

'Rory Gallagher's Leprechaun Boogie': Irish Stereotyping in the International Music Press

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Introduction

For centuries, the Irish have been stereotyped as uncivilised, drunk, ignorant, crafty and superstitious.¹ These stereotypes first emerged in the sixteenth century following the colonisation of Ireland by mostly Protestant settlers from Great Britain.² However, they grew rapidly from the late eighteenth century onwards as a result of increased political tensions across the island and mass emigration following the Great Famine (1845-1849), which led the popular press to produce crude caricatures of the Irish rooted in prejudice that spread to the mass reading public across Great Britain, the USA and Australia.³ After a period of relatively stable Anglo-Irish relations in the interwar years (1918-1939), anti-Irish sentiment became pervasive once again following the breakout of The Troubles in the late 1960s.⁴

This anti-Irish sentiment spilled over into popular culture, where xenophobic cartoons and comedic sketches that harked back to the Victorian age were revived and became a regular feature of daily life throughout the 1970s and 1980s, thereby reinforcing stereotypes and socially acceptable attitudes about the Irish.⁵ These attitudes were also embraced by the international music press, who frequently framed Irish musicians in relation to typical Irish stereotypes or disparagingly overemphasised their nationality.⁶ While many of these references sought to be

¹ Douglas Curtis, *Apes and Angels: the Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1971); Roy Douglas, Liam Harte and Jim O'Hara, *A Cartoon History of Anglo-Irish Relations 1798-1998* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1998); Michael De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

² Elizabeth Malcolm, *Ireland Free: Drink and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

³ D.G. Paz, 'Anti-Catholicism, Anti-Irish Stereotyping, and Anti-Celtic Racism in Mid-Victorian Working-Class Periodicals', *Albion* 18.4 (1986): 601-616; Kerry Soper, 'From Swarthy Ape to Sympathetic Everyman and Subversive Trickster: The Development of Irish Caricature in American Comic Strips between 1890 and 1920', *Journal of American Studies* 39.2 (2005): 257-296; Padhraig Higgins, 'Paddies Evermore: Stereotypes and Irish National Identity in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 33 (2018): 61-86.

⁴ Enya Holland, 'Anti-Irish Sentiment in Modern Britain.' *The York Historian*, 8 March 2018, <https://theyorkhistorian.com/2018/03/18/anti-irish-sentiment-in-modern-britain>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁵ John Nagle, "'Everybody is Irish on St. Paddy's': Ambivalence and Alterity at London's St. Patrick's Day 2002', *Identities* 12.4 (2006): 563-583.

⁶ Matteo Cullen, *Vagabonds of the Western World(s): Continuities, Tensions and the Development of Irish Rock Music, 1968-78* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Limerick, 2012); Sean Campbell, 'Ethnicity and Cultural Criticism: Evocations and Elisions of Irishness in the British Music Press', *Celtic Cultural Studies* (2007), https://web.archive.org/web/20090818043242fw_/http://www.celtic-cultural-studies.com:80/papers/01/campbell-01.html. Accessed 15 December 2022.

comical rather than overtly malicious, they wrapped prejudice in a 'cloak of fun and frivolity',⁷ which made it seem harmless and trivial. However, such disparagement humour could, in fact, foster discrimination against targeted groups by moulding (negative) public opinion of what it meant to be Irish, which was particularly concerning at a time when Anglo-Irish tensions were already high.

This paper seeks to explore the presence of Irish stereotyping in the international music press using a case study of the Irish blues rock musician Rory Gallagher (1948-1995). Born in Donegal and raised in Cork, Gallagher was part of the power trio Taste and went on to have huge solo success over a career spanning three decades. The study uses a dataset of 600 articles about Gallagher published between 1968 and 1998 (the start and end of The Troubles) and gathered from three sources: the Rory Gallagher fan websites RoryOn!! and Rewriting Rory, and the British Newspaper Archive. It draws upon a combination of corpus and thematic analysis to identify frequently occurring Irish stereotypes and how they were used to describe Gallagher, embedding arguments in postcolonial theory, particularly the work of Homi K. Bhabha. Specifically, the analysis explores the different (often mutually incompatible) stereotypical roles into which Gallagher was unwillingly cast by the music press who drew heavily on his Irish nationality. This stereotyping took attention away from his music and, in doing so, downplayed his important contribution to the world of blues and rock.

While numerous studies exist on the way that Irish people have been historically stereotyped or discriminated against, either in the popular press⁸ or in Anglo society,⁹ to date, there has been a dearth of research on the music press and how ideas about what it means to be Irish are constructed.¹⁰ Exploring this context is important because it demonstrates how a sustained focus on nationality offers a reductionist meaning of Irishness, classifying every aspect of a musician's identity as an innate part of being Irish and, therefore, glossing over other factors. When such references are viewed both collectively and longitudinally, it becomes apparent how what might be deemed as 'throwaway remarks' or 'harmless banter' can, in fact, be destructive

⁷ Thomas E. Ford, 'Psychology behind the unfunny consequences of jokes that denigrate.' *The Conversation*, 7 December 2016, <https://theconversation.com/psychology-behind-the-unfunny-consequences-of-jokes-that-denigrate-63855>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁸ Curtis; Douglas, Harte and O'Hara; De Nie.

⁹ Christie Davies, 'Language, identity and ethnic jokes about stupidity', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 65 (1987): 39–52; Bronwen Walter, "'Shamrocks Growing out of their Mouths": Language and the Racialisation of the Irish in Britain', *Language, Labour and Migration* ed. Anne J. Kershen (London: Routledge, 2017), 57–73; Bronwen Walter, 'Voices in other ears: "accents" and identities of the first- and second-generation Irish in England', *Neocolonial Mentalities in Contemporary Europe?* eds. Guido Rings and Anne Ife (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008): 174-182; Louise Ryan and Edina Kurdi, "'Always up for the craic": young Irish professional migrants narrating ambiguous positioning in contemporary Britain', *Social Identities* 21.3 (2015): 257–272; Shane Walshe, 'Salience and stereotypes: The construction of Irish identity in Irish jokes', *Irish Identities*, ed. Raymond Hickey and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501507687>.

¹⁰ For exceptions, see Gerry Smyth, 'Paddy Sad and Paddy Mad: Music and the Condition of Irishness', *Music in Irish Cultural History*, ed. Gerry Smyth (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 51–64; Gerry Smyth, 'Musical Stereotyping and Irish Identity: The Case of The Pogues', *Music and Irish Identity: Celtic Tiger Blues*, ed. Gerry Smyth (London: Routledge, 2017), 74–88.

and perpetuate long-held stereotypes that have their roots in colonial discourse. The study, thus, will build upon the existing body of work on Irish stereotypes and prejudices by contributing new findings on the music press and how it plays a pivotal role in shaping audiences' understandings of musicians, particularly in relation to nationality. On a secondary level, it will also offer new information on Rory Gallagher – a musician who has thus far been overlooked in academic research¹¹ – and go some way to recovering his musical integrity and safeguarding his legacy.

In what follows, I outline the five most frequently occurring themes to emerge from my analysis (the Irish as violent troublemakers; the Irish as heavy drinkers; the 'Irish' way of talking, the Irish as 'dumb Paddys'; Irish folklore and traditional ways of life) and demonstrate how the music press built on a long historical tradition of mocking the Irish to unfairly link these stereotypes to Gallagher. These stereotypes occurred throughout the entire period of The Troubles and across the entire international music press, but were particularly prominent in the 1970s and in British newspapers/magazines – a period when political violence was at its worse and Gallagher was at the height of his popularity. In all 600 articles consulted, Gallagher's Irish identity is always mentioned and, in many cases, foregrounded, with a particular focus on traits he possesses that are considered to be distinctly Irish or manipulated for 'humorous' effect to fit with expectations of how an Irish person should be.

Stereotypes, Ireland and the Music Press: A Postcolonial Perspective

Before looking at the way in which Rory Gallagher was portrayed in the music press, it is important to understand the derivation and function of stereotypes more generally and how they work to (re)produce discourses of power, as well as their specific relevance to an Irish context. According to Hook,¹² racial stereotypes are a 'potent kind of reification' that concretises racist notions into actual people, situations and experiences in order to establish a 'truth'. These stereotypes are heavily bound to colonial discourse and operate by construing the colonised – i.e., the Other – as 'less human, less civilised, as child or savage, wild man, animal, or headless mass'¹³ in order to justify conquest. Essential to this ideological construction of otherness is the concept of 'fixity'¹⁴ which can be defined as a sign of cultural, historical and racial difference. However, fixity is paradoxical because it exaggerates the differences of the Other, yet formulates a category of sameness to make them stable and rigid.¹⁵

¹¹ For exceptions, see Lauren Alex O'Hagan, "'Rory played the greens, not the blues": Expressions of Irishness on the Rory Gallagher YouTube Channel', *Irish Studies Review*, 29.3 (2021): 348–369; Lauren Alex O'Hagan, 'Fashioning the People's Guitarist: The Mythologization of Rory Gallagher in the International Music Press', *Rock Music Studies* 9.2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/19401159.2022.2048988>; Lauren Alex O'Hagan, "'It's always nice to head for home": Music-Making, Sense of Place, and Corkonian Identity in the Rory Gallagher Irish Tour '74 Documentary'. *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland* 17 (2022), 47–77. .

¹² Derek Hook, 'The Racial Stereotype, Colonial Discourse, Fetishism and Racism', *Psychoanalytic Review* 92.5: 727.

¹³ Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 75.

¹⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, Routledge, 1994), 66.

¹⁵ Hook.

The stereotype is a discursive articulation of fixity, constantly moving between what is already 'in place' and what must be 'anxiously repeated' at both the level of discourse and identity.¹⁶ This duality creates an ambivalence, which gives the stereotype currency and ensures its iterability across time and contexts, but also recognises its ability to disrupt the authority of 'fixed' meanings.¹⁷ While stereotypes inform 'strategies of individuation and marginalisation', they are an untrue depiction of what is real and are always 'in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed'.¹⁸ Building upon the work of Frantz Fanon,¹⁹ Homi K. Bhabha establishes a psychoanalytic view of stereotypes, linking them to Freud's concept of 'fetishism', which here serves as a balancing act between what colonisers fear and desire. In other words, fetishism creates a sense of order and control by holding a given belief structure in place, thus normalising difference and concentrating it within a circumscribed set of identity attributes.²⁰

Given Ireland's turbulent geopolitical history, this type of postcolonial view, which 'widens, instead of narrows, the interpretative perspective'²¹ is well suited for the study of stereotypes. However, the relevance of postcolonialism to Irish Studies has been strongly debated since the early 1980s. For some, issues lie in the matter of whether Ireland can really be considered a colony, given its geographical location and predominantly white population, which challenges some of the constitutive categories of colonial discourse.²² For others, postcolonialism risks giving 'intellectual succour'²³ to the Provisional IRA or emphasises negative aspects of Ireland's relationship with the United Kingdom, despite the fact that Irish nationalists rarely conceived their historical experience in colonial terms and many Irish people were, in fact, 'enthusiastic co-partners and beneficiaries' in the British Empire.²⁴ McClintock, on the other hand, sees the 'post' aspect of the term as problematic because it implies a form of historical closure when there is an absence of ending and an inability to return to a 'clean', pre-colonial identity in the case of Northern Ireland.²⁵ Despite these concerns, postcolonial perspectives on Ireland have continued to develop over the last few decades and are generally considered to offer a better understanding of how Irish social and cultural development was (and to some extent, still is) mediated by colonial capitalism.²⁶ This is particularly the case when it comes to stereotypes, which are deeply embedded in Ireland's contested past and rely on 'prejudice, anticipation and systematisation of human behaviour' to categorise and judge other people.²⁷

¹⁶ Bhabha, 66.

¹⁷ Emmie McFadden, 'Hyde and Seek: English-Irish Hybridity in Stephen Frears' *Mary Reilly*', *Irish Studies Review* 19.1 (2011): 71.

¹⁸ Bhabha, 66.

¹⁹ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

²⁰ Hook, 722–723. .

²¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 179.

²² Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996).

²³ Joe Cleary, *Outrageous Fortune: Capital and Culture in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Field Day Publications, 2007), 19.

²⁴ Cleary, 21.

²⁵ Anne McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism".' *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 84–98.

²⁶ Gibbons; Cleary; Noel McLaughlin and Martin McLoone, *Rock and Popular Music in Ireland Before and After U2* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2012).

²⁷ John Morris, 'Introduction: On Stereotypes and Stereotyping', *Exploring Stereotyped Images in Victorian and Twentieth-Century Literature and Society*, ed. John Morris (Lewiston: Mellen, 1993), 1.

According to Smyth,²⁸ Irish stereotypes 'circulate freely' in society and emerge whenever the 'slightest exposure to Irish cultural activity' takes place. This is highly apparent in the context of music where, as McLaughlin and McLoone²⁹ note, the Irish are generally seen by the British press as 'too alike for difference to matter', except when it comes to oversimplistic stereotypes. Thus, Irish musicians are thrust into a 'liminal zone',³⁰ where their difference is often overlooked (e.g. described as 'English' or 'British' rather than 'Irish') or they are confined to narrow definitions of Irishness (e.g. centred around talking, drinking and fighting). Not only are the Irish viewed as an inherently musical 'race', but they are also frequently split into what Smyth³¹ terms the 'Paddy Sad/Paddy Mad' dichotomy.³² Although a dichotomy, the two characterisations often strangely coexist, which fits with Bhabha's notion that chains of stereotypes tend to be a 'polymorphous and perverse [...] articulation of multiple beliefs'.³³

The 'Paddy Sad' stereotype taps into Ireland's long history of dispossession and defeat; under this declensionist narrative, the character is 'late' or about to be 'rendered obsolete', which results in feelings of melancholy or nostalgia.³⁴ In contrast, the 'Paddy Mad' stereotype connotes pleasure and excess as a response to the disappointments of everyday reality; 'implied subservience' has led this character to 'give up on reality' and 'embrace the oblivion' which has preselected him/her.³⁵ Smyth traces the origins of the dichotomy to the medieval Irish text *Cath Maige Tuired*, which makes reference to two types of music: *genntraigí* (joyful music) and *golltraigí* (sorrowful music). However, he argues that it was twentieth-century composer Seán Ó Riada who made Paddy Mad and Paddy Sad 'respectable and recognisable figures within the Irish cultural landscape' by giving Irishness 'a sound' whose limited registers captured the Irish emotional response to the world.³⁶ Ó Riada's impact has since moved into the realm of Irish popular music, with bands like Horslips and The Pogues subscribing to modern articulations of the 'Paddy Sad/Paddy Mad' dichotomy. According to Smyth,³⁷ The Pogues represent a 'limit case' in the way that their music juxtaposes aggression and alcohol-fuelled violence with a darkly, melancholic perspective of failure, excess and loss. However, in other cases, it is the (largely

²⁸ Smyth, 59.

²⁹ McLaughlin and McLoone, 151.

³⁰ McLaughlin and McLoone, 151. .

³¹ Smyth; Smyth.

³² According to McLaughlin and McLoone (156), U2 frontman Bono is one of the few Irish musicians to circumvent the Paddy Mad/Paddy Sad dichotomy, offering a voice that counters colonial stereotypes. However, they note that Bono is still mocked by the press for his 'subjective philosophising' on sociopolitical matters.

³³ Bhabha (82) gives the example of the Black man who is both 'savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces'.

³⁴ Smyth, 52.

³⁵ Smyth, 52.

³⁶ Smyth, 57.

³⁷ Smyth, 58.

Anglo) music press itself who are responsible for framing Irish musicians in this way, as we will see in the analysis on Rory Gallagher below.

The Irish as Violent Troublemakers

One of the most widely circulated Irish stereotypes relates to violence, which draws on a deeply entrenched history dating back to the seventeenth century. This image emerged from British propaganda following key events in Irish political history, such as the Plantation of Ulster and the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland, and was cemented over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as revolutionary groups were established as part of Ireland's struggle to become an independent republic.³⁸ As the island of Ireland grew increasingly turbulent during the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921) and the subsequent Irish Civil War (1922-1923), followed in the late 1960s by The Troubles, the entire population became framed as 'dangerous' and 'suspicious'.³⁹ This discrimination often cascaded into the music press, where Irish musicians were referenced in relation to revolutionary violence and crime.⁴⁰ Although these references were typically made in a covert, tongue-in-cheek manner, they were obvious enough for readers to make connections and, therefore, contributed to overall negative discourse around being Irish.

Live rock performances are frequently described with war metaphors to emphasise their aggression and power. However, an examination of articles about Irish rock performances, particularly in the period of The Troubles, reveals a noticeable trend in localising this through the inclusion of nationality, which can be seen as playing up to the 'Paddy Mad'⁴¹ stereotype. In the case of Rory Gallagher, for example, articles mention his '*Irish* Rory attack',⁴² describe him as playing 'rebel songs'⁴³ and being part of a 'gang of *Irish* street-fighters',⁴⁴ and frame his music as being full of 'gunpowder'.⁴⁵ All of the above references draw on different aspects of Irish political turbulence and rebellion, whether in the context of Fenianism, The Troubles, organised crime

³⁸ Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³⁹ Paddy Hillyard, *Suspect Community* (London: Pluto Press, 1993); Mairtin Macan Ghaill, 'The Irish in Britain: The invisibility of ethnicity and anti-Irish racism', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 26.1 (2000): 137-147. In addition to being politically violent, Irish men have also historically been depicted as domestically abusive, especially after the consumption of alcohol. These stereotypes were spread through vaudeville and caricatures in the popular press, gaining particular prominence in the US and Australia in a bid to position Irish immigrants as racially distinct and inferior to native-born American and Australian citizens (see Dianne Hall, "'Now him White Man: Images of the Irish in Colonial Australia', *History Australia* 11.2 (2014): 167-195; Jennifer Mooney, *Irish Stereotypes in Vaudeville, 1865-1905* (London: Palgrave, 2015).

⁴⁰ The Rock's Backpages archive (<https://www.rocksbackpages.com>) has been consulted to gain a general overview of how other Irish musicians have been historically portrayed in the music press.

⁴¹ Smyth.

⁴² Everynight Charley Crespo, 'Here Comes the Irish Rory Attack,' *Relix*, August 1979, <http://www.roryon.com/crespo.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁴³ G. Zimmermann, 'On the Road Again', *Guitars et Claviers*, February 1989, https://rewritingrorygallagher.blogspot.com/p/1989_30.html. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁴⁴ Richard Gold, 'Rory Gallagher—Irish Flannel and a '63 Fender', *Circus*, March 1976, <http://www.roryon.com/upstarts.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁴⁵ Roy Hollingworth, 'Gunpowder, Guinness and Guitars', *Hit Parader*, March 1975, <http://www.roryon.com/gun.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

syndicates (the Irish Mob) or even the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, which was led by a group of Catholics. This, in turn, invokes a stereotypical image of Gallagher as an agitated 'Paddy Mad' figure, loosely tying him to different forms of 'desperate' extremism due to a disillusionment with everyday life. The deliberate inclusion of 'Irish' or references to 'rebels' at a time when Ireland was constantly in the news for its ethno-nationalist conflict manipulates the dual movement of the stereotype between 'fixity' and 'repeatability',⁴⁶ thereby perpetuating the 'truth' about the Irish as violent, yet seeking to make light of the situation through attempts at humour.

Gallagher himself was often dragged into debates about The Troubles in interviews, but refused to comment beyond stating that he would never write political lyrics, even though he had 'strong emotional opinions' about Ireland.⁴⁷ He was also one of the few musicians who continued to play Belfast throughout The Troubles, arguing that young people in the north should not be deprived of hearing live music.⁴⁸ According to Gallagher's brother Dónal, Gallagher was not afraid to perform in Belfast because his concerts attracted both unionists and nationalists.⁴⁹ However, the music press often simplified this decision and, by the same token, the conflict by stating that 'being a good old Irish lad', Gallagher did not see the dangers of playing in a 'strike [sic] ridden violence torn country'.⁵⁰ Such value-laden language not only suggests that violence is so much a part of everyday life in Ireland that Gallagher is desensitised or somewhat naïve, but also hints at where his sympathies might lie for refusing to ignore the north. As Bhabha notes, chains of stereotypes are often 'curiously mixed and split',⁵¹ with the separation between *before* and *after* being dramatised; we see this here where Gallagher is depicted as an 'innocent' person (before) who has become caught up in and accustomed to the violence that now afflicts Ireland (after).

A more intentionally discriminative article comes from the Australian press, where Gallagher's concert at the Palais Theatre in Melbourne is described as having 'more force than an IRA bomb'.⁵² The article also uses a series of militaristic puns to support this claim: 'left [the audience] numb', 'brutal', 'ferocious rumbling', 'reeling if not battered', 'fiery', 'mercilessly thrashed'. Armstrong⁵³ describes 1970s Australia as a place full of 'anti-Irish racism', which he

⁴⁶ Bhabha.

⁴⁷ Frankenhooker (pseud.), 'Rory Gallagher Ruisrock Festival 1975', 18 July 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L_OkRfHep4&t=4s. Accessed 15 December 2022. (Privately, Gallagher supported a united Ireland).

⁴⁸ Roy Hollingworth, 'Music for Belfast', *Melody Maker*, 8 January 1972, <http://www.roryon.com/Belfast.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁴⁹ Dan Muise, *Gallagher, Marriott, Derringer & Trower: Their Lives and Music* (New York: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2002), 231.

⁵⁰ Tom Harrison, 'Rory Gallagher', *Beetle*, October 1974, <http://www.roryon.com/bluesboy179.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁵¹ Bhabha, 82.

⁵² Kim Trengrove, 'Rory Strums Up a Storm', *The Sun*, 25 June 1980 <http://shadowplays.com/blog/?p=881>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁵³ Mick Armstrong, 'Anti-Irish racism in Australian history', *Red Flag*, 27 January 2017, <https://redflag.org.au/node/5651>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

attributes to the strong opposition to Catholicism and the influence of British imperialism. Here, these descriptors seem to have been deliberately chosen by the journalist to feed into this rhetoric, tapping into the well-worn 'Paddy Mad' stereotype accordingly. The day after the article was published, Gallagher, in fact, was subject to anti-Irish sentiment when he was ejected by management from the Wrest Point Casino in Hobart who taunted him and called him an 'obnoxious little bastard',⁵⁴ despite being well known in the music industry for his gentle demeanour. Although there is no cause and effect between the article and the event, it, nonetheless, highlights the dangers of 'banter' and how the free circulation of stereotypes can lead those in positions of power (in this case, the casino management) to exercise certain phantasmatic control over the world. By turning Gallagher into a metonym for 'violence' based simply on his Irish accent, they seek to ensure the stereotype's 'efficacy'.⁵⁵

While the article is deliberately playful in nature, as van Leeuwen⁵⁶ notes, these types of texts are powerful because their ideological meanings are hidden behind the façade that they are 'just a bit of fun'. They, therefore, have a more subtle persuasive power in shaping public views on what it means to be Irish, creating a complex 'identity' that stems both from the recognition/mastery of difference and its disavowal/defence.⁵⁷ Gallagher had first-hand experience of The Troubles, having lived in Belfast in the late 1960s and spent the first eight years of his life in Derry (his father's hometown); some of his Derry schoolfriends, in fact, ended up in internments following the British Army's Operation Demetrius.⁵⁸ Therefore, what might be seen as throwaway remarks by journalists could actually have broader implications for the Irish musicians they involved. Not only do they trivialise the Northern Irish conflict and downplay its emotional impact on Irish people, such as Gallagher, but they even risk associating him with something of which he was not part, evoking animosity towards him.

In other cases, Irish journalists themselves deliberately draw upon the age-old stereotype of the Irish being violent for humorous effect. This mimicry serves as a performance that exposes the artificiality of the stereotype as a symbolic expression of power and aims to recuperate a position of strength.⁵⁹ This is most apparent in an article by Northern Irish journalist Harry Doherty, headlined 'Irish fugitive is caught',⁶⁰ which draws on the type of headlines that were extremely common in British newspapers throughout the 1970s as many paramilitaries fled and often made their way across the Atlantic. Doherty deliberately parodies the discourse

⁵⁴ Anon, 'Guitarist Gallagher Ejected', *Billboard*, 13 September 1980, <http://www.roryon.com/ejected.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁵⁵ Bhabha, 81.

⁵⁶ Theo van Leeuwen, 'Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodality', *Contemporary Critical Discourse Studies*, eds. Christopher Hart and Piotr Cap (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 288.

⁵⁷ Bhabha.

⁵⁸ Ezequiel, 'Music for the Ears', *This Is Rock*, October 2022, <https://rewritingrorygallagher.blogspot.com/p/magic-for-ears-this-is-rock-october-2022.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁵⁹ Bhabha, Chapter 4.

⁶⁰ Harry Doherty, 'Irish Fugitive is Caught', *DISC*, 5 October 1974, <http://www.roryon.com/fugitive409.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

surrounding The Troubles, as apparent in the main body of text, which suggests that Gallagher is fleeing, has been caught by the police and is now under interrogation:

Caught at last! After a three-week manhunt, the victim is in a corner, trapped, he must squeal. The victim is Irishman, Rory Gallagher, a reputable guitarist, and the information wanted: up-to-date report on his mission in the United States of America and other matters pertaining to his band. Gallagher won't get away this time. 'Keep your eyes on him', they told me. 'He's a crafty one'. They were right. Even as we are introduced, his eyes scan the surroundings, constantly searching out an escape route, but there are none.

The description of Gallagher as 'crafty' with his eyes 'constantly searching out an escape route' plays upon the long-standing stereotype of the Irish as shifty tricksters,⁶¹ while a later statement that he 'spends 90 per cent of his time running from continent to continent, from country to country, city to city' frames his tours in a sinister manner as if he were on the run. The article concludes by asserting that 'Gallagher took his chance' when the journalist looked down at his notepad, and 'was away like a shot'.

There is a well-established tradition of marginalised groups using humour as a coping mechanism to deal with hardship and threats, which worked as a survival strategy and alleviates pent-up pressures.⁶² Here, Doherty clearly draws upon this tradition, pastiching a familiar format in the British press to subtly critique the stereotypical view that all Irish people were terrorists. Gallagher himself also occasionally adopted similar strategies in interviews: when asked in 1972, for example, what 'a lad from Ireland' was doing in the USA, he jokingly replied that he was there 'to collect bombs for the cause'.⁶³ By performing an expected stereotype, Gallagher offers an 'ironic compromise' to the dominant view of the Irish at the time, showcasing just how hollow such 'codes' of Irishness are.⁶⁴ Speaking more honestly in a 1979 interview, Gallagher stated that he gets the 'odd quip' in England because of his nationality,⁶⁵ while following the Harrods bombing by the IRA in 1983, he and his brother Dónal both expressed concern that they might be issued with ID cards.⁶⁶ These snapshots indicate the harsh realities that Irish people living in Britain faced, or in Fanon's terms, the 'dramas' enacted every day in postcolonial societies.⁶⁷

The Irish as Heavy Drinkers

Just as with the association between being Irish and being violent, there is a long-standing belief that Irish people are prone to excessive drinking. Again, this stereotype of the 'Irish drunkard' materialised in the sixteenth century, propagated by the British as 'justification' for their

⁶¹ Curtis; Douglas, Harte and O'Hara; De Nie.

⁶² D.H. Monro, *Argument of Laughter* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1951).

⁶³ Rory Gallagher, *Cleveland Calling Part 1* (Chess Records, 2020), vinyl record.

⁶⁴ Bhabha, 86.

⁶⁵ Adam Sweeting, 'Gallagher: The Rory Details', *BEAT Instrumental*, March 1979, <https://www.roryon.com/beat.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁶⁶ Philip Nolan, 'The Man with the Golden Fingers', *Evening Herald*, 30 December 1983, <http://www.roryon.com/fingers193.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁶⁷ Fanon, 129.

attempted colonisation of what they deemed to be an 'uncivilised' nation.⁶⁸ This stereotype developed further following the Act of Union in 1800 and was spread through the popular press, with caricatures of Irish people as drunkards commonly used to ridicule Ireland and emphasise that the country was not capable of running itself.⁶⁹ While drink was often used by male rural labourers to survive the harsh conditions of winter or even to relieve sexual tension as many led celibate lives, Ireland had consistently moderate per capita alcohol consumption figures throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, the hard-drinking stereotype was consolidated in the public imagination and reinforced following the Great Famine and mass emigration to North America. Fearful of these largely Catholic new arrivals and the threat that they posed to the job market, members of America's growing Protestantism movement produced posters and propaganda leaflets depicting the Irish as lawless, lazy and drunk. Similar patterns of overt anti-Irish sentiment can also be observed in Britain well up until the 1990s.⁷¹ Even today, the stereotype persists, with television shows and films often depicting the Irish as heavy drinkers⁷² – an image furthered by the internationalisation of St Patrick's Day and its surrounding drinking culture.

While alcohol is often associated with the stereotypical rock & roll lifestyle, there is a disconcerting historical trend of the music press particularly emphasising or playing up alcohol consumption in the context of Irish musicians, typically in a sarcastic manner. Just as with the 'Irish as violent troublemakers' stereotype, this framing links to the 'Paddy Mad' figure, articulating alcohol as a localised form of 'Bacchanalian' excess and carnivalesque festivity.⁷³ Historical articles on Thin Lizzy, Horslips, Boomtown Rats and The Pogues frequently make reference to not just drinking, but the *Irish* penchant for drinking, commenting on Guinness and whiskey in particular. Rory Gallagher – the topic of this paper – was no exception to this rule, with headlines such as 'Gunpowder, Guinness and Guitars'⁷⁴ or claims that all he requires is his Fender Stratocaster and 'a few pints of Guinness' to get 'in the mood' to perform.⁷⁵ Such examples firmly embed alcohol into the context of being an *Irish* musician, rather ludicrously equating Gallagher's ability to play guitar with his capacity to drink Guinness. Again, this stereotype operates by exaggerating the differences of the 'Other', yet formulating a category of sameness to make them stable or 'reliably knowable'.⁷⁶ Not only do these connections play upon

⁶⁸ Alice Mauger, 'A great race of drinkers? Irish interpretations of alcoholism and drinking stereotypes, 1945–1975', *Medical History* 65.1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1017/mdh.2020.51>.

⁶⁹ Curtis; Douglas, Harte and O'Hara; De Nie.

⁷⁰ Diarmaid Ferriter, 'Drink and Society in Twentieth-Century Ireland', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 115C (2015), 1–21.

⁷¹ Livia Gershon, 'Drunkards! How an Anti-Irish Stereotype Began', *Yonkers Tribune*, 14 March 2017, '<https://www.yonkertribune.com/2017/03/drunks-how-an-anti-irish-stereotype-began-by-livia-gershon>'. Accessed 15 December 2022.; Richard Stivers, *Hair of the Dog: Irish Drinking and Its American Stereotype* (London: Continuum, 2019).

⁷² John O'Flynn. *Music, the Moving Image and Ireland, 1897–2017* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

⁷³ Smyth, 52.

⁷⁴ Hollingworth.

⁷⁵ Jerry Gilbert. 'Rory - Working Man's Guitarist', *Sounds*, 10 February 1973, <http://www.roryon.com/gilbert1.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁷⁶ Hook, 702.

deeply entrenched Irish stereotypes, but, in the case of Gallagher, they are factually inaccurate: he rarely drank alcohol before or during a concert because he wanted to remain fully focused on performing.⁷⁷

When reporting on the backstage setting, journalists tend to mention the drinks on offer, giving special attention to the presence of Guinness or Jameson's Whiskey. 'What are the first things you expect to notice...?' asks Jerry Gilbert of *Sounds*,⁷⁸ before answering 'a few bottles of Guinness, for sure' and 'a drop 'o the hard stuff'. Most articles fail to mention the fact that there were also bottles of Coca Cola and ham sandwiches backstage, that the Rory Gallagher Band's rider was extremely modest compared to other bands, and that most of the food and drink was handed out to journalists, fans and crew members, not consumed by Gallagher and his band.⁷⁹ By choosing to overemphasise the presence of alcohol and specifically *Irish* alcohol, the music press fed into the stereotype of the Irish as hard drinking. This stands as a clear example of how images of differences can be used to articulate both phobias and fetishes, which opens 'the royal road to colonial fantasy'.⁸⁰ In other words, the presence of alcohol offered a 'fixed' meaning of Irishness for journalists to latch onto, serving as a shortcut to stabilise their understanding and reiterate the 'hard-drinking' stereotype.

In a similar vein, whenever Gallagher is interviewed, articles tend to adopt a sarcastic tone to highlight his drink of choice ('he was, you guessed it, supping Guinness'⁸¹) or state that the interview took place 'over the traditional past-time of the Irish... drinking'.⁸² The fact that Gallagher drinks several beers in one interview is put down to the fact that 'he isn't an Irishman for nothing',⁸³ unfairly framing alcohol consumption as an instinctive part of being Irish. In other cases, Gallagher is portrayed as having a superior knowledge of alcohol simply because of his nationality. When meeting journalist Mike Flood Page in his local pub, for example, Gallagher's comment that they 'do a superb pint of Guinness' is met with the response 'Trust an Irishman',⁸⁴ implying somewhat caustically that Gallagher should recognise good alcohol simply because he is Irish. In these examples, by living up to a stereotype, Gallagher rearticulates his presence in

⁷⁷ Yusaku Matsumura. 'Rory Gallagher: Japan Tour 1977', *Ongaku Senka*, December 1977, <http://www.roryon.com/japan77-392.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.; Muise.

⁷⁸ Jerry Gilbert, 'Rory - The Sounds Talk In', *Sounds*, 4 August 1973, <http://www.roryon.com/talkin280.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁷⁹ An example of their rider, from 9 October 1974 at the Bristol Colston Hall, can be seen here: <https://m.facebook.com/RoryGallagher/photos/a-typically-modest-backstage-rider-for-a-rory-show-at-the-colston-hall-in-bristo/10155605777931807/>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁸⁰ Bhabha, 72.

⁸¹ Steve Clarke, 'Gallagher: Blues and a Lifestyle', *New Musical Express*, 17 March 1973, <http://www.roryon.com/lifestyle246.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁸² Henry Keiluhn, 'Blues-rock simplifies it too much', *The Scene*, 22 August 1974, <http://www.roryon.com/scene266.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁸³ Hervé Muller, 'An Irishman in Paris', *Rock and Folk*. April 1974), <http://www.roryon.com/paris178.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁸⁴ Mike Flood Page, 'Rory's Story', *Sounds*, 14 December 1974, <http://www.roryon.com/sounds121474-434.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

terms of its 'otherness', unconsciously turning himself into a metonym, which weakens his position and serves as an 'effective strategy for colonial power'.⁸⁵ Again, these cavalier comments serve to bolster the 'Irish as heavy drinker' myth, while also playing down the fact that most interviews with rockstars, regardless of nationality, took place in pubs, hotels or backstage – settings conducive to alcohol consumption, particularly during rare moments of downtime between concerts.

In other cases, journalists seem disappointed when they meet Gallagher backstage or in a pub and he does not live up to the stereotype expected of him both as a rockstar and an Irishman.⁸⁶ Steve Clarke of *New Musical Express*⁸⁷ notes how there were no drugs, groupies or wild parties backstage, but rather just a few people sat around drinking Guinness and talking about music. Equally, when Gallagher retires to his hotel room on his own at 'a reasonably modest hour' with 'a good book and a crate of Guinness',⁸⁸ it goes against what is anticipated of him. As Gallagher's actions do not correspond with the 'desire' of the stereotype, he threatens to disavow this particular construct of Irishness and show that alternative perspectives are possible.⁸⁹ Equally unsettling for the press are the occasions when Gallagher is not consuming a typically Irish drink: 'one is disappointed to find him not drinking Guinness stout'⁹⁰; 'we both drank Carlsberg, not a drop of Guinness in sight'⁹¹; 'it's hard to believe that two Irishmen in Berlin wouldn't try to find a bar somewhere that had a good pint of Guinness'.⁹² Surprise is also expressed when there are Irish people in Gallagher's entourage who do not drink alcohol (e.g. 'says Aikin, with his orange juice: an Irishman who doesn't drink'⁹³) as if this is a rare sight to behold. These examples challenge 'narcissistic' authority (i.e., apparent completeness and unity of identity) and show that there is more than one way of being Irish.⁹⁴

Throughout the 1980s, Gallagher suffered declining physical and mental health, for which he was prescribed medication that led him to gain weight. Rumours abounded in the press that his changed appearance was related to alcohol consumption, although it, in fact, was caused predominantly by steroid treatment.⁹⁵ In several press articles, Gallagher's anxiety problem was

⁸⁵ Bhabha, 85.

⁸⁶ Similar feelings of disappointment have also been noted across the music press in relation to Gallagher's clothing and occasions when he was not wearing the check shirt (his typical attire) that was expected of him (cf. O'Hagan).

⁸⁷ Steve Clarke, 'Strat-toting, denim-clad Rory Gallagher,' *Sounds*, 22 June 1974, <http://www.roryon.com/NME74.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁸⁸ Allan Jones. 'Rory keeps copping bad luck', *Melody Maker*, 30 December 1978, <http://www.roryon.com/copping152.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁸⁹ Bhabha, 91.

⁹⁰ Darcy Diamond. 'Rory Gallagher - Just Straight Ahead Rock', *Rock*, May 1977, <http://www.roryon.com/diamond.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁹¹ Max Kay, 'Rory Gallagher', *Music Magazine*, June 1981, <http://www.roryon.com/max.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁹² Barry McCabe, 'Barry McCabe interviews Johnny Fean', (November 2000), <http://www.roryon.com/fean232.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁹³ Hollingworth.

⁹⁴ Bhabha, 90.

⁹⁵ Michael Ross, 'While my guitar gently weeps', *Sunday Times*, 17 May 1998, <http://www.roryon.com/rorytimes.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

unfairly linked to alcohol use and, by the same token, to being Irish. Herve Picart of *Best*,⁹⁶ for example, points out that, when Gallagher is interviewed, he is clearly 'nervous' and 'edgy' with 'trembling' hands, before going on to question whether this is due to the stresses of being on tour or 'the amber and fruity liquid' that the 'Irishman' is 'confident[ly]' ingesting. The decision to write 'Irishman' rather than 'Gallagher' and its collocation with the value-laden 'confident' hints that Picart is more inclined to believe the latter, despite not overtly stating this – an uncomfortable pattern that reoccurs across the music press when writing about Irish musicians in the context of alcohol. In these particular depictions of Gallagher, we see a co-existence of the 'Paddy Sad/Paddy Mad' dichotomy: on the one hand, his mental health problems are reduced simply to a form of innate Irish melancholy, while on the other, his alcohol consumption is framed as a localised expression of 'tragedy' and 'escapism' – both again supposedly inherent Irish traits.⁹⁷

Gallagher's long-term overreliance on prescription medication resulted in liver damage and, ultimately, a liver transplant, from which he never recovered.⁹⁸ Following his death on 14 June 1995, many obituaries and posthumous articles incorrectly attributed (and continue to attribute) this to alcohol abuse.⁹⁹ In such accounts, the myth of alcoholism and being Irish is perpetuated, François Ducray of *Rock and Folk*¹⁰⁰ describing Gallagher as 'an Irishman... who was never far from a twist of gin in a jar of beer' and Jan Akkerman telling *De Telegraaf*¹⁰¹ that 'an Irishman who doesn't drink is crazy, but an Irishman who drinks too much also is'. Drawing upon the 'Paddy Sad/Paddy Mad' dichotomy, these articles not only make an underlying assumption about Gallagher's cause of death based on the fact that he had a liver transplant, but also romantically and rather dangerously depict this as 'written in the stars' because of his Irish nationality. This subsequently feeds the 'colonial fantasy'¹⁰² around the Irish and alcohol, thereby ensuring 'stability' by ordering the world in accordance with the beliefs that this hackneyed view makes possible.

⁹⁶ Herve Picart. 'Eire de fête', *Best*, March 1982, <http://www.roryon.com/Best233.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

⁹⁷ Smyth.

⁹⁸ Muise.

⁹⁹ While Gallagher drank alcohol, he was never the heavy drinker that he was purported to be and even went through long periods of sobriety (Treacy Hogan, 'The Legend's Going Strong', *Irish Independent*, 26 June 2004, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001715/20040626/515/0060>. Accessed 15 December 2022.). As Dónal Gallagher told Robert Haagsma ('Rory Gallagher: An Irishman not to be forgotten!', *Aardschok*, July 2000, <http://www.roryon.com/Aardschock.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022), when his brother was admitted to hospital in March 1995, doctors noted that his entire body was showing internal damage from his long-term medication use; it just so happened that his liver was the most damaged organ and required urgent medical intervention.

¹⁰⁰ François Ducray. 'Rory', *Rock and Folk*, August 1995, <https://rewritingrorygallagher.blogspot.com/p/rock-and-folk-august-1995.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁰¹ Jan Akkerman, 'Famous Last Words', Transcript of Radio Hengelo interview, 21 June 1995.

¹⁰² Bhabha, 72.

The 'Irish' Way of Talking

While the stereotypes of the Irish as violent and fond of a drink come largely from historical British propaganda, the idea that the Irish possess the 'gift of the gab' has a distinctly Irish origin. According to legend, the Irish chieftain Cormac Laidir MacCarthy was involved in a lawsuit in the fifteenth century. MacCarthy pleaded with the goddess Clíodhna for help and she instructed him to kiss the first stone that he encountered on his way to court, which would give him the gift of eloquence. MacCarthy followed her advice and won his case, leading him to incorporate the 'magical' Blarney Stone into the parapet of his castle. Since then, the tale has been passed down through stories and poetry, securing its legend, and the Blarney Stone is now a lucrative tourist attraction in County Cork. The word 'Blarney', however, has acquired more negative associations, coming to mean talk which aims to charm but is often untrue. This definition emerged in the nineteenth century as increasing numbers of Irish people emigrated to Britain as a result of the Great Famine. While in typical colonial situations, the subjected were non-white and, therefore, experienced 'epidermal racial schemas'¹⁰³ (i.e., bodily embodiments of racial oppression), the Irish did not generally lend themselves to visible racial divisions, meaning that they could blend into society. Thus, it was not until they spoke that their accents revealed them as Other, which then became latched onto to poke fun at them. For the British, Irish talk became framed as nonsensical or exaggerated, while the Irish accent was mocked for its distinctive sounds, thereby serving as a 'badge of difference' of inferiority.¹⁰⁴ Even today, Irish immigrants still experience similar remarks, which maintains the myth that the Irish are unintelligible or unable to speak properly.¹⁰⁵

In the music press, these two longstanding beliefs about Irish ways of talking ('gift of the gab'/unintelligible) have historically been emphasised in articles about Irish musicians.¹⁰⁶ Subscribing to the view that the Irish accent is difficult to understand, accent is invariably mentioned in articles about Irish musicians and their speech is repeated in exaggerated phonetics (e.g. 'fook' for 'fuck'; 'tree' for 'three'), thus making them the butt of jokes. Heightened attention is also given to the speaker's ability to charm and persuade, using language confidently and eloquently simply because of his/her nationality. Both strategies can clearly be identified in articles about Rory Gallagher.

Across articles, there is a continuous push-pull between different attitudes towards Gallagher's accent. In some cases, journalists describe it as 'impenetrable',¹⁰⁷ 'funny',¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Fanon, 92.

¹⁰⁴ Davies; Walter.

¹⁰⁵ Ryan and Kurdi.

¹⁰⁶ Ryan and Kurdi.

¹⁰⁷ Nick Robertshaw, 'From Showband Kid to Electric Blues Ace', *New Musical Express*, 9 November 1974, <http://www.roryon.com/gadget250.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁰⁸ Susan Whittall, 'Rory Gallagher: The Return of the World's Best Normal Guitarist', *CREEM*, March 1979, <http://www.roryon.com/creem379.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

'strong',¹⁰⁹ 'unmistakably Irish',¹¹⁰ 'thick'¹¹¹ or, in the case of his secretary, 'as thick as a pint of Guinness.'¹¹² They often comment on how this 'Lucky Charms accent'¹¹³ can make it difficult to communicate or understand what Gallagher is saying, particularly on the telephone. However, in other cases, Gallagher's accent is seen as 'hardly perceptible',¹¹⁴ 'soft' and 'charming'¹¹⁵ and, occasionally, praise is given to its strength because it is considered to be part of Gallagher's 'down-to-earth image'.¹¹⁶ The way that Gallagher's accent is framed in two opposing ways at the same time (i.e., both unintelligible and intelligible) show up the major flaw of stereotyping, thus serving to destabilise its power.¹¹⁷

While 'accent' seems to evoke a mixture of perceptions in the music press, 'brogue' is a far more loaded term and is almost exclusively used in a negative sense to single out the Irish accent as one that is not standard and is, therefore, to be treated as a joke or even with suspicion. As Heininge¹¹⁸ notes, Irish accents 'provoke laughter' because people have been historically cued to see them as humorous. 'Thick' is a repeated collocation with 'brogue', implying incoherence and incomprehensibility, but also tapping into perceived intelligence and the 'dumb Paddy' stereotype (see section below). When Gallagher's brother Dónal speaks, for example, it is his 'thick brogue' that leads the journalist to mistake 'Mickey Mouse' for 'Mickie Most'.¹¹⁹ Gallagher's brogue is also regularly compared and associated with other famous Irish people (e.g. 'has a soft Dave Allen brogue'¹²⁰), even if these people come from completely different geographical areas of the island and do not speak in the same way. By conglomerating *all* Irish accents monolithically, no recognition is given to the unique and multiple identities across the island, therefore indicating perceived group homogeneity and excluding certain voices – a potentially dangerous approach, particularly in the context of The Troubles.

Similar notions are at work in the supposedly phonetic transcriptions of the way that both Gallagher and his brother Dónal speak: 'Do ye worry, keep drinkin' and oi'll have a car there for

¹⁰⁹ John Spain, 'Rory - still against the superstar grain', *Irish Press*, 29 December 1978, <http://www.roryon.com/grain.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹¹⁰ Rick Sanders, 'All-action Rory heads for the studio', *Record Mirror*, 9 June 1973, <http://www.roryon.com/mirror167.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹¹¹ Crespo.

¹¹² Thierry Chatain, 'The Blue Line', *Rock and Folk*, April 1982, <http://www.roryon.com/rgfr482.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹¹³ Jeff Gilbert, 'Lost & Found', *Guitar School*, March 1992, <http://www.roryon.com/school219.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹¹⁴ Anon. 'Blues and smiles on the border', *London Irish News*, 24 December 1988, <http://www.roryon.com/smiles172.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹¹⁵ Flood Page.

¹¹⁶ Spain.

¹¹⁷ Hook, 709.

¹¹⁸ Kathleen Heininge, *Buffoonery in Irish Drama: Staging Twentieth-Century Post-colonial Stereotypes* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 3.

¹¹⁹ Tom Dupree, 'Rory Gallagher: Soft Spoken Guitar Warrior.....from County Cork', *Zoo World*, 6 December 1973, <http://www.roryon.com/soft.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹²⁰ Robertshaw.

yer'¹²¹; 'Oi have Rory for you now in New York'.¹²² The transcriptions are not truly reflective of the brothers' speech (both having Cork accents), but rather play to stereotypical Irish features of speech that are more associated with Dublin, such as /ɔɪ/ in place of /aɪ/. Even in cases when 'brogue' appears to be neutral, it carries underlying stereotypes. There are claims, for example, that Gallagher's brogue has been 'softened' or 'tempered' by years of travel, which makes him sound 'articulate'¹²³ or gives him the 'gentility of a museum curator'.¹²⁴ These contribute to the persisting notion that the Irish become 'civilised' by moving abroad and that a change in their accent can bring about an overall change in their behaviour. According to Barry, such portrayals are dangerous because they depict groups as driven by emotions determined by race rather than by personality, individuality or intentional decision-making.¹²⁵

Conversely, whenever 'lilt' is used, it carries far more positive semantic prosody. 'Soft' and 'charming' are frequent collocates, with Gallagher's lilt described as reducing words into 'a quieter kind of music'¹²⁶ or even having the ability to 'charm the pants off any girl'.¹²⁷ In one case, a photograph of Gallagher is captioned 'Baby Face Irish Lilt'.¹²⁸ Despite the phrase offering little linguistic sense, it works symbolically to emphasise Gallagher's gentleness. However, it may also serve an infantilising function when viewed in conjunction with later statements in the article that describe Gallagher as looking like 'a baby' or 'a little kid' and singing 'unintelligible' lyrics that are 'definitely not music for the intellect'. Here, we see how chains of stereotypes operate, the link between accent and perceived intelligence continually repeated so as to ensure a 'successful signification' of Irishness embedded in both fixity and phantasma.¹²⁹

Tapping into the 'gift of the gab' stereotype, references to Gallagher's eloquence are also a regular feature of the music press. However, again, these references are rather dubious. Articles state, for example, that Gallagher has a 'quietly beguiling eloquence that seems exclusive to natives of Eire'¹³⁰ or that he is 'an eloquent Irishman [...] via his tongue and via his Fender Stratocaster'.¹³¹ Even his brother Dónal is described as possessing 'that elegance common to the

¹²¹ Hollingworth.

¹²² Sanders.

¹²³ Claudia McQuillan, 'Rory Gallagher', *Pizza Platters*, 1 December 1976, <http://www.roryon.com/pizza.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹²⁴ Gold.

¹²⁵ Peter Barry. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 3.

¹²⁶ Penelope Ross, 'Back to the Basics', *SoHo Weekly News*, 19 February 1976, <http://www.roryon.com/basics190.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹²⁷ Al Simpson, 'Defender of the Faith', *Metal Hammer*, November 1987, <http://www.roryon.com/mhammer155.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹²⁸ Ross.

¹²⁹ Bhabha, 76.

¹³⁰ Colin Irwin, 'An Independent Man', *Melody Maker*, 18 November 1978, <http://www.roryon.com/independant.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹³¹ Anon. 'Rory Gallagher', *BEAT Instrumental*, 3 August 1969, <http://www.roryon.com/month263.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

Irish'¹³² when he talks or that 'being Irish', he has to top everyone else with his anecdotes.¹³³ Here, the ability to speak well is put forward as an instinctive aspect of Irishness. However, at the same time, this ability is also derided as 'talking Blarney' and not to be taken seriously.¹³⁴ Again, there is a clear ambivalence between what is both feared and desired when it comes to Irishness: the eloquent talking (which evokes a certain fear) is also essential to structuring and stabilising this 'fantasy' world of racist ideology (what is desired). By Gallagher and his brother exemplifying the stereotype here, they enable a point of fixity that motivates a 'buttoning down of otherness'.¹³⁵

The Irish as 'Dumb Paddys'

Strongly linked to 'Irish' ways of speaking is the stereotype of the 'dumb Paddy', which Walter¹³⁶ believes emerged largely from Anglo culture framing Irish dialects as 'substandard English' and, therefore, evidence of Irish people's 'stupidity'. According to Kiberd,¹³⁷ however, the Irish were also complicit in their own stereotyping. He notes that the vast numbers of Irish immigrants who moved to England throughout the nineteenth century were fearful of being abused for 'stealing' jobs and, therefore, tended to act the buffoon to portray themselves as harmless and lovable characters, which fits with Bhabha's concept of the 'mimic man'.¹³⁸ The 'stage Irishman', thus, became a regular feature of Victorian plays and novels, with characters such as Mackatawdry, Mackafarty, Phaelim O'Blunder and Bet Botheram O'Balderdash created to portray the Irish as clowns.¹³⁹ Satirical magazines in Britain, the US and Australia were also widely responsible for spreading the 'dumb Paddy' stereotype to a mass reading public, frequently portraying the Irish as apes or peasants.¹⁴⁰ These images also appeared later on in anti-Home Rule postcards to 'justify' why the Irish should not be left in charge of Ireland.¹⁴¹ Even today, the Irish are still frequently depicted as intellectually inferior in television and film,¹⁴² while stereotypes around their stupidity are preserved through the popular 'An Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotsman' joke cycle.

¹³² Roy Hollingworth, 'Put the load on me', *Melody Maker*, January 1973, <http://www.roryon.com/load.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹³³ Whittall.

¹³⁴ See O'Hagan for more discussions of Gallagher's accent in a contemporary context of YouTube comments on the Rory Gallagher official YouTube channel.

¹³⁵ Hook, 706.

¹³⁶ Walter, 174.

¹³⁷ Declan Kiberd, 'The origins of anti-Irish jokes and how they impacted Irish worldwide', *Irish Central*, 11 April 2022, <https://www.irishcentral.com/opinion/others/the-origins-of-anti-irish-jokes-and-how-they-impacted-irish-worldwide>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹³⁸ Bhabha, Chapter 4.

¹³⁹ Kathleen A. Heininge, 'The Search for Irishness', *Faculty Publications - Department of English*, https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1118&context=eng_fac. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁴⁰ Curtis; Soper; Paz.

¹⁴¹ Lauren Alex O'Hagan, "'Home Rule is Rome Rule': exploring anti-Home Rule postcards in Edwardian Ireland", *Visual Studies* 35.4 (2020): 330–346.

¹⁴² O'Flynn.

Although on a less overt level than the crude caricatures of *Punch* magazine, the music press has also been historically guilty of falling back on the 'dumb Paddy' stereotype when discussing Irish musicians. Cullen¹⁴³ has found that if somebody from Ireland is successful, the music press is far more likely to overemphasise their nationality, thereby 'essentialising certain groups by calling on a quintessential Irish identity' when discussing them, while Campbell¹⁴⁴ has noted that articles may even express bewilderment that such talent could come from a country like Ireland. Viewed from a postcolonial lens, such attitudes reflect the notion of the colonised as being of lesser rank and, therefore, any talent that they possess is met with scepticism, surprise or even fear because it can lead the dominated to move to a position of authority. In this case, the Irish excelling in the field of music is unsettling because it reveals the fragility of power hierarchies and shows how easily they can be reversed.¹⁴⁵

We see examples of this in articles about Rory Gallagher, which often show disbelief that a guitarist of such calibre could be Irish (e.g. 'that he was Irish was, at first, a little unbelievable'¹⁴⁶) or question his ability to play the blues because of his nationality (e.g. 'can an Irishman play the blues?'¹⁴⁷). In English and American articles, these statements tend to be somewhat derogatory, suggesting bewilderment that Gallagher goes against what is typically expected of an Irishman. In Irish articles, on the other hand, these statements are said with evident pride. Given that Ireland was steeped in religious conservatism and poverty at the time that Gallagher burst onto the music scene, it is seen as astounding that he is so successful and paved the way for later Irish musicians. This is emphasised by Waters¹⁴⁸ of the *Irish Times*, who describes the fact that an Irishman like Gallagher was an equal of Hendrix was an 'exhilarating and radical notion'. Gallagher's talent is empowering for Irish people as a whole, enabling them to challenge traditional stereotypes and claim a new identity defined on their own terms. While he still stands as a metonym, the metonym is now associated with positive aspects of musicianship and expertise, rather than negative aspects of low intelligence and cultural inferiority, thereby deconstructing the 'dumb Paddy' stereotype.¹⁴⁹

Another potentially antagonistic point arises when Gallagher is framed in the English or American press as being the 'Irish version' of other guitar virtuosos: 'the Irish [Johnny] Winter',¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ Cullen, 215.

¹⁴⁴ Campbell.

¹⁴⁵ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Oxford: Routledge, 1989).

¹⁴⁶ John Waters, 'Nobody did it better', *Irish Times*, 17 June 1995, <http://www.roryon.com/nobody.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁴⁷ Dan Hedges, 'British Rock Guitar', *Guitar Players Book*, 1977, <http://www.roryon.com/british.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁴⁸ Waters.

¹⁴⁹ Bhabha, 81.

¹⁵⁰ Picart.

'the Irish Jimmy Page',¹⁵¹ 'Ireland's Jimi Hendrix'.¹⁵² Although these comments are usually intended to be complimentary, they play into the myth of Irish inferiority and take away from the uniqueness of Gallagher's own style. Indeed, Gallagher himself often challenged such backhanded compliments, pointing out what made him different in a bid to construct his own identity. Even today on YouTube, similar comments can be found (e.g. 'the Irish Clapton'; 'the Irish Blackmore') and are often met with anger by Irish people,¹⁵³ demonstrating how seemingly innocuous statements are connected in complex ways to a country's history and can rapidly become inflammatory if not handled sensitively.

Throughout his career, Gallagher suffered from huge self-doubt about his musical ability – something that progressively increased as his struggles with anxiety and depression worsened in the 1980s. In a 1995 article, Jip Golsteijn of *De Telegraaf*¹⁵⁴ simplifies Gallagher's evident mental health difficulties by stating that Gallagher believes he is a 'simple Irish buffoon'. Just as we have seen with the alcohol examples, the emphasis on *Irish* here localises the descriptor, thereby tapping into the long history of the Irish as clowns and discounting the other more serious reasons for Gallagher's troubling state of mind. The buffoon imagery also draws parallels with the 'Paddy Sad/Paddy Mad' figures,¹⁵⁵ both framing Gallagher's melancholy as an instinctive aspect of being Irish and suggesting its outlet in the form of eccentricity (i.e., '[he] is the type who screams before he has been hit [...] he sees an enemy behind every tree').¹⁵⁶ In other cases, this 'buffoon' image extends to incorporate Gallagher's choice of clothing, his check shirt and jeans setting him up as an 'Irish peasant',¹⁵⁷ 'friendly farmer'¹⁵⁸ or 'simple, sympathetic countryman'¹⁵⁹ – all familiar tropes of being Irish that promote an image of intellectual inferiority. In other cases, Gallagher is described as looking like 'a paper boy'¹⁶⁰ or 'an errand boy for a Polydor executive'¹⁶¹ – jobs typically carried out by unqualified young people – to imply his simplicity.¹⁶² Gallagher was, in fact, 'a very intelligent, well informed and well-read person'¹⁶³ who taught himself French and

¹⁵¹ Andy Mellen, 'Taste - On the Boards', *CREEM*, November 1970. <http://www.roryon.com/ontheboards291.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁵² Anon., 'In Love with the Blues', *Irish News*, 13 June 1998, <http://www.roryon.com/news11.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁵³ O'Hagan.

¹⁵⁴ Jip Golsteijn, 'Popscore', *De Telegraaf*, 7 January 1994, <http://www.roryon.com/tele214.htm>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁵⁵ Smyth.

¹⁵⁶ Golsteijn.

¹⁵⁷ Gary Weimer, 'Despite radio's hex, Rory Gallagher is back to what he does best', *Illinois Entertainer*, December 1982. <http://www.roryon.com/hex259.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁵⁸ J. Moya-Angeler, 'Rory—Gran Reserva', *Extra!*, 14 March 1975.

¹⁵⁹ Haagsma.

¹⁶⁰ Steve Solomon. 'The Show Must Go On.' unidentified source 1979, <http://www.roryon.com/thumb341.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁶¹ Robin Mackie, 'Extroverted Introvert', *Record Mirror*, 23 February 1973, <http://www.roryon.com/RM245.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁶² cf. O'Hagan.

¹⁶³ Karen Howard. 'Interview with Donal Gallagher', *Music News*, 23 March 2019, <https://www.music-news.com/review/UK/13694/Interview/Donal-Gallagher>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

German and had a great interest in art, politics, cinema and literature. According to his brother Dónal, this was a side of which few people were aware because Gallagher did not like to talk about himself. Consequently, lacking this knowledge of Gallagher's interests offstage, journalists fell back on casual stereotypes associated with his Irish identity and used his clothing to make assumptions on his presumed level of intelligence and musical ability.¹⁶⁴

Other articles play upon the long history of the Irish as the butt of jokes. Texts start with the typical set phrase 'have you heard the one about...' before completing it with a statement related to Gallagher. While, in many cases, the writers turn this potentially negative structure on its head by providing a positive conclusion (e.g. '... the Irishman who blew Montreux apart?')¹⁶⁵ to this familiar trope, subtle antagonisms can still be detected in their choice of words. The use of 'Irishman' and 'blew...apart', for example, links back to the 'Irish as violent' (Paddy Mad) stereotype previously mentioned, accentuated by the later statement of 'catch him if you can', while other phrases in the text like 'if there'd be room to jig, they would have done it' links humorously to the Irish dancing tradition. Thus, what may initially appear neutral statements are, in fact, negatively weighted when viewed in their broader context, showcasing how 'many of the underlying assumptions of colonialism continue to operate and influence interaction between former colonising and colonised cultures'.¹⁶⁶ A more undisguised dig at Gallagher's nationality comes in a 1976 interview for *CREEM*, where journalist Peter Laughner decides to deliver what he calls a 'parting shot' to Gallagher by telling him a joke about an 'Irishman who got a pair of water skis for Christmas' and 'spent all the next year looking for a lake with a slope'.¹⁶⁷ According to Morris, such stereotypes carry weight because they lie in a combination of 'validity and distortion'.¹⁶⁸ In other words, while people might exist in Ireland who fit this 'intellectually inferior' assumption, they only represent a very small minority. Nonetheless, through fixity and repeatability, the stereotypes are given currency, producing a 'truth' that is hard to contest.¹⁶⁹

Some journalists are more sympathetic and suggest that the British press have generally underestimated 'the range of [Gallagher's] musical knowledge and prowess', as well as his 'intelligence' because of his 'Irish' character.¹⁷⁰ They single out Gallagher's humility, modesty and reticence to self-promote – which he was well known for in the world of music – as distinctly 'Irish' traits, as well as his choice to dress casually, avoid any gimmicks and the traditional trappings of the rock & roll lifestyle. '[Gallagher] is still a typical Irish lad' summarises Von

¹⁶⁴ O'Hagan.

¹⁶⁵ Jim Evans, 'Rory Gallagher', *Record Mirror*, 6 August 1977, <http://www.roryon.com/rm290.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁶⁶ Kenn Nakata Steffenson, 'BBC English with an Accent: "African" and "Asian" Accents and the Translation of Culture in British Broadcasting', *Meta* 57.2 (2012): 510–527.

¹⁶⁷ Peter Laughner, 'The Best Normal Guitar Player in the World', *CREEM*, November 1976, <http://www.roryon.com/normal.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁶⁸ Morris, 6.

¹⁶⁹ Bhabha, 66.

¹⁷⁰ Niall Stokes, 'Rory Gallagher - Pressing Ever Onwards', *Hot Press*, 9 June 1978, <http://www.roryon.com/pressing149.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

Hermann Haring of *Sounds*,¹⁷¹ implying that he remains down-to-earth. Through these statements, Gallagher is turned into an ambassador for Ireland, a physical embodiment of the 'best' qualities of being Irish.¹⁷² While still stereotypical, these traits are seen as desirable by those in positions of power (e.g. journalists), encouraging a form of 'reverse mimicry'.¹⁷³

Away from intelligence, the music press also often linked other aspects of Gallagher's personality to stereotypical Irish traits. Gallagher was a devout Catholic who attended mass regularly – something which Oscar Bastante of *Guitar Player*¹⁷⁴ expresses as 'like a good Irishman, [he is] deeply religious'. The statement is delivered somewhat tongue-in-cheek, playing upon Ireland's long association with Catholicism and implying, therefore, that it is no surprise that Gallagher would be this way. Equally, the stereotype of the Irish being hard-working and obstinate (myths that stem from their resilience to British rule) is tapped into, with Gallagher described as possessing 'proverbial Irish doggedness'¹⁷⁵ or always being 'a stubborn boy...on his home turf'.¹⁷⁶ Just as we have seen in earlier examples, by living up to the 'reality' of these Irish stereotypes (being Catholic, hardworking and stubborn), Gallagher unconsciously adds weight to their 'truth' – a core factor in maintaining their momentum.¹⁷⁷ Finally, the long-standing image of the Irish as oppressed is frequently put forward as the reason why Gallagher can play the blues so well. Here, the 'Paddy Sad' figure is in full operation in both serious (e.g. 'Irish people have an affinity with the blues, the music of another oppressed people'¹⁷⁸) and humorous (e.g. 'Get colonised for 700 years and see how you feel!'¹⁷⁹) ways. Comments on the official Rory Gallagher YouTube channel also extend this 'Paddy Sad' argument by linking the blues to Gallagher's depression.¹⁸⁰ Through these comments and, by the same token, the music press, Gallagher is framed as capturing the very essence of what it means to be Irish, thereby '(re)creating, (re)inventing and (re)inforcing' certain stereotypes of Irishness.¹⁸¹

'Irish' Folklore and Traditional Ways of Life

Ireland has a rich tradition of folklore dating back to the pre-Christian era, where tales, balladry,

¹⁷¹ Von Hermann Haring, 'Rory Gallagher: our fellow worker from Cork', *Sounds*, July 1986, <http://www.roryon.com/fellow184.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁷² O'Hagan, 16.

¹⁷³ Amardeep Singh, 'Mimicry and Hybridity in Plain English', <https://www.lehigh.edu/~amsp/2009/05/mimicry-and-hybridity-in-plain-english.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁷⁴ Oscar Bastante, 'Untitled', *Guitar Player*, July 1995, <https://rewritingrorygallagher.blogspot.com/p/guitar-player-july-1995.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁷⁵ Bert van de Camp, 'Rory Gallagher: Hooked on Guitar', *OOR*, March 1976, <http://www.roryon.com/oor220.htm>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁷⁶ Molly McSnailly Burke, 'Pirate Rory revisits for his destiny', *Sunday Press*, 2 February 1988. <http://www.roryon.com/pirate183.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁷⁷ Bhabha, 66.

¹⁷⁸ Niall Stokes, 'Down All the Days', *Hot Press*, June 1995, <http://www.roryon.com/downday.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁷⁹ Zimmermann.

¹⁸⁰ O'Hagan.

¹⁸¹ Áine, Mangaoang. *Dangerous Mediations: Pop Music in a Philippine Prison Video* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019), 173.

music and dance were exchanged and passed from generation to generation. Even following the arrival of Christianity in the fifth century, folklore beliefs remained and combined with religious beliefs, creating a 'singular brand of fairy tale tradition'.¹⁸² Unlike many other European countries, folklore beliefs remained strong in Ireland because of its largely rural society, meaning that traditional ways of life changed much more slowly. They were also promoted by the late nineteenth-century Gaelic Revival, which sought to carve out a unique Irish identity to counter the spread of Anglo culture across the island.¹⁸³ To outsiders, this traditional Irish way of life was seen as quaint and exotic, as a societal ideal now lost, and was, therefore, frequently portrayed on picture postcards that were sold to middle-class tourists.¹⁸⁴ Images often showed familiar folklore figures or rural scenes of Travellers in horse-drawn wagons. In doing so, the Irish were turned into a 'spectacle of the other'.¹⁸⁵ These ordinary/extraordinary, us/them paradigms were also promoted through the popular press, thereby offering a crude, reductionist meaning of Irishness. These ideas carried over into the twentieth-century music press, where Irish people were referenced by latching onto images of folklore and traditional ways of life.

In the case of Rory Gallagher, the leprechaun was particularly used for this purpose. In Irish folklore, the leprechaun was a small, mischievous sprite who possessed a hidden crock of gold. However, in the nineteenth century, the leprechaun was introduced as a derogatory symbol of Irishness that spread through the popular press, its red hair, beard and green clothing bearing little resemblance to traditional images of leprechauns who were shoemakers with red coats and breeches.¹⁸⁶ As St Patrick's Day became internationalised, the image of the leprechaun gradually grew to become a symbol of Ireland. When introducing Gallagher's band Taste to the world, *Melody Maker*¹⁸⁷ describes them as 'three young musicians from the land of leprechauns', while *CREEM*¹⁸⁸ equally calls them a group from the 'land of shamrocks and four-leaf clovers'. In other cases, Gallagher's own style of music is defined as a 'leprechaun boogie',¹⁸⁹ which pokes fun at his unique fusion of Irish folk and blues, thereby belittling his broader contribution to the world of music. In this way, the 'folklore' stereotype links to the 'dumb Paddy' stereotype, thereby working as part of a discursive chain that confines Gallagher to an interpretive circle.¹⁹⁰ Given his nationality, gender, bushy sideburns and boyish smile, Gallagher himself is also often referred to

¹⁸² Ortrun Franklin, 'The Luck of the Irish', *Star Nations*, 82, March 2020, https://issuu.com/neshi555/docs/sn202003march_issuu. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁸³ John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allan & Unwin, 1987).

¹⁸⁴ Ann Wilson, *The Picture Postcard: A new window into Edwardian Ireland* (Amsterdam: Peter Lang, 2021).

¹⁸⁵ Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage, 1987), 223.

¹⁸⁶ Diane Negra, *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

¹⁸⁷ Anon., 'No Labelling This Taste', *Melody Maker*, 29 March 1969, <http://www.roryon.com/label428.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁸⁸ Mellen.

¹⁸⁹ Angie Errigo, 'Old Sweat in Cologne', *New Musical Express*, 8 January 1977, <http://www.roryon.com/old.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁹⁰ Nadia Giguère, 'Encountering the Imagined Other: Interpretive Circle and Identity Negotiation among Western Expatriates in India', *Diversité urbaine* 13.2 (2013): 107–128.

as a leprechaun. Paul Fenton¹⁹¹ describes him as having a 'strange little leprechaun smile', therefore hinting that he is mischievous and cunning, while Julie-Ann Ryan¹⁹² refers to him as a 'bionic blues leprechaun', taking a jibe at both Gallagher's nationality and age (even though he was only 33 years old at the time). This metonymic process creates a 'fluid chain of unbroken meaning,' turning the leprechaun figure into a stand-in for Gallagher and, therefore, grounding 'a given idea in a particular physical attribute'.¹⁹³ Reporting at a 1977 concert, Brian Harrigan notes that Gallagher had sound issues, but they were quickly resolved and he went on to give an excellent performance. 'It could only happen to an Irishman',¹⁹⁴ Harrigan jokingly concludes, tapping into the 'luck of the Irish' stereotype, which promotes the belief that the Irish are inherently lucky, often due to their trickery and craftiness.

Some media even went so far as to produce images of Gallagher as a leprechaun. The image in Figure 1 was first used on a trading card given away with the Polydor Records 1972 compilation *The Guitar Album* and was reproduced later in several music press articles about Gallagher. A realistic illustration of Gallagher's face is superimposed onto the body of a leprechaun, who is dressed in the classic green and white colours symbolic of Ireland and doing a jig. Gallagher is depicted in a pastoral setting associated with rural life and stands behind a large wooden music note, which emphasises the idea that the Irish are inherently musical—something which Mangaoang et al.¹⁹⁵ believe has, in fact, hindered the recognition and status of popular Irish music. Next to the note is a bottle of beer, drawing upon the stereotype of the Irish as being fond of drink, while Gallagher's facial expression and oversized head serve to ridicule and fit him into the 'dumb Paddy' narrative. Viewed together, these different elements call to mind caricatures found in *Punch* magazine and show that these offensive images of Irish people were still circulating in British society in the 1970s. While Appel¹⁹⁶ considers such images to be 'mildly condescending but basically friendly', Whipple¹⁹⁷ stresses that these types of satirisation are not harmless and, in fact, normalise subtleties of ethnic stereotyping, which perpetuates the idea that the Irish are an inferior group to be lampooned. In this example, a relationship of 'contiguity' is apparent, this time the leprechaun serving as both a metonym and metaphor for Gallagher. In

¹⁹¹ Paul Fenton, 'A National Holiday with Rory Gallagher', *TransFM Magazine*, 1985, <https://members.storm.ca/~moparman/rgstory.shtml>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁹² Julie-Anne Ryan, 'Rage of the Underground', *Buckinghamshire Examiner*, 6 November 1981, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002490/19811106/102/0014>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁹³ Hook, 716.

¹⁹⁴ Brian Harrigan, 'Rory Raises a Hurricane', *Melody Maker*, 26 April 1975, <http://www.roryon.com/hurricane.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

¹⁹⁵ Áine Mangaoang, John O'Flynn and Lonán Ó Briain, *Made in Ireland: Studies in Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 2021).

¹⁹⁶ John J. Appel, 'From Shanties to Lace Curtains: The Irish Image in Puck, 1876–1910', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13.4 (1971): 365.

¹⁹⁷ Cherry Whipple, 'Review of "From Shanties to Lace Curtains: The Irish Image in Puck, 1876–1910', *Apush* (2017) https://www.cherrywhipple.com/uploads/5/0/5/7/5057459/immigration_article_review.pdf. Accessed 15 December 2022.

its association by displacement (metonym) and substitution by likeness (metaphor), its creator is, thus, able to exercise a certain phantasmatic control over constructions of Irishness.¹⁹⁸

Figure 1 - Rory Gallagher as a Leprechaun, *The Guitar Album* (1972)



While the leprechaun is the predominant figure in articles about Gallagher, some also refer to him as a 'banshee' (e.g. 'the flannel banshee breaks out'¹⁹⁹) in a nod to the mythical Irish spirit whose wails herald the death of a family member. Others instead call him 'Brendan the Navigator',²⁰⁰ drawing parallels between the Irish saint's voyages around the world to find the Isle of the Blessed and Gallagher's constant touring. Others still make reference to the Traveller tradition in Ireland, comparing Gallagher's own life to that of the peripatetic life of a Gypsy. In these references, 'living like a Gypsy' is framed as something inherently Irish, implying that Gypsies are a homogenous group despite a multitude of different ethnocultural groups falling under this umbrella term. Gallagher is described, for example, as the 'rockin' Irish rover',²⁰¹ the 'gypsy rover',²⁰² the 'Eire wanderer'²⁰³ and the 'Gaelic troubadour'.²⁰⁴ Of these words, 'rover' appears the most frequently, perhaps unsurprisingly given its particular cultural association with Ireland and its place in many Irish folk songs about traditional Gypsy life.

¹⁹⁸ Hook, 726.

¹⁹⁹ Bill Holdship, 'The Flannel Banshee Breaks Out', *CREEM*, July 1984, <http://www.roryon.com/banchee.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

²⁰⁰ Declan Lynch, 'Bad Day for the Blues', *Sunday Tribune*, 18 June 1995, <http://www.roryon.com/badday.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

²⁰¹ Linda Solomon, 'Rory: Rockin' Irish Rover', *The Gig*, 15 September 1974, <http://www.roryon.com/gig408.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

²⁰² Jeff Pike, 'Gallagher the Gypsy Rover', *Sounds*, 15 March 1975, <http://www.roryon.com/gypsy.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

²⁰³ Sanders.

²⁰⁴ Shiv Cariappa, 'Blues Rocker Rory Gallagher's Unique Sound Bridges the Atlantic', *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 July 1991, <http://www.roryon.com/unique.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

In all cases, journalists emphasise the beauty of roaming from town to town, having no attachments and even being an outcast, framing this as unique to the Irish spirit. This romanticisation of the 'Gypsy lifestyle' builds upon a centuries-old practice, which Lee and Matthews²⁰⁵ believe shades over the truth about the challenges that many members faced. In some ways, this is exactly what the music press does in reference to Gallagher. Although Gallagher himself often described his way of living as the 'Gypsy lifestyle', it was ultimately the incessant touring and pressures of life on the road that had a detrimental effect on his health and led to his premature death at the age of forty-seven. Nonetheless, even posthumous articles still try to romanticise his restlessness as an inherent part of being Irish.²⁰⁶ Again, such framings adhere to the 'Paddy Sad/Paddy Mad' dichotomy, implying that, as a 'tragic' Irishman, Gallagher was destined for misfortune, while his rejection of conventional ways of living showed a willingness to escape from reality and embrace 'oblivion'.²⁰⁷ Although this image is at odds with the 'luck' of the leprechaun, as is often the case with stereotypes, both freely co-exist, their imaginary mechanisms making both states somehow believable.²⁰⁸

The comparisons in the music press between Gallagher and Gypsies extend beyond touring and also tap into his own personal beliefs. Gallagher was an extremely superstitious person who followed horoscopes, had a fear of certain numbers and avoided going out on Friday 13th.²⁰⁹ Later in life, as his mental health worsened, these superstitions developed into obsessive compulsive disorder.²¹⁰ However, articles continuously portray these superstitions/OCD behaviours as 'charming'²¹¹ quirks unique to his Irish nationality. This once again sets the 'Paddy Sad/Paddy Mad' dichotomy in motion, despite the fact that Gallagher was clearly struggling and even stated candidly that things were becoming 'very unhealthy mentally' for him.²¹² Even today in YouTube comments, Gallagher's superstitions are still often framed as innate features of being Irish, which simplifies the complexity of his problems.²¹³

²⁰⁵ Ken Lee and Jodie Matthews, 'Romani Rebel Writing: George 'Lazy' Smith's Entrepreneurial Auto-Exoticism', *Rebellious Writing: Contesting Marginalisation in Edwardian Britain*, ed. Lauren Alex O'Hagan (Amsterdam: Peter Lang): 412-437.

²⁰⁶ Dave Ling, 'Soul Man', *Classic Rock*, March 2003, <http://www.roryon.com/soul345.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.; Eric C. Shoaf, 'Rory Gallagher - Let's Go to Work', *Vintage Guitar*, March 2003, . Accessed 15 December 2022.; Shinkicker, 'Greatest Blues Guitarists - Rory Gallagher: from Sinner Boy to Shinkicker', *Hub Pages*, 17 June 2013, <https://discover.hubpages.com/entertainment/Greatest-Blues-Guitarists-Rory-Gallagher-from-Sinner-Boy-to-Shinkicker>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

²⁰⁷ Smyth.

²⁰⁸ Hook, 713.

²⁰⁹ Liam Fay, 'Tangled Up in Blues', *Hot Press*, Anniversary Special 1992, <http://www.roryon.com/Tangled.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

²¹⁰ Marcus Connaughton, *Rory Gallagher: His Life and Times* (London: Collins, 2012), 142.

²¹¹ Uli Twelker, 'Rory Gallagher: Good Times', *Good Times*, 13 December 1992, <http://www.roryon.com/uli209.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

²¹² David Sinclair, 'The Show Must Go On!', *Q*, July 1990, <http://www.roryon.com/q8.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

²¹³ O'Hagan.

Beyond the Stereotypes: Concluding Discussion

Following the outbreak of The Troubles in the late 1960s, popular culture became rife with disparaging references to Irish people, particularly in Great Britain. Building on a long history of stereotyping the Irish, commentaries were frequently made across media about the Irish's perceived lack of intelligence, penchant for violence and alcohol, 'funny' accent and religious and superstitious beliefs²¹⁴ – cruel prejudices hidden under the guise of humour that capitalised upon growing anti-Irish sentiment. The music press was no exception, frequently overstating Irish musicians' nationality or deriding them through 'harmless' quips that drew on well-established stereotypes. These stereotypes then transformed into shortcuts to describe the musicians, as can be seen through the case study of Rory Gallagher – one of the most prominent Irish musicians of the period.

According to the music press, Gallagher could be everything from a simple country boy or a lucky leprechaun to a gypsy rover or a 'dumb Paddy'. He could be associated with the IRA or Guinness, have both superstitious and Catholic beliefs, hold the gift of the gab but at the same time be incomprehensible or even devious. The fact that he was Irish and a guitar virtuoso could also be baffling for some, particularly at a time when to be Irish was supposed to mean being second-best. At the heart of many of these stereotypes lay the 'Paddy Mad/Paddy Sad' dichotomy, which is deeply rooted in Irish cultural history from as early as the medieval period.²¹⁵ For Gallagher, it was a case of 'damned if I do, damned if I don't': when he lived up to expected stereotypes (e.g. by attending mass regularly yet following astrology), he was seen patronisingly as being a 'good Irish lad' and when he did not live up to expected stereotypes (e.g. by not drinking or partying excessively), he brought disappointment to journalists who met him. These findings are in line with previous postcolonial research on chains of stereotypes and how mutually incompatible assertions can coincide. According to both Bhabha and Hook,²¹⁶ these discursive structures serve as a way to deal with a 'threatening' reality, acquiring a protective function that enables the management of co-present and yet opposed beliefs. In doing so, it 'keep[s] anxiety at bay and protect[s] a narcissistic orientation to pleasure or subjectivity'.²¹⁷

While this 'disparagement humour'²¹⁸ may have been passed off as 'banter', it was part of a broader anti-Irish rhetoric circulating throughout the 1970s and 1980s in particular. Not only did it take away from Gallagher's music – in much the same way as the media's constant focus on his check shirts did²¹⁹ – but it also led to misconceptions around his intelligence, political allegiance and the circumstances of his illness and death, even sprouting nonsensical claims, such as him being a pallbearer at Bobby Sands' funeral.²²⁰ Such throwaway remarks by journalists

²¹⁴ Holland.

²¹⁵ Smyth.

²¹⁶ Bhabha; Hook.

²¹⁷ Hook, 713.

²¹⁸ Ford.

²¹⁹ O'Hagan.

²²⁰ Ivan Little, 'Rory Gallagher was forced to deny he was pallbearer at Bobby Sands' funeral', *Belfast Telegraph*, 8 October 2020, <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/rory-gallagher-was-forced-to-deny-he-was-pallbearer-at-bobby-sands-funeral-39599191.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

about being Irish also ignored the deeply emotional impact of the Northern Irish conflict on Gallagher, who had spent his early childhood in Derry, lived in Belfast for several years and had known people wrongfully interred, as well as encountered direct discrimination living in London and while on tour in Australia. Faced with such remarks in interviews, Gallagher often resorted to humour to mitigate the situation, adopting the role of 'mimic man'²²¹ and, in doing so, exposing the weakness of the stereotype. Occasionally, Irish music journalists also drew upon humour in a bid to defend Gallagher, most notably by parodying typical British newspaper articles reporting on The Troubles, again seeking to call out the fragility of clichéd depictions of Irishness.

It is only since the beginning of the Celtic Tiger period (mid-1990s) and the Good Friday Agreement (1998) that attitudes towards the Irish have slowly started to shift. As Ireland became transnationalised, being Irish was turned into an idealised ethnicity. Irishness, thus, gained a sense of cultural romance and was adopted by outsiders as an unthreatening and familiar identity, becoming a 'performative and mobile' notion.²²² While overt acts of discrimination have decreased, Irishness remains the basis for 'jokes' and 'banter' and has been found to 'delegitimise the professionalism' of Irish people when it emerges in work settings.²²³ Equally, although on a lesser scale, the music press today still draws attention to the nationality of Irish musicians in articles and makes particular references to alcohol and accent,²²⁴ demonstrating that there is still a long way to go in countering disparagement humour, preventing the normalisation of stereotypes towards historically marginalised groups and breaking free from the shackles of colonialist discourse.

To go back to Rory Gallagher, there were rare occasions when journalists saw beyond his nationality. Writing in *Guitarist* in April 1990, Romain Decoret stated:

Behind the pub/Guinness/Ireland cliches, the main value of Rory Gallagher is having crossed the boring seventies and the electronic eighties without ever changing his music. His personal style is a natural synthesis of blues, hard rock and folk, which owes absolutely nothing to commercialism. We call this integrity, and you can't buy that sort of thing in a supermarket.²²⁵

In other words, the impact and importance of Gallagher's music has been historically downplayed as a result of lingering colonialist attitudes that overemphasise his Irish identity and related stereotypes of Irishness. It is only today that people are starting to pay attention to the man behind these stereotypes and recognise Gallagher as an accomplished multi-instrumentalist who sold over thirty million albums worldwide, performed over two thousand concerts across the globe, actively shunned the trappings of the decadent rockstar and maintained an authentic, no sell-out image throughout his career.

²²¹ Bhabha, Chapter 4.

²²² Negra, 1.

²²³ Ryan and Kurdi, 269.

²²⁴ This is based on a cursory review of articles on Irish artists in the leading music press over the past decade.

²²⁵ Romain Decoret, 'Rory Gallagher: Irish Rock Distillation', *Guitarist*, April 1990, <https://rewritingrorygallagher.blogspot.com/p/guitarist-april-1990.html>. Accessed 15 December 2022.

If Gallagher must be defined by his Irishness, then it should not be on the grounds of whether he drank Guinness or had a 'funny' accent, but rather based on the fact that he was Ireland's first international rockstar, paving the way for the many Irish musicians who followed, and a man who brought unionists and nationalists together by being one of the few artists who continued to play Belfast during The Troubles. As Lynch²²⁶ asserted in Gallagher's obituary for the *Sunday Tribune*, it is 'impossible to overstate [his] importance' and the scale of his achievements to Ireland. He was 'a comet in a land of glow-worms' and the Irish 'loved [him] like a brother' for his 'incredible talent' and 'uncompromising integrity', but even more so for being a 'transparently decent human being'. Peeling back the stereotypes, this is Gallagher's real legacy.

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²²⁶ Lynch.

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