig (CD Track 25):

Bridge 2, 'Emerald'

Phil Lynott/Thin Lizzy

The musical notation consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts with a treble clef, a common time signature, and six measures of eighth-note patterns. The second staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature, and continues the eighth-note patterns. The third staff starts with a treble clef, a common time signature, and shows a transition to a different rhythmic pattern, likely a jig, indicated by the measure numbers 7 and 12.

Discussing the composition of 'Emerald', drummer Brian Downey stated:

'Emerald' came out of this...Irish folky 6/8, 12/8 kind of feel, which the bodhrán players play in Ireland....so 'Emerald' was based around that kind of a tempo. Some of the chords and progressions were very Irish...At that stage, Phil was obviously reading a lot about people like Cúchulainn, who were sort of mythical Irish heroes from way back.

(Brian Downey in Gormley, 2008; author's transcription)

Paddy Gibbons, a studio engineer working at Ardmore Studios in Dublin when Phil Lynott recorded there in 1968, states that Phil Lynott was 'ahead of his time' in seeking to create hybrid 'sham-rock' compositions which utilised both rock and traditional instruments, including the uileann pipes (Gibbons, 2009). While this aspect of Lynott's creativity was downplayed in the commercially-oriented albums of the mid and late seventies (though the group's use of Jim Fitzpatrick's Celtic-influenced cover-art maintained a conceptual connection with a tangible sense of 'Irishness' and Irish culture), musically, Lynott's appeal to traditional Irish music re-emerged in 1979, with the release of the album *Black Rose*. A commercial success for the group, the album contained the track 'Roisin Dubh: A Rock Legend', a composition in which three Irish tunes (the McPeake composition 'Will Ye

‘Go Lassie Go’, ‘Danny Boy’ and the instrumental ‘The Mason’s Apron’) are synthesized with the American folk song ‘Shenandoah’.¹⁴⁰

Of the three aspects of Smyth and Campbell’s definition, ‘attitude’ is probably the most difficult to pin down. An instructive interpretation of ‘attitude’ is given by the Oxford Dictionary: it is not simply a form of behaviour (‘a settled way of thinking or feeling’), but it also refers to a subject’s taking up a mental and physical position – ‘attitude’ is indicative of a ‘particular mental state’ with respect to external phenomena. As described in the sections above, Morrison has engaged Irish musical idioms on occasion throughout his career, most notably with the albums *Veedon Fleece* and *Irish Heartbeat* (1988). Interviewed for the *From A Whisper to A Scream* documentary, he has stated that Irish classical singing was a formative influence on his developing musicality:

My father loved John McCormack. He had lots of John McCormack records. So it’s always something that...it was part of the picture.
(Morrison, FWTS; author’s transcription)

What Van Morrison has adapted most successfully, in terms of attitude, from Irish folk and traditional music is the documenting role accorded to the folk song and the ballad. In Ireland, music has often played a social role, operating as a means of defining and documenting historical and social events. Bob Geldof identifies Irish balladeering as ‘a highly potent social and political force’ to which the artist has recourse ‘when you can’t express yourself through other ways’. Geldof proceeds to define the key social function of the ballad:

140 It is of interest that Gary Moore was a member of the group when *Black Rose:A Rock Legend* was recorded; it seems that he was a catalyst shaping Lynott’s studied quotation from the traditional repertoire, since this occurred most frequently during his tenure with the group.

There's a great subversity in ballads. They were often used as political broadsheets...from which you go on to the Dylan protest thing. Or they were just used to tell about the hard times...and there were plenty.

(Bob Geldof, FWTS, author's transcription)

The songwriter Paul Brady supports this view. His description of the development of Irish song is worth quoting here, in that it reads as true for a Van Morrison song ('And It Stoned Me', 'T.B. Sheets', 'Cypress Avenue', 'St Dominic's Preview') as it does for a traditional folk song from the Ulster or Irish traditions:

People have always been storytellers...the whole Irish song tradition has come out of a almost social role of passing information from village to village...and has got sophisticated into a way of expressing emotion. But it was mostly a kind of historical documentary record...disasters that happened, people who left for America.

(Paul Brady, FWTS; author's transcription)

In this manner, Van Morrison's music maintains the social and documenting role of folk music and balladeering, since it portrays his and others' lives in Belfast (*Astral Weeks*, *Moondance*), his emigration and new beginning in America (*His Band and The Street Choir*, *St Dominic's Preview*, *Tupelo Honey*), his return to the homeland (*Veedon Fleece*), as well as the liminal spaces between these experiences (*Wavelength*, *A Period Of Transition*).¹⁴¹

Van Morrison has also invoked various 'Irish' musical cultures, juxtaposing these with blues, jazz and soul music. He was exposed to the performance tradition of Irish folk and instrumental music, and reworked both musical

141 See also Breathnach (1971: 31), who has documented the role of the folksong in describing and reproducing the histories of 'events and disasters'.

and thematic elements in his own compositions. Morrison could claim a long-standing familiarity with Irish, English and Scottish folk music, as he accompanied his mother to informal sessions by prominent Belfast musicians, including the McPeakes, from an early age (Rogan, 2005; Heylin, 2002). Constraints of space prevent a detailed analysis of Morrison's appropriations from folksong traditions here, but reference can be made to continuities between the folk repertoire and Morrison's approach to form and content in songwriting.

Breathnach's study of Irish folksong describes the interrelationship of literary and musical ideas within the folksong tradition. The aural emphasis (sound patterns, chanting and role of metre) - what O'Boyle terms the 'intersection of poetic and musical traditions' (O'Boyle, 1976:24) - were an important dimension of Irish folksong, and it is interesting that Morrison's own works display a similar preoccupation with poetic ideas and themes. Writers and poets are frequently noted, quoted or alluded to; similar to folksong, vocal techniques and delivery display the influence of poetic metre and rhythmical principles on Morrison's vocal style. Further evidence of the intersection of poetic and musical concerns are his stream of consciousness deliveries, freedom from adherence to rigid tempos in vocalisation, repetition and ornamentation. These tendencies can be read as modernising forms of older Irish techniques which appear in his works just as they inform folk song metre; this co-relationship is worthy of a critical study in itself.

Morrison described his early 1970s output as 'Caledonia Soul', performing a series of 1973 concerts with a 12-piece group, the Caledonia Soul Orchestra.

Campbell and Smyth have described *Veedon Fleece* (1974) as Morrison's 'extended re-engagement with the homeland'. On the album's cover, Morrison poses with Irish wolfhounds amid lush greenery; tracks such as 'Country Fair' and 'Come Here My Love' evoke the simple joys of rural life. The opening track, 'Fair Play', adopts a Hiberno-English linguistic idiom, and invokes the Irish landscape and literary tradition:

Fair play to you
Killarney's lakes are so blue
And the architecture I'm taking in with my mind
So fine
Tell me of Poe, Oscar Wilde and Thoreau
(Van Morrison, 'Fair Play To You', *Veedon Fleece*, 1974)

Again on 'Streets of Arklow' the allusion to the folk tradition is evident; as Smyth and Campbell point out, a tradition of 'Streets Of...' songs exists, which includes 'Streets of Derry', 'Streets of New York' and Ralph McTell's 'Streets of London'.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the Irish rock text as a hybrid construction, identifying in it a tendency towards the mixing of Afro-American, Anglo-American, indigenous Irish and other musical styles. I endeavoured to illustrate the depth and diversity of musical influences referenced by first-wave Irish rock musicians, and sought to show how, through its status as hybrid, the rock text narrativizes the musician's absorption of diverse cultural strands. Third, I was interested in showing that Irish traditional (instrumental and folk) music played a particular role in the compositional strategies of first-wave Irish rock musicians. It is true that the first-wave Irish rock text is rarely defined by the inclusion of obvious signifiers of Irish

music; this is particularly obvious when they are compared to the overt adaptations of recognisably ‘Irish’ musical idioms by British and second-generation Irish musicians.¹⁴² However, developing Smyth and Campbell’s critical position, I have sought to illustrate that Irish rock appropriates techniques, tradition and attitudes from Irish folk and instrumental music, mixing these with the products of a series of musical legacies as a consequence of the ongoing process of supra-national cultural flows. This occurred unconsciously, as a result of the artists’ proximity to the prevailing cultural logic in both political jurisdictions, in so far as folk and traditional music were a ubiquitous presence in the Republic, and maintained a purposeful, if less immediately obvious presence in Northern Ireland also. However, I wanted to illustrate that such appropriation was also a deliberate and conscious strategy, and an interesting aspect of Irish musicians’ compositional style, informing the technical and narrative content of a number of compositions. In illustrating rock artists’ awareness and adaptation of aspects of indigenous musical styles, my aim was not to suggest that Irish music was located ahead of other musical traditions in Irish rock’s compositional strategies; as Rory Gallagher notes in the quotation which opens the chapter, his ‘main [musical] drive comes from the American thing’ – African-American blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, American country and folk music. However, the lack of focus on rock music’s quotation from the traditional repertoire has prevented apposite consideration of the genre’s true musical depth; I hope to have shown that a proper understanding of how the music embodies an individual regional

142 Mark Knopfler (*Cal*, 1984), Kate Bush (*Hounds Of Love*, 1985) Mike Oldfield (*Five Miles Out*, 1982) and the majority of recordings made by London-Irish folk-punk group The Pogues are obvious examples of this tendency.

response to global flows is attainable through a studied regard for how it has absorbed aspects of indigenous musical styles.

Reflecting on the ‘liminal’ space created by the hybrid text, Morris Goldberg, a South African musician, recalled how meaningful alternation between the sanctioned space of white South African cultural experience and that of the (forbidden) township enabled his appropriation of diverse musical styles:

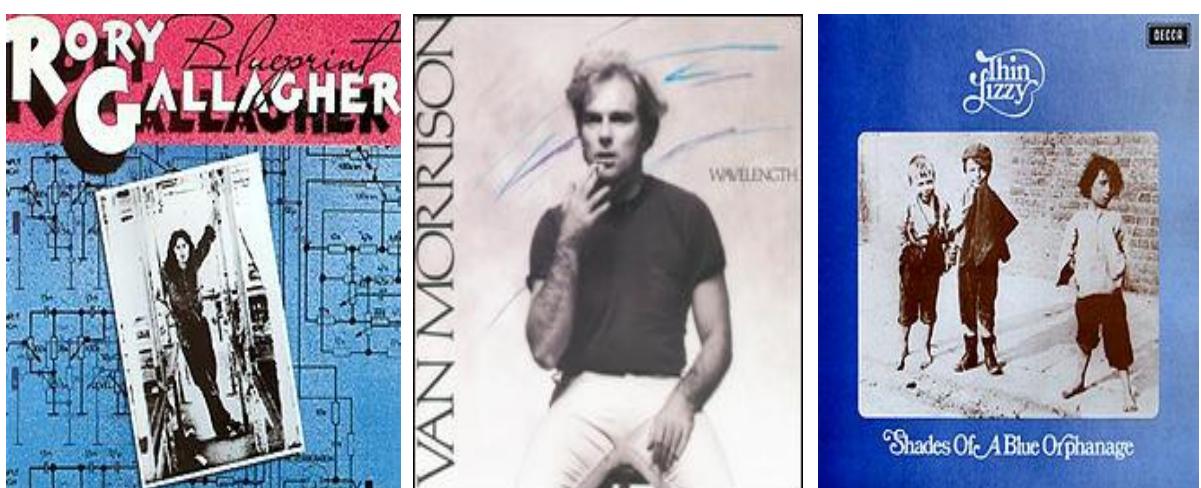
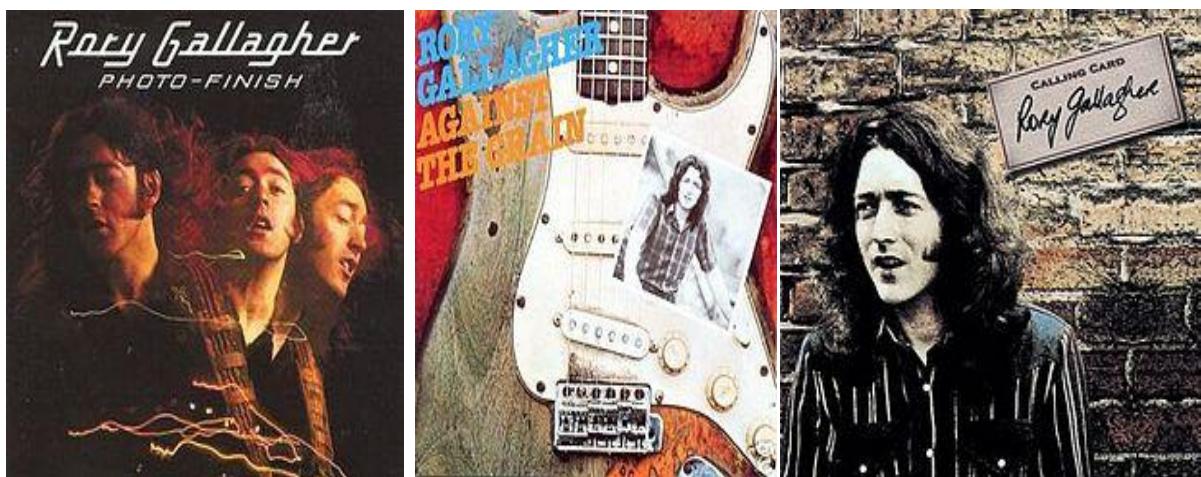
South Africans...almost looked down upon the music that came from South Africa. I guess because of the political situation, we were made to sort of, feel embarrassed about the music.... I heard this penny whistle music on every street corner...every kid was playing a penny whistle along with a guitar player...This was the way I absorbed a lot of the music from there...then people started realising that there's such a great fountain of music that comes from here, South Africa.

(Goldberg in Marre, 1997; author's transcription)

Equally, in Ireland, rock invokes not only the challenge to sedimented social and cultural norms embodied in American rock, but introduced the (post-colonial) question of re-presenting marginal subjectivities previously held in check by conservative and bourgeois socio-political interests on the one hand, and by the psycho-social depredations of imperial and colonial imperatives on the other. Thus, Van Morrison’s depictions of childhood in Belfast are fused with an American sensibility – and indeed, it is only through fusion with an alternative reality (the prism of the American studio) that such imaginings can be coaxed into reality. For Gallagher, the means utilised to explore Irishness was to delve deeply into the ‘indigenous cultural tradition’ of the blues. He did this in a decidedly scientific way – his recorded and live performances include covers of blues, soul and R&B artists from the southern (Mississippi Delta), and Northern (Chicago) traditions. Developing performative ability in acoustic and electric music,

including open tuned and slide playing styles, the outcome of such searching was not a negation of Irish cultural difference (Bhabha), but its contextualisation as one trope in a range of musical styles extending from Africa to the United States and Europe. Gallagher's performances appropriated the blues in order to posit Irish musical culture as a harmonizing element in an international music culture. Lynott's version of Irish rock represents a cultural process which draws on a number of social, historical, cultural and political 'pasts'. Simultaneously, it engages with the new horizon of 'the beyond' (Bhabha, 1994:1), exploring and expressing new possibilities involving dynamic engagement between Irish culture, the Anglo-American centre, and an increasing range of peripheral and 'other' cultures which thwarted limiting definitions of tradition and modernity, and challenged 'normative expectations of development and progress' (Bhabha, 1994:2).

The principal focus of the preceding analysis was primarily textual; in the following chapter, the ambiguities, contradictions and paradoxes of appropriating aspects of national culture are teased out, as part of a critique of the studied musicians' ideological, political and representational responses to constructions of Ireland and 'Irishness'.



Chapter Four

From Clontarf Castle to the Western Plain (via Cyprus Avenue and the sun): the National, Space and Place in Irish Rock

‘To do what I wanted, I had to leave Ireland. So it was like Catch 22, because first thing, I didn’t want to leave Ireland’.

Phil Lynott, *The Rocker* (RTE Documentary)

‘One of the best has to be a show we did in Belfast in 1973. It was at the height of The Troubles and we just didn’t know how it was going to go. There was a lot of trouble out on the streets but the atmosphere inside was electric, it was a real we-shall-overcome kind of night. With all due respect to audiences we’ve had in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway, there was something really special about the crowd in Belfast that night’.

(Rory Gallagher, in Fay 2010)

‘[I]t’s got nothing to do with the English scene. In fact, I’d go so far as to say it doesn’t have much to do with the Irish scene either, it’s just Belfast’.

(Van Morrison, *Rolling Stone*, 1970)

Introduction

This chapter draws first-wave Irish rock music into critical debates about the related concepts of nation and nationality, space and place. The thrust of the analysis is two-fold. First, I want to investigate rock artists’ responses to versions and narratives of national culture: this is done by investigating music and lyrics, referencing interviews given by them, and critically surveying related cultural products, such as the Rory Gallagher-focused biographical film *Irish Tour ‘74*. Second, I examine potential meanings in Lynott, Morrison and Gallagher’s complex articulations of space and place. I illustrate that notional tropes around space and place, which originated in

or developed through various strands of American musical culture, were adapted by Irish artists in their articulation of a challenging response to the limitations of provincial and national cultures. Rather than locating the national as a mediator between local and global culture in the rock text, I will hypothesise that Irish rock musicians themselves were active mediators, absorbing and reworking different versions of national culture; in addition, they at times reinforced, and on other occasions transcended the national by articulating emerging ideas of space and place in their compositions. This relates to the thesis's overall objective – arguing for the intellectual importance of Irish rock – because it demonstrates that the artists' relationship to national culture was complex, ambiguous and changing.

Conceptualizations of the nation, critiques of its ideological corollary nationalism, and analysis of identity formation involving national imagining inform the complex and controversial debates about contemporary cultural production. These deliberations are extremely difficult because the role of the national is uncertain with respect to the dynamics of the postmodern condition. In postmodernity, a political and social milieu has developed which is characterised by increased flows of human capital, information, resources and technologies across (national) boundaries; it is composed of diasporic communities, peopled by nomadic subjectivities, and operates through increasingly complex social, political and economic relations. The role played by the national in shaping social life and cultural politics has been granted significant authorial space in recent popular musical scholarship (Regev, 1992; White, 1998; Bennett, 2000; Zuberi, 2001; Cloonan 1997, 2003; Biddle and Knights, 2007).

The current chapter applies critical perspectives mapped out in some contemporary music-focused studies to the analysis of the Irish rock text. These provide a precursor to investigating musicians' respective engagements with versions of national imagining. I will illustrate that tensions and interactions between the local, the provincial/regional, the national and the global play out across the surfaces and systems of the Irish rock text, informed in part by the musicians' changing attitudes to political, cultural and aesthetic dimensions of 'Irishness' and, in Morrison's case, 'Britishness'.

International critiques of Irish rock have often tended to ignore the role of national culture in shaping Irish rock, simplistically categorising Irish musicians as global actors operating in the arena of international culture. To give an example, a 1977 article which focused on Rory Gallagher and described his musical style was titled 'British Rock Guitar';¹⁴³ while Gallagher was undoubtedly influenced by, and participated in, the British blues boom initiated by Alexis Korner and others, such titling overlooks the fact that he was born, socialised, began and maintained his professional career in Ireland. In other cases, analyses have over-emphasised rock's 'Irishness', essentialising certain groups by calling on a quintessential 'Irish' identity when discussing them. Again the case of Gallagher provides a typical example: a 1984 article called 'The Flannel Banshee Breaks Out!' drew somewhat cheaply on the well-worn stereotype of the wailing Irish fairy, locating the musician in a representational context associated with the

143 Chris Welch's well-intentioned 1990 *Metal Hammer* interview continues this tendency, opening with the assertion that 'Among the great British guitar giants, there are men with powerful egos, possessed of erratic genius. Then there is Rory Gallagher'. See:

<http://www.rocksbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=8357&SearchText=gallagher+>; accessed 29/12/2010.

mythological figure of the *bean sidhe* – ethereal, irrational, wailing, feminine, and a portent of immanent death or disaster. These essentialist representations occur without appropriate attention being paid to the respective musicians' deployment of national narratives which, as I discuss below, can occur in celebratory, critical and ironic ways (Cloonan, 2003; O'Flynn, 2009). This chapter develops the argument that a nuanced form of the national has informed aspects of Irish rock's aesthetic, style and content, and that the invocation of such a national focus can challenge dominant and essentialist narratives of Irish identity.

I think it can be surmised that with respect to the nation and its role in popular music production, two overarching positions have emerged. The first position seeks to deconstruct and limit the role of the nation, arguing that the onset of a post-colonial, post-national and post-postmodern world system has eroded the primacy of the nation and its politics as an 'organizational category' defining cultural identity (Biddle and Knights, 2007). This position is propounded by critics such as Homi Bhabha, whose analysis suggests that at the exact location where the nation ends – its border – the creative process of authoring alternative subjectivities begins (Bhabha, 1994: 1-2). This attitude resonates with certain popular music cultures, including rock, whose hybridising processes challenge the homogenising tendencies of national culture; popular musics' ironic reworking and energetic deconstruction of national mythologies can interrupt the silencing of diverse voices by national narratives (see figure below).



Figure 8: Reworking the symbolic economy of national cultures: Jefferson Airplane, *Volunteers* (1969); The Who, *The Kids Are Alright* (1979); Bob Marley and the Wailers, *Survival* (1979).

Against this, a number of scholars have sought to re-animate the view that the nation and its political and cultural corollaries act as an important mediator between transnational globalised cultural processes on the one hand, and localised musical practices on the other. For authors such as Biddle and Knights, the nation ‘remains a crucial...category for understanding how cultural texts and practices function’ (Biddle and Knights, 2007:1). This position argues that the role of the national remains primary in shaping the processes of cultural production, and in the mediation and articulation of cultural identities, performing the intermediary role of ‘vanishing mediator’ between the global and the local.

Biddle and Knights’ (2007) account is founded on the assertion that rather than disappearing into the binary of local and global, the nation is proposed as a ‘useful challenge to...the idealization of place’. They advance a notion of the national as an Hegelian ‘vanishing metaphor’: an invisible site of mediation between human (local) and global networks. They then argue that the national is a relevant mediator in defining identities and

subjectivities, even in what Rosi Braidotti describes as a ‘post’ postmodern’ and largely post-national world system (Braidotti, 2005: 169).

Rock texts, and the political responses advanced by rock musicians, seem to confirm Biddle and Knights’ thesis. Simon Frith has argued that during the 1960s countercultural moment, ‘rock’s artistic claims were inextricable from its political claims’ (Frith, 1984: 59); accordingly, as the new music found an audience in Ireland, the political tenets simultaneously attending to it were also made available to the listening public. This offered socio-political propositions which critiqued the claims of contemporary nationalisms, typified in the United States by aggressive foreign policy, racial discrimination, McCarthyism and life in the shadow of nuclear war, and in Ireland by the sedimentation of nationalist and unionist hegemonies as outlined earlier. I want to argue that it was musicians themselves, challenging such narratives and exploiting the commercial potential of their exilic status, who mediated between local, national and international (global) cultural and political parameters; I am suggesting that rock musicians played a more pro-active role in re-appropriating national narratives, culture and political responses within the wider context of the local and the global, than Biddle and Knights’ position seems to suggest.

The general position against effecting a ‘national bypass’ is argued pragmatically by O’Flynn:¹⁴⁴

Actual boundaries do exist between nation states and these are frequently invoked when discursive parameters are drawn...the popularity of international mass-produced music is interpreted through

144 Quoting Malm and Wallis, 1992: 237.

national charts, both printed and broadcast. At the same time, 'national' music can be actively promoted through the intervention of broadcasting quotas or through levels of media interest that are disproportionate to the market share enjoyed by domestic artists.

(O'Flynn, 2007: 21)

The challenge for the scholar of Irish rock is to elicit the function of the national in the practices and subjectivities of Irish rock. Similar to literature – and one is reminded here of the ambivalence of Samuel Beckett, Brendan Behan or James Joyce to the ideas and practices of various Irish cultures – the range of responses to national culture articulated by Irish musicians is complex and diverse. As described in Chapter Two, rock music and national institutions have often been at odds with each other, both in terms of philosophical and epistemological positions and in terms of the pragmatics of institutional and structural support for the development of rock industry and audiences. While Irish rock musicians, managers and promoters have utilised print media in Ireland and internationally to develop markets and audiences, it cannot be forcefully argued that this represents a 'level of media interest that [is] disproportionate to the market share', such as that ascribed by O'Flynn to traditional, classical and other musical forms (O'Flynn, 2007: 21). It was certainly not the case that Irish rock music was positively promoted through national media agencies in Ireland. Outside of the dedicated publication *Hot Press* (which only appeared in the later 1970s), coverage of rock music and culture was in fact extremely limited. It was granted minimal exposure on culturally-oriented popular television programmes: a very limited number of television broadcasts foregrounded emerging pop sounds, and highlighted the progress of the showbands (*Pickin' the Pops*, *The Showband Show*).¹⁴⁵ It is certainly true that national chart placings define the popularity and success of rock recordings.

145 See http://www.jivenaires.com/bands/rebel/rebel_pg2.html

Exploring the case of Irish rock, Smyth assigns primacy to the British and American charts, those to which the greatest economic and cultural benefits accrue. In addition, groups such as Taste, Rory Gallagher and Horslips have focused on national chart success, notably in Europe, and all three groups achieved high chart placings with various recordings in European national singles and album charts. However, it is important to note that rock music is often under-represented in the most visible chart listings. This is because commercial and popular discourse tends to focus disproportionately on singles charts, a category largely avoided by rock musicians because of negative associations with profitability and fabrication. Interviewed for the *Irish Tour '74* biographical film, Rory Gallagher stated:

I wouldn't regard myself as a Top-20 musician at all. Even though I might be...I could write a Top 20 hit – song – but I wouldn't, but...I don't think it's that important, you know?

(Rory Gallagher, in Palmer, 1974; author's transcription)

As established previously, the broadcasting, production and distribution technologies available through RTÉ, the national broadcasting company, were made available to the showbands, the beat groups, and, later in a limited manner, to the rock groups. However, there was no coherent state-driven policy focused on popular musicians or music practices in the Republic; nor was there apposite legislation in place to guide infrastructural development around emerging popular music scenes (Clancy and Twomey, 1997). While Northern Ireland operated as a separate political entity during the period, there is no evidence to suggest that a coherent policy with respect to popular music operated there either. I argue, therefore, that an institutionally-focused reading of 'nation' is of limited service in establishing the role of the national in Irish rock. Certainly, a majority of Lynott's, Gallagher's and Morrison's artistic endeavours were undertaken without recourse to a majority of state-level interventions available to contemporary

artists: statutory investment, broadcasting quotas, national media exposure and focused advertising. Furthermore, the lack of immediately identifiable musical signifiers of ‘Irishness’ in first-wave musicianship – in terms of language and musical style, for example – means that rock remained outside the category of styles to whom broadcasting quotas or other protectionist measures were applied, even in later years. On the other hand, the lack of state control with respect to the economic and cultural shaping of popular music was also beneficial to musicians, who did not suffer from the kinds of censorship imposed on Irish writers during the earlier decades of the twentieth century. Thus, adopting Cloonan’s parlance to describe the ‘Nation-State-popular music relationship’ at the institutional level, we might best describe Ireland as a mix of ‘authoritarian’ and ‘benign’: the nation-state’s attempt to foreground cultural nationalism in media, paired with the attempted control of popular culture by empowered social actors, led to popular music’s remaining low on the cultural agenda (Cloonan, 1999: 204). Northern Ireland, as a province of the United Kingdom, fared marginally better: while a similar level of control did not affect popular music performance there, there was little support for the development of popular music, with the industry and musicians acting without hindrance or significant support from institutional mechanisms of state.

Regev’s (1991) analysis of Israeli rock illustrates how rock can interact with national ideology, culture and politics. He illustrates that the national is a potential agent in both the shaping of musical hierarchies and the structuring of popular taste. As Regev states, until the early 1960s, ‘music in Israel existed under the sign of the ideological dominance and political centralism which characterised Israeli society’ (Regev, 1991:2); the musical corpus on which popular Israeli musicians drew was a part of a dominant

religious and political (Zionist) discourse. Regev notes that the Army Entertainment Ensembles ‘served as a channel for the distribution of ideologically saturated music, and acted as a ‘credential mechanism’ for a number of musicians in the 1970s (Regev, 1991: 3); one could liken these to the Irish showbands, which performed a similar institutional function as a point of development and departure for Irish musicians.

Regev describes the fourteen musicians who crafted ‘Israeli rock’; these are the composers and musicians who performed the foundational texts of ‘local authenticity’. There is no space to engage with the individual artists or texts here in detail, but taken as a whole, their music is exemplified by certain formal and conceptual traits. Firstly, they portray, consider, and critique aspects of Israeli social life, its cultural traditions and ideological underpinnings. Secondly, subversive voices (Regev examines beat groups from the 1960s and a range of progressive groups in the 1970s, for example) exist, though these often remain invisible in the pop/rock dominated sphere of popular music culture (Regev, 1991: 6).

The Israeli case is of interest as a comparative position because Israel’s cultural proximity to the Anglophone world and its simultaneous location in a range of non-western localities and regional cultures, mirrors the hybrid cultural location of Ireland. Furthermore, similar to Ireland, popular music practice in Israel operated as a means to affirm, reject or critique established national narratives. Rock musicians in Ireland drew not on the ‘ideologically saturated’ tradition of army bands, but on the commercially-motivated performance tradition of the showbands, and the counter-cultural tradition of the beat groups and African-American culture. Neither of these groups claimed any particular allegiance to institutionalised versions of

national culture. Rather than remaining in Ireland and drawing rock into the national consciousness as Israeli musicians did, a majority of Irish musicians emigrated to the Anglo-American centre in order to establish themselves as professionals. This, arguably, diminished the ability of the nation-state to influence the development of Irish popular music, and of rock music in particular.

National and Other Cultures in Ireland

The Irish rock text is an embodiment of the epistemological, psychological and spatial tensions which arose as rock artists struggled to reconcile received narratives of national allegiance and belonging with ideas encountered through the international counterculture of which they were prominent participants; the rock text is, quite literally, a record of the outcomes of such effort. First-wave Irish rock embodies musicians' negotiating between inherited, originary national or provincial cultural narratives, buttressed by connotations of permanence, homogeneity, borders and historicity on the one hand, and a rapidly expanding sense of the spatial, which stressed openness, dislocation, and a utopian expansiveness on the other. A pragmatic illustration of the origins and dynamics of this tension obtains if we briefly consider the intersection and/or collision of Irish and international cultures occurring on both sides of the border during 1966-7: the same chronological year that Rory Gallagher established Taste, Van Morrison fulfilled a residency with Them at the Whisky-A-Go-Go in West Hollywood, and Phil Lynott performed on the Dublin beat circuit with The Black Eagles.

1966 was prominent as a milestone in the history of the Irish Republic; the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising, it was a year of profound symbolic significance for the state. Newspapers of the time describe a number of public celebrations and commemorations taking place around the country, and a set of dedicatory stamps marking the anniversary was issued. Nelson's Pillar, a long-standing and controversial symbol of British influence located on O'Connell St., Dublin, was blown up on March 8th (reportedly by the IRA; Whelan, 2001: 139-40); this occurred just one month before the principal jubilee memorials were scheduled for the streets of the capital. The memorials themselves took place on April 10th, as President de Valera received the salute of assembled Rising veterans, and attended a military parade and fly-past at the GPO. The following day, the Garden of Remembrance, dedicated to those who had fought and died in previous conflicts of independence, was opened by him.¹⁴⁶ 1966 was a year, therefore, in which the foundations of Irish statehood were publicly underscored: narratives of national singularity and freedom from British political control were strongly reinforced. Notwithstanding Ireland's economic dependence on Britain and international trade, nationalism's status as a principal influence on the social lives, cultural output, political ideologies and philosophical outlooks of a significant majority in the Republic was restated.

In Northern Ireland, similarly extravagant celebrations occurred in the same year, as 1966 was the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. While some republican remembrance parades took place in the north, the

146 See Mullane, Dermot and Michael Foy, writing in *The Irish Times* on April 11th, 1966: 'Ireland Commemorates the Rising: President Takes Salute as Veterans Parade'; a significant amount of that day's *Times* was devoted to coverage and photography of the events in Dublin, and reportage on other celebrations occurring nationwide.

majority unionist communities asserted their cultural and political ties to Britain through widespread attendance at various Somme commemorations; a major ceremony honouring the North's many fallen was held at the Balmoral Showground on 4th July.¹⁴⁷ Allegiance to the union was further signified by the extensive crowds turning out to witness Prince Philip and Queen Elizabeth's symbolic visit to the province, planned to coincide with the Somme memorials.¹⁴⁸ Filmed footage of the royal visit illustrates that the queen honoured survivors of World War I, visited the staunchly Protestant and unionist community at Sandy Row, and opened the Queen Elizabeth II bridge in Belfast city; arguably, the events offered symbolic reassurance to Northern Unionists concerned by the Republic's assertive affirmations of statehood.¹⁴⁹ The unionist position countered these assertions through the expression of a resolute and, in some cases, uncompromising provincialism: 1966 also saw the establishment of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), a loyalist paramilitary organisation 'dedicated to upholding Northern Ireland's union with Britain at all costs'.¹⁵⁰

It is evident, then, that a defining disposition shaping public consciousness at the level of politics and culture in the Republic and Northern Ireland during 1966-7 was the narrative of national belonging. The nationally-focused cultural logic obtaining in both political jurisdictions reflects Martin Cloonan's observation regarding popular music and the 'Nation-State', which proposes that:

147 See *The Irish Times*, July 4th-6th 1966.

148 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/yourplaceandmine/belfast/A733123.shtml>. Accessed 1/12/2010.

149 <http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=43969>; accessed 5/12/2010.

150 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/613355/Ulster-Volunteer-Force>. Accessed 1/12/2010.

[T]he Nation-State is a body which claims sole jurisdiction over a given territory and the right to implement particular policies within that territory. In order to legitimise its rule the Nation-State may use certain cultural artefacts and will seek to exercise both cultural and political hegemony.

(Cloonan, 1999: 193)

Simultaneously, however, alternative ideologies were informing and transforming social life and outlooks, and challenging the hegemony of national and provincial allegiance in both political jurisdictions. In the same year as the events detailed above took place, Bob Dylan (who, by 1966 had become a symbolic and controversial figure in Anglo-American popular and counterculture) visited Ireland, performing at The Adelphi Theatre in Dublin on May 5th and at the ABC Theatre in Belfast on May 6th. Dylan's performing on both sides of the Irish political divide challenged narratives of provincial exclusivity; interpreted in this context, his two concerts, linked by his travelling from Dublin to Belfast by train, were emblematic in that, for popular musicians, the political border between the Republic and Northern Ireland remained comparatively porous, despite the escalation of political unrest.¹⁵¹ Dylan's two-stop Irish tour continued a similar precedent established by the showbands, who regularly travelled across the border prior to the Miami Showband murders of 1975; as I discuss below, his cross-border performances, largely unreported in the media, quietly anticipated Rory Gallagher's symbolic response to the hardening of national

151 <http://www.setlist.fm/setlist/bob-dylan/1966/adelphi-theatre-dublin-ireland-6bd7c69a.html>; accessed 1/12/2010. It is tempting to speculate that the following Van Morrison lyric, from 'Madame George' relates to, or was partly inspired by Dylan's journey: Now you know you gotta go/Catch a train from Dublin up to Sandy Row/In the wind, rain & fog & slush & snow/Keep on going on'. A well-known photograph of Dylan making the Dublin-Belfast journey (in wind and rain) was taken by his principal photographer on the tour, Barry Feinstein: located at <https://www.morrisonhotelgallery.com/photo/default.aspx?photographID=131>. Accessed 1/12/2010.

and provincial inclinations in Ireland and Northern Ireland during The Troubles.

What was happening was that the primacy of national imagining was cross-cut by a range of alternate cultural dispositions in both political jurisdictions. Recording the emergence of the influential rhythm ‘n’ blues Club Rado at the Maritime Hotel in Belfast, Rogan’s research states that by the summer of 1966, the city centre had ‘attracted a unique clique of heads and hipsters who resembled a motley microcosm of the hippie hordes regularly seen on Sunset Boulevard, Carnaby St. and the King’s Road’ (Rogan, 2006: 165). While comparatively underdeveloped live scenes existed in the Republic, similar transformations were occurring there, with the beat groups establishing an audience for its R&B-based performance style; as the writer Pat McCabe asserts, processes of modernisation and urbanisation affecting Dublin city made it ‘a heady place’ for local listening communities and for the many in-migrants arriving from rural Ireland (McCabe, *FWTS*).¹⁵²

A key agent in, and signifier of, the transformative cultural economy affecting the Republic Ireland was increased consumption of American rock and popular music recordings. By 1967, an influential youth-oriented counterculture, initially centred on the Haight-Ashbury districts of San Francisco, was catapulted into the public consciousness; rock music became a defining symbol of a new subcultural process typified by the hippie

152 Consider also Paul Brady’s reminiscences about his introduction to the Dublin music scene in the same feature.

migrations which coalesced into the Summer of Love. Simultaneously, soul and other black music channelled the voices of racial minorities clamouring for social change throughout the Long Hot Summer of 1967. By means of the market economy, Irish musicians were introduced to and absorbed these emerging sounds, with significant effect for the fledgling Irish rock culture. In addition, Belfast was part of the regular British touring circuit; a consequence of this was that until the Troubles made such visits unviable, notable blues artists (Champion Jack Dupree, John Lee Hooker, Memphis Slim) and the most prominent international bands (The Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Fleetwood Mac, The Faces, Cream, Bob Dylan, The Animals) came to perform in the city's theatres and colleges. Of the newer generation of groups, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, formed in 1966 (and touring in Belfast by the following year), was one which would influence Irish rock musicians significantly.¹⁵³ The three-piece group mixed blues, rhythm and blues, soul, jazz, and west-coast acid-rock; Hendrix's distillation of these styles was part of a textual framework which also drew on the narrative conventions of science fiction and the stream-of-consciousness poetics of Bob Dylan. The resultant songs incorporated musical representations of multi-dimensional space, of time travel, the cosmic, dreams, illusion and memory. They proposed an expansive sense of the spatial, embodying and enabling changes in the human experience of space particular to the 1960s and 1970s. I discuss the mechanics and consequences of these changes momentarily, but note here that when added to the group's multi-ethnic identity, its trendy aesthetic and confidently sexualised public image, a significant challenge to the certainties, limitations and hegemonies of national imagining on both sides of the border was proposed.

153 <http://novdec1967.blogspot.com/>; accessed 4/12/2010.

Contemporaneous with the evolution of cultural nationalism, then, was the emergence of a number of other accents which shaped popular culture in Ireland, and music in particular. In the blues and rock context, Hendrix's influence on elements of the Irish rock scene was significant: in addition to exploring indigenous sounds in hybrid contexts (Horslips, Gary Moore, Rory Gallagher) the major three-piece groups (in particular Skid Row and Thin Lizzy)¹⁵⁴ absorbed techniques and aspects of performance style pioneered by The Jimi Hendrix Experience and Cream in the United Kingdom. Hendrix's blues-based psychedelia was built on his innovative use of guitar effects such as phasing, fuzz and wah pedal; it provided musical templates for Lynott and Eric Bell (evident, for example, in the group's recorded composition 'Ray Gun'). In Lynott's case, an ongoing preoccupation with Celtic mythology and Irish nationalism was mixed with aspects of Hendrix's musical style; Lynott also learned from the American musician's intelligent manipulation of popular media, in terms of stage persona and public image.¹⁵⁵ Brush Shiels' recollection that watching Lynott was 'just like watching Jimi Hendrix without a guitar' illustrates the Irish artist's attempts to transcend the limits of 'national' culture (embodied, for example, in the conventions of Irish showband performance practices, and in the ongoing interrogation of Celtic mythology) by simulating the American guitarist in his emerging musical identity (Putterford, 2002: 29).¹⁵⁶

154 Gallagher's exploration of the three-piece format with Taste preceded the formation of The Jimi Hendrix Experience, though Hendrix's group achieved a more visible public profile, and in terms of musical direction was a greater influence on Lynott in particular.

155 Thin Lizzy sound engineer Peter Eustace recalls this influence on the band, stating that his early memory of Thin Lizzy performances was 'Eric going through his Jeff Beck and Jimi Hendrix routines' (Putterford, 2002: 46). On forming Skid Row, Lynott, with bassist Brush Shiels, drummer Noel Bridgeman and guitarist Bernard Cheevers attempted a cover of 'Hey Joe', the Joe Roberts composition which was popularised by Hendrix, and provided his first UK hit single. Putterford, 2002: 45-47.

156 Hendrix also produced and performed as a session musician on the Eire Apparent album *Sunrise*; the Northern Irish group subsequently toured as a support group with The Jimi Hendrix Experience in Canada, the US and Europe. See <http://irishshowbands.net/bgeire.htm>; accessed 5/12/2010.

Classic Rock and National Imagining

Crucially, in the new American musics of the period, there is a developing differentiation between emerging versions of national culture and nationalism as political practice; the progressive American rock emerging in the later 1960s and early 1970s represented an attempt by a predominantly white middle-class subculture to re-animate pride in national achievement, in tradition and history, without recourse to the physical, social and psychological violence and exclusions that nationalism proposed. The popularity of The Band, to give one example, stemmed primarily from their excavations and explorations of American histories. The group re-presented the symbolic architecture and emotional resonance of American histories and mythologies: its pioneering tendencies, the rugged individualism which typified life on the frontier, and the sensational adventurousness of its heroes and heroines. This was effectively presented in a musical context which also drew on a range of nationally-focused American traditions – medicine shows, rock ‘n’ roll, rockabilly, country, rhythm and blues and soul. Discussing their single ‘The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down’,¹⁵⁷ *Rolling Stone* critic Ralph J. Gleason illustrated The Band’s success in animating a new sense of the national, by commenting that:

Nothing I have read ... has brought home the overwhelming human sense of history that this song does...[i]t's a remarkable song, the rhythmic structure, the voice of Levon and the bass line with the drum accents and then the heavy close harmony of Levon, Richard and Rick

157 The Robertson composition, recorded in 1969 describes the last days of the American Civil War from the perspective of a Confederate soldier; the protagonist witnesses the Siege of Petersburg and the death of his brother, killed by a Union Army soldier. The Band’s complex exploration of American national culture was a process enabled, and complicated by, the members’ own nationalities; with the exception of drummer Levon Helm, the musicians were all Canadian nationals.

in the theme, make it seem impossible that this isn't some traditional material handed down from father to son straight from that winter of 1865 to today.

(Gleason, 1969: n.p)

In the American case, rock's flexible and complex reading of the 'national' was underscored by reference to the physicalities of the American landscape – its mountains, rivers, creeks, valleys and other archetypal, geographical features. Referencing the folk song strand based around the Cripple Creek mining motif, for example, The Band's composition 'Up on Cripple Creek' locates a narrative of romantic longing within the iconographic geography of America (CD Track 26):¹⁵⁸

When I get off of this mountain, you know where I want to go?
Straight down the Mississippi River, to the Gulf of Mexico
To Lake Charles, Louisiana, a little Bessie girl that I once knew
She told me just to come on by, if there's anything she could do

Now there's a flood out in California and up North it's freezing cold
And this living off the road is getting pretty old
So I guess I'll call up my big mama, tell her I'll be rolling in
But you know, deep down, I'm kind of tempted
To go and see my Bessie again.

(Robbie Robertson/The Band, v. I and IV, 'Up on Cripple Creek', *The Band*, 1969)

Jimi Hendrix's performance of 'The Star Spangled Banner' at the Woodstock Festival also signifies the manner in which the new musics could evoke the historic and emotional resonances of national narrative, while critiquing its co-option by the adherents of what had become, in the context of the Vietnam War at least, a belligerent nationalism.

158 <http://www.mattesonart.com/cripple-creek-song-history.aspx>; accessed 12/12/2010. Neil Young's 'Cripple Creek Ferry' also explores similar conceptual territory; the song appears on *After The Gold Rush* (1972). Other groups to explore and exploit similar themes include the Eagles ('Bitter Creek', *Desperado*, 1973, Van Morrison, Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Paul Butterfield, and Stephen Stills.



Figure 9: Excavating and re-contextualising American histories (and geographies): Crosby, Stills Nash and Young, *Déjà Vu* (1970); Joni Mitchell, *Hejira* (1976); The Band *The Band* (1968).¹⁵⁹

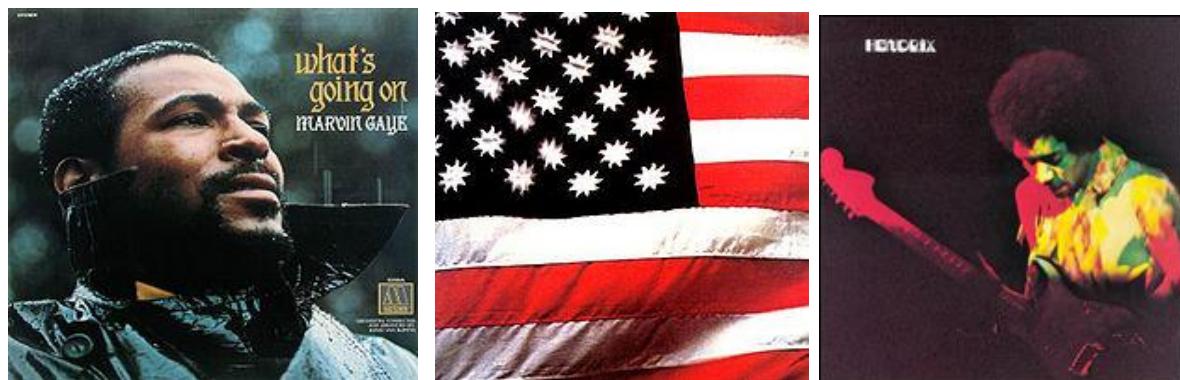


Figure 10: African-American interrogation of ‘America’ and reworking/critique of American symbolism: Marvin Gaye, *What’s Going On*, (1971); Sly and The Family Stone, *There’s A Riot Goin’ On*, (1971); Jimi Hendrix, *Band of Gypsys* (1970).

Contemporaneous to The Band’s excavation of American histories, the new black music of the time embodied the African-American desire that global attention be focused on struggles for social acceptance and equality in America. The political thrust of soul music, embodied in the sophisticated styles of Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and Curtis Mayfield argued for

¹⁵⁹ The Band and Crosby, Stills Nash and Young explored historicism, tradition and rootedness through music; the album cover from *Déjà Vu* and Elliott Landy’s portraiture of The Band at Woodstock provide visual representations of the tendency to excavate historical narrative in seeking material for songs. See also the cover art for Grateful Dead’s *Workingman’s Dead* (1970), and Eagles’ *Desperado* (1973), which illustrate a similar tendency.

cohesion and unity among blacks as a progressive response to the social decay accompanying black experiences of ghetto life. Emerging black music cultures were animated by the political agitation directed against racism, segregation and stratification, the pacifist campaign of Martin Luther King, the Black Power movement, the teachings and influence of Malcolm X, and the rising public profile of American blacks such as Mohammed Ali. In particular, Ali's stance against conscription to Vietnam created a storm of controversy and public debate in the US. The musics also re-absorbed elements of earlier black forms, including gospel, rhythm and blues, jazz and blues; they also opened new avenues, particularly in funk and soul. Jimi Hendrix, Sly Stone and George Clinton adapted these inclinations, developing hybrid musical styles in the rock context which invoked black histories in America, and illustrated the tensions of blacks' experiences as simultaneously being American and being ostracised by and excluded from sections of American society.

Irish Rock and the National

How best to discuss Irish rock's relationship to the national? Compared to other nation states, Irish popular musics' relationships with political dimensions of the state are not charged by any immediate intensity. This situation obtains in part because so few institutions of state regulate the practice, performance and distribution of rock music on the island, and because, as Harry White notes, music was never co-opted as an apparatus for the state-building process.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, the fact that rock musicians' creative development was achieved primarily through informal learning

160 This contrasts with the case of certain European folk musics: in Serbia, folk music plays a key role in the articulation of a hegemonic narrative of individuality and the promotion of exclusivist, nationalist sentiment (Hudson, 2007).

outside of public institutions such as schools or conservatoires means that rock was not strongly shaped by nationalist ideology. However, the particularities of the Irish political situation, and the perceptions of social conservatism facing musicians in both political jurisdictions, have influenced the manner in which aspects of the national are represented, engaged with and critiqued in the Irish rock text. I admit to a certain trepidation in invoking the national in discussing Irish popular music; there is significant anecdotal and historical evidence to suggest that in both the Republic and in Northern Ireland, the development of rock industry and culture was hindered by the lack of relevant state policy, the absence of a co-ordinated national infrastructure, and a dearth of state-level financial support, and a lack of interest in state support by musicians themselves.¹⁶¹ Disturbingly, while they have discussed the ways in which the national is invoked by certain popular musicians as a mediator between localised and globalising cultural forces, states' curtailing of a range of minority and majority voices is an issue on which contemporary theorizations of the national have been less articulate (O'Flynn, 2009; Cloonan, 1999).

Thus far, I have established that along with narratives of historicity and hegemonic singularity, Irish public culture, exposed to transformations in white and black American music, absorbed a range of countercultural responses which could critically interrogate the limitations of the national. From here, I will argue that the national plays an ambivalent role in the Irish rock text and in Irish rock performance. On the one hand, I am concerned to show that Irish rock musicians were exercised by the intellectual, emotional and political dimensions of the nation and national

¹⁶¹ Gallagher's self-description as 'anti-organisation and anti-establishment and anti-setups' may be read as a telling impression of popular musicians' positions with respect to institutions including the nation and more particularly, the state; see Sinclair, 1990.

identity; I will demonstrate that these issues did affect composition and performance practices. At the same time, I investigate whether Irish rock embodies interrogation and critique of the limits of national imagining.

Initially, I will detail the absorption, reflection and critique of the national in the Irish rock text; I then look at how the representation of place and space both affirms and challenges the legitimacy of the national in the same recorded works.

Rory Gallagher

Cursory surveys of Rory Gallagher's career and recordings overlook his developing engagement with Ireland and Irishness; they rarely focus on the role Ireland played in his professional development, or assess the impact of meaning of his artistic achievements with respect to Irish society and culture. As noted in Chapter One, Gallagher's performance at the Isle of Wight in 1970 locates an Irish man alongside some of most influential names (Morrison, Hendrix, Mitchell, Moon, Davis, Kristofferson, Townshend, Anderson, Lake) in what was a globally significant culture and a lucrative international industry; this makes the exclusion of the artist from Gerry Smyth's theoretical discussion of music, identity and the national in Ireland (Smyth, 2005: 35-37), and from McLaughlin's analysis of popular music and its interaction with national narratives (McLaughlin, 1999) all the more surprising.

Prior to becoming a professional musician, Gallagher's familial experience of 'Irishness' had already challenged the singular narratives of nationalist and sectarian exclusivity used to underscore cultural divisions and legitimise

political differences between north and south. Paternally, Gallagher's roots lay in Northern Ireland; his father Daniel was from County Derry, a region with a significant Catholic population, but with strong historical and cultural connections to the loyalist tradition through the Siege of Derry and Williamite conquest of Ireland. Gallagher's mother was from Co. Cork, geographically one of the island's southernmost regions, and a stronghold of Irish republicanism. Gallagher's father migrated across the border to work in the Republic as an employee of the ESB: the development of two hydro-electric power stations on the river Erne took place above the town of Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal in the early 1950s. Rory Gallagher was born in Ballyshannon, and the family lived there for a period while employment on the scheme was high.¹⁶² The hydro-electric scheme's completion required externally-sourced skilled labour and engineering expertise, and Ballyshannon was populated by workers of various nationalities, further adding to the cultural, national and ethnic mixing which typified Gallagher's early socialization. Thus, while Gallagher's upbringing involved many quintessentially 'Irish' institutions and socio-cultural mechanisms – the cinema, Catholic schooling, the showbands, Irish traditions and superstitions – from an early age, he was predisposed to a version of 'Irishness' typified by diversity rather than singularity. This was augmented by the family's geographical and cultural translocations to Derry, and later to Cork city (Musie, 2002).

The existence of a 'national' network of purpose-built ballrooms (the showband 'circuit') was instrumental in the early development of Gallagher's professional career. As described in Chapter Two, this network

¹⁶² Telephone interview with Donal Gallagher, 3/3/2010.

was in fact an inter-provincial one; for showband musicians, the ‘hard’ boundary between the island’s political jurisdictions remained porous, as musicians travelled in both directions across the border to fulfil professional engagements (Power, 2000). However, as a showband musician, Gallagher also experienced the limitations of conservative strands of national culture. For example, the Lenten ban on dancing imposed by the Catholic hierarchy in the Republic meant that musicians could not work in the pre-Easter period. Furthermore, the innate conservatism of the showband repertoire was illustrated in the IFM’s attempt to stifle Gallagher’s performances with a three-piece rock group in Cork (Muise, 2004). The musician had also faced censure from social institutions (particularly the Christian Brothers), and operated in a cultural climate in which the containment of foreign influence was considered a priority.

I propose that Gallagher’s early career was shaped by a rejection of Irish national cultures. Musically, neither traditional/ceilí practices (a manifestation of what O’Flynn describes as ‘native traditions’; O’Flynn, 2007:23) nor those of the showbands could accommodate his developing abilities. Furthermore, in contrast to Phil Lynott, there are no references to narratives of national imagining in his early works; nor is the use of motivic material from instrumental Irish music evident in the Taste compositions.

Leaving Ireland, Gallagher initially adopted the popular narratives of the counterculture in his creative expression. In particular, the Taste compositions reflect a preoccupation with essaying contemporary countercultural trends: experimenting musically with jazz; the search for ‘truth’ in exploring and invoking a foundational blues culture; exploring new ideas of musical space; developing as a multi-instrumentalist in the

popular (and performatively challenging) three-piece format. It is likely, however, that Gallagher's lyrical critiques of institutionalism, foregrounded on both Taste albums, sprang in part from his experiences of a conservative, traditionalist culture in Ireland. Musically and conceptually, *Taste* and *On the Boards* represent the youthful Gallagher's rejection and critique of the limitations of Irishness – what he came to view as its parochialism, authoritarianism and conservative tendencies. A lyrical example is the opening track on the *Taste* album, 'Blister on the Moon'. While couched in the symbolic language of international counterculture, the song's lyrics can be read as a critique of the authoritarianism existing at the institutional level in religious schools, and within showband culture (Muise, 2004). It is plausible that the lyrics show the influence of Christian narratives ubiquitous during Gallagher's youth; notably, the lyrics include the refrain of the Christian child's prayer 'Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep', while the 'velvet sponge full of soothing rain' also recalls an image from the crucifixion of Christ.

Everyone is saying what to do and what to think,
And when to ask permission when you feel you want to blink.
First look left and then look right and now look straight ahead,
Make sure and take a warning of every word we've said.
Now you lay you down to sleep make sure and get some rest,
Tomorrow is another day and you must pass the test.
Don't try and think too different now what we say is best,
Listen little man you're no better than the rest.
But now you want to run away? Ok, let's see you run,
Run across the frozen air try resting on the sun.
And if you feel it burn you don't yell out in pain,
Or wish you had a velvet sponge full of soothing rain.

(Rory Gallagher, verses I, II, IV, 'Blister on the Moon', *Taste*, 1972)

The initial line-up of Taste was established in Cork, and featured three Irish musicians: Gallagher, Norman Damery and Eric Kitteringham. Coghe (2002) states that both Damery and Kitteringham came from Protestant

families, which means that the group's earliest line-up bridged ethno-cultural divides obtaining in Ireland during the 1960s (Coghe 2002: 74).

Gallagher's cosmopolitan sense of 'Irishness' was augmented by a move from the Irish Republic to Belfast in 1966. While his motivations were primarily career-oriented, his tenure in the city afforded him a first-hand perspective on the complex political realities informing social life there. It also granted him a perspective on the sectarian inclinations which divided the unionist and nationalist communities within Ulster and divided the province from the Irish Republic. Under the management of Eddie Kennedy, Taste re-located to London, and Damery and Kitteringham were replaced by John Wilson and Richard (Charlie) McCracken. Like Van Morrison, Wilson and McCracken were both Belfast musicians with Protestant backgrounds (in fact Wilson had performed with Morrison in Them prior to joining Taste). Once again, therefore, the second line-up of Taste included representatives of both of the Protestant and Catholic communities, a palpably progressive arrangement, given the scale of sectarian divisions developing in Ireland during the years of the Troubles (McAvoy, 2005; Rogan, 2004).

The dissemination of Taste allowed Gallagher to expand his musical horizons; his disillusionment with the professional realities of Anglo-American rock precipitated a renewed interest in Irish culture and Ireland itself. I have argued in Chapter Three that Gallagher's hybrid style, showcased on his first solo release, incorporated elements of Irish folk and traditional music culture; as such *Rory Gallagher* was in tune with a transition the artist experienced in post-Taste period, through which his

relationship to Irish identity was re-negotiated. With the dissolution of Taste in 1970, Gallagher underwent a process of re-invention, in terms of music and artistic subjectivity. Gallagher's professional career between 1968 and 1978 can be interpreted as an opening out of the space of Irishness; in particular, his Irish tours created a politicised third space within which the incompatible narratives of Protestant/unionist and Catholic/nationalist could coexist, and through which conservative hegemonies obtaining on the island were challenged. What is evident is that rock musicians such as Gallagher had, by the early 1970s, developed an approach to cultural production which challenged the exclusivist narratives of difference proposed by nationalist and unionist positions in Ireland. In the context of his developing international reputation, what is interesting is that Gallagher continued to employ musicians from Ireland as members of his group. Bassist Gerry McAvoy has stated that Gallagher's selection of band members for the post-Taste Rory Gallagher Band was informed by professional realities:

I'd heard that Rory had tried out Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding, as well as a couple of guys from Belfast who were regarded as the top rhythm section in Northern Ireland at the time.¹⁶³

(McAvoy and Chrisp, 2005: 71)

What is interesting, in the context of the national, is that the new group eventually formed by Gallagher included two musicians from Ireland; as with Taste, the new group crossed 'national' boundaries, as Gallagher, born and socialised in the Irish Republic, employed Wilgar Campbell and Gerry McAvoy, (Northern) Irish musicians from the Belfast blues and R&B scene. In selecting additional musicians, Gallagher also opted for the Belfast-born

163 Redding had previously played bass, and Mitchell drums, with the Jimi Hendrix Experience.

pianist Lou Martin, who was added to the group in 1972; the Welsh drummer Rod De'Ath replaced Wilgar Campbell in the same year.

Why did Gallagher choose to work with Irish musicians? It is plausible that this was a manifestation of Gallagher's desire to establish a market and touring circuit for rock in Ireland; it is certain that he maintained an interest in performing for Irish fans (Holdship, 1984). Gallagher may also have employed Irish musicians in order to demarcate his cultural product in the global noise; in my view, it is possible that Gallagher's decision to employ Irish musicians was in keeping with an emerging sense of 'Irish' identity, which I explore in detail below.

Although Gallagher was never to express a clear position with respect to the ethnic divisions and sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, his cultural and professional activities, along with the musical hybridity he employed as a compositional strategy, suggest a belief in cosmopolitan co-existence. In this regard, Gallagher's decision to perform in Belfast during the 1970s represents an interesting engagement between international socio-political trends, and political realities specific to Ireland. Similar to Van Morrison, the views expressed in an interview with Keith Altham show Gallagher refusing to be drawn into detailed discussion of his political orientation, but voicing criticism of the idealised position on Northern Ireland adopted by American commentators:

When we talked recently, the conversation turned to religion, and some of Billy Graham's¹⁶⁴ recent pontifications on the Irish troubles, about 'the devil being at work in Belfast and being everyone's

164 Graham is an American Christian Evangelist and celebrity preacher.

responsibility to stop the bombings!' 'As if we didn't know that,' mumbled Gallagher. 'Sometimes I wonder about these preachers in their Cadillacs and gurus in their Rolls Royces – I wonder how much contact they really have with the people and the problems'.

(Gallagher in Altham, 1973)

Commenting later on U2's engagement with Northern Irish political issues, Gallagher made the observation that 'they're almost radically apolitical from an Irish viewpoint'. Developing his view, he stated:

I admire them as a group, musically and so on. But that 'white flag' thing – that radical peace sort of thing is troublesome because the whole Irish issue is just so complex. They're all very genuine about it. They're into the better nature of humanity and genuinely very nice people...But I tend to be a bit more gritty about the way things really are over here.

(Gallagher, in Holdship, 1984)

In contrast to the romantic nationalist sentiments expressed by Phil Lynott, and the equally romantic pronouncements on 'radical peace' later voiced by Paul Hewson (Bono), Gallagher largely avoided explicit political commentary; I contend that this was a conscious choice. It is reasonable to assume that Gallagher's diverse familial background would have prevented him from appealing to a 'hardline', essentialist nationalist/unionist position with respect to Northern Ireland. Secondly, the palpable threat of reprisals from paramilitary groups, such as sabotage of his live performances in Ireland or Britain, and the possibility of adversely affecting his professional prospects by making explicit political commentary, may also have been a preventative matter. Thirdly, rock musicians' political subjectivities were often informed by a wariness of institutionally based socio-political mechanisms – Gallagher described himself as 'anti-organisation and anti-establishment and anti-setup'.¹⁶⁵ Such scepticism regarding political

165 See Sinclair, 1990.

institutions, and a concomitant awareness of the intricacy of Northern Irish politics, could have prevented Gallagher from vocalising a particular political preference, or announcing a manifest position with respect to the Northern conflict. He stated in a televised interview:

I don't write political lyrics. I'm an Irish man, and I return there a lot...and play in the North of Ireland, and I have strong emotional feelings about Ireland, but I don't try and make my songs political platforms. I don't think that would be any good for anybody.

(Rory Gallagher, 19/08/75, in *Geminitys*, 2010; author's transcription)

In fact, I argue that maintaining a distance from provocative proclamations was a purposeful strategy on Gallagher's part, and this allowed him to appeal to an unusually wide and ethnically diverse rock audience in the North. Reflecting on Gallagher's successful appeal to both Protestant and Catholic rock fans, Donal Gallagher asserts:

Rory was accepted by all sides...Particularly at Ulster Hall where the Belfast concerts were. That street was bombed so many times it was known as 'Bomb Alley'...In retrospect, had Rory been blatantly supporting one side or the other, he might have fallen foul of some sort of sabotage. But because they would know that everyone in that hall was a mixture, they wouldn't risk hurting their own.

(Donal Gallagher, quoted in Muise, 2002: 31)

Gallagher's bassist, Gerry McAvoy, corroborates with such a position in stating that:

The first night we played Belfast in '71, there was ten bombs that went off around the city as we were playing...No one would play Belfast. But Rory would do it religiously every year and he was admired and respected for doing it...To music fans, it didn't matter. You might have had guys from the IRA in the audience. You might have had

guys from the UDN [sic]¹⁶⁶ in the audience. But for three hours everything was forgotten about and you could see that in their faces.

(McAvoy, quoted in Muise, 2002: 31)

Gallagher's decision to play Belfast, when the city was a recognised no-go area for major acts, needs to be read as a cosmopolitan proposition of some political significance. His performance proposed that rock culture could operate as a liminal space between warring ethnic groups: the Ulster Hall performance was one in which key cultural differences, central to narratives of ethnic exclusivity, were subsumed, as rock fans from both Catholic and Protestant communities attended together. Gallagher's first performance was prefaced by a standing ovation, suggesting that the cultural implications of the concert resonated with the diverse audience present. Highlighting the intersection of politics and culture embodied in Gallagher's appearance at the Ulster Hall, Roy Hollingworth's *Melody Maker* report concluded that:

Without being silly, or over-emotional...[i]t all meant something ...two thousand people as one, with no minority, to troublemakers, no inhibitions. Lennon and McCartney were given a lot of headline space for their attempts to bring Ireland into rock 'n' roll lyrics....Gallagher had done just the one thing a rock 'n' roller could do for Belfast. And that was play the damned place.

(Hollingworth, quoted in McAvoy and Chrisp, 2005: 107-8)

Hollingworth's reference to Belfast as a 'damned' place resonates with meaning, as the city was damned both by the realities of murderous violence, and by the musical silence which obtained as a result of avoidance by an increasing number of national and international acts due to the Troubles. Gallagher's performing in Northern Ireland throughout this

166 Most likely a misprinted reference to the UDR, the Ulster Defence Regiment, or the UDA, the Ulster Defence Association.

period illustrates the artist's understanding and negotiation of Irish and Northern Irish political and cultural intricacies. I suggest that the performances be read as an articulation of his view that rock music, in its interweaving of national and international cultural ideals and political perspectives, had a purposeful and pragmatic role to play in the mediating of political violence, and in transcending the limits of conservative versions of national and provincial culture on which sectarian violence depended. In addition, Gallagher was able to challenge mainstream portrayals of the Irish in the British press, which at the time were heavily influenced by the IRA's bombing campaign, and by the escalation of attacks in Britain. To an international and largely Anglo-American audience, Gallagher's success, demeanour and talent were a powerful counterweight to the stereotypical representations imposed through residual imperial/colonial narratives, re-animated in the light of the Troubles (CD Track 27).

Arguably, Gallagher's most focused expression of 'Irishness' and interrogation of the national is to be found in the Tony Palmer film *Irish Tour 1974*. In this biographical film, Ireland is invoked through visual representations of the island's physical geography, its architecture, culture, communities, and distinctive Hiberno-English linguistic patterns. The majority of the film's scenes were shot in and around the southern towns of Cork and Cobh, depicting both Gallagher's concerts there, and aspects of his everyday life. Footage of the GPO in Dublin and of the physical effects of sectarian conflict on the streets of Belfast alludes to the country's difficult and violent political history. Palmer's film provided Gallagher with a medium through which he could offer his particular world view, one centred strongly on the idea of Ireland as the wellspring of his talent. The film allowed Gallagher to communicate his vision of the island, of his

subjective and emotional location in it, and to deliberate on its meanings for him. It enabled Gallagher to differentiate himself from other British and American artists, through the invocation of the country's landscape, its political troubles and rich musical culture.

Irish Tour 1974 also represented Gallagher as juxtaposing the pragmatic community values of his background and socialisation against what he perceived as the excesses of international rock musicianship and its associated star culture. One of the film's scenes splices an interview in a small café in Cork with images of Gallagher wandering around the city streets and into Crowley's music shop; in a voice-over, Gallagher offers the reflection that:

I just want to continue playing – I want to be able to walk into a shop and buy a bar of chocolate if I want to, or go into a bar and have a pint...without being besieged all the time....of course if somebody comes over and says 'How are you doing, Rory?', that's fine, but I don't want to get into the Rolls Royce and the mansion and the cloak-and dagger style of living...I don't go just to get recognised. There's no point in that.

(Rory Gallagher, *Irish Tour '74*)

The 'Ireland' portrayed in the film is an island typified by small-town communities and the values associated with community life. This is particularly evident in the representation of Cork city; similar to the Bachelardian invocation of the human psyche through the medium of architectural history (Bachelard, 1959), Cork is represented by its small, winding streets, its imposing religious buildings, its industrial environs and the nearby Blarney Castle; in unison with shots of the rocky coast and the city's harbours, these images create an aura of both timelessness and of

Gallagher's deep roots/routes in an historically-oriented version of Irish culture. At the same time, Gallagher's music brings a new dimension, a new cultural experience, to the Irish listening public. This is communicated by the camera's focusing on ecstatic audiences, fans and autograph hunters consuming his highly-charged and energetic performances, by the group's signing autographs, and by the scores of fans who follow Gallagher's trips around the city of Cork. Gallagher's determination to give concerts in venues where rock music had never taken place can be seen as a pragmatic attempt to open new markets, but it concomitantly begs interpretation as a symbolic attempt to introduce key values of the counterculture to an Ireland in which the liberalisation of social values was strongly policed by church and state.

For Rory Gallagher, then, the national was a point of musical and professional departure; shaped by his early experiences in Ireland, he was inspired both to express and reject the limitations of national culture in establishing himself as an international musical figure. His experiences as a professional musician in the United Kingdom, and touring both the UK and the US, granted him an objective perspective on Ireland. Gallagher's annual Irish tours, and his involvement in the establishment of a rock audience and a professional touring circuit (including a full-scale outdoor rock festival at Macroom in 1977) can be read as key responses to the artist's preoccupation with Ireland, and his attention to the role rock and blues could play in opening Irish public culture to progressive political, social and cultural movements emerging in other parts of the western world.¹⁶⁷

167 See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ux6xCvBmIzA&feature=related>; accessed 29/12/2010; also <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJwHsLdKH1A&feature=related>; accessed 29/12/2010.

Phil Lynott

Phil Lynott's grappling with aspects of national culture was, like Gallagher's, a complex and contradictory process. Unlike Gallagher, who had lived in both political jurisdictions, Lynott's socialisation took place solely in the Irish Republic, meaning that he was exposed more fully to the nationalist political position and its cultural corollaries. Lynott's ongoing excavations of Irish mythology, and his explorations and performance of Irish folk music influenced his compositional style and the lyrical content of his work; the result was that Thin Lizzy's hybrid creations foregrounded recognisably Irish idioms – musically and textually - to a greater extent than did Gallagher's. Lynott is one of the very few Irish or international musicians to effectively and successfully draw tangible aspects of national culture into the rock context. Irishness was to be a dominant expression in the complex negotiation of identities and cultures animated by Lynott's desire to belong: to identify in Ireland a home, and to assert, through Irishness, a positive individual subjectivity.¹⁶⁸

Thin Lizzy's first album included the Lynott composition 'Eire'; against a pensive and wistful soundscape, invoked by the use of a minor tonality and heavily reverberating guitar and vocal lines, the song's lyrics offer an

168 Complicating his appeal to the nationalist Irish position, Northern Ireland provided important dimensions to Thin Lizzy, as the first incarnation of the group had two Northern Irish members in keyboardist Eric Wrixon and guitarist Eric Bell (Putterford, 2002). Belfast guitarist Gary Moore was a key participant in later studio sessions and tours. Lynott's first romance to be explicitly commemorated in song was with a Northern Irish girlfriend ('Look What The Wind Blew In'). However, the overarching cultural strand of national culture Lynott utilised was that associated with the republic, its mythologies, memories and narratives.

idealised and compacted ‘version’ of an Irish history concomitant with nationalist narratives of invasion, challenge and triumph:

In the land of Éireann sat the high king
Faced with the problems
The dreaded Viking

Gather all the men folk speaking the Celtic tongue
The land is Éireann, the land is young

Stands Red O'Donnell, fighting the Saxon foe
With Hugh O'Neill
Oh

All along the north land they fight bitterly
The land is Éireann
The land is free

(Phil Lynott, ‘Eire’, *Thin Lizzy*, 1970)

This portrayal adapts a commonly essayed and idealised version of Irish national culture, in which pre-modern Irish society, represented by belligerent Irish chieftains, challenge and overcome Norse and Saxon invading forces. The Irish are portrayed as a united ‘folk’ and differentiated from foreign invaders on the basis of linguistic identity. Ironically, it was largely through the English colonial conquest of Ireland that the notion of a singular Irish identity crystallised. While Ireland has often been referred to as ‘non-England’ or the ‘other’ through which English identity unified, equally the presence of an external ‘other’ was vital to the development of a unified form of Irish national identity (Kiberd, 1996).

Lynott’s portrayal of Ireland in ‘Erin’ can be critiqued as a romantic one. However, it should also be noted that in its representation of Irish subjectivity as assertively masculine, Lynott’s portrayal potentially subverts the problematic feminisation of the Irish, which has been established as a

key trope of both colonial and early nationalist representations of the island and its peoples. In his analysis of Irish nationalism, O'Brien (2002) examines this tendency of linking Ireland with feminine imagery at length; analysing ancient Irish writings, fifteenth and seventeenth century poetry and the twentieth century politically-oriented writings of Patrick Pearse, he illustrates that the assigning of female characteristics to representations of Ireland is a recurring trope of colonial and nationalist discourse, and in the construction of Irish peoples as 'non-English'. Describing Elizabethan representations of Ireland, O'Brien states:

...[T]here is ample evidence that this adequation of place and female person was part of a mapping strategy which would allow the colonial relationship...to be seen as natural...Ireland, if mapped as a woman, could be courted, wooed, or if necessary ravished by male Elizabethan adventurers.

(O'Brien, 2002: 84)

Thus, Lynott's portrayal in 'Erin' works against the unbalanced feminisation of Ireland, and in so doing challenges both colonial and nationalist stereotypes of the land and people. Lynott continued with such assertive masculine portrayals in invoking Irish history and culture; the composition 'Emerald' (1976) is a case in point.

The group's subsequent album, *Shades of a Blue Orphanage*, downplayed the members' Irishness, with Lynott preferring to focus lyrically on the American discourses transmitted into Ireland via contemporary popular culture: jive dance, Elvis Presley, rock music, superhero and cowboy films. This work both upholds and challenges the notion that the local and global are mediated by the national. In the lyrical narrative of the title track, the specificities of local geography, and Anglo-American cultural discourses intertwine without initial recourse to the national:

When we were kids we used to go over the back wall into Old Dan's
scrapyard
Into the snooker hall, where most us kids were barred
And into The Roxy and The Stella where film stars starred
That's where me and Hopalong and Roy Rogers got drunk and jarred
And we might have been the saviour of the men,
The captured captain in the devil's demon den.

(Phil Lynott, 'Shades of A Blue Orphanage', *Shades of A Blue Orphanage*, 1972)

The effect of such recollection, however, is the creation of a hybrid subjectivity which invokes the national – that is, a new 'version' of Irishness – idealised in the song's refrain:

And it's true, true Irish blue
And it's true, true blue
And sometimes it reminds me of you.

(Phil Lynott, 'Shades of A Blue Orphanage', *Shades of A Blue Orphanage*, 1972)

The intertwining of Irish and international cultures continues in the portrayal of the character Dan in verse II. Initially Dan is linked to Dublin, and, through the references to 'the great freedom dream', capture and detention, to narratives suggestive of national independence; thereafter, the possibilities of an alternative subjectivity are explored:

There's an old photograph of Dan that I wish you could-a seen
Of him and the boys poised, standing in St. Stephen's Green
You see, they were a part of the great freedom dream
But they were caught and detained and are locked inside the frame
of the photograph
And they might have been the clever con, the good samaritan, the rassclaut¹⁶⁹
man,
They might have been the loaded gun, the charlatan of the tap dancing fan.

(Phil Lynott, 'Shades of A Blue Orphanage', *Shades of A Blue Orphanage*, 1972)

169 A Jamaican *patois* expletive.

Thematically, *Shades of A Blue Orphanage* displays a romantic sensibility, foregrounding Anglo-American cultural influences, and underplaying references to recognisable tropes of Irishness. In contrast, Thin Lizzy's third album, *Vagabonds of the Western World* represents the apotheosis of the group's exploration of 'Irish' rock and Irish identities. This incarnation of the group comprised three Irish members, from both the Republic (Lynott, Downey) and Northern Ireland (Bell), and similar to Gallagher's group, it had Catholic and Protestant members. Like Taste and the Rory Gallagher band, and in addition to presenting a visibly multi-racial line-up, Thin Lizzy also proposed that from an ostensibly 'Irish' cultural milieu, an inclusive position with respect to sectarian cultural identities could be fostered. This is not a case of the national mediating between the local and the global; rather, it is an international musical form (rock music) allowing for successfully mediating between traditionally incompatible nationalist and colonialist positions.

Unlike Gallagher, whose album art did not incorporate visual signifiers of Ireland, Lynott and Thin Lizzy drew strongly on Irish imagery. The *Vagabonds of the Western World* cover-art, created by Jim Fitzpatrick, featured spiral and triskelion designs, associated with Celtic artistic traditions, as an integral aspect of the artwork; it also contained a pictorial representation of the group positioned as the three leaves of a shamrock. As discussed in the previous chapter, *Vagabonds of the Western World* drew on indigenous musical forms as a key aspect of compositional strategy. In addition, the obvious reference to J.M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* in the title and to Irish mythology in the 'Legend of the Vagabond' narrative printed on the album sleeve augmented the connection to narratives of national culture.

The departure of guitarist Eric Bell heralded a change of musical direction for Thin Lizzy, with Lynott focusing on the development of a commercially-oriented image and sound. However, compositionally, *Nightlife* (1974) extended Lynott's interest in foregrounding narratives associated with Irish culture. The composition 'Philomena' utilises a recognisably Irish instrumental motif, in conjunction with linguistic signifiers of Hiberno-English, thematic reference to wandering and emigration, and the romantic longing for home and family expressed through the convention of the letter written from exile (CD Track 28):¹⁷⁰

Well I've been the wild, wild rover, sailed all over the sea
But this thing that makes me wander has made a fool of me
For it took me from my childhood, underneath the stars and skies
And I still hear the wind, whistling through the wild wood, whispering goodbye.

And it's home boys, it's home; it's home boys, it's home,
it's home boys, home, when you're far across the foam

If you see my mother, tell her I'm keeping fine
Will you tell her that I love her, and I'll try and write sometime
If you see my mother, give her all of my love
For she has a heart of gold there, as good as God above

If you see my aul' one, will you tell her I'm keeping fine,
Will you tell her that I love her, and I'll try and write sometime.

(Phil Lynott/Thin Lizzy, 'Philomena' *Nightlife*, 1974)

In 'Philomena', a version of national culture operates in conjunction with international musical forms; the latter is evident in the use of electric, rock-oriented instrumentation (bass, guitars, kit drums), and in the composition's harmonic content (including the use of twin lead guitars). Similarly, the instrumental composition 'Banshee' references the mystical figure of Irish

170 Consider the folk songs 'My Dearest Dear', 'Leaving of Liverpool' and 'Kilkelly, Ireland' as examples of this trope in Irish and Irish-influenced American folk musics.

mythology and superstition, though musically the song unfolds around the tonality of the blues. The narrative of ‘Frankie Carroll’ describes an ubiquitous and melancholy domestic scene, and the protagonist’s ostensibly Irish name suggests that the narrative took place in an Irish context.

While the subsequent *Fighting* album downplayed national culture, Lynott identified the composition ‘Wild One’ as relating to ‘what Irish call Wild Geese’. Historically, the term refers to Irish soldiers departing to serve in continental European armies following Jacobite defeat in the Williamite War. In an interview, Lynott emphasises the term’s literary allusions, as one relating to ‘people who leave Ireland to become famous...like Joyce, Yeats, Wilde and...Thin Lizzy’. In a subsequent *Melody Maker* interview, he explained in detail that:

I was just thinking generally about people who had left the country. Anybody that was hip. Like, there’s an awful lot of really clever Irish people in London, right?...Only the cream go away and survive in London. I just thought that in the song it was a terrible waste of talent... All the time, ‘I’ is supposed to represent Ireland. The call of Ireland to its wild ones to come back.

(Lynott in Snyder, 1976)

‘Freedom Song’, also featured on *Fighting*, was described as referring ‘either to the situation in Ireland or to injustices served on Blacks’.¹⁷¹ The *Jailbreak* album featured the composition ‘Emerald’, where, against a driving 6/8 rhythm and electric guitar accompaniment, a fictionalised and generalised account of an historic episode is given in a hybridised musical context:

Down from the glen came the marching men

¹⁷¹ n.a. ‘Ireland’s Own’. *Melody Maker*. 5 January, 1977. <http://www.philip-lynott.com/Vagabond/faqsite/fighting.htm>. Accessed March 30th, 2010.

With their shields and their swords
To fight the fight they believed to be right
Overthrow the overlords

To the town where there was plenty
They brought plunder, swords and flame
When they left the town was empty
Children would never play again

From their graves I heard the fallen
Above the battle cry
By that bridge near the border
There were many more to die

Then onward over the mountain
And outward towards the sea
They had come to claim the Emerald
Without it they could not leave.

(Phil Lynott, 'Emerald', *Jailbreak*, 1976)

'Emerald' also introduces the concept of border and borderlines, discussed in detail in relation to space and place below. For *Johnny The Fox* (1976), the group returned to Celtic-influenced cover-art by Jim Fitzpatrick. The track 'Fool's Gold' opens with a spoken reference recalling details of the Irish famine, intertwined with the American narrative of the gold rush:

In the year of the famine
When starvation and Black Death raged across the land
There were many driven by their hunger to set sail for the Americas
In search of a new life and a new hope
Oh, but there were some who couldn't cope
And they spent their life
In search of fool's gold.

(Phil Lynott, intro, 'Fool's Gold', *Johnny The Fox*, 1976)

Explaining his use of an Irish accent on the piece, Lynott stated that:

On 'Fool's Gold', where I speak with the Irish accent all the time. It's very Dublin, I think. The idea with that was to explain it away, once and for all, how an Irishman sings with an American accent due to the

immigration thing. That was the whole point of that introduction piece, because with so many of the situations on ‘Johnny the Fox’ being American, I wanted it to relate as to why a black Irishman was singing about those situations.

(Lynott, philip-lynott.com, 2011)

Interestingly, Lynott did not invoke key events from modern Irish history in his cultural representations of Ireland. The 1916 Rising, a cornerstone of Irish national imagining, is never mentioned, though ‘Soldier of Fortune’ on the *Bad Reputation* album is recognised by biographer Stuart Bailie as containing a reference to the Irish Republic’s national anthem, *Amhrán na bhFiann* (or ‘The Soldier’s Song’ in its original English form):

Tonight we man the *bearna baoil*¹⁷²
In Erin’s cause, come woe or weal,
‘Mid cannon’s roar and rifles’ peal,
We’ll sing a soldier’s song.

(Patrick Heeny and Peadar Kearney, ‘The Soldier’s Song’, 1907)

The battle’s over, the war is won
But this soldier of fortune, he will carry on
He will carry on when all hope is gone, he will carry on
He’s trained to kill and kill he will, as we march along,
Singing just another soldier’s song
Just another soldier’s song.

(Phil Lynott, ‘Soldier of Fortune’, *Bad Reputation*, 1978)

Such a reference notwithstanding, it seems that the romanticism of the older ‘Gaelic’ narratives were more creatively appealing to the artist, and it is these representations that typify many of Lynott’s most evocative and impassioned portrayals of Ireland and national culture.

172 Translates literally as the ‘gap of danger’.

Lynott was unique among the artists studied in his exploration of a key strand of Irish national narrative: the imagery, language and symbolic economy of the religious. Unlike Van Morrison's multi-faceted appropriations from diverse religious and meditative traditions, Lynott's expression of the religious was linked primarily to the Catholic religion with which he had grown up in Crumlin. This focus on religion is made lyrically evident on Thin Lizzy's first album, through a humorous verse in 'The Return of The Farmer's Son':

Well my father is a farmer,
Used to smack me on the ass
Used to dress me up in my Sunday best
"Get down, get down to Sunday Mass."

(Phil Lynott, 'The Return of the Farmer's Son', *Thin Lizzy*, 1970)

On the same album, Lynott offers a challenge to the certainties of religious knowledge in his description of the travelling space-being:

I know someone who doesn't believe in God
Someone I know doesn't even know God

(Phil Lynott, verse I, 'Ray Gun', *Thin Lizzy*, 1970)

By the time the group recorded 'Nightlife' (1974), Lynott's focus on the religious had sharpened significantly; on that album, he devoted an entire song to the celebration, invocation and beseeching of 'Mother Mary'. Lynott's portrayal draws on the representational economy of the archetypal mother figure and protector of the Catholic faith: in 'She Knows', Mary becomes the loving, merciful feminine who can be turned to in times of desperation, pain and helplessness.

Who's got the funk when you're feeling low down?
Who's going to love you when there's no one else around?
Who's going to help you especially when you're sick?
Loving Mary, I need you quick.

She knows, and she gives her everything

She knows, and she can do her thing
She knows, and she tries her best
She knows, oh, you know she knows.

Who's got the junk when you're feeling low down?
Who's going to give when there's none to go around?
Who's going to help you when you feel you've had enough?
Mother Mary, this time it's rough.

But loving Mary, do you feel the pain?
I'm falling down, and I can't get up again.

Who's going to help you, especially when you're ill?
Loving Mary, I hope you will.

But loving Mary, do you feel the pain?
I'm falling down and I can't get up again.

Mother Mary, is there nothing you can do?

(Phil Lynott, 'She Knows', *Nightlife*, 1974)

Lynott's appeal to this 'most influential mediator' (Tait, 2006) reminds one of the centrality of Mary, the celestial mother, in certain modes of Irish artistic expression. For example, Tait's study of the Virgin Mary in medieval Irish art opens with a poem by Aonghus Fionn O' Dalaigh. Written in 1570, the short poem is very similar in tone and theme to that composed by Lynott:

I do not well deserve to obtain the home of heaven
But through her intercession
May the King of the household abandon me not
And may Mary not forsake me.

(O'Dalaigh, quoted in Tait, 2006:163)

Detailing the devotional, representational and symbolic particularities of 'the cult of the Virgin Mary' in Ireland, Tait confirms that the veneration of Mary, which had roots in the 'pious legends circulating in oral tradition', was evident in numerous facets of Irish life between 1500 and 1660. This included popular forms of culture, religiosity and superstition; pamphlets

and theological doctrine; and artistic representations including carvings, paintings, statuary, wayside crosses and jewellery. Tait's detailing of abundant instances of the latter is fundamental to the contextualisation of Lynott's portrayal, because she concludes that the 'nineteenth- and twentieth-century incarnations suggest descent from the *exempla* of the later middle ages':

The multi-faceted queen of the heavenly household became a key patron of a domestically-based religiosity whose strength lay in the ways it managed to incorporate the concerns and interests of the various sections of the Catholic community.

(Tait, 2006: 183)

Lynott's own representation can be interpreted, then, as recalling an important Irish tradition of invocation and celebration of the Virgin Mary in artistic culture. Coterminous to invoking the devotional economy of Catholicism in 'She Knows' is reference to the benign mother-son relationship, and by extension, Lynott's own relationship to his mother Philomena. It is interesting, and far from coincidental, that the song 'Philomena' appeared on the same 1974 album as 'She Knows'.¹⁷³

Lynott continued to explore and express Irish religious culture on the subsequent *Fighting* album; 'When the Spirit Slips Away' was the artist's first recorded meditation on mortality: against a musical background of heavy echo, phasing, panning and reverberation, and accompanied by a sombre musical accompaniment in a minor key, the song's lyrics alluded to an externalised subject, from their deathbed helplessly experiencing the ebbing of life. Again, Lynott utilises a style of language common in Catholic

173 For a close detailing of Philomena and Philip Lynott's relationship from his mother's perspective, see Lynott and Hayden (1995, 2010).

liturgical writing, in which divine intervention, characterised by an angelic presence, by mystery and revelation, is proposed as the sole avenue for redemption at the hour of death:

When the spirit slips away
There's nothing you can do, there's nothing you can say
May the angels be watching over you
When your spirit slips away.

When the darkness starts to fall
You're on your own and your back's against the wall
May the angels bring their flame to you
When the darkness, it starts to fall.

When the music that makes you blue
Unfolds its secrets, the mysteries are told to you
May the angles sing 'Rejoice' to you
That fateful day when your spirit slips away

(Phil Lynott, 'When The Spirit Slips Away', *Fighting*, 1975)

The lyrical style adopted here also recalls the language of what can be described as an oral tradition of Irish blessings. The best known of such blessings is similar to that composed by Lynott, both in terms of metre and structure, and also in its proposition that a benign spirituality can afford celestial assistance in times of need:

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

(Tacoma Weekly, 2011)

The explicit focus on the language and signifying economy of religion continued on the *Bad Reputation* album (1977). On that collection, Lynott's compositional focus had shifted away from the expressions of an assertive and juvenile masculinity which typified *Fighting*, *Jailbreak*, and *Johnny The*

Fox; he opted here for an introspective viewpoint that foregrounded themes of despair and escapism ('Southbound'), addiction ('Opium Trail'), indecision and spiritual breakdown ('Soldier of Fortune', 'That Woman's Gonna Break Your Heart'). On 'Downtown Sundown', Lynott interweaves romantic and religious imagery in creating the song's narrative. In an unusual musical context for the group (the use of clarinet and soprano saxophone as a contrapuntal device is more suggestive of Van Morrison than a typical Thin Lizzy composition),¹⁷⁴ Lynott returns to the use of religious imagery:

If you climb the mountain,
Then you will see
There is no great distance
Between the Lord and me

Please believe in love
I believe there is a God above for love, and he's coming,
Yes, he's coming.

(Phil Lynott, verse IV and chorus, 'Downtown Sundown', *Bad Reputation*, 1977)

In addition, the album's closing track, 'Dear Lord' draws strongly on the language of the Catholic confessional; it is ostensibly a prayer set to music.¹⁷⁵ The lyrical focus on the religious in 'Dear Lord' is again augmented by the musical setting: the track's elaborate construction includes a jarring, 'heavenly' choir produced through the use of stacked female voices, strings and synthesisers. Here, Lynott has moved away from the reassuring expressions of faith in the Virgin Mother (*Nightlife*) to a more ambiguous and pessimistic depiction of the religious, characterised by existential doubt (CD Track 29):

174 Performed by Gerry Helliwell of Supertramp, see <http://www.johnhelliwell.com/biography7.html>, accessed 28/2/2011.

175 Interestingly, jazz saxophonist John Coltrane recorded a track of the same name in 1965, released initially on the *Transitions* LP and later on *Dear Old Stockholm*. Whether Lynott was musically influenced by Coltrane's work in using the title is not clear; I discuss Coltrane's influence on articulations of space in the Irish rock text below.

Dear Lord, this is a prayer
Just let me know if you're really there
Dear Lord, come gain control
Oh Lord, come save my soul
Give me dignity, restore my sanity
Oh Lord, come rescue me
Dear Lord, my vanity is killing me
Oh Lord it's killing me, killing me

If you give your soul to heaven
And your soul begins to bleed
Remember all the sevens
Don't turn up when you need.

If you do believe in glory
Then please believe a fact
Give your soul to heaven
You won't get it back.

I'm down deep and I need your help
There's no one to turn to and I can't help myself
Dear Lord, hear this call
Oh Lord, save my fall.

I'm scared, I doubt
Dear Lord, help me out
I despair my Lord my prayer my Lord
Care, my Lord.

Dear Lord, take the time
I believe your story, now you believe mine
Oh Lord, I'm on my knees
Oh Lord, please, please, beware,

My Lord, oh care my Lord
Give me dignity
Restore my sanity
My vanity is killing me.

(Phil Lynott, 'Dear Lord' *Bad Reputation*, 1977)

In contrast to 'Spirit Slips Away', the subjective focus here is on the first person; Lynott mixes strains of autobiographical writing with the

conventions of the confessional poetic which, as Deryn Rees-Jones describes, focuses on ‘the private experience of suffering’ (Rees-Jones, 1999: 15). It is likely that Lynott here is detailing both the torment of religious doubt and the suffering of the drug addict, a situation with which, by 1978, he himself was almost certainly familiar. In using the confessional style, Lynott’s lyric aligns with energetic exploration of the confession as ritual and literary device in Irish writing. One is reminded instantly of the Joycean use of the confession, and also that of Frank O’Connor’s *My First Confession*; George Moore’s *Confessions of A Young Man* featured a similar device, while Brendan Behan also used the ritual in *Confessions of An Irish Rebel*. What is common among these representations is the appeal to, or interrogation of, what Jonathan Mulrooney terms the ‘Catholic confessional identity’. Examining the confessional sequence in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Mulrooney concludes that the Catholic ritual of confession is central to the articulation of Dedalus’ (and, indeed Joyce’s) ‘Irish subjectivity’. Mulrooney’s reading of the fate of Stephen, whose quest for ‘authentic aesthetic representation’ in *A Portrait of The Artist* is arrested in the opening pages of *Ulysses*, resonates with the subject’s experience as recounted in Lynott’s ‘Dear Lord’; like the hero of *A Portrait*, the latter protagonist also faces ‘a rather sad, Icarian end’ (Mulrooney, 1999, 166).

It is interesting to align Lynott’s religiously-focused lyrical creations with those of the earlier Irish writers in this way, because it illustrates that Lynott’s appeal to the religious imports into the first-wave Irish rock song an aesthetic which was central to other strands of twentieth century Irish cultural narrative. While we cannot assume that Lynott was familiar with these earlier works, it is notable that his own subjective experience prompted similar inclusion and interrogation of aspects of his religious

identity within his hybrid compositional style. It can be argued, then, that the sociological context in which Lynott was raised, being similar to that of previous Irish writers in its foregrounding of the religious, reproduced a definitively ‘Irish’ element in his transforming creative identity. Supporting this hypothesis is the fact that the psychological impact of Catholic doctrine was something Lynott recorded in interviews. In response to Tony Clayton-Lea’s questioning whether ‘Philip Lynott [was] a religious person?’ the artist replied that:

As I get older I get more religious...I'd say it's almost like being Irish and Catholic. Once you're Irish and Catholic, you're always Irish and Catholic. I think it's in you. You can never disassociate yourself from it. You can acquire another accent, but it'll always be there in your head. The rules that were beaten into me at school are ingrained. I still know when I commit a mortal or a venial sin, you know?

(Phil Lynott, interviewed by Tony Clayton-Lea, *Hot Press Magazine*, 2011)

Given Lynott’s belief in the ongoing affect of Catholicism on the Irish creative mind (another area in which his creative philosophy mirrors that of Joyce), it is unsurprising that references to Catholicism and the religious are an informing aspect of Lynott’s creative aesthetic. In conjunction with his interrogation of Celtic mythology, I hope to have shown that the inclusion of the religious illustrates a unique way in which Lynott represented and interrogated Irish national culture in a hybridised cultural context.

Van Morrison

Of the three musicians studied, Van Morrison’s relationship to the national is the most difficult to describe and critically analyse. This situation obtains partly because of the particularities of Morrison’s musical development, and also because of the political realities informing statehood in Northern

Ireland. Morrison's principal biographers have noted that from an early age, he absorbed blues, jazz and R&B, along with Irish folk, classical and traditional music (Heylin, 2004; Prendergast, 1987); this created a complex musical identity in which the crossing of borders – whether of genre, nationality, or ethnicity – was commonplace. In the previous chapter, I explored in detail the artist's portrayal of a personalised version of 'Ireland' in *Veedon Fleece*. Outside of this, it cannot be said that conventional expressions of national imagining informed Morrison's creativity between 1968 and 1978 to the extent that engagement with American musical forms – rock, blues, soul, R&B and country – did. Unlike Gallagher and Lynott, Morrison was not exposed to the cultural nationalism common in institutional education in the Irish Republic, and it seems fallacious to try to assign a relevance for the national (in the sense of Irish national culture) to Morrison's musical style. Nor does Morrison deliberate musically on Protestant provincial identity, though Rogan, correctly in my view, has linked Morrison's professional outlook and public subjectivity to a defining 'Ulsterness' (Rogan, 2006).

Born and socialised in East Belfast, Morrison's early exposure to popular musical styles, and jazz in particular, came through both American and British sources – that is, via national and transnational routes. Through American recordings and broadcasts, Morrison encountered the folk, jazz, country blues and rhythm 'n' blues musicians whose oeuvre influenced his own sound (Lead Belly, Giuffre, Charles, Bland, Broonzy, Williams and so forth). However, the British trad-jazz movement also provided an important impetus for Morrison. As a recent documentary illustrates, the hybrid 'skiffle' styles perfected and popularised by Lonnie Donegan, the performance practices of Chris Barber and the exilic mythology attributed to

Ken Kolyer were central of elements of British jazz culture with which Morrison was also familiar.¹⁷⁶ This intersected with Morrison's exposure to, and absorption of, cultures connected more specifically to Ireland, Ulster and Belfast: those of Irish classical and operatic singing, Unionist, Ulster Scots and Irish folk, and country and western music, for example (Van Morrison, *FWTS*; Figgis, 2008).

My reading of Morrison's relationship to the national is premised on the fact that while Ireland, and Belfast in particular, was used as a source of lyrical and musical inspiration during certain creative periods, such invocation always took place in an ambivalent and complex fashion. McLaughlin and McLoone describe the contradictions and tensions implicit in Morrison's simultaneous attraction to, and rejection of, Northern Ireland, as expressed in his music:

All the Morrisonian themes of ambiguity, contradiction and paradox are here – belonging and yet trying to get away; the competing pleasures of the spirit and the flesh; the relationship between the local and the foreign, between the inside world and the outside, between Ulster and America, between the private and the public persona.

(McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000: 185)

With respect to the role of Ireland in Morrison's appeal to national imagining, it has been established that Belfast was often the inspiration for Morrison's early works ('T.B. Sheets' and the *Astral Weeks* song cycle in particular; McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000: 184); a trip to Ireland in 1973 musically and lyrically inspired key songs on *Veedon Fleece* (Yorke, 1975). Scholars such as McLaughlin and McLoone (2000) and Onkey (2006) have

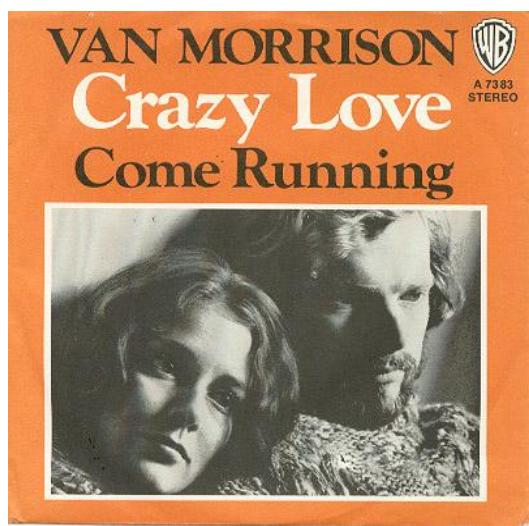
176 The documentary in question is *Red, White and Blues* (2003), by Mike Figgis; it includes interviews with and performances by Morrison.

explored *Astral Weeks* and *Veedon Fleece* in depth, and I want to complement their critical perspectives by investigating Morrison's 1973 album *Hard Nose the Highway*. I will postulate that the songs on the album are illustrative of an ongoing negotiation of ideas of Ireland, Britishness, Ulsterness and Americana within Morrison's 1970s output. I argue that songs and themes presented on the album can be read as a reinstatement of Morrison's commitment to Ireland and Irish culture following emigration to the United States: his emigration had culminated creatively in the foregrounding of an exilic identity premised on the artist's assimilation into American culture. I am interested to show that *Hard Nose the Highway* pre-empts the 'extended re-engagement with the homeland' Morrison undertook on his next studio album, *Veedon Fleece*, in its negotiation of Irish imaginings within a hybrid narrative context.

Hard Nose The Highway (1973) can be interpreted as the conclusion of Morrison's exploration and experience of romantic Americana; it signals his return to investigation of a wider and more fractured musical and personal identity. Prior to 1973, Morrison's musical endeavours had taken him from Belfast to New York, to Boston, and eventually north to the artistic enclave established at Woodstock village, New York state. As the music he produced between 1968 and 1972 demonstrates, Morrison was creatively enabled by such migration; it led to significant professional development, as Morrison worked with first-class musicians (Connie Kay, Tom Kielbania, Richard Davis, Jeff Labes, John Platania) and was assisted and influenced by critically and commercially successful producers (Bert Berns, Lewis Merenstein, Ted Templeman). Morrison also benefited from artistic proximity to the contemporary developments in popular musicianship made by The Band and Bob Dylan in the late 1960s and 1970s. In addition,

Morrison's emigration to America enabled a range of new personal experiences, including marriage (to Janet Elizabeth Rigsbee) and fatherhood (Shana Caledonia Morrison was born to Morrison and Rigsbee in 1970).

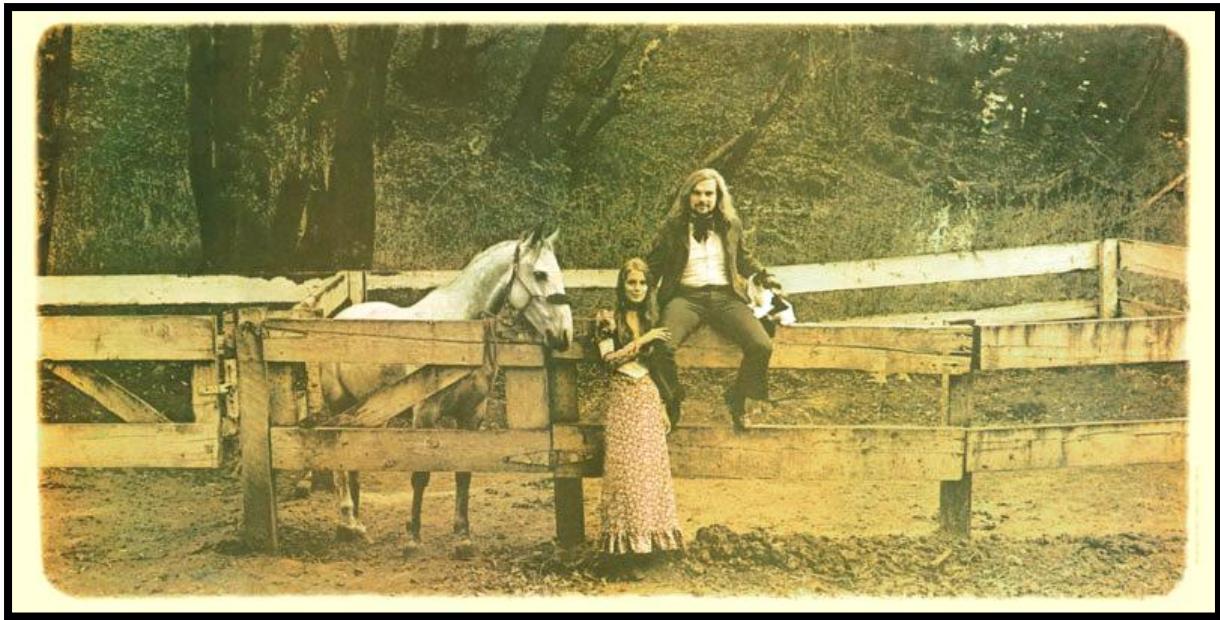
These events and transformations provided the intellectual and creative stimulus informing the studio albums *Moondance* (1970), *His Band and The Street Choir* (1970) and *Tupelo Honey* (1971). On *Tupelo Honey*, in particular, Morrison presented narratives of romantic coupling, transcending the tropes of youthful wandering and solitary, sexualised yearning which informed the *Them* and *Astral Weeks* compositions. For the album's sleeve, photographer Michael Maggid framed Morrison in a California woodland, with his wife Janet on horseback next to him; in addition to suggesting the couple's marital bliss, the image invoked the religious, in its reworking of the biblical journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem; it also referenced the chivalric code of the Avalonian and Arthurian legends which influenced Morrison's creative imagination.



Morrison and Rigsbee on the *Crazy Love* single, 1970



Tupelo Honey album cover image, 1971



Michael Maggid's *Tupelo Honey* inlay photography compares, in terms of theme, tone and mood, to the historically-focused visual representations of The Band in Landy's images discussed above.¹⁷⁷

Focusing primarily on his flowering relationship with Rigsbee, *Tupelo Honey* (1971) saw Morrison adapt The Band's tendency to frame romantic narratives within descriptions of the American landscape. The album's several love songs interposed lyrical references to the romance with descriptions of American geography: its rivers, the outdoors, moonlight, night breezes, ridges, and historic communities. Complementing this inclination was the use of American linguistic idioms and African-American musical structures: *Tupelo Honey* was defined by a notable absence of any discernible reference to the artist's Northern Irish identity. Rather, Morrison focused on rehearsing the narrative of the successful emigrant, leaving behind an array of painful pasts and embracing the possibilities of 'starting a new life' in an idealised American community (CD Track 30):

177 See also <http://iamthechildofthemoon.blogspot.com/2010/07/mrs-morrison.html>; accessed 5/1/2010.

Here I come a swaggering
Way on over the ridge
See the water flowing, way beneath the bridge
And my woman's waiting
By the kitchen door
I'm driving along
In my old beat up car

Going down to old Woodstock
Feel the cool night breeze
Going down to old Woodstock
Give my child a squeeze.

(Van Morrison, verse II and chorus, 'Old Woodstock', *Tupelo Honey*, 1971)

When I hear that robin sing
Well I know it's coming on spring
Oooh-we, and we're starting a new life.

I've been shovelling the snow away
Working hard for my pay
All I gotta say is we're starting a new life.

We're gonna move
Way on down the line
Girl, we been standing in one place for too long a time
When I hear that robin song
Well, I know it won't be long
Frankly, I know we belong
And we're starting a new life.

(Van Morrison, 'Starting A New Life', *Tupelo Honey*, 1971)¹⁷⁸

With respect to 'national' culture, what is notable here is the invisibility of Morrison's Ulster and Irish identity, replaced here by portrayal of the American landscape, and the use of American English linguistic idioms ('gonna', 'my old beat up car', 'here I come swaggering'). The cultural locus

178 See also:

<http://www.google.ie/images?hl=en&q=elliott%20landy%20van%20morrison%20janet%20planet&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&biw=1003&bih=544>; accessed 5/1/2010.

here aligns more closely with the nostalgic Americana of the many cowboy films Morrison watched as a youth than with the intricacies of his complex and transforming transatlantic public identity:

Oh, she give me moonshine whiskey
Oh, she give me southern love
Deep in the heart of Texas
There beneath the stars above
Oh, she give me southern comfort
Oh, she give me moonshine love
Deep in the heart of Texas
There beneath the stars above

(Van Morrison, verse I, 'Moonshine Whiskey', *Tupelo Honey*, 1971)

The narrative style and subject matter of *Tupelo Honey* suggest that Morrison was seeking to codify his personal and professional achievements in attaining personal, professional and subcultural status in American social life. This embracing of the narrative of the successful emigré was fitting, given that Morrison had progressed (largely through sustained endeavour and creative compromise) from the anonymity of the Irish showband scene, through the beat groups, and to the forefront of an internationally significant artistic culture. Furthermore, he had re-invented his public persona, transforming from a shy, awkward and sullen individualist into a more sensitive and pragmatically oriented family man during the same period.

By 1972, this phase of personal and creative bliss was in its closing stages. Morrison's marriage to Rigsbee ended in a difficult divorce, and he was overtaken by a sense of disillusionment with the very Woodstock music scene which had previously inspired him. The sense of desperation accompanying such transition was voiced on *Saint Dominic's Preview* (1972);

despite the presence of Janet Planet in the backing vocalist role, it was evident, both lyrically and in terms of the album art that Morrison chose, that he was returning to a preferred self-portrayal as an insular, exilic troubadour. This change provided the compositional impetus for ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Listen to the Lion’, in which the *topos* of centredness and rootedness is replaced with that of travel and journeying. The constructed nature of his former American-centred bliss was obliquely referenced in the title track; eschewing the American spatial frame of reference foregrounded on *Tupelo Honey*, it is interesting that direct references to Ireland and Irish culture re-appear in ‘Saint Dominic’s Preview’:

Meanwhile back in San Francisco
I try hard to make this whole thing blend,
As we sit upon this jagged story block
With you my friend.

And it’s a long way to Buffalo.
It’s a long way to Belfast city too.
And I’m hoping that Joyce won’t blow the hoist
‘Cause this time, they bit off more than they can chew.

(Van Morrison, verse I and pre-chorus, ‘St. Dominic’s Preview’, *St. Dominic’s Preview*, 1972)

With the release of his subsequent album, *Hard Nose the Highway* (1973), Morrison made public his frustrations with the remit and practitioners of American popular artistic culture. This occurred most potently through the composition ‘The Great Deception’, in which Morrison lyrically critiqued the participants of such cultures – rock stars, audiences, hippies and the film industry - in vitriolic fashion:

Did you ever hear about The Great Deception
Where the plastic revolutionaries take the money and run;
Have you ever been down to Love City
Where they rip you off with a smile and it don’t take a gun?

Don’t it hurt so bad in Love City

Don't it make you not want to bother at all
And don't they look so self-righteous
When they pin you up against the wall?

Did you ever hear about the rock and roll singers
Got three or four Cadillacs
Saying 'power to the people, dance to the music'
Wants you to pat him on the back

Have you ever heard about the so-called hippies
Down on the far side of the tracks
They take the eyeball straight out of your head
Say 'son, kid, do you want your eyeball back?'

(Van Morrison, verse I, II, IV, VIII, 'The Great Deception', *Hard Nose The Highway*, 1973)

Such deconstruction of an idealised America enabled a return to exploring a more fractured sense of self, with Morrison's creative sensibility now mediating between the competing impulses of Ireland, America and Ulster. Morrison embraced a more ambiguous framework of representation that could reference both his experiences and pasts in Ulster along with those in America. This was evident through the coterminous lyrical representation of Irish and American placenames in the title track (CD Track 31):

I was torn down at the dead's place
Shaved head at the organ
But that wasn't half as bad as it was, oh no
In Belfast and Boston.

(Van Morrison, verse II, 'Hard Nose the Highway', *Hard Nose The Highway*, 1973)

In particular, the track 'Wild Children' offered impressionistic images of post-war youthful experience, leisure culture and romanticism that could resonate with British, Ulster and American audiences:

We were the war children
Nineteen forty-five
When all the soldiers came home

Love looks in their eye.

Rod Steiger and Marlon Brando
Standing with their heads bowed on the side
Crying like a baby thinking about the time
James Dean took that fatal ride, took that ride.

(Van Morrison, verses I and III, 'Wild Children', *Hard Nose The Highway*, 1973)

Hard Nose the Highway included a cover of the track 'Bein' Green'. Credited to Joe Raposo, the song originally appeared in 1970 on *The Sesame Street Book and Record*; it was the first cover song to appear on any Van Morrison studio album (Heylin, 2004). While ostensibly a children's song, it was one which encapsulated a philosophical ambivalence, expressed by the character Kermit the Frog, about the comparative blandness of his skin colour (Yorke, 2004: 254-5). Morrison has described the song as one dealing with self-acceptance (Yorke, 1975: 108). To me, Morrison's recording of the song resonates the artist's own ambivalence regarding his inherited Irish (hence 'green') identity; it represents a reflection on Morrison's self-image as an outsider in American culture, and a coming to terms with the primacy of Ireland and Ulster – a source of cultural and subjective difference - in his public subjectivity:

It's not easy being green
Having to spend each day the colour of the leaves
When I think it could be nicer being red, or yellow, or gold
Or something much more colourful like that

It's not easy being green
It seems you blend in with so many other ordinary things
And people tend to pass you over
'Cause you're not standing out like flashy sparkles on the water, or stars in the sky

But green is the colour of spring
And green can be cool and friendly like
And green can be big like an ocean,
Or important like a mountain, or tall like a tree

When green is all there is to be
It could make you wonder why
But why wonder, why wonder?
I am green and it'll do fine, it's beautiful.

(‘Bein Green’, Joe Raposo, *Hard Nose The Highway*, 1973)

Couched in the parlance of a child’s verse, ‘Bein’ Green’ culminates with the realisation that an acceptance of individuality could generate dignity and self-worth. This realisation would have been critical to Morrison’s mindset, given his lengthy residence in America, and his ongoing participation in a primarily American popular culture. By accepting that his Irish identity was, in fact, still ‘beautiful’, Morrison could positively re-engage with it – a process which began on the same album.

‘Purple Heather’, the final track on *Hard Nose The Highway*, directly referenced Morrison’s Ulster and Scottish roots/routes. Attributed to the musician Francis McPeake, whose relatives Morrison would have seen performing in Belfast, the composition is a reworking of the eighteenth century Scottish song ‘The Braes of Balquidder’.¹⁷⁹ It is possible that exposure to American and British musicians’ versions of the composition influenced Morrison’s decision to record it; it had been performed by The Byrds, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan, among others.¹⁸⁰ Whatever the reason, performing ‘Purple Heather’ permitted Morrison to strongly re-assert and romanticise the Ulster and Scottish

¹⁷⁹ See <http://www.scotsindependent.org/features/singasang/balquhidder.htm>; accessed 16/1/2011.

¹⁸⁰ See <http://web.archive.org/web/20090806133748/http://geocities.com/bobdylan27/bootlegs6062.html>; accessed 16/1/2011.

dimensions of his complex musical subjectivity, and provided a means to reference his Northern Irish identity without appealing to the divisive and limiting rhetoric of sectarianism. The limited comments Morrison did make regarding Northern Ireland at the time indicate a studied ambivalence to the province, based on the ongoing sectarian violence engulfing loyalist and republican communities (Heylin, 277). Morrison responded to this by facilitating his parents' moving to the United States; musically, he sought modes of expression which referenced a Belfast, an Ulster and an Ireland far removed from the cycles of violence in which national and provincial imagining played a dominant role. In 'Purple Heather', romance and togetherness counteract the images of a fractured Northern community (CD Track 32):

Will you go, lassie go
And we'll all go together
In the wild mountain thyme
All around the blooming heather
Will you go?
.

(Francis McPeake, arr. Van Morrison, chorus, 'Purple Heather', *Hard Nose The Highway*, 1973)

It also lays the groundwork for the transcendental sense of Irishness explored on *Veedon Fleece* a year later: an Irishness not connected to Belfast, but to a version of 'Ireland' seen through the eyes of a returning emigrant, and shaped by the artist's cultural and physical exile in America.

To conclude, Morrison's compositions and covers on *Hard Nose The Highway* can be read as a mediation of diverse strands of local, national and global cultural strands. Morrison rejected his earlier strategy of foregrounding a singular narrative of local or national culture – whether that

of Belfast, Woodstock, or California. Here, he opted to articulate a more complex, less coherent but ultimately more realistic intertwining of regional, national and global cultural strands, presenting these in a hybridised context through which his sophisticated and shifting subjectivity could be expressed. In addition to Morrison's negotiation of the relatively fixed epistemologies of national identit(ie)s, it is instructive to describe Morrison's engagement with the national as one involving the trope of exile.

The term 'exile' is one to which numerous meanings accrue in a range of narrative contexts; these include dislocation, banishment, separation, expulsion, ostracism, and elopement. Various forms of exile can be recognised in diverse strands of 'Irish' culture. Certainly, ancient Gaelic mythology provides many examples of the trope; diverse legends, from that of Mad King Sweeney to the Wanderings of Oisin, of Naoise, the Children of Lir and the Flight of Diarmaid and Gráinne, involve voluntary or enforced forms of exilic wandering. The tragedy of famine, and subsequent mass emigration from Ireland, produced a later variant of the trope, as did political events shaping various Irish cultural traditions in the nineteenth century. The Irish literary revival drew on both the ancient and modern variants of the tradition in creating a literature in which emigration and exile featured as a defining characteristic. James Joyce and Samuel Beckett are the key figures for whom exile from Ireland was a significant aspect of artistic development. In contemporary settings, the evolution of diasporic culture reworks the themes of dislocation, exile, longing for and rejection of the homeland. Popular music relies strongly on exploring and exploiting aspects of this tradition – from the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main St* to Bob Marley and the Wailers' *Exodus*, exile is a recurrent motif in rock music.

Van Morrison's exile from Ireland can be seen as an engagement with an established tradition of wandering implicit in diverse strands of Irish culture.¹⁸¹ During the 1970s, and in contrast to some of these earlier forms, Morrison's recorded output rarely embraced a romantic longing for the homeland, though the impressionistic reminiscences of *Astral Weeks* illustrate a strong emotional connection with Ireland, and with Belfast in particular. Rather, Morrison's work shows a willingness to engage with the figure of the exile. In addition to calling his production company Exile Productions, and he actively explored the physical, emotional, cultural and psychological terrain of exile by emigrating to, and wandering throughout, America. Morrison's skill, developed through his status as a wandering musician, lies in his ability to absorb the nuances of these terrains, representing them to localised audiences in a way which 'speaks' authentically to those audiences. This is not to suggest that his works are unproblematically 'authentic'; as Allan Moore has argued, any notion of authenticity is subjective, constructed, and open to critique (Moore, 2002: 32). What is evident, however, is that Morrison has adapted the trope of exile, a cultural position with an established history in diverse strands of Irish culture, in establishing a musical identity which resonates with Irish, American, and international audiences. In the following section, I explore how rock's use of space and place helps to account for such popularity among different listening communities.

181 Several examples of the trope of exile can be found in Irish song; consider, for example, the collection *Farewell My Own Dear Native Land -Songs of Exile and Emigration*, discussed at <http://www.mustard.org.uk/vop/654.htm>. Accessed 30/3/2010.

Some Intricacies of Location: Space and Place in Irish Rock

The bordered space of the nation is a single dimension of what Fredric Jameson describes as the postmodern subject's cognitive map (Jameson, 1993). In conjunction with the national, articulations and conceptualisations of space and place can offer crucial insights into the intellectual focus and cultural concerns embedded by rock musicians in their texts. The analysis of space and place links to ideas I have developed above both because of the primacy of bordered and other spaces in nationalist narratives and their alternatives and also because, as Angela K. Martin notes, contemporary social and political movements 'rely heavily on associations of place' in their articulation of diverse identities and critical positions (Martin, 2007: 89).

Smyth (2001) has explored issues of space in the Irish rock context, focusing on a second-wave group, U2. In seeking to establish certain 'imagined geograph[ies]' relating to the band, Smyth investigates some of the spatial affiliations associated with the group's sense of home, of exile and of migrancy. He also focuses on how the band's sound reinforced certain representations of space: for example, during the 1980s, the presence of key sonic features in the band's approach seemed to communicate a 'sense of open space and grandeur' which Smyth associates with the desert. These sonic features included the use of open-ended chord structures, a harmonically minimal rhythm section, ringing open strings in several compositions' guitar figures, and the use of echo and delay as principal guitar (and vocal) effects (Smyth, 2001:169-73). He concludes that

throughout their career, U2 developed diverse musical vocabularies which conveyed a range of musical and social-political spaces. I develop similar arguments with respect to Lynott, Morrison and Gallagher in the current chapter, focusing on various expressions of the spatial, including the geographical and the utopian.

I approached issues of space and place in describing how The Band, Van Morrison and Phil Lynott invoked specific locations and their symbolic economies in composition; they also used geographies and landscapes to situate narratives and contextualise the temporal dimensions of their works. Such preoccupation with place and space in the popular musical text can be traced back further than the late 1960s: it informed compositional styles in folk, blues, country and rhythm and blues. To give an example, Chuck Berry's 1958 Chess single 'Johnny B. Goode' (one of the most widely covered songs in rock), combined ideas and motifs from country, blues and rhythm and blues; its narrative included a specific reference to place (New Orleans, Louisiana, in the American south), and this was instrumental in Berry's resonant evocation of what Doreen Massey (2005) describes as the 'envelope of space-time' central to the song's narrative:¹⁸²

Deep down in Louisiana close to New Orleans
Way back up in the woods among the evergreens,
There stood a log cabin made of earth and wood
Where lived a country boy named Johnny B. Goode,
Who never ever learned to read or write so well
But he could play a guitar just like a ringing a bell.

(Chuck Berry, verse I, 'Johnny B. Goode', *Chuck Berry Is On Top*, 1958)

182 New Orleans, Louisiana is the site of key musical transformations shaping Western popular music during the twentieth century, including the birth of jazz, the expansion of blues, funk, rhythm and blues and swamp rock.

Berry's lyric provides an early example of what would become a defining representational feature of rock narrative. Not only were groups themselves defined by their roots/routes in particular landscapes, localities and regions, but the rock text increasingly expressed the culture's obsession with space and place: artists explored and expressed both the geographical particularities of American and other landscapes, and utilised the text to interrogate and represent the vast, unexplored spaces emerging in western culture – the American wilderness, the open road or highway, and, increasingly, space itself.

A second form of 'space' I think it apposite to examine with respect to rock music is the aural/musical 'space' created through the use of certain musical forms, dynamics, timbres, textures and lyrics. Examining U2's 'Where The Streets Have No Name', the cultural theorist Gerry Smyth argues that music can evoke a sense of place, both through the use of suggestive musical motifs and through song lyrics (Smyth, 2001: 176-187). Mixing musical analysis (focusing primarily on chordal movements, timbre and texture) with an investigation of the song's lyrics, Smyth concludes that this song's evocation of space is typical of that found throughout U2's early compositions:

The atmosphere is epic, the dominant texture one of felicitous space....'Streets' is in fact the emblematic song of U2's first decade, musically grounded yet texturally dynamic. The space between the Edge's minimalist guitar and the rhythm section's solid base is filled by the voice which, with Bono singing close to the top of his range, manages to connote conviction and movement without ever deviating too far in terms of melody, or deviating at all in terms of musical structure.

(Smyth, 2001: 184)

Following Smyth's example, I explore musical evocations of space in first-wave compositions, deliberating on how such articulations inform our knowledge of Irish rock music and its preoccupations. Extending Smyth's method, I wanted to establish what is connoted by the respective musicians' creation and usage of various kinds of 'space', both conceptual and musical. I will scrutinise aspects of musical form and texture and deliberate on the kinds of space they create and relate to; I also examine the practice of invoking idealised spaces in songwriting by exploring lyrical allusions and utopian representations of space in the popular song. Such investigation resonates with recent scholarship in Irish Studies, and in particular with a position forwarded by Smyth, who has argued that:

The modern Irish person's experience of and relation to individual space is subject to a number of influences which radiate outwards in a series of decreasingly discernible though no less impactful contexts.

(Smyth, 2001: xv)

My intention here is to detail some of the 'influences and contexts' shaping first-wave Irish rock musicians' spatial dispositions, and affecting their music. I will illustrate that spatial representations in first-wave texts are particular to the period which produced them, and as such differ from those informing those Irish bands influenced by punk and New Wave – U2, The Radiators From Space, The Pogues and Sinead O'Connor, for example. I aim to illustrate that critical potential of such analysis by showing that understandings and expressions of the spatial intertwine with memory, location and history in creating both the particularities of the cultural text and the context of its production. Furthermore, I will illustrate that the romantic/escapist element of Irish rock texts develops largely through the portrayal of imagined and idealised spaces, including the 'wild west', the (home)town, and the sea. I want to suggest some potential meanings relating to these processes and practices of representation.

Firstly, however, I define what I mean by ‘space’ and place’ for the purpose of the current study. Understandings and interpretations of place and space are numerous and diverse, as the concepts are shaped by theoretical developments in the sciences, in geography (Harvey, 1969; 1973; 1989; 2000), philosophy (Bachelard, 1958), cultural studies (Jameson, 1984; 1991; Williams, 1973; Smyth, 2001; Massey, 1991, 1992; Gibbons, 1998) and music (Cohen, 1995; Whiteley, Bennett and Hawkins, 2007; Leyshon, Matless and Revill, 1998). For my analysis, I read place as a concept relating very much to the particularities of geography and its regional, provincial and territorial correlatives. In referring to place, I am arguing for a view of the concept in which the term and its pasts/presents tend to ground cultural narrative, and provide definable particularities of space and time. The invocation of place in popular music links to the practice of articulating inclusive, bonded social identities; it is further associated with collective experience and memory. A key example is the use of place in the creation of the ‘bounded, enclosed spaces’ on which nationalist discourse depends (Stokes, 1997:89), though as I will argue, articulations of place can challenge nationalist hegemonies. Space, on the other hand, represents more open, effusive and potentially emancipatory locations, intervals and cultural dispositions. In what follows, space suggests the potential and actuality of unbordered conceptual and musical zones; it signifies and embodies the potential of utopian idealisation; of interchange; it embodies the hybrid musical text, which itself is a space where diverse cultural influences are imagined, interact and compete.

Analyses of space and popular music have often focused on how locality shapes musical production. For example, Peter Webb's study of Bristol's music scenes illustrates that the specificities of the city – geo-spatial, demographic and economic – were instrumental in shaping the musical style which emerged from the city to global exposure in the late 1990s (Webb, 2004). Similarly, Sara Cohen's study of Jewish communities in Liverpool examines how functional changes in the cityscape (primarily architectural transformations of public space) affect the practice of music-making (Cohen, 1995). Discussing the significance of music in the production (that is, the 'definition, representation and transformation') of place, Sara Cohen has argued:

Music plays a role in producing place as a material setting comprising the physical and built environment; as a setting for everyday social relations, practices and interactions; and as a concept or symbol that is represented or interpreted.

(Cohen, 1995: 434)

These comments are a basis for Cohen's analysis of how music-making, as a social activity, forges lasting connections between an individual and the place in which it is produced. Discussing music making among Jewish immigrants in Liverpool, Cohen argues that their musical practices not only 'helped to define the particular geographical and material space within the city that they inhabited', but contributed to the investment of space with 'meaning and a sense of identity' (Cohen, 1995: 438). Cohen's perspective calls for a full sociological analysis of how rock has shaped Irish geographies; while such work is beyond the scope of the current research, I hope to have shown that rock production and performance utilised the built environment in the urban centres (just as its precedent, the showbands, shaped the landscape through the profusion of ubiquitous dancehalls). I

have also touched on how rock produces place as a setting for ‘social relations, practices and interactions’ in detailing how audiences and consumers developed participant listening cultures through (limited) national and international media, by attending live events and purchasing Irish and international rock and pop recordings. Furthermore, rock groups themselves formed communities of musicians and listeners, interacting with folk and showband culture through live performance in Ireland, and engaging with and being influenced by emerging British and American sounds through recordings and broadcasts. I now turn to the investigation of Cohen’s third category of ‘place’, that of the symbolic, in examining how musical representations of space symbolise certain continuities of Irish cultural life, and signify rock’s location within it.

Discussing the music scene in Bristol, England, Webb (2004) notes that popular music production involves ‘the interaction between place, individual subjectivity, creativity and production’ (Webb, 2004: 67). From this starting point, he argues that the specificities of space and place seep into, and impact on, the style of music produced in a particular locality. Cohen’s and Webb’s ideas are complementary: Cohen’s argument perceptively proposes that the determination of participative links in musical production actually shapes the individual’s sense of physical place, while Webb suggests that local geography, through its effect on musical production, creates the local variations of homogenous ‘global’ musical forms such as rock. Understood in this way, the influence of place in shaping cultural practices around Irish rock music becomes apparent. As outlined in Chapter Two, the range of dedicated musical spaces afforded to Irish musicians for the consumption, production and performance of popular music was extremely limited. A lack of ‘inlets’ and ‘outlets’ for

musical production influenced rock musicians' perception of place, and of the identification of urban Ireland as a space with extremely limited resources for rock music; this certainly would have motivated Irish musicians to emigrate to the Anglo-American centre in search of professional opportunities. Thus, Irish musicians adopted conceptualisations of space received from Anglo-American culture: these are described and examined below in detail. At the same time, Ireland provided some of the conceptual underpinning informing musicians' compositional creativity; this is evident in the references to Ireland, and Irish national culture, in several first-wave rock songs, as illustrated above. Phil Lynott referred to the contradictions of Ireland as 'place' in the mindset of the practising musician, in his statement that:

Ireland has this appeal and you will always return...It's terrible. Everybody wants to stay there, but there's just no work.

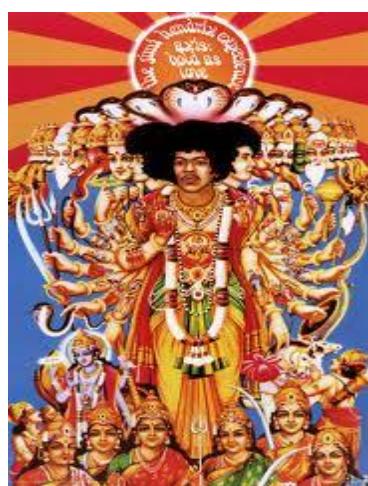
(Lynott, interviewed by Snyder, 1976)

In this regard, Webb's position is observant, because in the case of Irish rock, interactions between place, productivity and subjectivity strongly influence the practice of music-making, determining the content of several compositions; at the same time, musicians had to utilise the spaces of an international popular culture to transcend the professional and musical limitations particular to indigenous Irish culture. Before analysing the relevance of place and space in the Irish rock text, I want to briefly illustrate what I consider the principal and particular dynamics and properties of 'space' within Anglo-American musical culture during the 1960s and 1970s. I then develop the argument that space and place maintain important functions in Irish rock songs: these include grounding respective narratives by providing geo-physical 'backgrounds' for narrated events, and offering idealised (or utopian) spaces for romantic imagining.

Conceptualisations of space and place changed rapidly in the Anglo-American world between the 1960s and 1970s, as transitions in interior and exterior understandings of space affected the western subject's sense and experience of location. In addition to an obsession with place, and the focus on location for the grounding of narrative, an emphasis on 'inner' spaces was taken up by the new rock groups. Jefferson Airplane's exhortation to 'feed your head' developed from the 'turn on, tune in, drop out' mantra of Timothy Leary; this complemented an upsurge in public interest in Buddhism and mysticism, motivated in part by a search for ideological values distanced from the aggressive nationalism driving American interventions in Vietnam. This transition in the western subject's cognitive map led, in rock culture, to the emergence of a psychedelic musical style, purposefully incorporated into the artistry and performance practices of Van Der Graaf Generator, Pink Floyd, Hendrix, Cream and the American west-coast acid rock groups (Clarke, 1989: 4).



Jefferson Airplane¹⁸³



Jimi Hendrix (1967)¹⁸⁴



The Pink Floyd¹⁸⁵

183 See also

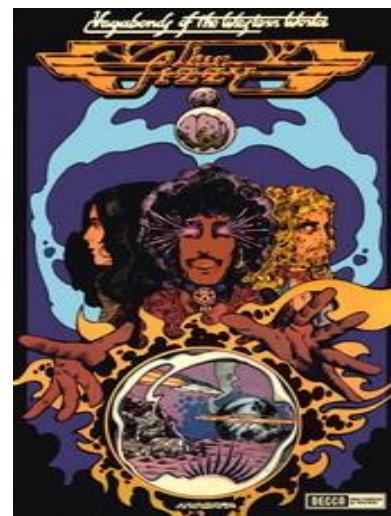
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Music Festival (1969)



Grateful Dead



Thin Lizzy (1973)

At the same time, the expansion of public consciousness into outer space occurred as a response to high-profile US moon landings, the propulsion of rockets and satellites into deeper space, and the development of volatile nuclear capabilities by the US and USSR ('Star Wars') during the Cold War. This development began initially with the launch of the Russian Sputnik satellites in 1957 – the International Geophysical Year – and precipitated the American placement of a human on the moon. Again, these changes yielded thematic transformations in popular culture, including fashion and music; David Bowie's *Space Oddity* (1969), Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* (1973), Funkadelic's *Cosmic Slop* (1973), guitarist Larry Coryell's *Spaces* (1974) and jazz musician Sun Ra's *Space is the Place* (1973) are indicative of the incorporation of new conceptualisations and representations of stellar space in the domain of popular song. At the level of signification, also, the explosion of cult of the 'rock-star' and the 'star-texts' associated with rock's most public figures occurred through the

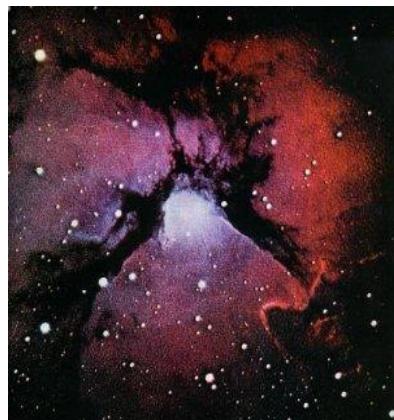
184 See also

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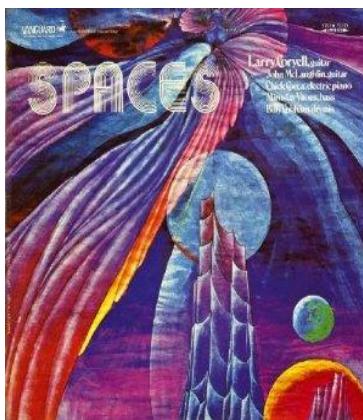
185 See also

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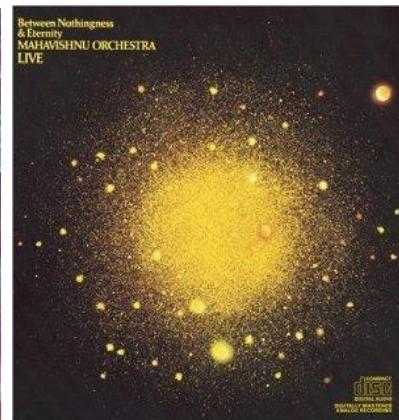
equation of such figures with the intensities, energies and luminosities of heavenly stars.



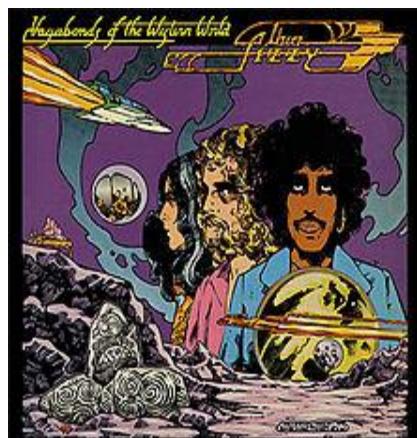
King Crimson



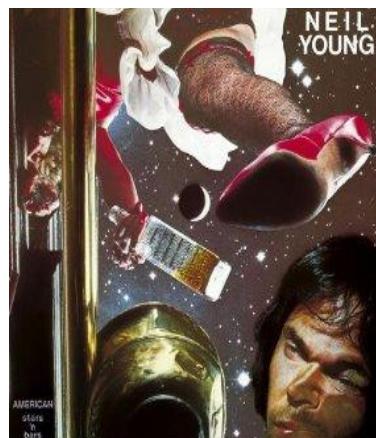
Larry Coryell



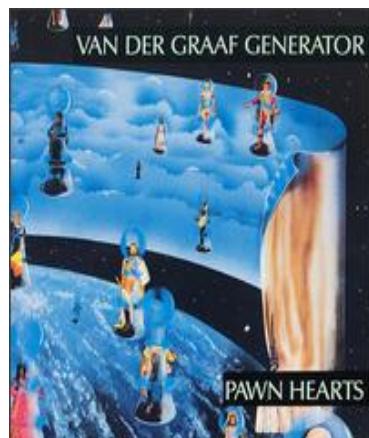
Mahavishnu Orchestra



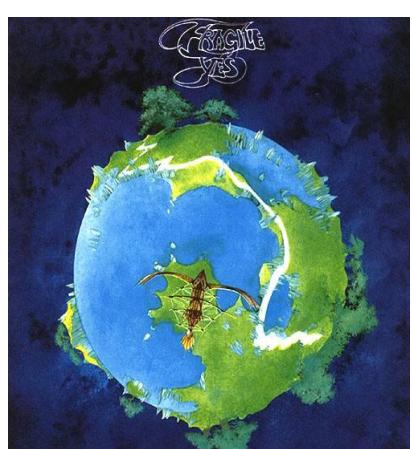
Thin Lizzy



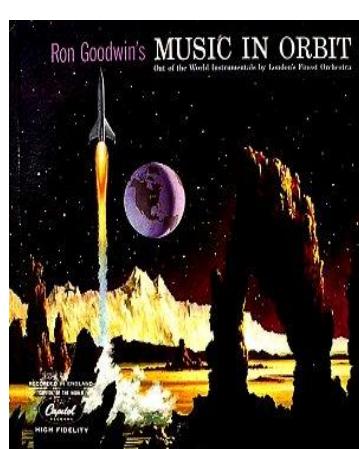
Neil Young



Van Der Graaf Generator



Yes



Ron Goodwin



Hawkwind

Figure 11: Popular music incorporating the new awareness of planetary space: various albums of the 1950s, 60s and 70s.¹⁸⁶

Such expansion of musical worlds occurred at the same time as the revival of interest in the micro-community, and the ‘utopianisation’ of earlier forms of community culture, extant in the drive to revive and rework folk and traditional music. Implicit in this musical tendency was the practice of naming particular places, with the intended effect of communicating a sense of experiential authenticity to the songs’ narrative. Clapton’s invocation of Rosedale, Mississippi in his cover of Robert Johnson’s ‘Cross Road Blues’ is typical of the practice, as is Grateful Dead’s original composition ‘Truckin’’:

Arrows of neon and flashing marquees out on Main Street.
Chicago, New York, Detroit and it’s all on the same street.
Your typical city involved in a typical daydream
Hang it up and see what tomorrow brings.

Dallas, got a soft machine; Houston, too close to New Orleans;
New York, got the ways and means; but just won’t let you be.

(Grateful Dead, verses II and III, ‘Truckin’’, *American Beauty*, 1970)

Similarly, in Phil Lynott’s version of ‘Whiskey in the Jar’, the reference to the ‘Cork and Kerry mountains’ assists the construction of narrative realism, as do Morrisonian references to Cypress Avenue, Sandy Row and the streets of Belfast in *Astral Weeks* and later albums. This compulsion was representative of a desire return to ‘authentic’ cultural expression in the face of technological change and the loss of locality and community; it was a key preoccupation driving Anglo-American youth to re-inhabit the musical

186 King Crimson, *Islands* (1971); Larry Coryell, *Spaces* (1974); Mahavishnu Orchestra, *Between Nothingness and Eternity*, (1973); Thin Lizzy, *Vagabonds of the Western World* (1973); Neil Young, *American Stars 'n' Bars*, (1977); Yes, *Fragile* (1971); Ron Goodwin, *Ron Goodwin's Music in Orbit* (1958); Van Der Graaf Generator, *Pawn Hearts* (1971).

spaces of earlier cultures, such as that of African-American blues (Carson, 2001: 17-25).

From the perspective of western popular music, certain developments occurring relating to the newly emerging cognitive map were crucial, as artists sought to express the expanding inner and outer worlds through music. The use of emerging studio technologies and electronic effects which could be added to instrumentation was a principal shaping agent; lyrical references to space, to time and space travel, and by means of a musical focus on the creation of 'space' through new structural and improvisational techniques. With respect to such creation, rock mirrored changes first proposed by jazz musicians: the explorations of modal and polyrhythmic approaches by John Coltrane and Miles Davis, and the range of musical ideas relating to a transcendent sense of 'space' initiated by Sun Ra, transformed performance practices in African-American musicianship, since these directions could express more capably the changing sense, in African-American culture, of a new spatial (and space-focused) logic through which the lingering trauma of slavery, the loss of diverse cultural and linguistic traditions, and the ongoing realities of ghettoisation and segregation could be faced.

In unison, then, changes in popular culture during the 1960s and 1970s culture produced a specific representation and understanding of space, in which minimalised micro-communities and vast expanses of space collide. It is interesting and relevant to investigate how these preoccupations were worked out in the music produced by first-wave artists, and I turn to such examination now.

Interestingly, Irish rock artists did not explore the ‘psychedelic’ elements of musical ‘space’ to the same extent as some contemporary British and American bands. This might be attributable to the fact that neither Gallagher nor Morrison embraced the soft (and hard) drug culture favoured by some of their contemporaries. However, Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison each produced texts with lyrical references to this expanded sense of physical space – Morrison’s *Astral Weeks* and *Moondance* are key texts here, but ‘Morning Sun’, ‘Blister on the Moon’ and ‘Moonchild’ by Gallagher, and Lynott’s ‘Dancing in the Moonlight’, ‘The Rise and Dear Demise of the Funky Nomadic Tribes’ and ‘Old Moon Madness’ are fascinating examples of a similar tendency in their music which will be discussed in detail below.¹⁸⁷

With respect to space, first-wave Irish rock followed the general trend in western popular music in appealing both to the quasi-nostalgic, memory-laden ‘folk’ routes of blues and folk music, while expressing the new spatial logics enabled by the transformation of public conceptualisations of space and utopia in the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to expressing the particularities of local landscapes and identities of place, changes in the late-modern subject’s cognitive map had a profound effect on first-wave musicians’ performative style: Gallagher’s music, in particular, absorbed and reworked of the progressive African-American ideas of musical space emerging through jazz. Both concrete (geographical) and imagined

¹⁸⁷ At the same time, Anglophone culture and society was influenced by a concomitant exploration of ‘inner space’ – of consciousness, spirituality, and heretofore unexplored dimensions of mind and body made possible by a widespread interest in meditation, advances in the cognitive sciences, and recreational drug use. This would be a further area of interest through which Irish rock might be studied.

(mythological, idealised) spaces are central aspects of Morrison, Lynott and Gallagher's compositional strategies, consciously developed to create certain musical effects and to emulate new meanings of space which transcended those implied by the boundaries of the national. These representations serve different purposes: eliciting a range of musical and aesthetic effects; affirming and complicating the musicians' relationships to national culture; signifying exploration and knowledge of the spatial logic of popular Anglo-American representational forms. This transition was an important one for rock musicians, as Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck and Gallagher could absorb ideas from free jazz and incorporate them into the rock context.¹⁸⁸ As Gallagher stated:

At one point in my life, Ornette Coleman was like my hero. I just admire his free spirit, his sound and his ideas. You can apply some of it to the guitar to an extent. James Blood Ulmer does some of that. And the Byrds, of course, used a [John] Coltrane riff for 'Eight Miles High'. Chris Hillman used to play Coltrane on a mandolin, and I guess [Roger] McGuinn took it and wrote the song from that.

(Gallagher, interviewed by Holdship, 1984)

188 From what I can ascertain through internet research, Gallagher's exploration of jazz-blues-rock hybrids, undertaken initially while with Taste, chronologically preceded Jeff Beck's high-profile jazz/rock 'fusions' (*Blow By Blow* (1975), *Wired* (1976) by some years.

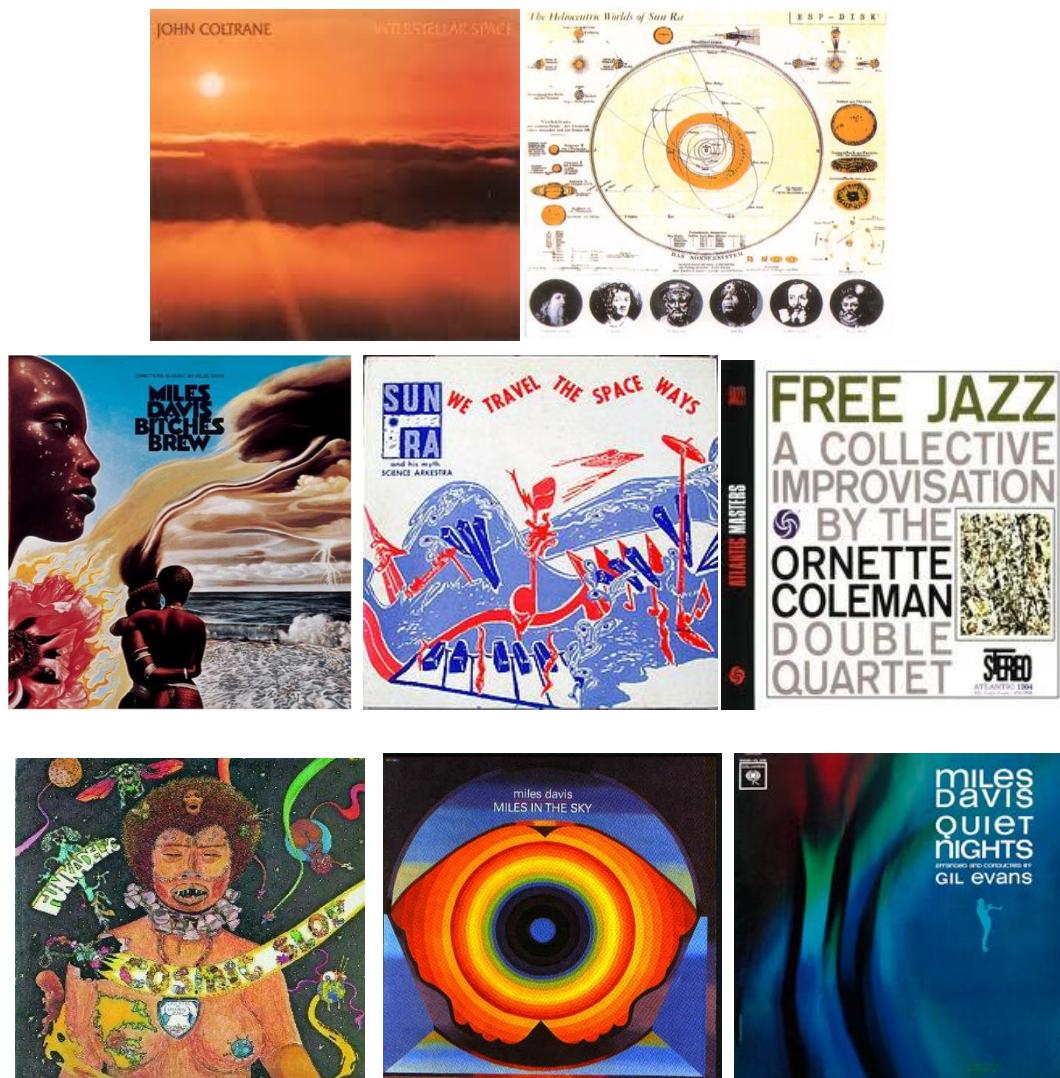


Figure 12: African-American music and new conceptualisations of space: John Coltrane, *Interstellar Space* (1967); Sun Ra, *The Heliocentric Worlds of Sun Ra*, Vol. II (1967); *We Travel The Spaceways* (1966); Ornette Coleman, *Free Jazz* (1961); Funkadelic, *Cosmic Slop* (1973); Miles Davis, *Quiet Nights* (1963); *Miles in the Sky* (1968); *Bitches Brew* (1970).

Rory Gallagher's work between 1968 and 1978 is characterised by distinctive uses of place and space. The enunciation of place, in terms of geography, is limited in the recorded works to key locations in the United States, and in particular the eastern and southern regions of that country.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ The single exception to this occurs in a posthumously released cover track from the 1974 *Tattoo* sessions, entitled 'Tuscon, Arizona'. Gallagher's cover of the Doug Wray composition impressionistically describes the town of Tucson, Arizona; both the CD reissue and official Gallagher website carry the misspelling/reworking of the town's name in their reference to 'Tuscon, Arizona'.

Unlike Lynott and Morrison, there is no geographical reference at all, in the articulation of place, to Ireland; nor do Gallagher's compositions include those places traditionally associated with the Irish diaspora and its folk routes in America - Boston, New York city, San Francisco or Chicago – as both Lynott's and Morrison's do. Rather, place is used by Gallagher to signify his appropriation of subcultural capital within strands of American popular culture. The places named by him in text are primarily rural locations, associated with country blues and country music: this tendency begins with the references to the plantation farms of Louisiana and the state of Tennessee on the first Taste album (in 'Sugar Mama' and 'I'm Moving On' respectively). Such practice is in keeping with Gallagher's scientific excavation of blues culture and its signifying locations; it also illustrates the manner in which Gallagher broke from traditional representations of America in the Irish cultural imagination, expressing his preference for exploring new 'routes' based on a developing knowledge of early twentieth century American musical forms and the rural cultures which initially informed them.

In addition to Louisiana and Tennessee, other places described in Gallagher's songs are those of the American south, and include The Everglades, and Cape Kennedy, Florida ('Daughter of the Everglades', *Blueprint*; 'All Around Man', *Against The Grain*). ¹⁹⁰ 'In your Town' (*Deuce*, 1971; *Live in Europe*, 1972), centres on Sing Sing prison, at Ossining, New York state. The narrative describes a jailbreak, and is likely a distillation of Gallagher's interest in the hard-boiled detective fiction (typified by works of

¹⁹⁰ The latter song is a cover of the Bo Carter composition from 1936.

Dashiell Hammett), and in detective films and film noir.¹⁹¹ Gallagher's fascination for such narratives also informs the narrative reference to place in his 1978 composition 'The Last of the Independents':

Lord, I had no time to lose,
Things were getting hot,
Only I know where we stashed the loot,
The mob wants to know the spot.
They got the muscle in from Cleveland,
The fire-power from Detroit,
They missed me in New Jersey,
Though things got pretty tight.
Well, they caught my scent in Richmond,
At the Hotel Savoy,
But I got out the laundry chute,
And went to Chicago, Illinois.

(Rory Gallagher, verses II-IV, 'Last of the Independents', *Photo Finish*, 1978).¹⁹²

The final reference to specific places in the recorded works occurs on *Photo Finish*, where, in 'Mississippi Sheiks', Gallagher invokes the tropes of time travel and the dreamscape to frame his portraiture of the influential country blues band of that name:

I saw the Mississippi Sheiks on the corner of the street
Or was it just a dream?
Like, I've been travelling in a time machine
So come along with me, back to the southern streets
I saw old Peg Leg Howell,¹⁹³ his gang were making quite a sound
I heard Bo Carter wail and the gitfiddle combo play
So come along and see the Mississippi Sheiks; what you got to lose?
Can't you hear me calling, calling you?

191 For example, Sing Sing prison features prominently in Hammett's novel *The Dain Curse*; see opening paragraphs of Chapter 5 in same.

192 The same theme informs 'Philby' and 'Continental Op' on the later albums *Top Priority* (1979) and *Defender* (1987).

193 An African-American guitar player and street singer (1888-1966) who performed primarily in Atlanta, Georgia and its environs.

Why should you stall?

You'll never live it all till you've done that Georgia crawl.

(Rory Gallagher, 'Mississippi Sheiks', *Photo Finish*, 1978)

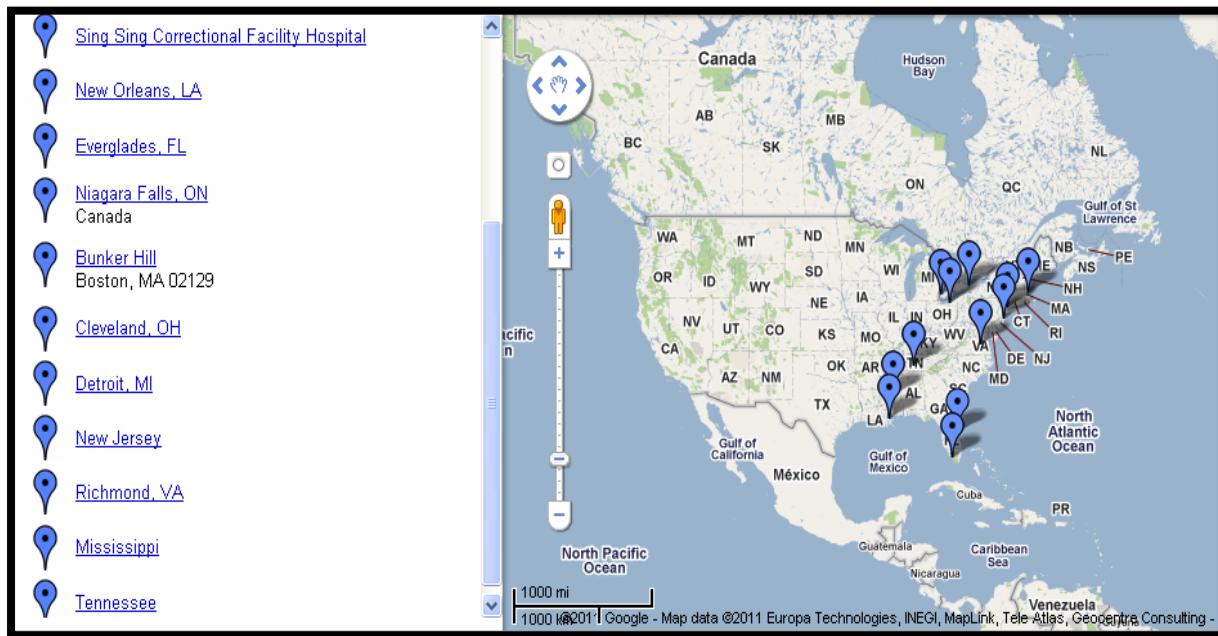


Figure 13: Places/locations named in Rory Gallagher's studio compositions and covers released 1968-78

To conclude, Gallagher's lyrical references to place, which can be read as a construction of what Sarah Daynes calls 'an imaginary 'elsewhere'' (Daynes, 2004), performed a significant function in his music: it was a means to demonstrate his knowledge of signifying strands in the American cultural imaginary, in particular, African-American music, and aspects of literary and film culture.

With respect to space, Rory Gallagher's work also embraced new configurations, as Gallagher sought to modernise blues music and culture. Interviewed in 1977, Gallagher stated that:

There's not much point in simply recreating what's already been done...The blues players themselves are the first to admit that they want to do something new...I like to echo the old thing. But I don't think you're helping the blues if you stick to the traditional way when you're playing to younger listeners.

(Gallagher interviewed by Hedges, 1977)

One way in which Gallagher transformed the older thematic material and concerns of African-American blues was by drawing aspects of them into dialogue with representations of planetary space and the new sense of cognitive location which emerged in popular culture during the 1960s. Conspicuous references to the spatial paradigm occur throughout the recorded works, notably in the numerous lyrical references to the planets, the sun and the moon. These references first appear in the Taste compositions: the eponymous first album opened with the blues-rock track 'Blister on the Moon', in which both moon and sun are featured. While the conceptual thrust of 'Blister on the Moon' can be read as a critique of institutional authoritarianism, it incorporates a revised sense of the spatial through the juxtaposition of human physicality, atmospheric and solar space:

But now you want to run away: ok, let's see you run
Run across the frozen air, try resting on the sun.

(Rory Gallagher, 'Blister on the Moon', *Taste*, 1969)

Sun and moon also appear in 'Morning Sun', 'All Around Man' and 'Moonchild'; in the latter tracks, the traditional preoccupation of blues culture with relationships and romance is reconfigured to incorporate new ideas of space:

You are a moon child and pretty soon child
I've got that feeling I'm going to make you smile for ever, if I can;
Just give me a sign, and I'll show you my plan

Tell me why you look so sad
Time slips by, like grains of sand
Just put your future in my hands.

(Rory Gallagher 'Moonchild', verse I and III, *Calling Card*, 1976)

I ain't no astronaut, from Cape Kennedy I don't come
Just step inside my rocket ship
I'll take you circling 'round the sun
We'll head off for Pluto, Venus and Mars,
Step inside baby, I'll take you very far.

(Bo Carter, arr. Rory Gallagher, 'All Round Man', verse V, *Against the Grain*, 1975)¹⁹⁴

In 'Railway and Gun', a further transformation of a typical blues trope, that of migration, is attempted. The railway, a key modernist symbol of migration, escape and redemption in country blues, is re-contextualised in a manner which resonates with new conceptualizations of space. Gallagher had utilised the traditional image of the train in his cover version of Lead Belly's 'Leaving Blues': the train offered a conventional escape from the emotional trauma of romantic rejection:¹⁹⁵

Leaving in the morning
I don't know which way to go
But I'm leaving in the morning
On that C&O
On that C&O¹⁹⁶

(Huddie Ledbetter, arr. Rory Gallagher, verse I, 'Leaving Blues', *Taste*, 1969)¹⁹⁷

194 This compulsion reached its compositional apotheosis in Gallagher's canon in 1979, with 'Follow Me' on the *Top Priority* album: I want to plant a star in the sky/ one you can find at the end of the night/I want to climb a ladder to space/and leave without trace, 'cause now is the time. Things are gonna be so clear/ When I'm light years from here/ In some other space.'

195 While 'Leaving Blues' is a Lead Belly composition, Gallagher's cover is evidently shaped by Davy Graham's acoustic interpretation of the same tune, which was released on Graham's 1964 LP *Folk Blues and Beyond*. Compare <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qamD4-VvUI&feature=related> (Graham's version) with that of Gallagher. Accessed 15/7/2011.

196 The C&O refers to the reporting marks of Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, a freight railroad system extending from Virginia to the Ohio river.

However, such traditional representation is reconfigured in ‘Railway and Gun’, as part of a wider re-organisation of the subject’s cognitive map:

Keep your railway to the sun
Just leave any time you choose
Tell me what you hope to find
I’ll tell you what you’ve got to lose.

Throw away the map
That way, you can’t find your way back
So before you leave,
You better find out where it’s at.

(Rory Gallagher, ‘Railway and Gun’, 1970)

On the Boards suggested a more transitional sense of the spatial. In the album’s third track, ‘It’s Happened Before, It’ll Happen Again’, against a jazz accompaniment, lyrically the song expressed a sense of spatial disorientation (CD Track 33):

Another glass would send me to outer space
The ceiling joins the floor,
Am I out of place?
And then I ask myself, what’s it all for?
It’s happened before, it’ll happen again
It’s happened before, it’ll happen again.

(Rory Gallagher, ‘It’s Happened Before, It’ll Happen Again’, *On The Boards*, 1970)

Thus, the track is in tune with the new spatialisation evident in the popular music of the time, in which the representation of outer space informs the narrative structure of the popular song – consider, for example David Bowie’s ‘Space Oddity’ (1969) or Pink Floyd’s ‘Interstellar Overdrive’

197 A similar image of the train is utilized in ‘Catfish’ and ‘I’m Moving On’, as Gallagher absorbed the conventional trope of railway as an avenue for redemption into his own works.

(1967).¹⁹⁸ Lynott and Morrison followed this trend as well: the sun and moon, stars, the skies, planets and space feature regularly in several of their compositions: ‘Moondance’, ‘Flamingos Fly’, ‘Astral Weeks’, ‘Gypsy Queen’, ‘The Way Young Lovers Do’ are examples from Morrison’s studio works; ‘Cowboy Song’, ‘Ray Gun’ ‘Philomena’ ‘Old Moon Madness’, ‘The Hero and The Madman’, ‘Chatting Today’, ‘Buffalo Gal’ and ‘The Rise and Dear Demise of the Funky Nomadic Tribes’ are examples from Lynott’s.

Two key geo-spatial locations which do consistently recur in Gallagher’s music are the sea and the (home)town. Throughout his childhood in Ballyshannon and in Cork, Gallagher lived next to the sea, and it is hardly surprising that it inspired his musical style and lyrical content. ‘Crest of A Wave’, is a deliberation on fame and fortune in the music business; ‘Maritime’ is a Shadows-style track that references both the sea, and the Belfast beat club of that name, where Gallagher began his professional career with Taste. In ‘Lost at Sea’, the song’s subject is compared to a disoriented sailor, who is ‘caught in tides’, only to be rescued by the unnamed saviour:

The reef was near but you came closer.
Reaching out I don’t know how.

Raise the sails and leave,
And take me straight home.
I can almost see the distant shoreline.

(Rory Gallagher, verses II and III, ‘Lost At Sea’, *Against the Grain*, 1975)

The ‘roaring sea’ appeared in ‘For the Last Time’ on the *Rory Gallagher* album; it appears again in ‘There’s A Light’, recorded for the *Deuce* album:

198 The release date of April 1st, 1969 coincides with the most intense months of the space race, as the US sought to place a manned spacecraft on the surface of the moon.

I do not stare absently
Counting waves upon the sea
Now I know where I want to stay
There ain't no hard decisions to make.

(Rory Gallagher, verse III, 'There's A Light', *Deuce*, 1972)

'A Million Miles Away', a melancholy minor blues recorded for the *Tattoo* album, became a staple of Gallagher concerts; its evocative imagery likens the subject's melancholy to an ocean scene:

I'm a million miles away
I'm a million miles away
Sailing like the driftwood on a windy bay, on a windy bay

Why ask how have I been; how does it look to you?
I fell hook, line and sinker, lost my captain and my crew
I'm standing on the landing, there's no one there but me
That's where you'll find me, looking out on the deep blue sea.

(Rory Gallagher, chorus and middle eight, 'A Million Miles Away', *Tattoo*, 1973)

Musically, 'A Million Miles Away' is one of the songs in which Gallagher improvised most extensively and creatively. The use of harmonics, string bends and dynamic variation through the manipulation of electric guitar's volume control programmatically suggest the expansiveness and fluidity of oceanic movement. The sonic references to the sea are augmented in the film version of the *Irish Tour*: Gallagher's performance of 'A Million Miles Away' is framed by footage of a rocky Irish shoreline being pounded by waves, interspersed with images of ships moored in the Cork docklands, and footage of the southern seaside town of Cobh.

For Gallagher, the town represented an ideal geo-spatial location. The town combines aspects of both urban and rural ways of life, without the

anonymity of the city or the loneliness of rural existence. Gallagher alludes to this in a telling biographical passage in the *Irish Tour* documentary:

I was born in Donegal. That's up in the North-west of Ireland. And now I live in Cork. That's down on the south coast. It's the kind of place where everybody nearly knows everybody else. If you want to meet someone, you more or less know where to find them. If you don't want to meet someone, you can more or less go where you won't meet them, which is kind of nice.¹⁹⁹

(Rory Gallagher, in Palmer, 1974; author's transcription)

'In Your Town' is a Gallagher composition that describes a jailbreak from the maximum security prison in Ossining, New York. Symbolically, the town acts as a location for the subject's usurping of the hierarchy between incarcerated felon and justice system, allowing him a space to complete his revenge on the Chief of Police, the Fire Chief and District Attorney respectively. 'Going To My Hometown', recorded for both the *Irish Tour* film and the *Live in Europe* LP, was a composition which Gallagher imbued with a particular significance with respect to Belfast. He had lived and played in the city during the mid 1960s and he maintained, by his own admission, an emotional attachment to the north:

In an Irish Tour, I always try and include Belfast and the north of Ireland. After all, I lived there for a while, and I learned a lot playing in the clubs there. So I have a certain 'home' feeling for the place.

(Rory Gallagher, in Palmer, 1974; author's transcription)

Gallagher's performance of 'Going to My Hometown' incorporates an emphatic call and response passage, with the Belfast audience responding 'yes!' to Gallagher's repeated question: 'Do you wanna go?'²⁰⁰

199 See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxiEMpcI83E>; accessed March 29th, 2010.

200 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGrpT4iav8Y>; accessed March 30th, 2010.

Similarly to Phil Lynott, a further resonance of the ‘town’ motif, which appears over a dozen times in Gallagher’s recorded work during the period, is its invocation of strands of ‘cowboy’ mythology. This is evident in ‘Barley and Grape Rag’, where Gallagher proposes to arrive ‘into town’ in the manner of a marauding hero:

Well I don’t care if I get arrested,
Tonight they’ll need more than a ball and chain,
I don’t care who’s interested,
I’m coming into town just the same.
I’ve been so alone, I’ve been feeling blue,
I think I need a little drink or two,
Be my friend, tell me where the place is,
Where the whiskey flows and the dices roll till dawn?

(Rory Gallagher, verse IV, ‘Barley and Grape Rag’, *Calling Card*, 1976)

Another element of the spatial which is key to understanding the intellectual thrust of Gallagher’s early work is the manner in which it absorbed new ideas of space from jazz. While critics have stressed the blues-based element of this musical style, the use of musical ideas from jazz culture was also a key feature of Gallagher’s aesthetic during the period. During the 1960s, the free jazz movement pioneered by Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman led to the development of a style in which many of the conventions of bebop, hard bop and cool jazz were rejected. In their place, a performance style based primarily on improvisation emerged: in keeping with Coleman’s concept of ‘harmolodics’, free jazz performances and compositions were more likely to include atonality and polyrhythm than to rework bop, swing or Dixieland material. A key outcome was the shift from a method through which melodic, chordal and harmonic movement were the defining features, to one in which the performance was a space in which a range of rhythms, melodies and harmonies could be placed, explored and developed.

Musically, the blues-rock and jazz-rock structures Taste absorbed from jazz allowed the group significant space for exploratory improvisations. Gallagher, John Wilson and Richard McCracken used techniques of call and response, melodic, rhythmic and motivic development, ornamentation and embellishment to develop and showcase musical ideas between the verses of songs. Typical examples of this are the trio's televised performances of 'Blister on the Moon', which broadcast on Belgian television in July 1969, and 'It's Happened Before, It'll Happen Again', recorded at the Beat Club in February 1970.²⁰¹



Figure 14: Phil Lynott: geographical locations in composition, 1968-78

Surprisingly, limited critical attention has been paid to analysis of space and place in Phil Lynott's music; this is an oversight, given the extent to which place features in his compositions. Of the three artists studied, Lynott's articulations of place are the most geographically diverse, and include Brazil, Afghanistan, Mexico and the Burmese state of Shan. This diversity

²⁰¹ See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-IyyZG1Cqk>; also http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fN8cRm_G6Dg accessed 13/10/10.

can be accounted for in part, I suggest, by the musician's biographical particularities (for example, his father, Cecil Parris, was Brazilian). It also reflects the nomadic tendency informing aspects of his narrative style, which I examine in detail later. On the first Thin Lizzy album, released in 1971, Lynott was concerned to focus on Ireland, with Irish locations described in 'The Friendly Stranger At Clontarf Castle' and 'Eire'. For the subsequent *New Day* EP, the poignant track 'Dublin' makes explicit reference to the city:

At the quays friends come and say farewell
We'd laugh and joke and smoke
And later on the boat, I'd cry over you
In Dublin
How can I leave the town that brings me down?
That has no jobs, is blessed by God and makes me cry

Dublin
And at sea with flowing hair
I'd think of Dublin
Of Grafton Street and Derby Square
And those for whom I really care and you
In Dublin

(Phil Lynott, 'Dublin', *New Day* EP, 1971)

This tendency continued with *Shades of A Blue Orphanage*, where the title track offers a vivid portrayal of life in 1950s Dublin: the lyrics detail photographs of St Stephen's Green, the Roxy and Stella cinemas, and the snooker halls and scrapyards in which the protagonists played. I believe this shows not only Lynott's interest in the songwriting style of Van Morrison, who placed equal emphasis on locating Northern Ireland, and Belfast in particular, as the narrative centre of his early works, but also illustrates Lynott's familiarity with the Irish folk song tradition, since songs such as 'Raglan Road', 'Dublin in the Rare Aul' Times' and 'McAlpine's Fusiliers' use a similar technique to ground their respective narratives. There is also a strong link also to modes of representation central to the Irish literary

tradition typified by Joyce, whose *Ulysses* contains numerous references to the streets, buildings and suburbs of Dublin city.

Phil Lynott's work also incorporated descriptions of planetary and musical space in rock; the intellectual and creative energies of Jimi Hendrix, rather than the jazz musicianship which Gallagher absorbed, was a principal influence in Lynott's case. This is especially evident in the intricate musical structures and textures which he and the three-piece group used early compositions: Thin Lizzy's use of distortion, wah, panning, reverb, overdrive and fuzz effects create musical timbres and tonalities creating musical space in a manner which drew creatively on the musical vocabulary developed by Hendrix for the electric guitar between 1967 and 1970. Hendrix's obsession with interplanetary travel, UFOs and spaceships was a major strand of his songwriting: the tracks 'Third Stone From The Sun' 'Bold As Love', 'EXP', 'Astro Man' 'Moon, Turn The Tides...Gently Gently Away' are examples of the music informed by such a preoccupation. Lynott's compositions 'Ray Gun' and 'The Rise and Dear Demise of the Funky Nomadic Tribes' extend Hendrix's concern with the interplanetary:

I know someone who doesn't believe in God
Someone I know doesn't even know God

He came from a planet three thousand miles away
Just a short trip
A kind of brief holiday

Can you give someone somewhere to stay?
I've got to warn you, he's got a gun
I've got to warn you, he's got a gun

I know someone who came on a short trip
Travelling lightly
Travelling by spaceship.

(Phil Lynott, 'Ray Gun', verses I-III, *Thin Lizzy*, 1970)

The people rose and set off for the sun
At night they read their star signs
A people proud, for they know their kingdom come
Their skin was tanned by moon-shine

Got to keep-a-movin'
Got to keep-a-movin' on.

(Phil Lynott, verse I and chorus, 'The Rise and Dear Demise of the Funky Nomadic Tribes', *Shades of A Blue Orphanage*, 1971)

In the latter song, Lynott fused Hendrix's preoccupation with space to another theme common in the lyrical remit of the classic rock text: that of voyaging in search of a new and/or utopian living space. I deal with the utopian aspect of the Irish rock text below, but note here that in depicting human communities in planetary space, Lynott's lyric draws on the same representational economy as that used by Hendrix, Neil Young, Funkadelic, and David Bowie during the classic rock period: these artists responded to the anachronisms and limitations of Anglo-American social life by portraying space as a romanticised destination whereby such limits could be transcended.²⁰²

In the later four-piece (Gorham, Robertson, Lynott, Downey), Lynott moved to using non-specific, urban American spaces as a framework for the narratives of action, romance and violence portrayed in song. This

202 Consider the lyrical similarity to Young's 'After The Gold Rush' (1970): Well I dreamed I saw the silver spaceships flyin'/In the yellow haze of the sun/ there were children cryin' and colours flyin' all around the chosen one/All in a dream, all in a dream/The loading had begun/ Flying mother nature's silver seed to a new home in the sun'; Bowie's 'Starman' (1972), and 'The Supermen' (1970) idealized interplanetary beings, while Funkadelic's 'Mommy, What's A Funkadelic? (1970)' and 'What is Soul?' (1970) expressed George Clinton's proposition that funk was of benign alien origin; such a preoccupation was the basis for his various groups' ongoing exploration of interplanetary space in music, culminating with Parliament's 'Mothership Connection (Star Child)' (1975).

transition was influenced by the group's professional engagements in the US, where Lynott encountered the landscapes of America through the 'interactions and practices' of touring (Cohen, 1995: 434). What I am suggesting is that Lynott's experience of urban 'place' in the United States profoundly affected his musical and narrative styles: it was a key factor initiating the transition from the lengthy, Irish-based and localised narratives informing early Thin Lizzy compositions ('Diddy Levine', 'Shades of A Blue Orphanage', 'Brought Down', 'The Friendly Ranger At Clontarf Castle') to a more urbane, universal frame of reference ('The Boys Are Back in Town', 'Showdown', 'Nightlife', 'Fighting'). This transition was visually represented in the album cover art of the *Nightlife*, *Fighting*, and *Johnny The Fox* albums; on *Nightlife* in particular, artist Jim Fitzpatrick depicted Lynott as a panther poised above a night cityscape.²⁰³ The *Jailbreak* inlay art featured an exploding futuristic metropolis reminiscent of Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds*. A key theme in Lynott's lyrical approach between 1974 and 1977 was the depiction of non-specific physical spaces as a backdrop for aggressive or violent engagement; this informed a number of compositions: 'For Those Who Love To Live', 'Massacre', 'Angel From The Coast', 'Johnny' 'Fight or Fall' and 'Johnny The Fox Meets Jimmy the Weed'.²⁰⁴

203 The representation of Lynott as a 'black panther' in this way prompts analysis of his relationship to African-American culture, and black political culture in particular; I discuss this aspect of his transformative creative subjectivity in the following chapter.

204 It is plausible that Lynott's preoccupation with the aggressive in his depictions of musical space was prompted by the development of a similar tendency in Celtic rock; Horslips' re-presentation of The Tain saga had stated in 1974 that it was 'Time To Kill' and 'one hundred heads are so much better than one'.



Figure 15: Thin Lizzy and the landscapes of urban myth: *Fighting* (1974), *Jailbreak* (1976) and *Remembering Part I* (1976).

In his early work, Van Morrison references the geographical specificities he encountered during childhood and adolescence in Protestant Belfast. In addition to fusing the various musics he encountered in Belfast – blues, jazz, gospel and soul – Morrison's early work is notable for its references to Irish geographical locations. Various songs from the *Astral Weeks* song cycle contain reference to real or imagined places: these include Cyprus Avenue and Sandy Row; the streets of Belfast and the Dublin-Belfast train line; in the songs 'Fair Play to You' and 'Streets of Arklow', from the album *Veedon Fleece*, the lakes of Killarney and the streets of Arklow, a small town in the Irish Republic are also featured. Recorded in New York, Morrison states that the songs of *Astral Weeks* were conceptualised in Belfast. By referencing these specific locations, Morrison returns to the Belfast of his childhood – the tree-lined streets and gardens of Cyprus Avenue, the closely-knit Protestant community of Sandy Row and its environs – and records its disappearing street scenes. Sandy Row was once a popular shopping district, but the Troubles brought a decline to its fortunes, as did a more grim association with sectarian loyalism. The Dublin-Sandy Row train Morrison refers to in 'Madame George', which arrived into Sandy Row from the Republic's capital, ceased to run in the 1950s. Putterford (2002)

has studied Van Morrison's referencing of the geographical specificities of Belfast, and noted its influence on Bruce Springsteen, Bob Geldof and Phil Lynott. Bob Geldof has stated:

People said I was trying to do a Bruce Springsteen, but I'd never even heard of [him]...it only sounded like Springsteen because, as Springsteen has since admitted, he was steeped in Van Morrison...[c]onjuring up universal imagery from stuff that happened on your own street was very much an integral part of Van Morrison's songwriting style, and both Philip [Lynott] and I borrowed from that.

(Geldof, quoted in Putterford, 2002)

However, even on *Astral Weeks*, referred to as Morrison's most 'Irish' early work, locations outside of Ireland are referenced. Ladbroke Grove, a London suburb, appears in the closing couplets of 'Slim Slow Slider', the album's final song, pre-empting, perhaps, the wider arc of Morrison's subsequent invocations of space.



Figure 16: Van Morrison: geographical locations referenced in compositions, 1968-78²⁰⁵

205 Please link to:

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msa=0&msid=101393456949985403232.00048305c6036d734b5eb&hl=en&ie=UTF8&ll=30.751278,26.71875&spn=165.349762,360&t=h&z=1&iwloc=00048305eede7df1db988; created 5/5/2010.>

On later albums, Morrison expanded the breadth of place which he built into his songs; this reflected his migration to and across America and Europe, and his growing familiarity with specific locations on the American continent in particular. New York and Canada appeared in *Moondance* (1970); while the *His Band and the Street Choir* LP (1971) did not mention specific placenames other than 'America', *Tupelo Honey* (1972) and *Hard Nose the Highway* (1973) suggested an extensive engagement with rural and small-town America. The descriptions of domestic life in the songs 'Old Old Woodstock', and 'Snow in St Anselmo', recall those of *Astral Weeks*, in the poetic reference to place, and through emotional engagement with the artist's physical surroundings:

Snow in San Anselmo, the deer cross by the lights
 The mission down in old San Rafael, a madman looking for a fight
 The massage parlor's open, the clientele come and they go
 The classic music station plays in the background soft and low
 The silence round the cascades, the ice crisp and clear
 The beginning of the opera seem to suddenly appear.

(Van Morrison, verse I, 'Snow in St Anselmo', *Hard Nose the Highway*, 1973)

As the figure below illustrates, Morrison's *Hard Nose The Highway* (1973) artwork featured a composite of urban, rural and planetary space.

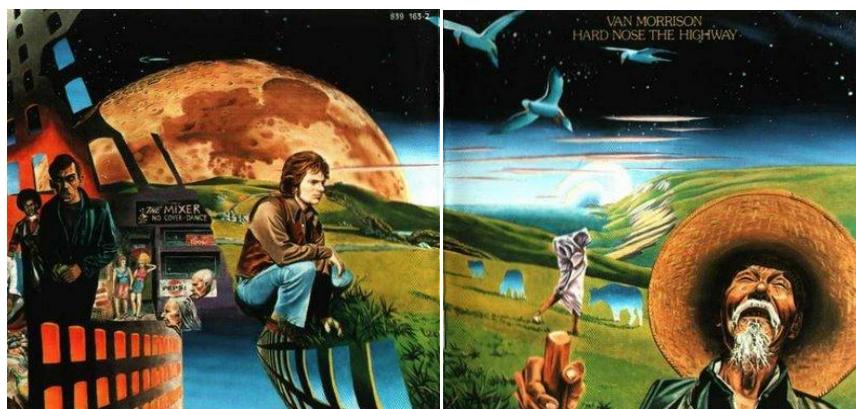


Figure 17: The *Hard Nose The Highway* gatefold image (1973)

For Rory Gallagher, place was a signifier of a developing knowledge in, and a literal mapping, or discovery of, popular forms of American culture. In Van Morrison's work, place plays a similar role; in contrast to Gallagher, however, Morrison's many references to place extend from Ireland, Scotland and Europe across the Atlantic, and traverse the United States, echoing his transatlantic crossings, and his exilic experiences of musical production and performance. Morrison's work is also characterised by what I am calling the sensuous representation of place: the emotional and experiential resonances pertaining to place are often articulated in his works. A pertinent example occurs in 'Cyprus Avenue': not only is the Belfast location described in that song, but the effect of walking through it on Morrison's creative sensibility is also expressed in the lyrics:

Well I'm caught one more time way up on Cyprus Avenue
Caught one more time, way up on Cyprus Avenue
I'm conquered in a car seat, nothing I can do.
Think I may go crazy before that mansion on the hill
I may go crazy before that mansion on the hill
But my heart keeps beating faster, my feet won't keep still.

(Van Morrison, 'Cypress Avenue', verse I, 'Astral Weeks', 1968)

The textual reference to the mansion, grounded in the realism of narrative description, also implies an alternative, transitional geography, with transatlantic flow at its epicentre, as Morrison uses both the AAB structure of American blues, and lyrically quotes from the Hank Williams composition 'Mansion on A Hill'. Similar in effect, in terms of the sensual emerging from the presentation of place, are the descriptions of the Wicklow town in 'Streets of Arklow'; Morrison's impressionistic portraiture of the town describes an emotional response to visiting the village in 'God's green land':

And as we walked
Through the streets of Arklow
In a drenching beauty
Rolling back, 'til the day
And I saw your eyes
They were shining, sparkling crystal clear
And our souls were clean
And the grass did grow.

(Van Morrison, verse II, 'Streets of Arklow', *Veedon Fleece*, 1974)

We can also read the Irish rock text as one in which manifestations of place and space reflect rock's predilection for articulating the potential of utopian spaces. Anderson (2002) states that forms of utopian expression can be found throughout the field of culture; examining the utopian impulse in popular music cultures as diverse as rave, rock and hip-hop, he concludes that it represents a 'principle of hope' through which the limitations of the artists' subjective, social and artistic experiences can be challenged or overcome (Anderson, 2002: 212-3). Drawing on Anderson's reading of 'utopia' as 'one expression of a broader desire for a better way of being' (Anderson, 2002:214), I argue that the representation of space in the Irish rock text contained an enunciation of the utopian which was inextricably linked to the lyrical idealisation of 'the west'.

In addition to the articulation of migration, to transatlantic crossings, and the representation of American and Irish places and spaces, all three artists' output foregrounds the mythology of 'the west'. Such representations take various forms, but Gallagher's cover of Lead Belly's 'When the Boys Were Out On The Western Plain', Lynott's 'Cowboy Song' and 'Southbound' and Morrison's 'Crazy Face' provide apposite examples of Irish musicians' tendency to represent idealised space, and in particular that of the frontier central to cowboy mythology:

When I was a cowboy out on the western plain
When I was a cowboy out on the western plain
Well, I made half a million, working hard on the bridle reins...

...now me and a bunch of cowboys rode into Jesse James.

(Huddie Ledbetter, arr. Rory Gallagher, 'Out on the Western Plain', *Against The Grain*, 1975)

I'm going southbound, drifting like a drover...
Tumbling with the tumbleweed down the open road
taking only what I need.

(Phil Lynott/Thin Lizzy, 'Southbound', *Bad Reputation*, 1977)

I am just a cowboy, lonesome on the trail
A starry night, a campfire light
The coyote call, the howling winds wail
So I ride out to the old sundown

I am just a cowboy, lonesome on the trail
Lord, I'm just thinking about a certain female
The nights we spent together riding on the range
Looking back it seems so strange

Roll me over and turn me around
Let me keep spinning till I hit the ground
Roll me over and let me go, running with the buffalo.

I was took in Texas; I did not know her name
Lord, all these southern girls seem the same
Down below the border in a town in Mexico
I got my job busting broncos for the rodeo...

Roll me over and set me free
The cowboy's life is the life for me

(Phil Lynott/Thin Lizzy, 'Cowboy Song', *Jailbreak*, 1976)

Dressed in black satin, white linen and lace
With his head held high and a smile on his face
And he said:
'Ladies and gentlemen, the prince is late'
As he stood outside the church-yard gate
And polished up on his .38
And said:
'I got it from Jesse James'.

(Van Morrison, ‘Crazy Face’, *His Band And The Street Choir*, 1970)

At one level, such appeal to the symbolic economy and idealised spaces of cowboy mythology represents a direct appropriation from American cinematic culture; it occurred because of the primacy of American cinema in Ireland during the 1950s and 1960s.²⁰⁶ Prior to the coming of television, most villages and towns in Ireland had some form of cinema; the larger towns and cities had several cinemas to cater for growing audiences (McBride and Flynn, 1996).²⁰⁷ Discussing this, and recalling its effect on his Irish adolescent masculinity, Frank Feely has written:

We were big into cowboys. For a while the Corinthian Cinema on Eden Quay earned the name of ‘the Ranch’ because of its propensity to show cowboy films. The biggest hero of them all was Hopalong Cassidy...The reputation of another well-known cowboy, Gene Autry, suffered from the fact that he actually kissed girls, and even worse, he sang.

(Feely, in McBride and Flynn, 1996: 25)²⁰⁸

The centrality of cinema in Irish life in both political jurisdictions during the 1950s helps to explain why all three artists, despite having very different personalities and artistic temperaments, focus strongly on the mythology

206 See also O’ Toole, 1990 and 1995 for a similar appeal to the representational economy of the western, and an extension of such discussion as is presented here.

207 What arises, then, is the curious and paradoxical state of affairs in which Irish cultures were influenced by the nativist primitivism of nationalism or unionism and the strict exactitudes of Catholic and Protestant religiosity at the very same moment that Hollywood blockbusters were made available to majority audiences.

208 Maeve Binchy and Nell McCafferty, amongst others, describe the importance of cinema to female adolescence in Ireland in the same volume; see McBride and Flynn, 1996:19-20 and 57-58. John McMahon corroborates this view, succinctly detailing the two strands of material which would become central to Rory Gallagher’s narrative creativity: ‘I remember few of the feature films, but the joys and thrillers of the follier-uppers (short films following the main feature) still remain with me. The hero could be a cowboy, like Hopalong Cassidy, or the Lone Ranger, or even a London policeman – Whoever-it-was of the Yard pursuing London’s villains in his black Wolsley police car, trying to solve the crime within the allotted time’; McMahon, in McBride and Flynn, 1996: 23.

and symbolic space of the west in composition. Gibbons (1998) sees in the ‘old west’ a ‘general distrust of everything connected with modernization’; this disposition resonates with Gallagher’s absorption of the west, initially enabled through exposure to the films of Gene Autry. Autry’s films and their protagonists romanticised the old west, its moralities and traditions; Lynette’s analysis of *Man of The Frontier*, for example, illustrates that Autry, portraying the ‘New Deal’ cowboy, sought to identify the cowboy as the antidote to the corruptions and indecencies of modernisation (Lynette, 2001: 93-4). While Feely’s comments indicate antipathy to Autry’s music, Gallagher has noted that it was just such singing that exposed him to American forms of musical performance. *Man of The Frontier* featured jug bands, country and ‘hillbilly’ music, minstrelsy, and dance; it also portrayed Autry’s ability to control crowds and challenge malevolence through purposeful and powerful singing – an ability which Gallagher later developed himself. Lynott was equally influenced by cowboy culture and what it sought to represent, though Lynott tended to focus on the aggressive, nomadic and uncompromising aspects of the cowboy narrative. In Tim Booth’s artwork, Lynott is represented through as the victorious Johnny Cool, the “in command” character of *Nightlife*’s ‘Showdown’; responding to Lynott’s self-imaging as cowboy, Booth also depicted him in cowboy apparel, astride a ‘heavenly’ guitar against a desert landscape typical of the western film in artwork relating to the ‘Cowboy Song’ release.



Figure 18: Lynott as the cowboy hero in artwork by Tim Booth; author's photographs.

Influenced by the ubiquitous cowboy culture which all three artists encountered in Irish cinemas during the 1950s, the old west is represented by them as a place of rugged individualism. The tradition of a ‘wild’ or utopian west has further resonance in older Gaelic culture: Tír na nÓg, the land of youth, appears as a motif in the mythology of pre-Christian Ireland. It reappears in accounts of magical lands to the west in early Christian Ireland, such as the *Navigatio* of St. Brendan. With respect to space, the symbolic economy of western landscape is enabled in the Irish rock song. It is interesting that all three artists, and Gallagher and Lynott in particular, used this symbolism and space; it is difficult to find other artists who explored the myth of the wild west so comprehensively. Discussing cultural parallels between representation of ‘the west’ in Irish literary and American popular culture, Luke Gibbons deduces that:

The invocation of the west as the source of heroism, mystery and romance goes back at least to antiquity...[i]n modern times, however, Ireland and the United States would seem to be the outstanding

examples of countries in which the myth of the west has been elevated to the level of a national ideal.

(Gibbons, 1996: 23)

Invoking this mythical sense of place, Gallagher's 'Out on the Western Plain' employs the conventions of the American western myth: the celebration of personal liberty, male bonding and the narrative of 'spartan' conduct by which the cowboy earns his fortune (Gibbons, 1996: 24).

Complementing this, there is a sense in which musicians' inhabitation of the space of the west(ern) may have re-animated psychological tropes extant in older Irish cultures. The representation of the American west and its attendant hero ideology re-affirmed other mythological systems Gallagher, Morrison and Lynott would have encountered as participants in Irish and Ulster social life and institutionalisation: the Christian doctrines expressed through the tenets and narratives of the Catholic and Protestant faiths; the violent heroism of the mythologies of ancient Ireland; the defiant individualism of Ulster unionism; and the hegemony of the nationalist blood sacrifice.

Similarly to Jesus, Patrick and other symbolic protagonists in the Catholic teachings, the western hero was an extraordinary and controversial outsider, ridding the community of its vices and afflictions, and often suffering or martyring himself for its wellbeing. The superhuman dimensions of the hero was equally reflected in the descriptions of manhood in both the ancient Irish sagas (Cúchulainn, Ferdia, Brian Boru, Oisin, the warriors of Ulster) and the tales of na Fianna, the group of elite Irish warriors and army of

Fionn MacCumhail. In Morrison's case, the Arthurian heroes and anti-heroes of Avalon – Arthur, Gawain, Lancelot, Galahad – resonated in the symbolic economy of the western.

Extending the mythical sense of place, the songs of Morrison, Lynott and Gallagher regularly feature the inhabitants of magical and alternative landscapes, including cowboys, vagabonds and gypsies. Examples include the assembly of fairground misfits in Gallagher's 'Tattoo'd Lady'; the barefoot gypsy player and 'merry gypsies' in Morrison's 'Caravan' and 'Streets of Arklow'; the roving vagabond of Lynott's 'Vagabond of the Western World'.²⁰⁹ Cawelti concludes that:

The symbolic landscape of the western formula is a field of action that centers upon the point of encounter between civilisation and wilderness, East and West, settled society and lawless openness....Historically, the western represents a moment when the forces of civilisation and wilderness life are in the balance...and individual actions may tip the balance one way or another.

(Cawelti, quoted in Lynette, 2001: 92)

209 Nor was the tendency to hybridise cowboy and Irish narrative particular to popular music. It is interesting that Ciaran Carson's 2007 translation of the *Táin* describes its literary evolution by referring to the western: 'The title alone, sometimes rendered as 'The Cattle Raid of Cooley' was decidedly off-putting, suggesting a dime Western rather than an epic'. (Carson, 2007: xxiv). Flann O'Brien's narrative of Slug Willard, Peter Andrews and Red Kiersay, the 'cowboys of Ringsend' of *At-Swim-Two-Birds*, illustrates a similar hybridisation of the cowboy trope, likely drawn from turn of the century cowboy novels: 'One morning Slug and Shorty and myself and a few of the boys got the wire to saddle and ride up to Drumcondra...So when the moon had raised her lamp o'er the prairie grasses, out flies the bunch of us, Slug, Shorty and myself on a buckboard making like hell for Irishtown with our ears back and the butts of our six-guns streaming out behind...and us roaring and cursing out of us like men that were lit with whisky, our steel-studded holsters swaying at our hips and the sheep-fur on our leg-chaps lying down like corn before a spring wind'. O'Brien, 2001: 53-55.

Kaulingfreks et al (2009) support this thesis in deconstructing the cowboy myth:

The myth of the cowboy is rooted in this conflict between individualism and society. He has great freedom because of his disconnection to society, his limited dealing with others. But he is not a representative of the natural state (like Indians) and so avoids the Hobbesian fate. Instead, he is on the margins of society. He has chosen to step away from society, but always remains related to it. Typically, as the movie begins, he rides into town, but after an hour and a half, he leaves again. Town, or society, is not the place to be happy or to be free, but it cannot be completely left behind.

(Kaulingfreks et al, 2009: 156)

To me, this resonates with the cultural location of the Irish rock musician, and the space of the Irish rock song. In the first instance, the musician is both insider and outsider, with respect to the national; ostensibly ‘Irish’, but influenced by cultural flows coming from inside and outside the nation’s borders. Secondly, the artist, a transatlantic subject, inhabiting the space between local and global cultures, is a participant in a constant process of subjective transformation which affirms and critiques the national.

Conclusion

The current chapter has investigated whether and how the Irish rock text is shaped by, and reacts to, narratives of national imagining. If we are to assign a relevance to the national in Irish rock, I have argued that it is instructive to look away from institutionally-based enunciations of the national, and to focus on cultural and political issues, examining how these featured, were shaped or rejected in the work of Irish artists. I was concerned to show that the first-wave rock musician and the Irish rock text

can challenge nationalist hegemonies, while absorbing and developing strands of ‘national culture’ or responding to political realities through performance. I then looked at a range of complementary ‘spaces’, which combines with the invocation of place to affirm and challenge the locational premises on which the dominant strands of Irish cultural thought are built.

In my closing comments I want to align Irish rock with other cultural strands obtaining on the island with respect to the national. Harry White’s analysis of musical development and Irish cultural thought provides an ideal point of entry for such endeavour.

White is concerned to register music as a ‘dynamic agent in the history of Irish ideas during 1770 and 1970’ (White, 1998: ix). A key endeavour in his analysis is examination of the close ‘intimacy between music and politics in the development of Irish culture’; he argues that music has been utilised to service the ideological and artistic needs of political nationalism and its cultural correlatives. White’s study focuses primarily on musicians associated with the art music tradition, though art music’s engagement with the ‘ethnic repertory’ – indigenous instrumental and folk music – is a key point of analysis. While he does not focus on popular music in significant detail, his analysis shows that there are precedents in Irish musical culture for much of the development of Irish rock’s cultural location. Like rock, art music in Ireland evolved as a response to cultural impulses emanating from within Ireland, and consequent to broader international cultural movements. Conceptually, musicians and composers struggled with the formal and ideological expectations of nationalist and colonial cultures. This elicited a range of responses, from idealised, antiquarian appeal to a romanticised past (Edward Bunting) to romantic rewriting of that past

(Thomas Moore), to eventual reassessment and hybrid creativity through the tradition (Hamilton Harty, Sean O'Riada).

Interestingly, each of these positions finds a correlative in Irish rock music. Phil Lynott's ongoing engagement with a mythical 'Irish past' echoes the attempts of Edward Bunting to revive a Gaelic musical tradition associated with its bardic and harping traditions; we see in his work a successful attempt to incorporate tropes of the 'ethnic' tradition into international musical forms, as O'Riada, Arnold Bax, Thomas Moore and Villiers Stanford did. Interestingly, Lynott, Rory Gallagher and Van Morrison all faced the same crisis affecting the professional and artistic fortunes of Hamilton Harty and Charles Villiers Stanford in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: a lack of musical infrastructure in Ireland, and a dearth of institutional support or widespread cultural interest in their chosen musical style. Rock musicians' response to such a lack, that of physical and spiritual exile and hybrid composition, also echoed the response of Irish art musicians.

Eugene O'Brien's discussion on nationalism and culture in Ireland provides another perspective on the intertwining of culture and nationalism (O'Brien 2001). O'Brien's main focus is on establishing the 'epistemological structure' of nationalism, illustrating the constructed (mythic) nature of nationalist imagining. Although he prefers to explore nationalism *per se*, rather than undertaking explicit analysis of specific case histories, his work is of interest here because he engages in detail with Irish nationalism, and also because he investigates how culture and nationalism interact in the Irish case.

Drawing on Lacanian theory, O'Brien posits nationalism as a form of misrecognition. Nationalism posits idealised narratives (the 'hypostastized image') of selfhood, of ethnicity, historicity, temporality, geography (land) and culture (language) as the basis of an exclusive identity. Taking the example of Ireland, O'Brien states:

An image of selfhood is set up as an ideal, an ideal which has a dual interaction with the temporal structures of history. This moment of ideal fusion between self and image is often postulated as a mythical *alpha* point, an *ur*-beginning, from which all ideas of the race or *Volk* derive. In an Irish republican context, for example, 1798 or 1916, are such moments which seem to transcend time; from the unionist perspective, 1691, the date of the Battle of the Boyne, would be an analogous defining moment.

(O'Brien, 2001: 6)

A key issue in terms of the current discussion is the fact that in O'Brien's argument, 'cultural nationalism' is not offered as a means for side-stepping the exclusory nature of national imagining:

[T]he notion of cultural nationalism is an attempt made to avoid the pejorative label of nationalism, while at the same time making use of nationalistic rhetoric and the persuasive power of language to consolidate nationalist feelings and desires.

(O'Brien, 2001: 7)

O'Brien's critique of nationalism (and its correlative cultural nationalism) seeks to challenge discourses of nationalist elitism. The question which arises from this position is whether and how one can express a cultural aesthetic in tune with discourses of national culture, without consolidating 'nationalist feelings and desires'. In other words, we need to establish how

an artist could invoke a sense of ‘Irishness’ without recourse to the exclusivist ideology which is the bedrock of nationalist imagining. As a solution to this predicament, I want to propose that we distinguish conceptually between ‘cultural nationalism’ – a cultural, ideologically saturated and damaging correlative of nationalism – and benign forms of ‘national culture’ – an inclusive aesthetic strategy in which the national, as Biddle and Knights propose, operates as a single strand in a wider range of cultural narratives. Such a distinction allows for the expression of national narratives without recourse to essentialist notions of statehood; ‘national culture’, expressed in this way, does not wholly dispense with the national, but follows Bhabha’s model of locality, in that it is ‘more *around* temporality than *about* historicity... more complex than ‘community’; more symbolic than ‘society’; more connotative than ‘country’; less patriotic than *patrie*’ (Bhabha, 1994: 140).

Contrary to Bhabha’s dissemination of the national, such a model allows us to view the national as a potentially benign strategy of cultural production; it is a means by which the modes of national imagining inherent in Irish rock texts and identities can be identified and analysed. From Bhabha, we learn that for subordinated peoples, it is crucially important to (re)assert their ‘indigenous cultural traditions’ and ‘retrieve their repressed histories’ (Bhabha, 2004: 9); this cannot be achieved by romantically celebrating the past, or by homogenizing the present, but by exploring the liminal space between binaries, and between the boundaries of centre and periphery, black and white, coloniser and colonised, slave and master.

Bhabha seeks to displace the historicism that has dominated discussions of the nation as a cultural force. He does this because historicism uncomplicatedly proposes ‘a people, a nation, or a national culture as an empirical sociological category or a holistic cultural entity’ (Bhabha, 1994:140), exemplifying the misleading myth of modern social cohesion. Bhabha critiques conceptualizations of nations in which historicism (understood both as the belief that events and processes beyond the control of humans are shaping history, and the belief that history is a significant criterion of value) is foregrounded. What he proposes instead is his notion of the ‘location of culture’, within which the nation is properly viewed as a measure of the ‘liminality of cultural modernity’ (Bhabha, 1994: 140). This idealised, labile locality, typified by its complexity and by its temporality, invokes the symbolic, the collective, the psychic, the hybrid and the mythological; it exists in opposition to rational, dogmatic narrativizations of statehood enshrined in the rhetoric of cultural nationalism. As Bhabha suggests, and the complex relationship between Irish rock and its precedents in popular and showband culture illustrates, there are ‘no simple dynastic answers’ to the realities of western cultural life; simplistic narratives are incapable of expressing the totalities of lived experience occurring within and through the porous, shifting boundaries of the nation. In positing a view of the nation ‘as a temporal process’, Bhabha deconstructs the universalism of horizontal time. In his view, the concurrence of the epochal (historical) and the everyday (lived) ruptures any linear sense of historical time. Following Anderson, he critiques the appeal of the nation to atavistic originary myths, preferring to stress the recency of the concept of nationhood.²¹⁰

210 Bhabha’s identification of Goethe’s *Italian Journey* as the epitome of the temporal expression of the national leads me to reflect on how Joyce’s *Ulysses* challenges such temporal certainties with respect to Ireland. The novel deals very obviously with the temporal experience of civil and social life in the Irish

Bhabha posits the idea of ‘nation as narration’ – the nation as narrative, as an arbitrary collection of ‘cultural shreds and patches’ (1994: 142). If we are to understand the ‘homogeneity’ of modernity, we must begin by questioning the ‘progressive metaphor’ of social cohesion, the unifying myth of the nation as proposed by theorists treating gender, class or race as social totalities, rather than starting points for the expression of cultural difference. The ‘nation as narration’ is characterized by a split between the pedagogical and the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the ‘conceptual ambivalence’ – that is, the true narrative uncertainty of modern society – becomes the site of writing the nation. The tension between the pedagogical and the performative creates/enacts/ the tension between the ‘one’ and ‘the many’.

I propose that first-wave Irish rock is a musical culture in which musicians proactively mediated between versions of national cultures; this enabled the importation of nationally and provincially focused narratives into the rock text, while mixing these with Anglo-American and African-American mythologies, temporalities, musical forms and spaces. Moving arbitrarily between local, national and international cultures in composition enabled

capital; it turns inward to challenge the certainties of national imagining, however, by appealing to non-linear temporalities, be they the invocation of the Greek myth and its variants, or the author’s composition of the work outside of the novel’s own temporal/spatial subjectivity (*‘Dublin, Paris, Trieste’*). In addition, Joyce’s work invokes a Bhabhaian sense of liminality through the insertion of disparate, disseminate voices – Jewish, Irish, female, feminine, nationalist, unionist, Dubliner, racist, teacher, poet, lover, merchant – in the narrative. As I argue below, Irish rock’s hybrid nature, which involves the mixing of disparate musical styles, traditions and genres, also unbalances any exclusivist claims to national cultural difference. The fact that *Ulysses* was banned in Ireland has resonances with the wave of rage which followed publication of the similarly ‘liminal’ *Satanic Verses* (Bhabha, 1994: 166-170); this illustrates how challenging the ‘third space’ position is to the totalizing narratives of nationalism and cultural fixity embodied and maintained in various cultural traditions and their respective imagined communities.

Morrison, Gallagher and Lynott to challenge the ideological and political premises and singularities of nationalism and provincialism. Through their hybrid texts, rock musicians enunciated the contradictions and tensions inherent in belonging to, yet challenging Irish, British and Ulster traditions and identities; echoing the studied ambivalence to the national in the writings of Patrick Kavanagh and Samuel Beckett, first-wave rock music expresses the potential of reworking national culture, while asserting autonomy from restrictive forms of the nationalist imagination.

Chapter Five

The Green, White, Orange and Black (Atlantic): Black/Irish Interchange and Irish Rock Identities

'I'm a little black boy, and I don't know my proper place...'

(Phil Lynott and Thin Lizzy, 'Black Boys on the Corner', *Whiskey in the Jar* single B-side, 1972)

'Excuse me do you know the way to Kansas City?

Train down to St. Louis, get me there alright

Over to the city there, you know that one:

Where the farmer's daughter digs the farmer's son.

Dig your Charlie Parker, Basie and Young

Witherspoon and Jay McShann: they will come.'

(Van Morrison, 'The Eternal Kansas City', *A Period of Transition*, 1977)

'I saw the Mississippi Sheiks on the corner of the street

Or was it just a dream?'

(Rory Gallagher, 'Mississippi Sheiks', *Photo-Finish*, 1978)

Introduction

The study of identity, in various guises, is a foundational dimension of rock and popular music scholarship (Frith, 1983, 1998; Chambers, 1985; Thornton, 1996; Reily, 2000; Gibson, 2006). It is also a mainstay of Irish Studies' analyses of literary figures and the texts they produce (Deane, 1985; Kiberd, 1995; O'Toole, 1997; McCarthy, 2004). However, as established in Chapter One, academic analysis of first-wave Irish popular musicians'

subjectivities is still very much in its infancy. Compared to the extensive theorising of historical and literary figures, for example, attempts to analyse popular musicians' subjectivities, or to examine the identity politics informing their music, are limited in scope and number. That the critical lenses of postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial thinking have not been used to focus on rock musicians' identities is striking. Such analysis has the potential to describe the complexities of rock subjectivities: migrant professionals whose lives are typified by the habitation of liminal spaces, and by their proximity to cultural nodes and flows located in and between centres and peripheries.

Rock musicians' shifting identities are consistent with the Deleuzean sense of transition and becoming implicit in identity as process. In Deleuze's view, identity/subjectivity is not presented as fixed, or teleological, but is configured as a perpetual process of evolution. Marks' analysis of Deleuze's thought illustrates that the philosopher's development of Nietzschean ideas prompted him to reject the Hegelian proposition of binaries – subject/object, good/evil, self/other – positing instead a 'philosophy of becoming' which presented the world, and subjectivity itself, in a constant and complex state of flux (Marks, 1998: 52-3).²¹¹ With Guattari, Deleuze moved further from binaristic thinking, presenting thought, perception and subjectivity as a rhizomorphic multiplicity:

The rhizome is a figure borrowed from biology, opposed to the principle of foundation and origin which is embodied in the figure of the tree. The model of the tree is hierarchical and centralised, whereas

²¹¹ See also Michael Tanner's 1973 introduction to Nietzsche's *Beyond Good And Evil*. Tanner references this fundamental tenet of Nietzschean thought by explaining that the philosopher is 'irritated by the dogmatism that insists that between the poles of truth-falsity, good-bad, and so on, there can be no fruitful connections'. Tanner, 1973:12.

the rhizome is proliferating and serial, functioning by means of the principles of connection and heterogeneity. In simple terms, any line can be connected to any other line. However, these lines do not converge to form an organic whole. In short, the rhizome is another step in Deleuze's project of creating a new image of thought. The rhizome is a multiplicity, and as such seeks to move away from the binary subject/object structure of Western thought.

(Marks, 1998: 52-3)

Deleuze's thinking interrupts the notion that identities must necessarily be fixed, and provides a conceptual basis for investigating the transforming subjectivities developed by Irish musicians between 1968 and 1978. In particular, the notion of the rhizome as 'opposed to the principle of foundation' reflects the reality that Irish rock drew from disparate cultural sources; as I illustrated in the previous chapter, musicians mediated between different national, provincial, local and global flows in composition and performance, in articulating political responses and in embracing exilic thematics.

At the theoretical locus of the current chapter, then, is the proposition that first-wave rock identities are transitional, composite, rhizomatic entities. I will investigate a key strand of this composite, arguing that a crucial element of first-wave identities is their drawing on African-American musical cultures and performance practices. Gallagher and Morrison, white, Irish men, and Lynott, a mixed-race Irish man, appropriated black identities and performed black musical styles; the analysis will investigate the mechanics, motivations and outcomes of such cultural quotation.²¹²

212 It is appropriate to mention that in all three cases, white performers, and in particular Elvis Presley and Lonnie Donegan, played an interpretative role, acting as the musical conduits through which first-wave Irish rock musicians were introduced to black musical cultures.

McLaughlin and McLoone's analysis of Irish rock inspects an extensive range of hybrid texts, and includes significant factual and deductive arguments concerning the diverse musical subjectivities which produce them (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000). Discussing Van Morrison, McLaughlin and McLoone conclude that the key to Morrison's complex identity lies in the tension between rootedness and transcendence which typify his work. This central tension is the foundation of a range of contradictions, oppositions and ambiguities which Morrison embraces and engages with in his best work. McLaughlin and McLoone's analysis centres on the 1992 composition 'See Me Through the Silence Part II (Just A Closer Walk With You)'; while this piece appeared in the period subsequent to that explored in my analysis, I reference it here because it gives a clear sense of the complex and contradictory impulses informing Morrison's public subjectivity:

Against a gospel rendition of the hymn...Morrison remembers again the days before rock' n' roll and incants a list of influences which are both rooted in his Belfast upbringing and, at the same time, have transported him out of this. In doing so, he paints an evocative picture of a Protestant Sunday in Belfast which is spiritual, celebratory and sustaining and yet from which he seeks to escape through the un-Godly (and very un-Protestant) practice of 'tuning in of stations in Europe on the wireless'.

(McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000: 181)

McLaughlin and McLoone's position illustrates some of the dynamics and tensions implicit in Morrison's negotiation and mixing of cultural impulses from Ireland, Europe and America. However, there is no balanced, analytical reference to the centrality of black cultures in these processes; the artist's exploration of and responses to black music, a key element of the

remembering process alluded to here, is reduced to a ‘list of influences’. Excepting Lauren Onkey’s excavation of Van Morrison’s appropriation of blues and R&B identities (Onkey, 2006), a survey of rock-related literature reveals little concrete analysis of the productive interchanges between black and Irish cultures. Lynott and Gallagher’s interactions with African-American culture are equally under-researched, and this motivates the present attempt to investigate such appropriation.

The relevance of such a focus lies in the fact that black-Irish cultural interchange is a key element of Irish rock: Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison absorbed and re-worked black music and performance practices, and fused hybridised versions of black musicians’ subjectivities with diverse versions of ‘Irishness’ when developing their unique musical identities. The stated aim of the thesis is to argue for the cultural intelligence of rock musicianship, and I will endeavour to show here that musicians’ engagement with black culture is one facet of rock performance in which such intelligence is implicit. As illustrated in Chapters Three and Four, black music informs Irish rock’s musical structures, its tonalities, and its subject matter with respect to lyrics. Despite this integral influence, there has been to my knowledge, a distinct paucity of analytical critiques of Irish musicians’ interaction with black musical cultures. This is a surprising lacuna, given that there have been ongoing interactions between black and Irish cultures during the last two hundred years (Gilroy, 1993; Mishkin, 1998; Negra, 2006; Ferreira, 2001).

Developing the theoretical ideas of Paul Gilroy, I will argue that interaction between rock musicians and black musical forms constitutes a mutual

dialogue between Ireland and some of the musical cultures of Gilroy's 'black Atlantic'. I accept that Gilroy's ideas are not the only manner in which black, African and African-American histories can be understood and theorised; however, his attempt to read hybrid black cultures as rhizomatically linked by histories of travel, of oceanic and diasporic movement resonate with emerging understandings of Irish culture. It also allows for an initial theorisation of the links between Irish and black cultures. This represents a relatively new departure in theoretical explorations of Irish identity, since the overarching tendency has been to theorise the European, Euro-American and 'WHISC' dimensions of Irish subjectivities.²¹³ This was prompted by attempts to counteract the essentialising of the Irish as the 'black' or non-white, impure 'other' of imperialist representations; however, the effect of an unbalanced focus on the 'whiteness' of Irish cultures has been to eclipse the influence of black cultures on Irish identities emerging in indigenous and diasporic locations.²¹⁴

Proceeding without the benefit of face-to-face interviews with first-wave rock musicians, the chapter is a necessarily speculative attempt to demonstrate the attraction, and theorise the significance, of Irish rock musicians' engagement with certain cultures of the black Atlantic.

The musicians' respective engagements with black music – Gallagher with blues, Morrison with rhythm 'n' blues and jazz, and Lynott with various

213 White, heterosexual, Irish-born, settled, Catholic; see http://www.ethnicracialstudies.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Marshall_title_2.pdf; accessed 10/5/10.

214 One can look at recent portrayals of the 'Celt' as disembodied, feminine and 'pure', and the evolution of representational modes of 'Irishness' which can be co-opted by conservative cultural hegemonies to realise the negative potential in appealing to such essentialisms; see Smyth, 2009; Negra, 2006.

hybrid musics with black ‘routes’ (heavy rock, soul and reggae in particular) – illustrates that complicated subjectivities were developed by these musicians through the practice of popular music-making. In accordance with contemporary academic usage, I will use the terms ‘black’ and ‘African-American’ interchangeably to describe persons of African descent, excepting North Africa, born and socialised in the United States; I also use ‘black’ to describe a range of subjectivities of African, American or Caribbean origins existing in the geographical locations described by Gilroy’s term ‘the black Atlantic’.

Paul Gilroy challenges both external and internalised stereotypes of black subjectivity, and analyses the mechanics of cultural exchange by invoking the trope of the ‘black Atlantic’: a historically resonant re-interpretation of the cultural commerce between black cultures throughout the Atlantic’s geographical regions (Gilroy 1993). Gilroy sees a multiplicity of narratives emanating from the intermingling (*mestizaje*) between numerous ‘African’ cultures in America, Britain, the Caribbean and the African continent. This is important for my own position, because it proposes new ways of reading cultural exchange that are relevant to a discussion of heretofore invisible Irish cultural forms. My argument does not propose to uncritically co-opt Irish rock musicians’ identities into Gilroy’s model so as to re-assign a romanticised and essentialised ‘missing blackness’ to Irish subjectivities; rather, in the course of this commentary, I will illustrate and address a number of conceptual continuities linking Irish cultural experience, and, by association, Irish forms of cultural expression, with those of the black Atlantic, as identified by Gilroy, beginning with the notion of ‘double-consciousness’ itself. I also wish to illustrate the contradictions implicit in Irish musicians’ absorption of African-American musical and performative

practices, both for the Irish musicians in question, and for the black cultures from which they drew.

I am motivated by the realisation that Irish cultural scholarship has been slow to produce mature analysis of these interactions. A typical example of this concerns the academic reaction to a music-focused film by Alan Parker. *The Commitments* is an adaptation of Roddy Doyle's original novel; the film was subjected to academic criticism for its idealised portrayal of black-Irish cultural interaction. Such criticism stemmed largely from one particular scene in the film, which adapted a statement made by the protagonist, *Commitments'* manager Jimmy Rabbitte, in Doyle's original novel:

Do you not get it, lads? The Irish are the blacks of Europe. And Dubliners are the blacks of Ireland. And the northside Dubliners are the blacks of Dublin. So say it once, say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud.

(Alan Parker, *The Commitments*, 1991)

Irish and American academics have criticised Rabbitte's (and by extension, Parker and Doyle's) dialogue as a simplistic, and therefore problematic, identification of black and Irish cultures.²¹⁵ The basic argument states that this kind of dialogue ignores the antagonisms which characterised black-Irish cultural interactions in American cities such as New York (Eagan, 2006). While this criticism is valid, and indeed necessary in qualifying the manner in which *The Commitments* may make claims to authenticity in its portrayals of black and Irish music, it is notable that few scholars have taken the progressive step of viewing Parker's and Doyle's commentary as a suggestive starting-point for a methodical exploration of the continuities,

215 See Catherine M Eagan, 'Still "Black" and "Proud": Irish America and the Racial Politics of Hibernophilia' in Negra, 2006: 20 – 63.

contradictions and dialogues occurring between Irish and black American cultures. In other words, Irish scholars seem enthusiastic to critique the proposition that black and Irish cultures relate, but have shown little aptitude for researching possible similarities between such cultures. The effect of this has been to disguise the reality and relevance of Irish-black intercultural dialogues which, as I will demonstrate, extend backwards to the late eighteenth century, forwards into the twentieth, and encompass literature, theatre, and most obviously, music.

Gilroy's position *vis a vis* musical cultures and subjectivities is a starting point for exploring Irish rock identities and their relationship to African-American culture. The nomadic element of rock subjectivity, which forms a conceptual root in early and classic blues, will also be explored in appropriate depth; it is a theme commonly appearing in the music of all three first-wave musicians studied, and illustrates the tensions between rock subjectivities and reified forms of 'Irishness'. The discussion also references the theoretical positions on nomadism proposed principally by Deleuze and Guattari and by Rosi Braidotti.

Gilroy, the black Atlantic and Irish culture(s)

This investigation of Irish quotation from black Atlantic cultures begins by noting that Gilroy's model intimates a largely hidden history of black and Irish cultural interchange. This intersection occurred because cultural flows historically affected Irish, African, African-American and Caribbean subjectivities through the process and practices of maritime travel between

the ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Worlds. As Coogan notes, black-Irish interactions occur as a result of economics, administration and trading, slavery, missionary work and religious colonialism, and have affected cultural production significantly (Coogan, 2000). It is appropriate, I think, to contextualise Irish rock’s absorption of black cultural forms by locating it in a wider course of interchange extending back some two hundred years.

Notably, Gilroy’s analysis shows the presence and influence of Irish subjectivities throughout his construction of the black Atlantic. For example, Gilroy locates Crispus Attucks, remembered as the first man to be killed in the Boston Massacre, at the head of a “motley rabble of saucy boys, negroes, mulattoes, Irish teagues and outlandish jack tars” (Gilroy, 1993: 13). Furthermore, according to Gilroy, the abolitionist and ex-slave Frederick Douglass’ autobiographies illustrate that his engagement with Irish sailors in Baltimore, Maryland was critical in his ‘learn[ing] of freedom in the North’ (Gilroy, 1994: 13). Gilroy could have added that Douglass’ reading of Irish orator Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s speeches on Catholic Emancipation in *The Columbian Orator* was also influential: its ‘bold denunciation of slavery, and ‘powerful vindication of human rights’ provided a template for Douglass’ own ideological positions with respect to the emancipation of slaves (Douglass, 2004: 50). Travelling to Ireland in 1845 as a free man, Douglass remained there for several months (Ferreira, 2001: 54), and met with the nationalist politician Daniel O’Connell in Dublin; Chesnutt states that Douglass’ Irish visit included the delivery of over fifty lectures (Chesnutt, 2002: 22).²¹⁶ Ferreira concludes that Douglass’

216 Douglass’ own accounts describe the meetings with O’Connell, who was motivated to accentuate the parallels between the Irish Home Rule and American anti-slavery efforts; Douglass, 2004: 50-52.

association with the Irish ‘functioned as a critical component to his own liberation’ (Ferreira, 2001: 55).

Investigating similar black-Irish interchanges, Tracy Mishkin extends Gilroy’s identification of a black-Irish cultural continuum by highlighting the political and aesthetic influence of the Gaelic Revival on the architects of the Harlem Renaissance: James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke, and the Jamaican Claude McKay (Mishkin, 1998; also Smethurst, 2000; Innes, 2001). The postcolonial, Caribbean writers - Mc Kay, Derek Walcott and Wilson Harris, among others - have adapted the frameworks and philosophies developed by J.M. Synge, James Joyce and W.B.Yeats as key elements of their literary style and poetic works (Harris 1960; Walcott, 1990; Jenkins, 2003; Tynan, 2008).

The interaction of Irish and African American music in the United States occurred within the field of folk and popular music, as migration, the Middle Passage and the Famine brought diasporic cultures into contact.²¹⁷ Cross-fertilization of Irish and black culture occurred in part through the meeting of Appalachian and African-American music, and the stylistic, formal and instrumental characteristics of Louisiana creole, Cajun, bluegrass, Appalachian string-band and zydeco were shaped by such contact (Lomax, 1991; Helm and Davis, 2000; Pearson, 2003; Wells, 2003).²¹⁸ U2’s later attempt to explore certain musical corollaries via the ‘routes’ of African-American musicianship, including gospel and blues, were recorded

217 The traffic between nineteenth century Irish ballads and African American work songs could provide further evidence of black-Irish interchange, and the forced hybridisation of Irish and black American dance and representational culture embodied in the Riverdance productions could also be engaged with from this perspective. .

218 See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olsEOIXOwgA>; <http://www.folkstreams.net/film,128>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olsEOIXOwgA>; accessed 10/6/2011. See also Stokes, 2004:48.

in the rock documentary *Rattle and Hum*. Engagements between black Atlantic cultures and Irish subjectivities formed an important element of Sinead O'Connor's solo and collaborative work (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000), not least through her studio work with Prince. Developing an interest in Garveyism and Rastafarianism, O'Connor's album *Throw Down Your Heart* (2005) was a collaborative compilation of reggae standards, which the Irish artist recorded with prominent Jamaican session musicians.²¹⁹ Damien Dempsey invokes Irish-Caribbean histories through narratives of displacement on his album *To Hell or Barbados* (2007). Perhaps the most bizarre black-Irish musical interchange was the litigation which arose between New York rapper Biz Markie and the Irish-born songwriter Gilbert O'Sullivan. In their highly publicised 1991 court case, a US District Court granted an injunction against Warner Brothers and Markie, prohibiting their use of an uncleared sample of O'Sullivan's composition 'Alone Again (Naturally)' in a hip-hop track.²²⁰

What I am arguing for is an understanding of rock musicians' appeal to black Atlantic culture as an important dimension of a wider process of exchange. We should also consider the similarly hybridised status of Irish and black Atlantic cultures. Gilroy's exploration of black cultural expression in modernity opens with the assertion that to be 'European and black requires some specific forms of double consciousness' (Gilroy, 1993: 2). A European, black subjectivity involves coming from, belonging to, and

219 The sessions were produced by the Jamaican partnership of Lowell Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare.

220 The O'Sullivan composition has a distinguished history in African-American music circles, as it was covered by jazz musicians Blue Mitchell (1973) and Dewey Redman (1979) and by the singer Nina Simone (1982). Black Atlantic-Irish interchange continues in the contemporary moment, with the visits of Cassius Clay (Mohammed Ali) and US President Barack Obama to Ireland in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

emerging through diverse cultural heritages and racial lineages. The parallels with contemporary Irish cultures are clear. As I have previously described with respect to Irish rock's hybridising tendencies, a key tension in, and trope of, Irish popular musical creation relates to the expression of disparate subjective voices within a given cultural text. Indeed, the complexity of Irish rock subjectivities extends beyond the 'double-consciousness' of Gilroy's analysis, since the production of Irish rock music involves dynamic interchange between two or more overlapping parent cultures. A further parallel between Irish identities and the metacultures of the black Atlantic is the means by which they have destabilised and threatened 'stable and peaceful' visions of imperial (British) national life (Gilroy, 1993). Ireland, as we have seen, had to be feminised in order to fit into the colonial cartography; equally, 'the Irish' – predominantly white, yet uncivilised, romantic and barbaric – challenged the simplistic assumptions of phrenology, and other academic rigours increasingly harnessed to the segregating tendencies of the imperial impulse (O'Brien, 2002; Young, 2006).

Gilroy's engagement with the black Atlantic centres around the image of the ship: this 'micro-cultural, micro-political system' has theoretical and historical resonances for black histories, embodying the movement of people, 'cultural and political artefacts' across the Atlantic and the Caribbean:

Ships immediately focus attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of...tracts, books, gramophone records, and choirs.

(Gilroy, 1993:4)

While his primary focus is the cutter, the slave ship of the Middle Passage, Gilroy's propositions regarding the logic of the black Atlantic provide an early point of comparison to Irish culture, through Ireland's own historical connections to the sea, and to transatlantic influence on its cultures. Ireland's geographical and cultural bi-location as a European and Atlantic island produces as a consequence the island's centrality with respect to the interchange and migration of ideas, ideologies, technologies, cultures and languages within Europe, between Europe and America, and between Ireland and a series of pre- and post-colonial cultures (Quinn, 1983; Ekin, 2008). As such, Irish culture has been proximal to the cultural flows and social relations of the black Atlantic; such influence is clearly seen in Irish rock, in the appropriation of black musicianship and musical and expressive forms – jazz, rhythm and blues, blues and their attendant performance practices.²²¹

What the concept of the black Atlantic alerts us to is the primary (and, arguably, obsessive) focus, in Irish Studies, on the land as the primary signifier of 'Ireland': the source of its cultural narratives, its political legitimacy, its ideological foundations, and histories. Consequently, a range of narratives, based on Ireland's maritime cultures, have been ignored. The black Atlantic suggests a cultural continuum that can provide a firm intellectual basis for analysing cultural exchange between Irish and black musics. With respect to Ireland, there are precedents in this methodological approach; Bob Quinn's proposal of a 'West Atlantic continuum' was developed in the *Atlantean* films, and later appeared in book form (Quinn,

221 It is worth noting that Ireland also fed into the 'routes' of rock, as Irish musical forms, transferred to the US through emigration, mixed with black and other musics, thereby shaping key strands of rock culture; see O'Connor, 2001.

1983, 2005). Similarly, Nuala O'Connor considered cultural flows governing the transmission of musical culture between Ireland and the United States (O'Connor, 2001).

What Gilroy's position provides is an intellectual basis for the double-consciousness engendered in Ireland's colonial past and its intercultural present and including Ireland in discussions of the island's extra-European cultural heritage. Exploring the theoretical underpinnings of English and African-American versions of cultural studies, and indicating an awareness of Deleuze's focus on subjective multiplicities, Gilroy argues that the two disciplines 'share a nationalistic focus that is antithetical to the rhizomorphic, fractal structure of the transcultural, international formation I call the black Atlantic' (Gilroy, 1993: 4). Again, this suggests a parallel with the case of Irish cultures, including rock. Black Atlantic culture challenges the boundaries of the national, with black subjectivities in diverse territories being linked through 'rhizomorphic' lines of connection which transcend national borders. Irish histories of migration, nomadism, invasion and flight, appropriation and absorption mean that any version of 'Irish' culture can be understood as similarly composed, in terms of appealing to a 'fractal' and hybrid framework of reference, and having a transcultural, international basis which draws on indigenous and external sources in its articulation.

I am suggesting, then, while that rock subjectivities are shaped by established modes of influence particular to Ireland - national and diasporic culture, for example, and modernity also – Irish rock also absorbs notable influence from black Atlantic cultures. Exercised by the mythologies (and realities) of a prelapsarian indigenous culture, affected by waves of imposed

European, British and American colonial and globalising cultures, and by homogenising narratives of nationalism, Irish identities are analogous to those emerging across the black Atlantic, primarily in their experience of modes of ‘double-consciousness’. Rock music in particular is a specific culture fusing aspects of both internal and external cultures, creating a metacultural potential from which vitalistic, nomadic modes of identity have been created. Indeed, it might be argued that Gilroy’s model is too simplistic to describe the complexity of the Irish case, given the diversity of national, Anglo-American, global and peripheral cultures on which Irish rock subjectivities draw. These, as noted in the previous chapter, range from the antiquarianism of romantic Celticism to the exclusivism of Catholic nationalism, and also reference many hybridised points in between: the Ulster Scots tradition; the topos of exilic culture; the highly charged, youth-based and embodied dance culture of the beat-groups; the narrative formations of folk. Illustrating the political potential of such process, Gilroy argues:

These terms are rather unsatisfactory ways of naming the processes of cultural mutation and restless (dis)continuity that exceed racial discourse and avoid capture by its agents.

(Gilroy, 1993:2)

Similar to the musics of the black Atlantic, in Irish rock, the hybrid fusion of cowboy culture, indigenous Irish music, black, national, anti-colonial and inclusive political ideology, is better understood as an affirmative process with routes extending beyond the modern, and into the epistemological and aesthetic territories more closely associated with postmodernity. The portrayal of blacks as signs of ‘irrational disorder’ is responded to by subverting the epistemological certainties on which such essentialism is based; I suggest that Gilroy’s articulation of an idealised modernity has a

strong postmodern element, and to me describes the process of musical and identity creation typically employed by Irish and black musicians:

A concept of modernity that is worth its salt ought, for example, to have something to contribute to an analysis of how the particular varieties of radicalism articulated through the revolts of enslaved people made selective use of the ideologies of the western Age of Revolution and then flowed into social movements of an anti-colonial and decidedly anti-capitalist type.

(Gilroy, 1993: 44)

Applied to Irish rock, we can now begin to understand why Irish rock's subjectivities seem so far-removed from established and celebrated forms of Irish identity; it is precisely from such spaces – the island's literal edges, as well as those of the established cultures developing on it – that rock identity begins to emerge. Gallagher invoked the sea as a key trope in composition; evoking hidden forms of Irishness, the appeal to the sea also evokes the Deleuzean ideal of flux, of movement, and of simultaneously belonging to, and existing outside of accepted versions of Irish identity. Likewise, Morrison embraced exile, making exploration of the physical and mental outcomes of transversing both the Anglo-American cultural matrix and, simultaneously, the cartographic and conceptual space of the black Atlantic an important feature of his work. Lynott's own 'routes' invoke the sea and the movement of 'cultural and political artifacts' between Ireland and the Americas. These are invoked not only in the particularities of personal biography, but in his fusion of Irish music and the rock styles developing from black musical cultures' engagement with the technologies of the popular music industry.

A key aim in the opening philosophical survey of *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) is to establish an ideological, political and aesthetic legitimacy for the black Atlantic, which he attempts

by grafting black intellectual discourses, largely developed outside of the academy, onto a modernist hermeneutics. Interestingly, Gilroy views modernity, rather than post-modernity, as the epistemological vehicle most suited to the project of accommodating the heretofore silenced voices of the black Atlantic. Gilroy is unconvinced that postmodernity is a legitimate mechanism for retroactively accommodating the hidden voices and histories of the black Atlantic. Gilroy's dismissal of postmodernity is understandable, since the paradigm's rejection of metanarratives, of singular histories, teleology, rationality and epistemological certainties provides a means for the Euro-American intellectual tradition to disengage from the horrors of its imperial and colonial pasts. The playfulness of the postmodern – its superficial plundering and disjointed fusion of high and low culture, its claims regarding the death of history, its deconstructive tendencies – is more likely to further efface the histories of the black Atlantic.

Surprisingly, Gilroy does not offer a sense of the complementary critical potential of combining postmodern and post-modern attitudes. As well as acknowledging the multiple locations of cultural production engaged in the creation of a musical text, postmodernism can accommodate the remembering of histories which, for LeRoi Jones, is the cornerstone of black musical expression (Jones, 1963). Arguably, the most discerning of contemporary black musicians challenge the intellectual and epistemological confines of the modern, utilising a distinctly postmodern approach to explore and express the international metacultures of rock, reggae and hip-hop. However, Gilroy's wariness of postmodernism's ideological negligence with respect to hidden and tragic histories remains a valid support in his evaluation that excavations of black Atlantic culture are best undertaken through the philosophical locus of modernism.

The concept of postmodernism is often introduced to emphasise the radical or even catastrophic nature of the break between contemporary conditions and the epoch of modernism. Thus there is little attention given to the possibility that much of what is identified as postmodern may have been foreshadowed, or prefigured, in the lineaments of modernity itself....[i]t can be argued that much of the supposed novelty of the postmodern evaporates when it is viewed in the unforgiving historical light of the brutal encounters between Europeans and those they conquered, slaughtered and enslaved.

(Gilroy, 1993: 42-44)

I am tempted to adapt Gilroy's focus on the modern in describing first-wave Irish rock as a culture living out the tension between modernism and post-modernism. Like modernist artists, Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison are authoritative figures, orchestrating cultural productions which include appropriation of the narratives, symbols and signifiers of African-American music. However, the music itself, in its existence as both commodity and artistic proposition, in its subcultural insinuations, its hybrid contexts, and its diffuse symbolic indications, maintains a distinctly post-modern element.

Gilroy maintains a readiness to challenge the regressive narratives of black culture, and any tendency to accommodate an 'ethnic absolutism' in manifestations of its political culture.

Regardless of their affiliation to the right, left, or centre, [black] groups have fallen back on the idea of cultural nationalism, on the overintegrated conceptions of culture which present immutable, ethnic differences as an absolute break in the histories and experiences of "black" and "white" people.

(Gilroy, 1993: 2)

Applied to the Irish case, Gilroy's search for a theory 'less intimidated by and respectful...of boundaries' (Gilroy, 1993:4) suggests the possibility of reading Irish rock as a discovering of creative and intellectual 'routes' which

challenge national hegemonies and move beyond sedimented notions of cultural flow and development. First-wave Irish rock offered highly-charged cultural and political and social propositions. It suggested that strands of Irish and international cultures were formally compatible and could be mixed. It illustrated that Irish youth were familiar with international cultural forms, and could balance the desires of national culture with those of Anglo-American culture in the shaping of an international musical form. It indicated that African-American art, demonised by empowered social actors in the earlier campaigns against jazz and social dancing (Gibbons, 1998) could provide a catalyst that re-invented the mythologies, practices and meanings of Irishness, in a manner which embodied the contemporary experience of Irish culture – that of a transforming, ‘fractal’, ‘changing same’ (Gilroy, 1993: 3).

An insistence on focusing on musical subjectivities in this manner invites speculation on how Irish musicians are situated in the current discussion about the black Atlantic. As stated above, my intention is not to draw Irish musicians unproblematically into the rubric of Gilroy’s theoretical model; to do so would be to ignore issues of national and racial difference which I will unpack shortly. However, Irish musicians’ appropriation of black musics needs to be addressed. Gallagher, Morrison and Lynott’s work can be seen as involving extensive engagement with the musical cultures of the black Atlantic. Gilroy’s analysis offers key questions which can operate as a point of entry into discussing Irish rock’s relationship to the black Atlantic. One which I take up here is the question of contradictions in the transmission and adaptation of black musics.

Black Art, Irish Subjectivities

Rory Gallagher and the Blues

This research into Irish-black cultural interchange and the identity politics of those who undertake such mixing is challenged by the fact that first-wave Irish rock musicians have rarely articulated *why* they found blues and African-American culture so appealing, on the one hand, and why blues was so congruent with their developing musical identities, on the other. Previous writing about Irish musicians and their music has generally overlooked some of the contradictions which the absorption of blues culture raised (Clayton-Lea and Taylor, 1989). This was partly a result of musicians' providing only abbreviated or oblique responses when being questioned about this topic, and a lack of focus on the specific nuances of the musicians' Irish identities by those interviewing them or reviewing their work. Another important oversight emerges from the fact that Irish popular musicians were often categorised as 'British' musicians in semi-academic and journalistic overviews, with a consequent lack of focus on the specificity of their Irish identities.

Rory Gallagher's appropriation of blues culture is a measure of the complexities involved in such acquisition. Gallagher, a white musician born and socialised in the Irish Republic, was introduced to black music through the technological media of radio and cinema, which broadcast and showcased the hybrid styles of country, blues, jazz, rock and roll and skiffle in Ireland. Blues culture had developed in conjunction with the processes of mechanical reproduction, and the basis of blues' dissemination was its status as a recorded music. A focused musician could become proficient in the instrumental aspects of blues and folk styles by playing them on a record

player, absorbing the artist's playing style through repeated listenings, and subsequently emulating the recording on their own instrument. Additionally, a basic self-recording could also be made, if the musician had access to a portable tape recorder (commercially available from 1952, and widely obtainable after 1957).²²² The guitarist Eric Clapton recalls the manner in which he would 'listen carefully to the recording of whatever song I was working on, then copy it and copy it till I could match it' (Clapton, 2007:28).

Gallagher's subsequent exploration of blues, and his growing proficiency in blues rock, was enabled by the resurgence of interest in African-American acoustic blues in Britain, following developments initiated by Chris Barber and Lonnie Donegan within English jazz subculture, and the exploration of more 'purist' forms by the band leaders Alexis Korner and John Mayall (Palmer, 1987; Carson, 2001; Richards and Fox, 2010). Shadwick notes that Korner was a 'stickler for proper authenticity in recreating [blues] in a modern context' (Shadwick, 2001: 182). Gallagher appears to have absorbed and surpassed the British musicians' knowledge of the depth and variety of blues culture. This raises the issue of 'authenticity' and what it represents, both for Gallagher and with respect to African-American art. I will deal with the issue of authenticity in full in the chapter's closing sections, but want to illustrate here how Gallagher's response to blues 'authenticity' embodies his understanding of change within blues form.

222 See

<http://www.google.ie/imgres?imgurl=http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/recording/images5/1952grundigrepo.jpg&imgrefurl=http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/recording/tape5.html&usg=I1JhrK2ugnz1O7tEo1qjr7cRus=&h=640&w=800&sz=32&hl=en&start=6&um=1&itbs=1&tbnid=dMsY9crVmbwVM:&tbnh=114&tbnw=143&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dgrundig%2Brecord%2Bplayer%2Bhistory%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26tbs%3Disch:1>; accessed 22/5/10.

Using the technologies of reproduction as a resource, Gallagher traced African-American musicianship as far back as recordings and publications allowed (the 1920s and 1930s). What is extraordinary here is Gallagher's reading of blues culture, not simply as a resource which could be plagiarised for artistic and commercial profit, but as a continuum of individual expressiveness, intriguing histories and diverse cultural accents. In interview, Gallagher distanced himself from the scientific categorisations which typified the absorption of blues in the British context:

It's just that whole white scholastic thing...they think of the blues as a load of chronological numbers and recording dates.

(Gallagher, interviewed by Hedges, 1977)

As noted in Chapter Four, Gallagher's tenure in Taste was characterised by a rejection of Irish national cultures in favour of a studied focus on African-American musical histories and practices. Gallagher's achievement of performative virtuosity on the guitar referenced a range of African-American styles, beginning with those of the 1920s and 1930s (Blind Blake, Blind Willie Johnson, Scrapper Blackwell) and continuing, through the pre-war acoustic and early electric forms (Rev. Gary Davis, Lead Belly, John Hurt) to the electrification of blues and development of its regional variants as an electric music (Buddy Guy in Chicago; Freddie King and Albert Collins in Texas). A survey of Gallagher's published interviews illustrates awareness of the depth, intricacy and diversity of blues' development, which occurred not only in the Mississippi Delta and northern cities (primarily Chicago), but also through rhizomorphic developments in Texas, Tennessee, Florida, Missouri, Georgia and the Carolinas. Moreover, while he grappled with a historically-focused excavation of blues routes –

Piedmont, country, delta, Texas and Chicago blues, ragtime - Gallagher also understood that the formal and performative conventions of blues music were in transition: the syncretic forms of the blues were in flux, leading to black artists actually drawing on the developments made by white blues-rock artists in rock culture.

I mean Hubert Sumlin, who is one of my favourites, doesn't even play the way he did twenty years ago. The blues players themselves are often the first to admit that they want to do something new, so you have Muddy Waters recording with wah-wahs and all. The younger blues-rock players have actually affected the old black players.

(Gallagher, interviewed by Hedges, 1977)

These preoccupations affected Gallagher's performative abilities, which included the use of a range of open tunings, adapting the acoustic styles of adapting those of Lead Belly, and mastered electric forms – both the hybrid electrified country sound of Hubert Sumlin, and the later Chicago sound, typified by the styles Junior Wells and Buddy Guy. In terms of picking, Gallagher explored flatpicked and finger-picking styles. Additionally, Gallagher explored acoustic and electric slide guitar styles, using both the single-string slide techniques popularised by Earl Hooker and the chordal slide approaches of John Lee Hooker with both Fender Telecaster and Stratocaster, and with a wooden resonator National guitar. Gallagher was also aware of the contributors by white developers of blues and blues rock styles, including Lonnie Mack, Doc Watson, Tony Joe White and Brian Jones.

| Gallagher Composition | Performative Technique/style | Blues Artist associated with Technique/style |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 'Cradle Rock' | single string slide playing in standard tuning | Earl Hooker |

| | | | |
|--|---------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ‘Who’s Coming’ | That | chordal slide playing in open tuning | Hound Dog Taylor |
| ‘Unmilitary Two-Step’ | | Finger-picked ragtime style | Blind Blake |
| ‘Just Smile’; ‘I’m Not Awake Yet’ | The Not | Single string acoustic soloing | Scrapper Blackwell |
| ‘Wave Myself Goodbye’; ‘I’m Not Surprised’ | | Acoustic Guitar/Piano Duet | Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell |
| Walk On Hot Coals | | Phrasal repetition | Earl Hooker, Freddie King |

Figure 19: Absorption of blues styles and performative conventions by Rory Gallagher, 1968-78

Following the break-up of Taste, Gallagher oriented his learning and creativity more towards the exploration of existing blues culture than did contemporaries such as Clapton, Richards or Beck. His retreat from the cutting edge of blues rock (Smyth, 2005) was offset by immersion in the blues continuum. The characteristics and qualities which are likely to have attracted him to the blues can be understood in terms of three strands: those elements of blues culture which resonated with the Irish cultures in which Gallagher was socialised; those which revealed the roots of the beat and rhythm ‘n’ blues; those relating to the vitalities, political and sociological preoccupations of blues cultures themselves.

A further contradiction emerges as an effect of Gallagher’s appropriation of the blues. Throughout Gallagher’s professional career, Gallagher’s key

point of musical focus was the blues; as he stated, ‘the blues...became the kind of source point for me, a feeling thing, you know, emotionally’. However, increasing specialisation in blues performance became a starting point for Gallagher’s exploration of a range of African-American and Anglo-American musical styles, including folk, country, bluegrass, Irish and ‘African’ music.²²³ As I argued in Chapter Three, Gallagher’s music invites consideration of the commonalities between a range of musical styles; certain compositions, and in particular his cover of the Lead Belly composition ‘Out on the Western Plain’, became a vehicle for exploring a range of cultural concerns linking his own experiences as an Irish man to earlier modes of black experience. A further particularity of Gallagher’s exploration of blues styles concerns the status of contemporary blues during the 1970s. While he sought to broaden and deepen his understanding of blues styles, popular strains of blues culture were moving in an opposite direction; notwithstanding the specialist revival of interest in blues prompted by the rediscovery of ageing blues artists and their invitation to perform at various folk festivals during the 1960s, blues was experiencing a decline as a popular musical form. Recalling a Muddy Waters performance in the United States, Donal Gallagher recalled that:

I remember we all went...to see Muddy Waters and there was a very small turnout of public. The audience was made up mostly of musicians.

(Donal Gallagher in Muise, 2002:13)

This mirrors a contradiction in inherent blues music itself, evident as its proponents migrated away from the Mississippi Delta throughout The Great Migration: its evolution into a globally significant cultural

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See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCFdR388vxQ>; accessed 27/4/2010; see also <http://www.modern guitars.com/archives/000931.html>; accessed 27/4/2010.

phenomenon depended on its commercial exploitation by popular music industries at the Anglo-American centre, and by African-American musicians' exploitation of 'found objects' (Toni Morrison, quoted by Gilroy, 2003: 78) emerging from the burgeoning music industries – amplification and electric instrumentation, recording technology and distribution and promotion mechanisms.

| Gallagher Composition | Style/Influence |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 'Unmilitary Two-Step' | Ragtime/Country Blues |
| 'Barley and Grape Rag' | Ragtime |
| '20/20 Vision' | Ragtime/Country Blues |
| 'Sinner Boy' | Country Blues/Chicago Blues hybrid |
| 'Don't Know Where I'm Going' | Bluegrass |
| 'Catfish' (cover) | Delta/Chicago hybrid |
| 'Country Mile' | Country Blues/Chicago hybrid |
| 'Calling Card' | Urban Blues |
| 'Secret Agent' | Chicago Blues |

Figure 20: Styles and Influences in selected Gallagher Compositions

When interviewed by Gay Byrne for RTE's *Late Late Show*, Gallagher detailed his initial encounters with Elvis Presley and Lonnie Donegan, and spoke of how radio programming, including folk and jazz items on BBC and American Forces Radio, was critical in exposing him to blues music.²²⁴ Following a solo performance of Lead Belly's 'Out on the Western Plain' on the *Late Late Show* in 1988, Gallagher stated:

As a child, I liked Lead Belly and Big Bill Broonzy. They were the first blues players I heard. And it was like, more acoustic blues, country

224 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RP_F847Lubs; accessed 22/5/10;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfCWIFvtrx0>; accessed 22/5/10.

blues and...but obviously growing up on rock 'n' roll and folk music, I soon looked behind the rockers and found people like Jimmy Reed and Muddy Waters. But like any European educating yourself in the blues [it] was a slow process. You had to dig out this record and that record and eventually put the whole picture together.

(Rory Gallagher, RTE *Late Late Show*, 1988, author's transcription)

In an interview for the German television programme *Ohne Filter*, Gallagher also mentioned the importance of the Lippman and Rau international musical tours, which brought major African-American blues artists to the United Kingdom and mainland Europe during the 1960s. These tours were vital in introducing blues, performed by living professional musicians, to Britain and Ireland. Supporting Gallagher's assertions, Van Morrison also alluded to similar sources in describing his early immersion in blues, noting that both listening to recordings, and being exposed to live appearances, were instrumental aspects of this process. Morrison recalled the visits to Belfast by pivotal blues musicians including Memphis Slim and Champion Jack Dupree:

We get [the blues] both live and from records. Memphis Slim has been in Belfast; Jesse Fuller, Champion Jack Dupree, John Lee Hooker's been there....[w]hen I joined my first rock and roll band, I was still listening to blues and progressive R&B and jazz.

(Morrison, quoted in Onkey, 2006: 168-9)²²⁵

The figure of Elvis Presley was central to both Gallagher and Lynott's exploration of rock and roll, blues and folk music. For Gallagher, Presley provided an attractive, assertive role model, in that Presley was a white singer (and competent guitarist) who excelled in the performance of black

225 See also

http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/images/B000OPP7LS/ref=dp_image_0?ie=UTF8&m=A2WMH BKABXRCB5&n=283926&s=dvd; accessed 22/5/2010.

musical styles. Additionally, Presley was a ubiquitous cultural presence: Donal Gallagher has noted that Rory spent hours emulating Presley, having watched his choreographed performances in *Jailhouse Rock*; Gallagher stated in the *Late Late Show* interview that his first instrument was a plastic ukulele with Presley's picture on it. Furthermore, Presley's public persona, that of the sexualized, rebellious but virtuous youth, offered a viable alternative to the austere pieties of Catholic Ireland, and to the resonant but culturally distant propositions of mythological Celtic masculinity present in Irish popular culture during the years of Gallagher's youth.

In addition to the comparative ubiquity of blues recordings, its developing status as a musical culture, and the relative ease with which blues could be learned, the blues culture Gallagher absorbed had the added appeal of resonating with the biographical particularities of his own life. This is explicitly apparent by briefly comparing his consistent migrations through rural and urban Ireland with those made by Big Bill Broonzy, the musician Gallagher repeatedly identifies as inspiring the development of his musical talents. In *Late Late Show* interview, Gallagher noted that in addition to Ballyshannon and Cork:

...I spent time in other parts of Ireland as well, and no harm done, 'cause you end up with a nice, you know, need to travel and I like the gypsy lifestyle, so it suits me fine.

(Rory Gallagher, RTE *Late Late Show* appearance, author's transcription)

Similarly to Gallagher, who was born in Donegal but lived in Derry and Cork before moving to Belfast and eventually overseas, Broonzy's life was typified by migration: born in Mississippi, but raised in Little Rock,

Arkansas, he came to prominence as a country blues player, before migrating to Chicago and developing a city-blues style which garnered a national and international reputation (Shadwick, 2001: 43). This migratory lifestyle typified the experience of numerous travelling musicians, including Charley Patton, Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters and the many white musicians who came to prominence by commodifying and performing blues musics (Shadwick, 2001; Palmer, 1982). Clearly, this migratory predisposition was the antithesis of key values of settled life in post-national, Catholic Ireland, whose cultural logic was defined largely on parish-based community membership in rural areas, and similarly sedentary economic ties to a place of work in the cities.

The diversity of styles performed under the rubric of the blues by key performers would have resonated with Gallagher's own diverse musical interests. Again, it is instructive to look to his musical influences, and to Lead Belly in particular, in theorising that the wide musical palette performed by key folk and blues musicians offered Gallagher a template for the expression of the disparate strands of his own musical identity:

Lead Belly was a vitally important link between the older songster traditions of black America and the more urban-based (and middle class) folk revival of the 1930s....Lead Belly played blues numbers as part of a wide and rich tapestry of music drawn from many sources.

(Shadwick, 2001: 187)

As stated previously, the appropriation of black culture by Irish musicians involves complex interchanges; Gallagher took up the challenge of immersion in, and absorption of, the musical, sociological and performative elements of African-American culture. It is appropriate, I would contend, to view first-wave Irish rock musicians as functioning as Gilroy's 'organic intellectuals' – utilising self-taught and informally acquired musical skills to

explore black music, to comment on and extend the possibilities of Irish subjectivity by doing so. Gallagher's referencing of a range of blues styles, including country, Delta and electric forms could occur because of the commercialisation of blues-related musics, and the subsequent creation of an ubiquitous continuum of blues cultures through migration and distribution (Jones, 1963).

Van Morrison: Caledonian Soul

Van Morrison's exposure to African-American music began in the home: in his performance of 'Foggy Mountain Top' (an unreleased track performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1974) he states (sings) that he has been 'listening to this music/ ever since the age of three.' Scholarly work by both Lauren Onkey and McLoone and McLaughlin reveals the breadth and depth of Morrison's early exposure to African-American music: Morrison's father was a passionate fan and collector of jazz, and due largely to his father's influence, he experienced a range of African-American music from an early age. Onkey (2006) names Lead Belly, Mahalia Jackson and Duke Ellington as key figures whose recordings Morrison experienced through his father's extensive collection of American recordings: in so doing, she covers three musical cultures of significance in Morrison's musical development: blues/folk blues, gospel and jazz. All three genres had an effect on Morrison's developing musical identity, albeit to varying degrees.

While there is a tendency in critical appraisals to describe Morrison as a jazz musician (a categorisation which the artist does not deny), his compositions rarely employ the musical structures central to jazz music – its

complex melodic and harmonic content, its equally intricate chord progressions and substitutions, upper chordal extensions such as ninths, thirteenths, diminished, half-diminished and augmented chords. However, Morrison regularly appeals to the jazz musician's practice of dealing with influence through quotation. John P. Murphy's analysis of tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson illustrates how his improvisations and compositions include quotations and transformations of Charlie Parker melodies; rather than disguising, or agonising over the veracity of Parker's influence on his own style, Henderson makes these influences obvious to the learned listener by reworking Parker's material and by actively referencing him in his own texts (Murphy, 1990: 8-12). Morrison similarly expresses his debt to black musical 'ancestors', through the use and adaptation of black musical forms, and through direct lyrical reference to the African-American musicians with whose recordings he grew up in Belfast: Duke Ellington, Ray Charles, Jimmy Witherspoon, Huddie Leadbetter and Count Basie.

In terms of musical structure, Morrison's recordings between 1968 and 1978 are typified by an ongoing adoption and adaptation of blues forms. I submit that a majority of Morrison's musical is based on engagement with, and reliance on, the basic structures of what Jones terms 'classic blues' (Jones, 1963:82). These are the songs with 12-bar, AAB verse structures, which Morrison used these to great effect in so many of his compositions. In his analysis of African-American musical styles, LeRoi Jones states that classic blues was built on the earlier traditions of white and black minstrel shows (from which the performative aspects of blues culture developed), earlier blues styles and musical developments emerging through popular theatre

(vaudeville). Describing his early exposure to blues music, Morrison stated that:

Blues sounded natural, like the most natural thing I'd ever heard...I mean in retrospect it is a bit strange....to think, well...here I am and what have I got to do with this culture? This is still early days, I mean I was ten, eleven maybe at the time...I felt I could relate to these words. Somehow it told me something about my own life.

(Morrison in Onkey, 2006: 136)

Van Morrison has suggested that he found the blues a very 'natural' musical culture for him, and from this we can infer that he easily and energetically assimilated black music culture. The question of how this was achieved needs to be answered, since Morrison's cultural singularity was primarily that of an East-Belfast working-class Protestant, and he was an active participant in that culture. I propose that primarily, this assimilation was enabled because he was socialised at home with classic blues and jazz: access to his father's extensive record collection meant that from an early age, Morrison was regularly exposed to the musical styles which became central to his musical identity. Morrison's home in Hyndford St. embodied a unique listening context for the young musician, since black musical styles were respected and revered there (Rogan, 2006). Furthermore, his father's knowledge of blues and jazz meant that Morrison was introduced to its most sophisticated proponents – Bechet, Armstrong, Gillespie, Parker, Basie – at a time when jazz, in particular, had evolved into an articulate musical language. Another particularity facilitating Morrison's absorption of African-American musicianship is that radio, and not television, was the primary technological conduit for popular music during his youth. The centrality of aural transmission eroded the visual differences and distinctions between African- and Anglo-American artists, so that Irish

musicians did not discriminate racially in their absorption of emerging musical styles.

Another element aiding Morrison's absorption of black musics relates to its formal characteristics. In contrast to the cadentially and harmonically complex forms of 'classical' music, blues adopted relatively simple structures, forms and modalities which were open to embellishment by the individual artist. Blues is based on a I-IV-I-V-I chordal pattern (or variants thereof); the music is aurally attractive, in its movement away from the tonic, to sub-dominant, dominant, and subsequent resolution on the tonic chord. The basic patterns are easily assimilated and emulated, even by an untrained ear (though the practices of embellishment, variation and improvisation are specialist abilities); hence the music's ongoing use as a vehicle for popular song throughout the later twentieth century. As a musical offshoot of an oral culture which featured emotional, historical and social narratives, blues resonated with other folk traditions to which Morrison was exposed during the 1950s. Discussing the function of the folk music he encountered in Northern Ireland as a youth, the songwriter Paul Brady asserts that:

People have always been story tellers, I think...the whole Irish tradition has come out of...almost a social role of passing information from village to village about horrible events...and has got sophisticated into a way of expressing emotion, too.

(Paul Brady, *FTWS*)

We should also point to musical similarities between blues music and indigenous Irish and Ulster Scots musics (in particular, *sean nós* and other folk forms). First, there is the predominance of orality: the use of musical forms as a means of expressing social realities, histories and narrating events. O' Maoldomhnaigh's description of Irish *sean nós* singing illustrates

the formal similarities between blues and the Irish singing with which rock artists would have been familiar:

Songs were made to accompany the work inside and outside the home, to express the many emotions-love and sadness of daily existence, to record local and other historical events and to often mark the loss of family and friends whether by death or by emigration.

(O' Maoldomhnaigh in Comhaltas, 2004)

Second, there are similarities of expression: high instances of ornamentation, including melismatic embellishments; grace notes; individual ornamentation and variation of subject, theme and narrative. Third, there is the use of modalities which are not linked to the functional harmonic system of western art music: rather, diatonic modes or pentatonic scales are often the structural basis for composition and singing. Fourth, there is the fact of interaction between singer and audience, whereby listeners participate with and respond to the singer with commentary and espousal; this resonates with the older worksong and gospel formats, while blues singing was crystallised into the AAB format, with the call-and-response element maintained in the B line answering to the repeated A.²²⁶ In the range of recitative styles embodied in blues and black folk texts and styles (including those of the disproportionately influential Lead Belly), Morrison could find prototypes which resonated with the narrative folk styles he encountered socially and institutionally in Ireland.

I propose that the psychological disposition of the indentured African-American cultures out of which the blues developed had two key elements which resonated with, and informed, Van Morrison's emerging musical

226 Rory Gallagher comments on the musical similarities between Irish, African and African American music in the ITV 'Rock in the North' documentary (1994): see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfAc8QbafAk>; accessed 15/3/2011.

identity. The first is the early predominance of work as a trope informing musical practice, and the second is the spiritual dimension of the blues. The academic and critic LeRoi identifies the blues as a key juncture in African-American musical history. The blues was itself was a hybrid musical form which developed almost wholly in America; while there were work songs in the predominantly agricultural cultures of West Africa, Jones notes that among the cultures which provided the slave populations, ‘there are no records of 12-bar, AAB songs...at least none that would show a direct interest in the social and agricultural problems in the Southern US’ (Jones, 1963: xi). However, Jones identifies the work songs and field hollers of African and Afro-American slaves as the fundamental basis for the blues, along with a second musical root: that of the negro spiritual. The work song developed around the realities of enforced labour, and the spiritual developed when African religious beliefs were re-interpreted in the context of the dominant Protestantism of the American south. It is interesting that these elements of work and spirituality are omnipresent in Morrison’s work. In the pre-blues musical forms of the African-American slaves, the centrality of labour is manifest in that the work song evolved as a means of expressing the everyday and existential hardships of slavery, and accompanying labour:

Jerdan's mills a'grinding, Jerdan's ahay
Jerdan's mills a'grinding, Jerdan's ahay

Built without nail or hammer,
Built without nail or hammer.

(‘Jordan’s Mills’, No. 88 in Allen et al, 1996)

We got to work in the mornin’, just at dawn of day
We got to work in the mornin’, just at dawn of day
Just at the settin’ of the sun, that’s when the work is done

I’m down on Parchman Farm, but I sho’ wanna go back home
I’m down on Parchman Farm, but I sho’ wanna go back home
But I hope some day I will overcome.
(B.T.W. ‘Bukka’ White, verses IV and V, ‘Parchman Farm Blues’, 1940)

Morrison's professional musical life is a credible example of this: as McLaughlin and McLoone note, Morrison has repeatedly described himself as a professional musician – a working performer doing a job:

[I]n the end, it is the music that really matters, more so than the literary figures, the mysticism, the esoteric speculation, pastoral invocations of a primordial Garden of Eden and the sometimes incongruous incantations. As he has said on many occasions, he is a working musician doing a job.

(McLaughlin and McLoone, 2000:186)

In so doing, Morrison stresses the working element of his art, and references one of the staple aspects of early blues culture. His composition 'I've Been Working' (1970) describes the centrality of labour in his worldview. The track originally appeared on the album *His Band And the Street Choir* (1970), and Morrison also included live versions of the song on two subsequent releases, *It's Too Late To Stop Now* (1973) and *A Night in San Francisco* (1994). The composition's repeated references to labour recalls the lyrical content of early negro work songs, as well as the AAB structure typical of blues. In 'I've Been Working', the solace to be found through the presence of a loved other offsets the dejection of repetitive, hard labour (CD Track 34):

I've been working, I've been working so hard
I've been working, I've been working so hard
I come home, I'll make love to you, make love to you

I've been grinding, I've been grinding so long
I've been grinding, I've been grinding so long
Been up the thruway, down the thruway, up, down and back up again.

(Van Morrison, 'I've Been Working', *His Band and the Street Choir*, 1970)

The second key aspect of early blues composition was the spiritual dimension of African-American musicality. Jones' analysis proposes that the slaves' widespread adoption of white religious culture occurred as a result of the prohibition of the practice of their own religions, as a transformative consequence of black/white cultural interactions, and through the translation of 'African fetish religions' into the institutionalised religions of the white American populations. It also reflected a change in the slaves' psychological and epistemological sense of self, which shifted from viewing slavery in America as a temporary indenture to an understanding that they were part of a process of becoming American. While slave-owners practised a continuing ambivalence regarding slaves' spiritual conversion, the nineteenth century involved a major drive to increase their participation in American religious culture. The type of religion offered to the slaves was one concomitant with the needs of the plantation, as it proposed a glorious afterlife to counteract the indeterminable sorrows of plantation life. It also pacified slaves' rebellious desires and re-focused their attention from the desire for liberty. In addition, it produced 'a great inner strength among the devout and an almost inhuman indifference to pain' (Jones, 1963: 38).

Morrison's compositions contain numerous references to the religious aspects foregrounded in African-American music culture. In 'And It Stoned Me' (*Moondance*, 1970), Morrison intersperses narrative recollections of a boyhood fishing trip with references to water. Such reference alludes to the centrality of water in religious cultures such as the Baptist tradition, and recalls the transcendental function of water in several African-American spirituals (Simms, 1966: 36).²²⁷

227 Consider, for example, the spirituals 'Deep River', 'Wade in the Water', 'Down By The Riverside', 'O'er the Crossing', 'Michael Row The Boat Ashore' and 'Roll, Jordan, Roll'.

Oh the water, oh the water
Oh the water, let it run all over me
And it stoned me to my soul

(Van Morrison, 'And It Stoned Me', *Moondance*, 1970)

In 'Everyone', water again provides the context for a transcendental experience:

By the winding stream, we shall lie and dream
We'll make dreams come true if we want them to
Yes all will come and play the pipes and drum
Sing a happy song and we'll sing along.

(Van Morrison, 'Everyone', *Moondance*, 1970)

The 'winding stream' is the location for prostration and dreaming, blessed by the idyllic realisation that the subject's dreams will come true, while the reference to pipes and drum speaks both of arcadian romanticism and Protestant musical culture. Vocally, Morrison's style develops as clearly from his exposure to the gospel singing of Mahalia Jackson as it does from his absorption of the secular R&B styles of Jackie Wilson or the hybrid religious/secular delivery of Ray Charles. His gospel-inflected delivery on the later *A Period Of Transition* album is vocally superior to the derivative emulations of Jackie Wilson in 'Jackie Wilson Said' (*St. Dominic's Preview*) and the sentimental doo-wop vocals of 'Give Me A Kiss' (*Tupelo Honey*).

Utilising the antiphonal structures of gospel music, *A Period of Transition* foregrounds Morrison's grasp of and expertise in gospel's vocal idioms. His performance of a range of embellishments, ornamentations and dynamics associated with gospel singing permeate the work. These techniques are authoritatively delivered on 'You Gotta Make it Through the World' and 'The Eternal Kansas City'; again, the gospel influence is most palpable in the melodic and rhythmic embellishments Morrison uses to accompany the closing IV-I cadence of 'Joyous Sound'. While Morrison's creativity in

terms of songwriting arrived early – it was in full evidence as he composed *Astral Weeks* and *Moondance* in 1970 – the distillation of his musical influences with respect to his ability as a vocalist is most clearly evident in the work he produced in the later 1970s.

Tying together strands of Irishness and blackness, Morrison utilised the notion of ‘Caledonia’ as a conceptual framework through which the Irish and African-American identities with which he identified could be combined. The invocation of Caledonia was an inspired choice, as it referenced at least three key elements of Morrison’s musical identity which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s. The first association was with his Ulster-Scots heritage: Caledonia was the name given by Roman scholars and military to the northern regions of Britain outside the Empire (Moffat, 2005: 22). Keay and Keay (1994) note that its usage in modern English and Scots was as a ‘romantic or poetic name for Scotland as a whole’ (Keay and Keay, 1994: 123). By invoking Caledonia, Morrison could reference his associations with both Scottishness and Irishness, without encumbering himself with the professionally hazardous implications of Ulster unionism. Second, Morrison’s excavations of blues culture included the discovery of the Louis Jordan jump-blues composition, ‘Caldonia’, which had topped the *Billboard* Race Records chart in 1946. Jordan’s use of the term does not imply any direct reference to Scotland, Ireland or Celticism: however, hearing and performing ‘Caldonia’ must have been a significant moment for Morrison, in so far as the song potentially suggested a conceptual continuum between African-American blues musicianship and Morrison’s Scottish and Irish identities. This provided Morrison with a reciprocal link back into the African-American culture which so interested him. Morrison’s decision to record the Jordan song, re-titled as ‘Caledonia’, produced the 1974 single of the same name.

Third, Morrison's use of Caledonia follows the appearance of the term in a song released by his musical contemporaries and close associates, The Band: the latter group's album 'Music From The Big Pink' (1968) included the composition 'Caledonia Mission'. Like Louis Jordan's recording, there are no direct links to the Scottish and Irish resonances of 'Caledonia' in the Robertson composition; in all probability, the 'Caledonia' referred to in the Band's composition is either Caledonia, Arkansas, Caledonia, Missouri, with its noted Presbyterian Church (or mission);²²⁸ or Caledonia, Ontario, the scene of a police 'bust' involving the group.²²⁹ However, Morrison maintained close creative ties with the group, and their nebulous use of the term may have contributed to its crystallisation as a concept which informed his creative, professional and personal orientations during the 1970s.

In the early 1970s, it was evident that Morrison had absorbed and adapted the 'Caledonia' concept to a significant extent: in addition to its appearance in the hypnotic, lyrical improvisations of 'Listen To The Lion' (*St. Dominic's Preview*, 1972), Morrison used the term as a trading name for his publishing company. Importantly, he named his working musical group The Caledonia Soul Orchestra (and later the Caledonia Soul Express), using the 'Caledonian Soul' idea to mark an aesthetic and economic space in the Anglo-American musical field, and to embody his 'deep connection' with

228 See

[229 See \[http://theband.hiof.no/articles/caledonia_mission_viney.html\]\(http://theband.hiof.no/articles/caledonia_mission_viney.html\); accessed 23/5/10.](http://www.google.ie/imgres?imgurl=http://thelibrary.springfield.missouri.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow2i207c.jpg&imgrefurl=http://thelibrary.springfield.missouri.org/lochist/periodicals/ozarkswatch/ow50315.htm&usg=_n4-j1nfaZXIXfDa9yczp9p6MPg=&h=311&w=300&sz=14&hl=en&start=15&um=1&itbs=1&tbnid=9O2KvKONMqMnM:&tbnh=117&tbnw=113&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dcaledonia%2Barksas%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26tbs%3Disch:1; accessed 23/5/10.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

black and Irish cultural flows (Onkey, 2006: 175). Morrison also named his first daughter Shana Caledonia Morrison.

Irish Blue: Phil Lynott and African-American Nomadism

In some ways, Lynott's relationship to African-American music is more complex than the absorptions of blues and R&B undertaken by Morrison and Gallagher. Lynott's racial and cultural lineage is more difficult to categorise than either Morrison's or Gallagher's: a British-born, Brazilian-Irish, mixed-race man, Lynott's 'routes' developed through his socialisation in an Ireland defined by cultural isolation, on the one hand, and an increasingly intricate process of interchange with Anglo-American culture, and later with the cultures of the Black Atlantic, on the other. Similar to Morrison and Gallagher, he maintained an interest in the blues roots of rock – 'Slow Blues' (1973), 'Night Life' (1974), 'Silver Dollar' (1975) and 'Baby Drives Me Crazy' (1978) are Thin Lizzy compositions based wholly on the structural, melodic and harmonic conventions of the blues. However, Lynott's enduring musical interest and aptitude lay in working with music derived both from (black) blues and (white) folk traditions – primarily in the context of the rock and heavy rock genres. Putterford states that Lynott's upbringing at the family home on Leighlin Road in Crumlin, Co.Dublin was responsible for his immersion in both black and white musical cultures, through his uncle's record collecting:

Much of Philip's early inspiration came from [his uncle] Timothy's record collection. He'd tag along every Saturday afternoon when his uncle went shopping for records in Dublin... "I was the only one working at the time, so I was the only one with any money" says Timothy, "and I used to spend it all on music. I'd buy one or two LPs a week, but when I'd get them home Phillip and his friends would spend all day listening to them. One of my favourites was The Mamas and

The Papas,²³⁰ and Philip loved them too. He was also very keen on the black American groups, the Tamla Motown stuff. And then he was into the heavier groups from England, like The Who and Cream".

(Putterford, 2002: 15)

In addition, Lynott maintained an interest in Irish (white) folk music, working this tradition into numerous compositions as a key aspect of his hybrid musical strategy.

Phil Lynott's attraction to, and emulation of, African-American music was conducted through the mediating figures of Jimi Hendrix and Elvis Presley. It is important to acknowledge Lynott's interest in the black and white 'routes' of rock, as it was a combination of these cultures, in conjunction with an ongoing preoccupation with Irish cultural history, which informed Lynott's musical identity between 1968 and 1978. In acknowledging Presley's influence on Lynott, it should be remembered that Lynott's professional career began as a singer and frontman; so the regal element of Presley's public persona also influenced Lynott's self-portrayal in the media. In addition, the Irish musician was moved sufficiently by the passing of 'the King' to compose 'Kings Call' (*Solo in Soho*, 1980). As the key preoccupation of the chapter is Irish musicians' appropriation of black music and performance practices, I will, in the following sections, foreground Lynott's appropriations from, and relationship to, the black musician Jimi Hendrix.

Hendrix's connection to African-American culture needs to be viewed in the context of his interracial background and early socialization in a racially and culturally mixed district of Seattle.²³¹ Like Lynott, Hendrix often

230 A 1960s American male/female vocal group noted for their vocal harmonies.

231 See Steve Vosburgh's biographical documentary entitled *Jimi Hendrix: The Uncut Story*. Described at <http://www.amazon.com/Jimi-Hendrix-Uncut-Story/dp/B00029X08I>; accessed 23/5/10.

struggled with racial identity, with the expectations of black American society, and with the contradictions of living blackness in a society dominated by a white majority. While ‘black’ through familial ties, Hendrix’s subjectivity challenged the divides of race. As an apprentice musician, Hendrix toured the ‘Chitlin Circuit’ of the southern United States, performing as a backing musician for prominent rhythm and blues and soul acts. Creatively, Hendrix’s solo career was defined by his preoccupation with creating an inclusive music which drew on black pasts but was presented to mixed and predominantly white audiences (Henderson, 1990; Cross, 2005); his exploration of these directions continued until his death. Indicating his ambivalence towards received racial subjectivities and roles, his biographers note that he was more comfortable reading science fiction than the staples of black literature.

Musically, the guitarist was forced to confront the limitations of a consumerism which packaged his blackness as ‘authentic’, but had limited interest in his musical vision, and the expectations of a black politics which recriminated him for his apolitical stances regarding white oppression and black power. In reality, Hendrix’s music was both ‘black’ and ‘white’ – authentically blues, and firmly rooted in its traditions, but married to innovations associated with white technological processes. This would have been a revelation for Lynott, who also lived out the tensions of black and white binaries in his personality.

Like Hendrix, Lynott established a three piece line-up and developed Irish and rock forms using available technological innovations. Similarly, Lynott eventually adopted the practice of performing at half a step below standard

tuning, a practice common among African-American musicians.²³² An admiration for Hendrix was something Lynott shared with Thin Lizzy's guitarist Eric Bell, and the group's first album contains the inventive, but derivative composition 'Ray Gun', which emulates Hendrix's musicianship and compositional disposition through its science-fictional setting and the distinctive use of the wah pedal for rhythm and lead guitar parts. These are grafted onto a rebellious denial of Christian culture and an invocation of cowboy and gangster thematic material:

I know someone who doesn't believe in God
Someone I know doesn't even know God
He came from a planet three thousand miles away
Just a short trip, a kind of brief holiday
Can you give someone somewhere to stay
I gotta warn you, he's gotta gun
I gotta warn you, he's gotta gun
I know someone who came on a short trip
Travelling lightly, travelling by spaceship

(Thin Lizzy, 'Ray Gun', *Thin Lizzy* 1971)

In Lynott's case, the negotiation of black identity was focused on the subjectivities proposed by Hendrix, a man who challenged the binaries, certainties and hegemonies of black and white in the United States. Hendrix's engagement with the politics of black nationalism was also referenced in Lynott's oeuvre, through Fitzpatrick's representation of Lynott on the *Nightlife* cover as a black panther, and lyrically in 'Fight or Fall' (1976).

The second aspect of Hendrix's subjectivity which appealed to Lynott was that of nomadism. Gilroy, rather disparagingly I think, describes Hendrix'

232 Like Hendrix, Lynott preferred an E-flat tuning, better suited to his vocal range; Bono and U2 would adopt the same technique.

appeal to the gypsy trope as an escape from the difficulties of negotiating his black identity:

Hendrix would...rationalise his ambivalence towards both blackness and American through the nomadic ideology of the gypsy that appeared in his work as an interestingly perverse accompaniment to the decision to play funkier and more politically engaged music with an all-black band.

(Gilroy, 1993: 94)

I challenge this trivialising of Hendrix's appeal to nomadism. Gilroy overlooks the fact that this was a key dimension of Hendrix's conceptual identity, appearing throughout his compositions with the Jimi Hendrix Experience, as well as in the music he performed with the Band of Gypsys. As early as 1966, (three years before playing with an 'all-black band', and at the opposite end of his pop career) Hendrix recorded 'Stone Free', a composition in which nomadism is proposed as a solution to the 'entrapment' associated with settled living (CD Track 35):

Every day in the week, I'm in a different city
If I stay too long the people try to pull me down
They talk about me like a dog, talk about the clothes I wear
But they don't realise, they're the ones who's square
And that's why you can't hold me down
I don't want to be down, I got to move on
Stone free to do what I please
Stone free to ride the breeze
Stone free, I can't stay,
Got to get away.

(Jimi Hendrix, 'Stone Free', *Hey Joe* single B-side, 1966)

In 1967, the Jimi Hendrix Experience single 'The Wind Cries Mary' was accompanied by the B-side composition 'Highway Chile'; it shows Hendrix's absorption of the nomadic trope which Dylan had popularised in 'Like A Rolling Stone' (1965). The composition draws on the rhetoric of the wandering musician central to blues musicianship, and is also autobiographical, as Hendrix's youth, his military service in Vietnam and

his professional career in the southern US, in New York and London were typified by movement from place to place:

His guitar slung across his back
His dusty boots is his Cadillac
A-flamin' hair just a-blowin' in the wind
Ain't seen a bed in so long it's a sin
He left home when he was seventeen
The rest of the world he had longed to see
And everybody knows, boss, a rolling stone gathers no moss
Now you'd probably call him a tramp
But it goes a little deeper than that
He's a highway chile
(Jimi Hendrix, 'Highway Chile', *The Wind Cries Mary* UK single B-side, 1967)

The nomadic tendency appears again in The Experience's cover of 'Hey Joe', as the song's protagonist proposes to travel south across the Mexican border following the murder of his partner. The final Experience album, *Electric Ladyland*, also continued the nomadic tendency, through the romantically-inspired composition 'Gypsy Eyes'. Professionally, Hendrix's career was typified by nomadism – crossing the United States and the Atlantic engaging in professional commitments. And not only was Hendrix drawing on an emerging nomadic identity, he was also appropriating a trope of older blues and performance cultures. Nomadism defined both the *modus operandi* of the travelling shows, a staple of popular entertainment in the southern United States, and the migratory experiences of black subjectivities journeying across the same regions in search of work. As LeRoi Jones states:

[T]he thousands of black blues shouters and ballad singers who wandered throughout the South around the turn of the century moved from place to place not only because Negroes were allowed to travel after the Civil War, but because for a great many Negroes, emancipation meant a constant desperate search for employment...Not only the migratory workers who followed the crop harvests but the young men who wanted any kind of work had to tramp all over the South in search of it.

(Jones, 1963:64)

Therefore, the nomadic tendency is born very much of the sociological and economic realities of African-American culture, and cannot be explained away as a romantic desire to escape from an uncomfortable confrontation with black politics. Interestingly, the nomadic became a key dimension of rock music; not only black musicians, but white performers, including Lowell George, Bob Dylan, Stephen Stills and Neil Young developed nomadic tropes in their songwriting.²³³ In the context of Irish rock, Gallagher, Morrison and Lynott absorbed and reworked the nomadic impulse in their own compositions; I will trace the theme through the Thin Lizzy studio albums released between 1971 and 1977. I briefly examine the theoretical underpinnings of the nomadic trope, articulated in the writings of Rosi Braidotti and Gilles Deleuze, as a precursor to such investigation.

The appearance of the nomadic in Irish rock reminds us of Rosi Braidotti's recognition of a 'nomadic mode' as a primary trope of contemporary subjectivity. Focusing primarily on the feminine, Braidotti discards fixed notions of certain, homogenous identity; developing Deleuzeo-Guattarian ideas of transformative process (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980), she has argued in *Nomadic Subjects* (1994) that identity-creation reflects the reality of 'a subject in becoming'. In the nomadic mode, the body is a 'sexualized, racialized and enfleshed complexity', rather than a unified entity (Braidotti, 2006, p. 142; 1993:10-11). This in itself would seem to reflect the cultural logic of first-wave Irish rock as discussed in the chapters on hybridity, the

233 Consider, for example, George's 'Two Trains' and 'Roll Um' Easy'; Dylan's 'Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again', 'Don't Think Twice, It's Alright', 'Like A Rolling Stone' (covered by Hendrix) and 'Highway 61 Revisited'; Still's 'Old Times Good Times' (which featured Hendrix as a session musician) and 'Down The Road'; Young's 'Long May You Run', 'The Thrasher' and 'Ride My Llama'.

national and space. It also proffers progressive interpretative potential in terms of how we might read Hendrix's (and Lynott's) public performance of an expressive sexuality. The nomadism Braidotti proposes does not necessarily entail actual travelling, but reflects a process open to women who are confronting the cartography of a post-national world system, with its complex webs of national, global and local institutions, political systems, sedimented hegemonies and cultural flows. Braidotti's nomadic subject represents an epistemological, political and practical response to such realities by embodying what Phyllis Kaminski calls a 'multi-layered structure of human subjectivity' (Kaminski, 1996: 92). Developed as a response to the question of 'what is happening to bodies, identities, belongings, in a world that is technologically mediated, ethnically mixed and changing very fast in all sort of ways' (Braidotti, in Baraitser, 2010), this subject is in tune with the cadences of contemporary social life. The nomadic mode is best suited to existence in evolving societies by nature of its 'recombin[ation] of different registers of experience' (Braidotti, 1993:3). This includes the 'mixture of speaking voices or modes', the ability to cross borders, to utilise quotations from other voices, and maintaining a focus on intangible essences such as the 'political importance of Desire'. For Braidotti, the nomadic subject is 'an intensive, multiple subject, functioning in a net of interconnections. It is 'nomadic, rhizomatic, embodied and therefore perfectly cultural' (Braidotti, 1993, p. 10).

Braidotti's analysis reflects the cultural logic of Irish rock and resonates with the emergent first-wave Irish rock subjectivity. First, in her development of a theory of nomadism as praxis, she reflects key tendencies in rock musicianship discussed in previous sections: the predilection towards boundary crossing; the ambivalence to homogeneity; the practice of interconnection and rhizomatic absorption; multiplicity and hybridity.

Second, she addresses the actuality of professional musicianship as nomadic practice; all three musicians were involved in a continual process of touring, recording, and performance throughout the decade 1968-78, a period affected by technological change and, in terms of Ireland and the wider world, socio-economic and political volatility. Third, Irish rock's exploration and appropriation of African-American culture itself embodied a nomadic process, as Gallagher, Morrison and Lynott engaged with the routes of black performance cultures, and embedded elements of these in their texts and performance practices.

Deleuze's propositions on the nomadic are also relevant to understanding the discourses and principles of the rock text and musicianship. In *One Thousand Plateaus*, he and Guattari use an Irish literary model to represent the rhizomorphic nature of the contemporary text:

Joyce's words, accurately described as having 'multiple roots', shatter the linear unity of the word, even of language, only to posit a cyclic unity of the sentence, text, or knowledge.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1980:6)

While it relates primarily to the histories and epistemologies of the militaristic domain, Deleuze's description of nomadology approaches the semantic field of Irish rock in its proposition that the nomad, though an outsider, is a proactive participant in the process of production. Inherent to the nomadic condition is a disposition capable of understanding and absorbing the inherited or transmitted technologies and artefacts of cultural exchange. In other words, there is a manner in which the use of new technologies or cultural artefacts is made possible only by the nomad's understanding of them. What Deleuze's insight feeds into is a view of Irish rock musicians as empowered actors: nomadic in that they were capable of putting the significations, vocabularies and practices of black culture to use.

They understood the cultural mechanics of the black Atlantic, and were able to develop these into new, hybridised and rhizomatic formulations. Reading Deleuze's theorization of the nomadic 'war-machine' reminds one of the precarious location of the rock musician in Irish culture: acting outside of, and often in opposition to, the institutions and narratives of legitimization central to the state apparatus, and strategically abandoning the 'strata, segmentarities [and] sedentarity' of the State (Deleuze, 1986: 24). From Deleuze's perspective – that of a challenging strand of poststructuralist thinking - rock music can be understood as a 'war-machine', not only in terms of its conscious and enabling appropriation of black cultural form, but also in terms of its inhabitation of a 'smooth space' which can address the limitations of sanctioned state culture. Deleuze's model also offers a theoretical explanation of state culture's antipathy to the kinds of nomadism which typifies rock musicians' routes and preoccupations, because of the problems States have always had with 'nomadic or itinerant bodies' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). With respect to music, this is evident in an account provided by Gibbons:

Under the stewardship of a redoubtable local priest, Fr Peter Longley, Leitrim in the 1930s became the centre of operations for a concerted offensive against dance halls and jazz...that was to culminate in a mass demonstration against jazz in Mohill, January 1934, which over 3,000 people attended. The rally was of nationwide interest, attracting messages of support from Cardinal McRory, President deValera and the local Bishop McNamee.

(Gibbons, 1996: 33)

I am tempted to ask whether the band, the musical group, represents a kind of 'war-machine' which is antithetical to the state in the manner Deleuze describes. The lyrics of Thin Lizzy's 'Warriors' seem to echo and illustrate Deleuzean insights regarding the nomadic trajectory as 'war-machine': its cultural location, a rhizomatic composite existing in 'indefinite open space',

entails an interrupting of binaries (life/death; Venus/Mars; future/past; watcher/actor; head/heart; victory/loss) through a simultaneous inhabitation or experiencing of both the polarities of any given binary:

I am the warrior, I serve the death-machine
Losers or conquerors all flash past on my silver screen

Death is no easy answer
For those who wish to know
Just ask those who have been before you
What fate the future holds

I am a messenger
The message you must know
I am the warrior, I deliver the fatal blow

So fate will have to wait
Till time heals the scar
See my heart is ruled by Venus
And my head by Mars.

(Phil Lynott and Scott Gorham, 'Warriors', *Jailbreak*, 1976)

There is certainly a case to be made that the *weltschauung* of the roving nomad collides with the sedentary certainties of the nation. The kind of power unleashed by the protagonist in Lynott's composition 'Vagabond of the Western World' – an anarchic, sexualised ('gave this girl a baby boy') mobile ('you might meet him on the highway') embodied ('pretty fine dancer too') masculinity recalls Deleuze's analyses of the qualities of the nomadic mode. Gallagher and Morrison also expressed and embodied a comparable ambivalence to the 'conquering State', reinforced by their locating similarly 'revolutionary powers' in the rhizomorphic, synthesised cultures of the black Atlantic (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 356).

Thin Lizzy's album *Shades of A Blue Orphanage* (1972) presents the nomadic theme quite literally in the lengthy opening track, 'The Rise and Dear Demise of the Funky Nomadic Tribes' (CD Track 36):

The people rose and set off for the sun
At night they read their star signs
A people proud for they know their kingdom come
Their skin was tanned by moonshine
Got to keep a-moving, got to keep a-moving on
Got to keep a-moving, got to keep a-moving on
Got to keep a-moving, got to keep a-moving on.

(Thin Lizzy, 'The Rise and Dear Demise of The Funky Nomadic Tribes', *Shades of a Blue Orphanage*, 1972)

On the same album, 'Chatting Today', Lynott narrates how the certainties of employment (represented by the union, the foundry and the mill) are exchanged for the life of the individualistic wanderer, depicted sleeping out on the railway underneath the stars. The trope appears again on the subsequent album, reworked in the representation of the opportunistic Vagabond of the Western World; in 'A Song For While I Am Away', the protagonist is 'headed for the border' and 'far away hills' prior to a later homecoming. Thin Lizzy's successful single of the same period, 'Whiskey in the Jar', also proposed a wandering protagonist as the central figure of its narrative. On 'Nightlife' (1974), the song 'Philomena' dealt specifically with wandering and its divisive consequences. On the *Fighting* album (1975), the track 'Wild One' had nomadism as its central preoccupation, with Lynott referencing the narrative of The Wild Geese, the migrant Irish soldiers fighting in European armies following the Williamite Wars.

With *Jailbreak* (1976), Lynott further developed Hendrix's nomadic thematics. 'Cowboy Song' romanticised the masculine, transitional lifestyle of cowboy culture. Having detailed the ambiguous attraction of heterosexual romances (a theme also interspersed with allusions to nomadism in the album's fourth track, 'Romeo and the Lonely Girl'), the protagonist moves south over the border:

Down below the border, in a town in Mexico
I got my job busting broncos for the rodeo
Roll me over and turn me around
Let me keep spinning till I hit the ground
Roll me over and let me go
Riding with the buffalo.

(Thin Lizzy, 'Cowboy Song', *Jailbreak*, 1976)

In addition to his referencing Irish migrations to America following the famine on *Johnny the Fox* (1977), Lynott approached the nomadic theme by way of biography. The composition 'Sweet Marie' details the itinerant realities of touring, and its concomitant strains, splicing these onto the romantic remembrance of a loved one:

Somewhere out in Arizona, such a long way from California
I felt so alone there, I was two thousand miles away from home there
Tonight we're going to play Boston, and I still don't know what the hell is going on
Oh, but I wrote this song to keep me thinking about my sweet Marie...

But my home is where my heart is, and my heart is not at home
Now that we are parted, I feel so all alone.

(Thin Lizzy, 'Sweet Marie', *Johnny The Fox*, 1977)

On *Bad Reputation* (1977), the outcomes of nomadic migration are a central concern of both 'Soldier of Fortune' and 'Opium Trail'. The latter song challenges the conventionally positive portrayal of nomadism, as the protagonist's wandering along 'the smuggler's trail' leads to entrapment in heroin addiction. In 'Southbound', Lynott returns to the theme of the Wild

West, using the narrative idioms of western films as a basis for exploring the nomadic tendency once more:

Tonight after sundown, I'm going to pack my case
I'll leave without a sound, disappear without a trace
I'm going southbound.
Drifting like a drover, chasing my career
From the ships docked in the harbour, new horizons will appear
Tumbling with the tumbleweed, down the open road
Taking only what I need, before my head explodes
I'm going southbound.

(Thin Lizzy, 'Southbound', *Bad Reputation*, 1977)

Conclusion: Black Music, Irish Rock and the Politics of Authenticity

This chapter has sought to describe the various ways in which first-wave Irish rock musicians appropriated musical styles and performance practices from black Atlantic cultures, principally those of African-American blues and jazz. I have endeavoured to show that a key element of the cultural intelligence of first-wave rock musicianship is a knowledgeable, sensitive and articulate interfacing of Irish and black Atlantic cultural strands in composition and performance. In examining concrete instances of cultural appropriation, I was concerned to show that these were neither arbitrary nor superficial, but based on musicians' understanding of emerging cultural trends, on their awareness of the limitations of received notions of Irishness, and on their ability to masterfully incorporate the new cultural idioms into their emerging subjectivities.

The potential of drawing Ireland into the metacultural discourses of the black Atlantic is that of providing a minor but vibrant reading of emerging Irish rock identities as evolving through Deleuze's 'principles of connection' (Deleuze, 1986). Gilroy's proposition of a black Atlantic invites us to acknowledge a history of cultural and political engagement between Irish and black cultures which accentuates the links, rather than the polarities, between versions of both. Irish musicians' engagement with black musical forms and their attendant politics and identities can be understood as part of an ongoing and mutual cultural dialogue between Ireland, African-American and other black cultures.

A final issue of academic concern is that of 'authenticity', and whether and how Irish rock music, musicians and identities embody or project the authentic. I consider this matter here because academic discourse has, over time, deconstructed and re-inscribed the many possible meanings of authenticity; importantly for my own discussion, scrutiny of the term has played a major role in shaping how Anglo-American and Irish rock musicians' interfacing with African-American music is understood. For reasons of space, I will avoid lengthy rehearsal of the arguments propounded and debated by insightful scholars (Laing, 1985; Gracyk, 1996; Taylor, 1997; Middleton, 1990). However, a brief reference to the work of Allan Moore, who examines authenticity in the rock context, is helpful in setting out the parameters of my investigation.

Moore's (2002) analysis begins by stating that authenticity is cultural and therefore historicised, and a matter of interpretation. He focuses on who is ascribing authenticity onto a text or performance, rather than reading any

essential authenticity in the text or performance itself (Moore, 2002: 209). In attempting to tease out the philosophical and epistemological dimensions of the authentic, Moore suggests that there are ‘various authenticities’ through which artists ‘speak the truth about their own situation’, ‘speak the truth about absent others’ and ‘speak the truth about their own culture, thereby representing others’ (Moore, 2002:209, following Gilbert and Pearson, 1994).

Moore develops the arguments of Fornäs (1995) regarding the authentication of the author in describing the ‘first person authentication’ element of his complex, tripartite and socially contingent model. I am interested in two key points which emerge from Moore’s reading of authenticity. Firstly, it can be performed- Moore gives various examples of folk and rock groups (U2, Dick Gaughan, Big Country, Pet Shop Boys), illustrating how they articulate different but accepted notions of the authentic. Secondly, authenticity can be interpreted - Moore locates the ideological preoccupation with authenticity in the ‘social alienation produced under modernity’ (Moore, 2002:210). Developing this position, I think it useful to read social alienation as one of a number of factors shaping understandings of the authentic: cultural flows, technological developments, shifting processes of mediation, transforming subjectivities and changing political positions also influence how artists and audiences project and perceive the authentic.

Moore approaches blues rock culture (of which Rory Gallagher was a key participant) in his discussion, though his use of the genre to exemplify Fornäs’ conflation of artificiality and authenticity leads me to reflect on how

blues rock is represented and understood within academic discourse. Moore describes British musicians' absorption of blues in this way:

The blues rock movement of the 1960s was partly founded on the employment of a style ('the blues')... For Clapton, for Peter Green and...Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page, the search for the musical soul of blues singers like Robert Johnson was propelled by a desire to appropriate the 'unmediated' expression which was thought to be the preserve of the country blues style...

(Moore, 2002: 215)

I hope to have demonstrated that Rory Gallagher's studied investigation of blues suggests a far more intelligent interfacing of Irish, Anglo-American and African-American culture than the 'desire to appropriate' which Moore affords to blues rock in general. Contrary to Moore's narrative, Gallagher's (and in fact Clapton's; see Clapton and Sykes, 2007:29) engagement with blues culture was informed by an awareness of the complexity and diversity of blues styles. This did not wholly begin with 'urban' artists like B.B. King; for Gallagher in particular, it was a product of a musical education which began with skiffle, jazz, folk and rhythm and blues groups before encompassing country, delta and an expansive range of blues cultures. While blues rock musicians' painstaking and imperfect appropriations suggest that they were preoccupied with the performance of 'first person authenticity' by black musicians (and their own re-workings of it; see Richards and Fox, 2010), Gallagher's investigation of the blues was informed enough to acknowledge and embrace the fact that blues cultures' expression of 'unmediated soul' was mediated by technological change and commercial concerns. Gallagher did not see black musicians as possessing an archaic, essentialised primitivism, but as the inheritors of a vitalistic, living and changing musical culture. Thus, the appeal to acoustic blues forms ('authentically old') in Gallagher's compositions is matched by

investigation of ('authentically new') electric blues forms (typified by John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Freddie King, Earl Hooker and Buddy Guy) in his recorded work and live performances. Morrison's approaching the jazz and rhythm and blues traditions, and Lynott's interfacing of black ideas of nomadism and movement suggest a similarly complex process of engagement, appropriation and re-working is taking place in their music also (Onkey, 2006: 164-7).

What kind of authenticity can, or need we ascribe to Irish rock musicians' appropriation of black culture? Authenticity should not refer to the supposed 'purity' of a musical culture; as we have understood, and as the hybrid nature of Irish rock texts shows, popular musical cultures are syncretic in nature, drawing on, and influencing, those with which they come into contact. Returning to Moore's theories, it can be argued that first-wave musicians' appropriations of black music did speak the truth of their own situation: it offered a mode and means of musical expression which the existing cultures of showbands, ceili music and chart pop could not. It allowed for the expression of a deeper emotional resonance than the latter, more exclusive forms. It proposed a democratisation of musical expression, enabled by the processes of mechanical reproduction and by the evolution of broadcasting strategies which breached the pre-eminence of the nation state as the regulator of cultural value. It embodied the logic of nomadism which reflected the professional and existential realities of Irish rock practice. And it allowed the expression of alternative subjectivities, and by extension the trajectories of Irishness, which the sedimentation of popular cultural forms, subject to the censorial tendencies of nation and province, had rendered difficult, if not impossible.

Second, the use of black musical forms enabled the articulation of truth regarding ‘absent others’. In particular, Irish rock offered a more informed account of black culture than that which informed Irish culture more generally. This took place at a time when an appreciation of black culture in America and elsewhere was still underdeveloped. Certainly in Ireland, there is little evidence of an understanding of the congruences between Ireland’s postcolonial experiences and those of the black Atlantic. In 1963, Brian O’Nuallain, writing as Myles na Gopaleen in his ‘Cruiskeen Lawn’ column in *The Irish Times*, could parody Irish attitudes to black identity:

What of the black man of South Africa? One can overlook his tuberculosis, glaucoma, syphilis and leprosy but his illiteracy and feral speech put him in a class far lower than chimpanzeesial for in general monkeys have the wit at least to live in home-made trees.

(‘Cruiskeen Lawn’, *Irish Times*, November 28th, 1963)

Philomena Lynott’s experience of raising a mixed-race child in Dublin in the 1950s corroborates the view that Irish attitudes to black identities could be conservative and essentialist:

When Philip first moved in [to Crumlin, Co. Dublin] the social pressures were so intense that they conspired to pretend that Philip was the son of a friend of mine...While travelling on the ferry between Holyhead and Ireland, I once overheard a group of people gossiping about “a girl over on Kildare Road in Crumlin who had given birth to a black baby”. They agreed how shocking it all was.

(Lynott and Hayden, 2010: 53-56)

Irish musician’s exploration and adaptation of black Atlantic histories and culture needs to be understood in the context of these attitudes. In addition, Irish rock expressed the truth of the ‘absent others’ of Irish culture: those subcultural and alternative trajectories silenced by the residual and

conservative forms of provincialism and nationalism. Of further significance in Irish musicians' exploration and interchange with black Atlantic blues culture is the manner in which such processes provided opportunities as yet unavailable in Ireland. It allowed them the opportunity to develop as a musician outside of the narrowly defined categories of showband, classical and traditional music. It gave access to, and an opportunity to participate in, a powerful international musical culture. In absorbing and re-interpreting African-American culture, Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison were, I think, less interested in aping the cultures from which they drew, and more in marrying the most engaging aspects of a vibrant musical culture with socially received subjectivities. Ironically, blues culture was one which had been denied widespread respect in the United States; it was the European interest in the blues which formed the basis of rock culture and re-ignited American interest in the origins of blues music.

Van Morrison is responsible for bringing black musics such as rhythm 'n' blues and soul into a rock context, and as arguably the most capable musician ever to have done so, he has introduced African-American cultures to new audiences. As with Gallagher, it would seem that his appropriation of black music helped to fill a spiritual, cultural and social void that accompanied life in 1950s Ireland. Of course, Morrison was able to cultivate a fulfilling life outside of his appropriations of black music, and soul and R&B are only half of the picture of Morrison's extensive musical persona (not to mention his literary interests). Similarly to Gallagher, what Morrison's work between 1968 and 1978 shows is that an Irish musician could migrate to the Anglo-American centre, influence and be influenced by the music and cultures he found there, and engage with the commercial and artistic dimensions of a developing popular music industry. Both Morrison

and Gallagher's engagement with black music illustrates the critical possibilities available to Irish musicians versed in these cultures.

More than any international artist of the classic rock period, Lynott showed that Irish subjectivity was compatible with a rock sensibility. In a manner which was matched only by Horslips, Lynott developed, by appeal to an innate musical intelligence, a convincing and engaging hybrid of rock and instrumental Irish music. He did this by syncretising the Irish sensibility he inherited through his family and socialisation in Ireland with the performance styles of two American musicians defined by their ambivalence to essentialising categories of race: black/white, insider/outsider. Hendrix was a black musician with an astute awareness of the critical potential of marrying blues forms to technologies emerging from the commercialisation and transformation of those forms through technological change; Presley was a white performer whose mastery of black styles – gospel, blues and rhythm and blues – provided a credible, hybrid fusion of rock and roll. By intelligently appropriating the progressive elements of Hendrix's and Presley's musical visions – and in the particular case of Hendrix, the focus and appeal of nomadism – Lynott was able to develop a unique and enduring syncretised musical form of his own.

In the same way that Irish writers had adapted to post-colonial realities by developing a new and syncretic syntax through which the complexities of their experiences could be expressed, Gallagher, Lynott and Morrison developed hybrid and luminal forms of musical identity which are influenced, in formal, syntactic and thematic terms, by the cultures of the black Atlantic. In tandem with their complex negotiation of Irishness and

Irish identity, rock artists' intellectual appreciation of black culture- as well as their informed appropriation of its preoccupations- enabled them to considerably expand the vocabulary of Irish popular music, in musical, thematic and expressive terms. In addition, rock's discernment of proximities between Ireland and the black Atlantic, embodied not least in synchronous nomadic and post-colonial histories, added a contemporary dimension to the ongoing and vitalistic dialogue between black and Irish subjectivities.

Conclusion

Wheels Within Wheels: The Cultural Location of First-Wave Irish Rock

This thesis has explored first-wave Irish rock music, focusing on the compositions and performance practices of three internationally visible musicians. Using theories of hybridity, the national, space and place and identity, it has investigated three key actors in Irish rock and popular music culture, two of whom have been invisible in the critical analyses which have emerged to date. The study's primary objective has been to illustrate that first-wave Irish rock is a complex cultural phenomenon that maintains a forceful intellectual dimension: I have demonstrated this by examining compositional strategies, by exploring musicians' challenging engagement with national and international cultures and identities, and by highlighting their ongoing negotiation of critical (artistic) and commercial concerns.

In Chapter Two, I offered an historical survey of rock's development in Ireland. The survey illustrated the role of existing popular cultures, primarily those of the showband, the beat group and the folk rock tradition, in creating the cultural and structural conditions from which first-wave rock developed. I also focused on the effects and consequences of infrastructure, management, critical media and performance spaces in advancing the development of rock music in Ireland.

In Chapter Three, I investigated the trope and practice of hybridity in the compositions of Irish rock texts. Taking examples from Morrison, Lynott and Gallagher's recorded output, the analysis demonstrated that hybridity was used as a conscious strategy by these artists. I determined that the hybrid approach to composition was utilised in drawing motifs from Irish

traditional (instrumental and folk) music into the rock text; I also demonstrated that hybridity in composition signifies the respective musicians' awareness of, and fluency in, adapting a range of internationally relevant musical cultures.

Ireland's intricate cultural location and its difficult political history amplifies the challenge of establishing whether and how nation, space and place have affected popular musical production here. Chapter Four examined the role of the national in Irish rock music. I highlighted some of the difficulties faced by rock musicians in appealing to narratives of Irishness in their compositions and performances. By drawing the key distinction between cultural nationalism and national culture, I demonstrated that Irish artists were able to reference Irish cultures without appealing to exclusivist narratives of national imagining. The analysis also established that first-wave musicians, while avoiding potentially alienating public pronouncements on key issues in Irish political cultures, did engage with such politics through musical performance and in interviews. On this point, I have advanced a different view from many of the journalistic narratives describing the development of first-wave Irish rock, since these often downplay the artists' negotiation of, and preoccupation with, the realities of Irish politics. Chapter Five explored the interfacing of Irish and black cultures embodied in the Irish rock text. By referencing Paul Gilroy's theories of the black Atlantic, the investigation demonstrated that Irish rock's exploration of black cultures represents a mature and articulate discovery of these cultures' particularities, dynamics and meanings, and continued a history of cultural interchange between Ireland and black Atlantic cultures.

If we accept the description ‘Irish rock’ as a legitimate classifying designation (and I have argued in Chapter One that Irish rock is, in fact, a plausible and practical categorisation), it follows that the rock music produced by Irish musicians maintains some relation to ‘Ireland’; hence any appeal to a notion of ‘Irish rock’ presupposes a musical culture within which the Irish state(s) do(es) play some defining role. In elucidating what ‘Irish’ does, or can, mean to first-wave musicians, it is necessary to state that a majority of the island’s rock and popular music maintains a complex relationship with the ‘national’. This relationship becomes apparent by examining the national in both institutional and cultural contexts, and we can conclude that in developing the ‘Irish’ aspect of ‘Irish rock’, the island’s musicians, largely invisible in the legitimising narratives of statehood, have tended to draw on cultural expressions of Irishness in order to express a ‘local authenticity’ in the global arena of Anglo-American rock culture.

Ireland’s national borders have been claimed and challenged at different times by oppositional ethnic groups and political interests, making it difficult to establish an inclusive definition of ‘the national’. This is exacerbated by the reality of diasporic migration, a key trope of Irish social life; on the basis of the more or less continuous outward migration of the last two hundred years, in important ways, ‘the national’ may be seen to extend beyond the island’s physical boundaries. The development of extensive Irish communities throughout the Anglo-American centre has resulted in the concomitant translocation of a range of narratives and practices associated with ‘Irishness’ to and beyond these groups. These narratives and practices have fused with diverse cultural traditions in such contemporary settings, influencing cultural production there before

cyclically returning to the ‘homeland’ of Ireland to impact again upon regional and local cultural articulations.

In this concluding commentary, I will deliberate on the cultural location of first-wave Irish rock, attempting to highlight some of the philosophical trajectories that investigation of this musical culture raises. I take as a template, and indeed as a starting point, Keohane’s provoking analysis of Irish popular music, and in particular, his investigation of The Pogues, into whose music and performance he reads a distinctly post-modern sensibility. In so doing, I hope to contextualise first-wave rock as part of a longer history of Irish popular music which includes the work of later and more visible artists such as U2.

As part of his analysis of the music of trad-punk group The Pogues, Keohane (1990) seeks to establish a coherent underlying subtext which can describe the musical, aesthetic and political realisations attempted by the group during the 1980s. He concludes that:

[t]he pastiche which The Pogues are piecing together is one composed of fragments of the historical and contemporary experiences of the Irish diaspora. We find for example, images of work, travel, religion, fighting, boozing, fucking, gambling, politics, superstitions, whores, saints, heroes and outlaws; tales from bars in rural Ireland, from Germany, from Spain during the civil war, and from a fiesta in the 80s: From the Wild West, from New York last Christmas, from Soho and from Kilburn, from the trenches of WW 1, from a U.N. forces camp in Lebanon, from Belfast, Australia and from Greenland.

(Keohane, 1990: 71)

Keohane’s central premise is that the immigrant experience of The Pogues translates literally into the jump-cut musical style propounded by the group through their recorded works and live performances. A key aspect of this immigrant experience is an ambivalence centred around belonging and not belonging to tradition, to home, and to community; Keohane reads The

Pogues' music as a progressive response to received ideas about Ireland and its traditions, distorted through the members' experiences in the 'vortex of high modernism' (Keohane, 1990: 72). He posits the group's members as peripheral (Irish) subjects, thrown into and affected by cultural flows at the Anglo-American centre. The Pogues' cultural singularities, and the music emerging as a result of the expression of these, is defined by simultaneous appeal to the narratives of home and those of homelessness, of belonging and of singularity, of tradition and the rejection of that tradition.

Reading Keohane's commentary, I was struck by the similarities between the signifying content he locates in the music of The Pogues and that of first-wave Irish rock musicians. As the table below illustrates, a majority of the (stereo) types, cultural practices and norms used by The Pogues to signify their ongoing celebration, interrogation and critique of Ireland and Irishness can also be found in first-wave rock compositions.

| Types or Representations of Irish/Irishness identified in the music of The Pogues by Keohane (1990) | First-wave rock text with identical or similar character/representation of Irish/Irishness |
|--|---|
| Brendan Behan | Phil Lynott: 'Black Rose', <i>Black Rose</i> (1979) |
| Irish Literary Figures | Van Morrison 'Fair Play To You', <i>Veedon Fleece</i> (1974); 'St. Dominic's Preview' <i>St Dominic's Preview</i> (1972) |
| Banshee | Phil Lynott: 'Banshee', <i>Fighting</i> (1974) |
| Jesse James | Rory Gallagher 'Out on the Western Plain', <i>Against the</i> |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| | <i>Grain</i> (1975); Van Morrison: ‘Crazy Face’, <i>His Band and the Street Choir</i> (1971) |
| The Labourer/Images of Work | Phil Lynott: ‘Return of The Farmer’, <i>Thin Lizzy</i> (1971); ‘Chatting Today’, <i>Shades of A Blue Orphanage</i> (1972); Van Morrison : ‘I’ve Been Working’ <i>His Band And The Street Choir</i> (1970) |
| The Boozer | Phil Lynott: ‘Borderline Case’, <i>Johnny The Fox</i> (1976); Rory Gallagher: ‘Too Much Alcohol’, <i>Irish Tour</i> (1974); Van Morrison: ‘Linden Arden Stole The Highlights’, <i>Veedon Fleece</i> (1974) |
| The Soldier | Van Morrison : ‘Cypress Avenue’, <i>Astral Weeks</i> (1968); Phil Lynott: ‘Whiskey in the Jar’ (1972); ‘Massacre’, <i>Johnny the Fox</i> (1975); ‘Soldier of Fortune’, <i>Bad Reputation</i> (1978) |
| The Socialist Idealist | Phil Lynott: ‘Freedom Song’, <i>Fighting</i> , 1974; ‘Fight or Fall’, <i>Jailbreak</i> (1975); Van Morrison: ‘Tupelo Honey’, <i>Tupelo Honey</i> (1971) |
| Images of the Dead | Phil Lynott: ‘Spirit Slips Away’, ‘Suicide’, ‘Wild One’, <i>Fighting</i> (1974); ‘Warriors’ , ‘Massacre’, ‘Emerald’, <i>Jailbreak</i> (1976) |
| Images of Fighting | Phil Lynott: ‘Showdown’, <i>Nightlife</i> (1974); ‘Fighting My Way Back’; <i>Fighting</i> (1975); ‘The Boys Are Back In Town’, <i>Jailbreak</i> (1976); ‘Johnny’, <i>Johnny the Fox</i> (1976); ‘Soldier’s Song’, <i>Bad Reputation</i> (1978) |
| Images of Sex/Copulation | Phil Lynott: ‘Sha La La’, <i>Live and Dangerous</i> (1978); ‘For |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| | Those Who Love To Live', <i>Fighting</i> (1975); Van Morrison: 'Moondance', 'Into the Mystic', <i>Moondance</i> , 1970; 'I've Been Working', <i>His Band and the Street Choir</i> (1970) |
| Images of Religion | Phil Lynott: 'She Knows', <i>Nightlife</i> (1974); 'Spirit Slips Away' <i>Fighting</i> (1975); 'Dear Lord', <i>Bad Reputation</i> (1978); Rory Gallagher, 'Could've Had Religion', <i>Live in Europe</i> (1972) |
| Images of Gambling | Rory Gallagher, 'Walk on Hot Coals', <i>Blueprint</i> (1973); Phil Lynott: 'That Woman's Gonna Break Your Heart', <i>Bad Reputation</i> (1978) |
| Images of Superstition | Rory Gallagher: 'Seventh Son of A Seventh Son', 'Walk on Hot Coals' <i>Blueprint</i> (1973); 'Maybe I Will', <i>Deuce</i> 1971; Phil Lynott: 'Sha-La-La', <i>Live and Dangerous</i> (1978) |
| Images of Travel/Emigration | Phi Lynott: 'Sweet Marie', 'Fools' Gold', <i>Johnny The Fox</i> (1976); 'Southbound', <i>Bad Reputation</i> (1978); Rory Gallagher: 'Railway and Gun', <i>On The Boards</i> (1970); 'Don't Know Where I'm Going', <i>Deuce</i> , 1971; Van Morrison: 'Astral Weeks', 'Madame George', <i>Astral Weeks</i> (1968); 'Listen To the Lion', <i>Saint Dominic's Preview</i> (1972) |

Figure 21: Types or Representations of Irish/Irishness in first-wave Irish rock texts (after Keohane, 1990)

The fact that these representations can be found in first-wave rock texts suggests that in terms of representational economy, links can be found between the two cultural strands. In the case of first-wave rock, the overt 'Irishness' of these representations is less discernible, as cultural accents, principally those from the United States and the black Atlantic, often dominate the representational process. This changed in the later 1970s, as the new-wave groups grappled with received narratives in more parodic and

critical ways; a greater emphasis on Irish instrumental music provided a more conventional associational motif for the interrogation of Irishness by the Pogues (and presented different challenges for McGowan and the group). To conclude, it is appropriate to note that Keohane's quintessentially 'Irish' / 'Oirish' figures occur throughout the musical landscapes produced by first-wave Irish rock musicians; what I am suggesting here is that in terms of strategies of representation, a discernible continuity exists between the types portrayed in first-wave rock, and those appearing later in the works of Shane McGowan, the Pogues and the second generation of Irish rock artists.

Of course, there are key differences between these styles. While the post-modern pastiche of The Pogues deals with surfaces, the rock music of the 1970s often embodied an engagement with, and search for essences or truths. Whereas punk and its aftermath accepted the artificiality of identities and of cultural and political propositions, classic rock musicians sought out truths about their social and individual worlds. What is vital here, however, is acknowledgement of the ways in which Irish rock represents a localised response to both international transformations and specifically Irish cultural preoccupations.

What I have attempted to offer is an accurate contextualisation of Irish rock, and an appreciation of its achievements. Complementing previous studies, I was concerned to show that Morrison, Lynott and Gallagher engaged with and mediated between the challenges of the post-colonial mindset, the hegemony of national imagining, the realities of internationalisation and globalisation and their desire to express aspects of

local identity. This produced a musical response which encompassed both composition and performance practice in its articulation of a progressive and musically astute synthesis of Irish and international cultural flows.

The relationship between first and second-wave artists – Sinead O'Connor, Boomtown Rats, U2 and The Pogues – is difficult to discern and quantify. This important question is one which could be addressed at length in a future study, but I want to make some initial speculations on that topic here. What is notable is that just as the first wave developed from and reacted to the antecedent culture of the showbands, of folk and beat music, the later artists also absorbed and rejected elements of the first-wave, in terms of aesthetic focus, compositional and musical style, media image and exploitation of available technologies. As stated in Chapter One, the later artists were influenced by a musical landscape which had reacted ideologically to the excesses of classic rock, and which drew its referents from a post-punk musical oeuvre that was reflexively shaped by disco, heavy metal and new wave experimentalism. In terms of infrastructure, an advanced recording and production suite was established at Windmill Lane, Dublin by Brian Masterson in 1978, giving emerging artists (including U2 and Clannad) domestic access to world-class facilities. This allowed the later groups to exploit their status as ‘Irish’ bands: these were groups who had developed, and were now produced and recorded, in Ireland. Interestingly, with the exception of The Pogues, the second-wave bands seemed to initially reject the musical articulation of Irishness; thus they can be said to follow Rory Gallagher’s strategy of immersion in international cultural flows in their early careers. The democratisation of musical style that punk enabled seemed to challenge both the complexities and gender-

bias of rock musicianship: Sinéad O'Connor was the first Irish female artist to achieve a global profile as a (alternative) rock musician.

What was interesting in the case of U2 was that the guitar, a key signifier of rock musicianship, retained a primary role in articulating their musical identity; in contrast to the increasing focus on synthesized sounds in emerging popular contexts, the group successfully traded on the associations of the guitar with rock musicianship and a ‘commitment to traditional rock values’ (Moore, 2002: 219). Dave Evans’ (The Edge) interfacing of guitar performance with emerging technologies drew in part on his identification of Rory Gallagher’s musical achievements and performance practices, which he reworked in a contemporary context through the use of studio and guitar effects. The group’s professional relationship to the first-wave bands is complex; U2 supported Thin Lizzy at Slane in 1981, before headlining themselves in 1983. U2’s and Sinead O’Connor’s public proclamations regarding Irish and global political and religious issues contrasts with the first-wave groups; contributing factors may include a more liberal social environment, and perhaps a more informed approach to media manipulation by groups of the 1980s. A future study could analyse this relationship, its complexities and consequences more closely.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s rhetorical (and now (in)famous) question of whether the subaltern can speak raises important issues about the dynamics of Irish postcolonial cultural expression, and rock in particular. Spivak’s contribution to postcolonial enquiry has been to extend the technical, grammatical and analytical potential of Derridean and Gramscian theory in order to reinstate the potential for self-representation of the poor, colonised,

female – the ‘subaltern’ of (British) imperial cultural history. Utilising (and where appropriate, challenging) the methodological tools of Marxist and post-Marxist critical theory, Spivak’s key essay on the subaltern (1988) scrutinizes the representation (and re-presentation) of certain Indian (Hindu) cultural practices.²³⁴ Beginning with a technical theoretical critique of western intellectuals’ erroneous and damaging representation of the Other, Spivak also explores the manner in which *suti*, the Bengali practice of widow sacrifice, was problematically re-constructed as a criminal act in colonizing cultural narratives. Prefiguring Young’s position with respect to the role of the academic in shaping and prolonging negative forms of discourse with respect to cultural and racial alterity, Spivak has proposed the complicity of the western academy in reproducing the essentialising discourses of the colonial enterprise – descriptions which prolong the invisibility of the subaltern woman.

Who is/are the subaltern? For Spivak, this designation includes ‘men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribals, the lowest strata of the urban subproletariat’ (Spivak, 1989: 283). Such a representation of the subaltern contrasts with the benign western model of ‘the oppressed – who, through resistance based on ‘alliance politics’, potentially ‘can speak and know their conditions’ (Spivak, 1989: 289). Spivak challenges this western conceptualization on the basis of the subject’s position with respect to the division of labour and socialized capital. In her model, the subaltern exists on the wrong side of the international division of labour, and is powerless to speak (or self-represent) as a result of this. The nature of neo-capitalism is

²³⁴ Spivak’s essay was first published in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg’s edited collection *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (1988).

such that the subaltern is engaged only in the process of commodity production; exacerbating this, the products of capitalist production are exported from the generally third-world nations in which they are produced, denying the subaltern the ability to participate in and shape commodity culture. Thus Spivak's conclusion: 'If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak...' (Spivak, 1989: 289).

The relevance of Spivak's position to the study of Irish rock exists in the potential identification and invocation of the subaltern – that is, a range of identities existing outside privileged national and international cultural discourses. While her theoretical analysis has a practical corollary – the initial sections of the essay can be read as Spivak's intellectual preparation for the subsequent deconstruction of epistemic violence visited on Indian cultural discourses – the difficulty I perceive with Spivak's position is her identification of the subaltern as an underclass. Looking at the case of Irish rock, the subaltern voice is not drawn from an underprivileged, unrepresented underclass disadvantaged in terms of commodities. In the Irish case, the subaltern needs to describe those whose cultural location exists outside of widely held narratives of cultural singularity, whether North or South of the border, and this needs to be regardless of class affiliation. However, developing Spivak's position, I argue that Irish rock proposes that the subaltern can indeed speak and sing. The rock text presents a conscious challenge to the primarily unconscious processes and narratives of national affiliation, on the one hand, and affirmation of colonial cultural domination on the other. In so doing, it reverses the epistemic violence of an imperial and colonial project on the one hand, and a conservative nationalist-oriented representation of Ireland and Irishness on the other. Thus, the achievement of Van Morrison, Phil Lynott and Rory

Gallagher is illustrative of the manner in which first-wave Irish rock embodies the subaltern – a hybrid, decisive and vital corpus of subjectivities – and does in fact speak.

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