Converging Identities: Irishness and Whiteness in US Popular Culture

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Abstract

The status of Irishness throughout the 1990s departed significantly from its historical antecedents, as it came to influence the US popular culture landscape in ways few could have predicted. The mainstream fascination with and consumption of Irish-themed products throughout the US during and subsequent to this decade was extraordinarily far-reaching. Irishness in this period became an extraordinarily flexible, politically expedient, and unquestionably appealing identity and laid the groundwork for the emergence and reconfiguration of Irishness as the quintessential white identity. I argue that claiming an Irish or American Irish identity or often simply an affinity with Irishness became an increasingly common way to maintain, articulate, and openly defend one's white identity in a society perpetually preoccupied with racial issues. This thesis provides a detailed examination of the multiple, varied meanings and uses of Irishness in the US during the past twenty years. In charting that trajectory I show that Irishness can, and indeed has been, successfully marketed to what are, at least on the face of it, surprisingly diverse audiences including traditional American Irish groups, white supremacists and those with no ancestral connection to Ireland at all. The issue of race supplies the fundamental prism through which the success of contemporary Irishness is refracted. Through the lens of critical whiteness studies, I examine the uses of it as a specific white identity in recent American culture.

Introduction

Popular culture is the space within and through which we understand the nature of our social and political relations. (Davis 187)

Given the large Irish immigrant population it is hardly surprising that Irish themes have featured prominently in US popular culture for more than two hundred years. Mid-nineteenth-century theatre and early Hollywood films are just two of the more high-profile examples that demonstrate this long and commercially profitable cultural relationship. Often these stage and screen productions were little more than obvious attempts to woo large urban American Irish[1] communities into theatres in order to generate profits. But beyond basic economic considerations, the Irish occupy an unusually prominent position in US cultural history, especially when compared with other immigrant groups. Historically, the Irish were neither the largest European immigrant population nor the most well received of groups to enter the US, particularly during the mid-nineteenth century when hundreds of thousands left famine-ravaged Ireland and first regrouped in predominantly urban areas on the eastern seaboard. Irrespective of reactions from the "native" (and sometimes nativist) population, Irishness has clearly left an indelible mark on the US cultural landscape.

The status of Irishness in the 1990s departed significantly from its historical antecedents, as Irishness came to influence the US popular culture landscape in ways few could have predicted. The mainstream fascination with and consumption of Irish-themed products throughout the US during and subsequent to this decade was extraordinarily far-reaching. For example, enthusiastic audiences and consumers within and beyond the American Irish community embraced Irish-themed films, made for television movies, children's television

programs, dance and theatre productions, advertisements, books, music, festivals, shopping catalogs and stores, and theme pubs, restaurants, and parks (fig. 1).[2]

Fig. 1. "Killarney, Ireland" at Busch Gardens, Williamsburg, Virginia (Cjh1452000).

Moreover, Irishness in this period became an extraordinarily flexible, politically expedient, and unquestionably appealing identity. This is also in sharp contrast with many of its historical variants. Traditionally, Ireland has generally been depicted in the US with a curious, paradoxical mix of romanticism and condescension: the former emanating mainly from the relatively influential American Irish population, and the latter imported in large part from older, English colonial representational traditions. These were, and are, not always entirely distinctive, discursive paths. Nonetheless, this contradictory representational history in part helped fuel the popularity of Irishness throughout the 1990s.

Irish themes have long been popular constituent features of US culture. Music, as discussed in chapter 2, is a good example. However, there are key differences between those forms of Irishness that were popular in the past and those active in recent years. Most of these

differences have less to do with the shifting status of Ireland itself than with changes in the US cultural landscape in recent decades. These changes include fundamentally altered notions and conceptions of identity,[3] especially ethnic and racial identities, and new roles for the media and cultural consumption in shaping identity. The reworking of identities affected all white ethnicities in the US, and laid the groundwork for the emergence and reconfiguration of Irishness as the quintessential white identity. This is even more remarkable considering that many more Americans have German ancestral backgrounds.[4] However, Germans are less likely to tout their identity, due in part, perhaps, to twentieth-century historical events. An Italian iteration of whiteness would emerge only very recently, fueled in part by the success of television shows such as *Jersey Shore* and *Real Housewives of New Jersey*.

The reconfiguration of these white identities, one which has also affected the reception of Irishness in recent years, has much to do with populist versions of nativism that resurfaced in reaction to the changing racial makeup of the US.[5] Such movements have long been part of the fabric of US society. However in contrast to nineteenth-century variations of nativism, more recent versions have found the American Irish now rather staunchly situated on the dominant, normative, white side of issues concerning race/ and immigration. Particularly since the 1990s, American Irish have more often been nativists themselves rather than the object of nativist hostility as was once commonly the case. In the work presented here it is argued that this key cultural shift helped lay the foundation for the positive perception and reception of Irishness in the US in recent decades.

Although always commercially successful to some extent, given the extraordinary number of American Irish, Irish-themed popular culture in the 1990s became mainstream, popular, and cool. Catherine Eagan described “American Hibernophilia” as a “mania” in the

early 1990s, then, writing in 2006, revised her characterization of Irishness in the US to "simply pervasive" (20). By 2014 that high profile within the mainstream had diminished considerably, though Irishness continues to appeal to and resonate with millions of Americans and not just those self-designated as American Irish, in ways few could have predicted. As this thesis will argue, this was achieved in part because practitioners of Irish-themed culture in the US ensured that this culture signified rather vague but usefully adaptable sentimental and nostalgic notions of community, authenticity, and tradition. Above all else, though, Irishness, particularly since the mid-1990s connotes an acceptable, if not heroic and romanticized white identity. Claiming an Irish or American Irish identity, or often a simple affinity with Irishness, became an increasingly common way to maintain, articulate, and openly defend one's white identity in a society perpetually preoccupied with racial issues—there were "the racial politics of Hibernophilia" as Catherine Eagan characterized them. The varied and complex ways in which formulations of Irishness operate as palatable forms of whiteness are crucial in helping to account for the success of Irishness throughout and beyond this period. In 1997 Richard Dyer characterized whiteness as having an "everything and nothing quality" (127). Almost a decade later Diane Negra defined Irishness in a similar fashion (*Irish in Us* 1). The use of the same idea by both writers to capture the illusive character of whiteness and Irishness respectively is instructive in that it calls attention to the versatility which marks both phenomena.

Despite the groundbreaking research by historians David R. Roediger and Noel Ignatiev during the early to mid-1990s, questions concerning the importance and role of whiteness were very much resisted in mainstream American Irish studies (and arguably this is still the case), where papers examining the connections between race and Irishness were often greeted with a mix of incredulity and hostility, suggesting a high level of anxiety around the topic. This anxiety

can in part be attributed to commonly held ideas about Irish immigration history. For example, it is generally claimed, and often accepted, that the Irish, like other groups, including African Americans, suffered discrimination, stereotyping, and injustice at the hands of dominant WASP elites from the eighteenth until the middle of the twentieth century. Images depicting American Irish and African Americans as equally wild, stupid, lazy, and infantile in mid-nineteenth-century editions of *Harper's Weekly*, popularized through L. P. Curtis's historical account of them in *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature,* were, and still are, regularly circulated as evidence of the supposedly similar experiences of both groups.

This alignment of American Irish with African Americans reflects a "color blind ideology." As Jack Niemonen writes, color-blind ideology is the belief "that racial groups are essentially alike despite distinctive histories and unequal social relations, and that disparities in socioeconomic status attainments are the consequence of meritocratic processes" (57). Moreover, he argues this "is the framework with which Americans understand race relations" (57). The notion that the immigration experiences of the Irish and other whites can be equated with those of African Americans, though often asserted, is clearly preposterous. In comparing the histories of Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants with African Americans, Cornacchia and Nelson conclude:

> Although each white group confronted a hostile sociopolitical environment in the US, it nevertheless found adequate opportunities for advancement within the economic system … each group managed to obtain material and non-material preferments from the political system … [and] although the dominant WASP group did not welcome their arrival, neither did it raise long-term legal and political barriers to white ethnic empowerment. Hence, after initial systemic

> resistance, all three white ethnic groups encountered a political process that was responsive to their needs and demands. (120)

Although the American Irish clearly experienced some hostility and were discriminated against, they were rarely subjected to the type of institutional racism routinely experienced by African Americans. Many working within the US field of Irish Studies fail to recognize this crucial difference, persistently equating the experiences of American Irish with those of African Americans or regarding the differences in status between them as minor:.

> The difference was that, although they lived on the periphery of American society, the Irish were not barred by law as well as custom from trades and professions, or routinely denied their civil rights. The mere fact that they could vote gave them a wedge, which they used forcefully. Starting far behind America's "old stock" Protestant whites, despised for their religion and clannishness, and burdened by poverty and social dislocation, they were at least allowed to compete. (Quinn 667)

It is also routinely acknowledged that the American Irish generally managed to overcome difficult circumstances, worked hard to pull themselves "up by the bootstraps," as it were, and achieved the American Dream despite their harsh treatment at the hands of prejudiced elites. Not only is it inferred that the American Dream was/is available to all, but it is claimed that the Irish were particularly adept at obtaining it. Since the 1990s, this narrative of a rise out of victim status has been a particularly pronounced and popular one in US culture, especially among whites. As Charles Gallagher points out, "looking back and reconstructing a white ethnic experience that varies little from the experiences of nonwhites creates a happy and guilt-free revisionism where whites did not benefit from the social, economic, and political arrangements

of slavery and Jim Crow" (145). From the perspective of this "victim narrative"—or, as Joe Kincheloe calls it, "injustice history" (Kincheloe et al. 13)—the past provides little or no valid justification for the present difficulties of other racialized groups because, if the American Irish community has succeeded, then other groups cannot use the same past as an excuse for their present failings. In other words, the American Dream is color blind and available for all who *choose* to pursue it.

If American Irish and African Americans faced similar obstacles, as many historians suggest, what accounts for the successes of the former group and the continued oppression of the latter? Although whiteness was not enough to convince WASP elites in the mid-nineteenth century of the differences between the two groups, the move by American Irish to claim whiteness through the "victim narrative" and "color blind ideology" in the late twentieth century severed any association of their status with that of African Americans.

Since at least the early 1990s, then, claiming, adopting, and performing an American Irish identity typically, and largely unambiguously, has connoted a fundamental whiteness. As Jones has written, "[r]acial categories are neither objective nor natural, but ideological and constructed. In these terms, race is not so much a category but a practice: people are raced" (Jones 66). In his now classic work *White*, Dyer notes that, within the self-understanding of cultures of whiteness, "race is … never not a factor, never not in play" (1). Building on Dyer's claim, this thesis argues that all audiences or consumers of Irishness in the US are connected through ideologies of race. This is certainly not to imply that all those who claim an affinity with Ireland are white supremacists (though some are), but rather that American Irish, alongside other white Americans, are part of an indisputable and enduring racial hierarchy,[6] characterized, to a significant degree, by the perception that their privileged position is under threat from a growing

nonwhite other. In recent years one response of whites in the United States to this ostensible threat has been a forceful reassertion of white identities, of which Irishness is among the most well received and stealthy variants.

That the mid 1990s ushered in an astonishing array of Irish-themed popular culture artifacts has been acknowledged;[7] however, there have been few sustained attempts to critically analyze the allure of Irish-themed popular culture in this period, nor the diversity and range of its manifestations. Questions such as why this culture resonated deeply with so many Americans remain largely unexamined. In fact, we may point to numerous factors that help account for the popularity of – and, indeed, near obsession with -- all things Irish in the US during the 1990s. The spectacular explosion of the heritage/tourism industry reinvigorated the idea of Ireland as a place distinctively inhabited by "folk." According to Ian McKay, the notion of the "folk" received a dramatic makeover in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the impact of this transformation was still evident well into the late twentieth century (10). Whereas, once "folk" were once regarded as backward and uncivilized, romantic notions of the folk (rural, working class, etc.) as unsullied and unencumbered by modern life emerged from damning critiques of industrial capitalism. As McKay notes "one of the great abstractions of Romanticism, 'the Folk' came to be regarded as the epitome of simple truth, work, and virtue, the antithesis of all that was overcivilized, tired, conventional, and insincere" (12). Today the term has almost exclusively positive connotations, and the Irish, at least from the US perspective, came to occupy this category easily (as discussed in more detail in chapter 3).

During the 1990s one of the main ways Irishness differed from other white identities was through its synonymity with a certain type of cool. Indeed Irishness became shorthand for cool, as Colin Coulter noted (2), and the general acceptance of this idea helps in part to explain the

widespread appeal of all things Irish in this period. Prior to the 1990s, I suggest, Irishness was rarely considered cool or, indeed, as an identity that a non-American Irish would want to claim or be associated with. On the contrary, as J. J. Lee points out, historically many American Irish went to great lengths to deny their heritage, as a result of longstanding, mainstream ideas of what it meant to be Irish in the US. Lee notes, writing of early populations of American Irish, that

> [w]e know little about those who consciously rejected, or just drifted from, their ethnic heritage. What induced them to do so? Where they consciously sought to remake themselves, what rewards did they envisage for themselves or their children? How many made conscious decisions never to talk about their Irish origins, out of a sense of shame induced through their internalising of hostile stereotypes? (26)

During the 1990s, these long-standing stereotypes were radically altered. This was a period in which the American Irish were almost entirely assimilated, despite continued immigration, legal and otherwise, from Ireland. In this period as Matthew Frye Jacobson notes, the "story of the undocumented Irish was not about taking American jobs or draining American social services; like other 'invisible aliens' from Europe, the new Irish claimed national attention for a time, but never as a source of civic concern" (*Roots* 394). The Irish were identified and coded as undeniably white and so welcomed enthusiastically, especially in comparison with nonwhite and even Eastern European immigrant groups.[8]

The 1990s perception of Irish as cool also stands in some contrast to typical mainstream media representations of white ethnicity in the same period, which cast it as bland, suburban, anonymous, and decidedly uncool. The question of how Irishness managed to be both white (i.e., typically not cool) and yet cooler than other white ethnicities is a fascinating one. Ruth Barton,

writing about the popular Irish actor Colin Farrell, contends that his particular version of Irishness is often read as bringing "fresh Celtic spontaneity" to staid British and American culture (*Acting Irish* 228). The association of Irishness and cool was perhaps best exemplified during this period by Farrell's American persona, which endorsed a new brand of heterosexual, chauvinistic, white masculinity with a twist of Irish. Arguably this new cool has its origins in older forms of what is sometimes called "regular guy populism," and we may even trace Colin Farrell's brand of cool all the way back to Finley Peter Dunne's late-nineteenth-century American Irish newspaper character Mr. Dooley. Describing this character, Charles Fanning notes that, "even when he is being funny, Mr. Dooley provokes laughter not because he knows so little, but because he knows so much. He is witty, satirical, cutting. He exposes delusions rather than being victimized by them" (217). This characterization could also easily describe the character Billy Callahan (fig. 2), whom Farrell memorably portrayed in a 2005 guest appearance on the television comedy *Scrubs* (chapter 5 discusses this in more detail).

Fig. 2. Colin Farrell playing Billy Callahan in *Scrubs* (Captain Price).

The research that follows provides a detailed examination of the multiple, varied meanings and uses of Irishness in the US during the past twenty years. In charting that trajectory I will show that Irishness can be successfully marketed to audiences which on first glance appear to be surprisingly diverse. For example, St. Patrick's Day celebrations are opportunities for upper-class American Irish to host lavish dinners, white supremacist groups to advertise and recruit new members, and for those with no ancestral link to Ireland to wear the green and party to excess. But more compelling are the ways in which such seemingly dissimilar groups employ parallel notions of Irishness, illustrating its ideological flexibility on the one hand and remarkable uniformity on the other. Despite considerable divisions among the various types of consumers and audiences considered here, including those based on class, ethnicity, gender, political bias, region, or interest in particular Irish-themed pop culture genres or products, the distinguishing and unifying feature of this trend—and arguably the main element in its enormous success—is the irrefutable whiteness of Irishness. As noted earlier, there are many factors that help account for the success of Irishness in the 1990s, including the growth in heritage/tourism industries especially via the internet, mediated notions of personal and group identity, and consumption; all of these will be considered in the chapters that follow. However, as I shall show, the issue of race supplies the fundamental prism through which the success of contemporary Irishness is refracted. By examining the consumption of Irishness and its role in accentuating particular identities, I aim to shed light on the uses of it as a specific marker of white identity in recent American culture.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the major theoretical contributions that inform this study, beginning with a discussion of two terms that are often confusingly conflated: race and

ethnicity. Delineating their separate but related etymologies and histories provides the necessary background to understand the American Irish case. As Jennifer L. Hochschild has noted:

> Definitions and usages of concepts such as race and ethnicity matter because they help us to understand the practice of racial and ethnic interaction. If immigrants are regarded as a race apart, biologically distinct from the rest of us, they will be treated very differently than if they are regarded as belonging to another ethnicity, similar in crucial ways to all the others. (641)

There has been much written in the last two decades on whether the Irish were "white on arrival," were some type of racially "in-between" group, or became white after demonstrating pro-slavery/anti-African American attitudes in the mid-nineteenth century (as demonstrated by their participation in the New York draft riots for example). This chapter will revisit this controversial debate.

Chapter 2 considers the broader place of the Irish in US culture by first providing a condensed overview of representations in popular cultural forms, including music, theatre, film, and news media. This provides some historical context for what follows in the mid-1990s. The second half of the chapter examines American Irish involvement in practices of consumption and the US political process.

Chapter 3 first examines the sudden and somewhat unlikely emergence and explosion of the music and dance theatre production *Riverdance*. In many ways discourses around this show formed a kind of ideological template and cultural palimpsest for the ways in which Irishness was imagined and framed throughout the 1990s. Various elements of *Riverdance* are analyzed in detail, including its racialized discourse and, in particular, the selective and redemptive retelling of American Irish/African American relations. Also closely considered is the immigrant success

storyline. This very particular account of how some (i.e., "our") people succeeded remains a highly popular and flattering narrative that appears to appeal to most white US audiences. The second half of the chapter deals with the first of three sets of audiences, those whom I term "sanctioned," "deviant," and "ancillary" consumers or audiences.[9] It should be noted, however, these categories share many overlapping characteristics and that this tripartite division is purely for analytical purposes. All except the first group (the subject of chapter 3) have been largely overlooked by American Irish cultural studies, but all three groups invest in and deploy diverse, sometimes contradictory, but fundamentally similar notions of Irishness. By outlining the constitutive elements of Irishness in relation to each group I explore the ways in which Irish-themed products resonated with and continued to appeal to a wide variety of overwhelmingly white Americans at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century. Chapter 3 then examines the group ordinarily thought of as the main American Irish audience, labeled here "sanctioned" consumers of Irishness. This is the main audience for popular American Irish magazines such as *Ireland of the Welcomes* and *Irish-America*[10] and the group the Irish tourist board (*Bord Fáilte*) considers closely when selling its particular version of Ireland in the US. This group can also typically be relied upon to buy the types of products regularly advertised in the widely distributed Sunday *Parade*[11] magazine – products such as "May Your Heart Be Happy With Irish Laughter" figurines (fig. 3) and Irish-themed nativity sets featuring a very white, auburn-haired Joseph (fig. 4).

Fig. 3. “May Your Heart Be Happy with Irish Laughter” figurine advertised in *Parade* magazine (“May Your Heart”).

Fig. 4. “Irish Nativity Set” advertised in *Parade* magazine (“Irish Nativity”).

Chapter 4 examines the second audience group, those whom I have labeled “deviant” consumers of Irishness. These hate/nationalist/white supremacist groups are almost entirely ignored within American Irish cultural studies. In contrast, a large body of sociological work examining many different aspects of these groups has been undertaken, although this work has very little to say on their uses of Irish/Celtic ideology and iconography. Many diverse deviant

groups have used (and continue to use) the mainstream fascination with Irishness to appeal to wider and more general white audiences and boost their membership. There is some evidence that this has been quite a successful strategy. More important, perhaps is that, unlike the other two groups included in this study, deviant consumers explicitly announce, celebrate, and insist on the connection between whiteness and Irishness.

Chapter 5 examines some of the other miscellaneous US audiences (labeled "ancillary" consumers) who financially and emotionally invest in Irish-themed goods despite little or no apparent ancestral connection to Ireland. In some ways, this predominantly white US audience is linked to a wider global one also attracted by the apparent universal qualities of Irishness. The elements that render Irishness desirable to nonwhite global consumers—the romance of the triumphant underdog, community, musicality, and all around "expert havers-of-a-good-time" (McCarthy 13) exemplified by Irish pubs in the United Arab Emirates and traditional music festivals in Japan, for example)—are the same qualities that appeal to US suburban white audiences in search of a safe, usually masculine (and often chauvinistic) and yet cool and hip identity. At the same time, the US version of this audience connects Irishness with whiteness in a manner that sharply distinguishes it from its often nonwhite global counterparts. Given its appeal among non-American Irish audiences, *Riverdance* is revisited in this chapter.

Throughout the 2000s, there were some notable mainstream films (*Leap Year, P.S. I Love You, The Departed, Gangs of New York*) and television shows (*Rescue Me, The Wire, Sons of Anarchy*) that featured Irish/American Irish themes and characters. And although *Riverdance* continued to tour the world, as mentioned earlier, by 2014, the high-profile nature of Irishness across US popular culture had diminished considerably. This is in part due to the general "logic" of consumer culture, in which successful themes are emulated until a saturation point is reached;

that point arguably arrived in the middle of the 2000s, when the sustained interest in Irishness started to wane.[12] In addition, a number of important social, cultural, and political factors coalesced to influence the changing dynamic of the Irish/US relationship in this period. Feargal E. Cochrane, in an insightful essay, highlights a number of these factors, including Irish criticism of Bush and protests over the "war on terror" (most notably demonstrations regarding the use of Shannon airport by the US military; see figs. 5 and 6), which followed the initial outpouring of support after September 11, 2001.

Figs. 5 and 6 Protests near Shannon airport, Co. Clare, and Anti-War Concerts (O'Conchuir, irishantiwar.org)

In addition, despite being labeled a terrorist organization, the Irish Republican Army still maintained considerable support in the US prior to September 11, 2001. This position was untenable in the light of post-September 11 political realities. Cochrane also describes another unanticipated consequence of this period: the impact heightened security had on the approximately 50,000 undocumented Irish in the US. He argued that, "while this legislation was

not specifically targeted against the Irish community, those Irish who were undocumented or who over-stayed their tourist visas, have inevitably been caught in the cross-fire" (349). Cochrane characterizes the overused reference to 43 million Irish-Americans as a "meaningless figure" given that the vast majority had very little knowledge of contemporary Ireland (361).

At the same time (mid to late 2000s) the long-held romantic visions of Ireland showed some signs of disappearing. Ireland went through some extraordinary changes moving, at least according to some US perspectives, from being a bastion of idyllic, rural, conservative, religious, and white values to a country marked by values which were urban, multicultural, and characterized, for example, by support for same-sex marriage (McEnroe) which rendered shockingly evident the diminished influence of the church. Indeed, Ireland now ranks among the top ten atheist nations worldwide (Counihan). Not all of these changes were enthusiastically received by conservatives on either side of the Atlantic.

We may add to these factors a shift in the type of Irish immigrants moving to the US in the era of economic prosperity known as the "Celtic Tiger." Unlike their predecessors, these left by choice rather than necessity, were college educated, upwardly mobile, returned home often, and consequently did not need to establish a "home away from home." As Cochrane explains, this shift severely affected American Irish cultural and political organizations, such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Gaelic Athletic Association, whose numbers and influence continue to decline. Interestingly, however, less than ten years after Cochrane conducted his research, the economic downturn and resulting high unemployment had more driven up the numbers of Irish immigrating to the US, although the latter had lost its place as the one of the more sought after destinations. By 2013, the UK and Australia were the two most popular

destinations for Irish emigrants, with Canada projected to join them in 2014 due to planned visa changes.[13]

All of these elements combined had an impact on the reception of Irishness in the US in the years after 2001. It remains to be seen if "Irishness" will undergo another resurgence in the years ahead. At this juncture, however, before examining representations of Irishness in US popular culture or their various audiences, it is first necessary to discuss the theoretical foundations of this research.

Chapter 1: Race, Ethnicity, and Critical Whiteness Studies

One must analyse from "within" the culture, seeking to describe and interpret the phenomenal forms and practices. At the same time there is a political imperative at work. The point of analysis is not merely the construction and dissemination of knowledge, but the articulation of knowledge for change, be it social, cultural or political. (Davis 39)

Lawrence Grossberg noted that cultural studies is "always stepping on the toes of other disciplines…. The interdisciplinarity of cultural studies, then, is never merely a matter of references and footnotes. It is the very essence of the work" (94). This approach is clearly endorsed here as theories and concepts are culled from a variety of disciplines, including media studies, sociology, folk studies, history, cultural geography, material culture studies, and anthropology to help explain key aspects of Irishness. In particular I will be employing concepts of the folk, authenticity, and tradition. Ultimately, however, much of this research is informed and influenced by critical whiteness studies. David R. Roediger notes the origins of this field "emerged, from slave and American Indian traditions forward, from the idea that whiteness is a problem to be investigated and confronted" ("Complications" B6–B8). More specifically, as Joe L. Kincheloe insists, a "critical understanding of whiteness/white power and its effect on racial politics is possible only if we understand in great specificity the multiple meanings of whiteness and their effects on the way white consciousness is historically structured and socially inscribed" (163). My examination of the capacity of Irishness to function as an "exclusionary strategy"[14] is an attempt to address Kincheloe's request and add to our understanding of the specificities of whiteness and its role within and relationship to US racial politics. However, in order to provide some context for the emergence of critical whiteness studies, we will first turn our attention to some fundamental concepts concerning race and ethnicity.

As Richard Rees points out in his provocative work *Shades of Difference*, race and ethnicity are frequently and confusingly conflated, both within and beyond the academy.[15] Although the terms are regularly used interchangeably, they have distinct etymologies and have served (and continue to serve) sometimes different, although more often related ideological purposes. In this chapter, I will review the origins of these two terms and some of the major historical vicissitudes of their use. This will help provide the context with which to fully comprehend the convoluted and contradictory racial and ethnic positions occupied by the American Irish, from their earliest arrival in the seventeenth century to the present. This is followed by an introduction to, and evaluation of critical whiteness studies and its contributions to debates involving race, ethnicity, and Irishness. I will not offer a comprehensive history of the concepts of race or ethnicity as this has been successfully accomplished elsewhere.[16] However, what follows are some influential tenets, theorists, and through-lines in these matters, particularly as they relate to whiteness and Irishness.

Of the two key terms, race is much older than ethnicity. "It is fair to say that the roots of race may be traced as early as the sixteenth century, when Europeans began conceptualizing fundamental differences between themselves and the peoples of the New World and Africa" (Rees 34). In his influential article "Who Invented the Concept of Race?" Robert Bernasconi discusses the origins of the concept and points to Immanuel Kant as having first coined the term. "It is usually agreed that the term 'race' was first used in something like its contemporary meaning at the end of the seventeenth century" (84). Today, it is generally understood, though not always accepted, that differences between groups have no foundation in scientifically based forms of knowledge. "DNA studies do not indicate that separate classifiable subspecies (races) exist within modern humans. While different genes for physical traits such as skin and hair color

can be identified between individuals, no consistent patterns of genes across the human genome exist to distinguish one race from another" ("Minorities"). Before the very recent developments of the Human Genome Project, and indeed, for most of modern history, as Howard Winant observes, "[t]he supposed naturality of race, its givenness, was barely ever questioned. Race was understood as an ineluctable and natural framework of difference among human beings" (678). Bernasconi notes several additional key figures after Kant who also contributed to the "indisputability of race," including, most notoriously, the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, count de Buffon; and German physiologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach. All advanced pseudoscientific theories of race or what Steve Fenton has labeled "mistaken science" (54). Blumenbach's division of the world's inhabitants into four or five racial groupings—Caucasian, Mongolian, American, Ethiopian, and Malay—in particular helped lay the groundwork for the somewhat inevitable hierarchical ordering of the global population (Rees 36).

As L. P. Curtis demonstrates in *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, these ideas were firmly established by the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century in Europe when a spate of pseudoscientific practices and theories, including "craniometry" (skull measuring) and "physiognomy" (judging character from facial features) migrated beyond the academy into the popular culture of the day. Historians such as Smedley and Jordan have demonstrated that this racial dogma was predictably connected to larger developments of the era, most notably the expansion of capitalism and empire. As Rees writes, "[r]acial theories merely presented themselves as the most effective means for European and American capitalists to secure their economic interests" (105). In his landmark work *The Ethnic Myth*, Stephen Steinberg agrees that "[t]he enslavement of the African, like the earlier conquest of the Indian,

required a rationalizing ideology. It is facile to think that blacks were enslaved because they were seen as inferior; it would be closer to the truth to say that they were defined as inferior so that they might be enslaved" (30). Ideas regarding hierarchies of race became established hegemonic ideologies by the early part of the eighteenth century, first throughout Western Europe and then on the other side of the Atlantic.

However, despite obvious commonalities in conceptions of race in the service of various colonial enterprises, there were also some key differences among these European powers. According to Audrey Smedley,

> [t]he people most instrumental in the development of the idea of race as experienced in North America were the English colonists who began settlements in the seventeenth century…. Under the influence of English customs and beliefs, Europeans in the United States developed and institutionalized the concept to a more extreme degree that any other society outside of South Africa. (8)

Carol Berkin also supports this argument, writing that, in the seventeenth century, "the English brought to the 'middle ground' a firm sense of their cultural superiority."[17] Furthermore, it is clear that their relations to the Irish structured English ideas about race. Smedley, following historian Leonard Liggio, argues that the English view of race is distinct from that of other colonial powers precisely because of the impact of the centuries old English/Irish relationship. Liggio, in Smedley's summary, "proposes a hypothesis that is now becoming a more general part of our understanding of history: that it was the English experience with the Irish 'which was the root of English racial attitudes'" (53). Liz Curtis traces the history of Irish "othering" first to the Normans in the twelfth century and in particular to Gerald of Wales's *History and Topography of Ireland*, which was dedicated to King Henry II. Curtis argues that this work "was to cast a

long shadow over English perceptions" (8), and although by the fifteenth century the English had replaced the Normans, beliefs about the inferiority of the Irish/Celts remained remarkably similar:

> In 1577 the first histories of Ireland written in English appeared, in the first volume of Holinshed's *Chronicles*. The histories, by Edmund Campion and Richard Stanyhurst, depicted the Irish as a barbarous and backward people. Included in the same volume was the first English translation of the work of the Norman writer Gerald of Wales. The various justifications for colonization were brought together and elaborated by Edmund Spenser, the poet and author of *The Faerie Queene*, in his book *A View of the State of Ireland*, which was published in 1596. (Curtis 16–17)

Winthrop Jordan, in his groundbreaking work *The White Man's Burden*, writes that, "for Englishmen in the seventeenth century the Irish were a special case, and it required more than an ocean voyage to alter this perception" (47). In other words, Ireland had served as the training ground for both colonial expansion and ideologies of race long before the English ever set foot in the "new world." Perhaps the most persuasive contemporary evidence that this argument has achieved considerable consensus can be seen in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry on race, which is worth quoting at length:

> The peoples conquered and enslaved were physically different from western and northern Europeans, but such differences were not the sole cause for the construction of racial categories. The English had a long history of separating themselves from others and treating foreigners, such as the Irish, as alien "others." By the 17th century their policies and practices in Ireland had led to an image

> of the Irish as "savages" who were incapable of being civilized. Proposals to conquer the Irish, take over their lands, and use them as forced labour failed largely because of Irish resistance. It was then that many Englishmen turned to the idea of colonizing the New World. Their attitudes toward the Irish set precedents for how they were to treat the New World Indians and, later, Africans. ("Race")

Moving from the European to the US case, "Americans," from the first English in search of new lands in the sixteenth century until well into the nineteenth century, also grappled with definitions of racial identity. Although new "Americans" adopted predominantly English customs, values, and norms, for a substantial period of time in the early history of the United States, "American" meant a complicated mixture of "not English" (in terms of opposition to royalty at least) and English. As more immigrants and slaves arrived, the question became critical—what was the measure of "American"? For a time "Christian" was used to distinguish between the immigrants on one hand and indigenous peoples and slaves on the other. This was quickly replaced by the distinctive characteristic "free." Jordan notes that once both these terms were problematized, by ex-slave converts in particular, a new "term of self-identification appeared. This term was "white", which ultimately left little room for "others" to maneuver (52). As Rees writes, "[a]t least since the Naturalization Act of 1790, which specified 'free white persons' as the only proper candidates for naturalized citizenship, whiteness and American identity have been closely associated" (60).

This white designation was rather quickly complicated by the influx of immigrants deemed "in-between peoples," or what Matthew Frye Jacobson calls "probationary whites": those not immediately (at least at the time) seen as white (*Whiteness* 8). Benjamin Franklin, for example, infamously fretted about "swarthy Swedes" and the sizeable influx of Germans and

their impact on the WASP character of the "new world" (Kolchin 158). There was a similar but more widespread moral panic in the nineteenth and early twentieth century over the millions of Irish, Italians, Poles, Jews, Hungarians, and other white immigrant groups whose racial purity was cause for concern (though significantly not as much concern as was reserved for Chinese and other Asian immigrants, of course). The Irish, alongside their fellow white immigrant groups, were embroiled in this racial debate in part because the word "ethnic" did not yet exist and "race" often stood in for "group", as Jennifer Hochschild observes:

> The idea of ethnicity did not exist in 1900; the term "ethnic" was invented around World War I and came into widespread use in the 1930s. The term "race" did much of the work that we now assign to "ethnicity"; phrases such as "the Irish race," "the Yankee race," and "the Hebrew race" were common and uncontested" (639–640)

This semantic confusion helped contribute to the modern conflation of the two terms.

Unlike race, which, as noted above, has a long and controversial lineage, ethnicity, at least in its modern sense is, as Rees puts it, "surprisingly new" (5). The "modern sense" to which Rees refers is best exemplified by the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which again offers the following standard definition:

> Ethnicity refers to the identification of a group based on a perceived cultural distinctiveness that makes the group into a "people." This distinctiveness is believed to be expressed in language, music, values, art, styles, literature, family life, religion, ritual, food, naming, public life, and material culture. This cultural comprehensiveness—a unique set of cultural characteristics perceived as expressing themselves in commonly unique ways across the sociocultural life of a

> population—characterizes the concept of ethnicity. It revolves around not just a "population," a numerical entity, but a "people," a comprehensively unique cultural entity. ("The Study")

The proper place of "cultural distinctiveness" goes right to the heart of the assimilation debate that was and arguably still is at the forefront of the immigration debate today. For much of US history, ethnic difference (though obviously not termed in this manner) was viewed as un-American, as it was generally acknowledged that integration was the goal. In order to accomplish this integration and become American (though it is unclear what this entailed), immigrants were expected to forego some of their cultural baggage. Whether or not immigrants could or should accomplish this has been a controversial topic for melting-pot theorists and ethnic pluralists alike.[18]

Tracing the rise of ethnicity in the twentieth century, Rees argues that the term helped "resolve the problem of outcast immigrants" (6), by which he meant seemingly racially ambiguous groups including Italians, Hungarians, and other southern and eastern European groups perceived to be "flooding" the country in the early twentieth century. The term ethnic "provided a language in which the newcomers' racial differences could be reconceived to more benign cultural ones, a transformation which allowed the new immigrants to be theoretically incorporated into the white race" (Rees 6). There were many factors that contributed to this transformation. As Rees observes, "The upward mobility of the new immigrants' children, the expansion of the white middle class, and the creation of exclusive white suburbs were a few of the factors converging in the twentieth century to consolidate the white race as an undifferentiated European American formation" (4).

The long and distinctive history of immigration and the resulting hybridity of the US population ensure that most white Americans can choose which variant of white ethnicity they most closely identify with. As many have noted, this is also the case largely because intermarriage gives individuals considerable additional latitude in naming an ethnicity. Steinberg writes that "[In 1990] 56 percent of US-born whites were married to spouses whose ancestry differed from their own, and only a fifth had spouses with an identical ethnic background. Clearly, for the descendants of the great waves of European immigration in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the marital melting pot is a reality" (117). And, as Hochschild neatly summarizes,

> [e]ventually, however, the despised races became the celebrated white ethnics. The reasons included genuine assimilation, the desire to become white in order not to be black, the almost complete cessation of new European immigration after World War I, upward mobility in a growing labor force, and political incorporation through party machines. (642)

Herbert Gans's classic work on "symbolic ethnicity" and the writings of contemporary scholars including Fenton, Rees, Mary Waters, and Catherine Eagan,[19] all note that this discretionary dimension of ethnicity clearly and sharply distinguishes it from race. However, adding another confusing layer is the fact that ethnicity is so often conflated with race. Indeed, it has been posited that ethnicity has perhaps been used in recent years as a more politically correct cousin to race. As Rees notes, "[i]n everyday conversation it seems that 'ethnicity' functions as a polite euphemism for the more awkward, discomforting 'race' (10)." However, while ethnicity might on the one hand function as a stand in for race because the latter is a topic too politically charged to be broached,[20] a less-discussed, paradoxical feature of the term is the extent to which

it typically, and almost exclusively is used to refer to white ethnicity. Despite the race-free definition proffered by *Encyclopedia Britannica*, both Fenton and Rees note the whiteness of ethnicity. "It is significant that the discourse of ethnicity has been so predominantly applied to white populations in American society" (Fenton 137). This is also the claim made by Rees: "The fact that *ethnic* is still rarely used in conjunction with discussions of black culture and identity should pique our suspicion that something else needs to be explained in the exclusive use of this term for European Americans" (30). Fundamentally, however, acceptance of notions of ethnicity facilitated "a change in the status of difference" (Rees 6).

The perspective equating ethnicity with whiteness (outlined above) was complicated and challenged by the rise and subsequent success of the academic discipline known as "Ethnic Studies." Inspired in large part by various social campaigns of the 1960s, including the civil rights movement, by the end of the twentieth century there were more than seven hundred Ethnic Studies programs throughout the United States (Hu-DuHart 104). As Johnnella E. Butler points out, "Ethnic Studies in the academy refers to racialized US ethnic groups" (Hu-DuHart 28), such as those designated as African American, Asian American, Native American, Chicano/a, and Latino/a. Although Ethnic Studies programs differ considerably across a wide variety of higher education institutions in the US, "what they have in common is a specific or comparative focus on groups socially constructed as 'minorities' in US society for their shared history of having been racially constructed as distinct from the European immigrants and their descendants" (Hu-DuHart 106). Many academics within Ethnic Studies were racial-ethnic theorists or multiculturalists (sometimes referred to as the ethnic pluralists; Steinberg 46–47) who, as Manning Marable notes, believed that "[r]acialized minorities are fundamentally different from other ethnic groups because of their common history of oppression" (45).

The emergence of Ethnic Studies rejuvenated much older debates concerning assimilation and integration, key anxieties in the long history of US immigration and race. The "cultural universalists" or melting-pot advocates included high profile sociologists Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer, who bemoaned multiculturalism (a tenet of many Ethnic Studies programs), asserting it encouraged separatism by fixating on differences. They argued, instead, for a perspective characterized as "color-blind". (Lynne Cheney, former head of the NEH, went even further in 1990 when she argued a similar point and characterized Ethnic Studies as "un-American"; Takaki 11).

The origins of "whiteness studies" (which now figure within many Ethnic Studies programs)[21] or critical whiteness studies, as historian David R. Roediger prefers to label these (noting that detractors tend to omit the "critical") lie within numerous disciplinary influences and roots. Arlette Ingram Willis convincingly links the field to critical race theory (itself having legal studies roots), noting it "has spawned other critical studies [including] feminist race critical studies, queer critical studies, and whiteness studies."[22] Sharon Smith highlights its postmodern foundations, insofar as "the political framework for whiteness theory appears deeply indebted to an offshoot of postmodernism known as 'identity politics,' popular among much of the post-1970s academic left" (Smith 1). Sociologist Jack Niemonen, summarizing its growth more broadly, writes that "appearing in the late 1980s and based largely in the United States, the field of whiteness studies grew exponentially in the humanities and in schools of education. In recent years, the field has made substantial inroads in the discipline of sociology" (49). However as Anoop Nayak explains, its appeal and influence go well beyond the confines of any single academic field: "The interest in critical studies of whiteness in history, geography, sociology,

law, education, anthropology, media and cultural studies indicate a healthy transdisciplinary appeal" (752).

Disciplinary squabbles notwithstanding, even the most cursory glance at critical whiteness studies cannot fail to notice the influence of a much older academic heritage. As historian Roediger points out, critical whiteness studies has Native American, Chicana/o, and African American roots (*Critical Studies* 75). More specifically, John Munro traces much of the contemporary scholarship in the field back to two key constituents: an African American antiracist tradition, exemplified in the work of W. E. B. DuBois, James Baldwin, and Frederick Douglass, and a US Marxist line, in which Alexander Saxton and C. L. R. James are prominent influences. Interestingly Frederick Douglass makes specific mention of American Irish racism in his autobiography, wondering how freedom-loving Irishmen could become oppressors once in the US.[23] Roediger insightfully writes:

> If the defining intellectual thrust in the critical study of whiteness is to make white identity into a problem worth historicizing and investigating, it stands to reason that those groups for whom white behavior and attitudes have been most problematic would have inquired most searchingly into the dynamics of whiteness. Indeed, studying whiteness as a problem is perfectly consistent with an African American tradition, extending from Frederick Douglass forward, of insisting that talk of a "Negro problem" missed the point and that the "white problem" instead deserved emphasis. ("Eve" 606)

Despite the varying accounts regarding the disciplinary origins of critical whiteness studies, most cite a number of key texts as crucial to relaunching and reinvigorating the field in the early 1990s. Chronologically these texts include Saxton's *Rise and Fall of the White Republic* (1990),

Roediger's *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1991), Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* (1992), Ruth Frankenberg's *White Women, Race Matters* (1993), and Theodore Allen's two-volume work *The Invention of the White Race* (1994). A key common feature of these works, as Peter Kolchin explains, is they all start "from the now widely shared premise that race is an ideological or social construct rather than a biological fact, [and] they have at least partially shifted attention from how Americans have looked at blacks to how they have looked at whites, and to whiteness as a central component of Americans' racial ideology" (155). Beyond this, however, there is little consensus on the essence of critical whiteness studies, due in large part to vast differences in fields of study, methodologies, and motivations. In the pages that follow, I will summarize the most common criticisms of the field.

One of the most prescient critiques of work in this area has to do with its capacity to adequately define its key concepts. As Ashley W. Doane and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva explain, "one major challenge for those in the field of 'critical whiteness studies' is the need to analyze the core concept. What, sociologically speaking, is 'whiteness'? What does it mean to claim a 'white identity'?" (8). Many early writers in the field, including Doane, Waters, Richard Alba, and Peggy McIntosh, asserted that whiteness was invisible. In other words, most white people are not aware that they too are raced, a phenomenon accounted for in the classic dominant/subordinate sociological framework. That is, if one belongs to a subordinate group (in terms of class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) one is aware of the framework and understands how the dominant group functions. If, however, one belongs to the dominant group, the specific character and identity of this group is often invisible. This helps contextualize the historical origins of whiteness studies as developed by African American writers and the necessary redirection away from the "Negro problem" toward the "white problem." If whiteness is

invisible, as many early critical whiteness studies proponents advocated, how can it be studied? Douglass Hartmann, Joseph Gerteis, and Paul R. Croll challenge the notion of whiteness' invisibility and contend that whiteness is, indeed, visible. Findings from their 2009 study reveal:

> Seventy-four percent of white Americans—almost three-fourths—said that their racial identity was either "very important" or "somewhat important." Put this together with the fact that an overwhelming majority of white Americans wanted to preserve their racial culture (whatever that might be) and it would appear that the magnitude of the whiteness phenomenon is somewhat less striking than the abstract theories may have led us to believe. ("Empirical" 414)

This research demonstrates that whiteness is sometimes invisible and other times obvious, depending on the circumstances. (These circumstances will be explored in chapters 3–5).

Further complicating the issue is that whiteness has been variously defined and examined as a social location (rather than a shared identity), as symbolic capital (Lewis), as the foundational category of white supremacy (Bonilla-Silva), and the norm (Dyer). Hartmann et al. extrapolate on this definitional dilemma: "Whiteness is a notoriously multifaceted, even contradictory theoretical construct. 'Complicated and shifting in its meanings and uses' (Ellsworth 1997), whiteness can be visible or invisible, either an identity or the absence of identity, a normative cultural ideology or a subjectivity that believes that it transcends cultural time and space" (Hartman, Gerteis, and Croll, Working paper 34).

Another prevalent critique of the field is that critical whiteness studies erroneously emphasizes race above all other identity interests, including class, sexual orientation, gender, etc. Niemonen's observation is representative: "By suppressing intra-group divisions and contradictions, whiteness studies ignore how multiple statuses work together in people's lives"

(64). Influential works examining the intersections of gender and whiteness by Vron Ware and Ruth Frankenberg, to cite just two examples, challenge this claim. However, Niemonen is correct in stating that multiple statuses impact people's lives. Even in this work, which primarily focuses on whiteness and Irishness, gender – or, more specifically, insidious varieties of retro-masculinity -- are obfuscated by Irishness and demand closer examination (see chapter 5). In a similar critique Hartman singles out Saxton's work, with its emphasis on class, as a masterpiece in the field but criticizes others for largely ignoring it. And while class, sexual orientation, and gender are, of course, significant, there is a strong case to be made for the centrality of race and newer forms of racism operating under the guise of whiteness in the US. For example, while the election of President Obama is evidence for some that race no longer exists, and that the US is officially a color-blind or post-racial society, Roediger refutes this common "race is over" thesis. "The evasions of questions of power and privilege in the 'race is over' literature also obscure the extent to which the fiction of race still structures life chances in the United States" ("Eve" 601). The existence of systemic racism in employment, income, housing, education, and healthcare has been carefully detailed by Tim Wise, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Derald Wing Sue, George Lipsitz, and many others. Variously termed symbolic racism, modern racism, aversive racism, and color-blind racism, new forms of racism reveal, as Sue et al. suggest, that "racism is more likely than ever to be disguised and covert and has evolved from the 'old fashioned' form, in which overt racial hatred and bigotry is consciously and publicly displayed, to a more ambiguous and nebulous form that is more difficult to identify and acknowledge" (272).

One last criticism of whiteness studies should be noted before moving onto the relationship between the field and Irishness. It has been argued that the emergence of the area opportunistically gave white scholars a seat at the multicultural studies table and "may also

reflect the individual and collective self-interest of white researchers—an attempt to retain a grip on the mainstream of the study of race and ethnic relations" (Doane 6). In their influential anthology Doane and Bonilla-Silva argue forcefully for "the study of 'whiteness' in ways that go beyond simply placing white back in the middle and object of study but [insist] that it must be connected to study of the systemic practices that reproduce racial inequality and of the ideology of 'color blindness' that provides legitimacy and political cover for the persistence of racism" (ix). This criticism, in part, motivated Roediger to demand the inclusion of "critical" whiteness studies rather than simply "whiteness studies," as the latter often falls prey to the type of re-centering emphasized by Doane and Bonilla-Silva.

While Rees and Steinberg argue that the development and use of ethnicity as a concept is clearly connected to race, American Irish and other white ethnic groups in contemporary society continue to employ it as a coded form of whiteness. Irishness in the US is now synonymous with white. However, if, as is the case with most white Americans, one has one or more ethnic options to choose from, how does one make such a choice and what factors contribute to that choice? And given its contradictory historical racial classifications, what made Irishness so alluring for white people in the 1990s? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Like racial and ethnic identities, whiteness and Irishness are malleable, shaped and bound by varying social and political conditions of their time. Like whiteness, Irishness can be a social location, a shared identity, symbolic, a form of supremacy, and, among white American Irish groups in this country, arguably a norm. As Lewis urges, "scholars must contend with the challenge of how to write about what is shared by those racialized as white without implying that their experiences of racialization all will be the same" (623). Neither Irishness nor whiteness is

one-dimensional. To conceptualize and employ either identity in this simplistic manner is to eradicate its successfully pervasive and politically expedient nature. Its intrinsic flexibility is an essential component of its success. "The realization that whiteness is complicated, conditional, and sometimes even a bit contradictory does not set aside the theories, rather it suggests the need to further analyze and explore the conditions and factors that make whiteness most salient and significant" (Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll, "Empirical" 420).

As mentioned earlier, complex formulations of race have historically been deployed to characterize the Irish, due in large part to Ireland's similarly complicated colonial relationship with England. It is somewhat surprising that more was not written on race and Irishness in the context of the US before the 1990s, particularly in light of Frederick Douglass's revealing observations:

> During his 1845–1846 tour of Ireland, Douglass heard the "wailing notes" of the music of the oppressed and famished Irish people as close kin of the "wild notes" of the slaves' sorrow songs. Douglass lingered over the wails of the Irish to emphasize the tragedy of Irish-American racism, seconding Irish nationalist leader Daniel O'Connell's point that this was a "cruelty" not learned in Ireland and was utterly inappropriate to the Irish experience. (Roediger, *Black on White* 20)

(It may be noted, however, that the mural in honor of Douglas in Belfast is a contemporary nod to this relationship fig. 7).[24] Perhaps it was Douglass's remarks that helped prompt the idea that the Irish only learned about race once they set foot in the US. Noel Ignatiev for example, discussed the struggles between the American Irish and African Americans: "the answer is that the competition among these two groups did not take place under normal circumstances, but was

distorted by the color line, what O'Connell called something in the 'atmosphere' of America" (99). Both Roediger and Ignatiev are referring to Daniel O'Connell, the nineteenth-century advocate of Catholic Emancipation for the Irish (under English Home Rule). O'Connell's uncompromising antislavery views proved unpopular with the American Irish community and had a negative impact on his fundraising efforts.

Fig. 7. Mural on the Falls Road in Belfast, circa 2011 (Falls Road, Belfast)

To situate and understand the recent popularity of Irishness through the prism of critical whiteness studies might at first glance seem rather difficult. However, in the 1990s two influential works by noted labor historians called attention to the complex relationship between Irish-America and US race relations and set the stage for much work on the topic that followed. These works were Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (which included the chapter "Irish-American Workers and White Racial Formation before the Civil War," 1991) and Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White* (1995). Both write about Irish immigrants in antebellum America. Roediger, as his title suggests, examined how the white working class, including Irish immigrants, came during this period to identify as

white. “Roediger’s essential starting point is that because the white working class in the United States emerged in a slaveholding republic, its members came to define themselves by what they were not: slaves and blacks” (Kolchin 155). Borrowing heavily from DuBois, he concludes there was a public and psychological reward or gain for this white working class in claiming and asserting their whiteness and thereby reinforcing the inferiority of blackness. Moreover, Roediger suggests, it was unclear, particularly in light of the vehement nativist movement of the period, whether the Irish were considered white at all. In his equally controversial work, fellow labor historian Ignatiev, writing about the same period in US history, makes a similar claim. “Strong tendencies existed in antebellum America,” Ignatiev writes, “to consign the Irish, if not to the black race, then to an intermediate race located socially between black and white” (76). L. P. Curtis suggested this was not an uncommon perception in nineteenth-century America in his 1971 book. Ignatiev goes even further, arguing that “while the white skin made the Irish eligible for membership in the white race, it did not guarantee their admission; they had to earn it” (59). And earn it they did. By the end of the nineteenth century while the American Irish might have been still viewed with suspicion by the WASP majority, due in large part to their Catholicism, there were firmly integrated into whiteness. Whether or not the Irish were white on arrival, learned how to be white, or were considered something else is still a contentious topic among historians. It is, however, unlikely to be resolved, particularly in a contemporary US context where white and Irish have at least for most of the past half century been unambiguously synonymous.

American Irish history has long been an established field, featuring a host of eminent historians including Kerby Miller, Lawrence McCaffrey, and Andrew Greeley. However, prior to the works of Roediger and Ignatiev, these traditions tended to sidestep questions about the

racialization of the Irish. Scholars and attendees at various US Irish Studies conferences throughout the late 1990s and 2000s consistently positioned themselves within the "victim narrative" paradigm. As Eagan notes, this move reveals a "desire to re-become the 'other' and deny their past and present participation in the white power structure" (23).

The significance of either Roediger or Ignatiev's work should not be underestimated. Indeed their trailblazing research inspired important works on whiteness by Matthew Frye Jacobson (*Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*), Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno (*Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America),* and Karen Brodkin (*How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America)*. If the class-centered work of labor historians Roediger and Ignatiev represents the first wave of research on the intersection between whiteness and Irishness, the second wave emanated from a cultural studies perspective and was driven in large part by Lauren Onkey, Catherine Eagan, and Diane Negra. This work prompted sometimes disparaging and often-hostile responses from the US Irish Studies establishment, as it disrupted and contested what Joe Kincheloe has called the "injustice history" (Kincheloe et al. 13). In addition, these scholars challenged the centrality of traditional disciplines such as English and History in US Irish Studies,[25] and introduced uncomfortable questions about the nature of race and in particular the whiteness of Irishness. The research presented here is indebted to this second wave.

In the chapters that follow it is argued that the determining "preapproved characteristic"[26] of Irishness in the US since the mid-1990s is its indispensable whiteness even though it is often camouflaged, coded, and denied. This racial truth lies at the heart of both the appeal and utility of Irishness. As Eagan reminds, "the search for heritage, belonging and relevance is intertwined with race in complex and often subterranean ways" (87). Irishness provides both a sense of

distinction for US whites (a type of nonwhite white other, if you will) while simultaneously remaining firmly aligned with the dominant white majority. In essence Irishness allows one to move laterally between—ideologically speaking—the safety of its widely accepted positive white identity (though it is "othered" in contrast to Germanness, Englishness, etc.) and the broader white norm.[27] Allen contends, in an oft-quoted line from his landmark study *The Invention of the White Race*, that, "whiteness is the overriding jet stream in American history" (22). The objective of this work then is to advance understanding of the nature of Irishness particularly as its impacts the politics of US race relations. France Winddance Twine and Charles Gallagher write that third wave whiteness acknowledges:

> the relational, contextual and situational ways in which white privilege can be at the same time a taken-for granted entitlement, a desired social status, a perceived source of victimization and a tenuous situational identity. It is these white inflections, the nuanced and locally specific ways in which whiteness as a form of power is defined, deployed, performed, policed and reinvented that is the central focus of third wave whiteness. (7)

Before examining in detail the various audiences outlined above it is first necessary to sketch a brief historical overview of the popular representations of the Irish in the US.

Chapter 2: From Separation to Assimilation—The Irish in Politics and Popular Culture

The harp that once thro' Tara's halls

The soul of music shed.

Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,

As if that soul were fled.

So sleeps the pride of former days,

So glory's thrill is o'er,

And hearts, that once beat high for praise,

Now feel that pulse no more.

- "The Harp That Once Thro' Tara's Halls" by Thomas Moore[28]

Long before the very recent tendency to regard Irishness as cool and hip, ideas and images about Ireland and the Irish in US popular culture were saturated by sometimes imported and often pernicious stereotypes about the group. English attitudes and accompanying representational tropes concerning the Irish influenced US popular culture, especially during the nineteenth century, as vast numbers of predominantly working class Catholic Irish[29] moved to the United States in an attempt to escape the famine between 1845 and 1850.[30] An obvious example of this influence can be seen in the popularity of jokes about the apparent inherent idiocy of the Irish. As was the case in England, Michael de Nie observes that "jokes about Irish stupidity were a frequent staple of nineteenth-century … comic weeklies" in the US as well (17).[31] The image of an ignorant, violent, drunken, poor, Catholic "Paddy" was a popular figure on both sides of the Atlantic during this period. In addition to these influential English discursive traditions, homegrown versions of Irishness, occasionally altered as a result of American Irish lobbying, also affected mainstream images and ideas of Ireland in the US. These two sometimes-

contradictory influences formed the "public discourse about Irishness" that grew up alongside new popular forms of mass entertainment in the US during the last two centuries (W. Williams 6). From the late eighteenth to the late twentieth century, music and songs, print media, theatre, vaudeville, radio, and cinema all contributed to this public discourse of Irishness. Although this is not the appropriate venue to present a thorough historical account of Irishness in US popular culture, a brief overview of that history, beginning with music, is necessary in order to map out some broad representational patterns and help set the stage for the explosion of Irishness in the 1990s.

Irish music has a long and distinguished place in the history of US popular culture. Many trace its successful origins to the beginning of the eighteenth century and in particular to the work of composer, songwriter, and poet Thomas Moore (epigraph and fig. 8). Though born in Ireland, Moore lived most of his life away from the island, which likely contributed to the sentimentality evident in many of his works. Moore's *Irish Melodies* collection published in parts between 1808 and 1837 was just as popular in Ireland and England as it was in the US ("The Library"). In his study on Irishness in American popular song lyrics, William H. A. Williams notes that "even before the great upsurge in migration of the Irish to America, Moore's songs helped introduce into Anglo-American popular culture a vague identification of Ireland and things Irish with a strong sense of romantic nostalgia" (25). Williams continues:

> Although few writers emulated Moore in his use of Irish legends, ancient heroes, or classical allusions, his Irish Melodies inevitably helped establish within Anglo-American popular culture many elements that would be combined to make an Irish song: Erin as the female persona of Ireland, the cause of liberty, the longing for home and childhood, the mixture of joy and sadness, the harp and shamrock as

important national symbols, the beauty of the Irish landscape, and the exile's ineradicable love of the native land. (28–29)

Fig. 8. Bronze bust of Thomas Moore in Central Park, New York ("Thomas Moore").

Indeed this sentimentality remained a defining feature of popular songs about Ireland throughout the nineteenth century, which was perhaps to be expected, given the large number of Irish immigrants arriving in the US during the 1840–1870 period. If Michael D. Nicholsen's findings are accurate, Irish traditional music might well have been absent, at least from the mainstream, for at least fifty years prior to the 1950s. Nicholsen argued that traditional music as part of the public celebrations of St. Patrick's Day in Chicago had virtually disappeared by the 1890s (126).

A romantic, nostalgic version of Irishness underwent a revival in the early twentieth century when Tin Pan Alley composers attempted to capitalize on the sentimental tastes of the children and grandchildren of those earlier immigrants. The 1940s and 1950s saw a reinvention of Irish music as it became integrated more fully into the US mainstream. This integration ran parallel to the increasingly prosperous social and economic conditions of the American Irish community (Moloney 396). The success of Bing Crosby, "by far the most famous Irish-American performing artist of the twentieth century," is one obvious example of this

assimilationist trend (Moloney 398). His Irish-themed song "Christmas in Killarney" was featured on the best-selling *White Christmas* album.[32] Even though, as Mick Moloney crucially notes, the Irish component of Crosby's repertoire represented a very small fraction of his work overall, "with over thirty years of radio performances, recordings, and film appearances, he extended the life of such Tin Pan Alley songs … making them the bedrock of Irish Americana in popular culture" (399).

In contrast, as Paul F. Wells observed, "the 1950s were a low period for Irish traditional music in America" (43).. However, the 1960s heralded a folk music revival in the US, and Irish traditional music received a concomitant boost during this period. The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem immigrated to North America and spent time in Greenwich Village, the center of American folk music, influencing Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, and others ("The Clancy"). Moloney points out, though, that "[w]hen Irish Americans started to get interested in the Clancy Brothers, according to Liam [one of the Clancy brothers], there was an implicit repudiation of the invented Ireland of Tin Pan Alley" (401). Although it was a far cry from the mid to late nineteenth century, when Irish and American popular music were virtually synonymous,[33] groups such as the Chieftains, and Tommy Makem and the Clancy Brothers found enthusiastically receptive audiences throughout the decade. Wells notes that "by the late 1970s a full-fledged revival of Irish music was underway in America" (46). This was due in large part to a repudiation of the Tin Pan Alley versions of Irish music, as Clancy noted, and the re-ethnicization of Irish music through the prism of folk music. This revival, in turn, sparked the launch of many Irish/Celtic-themed festivals throughout the 1980s and beyond (see chapter 5).

The theatre also played a part in helping shape the "public discourse about Irishness," especially during the nineteenth century. One of the new popular and influential forms of

entertainment in New York during this period was variety theatre. A forerunner to vaudeville, variety theatre frequently reflected the mainstream nativist sentiment of the day towards the Irish, despite the involvement of many American Irish producers and performers. Moloney notes the ascendancy of the "stage Irishman" in variety theatre and argues that it often contained "a restricted set of images of the Irish that dominated the American stage. Some of these images presented the Irish as loyal, servile, and docile; others presented the Irishman as dim-witted and pugnacious" (384). As Williams remarks, it "is ironic … that Americans, who had freed themselves from British colonial rule, would have embraced so readily a stereotype of the Irish that had its roots in British imperialism" (63). The fusion of imported English traditions, adjusted to align themselves with the specificities of dominant US political culture, again comprised the public discourse of Irishness in this era.

Nativist ideologies also played a considerable role in framing how the Irish/American Irish were depicted in major print media during this era. It is worth reiterating (noted in chapter 1), as L. P. Curtis in his seminal work observed, that representations in the mid-eighteenth century were also crucially affected by the plethora of pseudoscientific theories of race, another popular fixation of the time. Physiognomy, phrenology, and other "sciences" established Irish in academic and popular culture realms as a group "othered," especially in relation to the Anglo-Protestant norm. "Whether seen from a scientific, social, or cultural perspective, the Victorian images of the Irish as 'white Negro' and simian Celt, or a combination of the two, derived much of its force and inspiration from physiognomical beliefs" (Curtis 13). Curtis, Dale T. Knobel, Noel Ignatiev, and others have successfully delineated the motivations behind the hierarchies of race. It can be acknowledged here (as discussed in chapter 1) that economics, imperialism, and dominant WASP ideologies all played crucial if obvious roles. A fundamental tenet and function

of stereotyping, including ethnic or racial stereotyping, is its ability to simplify the ordering of the world and the people in it. Stereotypes "play a key role in the rationalization of the existing social order" (Yzerbyt, Rocher, and Schadron 22). As Knobel observed, the very label "Irish" during the nineteenth century "mobilized an entire sub-language that defined and evaluated all to whom the term was deemed to apply" (16). This was especially true in popular print media representations of the day. It is, however, also important to note that even among the predominantly negative images of the Irish during this era there were also some sympathetic characterizations of the Irish, particularly as famine atrocities were publicized in the mainstream press.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, representations of the Irish often reflected the moral panic that emerged in reaction to the large influx of Irish immigrants into cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston.[34] New York was particularly important at that time, as Marion Casey reminds us, because of its dominance in the worlds of both journalism and popular culture. "The image of the Irish developed in New York was the one disseminated throughout the country," she argues ("Ireland, New York" 5). However, toward the end of the nineteenth century, representational changes emerged, echoing in part the rising class status of some American Irish and their place above and in contrast to even "less desirable" newer immigrants such as those from Italy and Hungary. "The images of the Irish in American popular culture were to soften in direct proportion to the rate of upward social mobility achieved by the group," writes Moloney, who attributes the "first major change in the image of the Irish on the stage in America" to Dion Boucicault and particularly his most famous and commercially successful plays *The Shaughran* and *The Colleen Bawn* (386). In addition, as the more respectable vaudeville replaced the bawdier variety theatre, the work of Harrigan (whom Williams singles

out as "very effective in developing the more positive side of the Irish stereotype" [158]) and Hart, an assortment of Tin Pan Alley songwriters, and popular recording artists such as John McCormack all contributed to an evolving image of the Irish in the US ("John McCormack"). The new image was one that directly appealed to emerging mass American Irish middle class tastes and sensibilities. Yet the fact of some class mobility alone could not altogether erase traditionally negative cultural stereotypes of the Irish either. While Harrigan and Hart were helping to modify the image of the stage Irishman, other American Irish groups were lobbying against more familiar characterizations. As Casey recounts:

> In 1893, four Irish county societies lodged protests with the Central Park Zoo in New York, charging that it was discriminatory to give names like "Mike", "Paddy", and "Biddy" to the monkeys and chimpanzees in its care. The Irish protests forced the Zoo to acknowledge that the practice was offensive and to prohibit it in the future. ("Ireland, New York" 88)

The remnants of pseudoscientific theories of race notwithstanding, by the time the new medium of film emerged in early twentieth century mainstream culture, it was generally established that Irish themes were often commercially successful though they still appealed primarily to American Irish audiences.[35]

Joseph M. Curran maintains that the US film industry made "more movies about the Irish than any other ethnic minority"[36] and clearly motion pictures about Ireland and the Irish have proved quite popular since the first days of Hollywood. Furthermore, Kevin Rockett argues that "cinema above all helped broaden the range of representations of the Irish" (17). Given the success of Irishness in other popular genres such as music and theatre, it is no surprise that early filmmakers were quick to create movies that also incorporated Irish characters, settings, and

themes. In some ways, cinematic depictions of the Irish followed a pattern similar to that of music in that early stereotypical and sometimes sentimental versions were popular at both the start of the twentieth century and again in the 1950s (see *The Quiet Man*). Rockett notes that "[t]he largest number of films in which the Irish appeared in the early cinema was probably those where they were the butt of jokes and were caricatured in traditional stereotypical ways. These were often derived directly from vaudeville" (27). However, in between these two periods (1920s and 1950s)—and this is where the music and film histories deviate from one another—cinematic mainstream urban images of the Irish become quintessentially American.

Early filmmakers, in their attempts to reach as many markets as possible, attempted to attract wider audiences beyond American Irish communities. This fundamental mass media marketing rationale helps in part to explain the ideological ambiguity of Irish characters in early films. "Ethnic characters, always a strong sell at the box office, create a sense of the Other who can be ridiculed and admired at the same time; the quiet ridicule maintains sufficient distance for viewers to feel comfortably different, while admiration means to be attracted to positive social values proven by experience" (Lourdeaux 4). The 1925 release of *Irish Luck* (fig. 9), a Zukor and Lasky/Paramount production filmed on location in Ireland, was a commercial hit. It generated a string of copycat films, many of which, as both Kevin Rockett and Roger B. Dooley point out, were often released in March to capitalize on St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

Fig. 9. The 1925 silent film *Irish Luck* (Calvert).

Before John Ford made either of his two best-known Irish-related films, *The Informer*[37] and *The Quiet Man*, he directed *The Shamrock Handicap* and *Mother Machree* at Fox in 1926 and 1928, respectively. Both early films featured Irish themes and/or characters. *The Shamrock Handicap* in particular foreshadowed many of the tropes that would appear almost thirty years later in *The Quiet Man*. The success of these and many other Irish-themed films reveals much about the broader appeal of Irishness by the 1920s and 1930s and this group's continued integration into US society despite lingering anti-Catholic sentiment.

American Irish identity begins to distinguish itself from other "Others" in Hollywood during the 1930s and 1940s. "The broad appeal of Irish-American stories in the Hollywood films of the 1930s and 1940s lay primarily in their ability to present the Irish as representative of a broader ethnic vision of the city as an urban village, fully ethnic yet fully American" (Shannon 48). Christopher Shannon argues that gangster films, and in particular James Cagney, best exemplified this transformative process. By the late 1930s Cagney was "the most identifiable 'Irish' actor in the USA" after starring in a string of hit films at Warner Brothers including

Public Enemy (1931), *Taxi* (1932), *The Irish in Us* (1935), and *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938) (Rockett 30). His antihero gangster persona, popular throughout the Depression era, symbolized the continued assimilation of the American Irish in this period. As Grant Tracey notes, the actor's "on-screen simultaneity (the good-but-bad boy) reflected the Irish American's apparent social role. Although their separate schooling and Catholicism kept them outside Protestant hegemony, many Irish Americans were prominent in New York City politics and had achieved a measure of 'whiteness' or social mobility" (4).

In tandem with the figure of the gangster was the inevitably Irish priest, the moral compass. Pat O'Brien (*Angels with Dirty Faces* [1938], *The Fighting 69th* [1940], and *Fighting Father Dunne* [1948]), Spencer Tracy (*San Francisco* [1936] and *Boys Town* [1938]) and Bing Crosby (*Going My Way* [1944]) all played memorable priests in a wide variety of films from the 1930s onward. The emergence of the priest, as Rockett notes, was "in large part a response to film censorship agitation, which had been orchestrated by the Irish-dominated American Catholic Church" (30). As noted earlier, Bing Crosby was one of the most popular entertainers of the 1940s and 1950s. *Going My Way* (1944) earned seven Oscars, including one for Crosby in the role of Irish priest Father Chuck O'Malley. The sequel *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945) grossed over $21 million at the box office and earned Crosby a second Academy Award nomination. Meaghan Dwyer-Ryan argues that through these films "the Catholic Church was also able to become a mainstream American institution. Scenes featuring Catholic schoolchildren reciting the Pledge of Allegiance while their habit-clad teachers proudly looked on encouraged the idea that parochial schools could produce patriotic American citizens just like public schools" (61).

As Ruth Barton notes, O'Brien, Crosby, Maureen O'Hara, and other "stars'" ethnic (read: white) allegiances were widely proclaimed in secondary publicity material as Hollywood

reached out to the massive American Irish audience and those in sympathy with Irish screen personalities and stories" (*Acting Irish* 5). That such stars would appeal to American Irish groups is no great surprise, but that there was now a "those in sympathy" audience is significant as it points to the evolving and much less threatening nature of the Irish image in popular culture. In contrast, no similar trend followed Hungarian-American or Italian-American actors or celebrities, at least until the latter decades of the twentieth century. Indeed Barton argues that, as the decades passed and Hollywood emerged as the dominant form of popular entertainment, "the preferred view of the Irish was as hard working, integrated members of long-established, working-class communities with the priest and the policeman acting as guarantors of that group's stability and conformity" (*Acting Irish* 235). Similarly, Timothy Meagher points to the "regular-guy" populism of the American Irish, and it is this image that helps in part account for the appeal and success of this figure on screen particularly during the 1940s (628).[38] So well-liked was this image that by "the early 1940s, some of Hollywood's most popular films and actors were Irish American" (Almeida 550).

Despite the fact that Irish/American Irish had served in every military engagement since the Revolution, their participation in World War II played a crucial part in supporting this relatively newfound mass appeal. Peter Quinn, in his provocative essay, discusses the transformation of the fighting Irish into the fighting patriotic American Irish during this period. His observations are worth quoting at length:

> By the time of World War II, the association of Irish and fighting, once so basic to Paddy's disruptive image, had become a rallying cry for American patriotism. The 1944 movie *The Fighting Sullivans* portrayed a brood of five brawling Irish-American brothers, all lost on the same ship, as the apotheosis of loyalty and

> sacrifice. In the 1941 movie *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, which celebrated the life and music of the Irish-American actor and songwriter George M. Cohan, the actor playing President Roosevelt says to Cohan (played by Jimmy Cagney), "I like the way you Irish Americans wear your patriotism on your sleeve". Gone were the days when Paddy was told not even to apply. Now Pat was assured that he was "in like Flynn" (667–668).

The American Irish, like many other whites, moved to the suburbs after World War II, leaving the inner cities to African Americans, other nonwhite groups, and newly arrived immigrants. They were able to make this move due to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the GI Bill of Rights, which provided low-cost mortgages as well as low-interest business loans to veterans. It also provided university tuition and, in its "peak year of 1947, veterans accounted for 49 percent of college admissions" ("Education and Training"). As historian Lawrence McCaffrey noted in his influential book *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*, "[e]ducation was the springboard that launched the Irish Catholic majority into the ranks of the American middle class" and hundreds of thousands of American Irish enrolled in colleges and universities courtesy of the US government (175). McCaffrey continues, "High school diplomas could propel the children of blue collar workers into white collar desk jobs, but the G.I. Bill meant that ex-servicemen skipped one sometimes two generational rungs—peasant to Ph.D. or M.D.—on the mobility ladder" (176).[39] The extent of their assimilation is evident in that "postwar scientific studies and civics textbooks identified Irish ethnics as 'representative Americans' in the years immediately after the war" (O'Brien 175). But as Linda Dowling Almeida notes:

> The challenge for the Irish in the second half of the twentieth century was coming to terms with their social and economic success and the migration out of tight-knit urban communities to the anonymity and dispersion of the suburbs. Immigration and parish life in the city had long nurtured Irish Catholic identity. With money, education, and home ownership outside the neighborhood, the Irish had to work harder to be Irish. (548)

Partly as a consequence of these wider socio-economic changes, Irishness occupied a much less noticeable cultural place as the assimilation of American Irish continued into the 1950s. The obvious cinematic exception to this trend was the 1952 release of John Ford's *The Quiet Man*, which managed to assemble virtually every stereotype that had ever appeared in Hollywood's version of the Emerald Isle. The result was both a major commercial and critical success,[40] and its lasting popularity is testament to the endurance and appeal of long-standing stereotypes of the Irish in the US. However, despite this high-profile example, throughout the 1950s Irishness as a central cinematic topic became less frequent. And although Irish/American Irish were still utilized as convenient stock characters, often heavily stereotyped and the object of humor,[41] there were fewer high-profile films made about the Irish during this period than in any other previous movie-making decade. Despite the generally diminished visibility of Irishness in US popular culture during this period, especially when contrasted with other eras, Casey detects a shift revealing "the demise of nostalgic representations in favour of a new phase of stereotyping" in her analysis of 1950s St. Patrick's Day greeting cards:

> The first time Norcross [New York greeting card company] associates the Irish with beer in its St. Patrick's Day cards occurs in 1957; leprechauns follow in

> 1958. A curvaceous modern "Colleen" adorns a 1959 card and corned beef and cabbage makes it debut on a 1960 card. ("Ireland, New York" 315)

However, more common media representations of Ireland from the 1960s through the early 1990s were news stories on the seemingly intractable and euphemistically titled "Troubles."[42] During this roughly thirty-year period, although mainstream media representations of the Irish in England and the US were occasionally ideologically contradictory as in the past, they more often drew images, themes, and stereotypes from common discursive repositories. As thoroughly documented by Liz Curtis, David Miller, and Louisa Burns-Bisogno, media representations of the Irish in England up to the early 1990s had not evolved a great deal since the height of the British Empire. Such discursive traditions endured well into the twentieth century as the Irish were routinely depicted as inherently violent, stupid, and uncivilized. Widespread antipathy toward the Irish alongside these intransigent stereotypes was completely naturalized in English culture, as a standard feature of the "national popular" to borrow Antonio Gramsci's term.[43] As Liz Curtis observed:

> The renewal of conflict in the north of Ireland in 1969 brought with it an upsurge in anti-Irish prejudice in England. Politicians and media commentators have refused to recognise Britain's responsibility for the 'troubles', and instead have portrayed Britain as a disinterested third party, and the Irish as irrational and innately prone to violence…. A survey published in 1984 of nearly 800 children at a Nottingham comprehensive school revealed that of seven groups—English, German, Indian, Irish, Jewish, Pakistani and West Indian—the Irish were the least liked, followed closely by the Pakistanis. (4–5)

Unlike their counterparts in 1980s England, the American Irish did not face daily intolerance on the part of the dominant majority, although long held nativist antipathy toward stereotypical Paddy in the US was, and occasionally still is, remarkable in its survival.[44]

In addition to nativist leftovers, by the 1980s images of the Irish in the US were crucially ideologically framed by "official" British government versions of "the Troubles," especially on the evening news. This practice was a long-standing norm: "From at least 1920 it was the policy of the British Foreign Office to propagandize its position on Ireland 'through friendly American press correspondents assigned to London'" (*Ireland,* Casey 60). In his important study of news coverage and the north of Ireland, David Miller reaches a similar conclusion, that "when it comes to characterising the conflict and its causes, official explanations predominate" (197). Miller notes that ultimately "US press and television reporting (especially news forms) tends to accept a key element of the 'official' view of the conflict—that the British state is somehow 'above' the fray and holding the ring" (197). Hollywood throughout the 1980s and 1990s also reflected this long-standing ideological approach to Irish political events. Many films of the period, including *State of Grace* (1990), *Patriot Games* (1992), *Blown Away* (1994), and *The Devil's Own* (1997), featured erratic, irrational, inherently violent Irish "terrorists" and a variety of, though not always sympathetic, certainly victimized English and American characters.

Even though certain periods—such as that between 1890 and 1950 and, as I argue in this work, the mid-1990s to the 2000s—featured Irishness more prominently than others,[45] from this brief survey it is obvious that Irishness in a variety of forms has occupied a continuous and significant position in US popular culture. As we shall see, the mid-1990s heralded a new chapter in that story.

Whereas one could once speak of Irishness as a set of images and stereotypes, by the mid to late 1990s it had become a set of consumption practices. Irishness became less about the "image" of the Irish, than about the circulation of multiple tokens of Irishness. The breakup of a mass market for media products into a variety of niche markets led to a differentiation in the ways in which Irish-themed culture circulates. This in turn accompanied the emergence of recognizably different kinds of consumers of Irish products.

Like other groups, American Irish have long been drawn to products affiliated with—if not originating in—their ancestral homeland. Casey notes several instances of companies marketing directly to this group, especially as the number of urban-based immigrants increased dramatically in the mid to late nineteenth century. Casey's work demonstrates that there has long been a market for Irish-themed goods, particularly as St. Patrick's Day became increasingly popular within mainstream US society.[46] Indeed March festivities spawned many early forerunners of the shamrock-emblazoned tchotchkes so familiar today. Beginning in the 1990s, Irish-themed merchandise was offered in countless catalogs, on hundreds of internet sites, in more than 500 Irish/Celtic "ethnic stores" across the country, on television shopping networks including QVC, in major department stores such as Macy's and Bloomingdales, at hundreds of Irish/Celtic festivals, and at theme parks and resorts including Busch Gardens, Dollywood, and Branson (see chapter 5). Even as other forms of Irish-themed content such as network television programs[47] and romanticized Hollywood films waned,[48] and although these days the "Celtic Tiger" is more of a "Celtic Garfield,"[49] Irish-themed shopping in the US continues to thrive. That Irish-themed goods appeal to more than just those with Irish ancestry is what makes this phenomenon fascinating and significantly different from other practices of ethnic affiliation in

the US. It is difficult, for example, to imagine Germanness sweeping the nation in a similar fashion.

As noted above, the branding and selling of Irishness in the US during the 1990s was not an altogether new phenomenon. There are some key differences between the early examples that Casey highlighted in her study and near contemporary versions. The most obvious one is the radically altered mainstream attitude toward ethnicity in general and white ethnicity in particular. Matthew Frye Jacobson summarizes the transformation:

> The Civil Rights movement had heightened whites' consciousness of their skin privilege, rendering it not only visible but uncomfortable (the more so, perhaps, because it was so hard to disown its chief comforts). The example of Black Nationalism and the emergence of multiculturalism had provided a new language for an identity that was not simply "American". After decades of striving to conform to the Anglo-Saxon standard, descendants of earlier European immigrants quit the melting pot. Italianess, Jewishness, Greekness, and Irishness had become badges of pride, not shame. (*Roots Too* 2)

Long associated with nativist prejudices toward Catholicism[50] and the shame of poverty, Irish ancestry in the past was frequently muted or hidden. During the mid to late 1990s, however, there was a rush to both reclaim and proclaim it. In recent years, as Marilyn Halter notes, "there has been a shift from the usual pattern of concealment that has been so intrinsic to American Irish identity to a much more outspoken display of Irish pride" (161). Merchandise such as the "God Bless This Irish-American Home" plaque and "Proud To Be Irish" pin found in the 1999 catalogues *Irish Elegance Gifts* and *Creative Irish Gifts,* respectively, illustrate this relatively new mainstream transformation and indicate the strong sense of pride in American Irish heritage

common during this period (*Irish Elegance* 5; *Creative Irish* [1999] 37). Indeed it is difficult to detect any near-contemporary public trace of the long-held American belief that declaring one's ancestry somehow diminishes one's patriotism, particularly in relation to the almost exclusively white American Irish community. A "stars, stripes and shamrocks shirt" featured in the spring 2004 edition of the *Creative Irish Gifts* catalogue both hints at this historic problem and assures its customers that now "you *can* have it both ways!" (see fig. 10; *Creative Irish* [2004]). As do "my country, my heritage" T-shirts that serve as "eloquent testimonials to your patriotism and your heritage," further indicating the incredible mainstream attitudinal change toward white European ancestry and Irish ancestry in particular.

Fig. 10. "Our Stars and Stripes shamrock fashion pin displays both your US and Irish pride!" ("Stars and Stripes").

Discussing the success and longevity of ethnic marketing in general, Halter observes, "[w]hat some viewed as a passing fad of the 1970s has only intensified. This renaissance is a form of voluntary ethnicity that has made any conflict between identifying oneself as American and affirming one's foreign heritage disappear" (9). Although there can be little dispute that ethnic marketing has intensified since the 1970s, especially in relation to Irishness, Halter's

suggestion that there is an equivalence of ethnicities or heritages is less convincing. And although Jacobson maintains that "ethnic hyphenation, if not neutral, has at least become a natural idiom of national belonging in this nation of immigration" (*Roots Too* 10), it is also crucial to remember Jennifer DeVere Brody's assertion that "the hyphen performs—it is never neutral or natural" (Jacobson, *Roots Too* 9).

Indeed this is one of the attractions of Irishness: its ability to neatly maintain exclusive racial boundaries as nonwhites are implicitly excluded from participating. Irishness, at least in the US, is rarely equated with anything other than white. This is evidenced by examples that note the perceived peculiarity of nonwhites wanting to also publicly affirm their Irish heritage (see chapter 4). Halter contends that "ethnicity is increasingly manifest though self-conscious consumption of goods and services and, at the same time, that these commodities assist in negotiating and enforcing identity differences" (7). Irishness during the 1990s offered a form of whiteness unlike other white identities in that it was in the main perceived as "cool." This also helps account for its popularity across a broad spectrum of audiences beyond the predictable American Irish aggregate (see chapter 5). In an era in which white was rarely represented in mainstream popular culture as cool, this is not without significance. Pete McCarthy, though certainly exaggerating somewhat, points to the association of Irishness and cool commonly reinforced throughout this period:

> To be Irish today is to be welcome almost anywhere. Grape-pip brandy will be uncorked, daughters unveiled, tables danced upon. People will line up to show you a Portuguese edition of Seamus Heaney or a Romanian Betamax pirate video of Riverdance. The Irish are perceived as young, eloquent, romantic, tuneful, mystical, funny, and expert havers-of-a-good-time. And, as a bonus, in the same

> way that the English abroad are made doubly welcome once people realize they're not German, so the Irish are welcomed for not being English. (13)[51]

"Sanctioned" consumers of Irish-themed material culture are the most obvious and visible of the three groups considered in this work. Most is known about this group as many American Irish scholars have examined just about every aspect of their history, especially over the past fifty years. But labeling this roughly thirty to forty million people "a group" implies a cohesiveness that is somewhat misleading, not to mention improbable, as in reality sanctioned groups invest and utilize Irishness in countless varieties of ways. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this analysis they are grouped together as they constitute the people who come to mind when typically referring to "Irish America." There is some debate, particularly among historians, about the general political biases of this group. Despite well-documented cases of American Irish firmly positioned on the left (communist leader and three time presidential candidate William Z. Foster for example)[52] and the right (Senator Joseph McCarthy), they were for almost two hundred years primarily identified with the Democratic Party.[53] This identification, which is central to the late twentieth century image of the "Irish American," is worth exploring at some length, inasmuch as it has determined the place of the Irish within US political culture.

The origins of the association between American Irishness and the Democratic Party can be traced to laws passed by Federalists at the end of the eighteenth century. To provide additional historical context here, it is worth quoting David Noel Doyle at length:

> The Federalists, architects of the constitution of 1787, and of its consolidation in the 1790s, mistrusted democracy and social equality, interpreted republicanism as the right of the propertied to representation; disliked the French revolution and the United Irishmen; favored Anglo-American understanding and trade; believed in

> national development under the joint guidance of business and government; and were homogenous, Protestant, and pre-revolutionary in origin. The Jeffersonian Democratic Republicans favored extending the franchise, spoke of egalitarianism, stood for states' rights against federal power, sentimentalized French and Irish radicals, were anti-British, argued for decentralized economic growth, and believed that elites should be reborn continuously and without privilege from the people-—broadly understood—whom all elites must serve. (182)

Edward T. O'Donnell underscores the significance of this era noting that "many historians point to this episode of Federalist-inspired anti-Irish hostility as the beginning of the Irish American identification with the Democratic Party" (55).

Coming into American society at or near the bottom, the Catholic Irish sorely needed allies, even protectors. They quickly found them in two institutions that did not question their whiteness: the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party. Although the former proved more open to promoting Irishmen to positions of power—most bishops in the United States were Irish by the 1850s—the Democratic party was far more powerful as a national institution and more consistently proslavery and white supremacist in its outlook (Roediger *Wages* 140).

Bruce Nelson, citing historian Timothy Meagher, notes that "the persistent identification of Irish Catholics as conservative is an oversimplification."[54] Similarly Andrew Greeley argues, the popular belief that "despite their membership in the Democratic Party (weakening with suburban integration), the Irish tend to be both conservative and racist" is little more than a stereotype (J.J. Lee 18). However, as Kevin Kenny notes,

> In the period through the Civil War, Catholic Irish immigrants steadfastly opposed the abolition of slavery, convinced that it would lead to an influx of

> cheap black labor into northern cities, undermining their hard-won but still precarious niche in the economy. This further strengthened links between the Irish and the Democratic Party. To build and protect their economic niche, Irish Americans tried to drive African Americans out of work on the docks and in other forms of manual labor, replaced them in domestic service, and forced them out of neighborhoods like the Five Points section of New York City. Deep-rooted tensions between Irish and black workers, aggravated by the Emancipation Proclamation and the Conscription Act of 1863, exploded in violence in July of that year on the streets of New York. Irish workers lashed out against symbols of power and privilege in the city, especially those connected with the federal government, conscriptions, and the antislavery Republican Party. They harassed, beat, and lynched African Americans and burned the Colored Orphan Asylum to the ground. Contemporary nativists, who had good reason to exaggerate, estimated the number killed in the riots at between twelve hundred and fifteen hundred. The official police figure of 119 dead is probably too low, but that would still make it, until recent reckoning, the worst riot in American history (Kenny, "Race" 372).

Despite the long-standing affiliation of the American Irish with the Democrats, "in 1980, a majority of American Catholics [including Irish American Catholics] voted Republican for the first time, helping to elect Ronald Reagan to the presidency; and, in the elections of 1994, Irish Americans cast a majority of their congressional ballots for Republicans for the first time since the 1920s, helping that party win majorities in both houses of Congress" (Kenny, *Race* 246).

Accounting for this seemingly sudden and dramatic conversion of both American Irish and white ethnics in general, Jacobson argues that

> The first explanation lies in the realm of moral and religious sensibilities, ideas that have aligned many Catholics with their Protestant counterparts of the religious right and that come in play most forcefully on issues like abortion, "family values" and gay rights…. The second explanation for white ethnic conservatism lies in the realm of social *status*—ideas about economics, opportunity, mobility, the work ethic and the state, which have been easily mobilized around issues such as welfare, busing, and affirmative action. (Jacobson, *Roots* 185–186)

Jacobson attributes the changing political allegiances of the American Irish (and white Americans generally) to racial concerns, noting "the eight mostly Irish and Polish working-class wards of south Chicago had supported Democrats by an impressive margin in 1960; but in the 1966 elections, in the wake of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s activism on behalf of open housing in Chicago, six of the eight wards voted Republican" (*Roots* 185). Nelson also contends that "far more than any other institution or leadership elite, the Catholic Church was the foundation stone on which Irish America was constructed" (157). During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries this same Catholicism elicited nativist scorn that alienated American Irish from mainstream Protestant America. It is ironic that in the near contemporary context the Catholic Church is often an ally of many conservative groups, especially on gay, immigration, and abortion issues. Overall then, and despite some notable "liberal" exceptions, as a group Irish Americans in both an historical and contemporary context can be characterized by their conservatism. This is evidenced by their adherence to traditional forms of Catholicism, voting

record, and long-standing, high profile attempts to ban gays and lesbians from marching in the New York St. Patrick's Day parade.[55] The latter prompted Irish President Mary McAleese to decline an invitation to be the parade's grand marshal in 2010 (O'Dowd).

There is little doubt that since the early 1990s Irishness has become a "multi-purpose product" appealing to a wide diversity of primarily white Americans. But what specific identities are being affirmed by ethnic Irish shopping purchases and attendance at Irish-themed shows such as *Riverdance*? In order to examine this question, three groups are considered—what I've termed sanctioned consumers (those typically associated with the American Irish), deviant consumers (extremist/supremacist groups, sometimes with ancestral connections to Ireland, sometimes without, who employ Irish/Celticness to appeal to wider white audiences), and ancillary consumers (typically those with no ancestral link to Ireland but attracted to and participatory in it nonetheless). It is crucial to note that dividing the groups in this manner is useful particularly for purposes of analysis, but that, in reality, they often overlap in their purchasing practices and attendance at various events. It is often their commonalties rather than their differences that prove the most intriguing and their common ideas of Irishness in particular. Although in this study these three groups are divided analytically, as sociologist Herbert Gans observed in the late 1970s, it is useful to think about them in terms of aggregates too. Gans explains that:

> If present societal trends continue, however, symbolic ethnicity should become the dominant way of being ethnic by the time the fourth generation of the new immigration matures into adulthood, and this in turn will have consequences for the structure of American ethnic groups. For one thing, as secondary and primary assimilation continue, and ethnic networks weaken and unravel, it may be more accurate to speak of ethnic aggregates rather than groups. (16)

These aggregates are the focus of the next three chapters.

Chapter 3: Riverdancing & Shopping—Sanctioned Consumers of Irishness

Irish identity in the 1990s has become something of a commodity on an open market. It's a multi-purpose product with fluctuating values depending on how much we're looking for [and] whom we're dealing with. (A. Smyth 144)

Riverdance in particular, as the harbinger of the new era Smyth describes, disrupted, redefined, but also sustained many familiar stereotypes of the Irish. It is worth recalling just how immense the *Riverdance* phenomenon was. An estimated 300 million viewers watched *Riverdance* make its television debut as the halftime entertainment during the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest (*Riverdance Press)*.[56] Fewer than two years later the original seven-minute performance had evolved into a full-length show and was breaking box office records in Dublin, London, and New York.[57] By 2008 the show had "been seen live by over 21 million people in over 300 venues worldwide, throughout 32 countries across 4 continents" (*Riverdance Press Information 2008).* Although its virtually instant popular appeal and commercial success were largely unanticipated, especially given its rather innocuous television debut, *Riverdance* was quickly positioned as a key example of a new and emerging type of Irishness. As Michael Cronin remarked, "[f]or Irish media pundits, *Riverdance* was the incontrovertible proof of Ireland's enrolment in the chorus line of modernity" (63). As well as being the most striking early indicator of this much-touted modern brand of Irishness, the production also foreshadowed the seemingly inexhaustible appetite for Irish-themed popular culture in the US throughout the mid to late 1990s and on into the new century. By the time *Riverdance* was first performed live on stage in the US in early 1996, it signified a contemporary Irishness that also incorporated and honored tradition, a vision primarily conceptualized by the show's producer Moya Doherty. Moreover, in the US in particular, *Riverdance* conveyed a strong sense of authenticity[58] and in

the context of contemporary identity, little is more important than situating oneself close to such "real" "traditions." And, as Kieran Keohane, Donncha Kavanagh, and Carmen Kuhling suggest, the fact that *Riverdance* came to epitomize such authenticity and that this resonated so deeply with its audiences certainly needs explaining (18).

In the US *Riverdance* was initially embraced by a predominantly middle-class, white, American Irish audience eager to champion a new image of their ancestors' identity and homeland.[59] While the audience for *Riverdance* was not exclusively comprised of "sanctioned" consumers, they were certainly among the first to attend and hence help popularize the show. A more focused examination of the sanctioned consumer is considered later in this chapter. The stage Irish image had long become passé (though this did not necessarily signal its death), and *Riverdance* offered a new contrasting version of Irishness that also conveniently signified American Irish wealth and social status.[60] About one month before the production attracted mass US attention, *The New York Times* published an article with the headline "Ireland Without Clichés," in which Doherty addressed the new Irishness that her show embodied. "I was tired of cliché images of Ireland.… I wanted to show the Ireland I know and love, that it is modern and in step" (Marks, "On Stage" C2). This new image was noted again when *Riverdance* made its US debut a month later: "At Radio City Music Hall, where the show opened on Wednesday night for a sold-out run through Sunday (Yes, St. Patrick's Day), there wasn't a stage leprechaun in sight" (Kisselgoff C5). For both its Irish producers and, at first, its largely Irish-American audience, *Riverdance* embodied a modern, respectable Irishness, neoteric and traditional, spiritual rather than religious, devoid of both political signifiers and, as the *New York Times* observed, stage leprechauns. Although by 2010 *Riverdance* and *Lord of the Dance* had largely dropped off the

mainstream cultural radar, it is important to recall briefly their remarkable popularity, longevity, and commercial triumph before discussing their content and appeal in greater detail.

In the US *Riverdance* was declared "officially a phenomenon" (Marks, "Reprise" C2) in 1996 when it followed its eight sold-out performances at New York's iconic Radio City Music Hall with a national tour (by this time it was already a hit in both Ireland and England). Performances at high-profile events, including the Kennedy Center Honors (1996) and the Grammy Awards (1997), where *Riverdance* composer Bill Whelan won in the "Best Musical Theater Album" category, ensured its popularity. In September 1997 *Riverdance* returned to Radio City Music Hall "for a sell-out three-week run, the second longest run of consecutive performances in the theatre's history" (*Riverdance Press*). At the same time original *Riverdance* dancer/choreographer Michael Flatley launched his rival show *Lord of the Dance*.[61] That production first opened in Ireland and then toured England before touring in the US, where it traveled extensively and performed to an enormous global television audience at the 1997 Academy Awards. The appeal of both shows during this period was quite extraordinary and difficult to overstate. By the late 1990s public television stations throughout the country (and notably not just those in traditionally densely populated American Irish cities or regions)[62] were using videos and music from both productions as membership incentives. For example, around St. Patrick's Day in 1997, *Riverdance* was broadcast five times in one week in conjunction with public television station KERA's (Dallas, Fort Worth, Denton) pledge drive, earning $29,000 on average per airing. During this same period *Lord of the Dance* also aired five times and raised over $25,000 in pledges per airing for the station. The assistant manager of on-air fundraising at the station characterized the screenings as "quite a success" noting both shows "exceeded … expectations" (Borth).[63] Indeed neither production showed any sign of waning as the new

century began. In 2001 *Riverdance* had three separate dance troupes simultaneously performing in Europe and the US[64] and was touted as both "the world's biggest grossing entertainment event" (O'Cinneide 81) and "Ireland's most profitable export" (Keohane, Kavanagh, and Kuhling 1). Writing in 2002, Barra O'Cinneide observed that *Riverdance* "has now become an important image maker for Ireland" (190). Questions regarding the nature and ideology of that image remained largely unanswered, however. By 2001 *Lord of the Dance* also had three different troupes performing in Europe and the US,[65] and Michael Flatley (by now the highest-paid dancer in the world; Acocella) found further success with two spin-off productions: *Feet of Flames* and *Celtic Tiger*, though neither matched the appeal or commercial success of *Riverdance* or *Lord of the Dance*.[66] In 2005 New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg declared March 15 "*Riverdance* Day," and by 2006 the show "had played to a global television audience of over 1.5 billion people" (Keohane, Kavanagh, and Kuhling 5). At the time of writing, two of *Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance* (to give the show its full title) troupes were still touring: Troupe 1 was performing in Europe and Troupe 2, having recently completed 15 performances in South Africa, was scheduled to embark on a North American tour in the fall.[67] *Riverdance* was also still going strong, maintaining three dance troupes, one of which completed a thirty-city North American tour in 2009 and had now "played to a global television audience of over two billion people."[68] For almost two decades now, through all these performances and appearances, the shows—and, by extension, Irish dance and culture, albeit in very specific versions—garnered mass cultural attention and reached millions of viewers in the US and beyond. However, recounting the popularity of these Irish-themed dance shows is a much easier task than accounting for their appeal.

In many ways and especially given its high profile, *Riverdance* functioned as the "gateway drug," if you will, into Irishness for all three groups discussed in this work. The ways in which this dance show connected with the three different types of audiences, as well as the broader cultural and political conditions that contributed to its success, will be examined in subsequent chapters.

Despite the suspect history (as detailed in chapter 2 on American Irish politics), *Riverdance* offered quite a different account of American Irish racial attitudes, one in which the Irish are positioned as historically not only comfortable but also sympathetic (presumably due to their colonial past) with the plight of other oppressed peoples, especially African Americans. As noted above, the reality was a little more unpleasant. During the first part of the second act in *Riverdance* the two principal Irish dancers leave Ireland and arrive in US. In subsequent scenes, including "The Harbour of the New World," the audience is introduced to other "immigrants" who are also adjusting to their new lives in the US. The first part of the New World sequence includes the song "Heal Their Hearts—Freedom," and in the original show this was performed by the Deliverance Ensemble, a twelve-piece African American choir from Atlanta, Georgia. In subsequent versions of the show, however, including *Riverdance: Live from New York City*, the choir was replaced by one African American singer who during his performance of "Heal Their Hearts—Freedom" is joined onstage by other "immigrants." The official *Riverdance* Web site explains the scene further: "From the darkness a lone voice sings and is then joined by other immigrants, reflecting the universal yearning of the dispossessed wherever they make their home" ("Scene by Scene"). The Merriam-Webster definition of immigrant, "a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence" infers an element of free will ("Immigrant"). To suggest, as *Riverdance* does, that African Americans are either immigrants or euphemistically

"dispossessed" peoples who faced and overcame problems similar to and alongside other white groups is to sidestep and negate the very different circumstances of their arrival in the US, particularly when contrasted with the journey made by most white European immigrants. The use of the word "immigrant" is jarring in the official *Riverdance* explanation of this scene as it suggests that, like other immigrants, Africans made a choice to come and live in the US, when, of course, most did not. Matthew Frye Jacobson in his insightful work on this idea notes:

> In their loving recovery of an immigrant past, white Americans reinvented the "America" to which their ancestors had journeyed. The ethnic revival recast American nationality, and it continues to color our judgment about who "we" Americans are, and who "they" outside the circle of "we the people" are, too. As early as 1967 Martin Luther King, Jr. decried the notion that the United States was a "nation of immigrants", and he cautioned against the damning exclusions inherent in such a conception. Citing the line inscribed on the Statue of Liberty that identifies her as the "mother of exiles", King exclaimed that it is no wonder "the Negro in America cries, 'Oh Lord, sometimes I feel like a motherless child'" (*Roots Too* 7–8)

The overall good-natured relationship between the American Irish and African Americans is underscored once again in the "Trading Taps" scene that follows "Heal Their Hearts—Freedom." The official *Riverdance* Web site explains that "[t]he wealth of the poor is in song, dance and story. Under the street-lamps in the new cities the dancers perform with pride in their heritage, curious to see what other traditions bring, struggling to bridge the gap between old dreams and new realities." At the beginning of the scene the two all-male groups (one Irish/American Irish and one African American), each slightly wary of the other, show off

contrasting though not unrelated dance steps and styles. However, by the end of the number they learn, exchange, and ultimately admire and respect the other's talents. In *Riverdance: Live From New York City* with principal dancers Tarik Winston and Colin Dunne, this scene closes with plenty of hugs and high fives—even though throughout the performance Dunne rather patronizingly repeatedly taps Winston on the head (*Riverdance: Live*).

An obvious parallel is encouraged in both these scenes between the African American quest for freedom and equality and the arrival of Irish immigrants into the US precisely because they were denied those same liberties at home. The narrative highlights the persecution suffered by both groups and the resultant understanding and appreciation they have for one another. This is a familiar cultural shift. As Onkey notes, many "Irish artists and political activists have made such a lateral move by using images and expressions of African-American oppression to illustrate Ireland's experience of colonialism" (45). Other examples that express and encourage this Irish/American Irish/African American alignment (albeit in very different ways) include U2's album and film *Rattle and Hum*, the 1991 film *The Commitments,* and musical group the Afro Celt Sound System. Similarly *Riverdance* highlights American Irish musicians performing harmoniously with African American gospel singers and tap dancers. Unfortunately the historical reality of relations between these communities is not quite as melodious. As discussed earlier, in general (though there are some well documented instances to the contrary), Irish immigrants in the US failed to establish alliances with African American groups in the nineteenth century and little has changed since (apart from the overused example of civil rights marches in the north of Ireland garnering inspiration from Martin Luther King, Jr.). This reality however, has not interfered with popular notions that align the Irish with the causes and struggles of African Americans. The gospel-singing and tap-dancing elements of *Riverdance* serve to console

audiences, particularly those in the US, by reassuring them of their egalitarian past and by extension, present. It is unimportant that, historically, Irish and African oppression in the US were clearly incomparable as *Riverdance* effectively employs nostalgia to suggest an equivalence of injustice. Indeed the show is the ultimate embodiment of David Lowenthal's observation that "nostalgia is memory with the pain removed" (Brabazon and Stock 305). In the end, audiences, and especially American Irish audiences, can both applaud themselves for how far they have come (proof of the "American Dream") and speculate as to why others have not been as successful.

The *Riverdance* production team clearly went to great lengths to emphasize the importance of including many different cultures in the show. For example:

> [Director John McColgan] believed that if we could get people from a deep-rooted tradition, whether it was Spanish, African, American or Russians, and they were excellent dancers, it would work. If they could say something through their dance about their tradition on a subliminal level, it would get through to an audience. There is a shared experience in all cultures, a common suffering of oppressed nations, and audiences tap into truth. (S. Smyth 87)

However, despite the producers' well-intentioned beliefs and efforts, very little attention was paid to these other traditions in mainstream press coverage of the show. In its first major review, the *New York Times* had only the following remark on the gospel choir scene: "Ivan Thomas, an American baritone, has a fine voice and a less than show-stopping song about freedom" (Kisselgoff). Subsequent reviews offered little more. When mentioned at all, these "other" elements were frequently the most criticized, as this 1995 review from *The Independent* (London) illustrates:

> Tackiness sucks gently at the centre of the enterprise, not least in the back-projections of lush poetic texts and fiery sunsets over emerald seas, and the appearance, for no good reason, of a black gospel band. Perhaps Flatley underestimated how much shamrock a wider audience could take. The second half is severely misjudged, conducting a random mini-tour of world dance performed by bought-in talent – American tap, Flamenco and acrobatic Russian folk dance. (Gilbert 21)

Audiences who typically do not think of or buy tickets to *Riverdance* because of its Russian/Spanish/American dances or music also reflect the lack of attention paid to these elements. As is evident from the ways in which it continues to be marketed, *Riverdance* is sold as a predominantly Irish dance show, and this is how audiences conceptualize it despite the inclusion of non-Irish material.

Preoccupations with notions of folk, tradition, and authenticity, particularly as they intersect with race, whiteness, and identity in general, also helped contribute to the incredible success of *Riverdance* in the US. In his important book *The Quest of the Folk,* Ian McKay argues convincingly that folk "were less people in their own right and more incarnations of a certain philosophy of history" (14). Johann Gottfried von Herder, a leading proponent of this philosophy in his influential mid to late eighteenth century writings on the topic, characterized folk as "'wild' and 'lacking social organization'… [and living] closer to nature …" (Bohlman 6–7). Although patently uncultured compared to those in the modern world, folk concomitantly functioned as an important connection to an idealized pre-modern rural past when it was believed life was decidedly less complicated. Although appealing in some regard to those already corrupted by society's modernizing forces, folk were also typically considered objectionable on

account of their inherently depraved and backward nature. Herder himself could have been writing about the Irish as he compiled his first volume of folk songs in the late eighteenth century, such is the ease with which they conventionally qualified for the category of folk. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century dominant English discursive[69] traditions categorized the Irish as folk largely in line with Herder's description, as wild and lacking social organization.[70] It was a representational model, as demonstrated in chapter 2, that later made its way to the US. Today, however, in general the notion of folk, at least as it pertains to white European or white Western peoples,[71] has largely been emptied of its negative associations as the more romanticized aspects of the concept—most notably tradition and authenticity—are emphasized. Indeed it seems a European (or at least "Western") passport is required in order to be considered folk. Non-Western folk are usually racially "othered" and alternately categorized as "primitive," "undercivilized," living in "undeveloped" or "developing" countries. Still, even within a narrow contemporary white European context, few are conferred folk status. Certainly the Irish, Scottish, and, to a lesser extent, Welsh are all considered folk. Switzerland and some Scandinavian countries are occasionally inhabited with folk, but this designation usually occurs within the confines of tourism literature. Why is it that Germans or French or English are rarely defined in this manner? Assuredly they all have lengthy folk traditions and, quite notably, France experienced unprecedented interest in its own folk—particularly rural—history during the 1990s. What then is it about the Irish, or more accurately the perceptions of the Irish, that renders them unmistakably folk? And why was this particular identity so appealing to millions of white Americans? In order to consider this question further the discussion is broadened here to include two ideas closely related to folk, and typically associated with near contemporary notions of Irishness: tradition and authenticity.

"There are few things as modern as tradition," Colin Coulter writes (27). Implied in this observation is the notion that traditions are, of course, invented, deliberately constructed phenomena, an idea skillfully demonstrated by Eric Hobsbawm in his now classic work *The Invention of Tradition*. Discourses emphasizing authentic Irish folk traditions have been incessantly promoted by tourist industries for decades (if not centuries) within and outside of Ireland and have largely shaped what is considered to be traditionally/authentically Irish, particularly on the US side of the Atlantic. As Negra writes:

> [I]t would seem that for as long as there have been attempts to package Ireland for the tourist trade, there has been an inclination to represent it as eternally unchanging.… Ireland seems to exist in a kind of twilight. The imagery is bathed in warm tones that bespeak a complex activation of the past and to be free from the rules of contemporary life. ("Consuming" 18–19)

This remains if not the dominant then certainly a highly influential vision of Ireland in spite of the dramatic transformations brought about by the Celtic Tiger,[72] as the era from the early to mid-1990s on into the next century is generally dubbed. The changes in Ireland during this period were immense as the following statistics attest:

> Between 1991 and 2003 the Irish economy grew by an average of 6.8% per annum, peaking at 11.1% in 1999 (GNP grew by 5.2% in 2005). Unemployment fell from 18% in the late 1980s to 4.2% in 2005, while the Irish Debt/GDP ratio fell from 92% in 1993 to 38% in 1999 to 28% in 2005. Throughout the 1990s Irish living standards rose dramatically to the point where the country is now, at least by some measures, one of the richest in the world (it now has the ninth highest GDP per capital in the world). (Keohane, Kavanagh, and Kuhling 2)

During this period, as Keohane, Kavanagh, and Kuhling document:

> Emigration was reversed which facilitated a 'new multiculturalism'; divorce and homosexuality were legalized, and the shift from rural to urban patterns of living accelerated. Most significantly Ireland was effectively transformed from a pre-modern, peasant economy to a postmodern, high-technology economy. (2)

Many accounts of Ireland note that, prior to this era, the island was characterized by a paralyzing inferiority complex resulting in large part from its colonial history. This neurosis, it is argued, dominated Irish culture for centuries, but was particularly apparent during the economically tough 1970s and 1980s when "Irish society found it difficult to unburden itself of its long tradition of pessimism, inferiority and patriarchal social control" (Keohane, Kavanagh, and Kuhling 10). As a result, Linda Dowling Almedia notes that "Ireland haemorrhaged young people for a decade from the early 1980s with about 10 per cent (360,000) of the population leaving between 1981 and 1991" (Hickman 13). However, by the mid-1990s, it is generally claimed, both this statistic and the downbeat national "structure of feeling"[73] were reversed as the "Celtic Tiger" revived the economy, culture, and people of Ireland. It is truly remarkable that such spectacular changes did little to disrupt the deep-rooted traditional touristic image of Ireland for many in the US,[74] who often consider their own country devoid of tradition when contrasted with Europe in particular.

Given the central role authenticity plays, or the perception of it vis-à-vis folk traditions, very little comment was made on the subject as it related to *Riverdance/Lord of the Dance* in the US at least. The following, from a *New York Times* review of *Lord of the Dance,* was a rare exception: "[U]nlike 'Riverdance', a plotless amalgam of Irish dance and other dances of Celtic origin, Mr. Flatley's show has a narrative and includes only Irish material" (Gladstone B8).[75]

Despite US choreographers and principal dancers, the authenticity of *Riverdance* on this side of the Atlantic was rarely questioned. In Ireland however a vigorous, long-lasting debate on the authentic (and often lack thereof) nature of the dancing presented in both shows took up considerable column inches. As Barbara O'Connor noted, decisions regarding what dance steps and styles were included in and omitted from *Riverdance* were inevitable given the considerable economic pressures on this type of show, "The globalisation of cultural production places increasing emphasis on visualisation and spectacle. Those aspects of Irish dance which do not easily fit this framework are evacuated, while those aspects which enhance the creation of spectacle are pursued" (60). This authenticity debate never became an important one in the US—notwithstanding the producers' claims of originality and innovation, and their insistence on the importance of including many traditions (notably Spanish, Russian, and American, even though typical press coverage paid very little attention to them)— in part because *Riverdance* fit rather comfortably into conventional US/*Bord Fáilte* conceptions of what Irish "really" means. In other words, *Riverdance* effortlessly corresponded to "the common cultural currency for Irishness in America; the symbols and images that form the *public* discourse about Irishness," to borrow William H. A. Williams's phrase (6).[76] Although producer Moya Doherty insisted that the show emphasized "modern" Ireland, other than distinguishing itself from the most stereotypical images it is unclear what makes *Riverdance* so thoroughly modern. The perception of a new Irishness perhaps owed more to Irish people's (and the Irish middle classes in particular) reevaluation of themselves and their nation in light of "Celtic Tiger" generated changes rather than any noticeably significant, representational paradigm shift within the US. Indeed there are plenty of examples from the mid to late 1990s that encouraged historically familiar US representations of Irishness (priests, fighting, leprechauns, alcohol, etc.) including NBC's mini-series *The Magical*

Legend of the Leprechauns (1999) and episodes of *Star-Trek: Voyager* (2000) set in the computer-simulated Irish town of "Fair Haven." And it could be argued that in the US *Riverdance* did little more than offer a modern take on traditionally stereotypical associations of the Irish with its whistles, pipes, red-headed dancing colleens, fuzzy allusions to Druid culture, Celtic iconography, and laments on oppression and immigration.

Traditional (but not other kinds of) Irish music are typically perceived and utilized as a way to connect with authentic folk culture. In an attempt to explain the appeal of the show *Riverdance* composer Bill Whelan insists that "[y]ou identify with the music and dance: it's abstract and impressionistic rather than telling a story. We were trying to create a feeling. If people criticise it for not having a story, they are missing the point: it's about feelings and emotions" (S. Smyth 90). Similarly, in a 1997 interview, American Irish dancer Michael Flatley refers to the apparent intrinsic capacity of Irish music and dance to awaken such feelings: "When the music starts, and I can hear the dancers moving like a powerful locomotive, my heart starts beating and I feel something passionate and ancient and deep being uncovered in me" (Pacheco F1). Both viewpoints evoke Herder's classic description of folk music and poetry as "the language of the soul or the heart," encapsulating "the cultural core before society complicated it" (Bohlman 54). The persuasive belief that folk culture frees contemporary audiences and provides something more meaningful, even if these are indulgences they can only partake in periodically, is undoubtedly an additional aspect of the appeal of Irishness. President of the Boston Irish Tourism Association Michael Quinlin alluded to these characteristics in a newspaper interview in 2005:

> I think people everywhere are turning away from the mass-media, marketing-blitz culture … and returning to things that are more small and intimate. Irish culture

> really fits that bill. The Irish are close to their roots. It's always been a folk culture, transmitted in very personal and social ways.… Celtic dance, like the music, is a great way to return to something that's more social and meaningful and personal. (Rockwell E1)

This is quite ironic given the blitz of Irish culture in this era. The specific ways in which Irish culture is more convincingly meaningful or effectively personal in comparison to other cultures are rarely articulated. Nevertheless, throughout the 1990s the desire to participate in authentic folk traditions in the US was evident in the immense growth in varied but related practices including Irish-themed festivals, dance classes, and language courses. For example, as Marion Casey notes, "[a]s 'to Riverdance' entered the American lexicon in the 1990s, enrollments in step dancing schools across the United States and Canada soared" ("Before *Riverdance*" 422). It is particularly peculiar that Irish dancing in the US is now considered both "cool" and "sexy" when before *Riverdance*, as Fintan O'Toole notes with only slight exaggeration, "all Irish Dancing was liturgical. It was an act of piety, a homage to the holy trinity of Catholicism, Irish nationalism and sexual continence" (Keohane, Kavanagh, and Kuhling 8). The same authors summarizes the historical contrast:

> Riverdance also illustrates a shift towards a more liberated approach to the body, since Riverdance costumes are much more showy and provocative than previous dancing costumes, incorporating eye-catching, body-hugging materials, short skirts, and tight shirts designed to subtly sexualize the bodies of the dancers and subject them to the audience's gaze. (Keohane, Kavanagh, and Kuhling 11)

The objectification of women in particular in this manner only brings *Riverdance* in line with most contemporary popular culture forms.

In addition to dancing, throughout the 1990s there were many often quite remarkable efforts to champion what was seen as authentic Irish folk culture in the US. In 1997 the *New York Times* featured a story on the rather peculiar growth of Irish language classes noting that "there are about 20 different places in New Jersey where Irish classes are offered" (Stewart 8). The article attempts to explain the motivations of those wanting to learn this complicated and obscure language:

> Students may have come after seeing 'Riverdance', or watching the movie 'Michael Collins', or reading Frank McCourt's memoir, 'Angela's Ashes'. They may love Irish music, dance or poetry. The majority are long-assimilated Irish-Americans looking for a piece of their past. A smaller number are Irish immigrants taking advanced courses. Others have no Irish ancestry at all. (Stewart 8)

Irish language classes, as well as the incredible popularity of Irish dance and music during this era, can be read as attempts to procure authentic meanings and identities. These forms were, and to a lesser extent still are, viewed and utilized as ways to move closer to something often rather intangible yet also powerfully evocative. Ultimately these practices represent an intense need to participate in something believed to be "real," that is, authentic and traditional. As Jonathan Culler notes, "one of the characteristics of modernity is the belief that authenticity has been lost and exists only in the past—whose signs we preserve (antiques, restored buildings, imitations of old interiors)—or else in other regions or countries" (5). Ideologies of both folk and Irishness, as ubiquitous as they were particularly in the latter half of the 1990s, must be situated within this "loss of the authenticity" context. Although considerably overused, this association of Irishness and authenticity continues to persist in the US. But as Regina Bendix reminds us, "the crucial

questions to be answered are not 'what is authenticity?' but 'who needs authenticity and why?'" (21).

> Notwithstanding their genuine desire to preserve their special identities, ethnic groups in America are in deep crisis. The ethnic crisis only begins with the fact that core elements of traditional culture have been modified, diluted, compromised, and finally relinquished.… It is fundamentally a crisis of authenticity.… It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that ethnicity in American society has become culturally thin. It consists mainly of vestiges of decaying cultures that have been so tailored to middle-class patterns that they have all but lost their distinctive qualities. (Steinberg, *Myth* 63)

Sanctioned audiences also epitomize Marcus Lee Hansen's "principle of third-generation interest," an idea almost eighty years old now that condemned the American-born second generation, "who in their rush to become American deliberately threw away what had been preserved in the home." But for Hansen the immigrants' grandchildren represented "a new force and a new opportunity": reversing the assimilationist trajectory of their parents, members of this generation strive to remember and recover what has been lost" (Jacobson, *Roots* 3). Sanctioned audiences have been steadily recuperating their American Irish identity for some time now. These sanctioned audiences range from touristic-minded students to third generation middle-class American Irish investing in Waterford crystal, to typically "traditional" older Irish Americans (members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, etc.), and the millions in between. Despite obvious distinctions, these consumers are allied by virtue of their sanctioned position garnered by way of four primary qualifications. The first is via their status as self-designated "Irish Americans" or employment of what has been termed "the emic measure of ethnicity"

(sometimes referred to as situational or felt ethnicity). Elizabeth C. Hirschman notes that the emic measure "is one which permits the individual to ascribe religious and cultural identity to him/herself. It is based on the individuals' subjective self-perceptions" (105). Echoing Ronald Cohen, Hirschman contends that such self-designation "is the only valid measure of ethnicity, since it represents the internal beliefs of the individual and hence reflects the salience and reality of the ethnic affiliation he/she experiences" (105). As noted earlier, the plethora of "proud to be Irish American" merchandise is particularly indicative of this relatively new ethnic attitude.

The second connecting characteristic of sanctioned audiences is their conspicuous consumption and exhibition of mainstream Irish-themed merchandise in both public and private arenas. As Juliet B. Schor notes of this latter dichotomy, "while the literature typically classifies identity and status as alternative sources of consumer motivation, they should not be seen as two independent processes. The self is not public or private, it is always both. Personal identity does not exist prior to the social world, it comes into being with it" (59). The number and variety of ways that Irishness "came into being" throughout the 1990s was truly incredible: festivals, parades, theme parks, and stores, to name but a few. Irrespective of venue, sanctioned consumers were at the forefront of this type of conspicuous ethnic consumption.

Third, sanctioned consumers are allied, as are "deviant" and "ancillary" audiences, by virtue of their whiteness. It is crucial to recognize whiteness in the context of sanctioned consumers even though these audiences are typically extremely reluctant to even acknowledge their place in the US racial configuration. As noted earlier, Jacobson and Nelson argue forcefully for the significant role race played in changing the political party affiliations of the American Irish in particular and white ethnics generally. And although arguably American Irish were once "othered"[77] at least vis-à-vis the WASP dominant elite, today they are no longer aligned with

nonwhite others. Indeed, in many ways, these concealed notions of race among sanctioned consumers are more dangerous precisely because they are largely publicly hidden, in stark contrast to deviant groups who are very candid and outspoken about their racial biases.

Finally, sanctioned consumers, although largely unaware of it, are also allied by their connection to Enterprise Ireland, the Irish Government's Trade and Technology Division (established in the 1990s), which has consistently attempted with considerable success to court this loosely affiliated group particularly during the last ten years.[78] Enterprise Ireland has more than thirty offices around the world and has played an important role in promoting global sales of Irish goods. One of these ways is through its popular trade shows. For example, in conjunction with the main trade association for Celtic-themed retailers in the US, the North American Celtic Buyers Association (NACBA),[79] Enterprise Ireland organizes several annual trade shows in efforts to network Irish suppliers with American retailers. Executive Director of NACBA Anne Tarrant explains the original mission of the group:

> NACBA was originally conceived as a troubleshooting organization to mediate between Irish themed shops and suppliers. Today with the professionalization of such shops it is less concerned with troubleshooting and functions more as a networking service. They also have a mentoring program for beginning businesses. NACBA is affiliated and co-operates consistently with Enterprise Ireland, as evidenced by their joint report on Irish Stores. Their programs and research overlap, in fact NACBA does much work [meaning research] for Enterprise Ireland. (Tarrant)

Sanctioned consumers are overwhelmingly the dominant group at these "trade only" events. They are both the sellers and the conceptualized consumers, and their notions of Irishness

provide the ideological framework for such occasions.[80] Considering the institutional support provided by Enterprise Ireland**,** it is perhaps no surprise that between 1989 and 1999 Irish "ethnic stores" in the US grew by forty-three percent. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Illinois had one such store for every 45,203 of its inhabitants! No other "ethnic heritage" could claim a comparable retailing presence. While these stores were once marginalized in established Irish enclaves such as New York and Boston, by the late 1990s one could shop for Irish-themed goods in the most unlikely places including Pelham, Alabama; Juneau, Alaska; Orlando, Florida; and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. According to the *1999 North American Irish Stores Report* compiled by Enterprise Ireland and NACBA, the total retail sales of Irish-themed stores in North America was almost $150 million in 1999, prompting the report to characterize such stores as the "best kept secret in US retail" (Enterprise Ireland, *1999*). Sales jumped to $181 million by 2001, and, even against the generally austere economic landscape of 2002, total retail sales of Irish-themed stores grew a further 6.6% to reach $193.3 million (Enterprise Ireland, *Update for 2002* 3).

However, "best kept secrets" rarely remain that way for long, and over the last few years there has been tremendous growth among Irish-themed catalogue companies and online stores *not* affiliated with either NACBA or Enterprise Ireland. For example, in 2002 Creative Irish Gifts, one of the most successful Irish-themed catalogue companies, mailed eight million copies of its catalogue resulting in sales of more than $13 million (Naples). As Grant McCracken notes, "[c]atalogues are another very powerful meaning maker. Catalogues use images and text to give meanings to products that would otherwise be quite ordinary" (*Culture* 189). In recent decades as Laura Pappano argues, "people are spending less time in malls, shopping by catalogue and online has rocketed in popularity. There are hundreds of virtual malls on the Internet, not to mention that most anybody who has something to sell is selling it online. And buying by catalogue is

standard practice for millions" (38). In existence long before the "Celtic Tiger" boom, Creative Irish Gifts published its first catalogue in 1987, introducing US audiences to "Unique Gifts With A Very Special Purpose." The inaugural catalogue announced the company's goal to "create desperately needed jobs by training teens in Belfast and Derry to manufacture the items offered in future catalogues" and offered the "double opportunity … to give your family and friends unique mementos from Ireland … and to give a Northern Irish child the opportunity of a lifetime." Galvanized by the 1981 hunger strikes and the symbolic martyrdom of Bobby Sands, it is likely that this message resonated strongly with the pro-nationalist American Irish audience of the day. This explicit appeal to audiences mindful of "the Troubles" at a time of Irish economic stagnation contrasts heavily with contemporary marketing strategies where economically successful "Celtic Tiger" Ireland provides the backdrop to saleable forms of Irishness.[81] Although Creative Irish Gifts continues to donate a substantial portion of profits to Irish-related causes, fewer than half of the products in its catalogue are actually made in Ireland. This shift suggests that for the average sanctioned consumer (whom, like Enterprise Ireland, Creative Irish Gifts explicitly targets),[82] the origin or at least the verifiable authenticity of such goods is largely irrelevant in part because of its surface Irishness (which as argued in chapter 2 already connotes its own authenticity because of its Irishness). Creative Irish Gifts did not specify where the other fifty-five percent of their not-made-in-Ireland products came from, but my own purchases from their 2002 Christmas catalogue confirmed the obvious. "Imported" personalized shamrock Santa decorations and pins were unsurprisingly manufactured in China. Clearly economic factors motivated the company to rethink its original goal of providing "desperately needed jobs" for the youth of Ireland. This shift to using (presumably) cheaper manufacturers in China only serves to bestow additional irony on the company name.

Creative Irish Gifts spokesperson Kate Kelty Naples notes that "clothing and jewelry are definitely our very best selling items," but these two categories alone do not convey the endless types of Irish-themed products available. Beyond the "traditional" St. Patrick's Day accoutrements such as "Light Up Shamrock Stakes," "Shamrock Strewn Placemats," and shamrock mailboxes, you can purchase Irish-themed ornaments, collectibles, cosmetics, sporting goods, posters, housewares, stationery, toys, car accessories, tapestries, food, etc. The list is endless. In addition, most companies and vendors will now "Irish-ize" items. Writes Naples, "for example, they may carry a blouse or dress adorned with roses, but will change the roses to shamrocks for us. When that happens, they will offer us an 'Exclusive,' meaning that only our catalogue can carry that item." It would be easy to write off the entire Irish-themed shopping phenomenon as mere kitsch, and the existence of "Proud to Be Irish Flip Flops" (fig. 11) and "Udderly Irish Collectible Ceramic Cows" makes it admittedly tempting to characterize it in this manner.

Fig.11. "Proud to Be Irish Flip Flops," advertised on the CafePress.com Web site ("Proud").

But as Sam Binkley suggests recovering "kitsch" from its inherently pejorative status may help cast light on the important functions served by otherwise disregarded popular artifacts. "Kitsch tucks us in, making a home in the repetitive fabric of imitative cultural objects, producing a sense of belonging in a rhythmic pattern of routinized experience" (142). Reframing the notion of kitsch in this manner helps advance understanding of these Irish-themed artifacts by crucially tying them to both concepts of community and notions of the everyday. Applying Binkley's theory of kitsch also erodes convenient high/pop culture distinctions as now all are signifiers of Irishness, whether they are discreet (a shamrock lapel pin, for example) or less so ("luck of the Irish" bowling shirt), and can be viewed as part of the same experience or continuum, i.e., "producing a sense of belonging in a rhythmic pattern of routinized experiences." Although wary of "adding a coat of Bourdieu"[83] to this argument, the high/low culture hierarchy is indicative of a type of snobbery around popular culture both within Irish studies and among upper-middle class, American Irish, sanctioned consumers. Discussing Pierre Bourdieu, Nicholas Garnham and Raymond Williams note "the primary distinction operated by the dominant culture and the cultural practices it legitimates (and by doing so those practices it delegitimates) is of culture as all that which is different from, distanced from the experiences and practices of the dominated class, from all that is 'common', 'vulgar', 'popular'" (126). Binkley's reformulation of kitsch allows us to remove this sort of elitism and taste politicking and replace it with a culture of equivalence in which discreet lapel pins and blatant bowling shirts have more in common than "the dominant culture" would like to admit. Binkley crucially notes that, "kitsch reduces all the complexity, desperation and paradox of human experience to simple sentiment, replacing the novelty of a revealed deeper meaning with a teary eye and a lump in the throat" (145).[84]

For sanctioned groups this sentimentality is clearly an important constituent of Irish-themed consumption. Enterprise Ireland noted a similar theme in its analysis of ethnic store shoppers: "first and second generation Irish Americans and Irish Canadians are the ideal Store customers. This group identifies with its Irish heritage and has a strong attachment to Ireland. They are more likely than native-born Irish to be attracted to merchandise that suggests a romantic view of Ireland" (Enterprise Ireland, *1999* 37). This romantic view is also in line with the *Bord Fáilte* vision of Ireland (particularly material aimed at US audiences) despite significant cultural, political, and racial transformations of post-"Celtic Tiger" Ireland.

Long before the fairly recent explosion of "plastic paddywackery,"[85] Irish luxury goods appealed to predominantly middle- and upper-middle-class Americans. Casey notes that "[b]y the time of the World's Fair at St. Louis in 1904, Irish trade with the United States was specializing even within its luxury goods niche" ("Ireland, New York" 186). "[By] the 1920s, Irish products were beginning to face tough competition in the American market. Less expensive linen from Czechoslovakia, lace from China and embroidery from the Philippines and Puerto Rico undercut the Irish trade, and American manufacturers could realize profits by knocking-off Irish imports" (Casey, "Ireland, New York" 207). Waterford crystal and Belleek china, to note the most high profile examples, have had a significant presence in the US market for many years. But in many ways these types of goods were overshadowed in terms of their market penetration and ubiquity by the proliferation of cheaply made (typically not in Ireland) products that are the natural result of the global Irishness boom of the 1990s on display in catalogs such as Creative Irish Gifts and Oriental Trading. However, by the end of the 1990s, Irish-themed luxury goods (often made in Ireland) were once again popular in the US, a trend also noted by Enterprise Ireland's spokesperson Nick Marmion in 2008, reignited at least in part by the popularity of

Irish-themed weddings (Marmion). At the time of writing there was an incalculable number of Web site offering products and advice about creating Irish/Celtic themed weddings either in Ireland or in the United States. Wedding planners in Ireland offer primarily North American clients a variety of options. One includes "The Traditional Castle & Ceili Wedding" and "The Ancient Celtic Island Wedding" (and rather inexplicably "The Jane Austen Wedding") complete with horse-drawn carriage rides to the ceremony ("Destination"). The main Web site page in 2008 for the North American Celtic Trade Association (celticbuyers.com) advertises its handbook entitled *Creating a Celtic Wedding,* dedicated to the topic and available free at its member stores. Also popular throughout the 2000s were Irish-made goods, particularly clothes aimed at middle- and upper-middle-class US audiences. The catalogue *Aireagal* launched in 2002 was a good example of this trend. It targeted "middle-aged, upper-income Americans with a love of Irish products" and encouraged customers to "phone Ireland toll-free" to place their order for $229 hooded cloaks, $359 tweed jackets, $495 cashmere sweaters and $3,500 custom-made Irish wedding gowns.[86] The cumulative impact of these luxury products and services has been a shift in both the cultural and symbolic capital of Irishness. Indeed the changing cultural connotations of Irishness from Catholic, poor, and working class to white, cool, sophisticated, and upper middle class also helps explain the popularity of this identity beyond traditional Irish-American audiences (see chapter 5).

From $3 shamrock head boppers to lavish upper-middle-class Irish-themed weddings, there is an Irish-related product available in every sales category in contemporary America. It seems that irrespective of age, geographical location, gender, class, or political ideology, as *Bord Fáilte* (the Irish Tourist Board) once advertised, "there is something of Ireland in all of us." Just what that something is, however, is purposefully obscure. It is contended here that near

contemporary Irishness appealed and continues to appeal to a wide variety of class audiences, including middle- and upper-middle-class as well as working-class ones. Even today amid the vagaries of the popular commercial marketplace, Irishness continues to adapt, accommodate, and appeal to remarkably diverse audiences, indicating that its popularity, although somewhat removed from the mainstream spotlight, is unlikely to completely fade any time soon. There is little doubt that sanctioned audiences are still driving much of this consumption. In stark contrast to previous eras when Irishness was certainly not viewed as "cool" or trendy in mainstream US society, Irish-themed shopping continues to grow. No other ethnic group can boast a similar widespread appeal. Taking figures from both Creative Irish Gifts and "ethnic stores" *alone*, more than $213 million dollars worth of Irish-themed merchandise was sold in 2002. "The US market leader in TV home shopping, QVC is now the biggest worldwide buyer of Irish giftware. In 2000, QVC sold Irish merchandise worth €31.74 million (IR £25 million) retail – equivalent to €15.24 million (IR £12 million) in orders" (Enterprise Ireland, *Annual Report*). In view of such consumption patterns, and as Peter K. Lunt and Sonia M. Livingstone suggest, much more work needs to be done on the relationships between audiences (such as these sanctioned consumers) and material culture to advance our understanding of the connections between and among them.[87] Negra's characterization of the Irishness phenomenon as "everything and nothing" (*Irish in Us* 1) ensures that Irishness can, and indeed does, appeal to a myriad of diverse though overwhelmingly white US audiences. Attention is turned next to "deviant" consumers and their motivations and practices vis-à-vis Irishness.

Chapter 4: "White and Proud"—Deviant Consumers of Irishness

TIM. You know it's funny. You don't look like an O'Brien.

GEORGE. Me??

[George and Jerry laugh nervously.]

TIM. And you really don't look like a Murphy.

JERRY. I may not look like a Murphy but I act like a Murphy.

GEORGE. He's extremely Murphy. He's Murphy to a fault.

TIM. Where are you from?

JERRY. Dublin. Originally. Parents came over here when I was eighteen. Cereal famine. Couldn't get a bowl anywhere. Bad. 'Tis a beautiful country though; lush rolling hills, and the peat, ah the peat.

TIM. Sounds more like Scottish.

JERRY. We were right on the border.

—"The Limo" *Seinfeld*

In light of the increased cultural and symbolic capital of all things Irish throughout the 1990s and 2000s, it is hardly surprising that American Irish "sanctioned" audiences emotionally and financially invested in Irish-themed material and popular culture with extraordinary and unprecedented intensity, as discussed in chapter 3. More extraordinary, arguably, are the many unpredictable ways in which Irishness resonated strongly with other white audiences, including those who either formerly concealed their Irish connection or had no ancestral link to Ireland at all. White supremacists,[88] or what are referred to in this work as "deviant" audiences,[89] are one such group, and their use of Irish/Celtic[90] themes particularly during the past two decades has been substantial. As noted throughout this work, claiming an affiliation with Irishness or an

Irish-American identity in recent decades became a common way to maintain and articulate an uncompromisingly white identity across a range of diverse audiences. But it wasn't until Irishness took hold in mainstream America in the mid to late 1990s that deviant audiences started to utilize a variety of seemingly innocuous Irish themes and iconography for recruitment and marketing. Throughout the late 1990s and into the following decade, white supremacists represented one of the fastest growing and enthusiastic consumer audiences of Irishness in the US.

One of the earliest mainstream media references to the potential connections between Irishness and white supremacy was in a 1992 episode of the television sitcom *Seinfeld*.[91] As the above excerpt suggests, main characters George and Jerry pose as O'Brien and Murphy in order to get a free limo ride home from the airport following the breakdown of George's car (on his plane ride Jerry learns that O'Brien missed his connection prompting his cheeky attempt to hitch a ride from the driver waiting in the terminal). However, unbeknownst to Jerry and George, O'Brien is a white supremacist on his way to New York to give a widely publicized racist speech. On the journey back into the city they pick up Tim, a follower of O'Brien although he has never met him, who begins to suspect that O'Brien and Murphy aren't who they say they are.

Despite the growth in Irish studies particularly during the last twenty years, deviant audiences are extremely under examined, partly because, although they flagrantly exhibit many of the same hackneyed symbols of Irishness as the sanctioned group (Celtic crosses, shamrocks, flags, etc.), they deploy them for vastly different political purposes. These purposes on the surface at least seem to clash uncomfortably with the sanctioned ideas of Irishness discussed in the previous chapter. However, on closer inspection sanctioned and deviant audiences are frequently ideologically closer than perhaps either group is likely or keen to acknowledge.

There are a number of reasons for the lack of serious consideration of these groups within Irish studies and most of them have to do with generally held stereotypes about white supremacists. Typical mainstream media representations focus on Southern, rural, uneducated, working class, marginalized, and fanatical aspects of the subculture. But as Abby L. Ferber points out, "research confirms that, like earlier incarnations of the Klan, contemporary white supremacist group members are similar to the US population in general, in terms of education, income and occupation" and she notes the existence of "white supremacist periodicals which target highly educated audiences" ("Constructing" 353–354). Similarly, Colin Flint identifies the "comfortable notion that irrational, marginalized, and extreme people in 'backwards' parts of the country are the cross-burners or militia members, the hate-mongers" (1) and definitely beyond what is typically regarded as the US mainstream. One likely reason for this ideological sidestep, as Ferber notes, is that "defining white supremacy as extremist in its racism often has the result of absolving the mainstream population of its racism, portraying white supremacists as the racist fringe in contrast to some non-racist majority" (*Race, Gender* 9). (This tendency is arguably even more pronounced in the so-called post racial President Obama era.)

A second, related stereotype of supremacist groups is that which categorizes them as historical relics, hooded Klansmen burning crosses in the Southern states of 1950s America, as in the Hollywood film *Mississippi Burning* (1988). In recent decades, however, there has been a steady resurgence in Klan activity throughout the country and not just in the south. One obvious reason for this is that the Klan, like many other supremacist groups, have broadened their platform to include anti-abortion, anti-gay and anti-immigration policies. In the late 1990s the Southern Law Poverty Center (SLPC), an organization that tracks supremacist activity noted that, "after years of decline, the Klan picked up steam. The Indiana-based American Knights of

the Ku Klux Klan exploded from one chapter in 1996 to 12 in 1997. The group held rallies in scores of cities and recruited heavily, even in schools" (SLPC 1998). By the early 2000s, due largely to characteristic internal struggles, the Klan was again waning, but by 2008 the organization was on the rise once more with close to 200 chapters throughout the country (SLPC 2009).

An additional reason for the tendency to think of Irishness and white supremacy as unlikely allies is that the Klan, like other nativist groups, is historically associated with fervent anti-Catholicism. However, this was changing as early as the mid-1980s when, in 1986, a Roman Catholic tool and die maker named James W. Farrands of Shelton, Connecticut, was selected Imperial Wizard of the "Invisible Empire KKK" (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 51).

Indeed, in recent years as the Klan and other similar groups became accepting of Catholicism they also capitalized on the popularity of Irishness to attract interest in their groups. Long inextricably linked with Catholicism, Irishness has been seemingly divested of this association within Klan subcultures. The existence in recent years of two (albeit small) groups in particular, the Celtic Knights of the Ku Klux Klan[92] and the Keltic Klan Kirk *(About Us Keltic Klan)*, provides some evidence for this assertion. Once vilified for its dominant religion, Irishness today features a presumed whiteness that trumps religious considerations and long-standing nativist stereotypes.

Contemporary white supremacist groups capitalizing on the popularity of Irishness have seemingly purged this ethnic identity of its religiosity, although the same cannot be said for 1980s and 1990s US mainstream media portrayals of "the Troubles," which insisted on framing just about every event within a Protestant/Catholic paradigm (see chapter 2). Irishness, so long inextricably linked with Catholicism, has been divested of this association in the unlikeliest of

places—white supremacist circles—which might help account for the curious arrangement of flags behind the white supremacist leaders in figure 12. The transformation of Irishness has both inspired new uses for this identity and impacted the over-reporting of Irish ancestry in late-twentieth-century America. As Dominique Bouchet notes, "[e]thnicity has become a way of reacting to social change, whereas it was formerly more a way of avoiding it. It is no longer the articulate expression of conformity to inherited unambiguous principles but the creative claim to nonintegration in a multicultural and rapidly changing society" (90).

As noted earlier, despite mainstream media tendencies that depict white supremacist groups as simplistic and one-dimensional, whiteness and its associative Irishness are complex ideological practices. By examining some of the ways in which Irishness is deployed within these groups, through the use of Irish/Celtic iconography in tattooing, merchandise, music, St. Patrick's Day, and festivals, for example, we can learn more about these largely unexamined and in some cases, still emerging practices.

Interestingly, before Irish became trendy in the mid to late 1990s, white supremacist groups in the United States more often employed the term Celtic to describe themselves. Historian Kerby Miller, toward the end of his provocative essay, notes that many who once labeled themselves "Scotch-Irish" (in an attempt to distinguish themselves from Catholic immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century) were, by the 1990s, happy to be "just Irish," suggesting both the radical transformation and popularity of the latter term ("Scotch Irish" 156). Irrespective of which word is used with more frequency, however, deviant audiences are likely to subscribe to what is often referred to as the "Celtic thesis." The origins of this thesis are traced to a series of articles first published in the *Journal of Southern History*, the *William and Mary Quarterly*, and *History Today* in the mid 1970s and 1980s by historians Forrest McDonald, Ellen

Shapiro McDonald, and Grady McWhiney. To put it briefly, they argued that the influx of Celtic peoples into the Southern US states between roughly the mid-seventeenth and nineteenth centuries had a profound influence on the south. Moreover, the historians argued that Celtic culture came to define the south and distinguished it significantly from the Anglo dominated northern parts of the country. As historian Kevin Kenny argues, "[i]t is not difficult to see the flaws in this Celtic thesis. It defines the word 'Celt' in a way that conforms to no previously accepted usage, lumping together the most disparate of peoples into an ostensibly common heritage and culture" (*American* 43). He continues:

> The pan-ethnic claims of the Celtic thesis, then, are easily refuted. More disturbing is its claim that the Celtic peoples (granting their existence, for the sake of argument) share common attributes that transcend historical time and space. Most historians, by virtue of the historical method itself, would reject this claim. While cultural continuity is certainly as important as cultural change, historians by definition tend to avoid the ahistorical, especially when it shades into racial mysticism, as it so clearly does in this case. A new theory of racial essentialism is surely the last thing the American south needs at this point in its history. The Celtic thesis, as one historian aptly concludes, merely serves to envelop the South in clouds of 'Celtic mist'. (43)

The Celtic thesis might be easily refuted as Kenny suggests, but it is no less popular for its generalizations and historical inaccuracies. James P. Cantrell, no doubt influenced by McWhiney et al., fueled the Celtic thesis fire further with his 2005 book *How Celtic Culture Invented Southern Literature*, challenging "the common perception that the culture of white Southerners springs from English, or Anglo-Norman, roots." The Amazon.com description continues: "Mr.

Cantrell presents persuasive historical and literary evidence that it was the South's Celtic—Irish, Scots, Welsh, or Scots-Irish—settlers who had the greatest influence on Southern culture, and their vibrant spirit is still felt today." Academic reviews were not quite as effusive, "[Cantrell] swaggers into the chasm of Celticity and attempts to plant his Confederate Flag in its nebulousness," noted Michael Newton (10–16). He further observed, "the book is indicative of the Celts' newfound respectability in America and attempts by some writers claiming academic credentials to yoke Celtic identity to the Southern cause" (10).

The League of the South (LOS), an organization founded in the mid-1990s "to organise the Southern people so that they might effectively pursue independence and self-government" ("Frequently"), is a leading proponent of this thesis, albeit with some modification. The group's Web site, complete with European spelling—"so-called 'American' English orthography actually is nothing more than a bastardisation of the proper and correct English language by New England busybodies," claims the site—provides its take on the Celtic thesis which is broadened to include virtually all Southern white people whose European ancestors immigrated before the late 19th century:

> The Anglo-Celtic peoples settled the South and gave it its dominant culture and civilisation. We believe that the advancement of Anglo-Celtic culture and civilisation is vital in order to preserve our region as we know it. Should this core be destroyed or displaced the South would be made over in an alien image — unfamiliar and inhospitable to our children and grandchildren. We, as Anglo-Celtic Southerners, have a duty to protect that which our ancestors bequeathed to us. If we do not promote our interests then no one will do it for us. ("Frequently")

Disguising a rather thinly veiled white supremacy, the Celtic thesis gained momentum throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s. A wide variety of companies, organizations, and consumer goods capitalized on the trend, and their success suggests a still growing audience for this idea. Established in the late 1990s, and earning between two and three million dollars a year by 2002, Dixie Outfitters Heritage Store is a good example of this movement (Beirich and Moser, "Dixie"). In that same year its online store had almost 20,000 visitors a month,[93]. Its site prominently features a mission statement explaining that its owners are "proud to be Southern and proud of our ancestors who fought and died in the War for Southern Independence. We believe various groups have distorted the real meaning of the Confederate Flag for their own purposes. We strive to feature the Confederate Flag in the context of history, heritage, and pride in the Southern way of life" ("Mission"). Dixie Outfitters also advertises prominently on the LOS Web site, as does The Caledonian Kitchen (www.caledoniankitchen.com), where you can buy Irish Stew "bursting with Irish flavor" (the New England busybody spelling policy not extending to advertisers) and HarpofDixie.com (now defunct) featuring Southern and Irish cds such as *Let Dixie Remember* and *ErinSong*. The official LOS store—DixieNet Merchandise offers books such as *Celtic Warfare* by League of the South President Michael Hill and *The South Was Right!* by James and Walter Kennedy.

But perhaps more than promoting the obviously flawed yet still undeniably popular Celtic thesis, the League of the South exemplifies two additional white supremacist trends of the 1990s: "the veneer of moderation" (Webster 139) by "only" promoting "our" heritage, and an expanded conservative platform with which to attract broader audiences. Beyond their militant margins, both strategies are now standard operating procedure for most white supremacist groups. "In their search for respectability, some hate groups have rejected explicitly racist terms for more

'subtle' code words that act as proxies for traditional rhetoric" (Webster 138). Ferber notes that even Klan leaders urged "followers to abandon overtly racist language in order to attract more members suggesting that the Klan is not about hate, but 'love of the white race'" (*White Man* 52–53). This is also certainly the route the League of the South took in the late 1990s. As Gerald R. Webster notes, its leaders "have advanced academic degrees and [their] Othering is cloaked by code words such as heritage, culture, freedom, and honor. Arguably, such sophistication makes the LOS more dangerous than parallel groups using more blatantly bigoted appeals" (139). And this is exactly the ideological location at which Irishness works most effectively: if one is only promoting Irish/Celtic heritage, one among many identities in the US, how can it be improper or contentious?

Just as the Internet significantly facilitated interest in Irishness generally (especially through genealogy- focused sites), it also played a pivotal role in the growth of various supremacist groups in the US particularly since the mid-1990s. Barbara Perry notes that, "consistent with the shifting demographics (that is, increasingly middle-class membership) and sophistication of the hate movement is an increasing willingness to take advantage of the Internet as a tool for both recruitment and unification" (174). Michael Whine identifies the many advantages of the World Wide Web for such groups, including interconnectivity, anonymity, low cost, and the Internet's ability to act as a "force-multiplier" enhancing power and enabling extremists to punch above their weight (236). Whine notes the Internet also enables supremacists to reach both their target audiences and especially new audiences when other, more traditional media outlets are denied them. Whine argues that the Internet has allowed these groups to get in contact with new audiences such as young and educated populations, which they hadn't previously been able to target effectively (241). In his analysis Brian Levin indicates that

Stormfront (www.stormfront.org) was the first major hate site on the World Wide Web (363). Established in 1995 by Don Black, Stormfront proclaims itself "a resource for those courageous men and women fighting to preserve their White western culture, ideals and freedom of speech and association—a forum for planning strategies and forming political and social groups to ensure victory" (Web site). In 2005 Web monitors ranked Stormfront in the top one percent of all Internet sites (Kim). Like other groups, Stormfront utilizes Celtic/Irish themes to appeal to broader white audiences. A photograph on Stormfront's Web site from 2004 (fig. 12) hints at some of the intersections between white supremacy and popular themes of Irishness/Celticness. The photo features the organization's founder Don Black seated next to the US's most well-known white supremacist David Duke at a conference in Washington, D.C.

Fig. 12. Stormfront's Don Black at the podium at a conference in Washington D.C. with David Duke to his left ("New World Order").

Draped behind them are six rather incongruous flags, an Irish one on the left (not the official tricolor, but a shamrocked "Erin Go Bragh" version) and the Red Hand of Ulster on the right (a controversial reworking of the official Government of Northern Ireland flag).[94] Sandwiched

between these are St. Patrick's Cross[95] ("first designed by British authorities in Dublin Castle in the 17th century" according to the University of Ulster CAIN Web site), a black flag featuring the Stormfront emblem (note the Celtic cross), St. Andrew's Cross (Scotland), and the Red Dragon (Wales). Clem McCartney and Lucy Bryson note that "flags and anthems seem to be more important for those with more right wing political views. This should not be very surprising [as] symbols are only capable of communicating a simple blunt message, which at its most basic distinguishes groups from each other" (21). However, the message on display here is certainly both blunt and jumbled. On the one hand, signifiers of Irish, Welsh, and Scottish identity operate as Aryan ideological camouflage and, in light of the widespread appeal of Irish/Celtic culture, Stormfront's visual assemblage demonstrates astute marketing awareness of the "everything and nothing" nature of these identities. That is, the Irish/Scottish/Welsh flags are semiotically broad enough to encourage mainstream audiences to align themselves with the group, while at the same time the inclusion of the Stormfront flag specifically defines its audience as white supremacist. On the other hand, the photograph contains some ideologically confusing signs, most obviously in the symbolic alliance of Irish nationalism with Ulster loyalism, suggesting that understandings of Irish historical events and Irishness writ large in the US continue to be simultaneously multidimensional, simplistic, and contradictory.

In an effort to increase their membership base, many white supremacist groups in recent years have attempted with varying degrees of success to capitalize on America's ongoing love affair with all things Irish/Celtic. Celtic-style crosses for example (fig. 13) are now regularly used as general racist symbols and are one of, if not *the* most commonly employed signs in the white supremacist community. As noted earlier, a Celtic cross is incorporated into Stormfront's logo and widely used on most of their promotional materials, flags, and T-shirts, etc.

Fig. 13. Stormfront's logo incorporates a Celtic-style cross ("Stormfront").

The presumed neutrality, from a mainstream US perspective, of a Celtic-style cross, and the omission of the Stormfront name help explain why this symbol is easily displayed at large events without arousing suspicion or outrage.[96] Another Celtic-style cross, this time in green with the letters AF integrated (fig. 14), is the logo of the American Front, a lesser-known white supremacist group based in Arkansas that aspires to "secure National Freedom and Social Justice for the White people of North America" (ADL "American Front").

Fig. 14. American Front logo also incorporates the Celtic-style cross (ADL "American Front"*)*.

Figure 15 shows two typical white supremacist tattoos that incorporate slightly different versions of the Celtic cross.

Fig. 15. Celtic crosses incorporated into typical white supremacist tattoo art (Pitcavage).

In all these cases the generally favorable attitude toward Irishness helps mask the identities and ideologies of white supremacist groups in wider social environments.

Another area within white supremacist culture in which the influence of Irishness became increasingly popular and visible throughout and beyond the 1990s is tattooing. Considering the manner in which tattooing was historically perceived, i.e., as "characteristic of the savage others" (Benson 238) or as "marks of savagery" (read nonwhite; DeMello 49), the contemporary tattooing trend, with its associated whiteness, is quite ironic. At first glance the tattoo in figure 16 appears to be a typical example, complete with Celtic cross and knot work.

Fig. 16. Celtic cross tattoo incorporating white power symbols (Pitcavage).

However, a closer reading leaves no question as to the ideology of its wearer. SS troopers in World War II also used the tree shaped symbol at the top, and within the white supremacist movement it denotes “future of the white race.” The cross-star on the right hand side of the tattoo was used in the 1930s by a prominent Hungarian fascist party and is also generally used today by the white supremacists. Opposite that, on the left-hand side, is a “Norse Rune” symbol used originally by the Vikings, later by the Nazis, and now by white supremacists. And finally, on the bottom may be found the symbol of the Nations group (“Hate on Display”). Similarly figure 17 appears to be just another Irish-themed tattoo with the shamrock or clover (botanical accuracy is largely irrelevant) in the center with the numbers “88” at the bottom. In the world of white supremacism, 8 represents the eighth letter of the alphabet which is “H”; therefore, “88” translates as “HH,” meaning “Heil Hitler.”

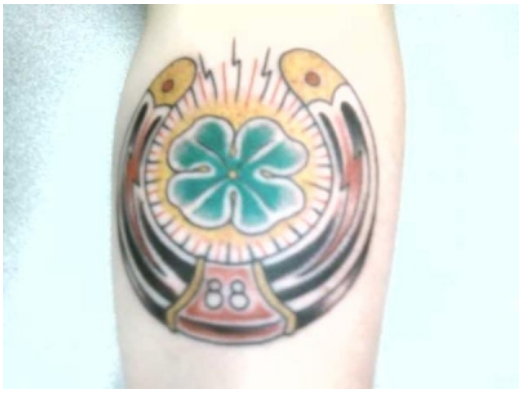


Fig. 17. Irish-themed tattoo incorporating white supremacist symbols (Pitcavage).

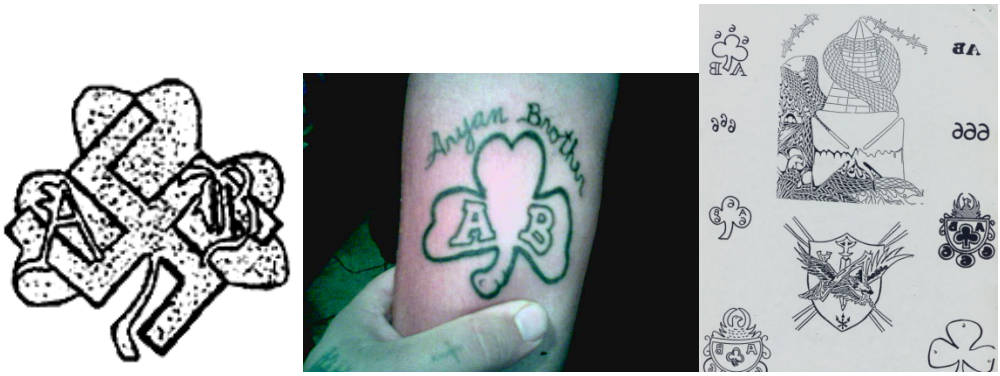
Figure 18 depicts the shamrock or clover on one arm and the Celtic cross signifying white supremacism as referenced earlier on the other.

Fig. 18. White power Celtic cross and a shamrock/clover symbol (Pitcavage).

Finally, figure 19 shows the “future of the white race” symbol surrounded by Celtic designs and shamrocks.

Fig. 19. “Future of the White Race” symbol surrounded by shamrocks and Celtic designs (Pitcavage).

Significantly the Anti-Defamation League’s “visual database of extremist symbols, logos and tattoos” includes the three-leaf clover or shamrock (*Hate on Display*). Founded more than forty years ago, the Aryan Brotherhood[97] is likely the oldest of modern white supremacist groups to use Irish symbols in their tattoos (see figs. 20, 21, and 22). According to the FBI, the Aryan Brotherhood was formed in San Quentin in the late 1960s and “originally, one had to be part Irish in order to be a member” (“Aryan Brotherhood”), although this is no longer the case. The Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) maintains that, in addition to swastikas and double lightning bolts, identifiers of the Aryan Brotherhood include a shamrock clover/leaf. Figure 22 shows some examples of prison tattoos common to the gang. The numbers 666 represent Satan and are often found written on the leaves of the shamrock. The FDC also notes that the group is known to “use Gaelic (old Irish) symbols as a method of coding communications” (“Major Prison Gangs”).



Figs. 20, 21, and 22. Aryan Brotherhood tattoos showing Irish symbols (Pitcavage).

Mary Kosut notes that "both celebrities and their audiences have mutually embraced the practice" of tattooing (1038). "Even though they have been pulled from their subcultural roots (blue-collar, deviant, underground) and replanted in the mainstream, tattoos still have a certain aura of cool and rebellion about them" (1038). This is the case despite the fact that it is estimated that one in every five Americans has a tattoo.[98] Margo DeMello observes that Irish/Celtic tattoos are also very popular across a range of mainstream audiences.[99] A 2009 story in the *Irish Echo* (an Irish American newspaper),[100] in which New York attorney Eamon Hanley's decision to get a Book of Kells inspired tattoo was profiled, supports DeMello's assertion. Hanley chose "an Irish band [tattoo] because my dad is from Ireland, and although I am more proud of being American than anything else, I think we should be proud of our heritage as well. I also think it looks cooler than an American flag or an eagle, which are very common" ("Indelible Irish").

What's significant about all these tattoos are the ways in which they can be and are read beyond the borders of the white supremacist community. The use of Irish symbols provides a type of ideological camouflage that allows these tattoos to be read as innocent body art particularly when contrasted with less ambiguous and often overtly violent white supremacist tattoos (see fig. 23, for example).

Fig. 23. Example of a more overt white supremacist tattoo (Pitcavage).

DeMello notes that, “except when worn in private areas, tattoos are meant to be read by others” (137), and in the case of white supremacist groups, the messages to be read by other subculture members are quite explicit (although sanctioned audiences might be surprised). As a result of the overlap between sanctioned and deviant audience tattooing practices, however, many forms of Irish-inspired ink are often ideologically ambiguous. These divergent uses nevertheless suggest how proximate the consumption practices of the sanctioned and deviant groups are. As

mentioned earlier, it is crucial not to frame middle-class standing and white supremacy as incompatible categories.

Just like Celtic crosses, increasingly the seemingly innocuous shamrock functions as an important racial signifier. In her important study Catherine Eagan quotes the following from a 1999 *Boston Globe* article: "to many minority groups, the shamrock adorning several fire engines and ladder trucks is a reminder that the Boston Fire Department remains an old boy network controlled by white and mostly Irish-American men" (55). That same year the Boston Housing Authority sparked further controversy on the issue when it included the shamrock alongside the Puerto Rican flag, the Confederate flag, and the swastika "in a list of potentially divisive symbols in the materials for their sensitivity training workshops" (Ritter and Neufeld). The list was compiled when "housing development residents from across the city were asked at seminars to fill out a questionnaire listing symbols they found offensive" (Ritter and Neufeld).[101] One African American man interviewed in the *Boston Globe* said he viewed "the shamrock as a sign of white dominance in his hometown; a reminder that the Irish in South Boston fought hard to keep blacks out of their schools and neighborhoods" (Robertson). In the media coverage that resulted, some whites remarked that while they read Puerto Rican flags as signs to stay out of certain neighborhoods, they dismissed the possibility that the harmless shamrock could be interpreted as anything other than an innocent symbol of Irish heritage. This shows again the extent to which the use of the shamrock constitutes a deceptively clever and powerful marketing device, a fact clearly recognized, for example, by the infamous white supremacist group the Council of Conservative Citizens[102] (once nicknamed the "Uptown Klan" on account of its appearance of respectability).[103] On their Web site there was once a link to "Euro Pride Apparel" which sold "Maiden of Ireland" T-shirts containing the phrase "Ireland Forever" in Irish Gaelic

(fig. 24; "European Pride") and shamrock-embossed "white pride" T-shirts (fig. 25), suggesting that the shamrock has unquestionably gained currency as a signifier of whiteness.

Figs. 24 and 25. T-shirts conflating Irish themes with "white pride". Fig. 24 is from the former web store of the Council of Conservative Citizens (now defunct). Fig. 25 is the online store (patriotflags.com) now affiliated with Council of Conservative Citizens.

Ironically, while all of this was going on in the US, the shamrock was also the subject of much debate in Ireland too. In 1996 the Irish tourist board (*Bord Fáilte*) decided to scale back the once ubiquitous shamrock in its new marketing campaign, arguing that it "failed to trigger a clear connection with Ireland" (Logue). The following year a leading image consultant told the Irish Marketing Society that the shamrock should be "ditched" as a national symbol in favour of a logo more representative of a dynamic, modern country noting, "For me the shamrock is moving forward, looking backwards. It really does not have a dynamic which means that we are going into the future" (Mulqueen). (The same consultant suggested that the "Great" should be dropped from "Great Britain" arguing that "if you are great, you do not have to say you are great" (Mulqueen). And on the eve of St. Patrick's Day, no less, in 2003, the Irish national airline Aer Lingus dropped the shamrock from its logo on some of its fleet to make room for the company's Web site address.

Equally ironic in light of the white supremacist marketing tactics is that the "Celtic Tiger" also facilitated a dramatic turnaround in migration patterns in Ireland. Many Eastern European and African immigrants and asylum seekers settled in Ireland just as numerous long-since-emigrated "natives" returned home. In 2007 Ireland's population increased by 2.3% (over four times the average EU rate) and reached its highest level in 130 years: 4,339,000 (Enterprise Ireland, *Economic*). According to the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO), the "total number of immigrants into the State in the year ending April 2007 was 109,500, up almost 2,000 from the previous year and substantially higher than for any other year since the present series began in 1987" (CSO 1). By that same year foreign born nationals accounted for almost ten percent of the total population (Enterprise Ireland, *Economic*). This new chapter in Irish migration sparked, as Michael Mays observed, "an outpouring of racist vitriol" (5). This was remarkable, of course, because, during the past two centuries in particular, the Irish have emigrated to virtually every corner of the globe, to places where their arrival was also not always amiably greeted. One consequence of this return is that the most active US white nationalist Web site (Stormfront.com) has had considerably more Irish members and postings from Ireland in recent years. For example, on Stormfront Ireland, the Web page dedicated to Stormfront members in Ireland, during March 2008 there were several responses to the post "So how was your St Pats day ruined?"

> In Galway and Cork we had the usual nigerians of Ireland association, Free tibet and of course not forgetting some traditional indian dancers! Even RTE[104] are broadcasting what a great multicultural festival Ireland enjoyed today!

> I watched the news today. What a load of PC rubbish. They kept banging on about the multicult crap. Every parade they showed had the same theme. I thought this day was about celebrating our white Aryan culture. Not about a bunch of third world's thinking their Irish now! (Darkwatcher)

According to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, an independent expert body founded in 1998 focusing on racism and interculturalism in Ireland, "[s]statistics reveal again that racism is being experienced regardless of people's legal status. Refugees and asylum seekers, Irish and EU citizens, including Travellers and non-EU citizens are experiencing racism in Ireland. Students and tourists also experience racism in Ireland" (*National*). This is not quite the *céad mile fáilte*[105] the Irish tourist board generally advertises.

The lack of attention accorded these demographic changes in Ireland contributes to the enduring image in the US of Ireland as a place, people, and culture impervious to change. In some ways such ideological assumptions mirror the dominant racial vision the US has of itself: "The USA is of course a highly multiracial society, but the idea of being an 'American' has long sat uneasily with ideas of being any other colour than white" (Dyer, *White* 149). Similarly, although Ireland has become much more racially diverse than at any other time in its history, the idea(l?) of Ireland, from the US viewpoint in any case, remains that of an exclusively white nation. In her insightful work on the revival of folk traditions in England, Georgina Boynes contends that the existence of such phenomena can best be viewed "as a direct and urgent response to a cultural crisis" (1). She reminds us that:

> Inherent in the Revival of folksong and dance is the intention that the values and characteristics of the past are not merely being re-asserted but are actually capable of attainment again through their "return" to and re-incorporation in contemporary

> living culture. The prospect of Revival offers not simply a world as it had been but a world as it could be again. (4)

It is argued here that the popularity of Irishness and its attendant focus on notions of the folk in the US during the past twenty years or so can also be characterized as "a direct and urgent response to a cultural crisis." That crisis emanates in part from the long tradition of white hostility toward "others" in the US and is fueled more recently by fears that whites will soon become a minority group.[106] This problem, as David Roediger notes, "is exacerbated by the fact that white residents of the United States believe that whites already are a minority in the United States.[107]

Another way white supremacist organizations capitalize on the general popularity of Irishness is through events linked to St. Patrick's Day. Since the late 1990s a wide variety of supremacist groups have made the most of this March holiday to advertise, engage in outreach, and recruit new audiences. Although there are several different strategies when it comes to organizing events around St. Patrick's Day, the common underlying assumption is that these events attract a predominantly white audience. The diverse approaches reflect the differences in intent and levels of marketing sophistication. Some events are organized as an alternative to the officially sanctioned variety in a given town or city. An obvious example of this is the annual St. Patrick's Day concert organized by the Florida chapter of the Hammerskins, one of the largest skinhead groups in the nation.[108] Their invite-only concerts are intended for already sympathetic audiences and feature hardcore white power bands (ADL, *Extremism is Florida* 10–11). Other groups use St. Patrick's Day in more covert ways in an effort to advertise their organization and appeal to wider audiences. The St. Louis chapter of the Council of Conservative Citizens uses the annual St. Patrick's Day parade in that city to hold what they call a "pro-police" rally,

maintaining that the city is filled with African American criminals (SPLC "Council"; see fig. 26).

Fig. 26. St. Louis Council of Conservative Citizens on St. Patrick's Day 2005 (image since removed from the Council of Conservative Citizen's website).

Another example of this type of covert strategy, but one that primarily appeals to a younger audience, is the annual March concert organized by the Maryland Skinheads. Figure 27 shows the poster advertising the 2007 event. The use of RAC (which stands for "Rock Against Communism" but has little to do with communism and is virulently white supremacist) rather than "hatecore" "or "white power music" is very strategic as ideological affiliations are not immediately revealed by the RAC acronym, at least for those not already familiar with the

genre.[109] No doubt the combination of St. Patrick's Day and free drinks attracts a substantial and enthusiastic audience.

Fig. 27. Subtle poster promoting a St. Patrick's Day event with white power music promoted via post on Stormfront.org.

Other white supremacist groups have adopted even more clandestine tactics when it comes to marketing their message on St. Patrick's Day. Figure 28 shows the cover of a CD distributed free of charge at a St. Patrick's Day parade by the Florida chapter of the National Alliance in the late 1990s.[110] A quick glance at this CD cover and you'd probably expect it to feature "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" or "Danny Boy."

Fig. 28. The subtle cover of the National Alliance's CD of white power music (natvan.org).

However, this sampler CD contains a variety of songs by white supremacist bands, broadcasts from a white supremacist radio show, and "a moving video of Black riots and attacks on innocent White People" (Strom). A high-ranking National Alliance member commented on the usefulness of this approach: "Consider also the fact that people don't normally throw a professional-looking CD away. A sampler CD given to someone may be around for a very long time; there's no telling how many people will see it, listen to it, and make digitally perfect copies of it" (Strom).

Using St. Patrick's Day as an opportunity to advertise and recruit was likely bolstered by the success of Eurofests organized by various white supremacist groups beginning in the late 1990s. Billed as family events, their organizers concealed their supremacist connections to both the general public and the musicians and dancers they approached to perform at them. Mark Potok of the SPLC described the usual Eurofest format: "Typically, the events featured Irish, German, Polish, Slovak and other ethnic dancers or musicians, often followed by speeches emphasizing European history without specifically mentioning Nazism" (Potok). National

Alliance membership coordinator David Pringle, in an interview with Kevin Alfred Storm broadcast on American Dissident Voices radio, identified the rationale behind organizing these types of events:

> That's how we're building community in local areas. For instance, some of these areas put on European Cultural Festivals, or Eurofests; St. Louis put on a very successful Eurofest, as have the Sacramento Unit and other Units, where they'll get several hundred people out for the Eurofest, many of whom may not be racially conscious—they might just like to experience and revel in their heritage—and that could be the perfect place to slip them some Alliance literature and let them see that we're not the bogeymen the media paint us as being (*Eurofests)*.

As mentioned by Pringle, one highly successful festival coordinated by the National Alliance was held in St. Louis in 2002 and underlines how convincingly the event organizers performed respectability. They managed to book various locals acts, including a well-known and highly regarded Irish dance troupe and a Scottish pipe band for the event without ever revealing their true nature or, more importantly, even slightly raising suspicion. Condemning these types of groups as ignorant fanatics overlooks this relatively new promotional strategy, which emphasizes a conventional and well-mannered demeanor—"button down terror," as Barbara Perry characterizes it (165)—that is winning them access to wider audiences (both online and face-to-face). It wasn't until Eurofest 2003 that the local paper (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*) did a little investigative reporting:

> When German and Irish musical groups gathered for a folk festival in south St. Louis earlier this month, they were hoping for a night of food and fun. Instead, the

> unsuspecting musicians found themselves performing at a recruitment rally sponsored by a white supremacist organization that the FBI says presents "a continuing terrorist threat. (Hathaway C1)

Unsurprisingly, the National Alliance provided a very different account:

> The second annual Eurofest in St. Louis Missouri was a resounding success with more than 280 people of European descent—i.e. White people—gathering together to celebrate and applaud their vast cultural and racial heritage on Saturday evening 7pm at the fantastically arrayed German Cultural Center.… The fanfare included beautifully dressed young girls in Irish costumes[111] clogging, tapping, singing and providing orchestral sequences which were the absolute pinnacle of the evening (*Eurofests)*.

Eurofests were organized all over the country, although the most successful were those held in Ohio, Arizona, California, and Missouri. It took a couple of years in some cases before local media ran stories exposing the deception, and Irish and German consulates began to advise cultural groups in their areas to be careful of such festivals. It would be easy to denounce Eurofests as merely the effect of successful false advertising and dismiss the National Alliance's account as hyperbolic. However, their vigorous appeals to others to emulate this approach suggests it is an effective strategy and confirms the Alliance's desire and ability to expose their ideas to less marginalized audiences. Although the National Alliance is now essentially defunct, other supremacist groups have adopted this strategy. At a St. Patrick's Day parade in 2009, white supremacists in Philadelphia distributed material about their organization with pictures of Irish revolutionary hero Michael Collins on the front. More surprising is the relative lack of mainstream media coverage of the links between such celebrations of European ethnic heritages

(and especially Irish ones) and white supremacy.[112] In March 2009, Turn It Down, a Chicago-based group that educates youth groups, parents, and schools about white supremacist music, was one of the few to notice the connection:

> For several years now, we've noticed an increasing connection that we find both disturbing and downright ridiculous. White nationalists love St. Patrick's Day. A lot. Turn It Down supporters and bands have noted an increased presence of overtly white power skinheads at Celt punk shows, and more white power St. Patrick's Day events spring up every year.

The tragic history of emigration and the Irish diaspora have, in a very real sense, made Irishness a global identity. Terry Eagleton notes that, while on the one hand, Ireland signifies "roots, belonging, tradition," it has also spelled at the same time "exile, diffusion, globality, disapora" (Mays 6). Producers of *Riverdance*— much more so than those of *Lord of the Dance*— astutely recognized and utilized the global draw and power of these evocative themes.[113] Some scholars maintain that Celticness/Scottishness also have the capacity to function in this manner, that is, as permeable categories or—to use Venkatesh's term—inclusionary forms of identity. For example, anthropologist Celeste Ray notes that "[m]any African Americans have Scottish ancestry, and they are also members of clan societies, bagpipe bands, and Scottish history reenactment societies" (34). Ray uses this example to suggest that "the vast majority of Scottish Americans are not celebrating "whiteness" (36). Indeed, in numerous works dealing with the popularity of Scottish culture in the US, Ray repeatedly dismisses the possibility that this identity operates as a form of exclusionary whiteness.[114] Colin MacArthur, on the other hand, asks, "whether there might not be lurking under the filiopietistic utterances the kind of identity-shoring Paul Gilroy condemns as 'ethnic absolutism,'" suggesting that Scottishness does indeed have an

exclusionary capacity.[115] Likewise it is argued here that Irishness in the US often functions as a way to keep "others," particularly nonwhite others, out. Recent postings on a leading white nationalist Web site concerning the presence of "others" at "our" festivals is revealing:[116]

> Not to dampen the festivities, but there have been several comments about negroes showing up in kilts. On the CCA[117] website they show a negro[118] in the games and a chinese girl in the competition. This should not be advertised on the site, it only invites more trouble. I know from past experience that if we don't "nip this in the bud", you soon will have lost your festivals.
>
> These people should be strongly shunned. Shunning people is legal and effective. Refuse to shake their hand, look at them and ask, "What are you doing here you're not Celtic/Scottish, Celtic is white." If you're thinking, "oh, it is only a few, just ignore them"... you're wrong. They will soon bring their friends... and their friends, until you've lost your festival. (Ramswolf)

Despite comforting stereotypes that consider white nationalists to be on the fringes of US society, often the difference between such people and so-called mainstream whites is merely the degree of willingness to publicly voice such beliefs. As Rebecca Aanerud observes, there is a prevailing yet "false assumption that a white person who does not participate in "extreme" racist acts (e.g., by belonging to a white supremacist group or subscribing to white supremacist ideology) is not racist" (49). Realistically, few whites ever consider or label themselves racist and even fewer would truthfully share such beliefs with anthropologists. In recent years many researchers have described contemporary racisms[119] as much more subtle, especially when contrasted with typical white nationalist varieties such as those described above. Surveying the research, Sue et al. note that modern racism, "(a) is more likely than ever to be disguised and

covert and (b) has evolved from the 'old fashioned' form, in which overt racial hatred and bigotry is consciously and publicly displayed, to a more ambiguous and nebulous form that is more difficult to identify and acknowledge" (272). Throughout the 1990s, "folk" alongside the terms Irish, Scottish, and Celtic regularly functioned as sometimes ambiguous and nebulous but nevertheless code words for "white." This is not without significance in a culture in which, to borrow Helen Davis's phrase, race and racism have long been "determining structures and institutions."[120]

Perry contends that "in dramatic ways, hate groups threaten to extend their impact beyond the immediate membership" (137). Appealing to Irishness is currently an effective method for such groups. St. Patrick's Day-related events, in particular, represent serious attempts to build barriers against the physical presence of nonwhites and their perceived intrusion into "our" white Irish/Celtic "heritage" in the US. The success of these strategies remind us to heed Abby Ferber's caution, noted at the outset of this chapter, about drawing sharp distinctions between the so-called white supremacist fringe and some supposed nonracist majority. Shamrocks and St. Patrick's Day, if not Celtic crosses and tattoos, show that the distance between extreme and mainstream is disturbingly narrow and that Irishness is a critical stage upon which US racial ideologies are performed. It is worth speculating as to how long the prevailing romanticized version of Irishness can survive, particularly with increasing numbers of supremacist groups using it. The answers could well rest with the next group analyzed in this work, one with no ancestral links to Ireland at all, largely white suburban ancillary audiences. It is toward an understanding of this group's investment in Irishness that attention is turned next.

Chapter 5: "Almost Irish"—Ancillary Consumers of Irishness

'Cause I'm almost, I'm almost Irish

And I hope almost, is good enough for you

And I'm mostly, I'm mostly Irish

OK mostly I'm American it's true

—"Almost Irish" by Ceann

In the mid-1990s, Irish-themed pubs, parades, restaurants, festivals, music, stores, shows, and even attractions at amusement parks became a common global phenomenon. Sean Williams documented the "profound sense of nostalgia generated by the performance of Irish culture" in Japan (102), and Michael Mays discussed the improbable existence of Irish pubs in Uzbekistan and the United Arab Emirates (9). On a similar theme, anthropologists Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan observed that "[o]ne of the remarkable features of Riverdance: The Show has been its widespread appeal and popularity. It has filled stadiums in Europe, America and Australia with audiences drawn from diverse backgrounds, and not just those interested in dance or with nostalgic memories of a half-remembered homeland" (93). There is little doubt that Irishness since the 1990s has attracted mass audiences beyond those with obvious ancestral links to Ireland. Yet little research has been undertaken attempting to explain why *Riverdance* and other Irish-themed goods and experiences were, and arguably still are, popular with such audiences. This aspect of Irishness was particularly conspicuous in the United States where, beyond the self-designated American Irish community, a wide assortment of primarily white audiences became enthusiastic consumers of all things Irish in the mid-1990s. In *Acting Irish in Hollywood,* Ruth Barton observes that "Irishness remains the most commercial of identities, appealing not only to the Irish-American population who, in any case, themselves boast multiple

hyphenated ethnic allegiances, but to the wider American and non-American cinema viewer" (227). The chorus (see above) from the 2005 song "Almost Irish" by Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, band Ceann is indicative of a curious desire expressed by a variety of US white audiences to have some kind of Irish connection, however tenuous and irrespective of actual ancestry. It also indicates the extraordinarily resilient social and cultural capital of Irishness. It is hardly unexpected that popular Irish themes were embraced by sanctioned or traditional American Irish audiences (chapter 3), or that perhaps even deviant audiences capitalized on its mainstream appeal (chapter 4). But ancillary audiences, the subject of this chapter, largely comprised of white, suburban, middle and upper-middle classes, form perhaps the most surprising of the three groups drawn to Irishness in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Their attraction was certainly motivated in part at least by the mainstream popularity of all things Irish.

> For some classes of goods, particularly those with which consumers have little personal experience, public meanings may be the only meanings available. These meanings can have a potent impact on consumer aspirations, fantasies, and desires, and many product choices are made on the basis of public meanings alone. Despite their importance, we have little knowledge of how these meanings develop. It is likely that they are influenced by a variety of factors, which include advertising, portrayals of consumer goods in media such as movies and television shows, and the association of specific goods with highly visible and distinct social subgroups. (Richins 517)

Beyond the "everyone else is doing it" rationale, there are other important factors to consider when examining the enthusiasm for this, on the face of it, seemingly peculiar interest. For all groups examined in this study, the associative connotations of community, nostalgia, tradition,

authenticity, and Irishness are clear. Indeed, the search for authentic identities is a standard feature of most postindustrial cultures. As the grand narratives of the past gave way to disparate, fragmented, mediated lives, the search for authenticity takes on even greater significance. Those in the US searching for authentic identities are in many ways no different from those in France or Japan seeking the same because, as Vincent Cheng notes:

> The pressure to define a unique and authentic national character and identity, one that is distinct from all others (preferably having originary and premodern roots, an always already-manifest destiny), may indeed be growing even more urgent with the globalization of our own postmodern era—the world of global markets, global media, and neocolonial economies—where cultural and natural distinctness and distinctions are fading, and cultures all grow increasingly to resemble, not distinct and separate uniqueness, but predictable simulacra of millennial inauthenticity, complete with CNN and a McDonald's in every village. (5)

At the same time, regarding identity construction as a straightforward process and assuming there are infinite identity choices available to all is to greatly simplify the matter. Helen Davis addresses this concern, noting that identity "is *not* simply a question of identity-shopping. Identity is in constant production and exists at the point of intersection between the individual and other determining structures and institutions" (162). She continues, arguing that "there are times when some identities matter more than others, and the relationships between different identities demand constant negotiation and dialogue" (181). These observations go right to the heart of this work, where the challenge is to identify and examine the "determining structures and institutions" that contributed to the re-imagining and reconstruction of Irishness as a positive and desirable ethnic/racial, often masculine, identity in the US during the 1990s. Two such

"determining structure" are race and gender, largely due to the deeply-rooted associations between Irishness and whiteness and, more recently, Irishness and masculinity.

This ancillary group is overwhelmingly white, middle class, and suburban or "boomburban" to corrupt Robert E. Lang and Jennifer B. LeFurgy's phrase. These authors contend that boomburbs "are not traditional cities nor are they bedroom communities for these cities. They are instead a new type of city, a subset of and a new variation of American suburbanization" (4). Further they note these "fastest-growing US cities with more than 100,000 residents have little identity outside their region" (5). Irishness, in part, helps fill this absence of identity. Consider the following set up on *While You Were Out*, one of the countless "home makeover" television shows broadcast on The Learning Channel in 2002. An upper middle class, white, suburban, "stay-at-home Mom" (Lisa Curtis) living in North Carolina wants to surprise her husband by inviting the *While You Were Out* team to make over their backyard patio in a style her husband will love—as an Irish pub. As the show develops, it is revealed that the soon-to-be-surprised husband (Chuck) is of Czech ancestry and cannot even lay claim to the "American Irish" moniker. Moreover, Lisa is unable to account for her partner's fascination with this particular ethnicity:

> TERESA (host). What would be your ideal for this space?
>
> LISA. He and his brothers, his two brothers and his father have been planning a trip to Ireland and Scotland for gosh years but um … I being sort of selfish said hey you and I need to go on a nice vacation before you go on this big trip with your brothers and I thought we'll bring a little piece of Ireland here for him.
>
> TERESA. Well why Ireland, is he Irish himself or …?
>
> LISA. He's not Irish, he's not Irish at all.

PETER (designer from England). I know "Curtis" is Irish.

LISA. See, I didn't even know that.

PETER. You didn't know?

LISA. He's Czechoslovakian.

TERESA. In Ellis Island, a lot of names become Curtis: Curtis-Lawski, Curtis-Stein, you know what I'm saying?

(Laughter)

LISA. He might not even know so you're going to shock him.

PETER. Oh good. ("Charlotte, Belvedere Lane")

With the transformation complete the host, Teresa Strasser, summarizes the project:

> All I can say is "cheers." In the last 48 hours the *While You Were Out* team has transformed this conventional Charlotte backyard into a colorful Celtic outdoor pub for Chuck to enjoy with friends. Garden designer Peter Bonsey has given the Curtis family a piece of old Ireland rich in texture and tradition. There's a fabulous lion head fountain, inventive barrel seats, a colorful pub sign ["Molly Malone"] and a whole new facade of faux stone to complete this inviting and Irish pub garden that would make anyone green with envy. ("Charlotte, Belvedere Lane")

A "replica" of the blarney stone (constructed of high-density foam), a glass-encased Irish dancing costume, and a putting green complete the "Emerald Isle" look. Chuck arrives home and the show's host asks him what is it about Ireland that he finds so appealing:

> TERESA. So what is it about Ireland and Irish pubs?
>
> CHUCK. I guess the history of beer probably.

(Laughter) ("Charlotte, Belvedere Lane")

This ethnic-tinged domestic makeover prompts several observations. First, when Irishness is performed in suburban backyards (where are the comparable German or French backyard makeovers?) we can safely assume that it occupies a solidly mainstream position in US culture. Second, the inability of the Curtises to articulate their attraction to Ireland is suggestive of Negra's hypothesis that Irishness in this era had this elusive "everything and nothing quality" (1). As is the case with other ancillary consumption scenarios, in this *While You Were Out* segment there is a peculiar tension at play between similarity and specialness. On the one hand, Lisa and Chuck employ Irishness to distinguish themselves within their suburban community while, on the other, they are concomitantly aware that they are part of a broader (and thus accepted) cultural trend.[121] Perceptions of specialness and uniqueness are frequently articulated when Americans describe their feelings about Ireland. But in the case of ancillary audiences that specialness is policed, ensuring such differentiation does not violate broader suburban/boomburban norms. At one moment in the *While You Were Out* broadcast, Lisa expresses concern that the makeover may be "too much" for her neighborhood. For ancillary consumers, Irishness is closely related to wider, often conflicting, suburban ideologies that champion conformity alongside illusory conceptions of American "individuality." As M. P. Baumgartner notes, "suburbs are strikingly homogenous by urban standards, a feature of their social organization painstakingly maintained by a variety of techniques, including zoning laws" (10). Baumgartner further observes, "middle-class people tend to be socially anchored only loosely into their atomized and shifting networks of associates. Their high rate of mobility from place to place means that bonds between persons are frequently ruptured and replaced with new and equally temporary ones, so that relationships often have short pasts and futures" (91). And

although ancillary audiences do not have ancestral ties to Ireland, their claims and articulations vis-à-vis this identity seem to function as a sort of cultural antidote, however tempered, to the homogenous and atomized nature of contemporary suburbia.

In the past decade or so, ancillary consumers have also fueled the Irish-themed merchandise boom. In its *1999 North American Irish Stores Report,* Enterprise Ireland (see chapter 3) worried that Irish-themed stores attract an ethnic customer to the exclusion of the mainstream customer market:

> Either the merchandise does not appeal to non-ethnic customers or the appearance and ambience of the store suggest to non-ethnic consumers that it is not for them. It raises the question as to whether Ethnic Stores are overlooking the large mainstream consumer market that might well be interested in quality merchandise such as crystal, tableware, apparel, etc. that can be sold on its own merit, irrespective of its Irish connection. (36)

A mere three years later this gap in the market was being addressed. In 2002 Enterprise Ireland noted that, "there has been an increase in Irish American customers, a sizeable decline in Other Celtic[122] customers and a 40% increase in customers with no Irish or Celtic connections" (*2002 Update* 9). In this short period, not only do we see more Irish-Americans buying more Irish-themed products, but also now more ancillary audiences expressing an explicit attraction to Irishness and shifting their consumption patterns accordingly. Perhaps this helps account for the existence of $80 mohair throws, phonograph photo frames, and Grateful Dead T-shirts that seem to have no connection to Ireland at all, yet can be found in the Creative Irish Gifts spring 2004 catalogue. Indeed the number of Americans claiming Irish ancestry in the US census actually decreased by 5 million between 1990 and 2000, suggesting that ancillary audiences play a much

larger role in the Irish-themed consumption boom than is typically acknowledged ("Selected Social").

As mentioned throughout this work, Irish and Celtic are often conflated in the US. Two of the most popular festivals—the Celtic Classic in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and the Chicago Celtic Fest—as well as mail order shopping catalogues such as Gaelsong and Celtic Croft, and the North American Celtic Traders Association (formerly NACBA) suggest the profitability in synching the two and reaching out to a wide variety of primarily white audiences interested in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Brittany, Cornwall, and beyond. It is conceivable that these audiences also participate in the increasingly popular Renaissance fairs, whose attendees Paul F. Grendler argues are equally "overwhelmingly white" (40). Further complicating this trend is the rise of what Nick Marmion at Enterprise Ireland has dubbed "British Isles" stores. Catalogues such as Shannon (from spring 2008), featuring Belleek teapots alongside Sir Galahad bronzes and King Arthur chess sets, are reflective of this trend that also often incorporates Pagan/New Age components. ("We are told that 20 percent of Americans believe some part of the so-called 'New Age philosophy'" [McCracken 143]). Arguably, on this side of the Atlantic the differences between Irish and English or Celtic and Anglo are far less important than their much more significant alliance across race as all of these enterprises appeal primarily to a pan-white racial audience.

Throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s festivals became particularly lucrative venues in which to sell Irish/Celtic themed goods and also a place where ancillary audiences increased their presence. During this period at least thirty-four of the fifty United States had one Irish festival and a majority of those host such events annually.[123] An additional fifteen states hosted at least one "Celtic" festival (including an Irish dimension).[124] Hawaii was the only state in

which I could find no record of Irish or Celtic festivals (although their official tourist website listed an annual St. Patrick's Day parade). Predictably such festivals attracted sanctioned and even deviant audiences but ancillary consumers could also be found at these events. Indeed the massive popularity of such festivals is the direct result of successful appeals to wider non-American Irish audiences. As Marilyn Halter notes, festivals are "examples of cultural forms grounded in economic interests" (102), and one of the major motives driving the proliferation of Irish/Celtic festivals is the opportunity for vast financial rewards for the organizers, the vendors, and the city hosting the event. Festival attendance figures, as Liam Daly notes, are difficult to accurately estimate. His numbers (see table 1) are based on publicity distributed by the various festival organizers and therefore should be interpreted with some skepticism.

Table 1 Top Attended Irish Festival in US as Self-Reported from Liam Daly's Web Site

1. *Bethlehem Celtic Classic, PA*—265,000 (2007)
2. *North Wildwood Irish Fall Festival, NJ*—250,000 (2006)
3. *Chicago Celtic Fest, IL*—190,000 (2005)
4. *Milwaukee Irish Fest, WI*—over 140,000 (2007)
5. *Green Lane Park Scottish Irish Festival, PA*—over 130,000 (2006)
6. *Dublin Irish Fest, OH*—102,400 (2009)
7. *Irish Fair Minnesota, MN*—almost 100,000 (2006)
8. *Kansas City Irish Fest, MO*—97,000 (2011)
9. *The Great Irish Festival NYC, NY*—80,000+ (2011)
10. *Longs Peak Scottish/Irish Festival, CO*—75,000 (2003)
11. *North Texas Irish Fest, TX*—73,000 (2011)
12. *Indy Irish Fest, IN*—over 50,000 (2006)
13. *Riverfront Irish Festival, OH*—50,000 (2006)
13. *Gaelic Park Irish Fest, IL*—50,000 (2006)
13. *Great American Irish Festival, NY*—50,000 (2008)
13. *ShamrockFest, DC*—50,000 (2009)
17. *ICONS Irish Music & Arts Festival, MA*—32,000 (2007)
18. *Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival, OH*—over 30,000 (2005)
18. *Irish Day Festival Long Beach, NY*—over 30,000 (2007)
18. *St Patrick's Church Irish Festival, VA*—over 30,000 (2006)
21. *Los Angeles County Irish Fair & Music Festival, LA*—26,000 (2009)
22. *Erin Feis on the Riverfront at Peoria, IL*—over 25,000 (2004)
23. *Pittsburgh Irish Festival, PA*—over 25,000
24. *Syracuse Irish Festival, NY*—25,000 (2006)
25. *Great Irish Fair of New York, NY*—20,000 (2011)

IrishKC.com

The Milwaukee Irish Fest bills itself as the "largest and best Irish cultural event in North America,"[125] boasting more than 100,000 visitors over its popular four day event. To borrow Halter's term, "[b]lended ethnicity" or "the amalgamation of two or more ethnic backgrounds" (186), is evident in T-shirts with the captions "Warning: Irish Temper and Italian Attitude," "Warning: Irish Temper and German Stubbornness," and "Warning: Irish Temper and Polish Humor" commonplace items on sale at this event in 2003. In addition to Irish ancestry these T-shirts presumably appeal to Americans of Italian, German, and Polish descent. In fact the majority of the US white population is accounted for. Although implied, the absence of "American" on these shirts is also significant. One wonders if "American" would be read as a tacit constituent element on a similar T-shirt configuring Irish, Jamaican, and Nigerian ethnicities. Similarly the caption accompanying the "stars, stripes and shamrocks shirt" in the spring 2004 *Creative Irish Gifts* catalogue announces, "you can have it both ways!" As do "my country, my heritage" T-shirts that serve as "eloquent testimonials to your patriotism and your heritage" in the same catalogue (as discussed in chapter 3). It seems that one can conveniently claim Irish ethnicity alongside American allegiance, but nonwhite groups are rarely if ever allowed similar identity alignments. Mary C. Waters notes, "aside from all of the positive, amusing, and creative aspects to this celebration of roots and ethnicity, there is a subtle way in which this ethnicity [Irish] has consequences for American race relations" (156). In many ways it is the levels of explicitness vis-à-vis race that differentiate ancillary audiences from deviant ones. Issues of race for the ancillary audience tend to more disguised and implicit than for deviant audiences. In addition, because ancillary audiences have no direct ancestral link to Ireland (as is

the case with sanctioned audiences), they can opt in and out of their associative Irishness with greater fluidity that either of the two other groups.

As is the case with sanctioned and deviant audiences, the most common way to associate oneself with the positive attributes and popularity of Irishness is through music and dance, an important component of festivals and amusement parks. Paul F. Wells notes, "Clearly, Irish traditional music is a popular commodity in twenty-first century America, and is enjoyed by many with no Irish heritage themselves" (26). However, there are some limitations regarding what is considered authentic and/or traditional Irish music. In her analysis of the New York-based group Black 47, Lauren Onkey illustrates how their use of many different musical styles including hip-hop and rap (not to mention overtly political lyrics) present an unacceptable twist on what it means to perform Irish music in the US. This is an issue the band themselves also recognize. In their early 1990s song "Rockin' the Bronx" they reference the problems they face when their music fails to meet audience expectations:

> Oh we got a gig in the Village Pub
>
> But the regulars there all said that we sucked
>
> Then Big John Flynn, said "oh, no no
>
> You'll be causin' a riot if I don't let you go"
>
> Then a flintstone from the Phoenix gave us a call
>
> When he heard the beat, he was quite appalled
>
> "D'yez not know nothin' by Christy Moore?"
>
> The next thing you be wantin' is Danny Boy! ("Black 47")

In contrast to Black 47 and *Riverdance,* Michael Flatley's *Lord of the Dance* boasted that it included "only Irish material" (Gladstone B8). This also raises the question whether, like other

Americans, Irish fundamentally means white for Flatley too. The absence of any African American performers (in contrast to *Riverdance)* in particular is noteworthy, not only because Flatley hails from Chicago and was so obviously influenced by many diverse US dance styles (including tap), but also because of his frequently stated public alliances to the bravado approach of various African American athletes. Explaining the less than flattering reception his glitzy show received on the European side of the Atlantic,[126] Flatley, in a *Los Angeles Times* interview, contends, "I did it my way, which may be more flamboyant than the British press cared for, but it's typically American … This is the country of Muhammad Ali, Hector Camacho, Sugar Ray Leonard and Michael Jordan" (Pacheco F1). Despite this, his *Lord of the Dance* show was an all-white spectacle. The sole allusion to a racial "other" emerges with the introduction of the dark haired femme fatale who dances to vaguely Eastern European/Asian Muzak.

This Irish/white convergence is also illustrated by a 1999 *Washington Times* headline, "A tap-dancer with the luck of the Irish: Black American lands featured role in 'Riverdance'" (Blanchard C12). There have been African American performers in *Riverdance* since the original 1995 show, making this headline even more peculiar but revealing that *Riverdance*/Irishness, at least from this newspaper's perspective (which admittedly is a staunchly conservative one, Glaberson), signifies white. But even more contentious is the use of "Black" with "American." As David R. Roediger observes:

> African-American thinkers have also fixed on the complex ways in which being American both has and has not implied being white. As Morrison argues, a crowning achievement of white domination in the United States has been that for most of the nation's history "American" has silently signaled "white American".

> Adjectives were necessary only when nonwhite race or ethnicity within the white population had to be indicated. (*Black on White* 18)

The success of *Riverdance*, *Lord of the Dance,* and the countless spin-off and imitation shows sparked an Irish dancing craze throughout the US ("Irish Dance Schools"). "The kids we have now are not just Irish," Lisa Petri said in the premier issue of *Irish Dancer*, a magazine published in Mequon, Wisconsin. "We have Asian, Hispanic, and Italian kids. Even the kids who have Irish names do not have Irish-born parents and the majority of their parents never danced" (Casey 422). While nonwhite American kids may be Irish dancing, even in "post-racial" America, it isn't the norm. *The New York Times* profiled Drew Lovejoy, a 17-year-old dancer from Ohio in its 2012 St. Patrick's Day issue precisely because he challenged this norm. "His father is black and Baptist from Georgia and his mother is white and Jewish from Iowa. But his fame is international after winning the all-Ireland dancing championship in Dublin for a third straight year" (Tavernise). In the same story Drew's mother Andee Goldberg, referring to the Irish dance community, noted, "They don't even know he's Jewish. That hasn't been broached. I think it would be too overwhelming," although it isn't clear which community she is referring to, American Irish or Irish or both. *IrishCentral*, "the largest American Irish media site"[127] was a bit more blunt in its coverage of Lovejoy's success. "Jewish black kid is new 'Lord of the Dance'" was their headline (Hayes), lending further evidence to the anomaly of nonwhites participating in Irish related events. This is a subject rarely explicitly addressed in mainstream media or conversation because as David W. Stowe writes, "[t]he only people nowadays who profess any kind of loyalty to whiteness qua whiteness (as opposed to whiteness as an incidental feature of some more specific identity) are Christian Identity types and Aryan Nation diehards" (74). Frequent posts on the popular white supremacist website *Stormfront* (see chapter 4) confirm

Stowe's observations. Echoing the sentiments of users on *Stormfront Ireland* (as discussed in chapter 4), recently a user asked "Was St. Patrick's Day in your city a White event"? ("Darkwatcher") The same user characterized the day in Vancouver as "sickening," a "multicultural event complete with East Asians (probably Chinese) marching in the parade, and who knows what else" (Stormfront Ireland). Responding to the post, another user wrote, "Are you kidding?! That's terrible! One thing we still have that's great in NYC is the St. Patrick's Day Parade, it's the only time I see that many white people in one place around here anymore!" ("Stormfront"). As noted in chapter 4, the New York parade is rather infamous for its persistent intolerance. Writing in 1996, Stowe also argues

> Anecdotal surveys reveal that few white Americans mention whiteness as a quality that they think much about or particularly value. In their day-to-day cultural preferences—food, music, clothing, sports, hairstyles—the great majority of American whites display no particular attachment to white things. (74)

However, Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll's landmark research *An Empirical Assessment of Whiteness Theory: Hidden from How Many?* published in 2009 challenges Stowe's assertions. They argue that whites are increasingly attentive to their race and culture, noting that "37% of whites say that their race is 'very important'" ("Working Paper" 20) and "77% of whites reported that their racial group has a culture that should be preserved" (although as the authors note, respondents only offered vague definitions of what constituted white culture; "Working Paper" 21).

Capitalizing on the successes of Irish music and dance as well as Irish/Celtic themed festivals, many major amusement parks including Sea World Orlando, Epcot Center, and Busch Gardens - together they attract approximately 20 million visitors annually – (Rubin) also added

Irish components in the 2000s. In 2001 Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia, added Ireland to its list of European mock villages, even hiring Irish students for an extra touch of authenticity.

> Irish tradition and heritage are beautifully depicted throughout the festive village of Killarney. This captivating Irish hamlet is home to Corkscrew Hill, a 4-D adventure ride through mythical Celtic lore, "The Secrets of Castle O'Sullivan," an awesome music and special effects show and a resident leprechaun and his sound machine. Strolling entertainers delight park guests as they savor traditional Irish food and a pint or two of cheer at Grogan's Pub. The tradition of handcrafted giftware continues as Irish artisans proudly display their talents. Ireland at Busch Gardens Williamsburg is the newest country to join the world-class adventure park in the last 20 years. ("Busch Gardens")

Though certainly clichéd, the success of this "Irish" element soon caught on. Dollywood in Tennessee, which attracts about two million visitors annually, launched an Irish/Celtic component in its "Festival of Nations" celebration in 2001 ("About Us Dollywood).[128] In 2007 "Celebrate Ireland" featuring Irish music, dance, art, and food was the highlight of the five-week festival. "Our Irish roots run really deep in East Tennessee, and I'm especially proud of my Irish heritage. You can bet I'm gonna show folks a jig or two of my own!" singer Dolly Parton exclaimed in a press release announcing the festival ("Celebrate Ireland"). Dollywood also includes "A Touch of Ireland" gift shop where you can buy "a variety of authentic items from the Emerald Isle" ("A Touch of Ireland"). This gift shop, along with over 150 other Irish/Celtic stores throughout the US and Canada, are members of the North American Celtic Trade Association, an organization that works closely with Enterprise Ireland (see chapter 3) to promote Irish-made and Irish-themed goods in the US.

By 2008 the phenomenon had even reached Branson, Missouri, a popular destination spot aimed at primarily rural, Midwestern and Southern, white retirees (Elwood). It hosted an Irish dancing show *Feet of Fire*, a gimmicky attempt to confuse potential audiences with Michael Flatley's *Lord of the Dance* spin-off show *Feet of Flames*. "In addition, an Irish crafts colony presents the isle's finest weavers, hat makers, crystal glasscutters, drum makers, stone carvers and jewelry makers" ("Feet of Fire"). Since then a host of other Irish-themed shows have toured Branson including the Twelve Irish Tenors, Daniel O'Donnell, *Spirit of the Dance,* and *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling* show (Gull). Branson is also home to Irish-themed pubs including Waxy O'Shea's Irish Pub and Killarney's Irish Pub and Grill. More bizarrely, however, in 2009 the tourist destination hosted a "Titanic Irish Festival," an event

> dedicated to the Irish involvement with the RMS Titanic from its building and routing to the composition of its crew and passengers on its fateful voyage. As one would expect, the event will have Irish music and a few other surprises, but what one would not expect is the integration of "new" Irish crew members and passengers in a manner that, while sharing the basic Titanic experience, does it from such a completely different perspective, that it's an entirely different exciting experience. (Titanic Irish Festival)

Dollywood and Branson, though easy to deride, are quite revealing when placed in a broader context. For most of US history, few beyond the American Irish community would claim an interest in anything Irish (see chapter 1). As noted earlier, and as historian Kerby Miller has remarked, many once staunchly self-labeled, mostly Southern "Scotch-Irish" Americans (so-called in a attempt to distinguish themselves from Catholic immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century) by the 1990s were happy to be "just Irish," suggesting both its radical transformation

and popularity. The success of Irishness in the southern US is highly significant and further evidence that Irishness is accepted and utilized as a white racial strategy, although it disguises itself rather handily behind the claims of being just ethnicity, heritage, or pop culture trend.

As noted earlier, although ancillary audiences have little or no known Irish (or Celtic) connections, they remain a predominantly white audience (as is the case with both sanctioned and deviant consumers). These festivals, theme parks, and destinations are sites in which Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Carla Goar, and David G. Embrick's notion of "white habitus" is evident. Borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu's well-used idea of habitus, that "deep cultural conditioning that reproduces and legitimates social formations," Bonilla-Silva et al. argue that "'white habitus'—racialized socialization processes that facilitate a white culture of solidarity—emerge because of the social and spatial boundaries and isolation of whites" (233). This is certainly true at overwhelmingly white Irish/Celtic themed events. Perhaps even more significant is, as Bonilla-Silva et al. also note, "whites, for the most part, do not interpret their racial isolation and segregation from blacks as something racial" (248).

Another example of "white habitus" in practice and the conflation Irish/English can be seen in the proposed (in 2008) construction of a 980-acre residential community called White Oak in North Carolina. Houses ranging from $200,000 to $800,000 suggest the project was aimed at a decidedly upper class, white, American audience. Irish golfer Padraig Harrington was the television spokesman and boasted to the US audience that White Oak is a golf and equestrian community with "Irish flavor and European sophistication in the Blue Ridge foothills … where champions choose to live" ("White Oak"). Despite the racial diversity of contemporary Ireland and indeed Europe, European just like Irish (at least in the US) is arguably almost always coded as white, as is the case in this particular example, especially given the visual cues and classical

music soundtrack. Further fueling this appeal to a pan-white audience the White Oak website tells prospective residents about the significance of the location in a section titled "Royal Roots, White Oak Wisdom": "In 1743, King George II gave approximately 93,000 acres to the Ambrose Mills family. Not long after, 13 colonies declared their independence, and eight years of war ensued, which makes White Oak truly hallowed ground, tread upon by the King's men and the first American patriots" ("White Oak"). Not only is the war of independence neatly glossed over there is of course no mention of the peoples that first inhabited the land. Additional "royal roots" are emphasized by the inclusion in the project of Captain Mark Phillips (ex-husband of England's Princess Anne and Olympian horse rider), who was originally slated to design the equestrian offerings at White Oak. "With this stellar assemblage of champion expertise, White Oak promises a player's golf course, superb private equestrian facilities, an intimate club environment, and a charming village with an Irish accent" ("White Oak").

Certainly a different type of Irishness is suggested here from, say, the one offered at Branson. Irishness is conflated with "European" on the one hand and "English royalty" on the other through golf, horses, champions, and rural associations. Hindered in part by the housing/financial crisis of the late 2000s, White Oak never came to fruition and went into bankruptcy in early 2012, despite having sold some lots and constructing a half-completed golf course (Gavrich). Nonetheless the White Oak developers, much like Stormfront (the supremacist internet site discussed in chapter 4) are successful in aligning white English ancestry with Irishness and even a broader Europeanness. But what is essentially being communicated is a fundamental whiteness. Irishness is arguably the most important constituent of the three, however, as it operates as the "ideal guilt-free white ethnicity" as Diane Negra characterized it. (*Irish in Us* 11).

In addition to race, a second "determining structure" of Irishness for the ancillary audience is the specific brand of masculinity it offers. As Barton notes, "[B]eing Irish in so many recent cinematic and other media representation means being simultaneously tough and vulnerable; it almost always is identified with masculinity" (*Screening* 13). Much has been written on emerging American Irish masculinities since the early 2000s. For example Gerardine Meaney's analysis of popular television shows *The Wire* and *Rescue Me* connect American lrish masculinity to the events of September 11, 2001. Diane Negra focuses on "darker" American Irish texts including *The Departed* and *The Black Donnelly's* and argues they reveal "masculinist narratives of anger, resentment and defensiveness" (Barton, *Screening* 279). The masculinity that appeals to the ancillary audiences of Irishness does not fall into either of these two categories, but is connected to them through the "laddish" tendency that surfaces in many of these narratives. "Laddishness" can be viewed as a direct response to the metrosexual "new man" image that emerged in the 1990s (Wheaton 193). "The contemporary heir apparent to the yuppie, in the lineage of commercial masculinity, is the metrosexual. A term coined in 1994 by cultural critic Mark Simpson, 'metrosexuality' describes the relatively recent trend of heterosexual men engaging in and 'unashamed about beauty care, shopping, and spa treatments'" Shugart 283). But metrosexuality, as Shugart notes, often "represents a threat to masculinity" (285). The type of masculinity that appeals to ancillary audiences is also emptied of its obvious working class referents and consequently is more socially acceptable than either of the masculinities Negra and Meaney describe. Nevertheless, it is one that also celebrates a retro chauvinism through the use of Irish male "charm" and "roguishness." This brand of masculinity can be seen in the on- and off-screen personas of Colin Farrell and in Justin Timberlake's September 2004 *GQ* cover story announcing the end of his boy band phase ("Justin Timberlake Grows Up").[129]

Irish film actor Colin Farrell made his US primetime television debut in 2005 when he guest-starred on the popular NBC comedy *Scrubs.* (*Variety* described the show as attracting "upscale demographics" [Schneider]).

> The show focuses on the lives of several people working at Sacred Heart, a teaching hospital. It features fast-paced dialogue, slapstick, and surreal vignettes presented mostly as the daydreams of the central character, Dr. John Michael "J. D." Dorian. The name is a play on surgical scrubs and "scrubs" as slang for the new and inexperienced ("Scrubs").[130]

In an episode entitled "My Lucky Charm," Farrell plays Irishman Billy Callahan, "a free spirit who embraces life" ("Scrubs TV)" and encourages the main characters (especially the two male leads J. D. and Turk)[131] to do the same. Billy knocks a man unconscious at a bar and then takes him to the hospital for treatment (in order to be with him until he wakes up, Billy initially pretends to be the man's brother). His personality is established in his opening scene when he temporarily convinces J. D. and Turk that despite what they've heard, he's actually American rather than Irish.

> J. D. And you must be the Irish brother?
>
> BILLY. No sir, Rob Pearson, Ohio born and bred, yep red stater and proud if it.
>
> TURK. Oh sorry, we …
>
> BILLY. Only taking the piss out of you lads, name's Billy Callahan, had you going with the American accent though didn't I? I'll just put it out there, do us a favor, is there any chance I can get one of these [points to an intravenous drip feed] filled with Guinness? I've an awful hangover, me

head is splitting, we had a late night last night as you can see and I'm a bit shaky. Is there any chance?

J. D. Probably not, we don't usually do that.

This is the first in a series of "piss takes" as Billy continues to poke fun at J. D. and Turk throughout the episode. That they more often than not fall for his lines helps to contrast the supposed and widely accepted essence of white Irish masculinity—cool, charming, sarcastic, humorous, fun loving, adventure seeking, womanizing, fearless—with the lack of these same qualities in American men. These differences are further accentuated when Billy asks J. D. and Turk about their exciting lives and we see them playing the card game Go Fish and falling asleep on the couch at home at night. To which Billy advises:

BILLY. Lads you'll sleep enough when you're dead and buried. You have to get out on the street, you've to talk to a stranger. Drink a beer with breakfast. Take the ugliest girl home from the party.

J. D. Done it, done that, that one I've done.

BILLY. Go travel to Texas, you know, go line dancing with some married women that wish they weren't married, you never know what life will put in your lap if you open your arms and embrace it.

Despite J. D.'s pathetic attempt to position himself as "cool" in the middle of Billy's suggestions, he and Turk are by spectacular contrast uncertain, powerless, and weak. They repeatedly fall for Billy's stories and can only watch as the Irishman charms every woman in the hospital including their partners. Indeed the emasculation of J. D. and Turk is a major theme of the episode, as Billy kisses J. D.'s girlfriend Eliot ("He said my eyes looked like the Irish countryside after a soft rain.") and almost kisses Turk's wife Carla ("He said my hair was curly."). Furthermore, Billy

repeatedly suggests that J. D. and Turk act like a couple and at first assumed they were. At the same time Billy's womanizing is framed as positive and a characteristic to aspire to, or at least admire. It evens motivates the two leading female characters, supposed best friends, to fight for Billy's affection. And despite the fact that Billy has seemingly flirted with the entire female hospital staff, the women are all clearly irritated at J. D. and Turk telling them when Billy is arrested "You have one day to come up with another gorgeous Irishman."

In addition to the traits already noted, Billy displays a strong sense of honor and integrity unfamiliar to J. D. and Turk. Explaining why he brought the man he punched to the hospital, Billy states, "where I come from you knock someone unconscious you stay around and make sure they're ok." Not the conventional American response, though of course hardly the norm in Ireland either. That's largely irrelevant here, though, as it is the perception of Irish masculine honor and integrity that matters most. Unlike Billy, J. D. and Turk lack traditional male traits of forthrightness and honor especially among "brothers." This is emphasized again when J. D. and Turk apologize for "the whole incarceration thing" (they called the police on Billy after learning that he was not in fact the brother of their patient but rather the one who knocked him unconscious). Billy responds:

> No worries, life's too short to hold grudges but still you two boys might want to ask yourselves why you contacted the authorities and didn't have the decency to come talk to me first but I should let you two partners figure that out. By the way you're a gorgeous couple, good luck to you, see ya lads.

The character of Billy in many ways imitates the persona Colin Farrell actually cultivated in Hollywood. As Barton points out, the mainstream US press warmed quickly to the actor, as evidenced by this 2004 *People* magazine headline, "Why We Love Him: Unapologetically un-

PC, this gregarious rogue is up for anything. His idea of group therapy? Happy hour. His motto? 'Life's too short.' Diet? 'All the salads in L.A. get on my nerves'" (Barton, *Acting Irish* 211). Barton also argues that many Irish actors in the US function to re-invigorate "what is perceived as an atrophied tradition with a fresh Celtic spontaneity" (*Acting Irish* 228). One might also suggest that both Colin Farrell and the character of Billy Callahan function to reinvigorate a similarly atrophied US masculinity. Such personas provide an outlet for those not permitted or unable to behave similarly in a constrained and supposedly politically correct environment and helps explain the popularity of this particular type of Irish masculinity at this specific moment in US culture.

It must be noted that there is also a strong sense of irony running through the episode especially in relation to what Irishness represents in the US. For example in one scene J. D. and Turk badger Billy to prove his Irishness by naming all the components in Lucky Charms cereal (pink hearts, yellow moons, orange stars, green clovers). J. D. quips afterward, "See I told you he was Irish." There is a definite sense in which common ideas of Irishness in the US are being simultaneously mocked and reinforced throughout the episode.

Another fascinating though less likely example that illustrates the persistence of this Irish and chauvinistic masculinity association can be found in a 2004 *GQ* article featuring singer and actor Justin Timberlake. The article opens with the following: "Is there anything that Justin Timberlake cannot do? Is there any woman he cannot have? Are there any clothes he cannot wear? Apparently not. Oh, and by the way, it's okay to admit that you think he's cool" (355). And just in case this introduction is met with any skepticism, the feature is accompanied by a series of photos of Timberlake in Irish garb complete with conspicuous signifiers lest readers fail to identify the more subtle references. On the cover he wears a wool suit and heavy coat with a

bottle of Guinness prominently in hand (see fig. 29). The opening photo inside the issue features Timberlake falling over on what is apparently an Irish beach while wearing a derby and a bottle of Jameson in hand. There are more than thirty stills of Timberlake participating in apparently Irish like activities, such as accordion playing and fighting some very brutish looking lads. Most intriguing is an assemblage of nineteen photos (both color and black and white) over two pages depicting Timberlake reading Joyce, wearing a T-shirt that says "I'm the Irishman your mother warned you about," drinking yet more Guinness, posing with New York City's Police Pipe Band, and playing golf in his pajamas on the "Irish" coastline.

Fig. 29. Photos of Justin Timberlake by Bruce Weber from the September 2004 *GQ* article ("GQ").[132]

There is only one photo in the collage in which Timberlake or at least part of him is not featured and that is a color shot of a beach replete with cold looking waves, grey sky, and rugged coastline à la the west of Ireland. This functions to anchor the surrounding images so readers understand the location or intended location. The overriding theme of the article stresses the newfound authenticity and coolness of Justin Timberlake:

> Most creative people start out being cool and interesting and get lamer and more cloying as they become more famous (the "I love his old stuff" model). Justin, on the other hand, started out lame and hugely famous and, years later, seems to be homing in on a kind of authenticity. (363)

Visually and by association Irishness in this article functions as the official stamp of both that authenticity and coolness. Oddly enough there is hardly a mention of Ireland or Irishness with the exception of the following line explaining the fashion choices: "Heavy Wools. Tweeds. Flannels. The kind of fabrics that will get a guy like Justin Timberlake through a damp, brisk day on the Irish seaside have been given new life this fall by fashion's heavyweight designers" (358). Timberlake himself makes no reference to Ireland during his interview and neither does the writer in the rest of the fairly lengthy article.

Although very different, Timberlake's associative tangential Irishness and the persona/character of Colin Farrell/Billy Callahan essentially serve the same purpose. Both use Irishness as cultural shorthand through which charm, confidence (especially toward women), humor, and playfulness are conveyed. In short, both endorse a new cool heterosexual, palatably chauvinistic, white masculinity. However, when framed with an American accent/identity, this type of masculinity is generally regarded as inappropriate and outdated, as was the case with Mickey Rourke's extraordinarily sexist interactions with actress Jessica Biel during a 2008

episode of the BBC program *The Graham Norton Show*[133] or the various womanizing boyfriends on VH1's short-lived reality show *Tool Academy* (2009–2010).[134] Safely sheltered by Irishness, similar attitudes and actions are legitimized.[135] White Oak and *GQ* magazine are also part of a broader trend of Irishness, particularly visible in the early to mid 2000s, where, as in the early twentieth century as documented by Marion Casey (see chapter 3), Irish luxury goods were popular with mainstream middle and upper middle class consumers. The rise of Irish-themed weddings and catalogues aimed at upper middle class audiences are additional examples of this trend. Indeed in 2000 Enterprise Ireland clearly stated their objectives in this regard: "We are working with selected client companies to increase Irish consumer sales in the non-ethnic mainstream US retail market. Initiatives in 2000/2001 focus on knitwear, jewellery, menswear, the wedding market, niche consumer trade shows and e-tailing" (*2000 Annual Report*). In 1999, Michael McNicholas, Senior Vice-President of Consumer Products at Enterprise Ireland, declared "the overall potential of Irish goods in the USA has yet to be fully tapped" (*1999 Report*). Despite a generally ailing economy, by 2004 the US Irish-themed goods market was still developing, helped in part by the growing trend of Irish-themed weddings. Members of NACBA argue the increasing popularity of wedding kilts rather than tuxedos is helping fuel recent sales as Irish-themed retailers vigorously attempt to break into the lucrative US bridal market. The Irish-themed wedding in the final episode of Fox's reality television show *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancé* watched by an estimated 21 million people is one example representative of this argument. Proud of their Irish ancestry, Randi McCoy's brothers had long promised to wear kilts at their sister's wedding ("My Big Fat").[136] However, by 2006, Diane Negra argued, "Irishness has gone decidedly down-market."[137] Irish-themed merchandise on offer in Oriental Trading catalogues and shops at Dollywood,[138] the Irish-themed song-and-dance shows at

Branson, Missouri,[139] or even the popularity of shillelagh carrying Extreme Championship Wrestler Finlay (a.k.a. "The Celtic Brusier"; a.k.a. "The Fighting Irish Bastard")[140] suggest some truth to Negra's observation. The evidence presented here illustrates that Irishness from the mid 1990s through the late 2000s managed to appeal to incredibly diverse white audiences including working class and upper class audiences. Whether that trend continues remains to be seen.

Conclusion: "A Multiplicity of (White) Meaning"[141]

Kathy: I wanted to know, did both of your parents come over on the boat steerage and that whole thing?

Maggie: Yes, with six kids and she was pregnant.

Kathy: Now Mom why don't you and Bill O'Reilly want the Mexicans to come live here again?[142]

[Conversation between comedienne Kathy Griffin and her Mom Maggie about her family's Irish ancestry on the Bravo reality television show "Kathy Griffin" My Life on the D-List".]

The success of *Riverdance* and Irishness around the world corresponded with the largest period of economic growth in the history of Ireland. The story of the 'Celtic Tiger', typically characterized as the economic miracle that brought prosperity and a renewed social confidence to the Irish people is by now a familiar one.[143] Keohane et al argue that *Riverdance* and the 'Celtic Tiger' are so intertwined that the show itself can be viewed as "a collective representation of Ireland that was contemporaneous with its economic and cultural transformation".[144] The Celtic Tiger was no more by 2013 but *Riverdance* had "been seen live by over 23 million people", "played to a global television audience of 2 billion people" and had just announced their 20th anniversary UK tour.[145] That *Riverdance* was such an enormous success was both a key indicator of the market potential of Irishness and a facilitator of the favorable reception of all things Irish in the global market place.

At the same time, Ronit Lentin observed the obvious contradiction: "As 'we' the nation celebrate 'our' sameness through Riverdancing Irish culture, 'we' expel otherness".[146] This was evident both in Ireland and in the United States. In reviews of both *Riverdance* and *Lord of the*

Dance, some journalists, though most often in passing, noted the disturbing racial element in the shows. An early example of this was in a 1996 review of *Riverdance* by Jan Parry in *The Observer* (England): "But the one-arm salutes, the black uniforms, the thunderous rat-tat-tat of unison feet have sinister connotations that the show's presenters seem not to acknowledge".[147] A year later, *New York Times* critic Alan Riding echoed this sentiment. "And mention of the crowd-pulling Irish song-and-dance show, *Riverdance*, prompted Peter Murray, the director of the Crawford gallery in Cork, to sniff at "all those black-clad young people goose-stepping around the stage".[148] That same year John Walsh in *The Independent* (England) described *Lord of the Dance* as "a music-and-dance extravaganza loosely based around Celtic mythology with some curious add-on effects deriving from Druidism, Greek-god attitudinizing, biker chic and fascist iconography", further noting that the show "features, among several displays of superhuman agility, a weird amount of militiamen strutting, of black-shirted uniforms, dictatorial paraphernalia, masks and what might be jackboots".[149] In 1998 Jon Pareles again in the *New York Times* remarked that "[t]hen along came the corporate Celtic blockbusters of the late 1990s, "Riverdance" and "Lord of the Dance" with a whistle skirling while ranks of vigorous step-dancers clattered away in formation, something like an Irish "Triumph of the Will".[150] This film reference reappeared in the *Times* (England) several years later in a review of *Riverdance* at Radio City Music Hall: "None of the soloists have the charisma or the virtuosity of Mr. Flatley. They tend towards the earnest and bland, shifting the emphasis to the corps groupings, which with their massed formations and rat-a-tats are like something between a pep rally and 'The Triumph of the Will'".[151] Only once did producers from either show publicly address this topic. Michael Flatley during an interview for *The Independent* remarked, "Our dancing is very precise but I don't think it's military in any way. Just very masculine".[152] And although overall the

above press comments were often elitist, disparaging and glib they nevertheless highlight Irishness, whiteness and fascism all pleasantly tolerating each other within the accepted realms of the national popular.[153]

Riverdance heralded a new phase in the enduring fascination with all things Irish in the US. And although the 1990s version shared some similarities with its antecedents it differed from them in important ways too. In terms of commonalties, the popularity and success of *Riverdance* and Irishness in general tapped into long standing correlations of the Irish and authentic folk traditions (however ill defined these concepts might be). That Irishness remains equated with these ideas is remarkable considering the changes associated with the period of the "Celtic Tiger", which transformed Ireland from a traditional agrarian to a high tech urban culture. Despite these dramatic changes, Irish music and dance in the 1990s were seen as key routes through which white Americans in particular could tap into these authentic 'folk' experiences. Indeed their popularity is quite astonishing as evidenced by the still growing list of cities that boast an annual Irish/Celtic festival where music occupies a central and defining place. This Irish music and dance craze extends well beyond the US, of course, to far-flung places throughout the world (China, Japan, Hungary, United Arab Emirates, New Zealand and Montserrat all hosted either a St. Patrick's Day parade or Irish festival in the past decade). However, the US variant contains an element absent in global versions, that is, a close connection to whiteness in particular and race in general, as 'Irish' operates as not always subtle code for 'white' in a culture increasingly (some argue perpetually) preoccupied with issues of race. That Irishness is used in this manner in the US is, on the face of it, quite unexpected given that in a broader contemporary global context it more often functions as an exemplary inclusionary identity. During the 1990s Irishness became a fluid, permeable and often rather

unstable category thus allowing a vast range of diverse people to regularly and arbitrarily adopt it.[154] Arguably it is this flexibility that generated its success on the global stage, allowing it to become, en route, the archetypal postmodern identity operating for those who employ it as a distinguishing feature in an increasingly homogenous world.

> While the assimilation of immigrant and ethnic groups into the dominant or majority group is a complicated process that is affected by many factors, we should not discount the influence of an inclusive racial label in this process. In short, the social construction of a pan-ethnic racial group called White served to minimize ethnic differences among the numerous European ethnic groups while fostering a common racial identity. It also hardened the division between White and Others.[155]

This white exclusivity is borne out by attendees at Irish/Celtic festivals and similar events where the number of non-whites is negligible. This near exclusive whiteness is often touted by nationalist groups as one of the major attractions for attending such events, in a manner similar to their promotion of NASCAR events. A variant of this Irishness/whiteness association was evident in a recent episode of W. Kamau Bell's *Totally Biased* comedy show on FX in which a red haired "Irish American" NYPD puppet beats up an African American puppet, suggesting that this correlation is still prevalent in the mainstream consciousness.[156]

There were some other hints of an emerging backlash. In 2003 Urban Outfitters sold very innocuous t-shirts featuring shamrocks and "made in Ireland" slogans in its ninety stores throughout the country. Company spokesperson Mike Isabella noted that buyers for Urban Outfitters "picked the Made in Ireland tee due to the success of similar items in the past".[157] At the time the Irish-American newspaper the Irish Echo observed that this clothing trend pointed to

"the conflation of Irishness and coolness".[158] However by 2006 Urban Outfitters caused controversy within the American Irish community by selling t-shirts with a decidedly different Irish themed caption and tone – "Erin Go F*** Yourself". By the end of the decade stereotypical t-shirts were ubiquitous. Walmart for example sold "Irish today, hungover tomorrow" and "Drink Til Yer Irish" t-shirts. Around the same time there were some other high profile Irish related howlers. In 2011 New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg made some derogatory comments about the drunken Irish.[159] In 2013, Donnelly's pub in Peoria, Illinois offered an Irish seven-course meal -- six beers and a potato.[160] In 2010 restaurant chain Denny's offered unlimited pancakes in "celebration" of the 150th anniversary of the end of the Irish Famine.[161] Countless bars throughout the US sell Irish car bomb drinks. It is doubtful that an I.E.D. cocktail would be accepted in the same glib manner.

One reaction to this was the creation of the Irish Anti-Defamation Federation in Pennsylvania, to "battle against defamatory and derogatory assaults against the Irish".[162] On its website, in a section called "current forms of derogatory situations", it lists

> Various Retailers/ Vendors - selling derogatory T-shirts and other merchandise
>
> Radio/Newspaper/T.V. advertisements - Use of grossly inaccurate depictions, or bad taste in humor
>
> Bars/Pubs & Restaurants - Use St. Patrick's Day as a drinking holiday[163]

In 2011 the Irish Anti-Defamation Federation was successful in its campaign to ensure that 19th century illustrator Thomas Nast, famous for his derogatory representations of Irish Catholics in particular, would not be inducted into the New Jersey Hall of Fame.[164]

Stereotypes, whether historical or otherwise, are, of course, upsetting. But the days of anti-Irish, inspired nativist prejudice and derision have long since gone. Indeed, as Hochschild

notes, "[b]y the 1960s, Irish Catholic families enjoyed on average $2,500 more than the national average family income. An Irish Catholic has been president of the nation, and during his presidential campaign John Kerry was coy about the fact that he is not Irish".[165] The American Irish are hardly oppressed. Being Arab-American, Muslim, Jewish, Hispanic, African American, or a member of the GLBTQA community will certainly increase one's chance of being the victim of a hate crime far more than being American Irish or white.[166]

Almost twenty years ago Luke Gibbons characterized the marketing texts of Irishness in terms of cultural schizophrenia.[167] When Irish nationalist ("England, Get Out of Ireland") merchandise is on sale next to a booth with confederate flags and white supremacist music, and a replica "paddywagon" is displayed at Irish festivals, that phrase is still apt particularly in the context of the US. Although the high profile of Irishness in the late 1990s has dissipated, in many ways Irishness is just a part of the mainstream landscape of the US. While there are German, Polish, Hungarian and Italian parades and festivals, Irish themed ones have no equal in terms of attendance or frequency. In 2013 every single state in the union hosted at least one St. Patrick's Day parade. Irish themed shopping continues to be popular, cutting across a broad range of audiences. Irish themed American Girl Irish dance tie-ins,[168] Tony award winning shows such as Finian's Rainbow, Major League Baseball St. Patrick's apparel[169] and even Irish food all target mainstream consumers.[170] Halter argues that ethnic themed goods function, ". . . as a way to express a distinctive identity, to become more individualized and less lost in the bland mainstream of the generic middle-class customer."[171] Indeed the motivations behind much contemporary shopping, as Halter suggests, can be viewed as attempts to distinguish oneself in an increasingly homogenized and corporatized society (by buying homogenized and corporatized goods). The paradox in the case of Irishness of course is that literally millions are participating,

prompting the question of how *distinguishing* is it? "Identities, in essence and in contradiction, are made, not born. They are, as we well know, constructs, inventions, imaginations, stories we are told or tell ourselves about ourselves. But 'fictions of identity are no less powerful for being fictions', and stories do, after all, make our lives livable".[172] The seemingly limitless Irish themed goods market is a clear indication that connotations of Irishness in US popular culture have undergone some radical transformations in the two decades. Fervent consumption habits, institutional help, identity crises, new subcultural trends, the rise of the internet and an increasingly volatile culture of race in America (fueled especially by white fears of becoming a minority group) have all played a part in this metamorphosis.

> The narrow focus of racial exclusion – that is, the belief that racial exclusion is illegitimate only where the "whites only" signs are explicit – coupled with strong assumptions about equal opportunity, makes it difficult to move the discussion of racism beyond the societal self-satisfaction engendered by the appearance of neutral norms and formal inclusion.[173]

As a result new uses of Irishness are constantly being devised in an attempt to capitalize on its mainstream popularity. Participation by sanctioned, deviant and ancillary audiences in a variety of Irish themed cultural practices, from tattooing to shopping, indicates the distinctions between these groups are less stable than a first glance might suggest. Not only do these audiences often engage in similar practices but they can also increasingly be found doing so in the same geographical spaces, most notably at Irish/Celtic themed festivals. More significantly however, sanctioned, deviant and ancillary groups are connected through race. Richard Dyer notes that "race is . . . never not a factor, never not in play".[174] While it is (or ought to be) a truism to say that most Irish and Celtic themed events in the U.S. are overwhelmingly white, the contemporary

consumption of Irishness has become a critical stage upon which US racial ideologies are performed. Given its high consumer demand, Irishness in the US will likely be 'sold out' for the foreseeable future.

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1 Although among the earliest Europeans to set foot in what was to become the United States, many different labels have been applied to identify and distinguish between groups of Irish in the US, mainly in an attempt to highlight class, political, and religious differences. For example, descendants of primarily Protestant, middle class, Ulster/Scottish Irish who arrived early in US history were keen to distinguish themselves from the primarily poor, Catholic Irish immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century (hence the use of "Scotch-Irish," "Ulster Scots," etc.). Following Kevin Kenny, the term American Irish is used in this work and refers to "people of Irish origin, regardless of religion or regional background, living within the borders of the present-day United States" (*American Irish* 3). This term is also useful in that it places the American component before Irish heritage, in a manner symptomatic of American attitudes around ancestry (even when the term Irish-American is used.). (Apologies to Canadians and Mexicans for the use of "American" to refer exclusively to those in the US.)

2 Obvious examples in these categories include: *Waking Ned Devine*, *Far and Away* (films); *The Magical Legend of the Leprechauns*, *Durango* (made-for-television movies)*; The Mystic Knights of Tir Na N'og*, *So Weird* (children's television programs); *Riverdance*, *Lord of the Dance*, *Feet of Flames*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (dance and theatre productions); Lucky Charms, Irish Spring, Dr. Pepper, Folger's, Mercedes Benz (advertising); *Angela's Ashes*, *'Tis*, *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (books); Sinead O'Connor, The Cranberries, The Coors, U2, The Guinness Fleadh (music); Creative Irish Gifts, Airgeal, Gaelsong (shopping catalogues and stores); Bennigan's, the Fado Irish Pub chain (pubs, restaurants); Dollywood, Branson, Busch Gardens (theme parks). These examples, of course, represent a very incomplete list of Irish-themed material and popular culture in the 1990s and beyond.

3 One of the key ways in which recent strands of Irishness in the US differ from traditional variants is that the former resides in a culture that perpetually raises and amplifies questions of identity. This is not to suggest identity in the past was rigid or fixed and contemporary manifestations are variable and fluid in some simplistic modern/postmodern dichotomy. However, there are clearly some major differences between the ways in which people conceptualized their personal and collective identities half a century ago compared with today. "As David Harvey and others have pointed out, preoccupation with identity, with personal and collective roots, has become far more pervasive since the early 1970s" (Sarup 97).

4 In 2013, the US census reports that 32 million Americans claimed German ancestry compared to 20 million claiming Irish ("First Ancestry"). In 2000, 30 million Americans claimed German ancestry compared to 19 million claiming Irish ("Ancestry [First]").

5 A 2009 report on nativist activity noted:

> Even as the total number of anti-immigration groups has remained more or less the same in recent years, the number of extremist groups within the nativist movement has continued to climb. According to a count by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of "nativist extremist" groups in the US rose from 144 in 2007 to 173 last year—a 20% increase. Organizations identified by the Intelligence Report as nativist extremist are groups that go after people, not policy. Rather than limiting themselves to advocating within the mainstream political process for tighter border security, stricter immigration controls, or tougher enforcement of immigration laws already on the books, these fringe outfits target and confront immigrants as individuals. Some conduct armed 'citizen border patrols.' Others confront Latino immigrants congregated at day

> labor centers or informal roadside pickup sites. Some conduct surveillance of apartment houses and private homes. Almost all of them disseminate vicious, immigrant-bashing propaganda" (Holthouse).

6 "In the USA, there appears to be a fairly widespread view, both among many academics and the wider public, that white Americans are at the top of a racial hierarchy, African Americans at the bottom (with sporadic reference to Native Americans as an equally oppressed group), and groups such as Asian Americans and Latinos somewhere in between" (Song 861).

7 Numerous articles in the journals *Eire-Ireland* and *New Hibernia Review* and Diane Negra's 2006 anthology.

8 My own experience of applying for a green card in the US lends further, albeit anecdotal, evidence to the existence of such discrepancies. A significant portion of my interview was taken up by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agent relaying the details of her recent trip to Ireland, how much she loved it there, and how friendly "my" people were, etc. I highly doubt any Mexican experiences a similar welcoming atmosphere from INS.

9 I use these terms interchangeably as they are notoriously difficult to disentangle. For example, many who watched *Riverdance* at Radio City Music Hall also purchased merchandise (which incidentally led to merchandise-selling records at that venue). Would such a person be more accurately labeled as an audience member or a consumer? Consumer is the most-used term today, as we consume everything in the broadest sense, but I also continue to include the term audience to incorporate the notion of watching, observing, and/or participating in a spectacle that is not always an intrinsic part of the definition of consumer.

10 *Irish America* was "[f]ounded in 1985 by Niall O'Dowd and Patricia Harty [and] continues to be the bestselling Irish magazine in the U.S." ("About Irish"). *Ireland of the Welcomes* was

"[f]irst published in 1952 [and] portrays the best of Ireland's history, culture and lifestyles to many people worldwide. Some of our readers are Irish-born, some have Irish roots, while others simply enjoy reading about the country which they are planning to visit or perhaps, re-visit" ("About Us" *Ireland*).

11 "Founded in 1941, Parade magazine has 72.775 million weekly readers and is distributed by more than 470 Sunday newspapers, including the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution, The Baltimore Sun, Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, Dallas Morning News, Houston Chronicle, The Los Angeles Times, The Miami Herald, The New York Post, The Philadelphia Inquirer, San Francisco Chronicle, Seattle Times & Post Intelligencer,* and *The Washington Post*" ("About Us" *Parade*).

12 This pattern is clearly observable in the case of Irish dancing. The enormous success of *Riverdance* in the mid 1990s spawned countless local, regional, and national copycat shows until mainstream audiences grew bored with them as indicated by lackluster tickets sales. *Riverdance The Farewell Tour* began in 2009 with performances scheduled throughout 2010, but, as noted in the conclusion, it was still touring in 2013 though to considerably less mainstream fanfare.

13 "The UK and Australia are by far the two most popular destinations for Irish emigrants. Canada is becoming an increasingly important destination, especially as 10,700 2-year working holiday visas will be available for Irish citizens in 2014" (Glynn, Kelly, and Mac Éinrí II).

14 Pete Martin defines Max Weber's term as "activities undertaken in order to maintain or defend the special status of a group against perceived threats from outsiders" (Boynes vii).

15 NBCNews.com even has a section called race and ethnicity, although it never spells out the differences between the two terms. "For convenience, I use the terms 'race' and 'race/ethnic' interchangeably, while recognizing that race and ethnicity can be viewed as either distinct or

overlapping bases of identification" (Hunt 391). "We use the term ethnicity though in some case the term race may be more accurate," even as they acknowledge that the "two terms have distinct meanings" (Grier, Brumbaugh, and Thornton 36).

16 See, for example, Smedley, Jordan, Rees, Steinberg, and Allen.

17 Berkin defines middle ground as "a cultural space contributed to by both Indian and white colonists, emerged, allowing the two worlds some possibility of understanding and cooperation" (5). She also argues how the French seemed to be more flexible in this than the Dutch or the English.

18 Although the long running debate between the two groups is beyond the scope of this work.

19 The latter two discuss the American Irish case specifically.

20 As I write today closing arguments are being made in the George Zimmermann trial with National Public Radio reporting that measures are being taken in case Zimmerman is acquitted. This is hot on the heels of celebrity chef Paula Deen's recent confession regarding her use of the "n" word.

21 "Although the term 'whiteness studies' might at first glance suggest works that promote white identity or constitute part of a racist backlash against multiculturalism and 'political correctness,' virtually all the whiteness studies authors seek to confront white privilege—that is, racism—and virtually all identify at some level with the political Left" (Kolchin 154).

22 "Derrick Bell is recognized as the intellectual founder of CRT [critical race theory]" (Willis 17).

23 Frederick Douglass, the Black abolitionist whose own quest for freedom had been substantially aided by the advice of a "good Irishman" on Baltimore's wharves in the 1830s, could only wonder "why a people who so nobly loved and cherished the thought of liberty at

home in Ireland could become, willingly, the oppressors of another race here" (Roediger, *Wages* 137).

24 Much had been written on this in the context of England.

25 "*Riverdance* is just a show," one esteemed historian told me at a conference once, as if anyone would say that about "just" a work of literature.

26 To borrow Alladi Venkatesh's term. In an analysis of "ethnoconsumerism," Venkatesh notes that there are two sets of principles that operate within ethnicity: the inclusionary-exclusionary principle and the difference-identity principle. By excluding, one establishes difference. By including, one establishes identity. Both are, therefore, closely related. The inclusionary-exclusionary principle states that a group tries to include only people who display preapproved characteristics and excludes the others (Venkatesh 33).

27 Of course, one must be aware there is also a danger of conceptualizing white as a unified, stable identity position, but the *perception* of it as unified, stable is what is more interesting.

28 http://www.libraryireland.com/Irish-Melodies/The-harp-that-once-thro-taras-halls-1.php (accessed November 25, 2014)

29 Before this wave of immigrants, though, the Irish in the US were mostly Protestant and middle class. However, little of this group is represented in the media—or very little in a negative manner.

30 The famine is typically attributed to a series of natural (potato blight) and political events (so-called "economic non-intervention" policies by Westminster) beginning in 1845. Despite some potato failures before this year, the Irish continued to overrely on the potato as a main food staple. When the potato crop failed for five successive years, the results were catastrophic. Although there is some dispute about the statistics (records are patchy), the Irish population

exceeded eight million before *An Gorta Mor* ("The Great Hunger"). By 1851 the population was 6.5 million. It is generally acknowledged that approximately one million people died and a little more than that emigrated to England, the US, Canada, etc.

31 "Jokes both condense and engage deep reservoirs of implicit cultural knowledge" (Hartigan 4).

32 This song was added to the *White Christmas* album in 1955, ten years after the album's original release.

33 "According to Pekka Gronow, 'At the turn of the century, Irish music and American popular music were still sufficiently close that the average mainstream record buyer might well purchase an Irish jig. By the 1920s, Irish-American music and American popular music [had] grown apart, and record companies began to view the Irish as a foreign group, just like the Italians or the Finns'" (Casey, "Ireland, New York" 127–128).

34 "Between 1820 and 1920 from 4.3 to 4.9 million Irish emigrants went to the United States" (Doyle 171).

35 "By the 1920s Columbia and other companies had begun separate catalog series targeted specifically to the Irish market" (Wells 38).

36 Although it seems when using the phrase "the Irish" Curran also means not just those Irish in Ireland but also Irish Americans, of which there are considerably more (Curran xvi).

37 Ford's first major break was with his 1935 feature *The Informer,* for which he received significant acclaim. This stylistically neo-German expressionist film revolves around the character of Gypo Nolan, an ex-member of the Irish Republican Army who informs on his former associates to the English for purely financial gain. The success of this film, it is believed here, has very little to do with the subject matter of Ireland and its struggles. As Andrew Sarris

points out, the "fact that Gypo Nolan was a lower class characters with an empty belly was virtually sufficient in itself to make him a worthy protagonist of the Depression era" (68). Joe Queenan sums up the litany of stereotypes to be found in *The Informer*:

> Victor McLaglen is all too convincing as a complete idiot. With its weeping mothers, lugubrious wakes, flailing shillelaghs, boisterous pubs, drunken layabouts, ubiquitous crucifixes, gentle clerics, duplicitous Englishmen, angelic choirs, contrite stool pigeons, faithful sisters, lovable tarts, implacable inoperatives and piping pipes, *The Informer* is a masterpiece of celluloid blarney. (64)

38 Meagher goes on to observe this characteristic/tradition can be traced back to newspaper columns by journalist Finley Peter Dunne speaking in "Irish brogue" as Mr. Dooley in his tavern half a century earlier.

39 The GI Bill, despite the persistent belief that it was available for all who served, was notoriously difficult for nonwhite GIs to access (Brodkin Sacks 310-313).

40 *The Quiet Man* won an Academy Award for best screenplay (Frank Nugent) and best director (John Ford) and was nominated in five additional categories. It also won three awards at the Venice Film Festival and became the most acclaimed film ever produced by Republic Pictures, grossing more than seven million dollars in the US alone.

41 I am thinking here of the character Sergeant Quincannon played by Victor McLaglen in John Ford's *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949) and *Rio Grande* (1950). Indeed Ford almost single-handedly kept (often stereotypical) Irish themes in his films throughout the 1950s (including *The Long Gray Line* [1955], *The Last Hurrah* [1958]) when they were not as common as in previous (or for that matter later) decades.

42 One of the greatest euphemisms in English colonial history, "the Troubles" was the official term used by Westminster to describe the post-1969 war in the north of Ireland.

43 "The notion of the 'popular-national' (or, more frequently 'national popular') is one of the most interesting and also most widely criticised ideas in Gramsci's thought…. It is important to stress, however, that it is a cultural concept, relating to the position of the masses within the culture of the nation" (Hoare and Smith 421). "The 'national popular' is a 'crucial site for the construction of a popular hegemony'" (Hall 26).

44 I have personally experienced the remnants of this nativist sentiment on many occasions during my time in the US. Interestingly enough, it seems to reside most often in older Midwestern women of German extraction who were typically raised in rural places devoid of large American Irish populations and where Americans of German and/or Nordic ancestry held local power.

45 The period 1950–1990, for example. In part this general trajectory parallels the movement of American Irish from the cities to the suburbs and further assimilation into mainstream American culture.

46 "It was only in the 1850s, however, that the St. Patrick's Day Parade became a major event in the life of the Irish-American community. In 1849, the marchers in the New York parade numbered roughly 1,500 men; by 1866 *The Irish American* claimed thirty to forty thousand; in 1870, the *New York Herald* put the number at a full forty thousand marchers" (Moss 136).

47 NBC's sitcom *The Fighting Fitzgeralds* and ABC's *Madigan Men,* for example.

48 With occasional exceptions such as *Leap Year* (2010), although it would be a stretch to characterize this as a Hollywood blockbuster unlike *Far and Away* (1992) or *Waking Ned Devine* (1998).

49 In late 2005 *The Irish Times* characterized Ireland's 1999–2004 economy as the "Celtic Garfield" (the "Tiger" years being 1993–1998). The author notes some similarities and differences between the two eras. "Both periods have had similar growth rates. Between 1993 and 1998, GDP growth has averaged 7.6 percent. Between 1999 and 2004 it averaged 7 percent. One difference to note is that, at the end of the first period, unemployment was close to 10 percent. By 2004 it had fallen to just over 4 percent. But that is where the second period's advantages end. Celtic Tiger growth was based on sustained competitiveness and a surge in exports and tourism. Unit labour costs grew by only 3.2 percent between 1993 and 1998. Exports increased by a massive 128 percent. This was dominated by multinational activity but indigenous exports performed creditably during the period. And an entirely indigenous industry—tourism—saw visitor numbers rise by 72 percent. Consumer prices rose by just 9.9 percent over the five years and our current account balance was in surplus to the tune of 2.5 percent of GDP, in average terms. Manufacturing employment also grew strongly and did not peak until 2001 when it exceeded 250,000 people. The Garfield phase has been far more self-indulgent. Growth in the last six years has been driven far more by personal consumption and the purchase of cars. Levels of personal indebtedness have risen dramatically, as highlighted by the Central Bank's publication this week of its *Financial Stability Report*. In contrast, the productive side of our economy has deteriorated. Exports have grown by merely 25 percent over this period of similar length. And tourism numbers are up by only 7 percent. Our current account has registered a deficit of around 0.7 percent of GDP. The causes of this deteriorating performance are evident from the growth in unit labour costs, which rose by 15.8 percent in the period, as well as by trends in consumer prices, which have grown by 22.5 percent. Another difference between the two eras relates to the importance of construction. During the Tiger era, construction

employment was around one-third of manufacturing employment. In the second era, construction employment grew to roughly equal manufacturing employment and now accounts for one-third of overall employment growth. This is justified by demographic trends and immigration pushing housing demand. But it is not a sustainable basis for growth. Once houses are built, some of the employment slack will be taken up by investment in public infrastructure. But this activity is less jobs-intensive. It is also less productive. Last week Forfás held a very useful conference on the role of productivity in the economy. Most forecasters agree that economic productivity is declining. The reasons were elaborated upon at the conference, as were the policy solutions. The decline is happening because the so-called non-traded sector of our economy, incorporating the public sector and much of our services sector, is immune from the competitive pressures that force organisations and firms to become more productive and competitive. Yet this sector is responsible for most of the price increases in our economy. This is driving up prices and wages and that is hurting more productive sectors. This is happening as information technology is providing firms with huge opportunities to cut costs. To do so they must restructure. The Government must give firms the freedom to do this so that they can engage in a "race to the top" by increasing productivity. What about the fallout of this for jobs? Governments must help workers to retrain—with generous tax incentives for retraining and life-long learning—and should ruthlessly enforce legislation against ageism in the workplace. In a full employment economy, we should not fear dynamism and change, we should embrace it. The contrast between the two sides of our economy is not an indictment. An increase in consumption and construction is warranted. But it can't last forever. As globalisation intensifies, the challenge for our economy is to rediscover the lean and agile qualities of the 1990s" (Coleman: 5).

50 We see this fear of Catholicism (especially the idea that Catholics will answer to the Pope over the US President) clearly in the US presidential campaign of John F. Kennedy in 1960.

51 In almost daily encounters with Americans over the course of the past decade and a half my own Irishness is overwhelmingly greeted with a positive reaction irrespective of actual individual temperament.

52 Who was known as "the architect of the Great Steel Strike of 1919 and, thereafter, a leader of the American Communist Party for the next forty years" (Nelson 158).

53 "In politics, Irish Catholics were consistent supporters for the Democratic party from the 1840s onward" (Mintz and McNeil). See also Doyle.

54 "While highlighting the church's hostility to socialism, Meagher notes the development of an Irish Catholic outlook that had crystallized into a prototype of 'urban liberalism' by the second decade of the twentieth century" (Nelson 147–178). Mary Lethert Wingerd makes a similar point in her study of St. Paul, MN, another "Irish town."

55 "One year when trying to figure out where to spend St. Patrick's Day I briefly considered New York, with its green beer and good-natured, ruddy-cheeked, homophobic Irish policeman …" (McCarthy 5).

56 These statistics and the rest that follow in this paragraph are taken from *Riverdance Press Information 2008* provided to the author by Merle Frimark, press agent for *Riverdance.* For more on the creation and development of the show particularly during its early years, see Sam Smyth.

57 The show had record sales of over 120,000 at the Point Theatre in Dublin; set a box office record of 151 sold-out shows at London's Apollo (Hammersmith); smashed merchandise sales records during its first performance at Radio City Music Hall in New York; sold out a 13-week

Australian tour (over 350,000 people); broke the Canadian record (CAN $11 million) for first-day ticket sales (*Riverdance Press*).

58 "[M]ost scholars who study authenticity agree that authenticity is not an attribute inherent in an object, and is better understood as an assessment made by a particular evaluator in a particular context" (Grayson and Martinec 299).

59 My assessment of the types of audiences *Riverdance* attracted in New York (middle and upper class) are based on my own observations and reporting in the *New York Times*. Ticket prices were high. The *New York Times* society pages also provide some evidence for this, with Irish celebrities such as Liam Neeson, etc., who first went to see the production at Radio City Music Hall in New York.

60 Initial theatre ticket prices at upscale venues ensured that working-class Irish Americans were unlikely to attend.

61 Michael Flatley left before *Riverdance* ever made it to the US. Indeed he left just as the show was scheduled to open for a six-week run at the Hammersmith Apollo (London), citing creative control differences, and was replaced with English-born dancer Colin Dunne. Even though Flatley's name was at the top of the bill without him, "by overwhelming public demand, the run [was] extended twice, first by nine weeks and then by a further four, making a box-office record of 151 sold out shows at London's Apollo" (*Riverdance Press*). During the period 1995–1999, both *Riverdance* and *Lord of the Dance* were often referred to as "Flatley shows" in the US.

62 For example, in 2000 the number of people claiming Irish ancestry in Texas was fewer than those claiming Mexican, Italian, English, African American, or German ancestry ("Ancestry [First Ancestry]").

63 Interestingly Borth referred to both *Riverdance* and Lord of the Dance as "Michael Flatley shows" even though the dancer was no longer part of *Riverdance* at the time.

64 The Liffey troupe toured Europe. The Shannon troupe was a permanent fixture at the Gershwin Theatre on Broadway in New York City. And the Lagan troupe toured the US. In 2001 tickets for *Riverdance* at the Gershwin cost between $25 and $80.

65 Troupe 1 traveled in Europe. Troupe 2 was resident at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi. And Troupe 3 was a permanent attraction at the Broadway Theater in the New York-New York Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

66 Although in 2008 *Feet of Flames* was still touring Taiwan.

67 Although Michael Flatley has officially retired from dancing (with the notable exception of a 2008 performance on the popular television show *Dancing with the Stars*), he is still very much involved (i.e., producer, choreographer) with the *Lord of the Dance* show. In July 2013 two troupes were still touring: one in Europe, one in North America.

68 Since *Riverdance* first made its 1994 debut there have been countless changes and versions of the show. At the height of its popularity, numerous separate troupes toured different continents simultaneously, such was the global demand. In 2008 the *Riverdance Farewell Tour* was announced with dates scheduled for 2009. That tour was then extended and finally closed on June 17, 2012.

69 "[A] discourse is not simply an idea. Discourses are concrete in so far as they emanate from specific points of view. They are historically specific, though sometimes their enduring quality makes a specific discourse appear to be both natural and transcendent.… Discourses however do not merely hang in the ether as disembodied ideas, though they may come to be regarded as such, and in turn be appropriated within the 'common sense' wisdom of the age.… Discourses

are material in the sense that they emanate from specific classes or social relations and they have material consequences" (Davis 165).

70 Indeed such concepts developed in tandem with colonialist ideologies.

71 We can't limit this idea to simply a European context, as McKay's study in particular discusses the folk status bestowed upon some Canadians, particularly white Nova Scotians.

72 Coulter's observations regarding the overuse and sheer triteness of the term "Celtic Tiger" are instructive: "[T]he phrase has been issued with such regularity that it has become a bane for a great many Irish people. This understandable irritation has done little, however, to diminish the ubiquity or authority of the metaphor" (4). So, while acknowledging that irritation, there is really no getting away from the term.

73 In the Raymond Williams sense.

74 I am thinking here of US audiences who have not vacationed in Ireland in recent times and therefore have not witnessed firsthand the dramatic transformations of post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. Rather, their ideas of Ireland have been largely shaped by media representations of the country and its people. Americans who have visited Ireland in recent years are often surprised by the post-Celtic Tiger changes, contrasting, as they often do, with the tourist industry's vision of the country.

75 Although this wasn't enough to get it on the *Bord Fáilte* list of sanctioned Irish artists (see chapter 5). On the subject of narrative, remarkably for such a successful show, the story of *Riverdance* is virtually impossible to summarize. Even *Riverdance* composer Bill Whelan is not that certain about the story—and he isn't even sure *Riverdance: The Show* can be described in a one-sentence summary like a film producer's pitch. "People come out of the show and are not quite sure what they've seen. There's no boy-girl story, no central character. You identify with

the music and dance: it's abstract and impressionistic rather than telling a story" (S. Smyth 90). The most concise (!) explanation is offered in the official press kit:

> Riverdance traces the life of a river. The invocation sung at the start is called Cloudsong: it is the rain falling, feeding the river, which springs to life and flows through the land and out to sea. There, the cloud reforms and returns to the land, nourishing, renewing and refreshing it. The constant refrain 'uisce beatha' translates as 'water of life'. The number builds from the gentle song to the dancers' feet rhythmically recalling a river gathering force and rushing to the sea. The choreography reflects this cycle. The riverwoman dances alone, her soft-shoe dance evoking the flow of the river. As she crosses the land, the earth, represented by the male dancer, awakens and bursts forth onto the stage. As the strength of the river builds, so dancers gather, signifying new life and energy, until the full Riverdance line swells to fill the stage as the river meets the sea. Then earth and river dance in harmony, as the water of life renews the land. The river, from cloud to sea to cloud again, symbolises the life cycle, and echoes the Irish experience of emigration and renewal: people who had left their homeland and traveled across the sea, returned in the 1990s to enrich Ireland with their talents and experience gained abroad. The show as a whole builds on this idea, also exploring the way people from different lands enrich the countries they emigrate to, bringing with them their own culture, music and dance. (*Riverdance Press*)

Though it obviously did not deter audiences, the nebulous nature of the storyline accounts for much of the less-enthusiastic press whose reviewers were clearly frustrated at the lack of readily accessible narrative. For example, in 1996 the *New York Times* called *Riverdance* "a mishmash

of a variety show with a one-world theme" (Kisselgoff C5) and almost ten years later described it as " two hours of vaudeville acts strung together on the loose premise of a river and its 'journey'" (Rockwell E1). In contrast, *Lord of the Dance* was often lauded for having a clear storyline as in this *New York Times* review from 1997: "But unlike "Riverdance," a plotless amalgam of Irish dance and other dances of Celtic origin, Mr. Flatleys's show has a narrative and includes only Irish material. With much melodrama, it describes how the powers of evil try to overcome the ancient spirits of the clans. Among other feats, Mr. Flatley must vanquish a stomping army of masked men and resist the temptations of a sultry seductress" (Gladstone B8).

76 Because, of course, in reality people, cultures, and identities are complex, multifaceted, ambiguous, and often contradictory entities. When I examine the images of the Irish, I am really discussing perceptions of Irishness (often constructed with and from mediated stereotypes).

77 Casey provides evidence, quoting from early 1930s editions of *Good Housekeeping*:

> March Brothers of Lebanon, Ohio carried a line of fancy dress costumes for "masquerade parties and entertainments" then included an Irish man, woman, boy, and girl. The Irish were considered as exotic as the other ethnic groups represented by clothing, like Indian, Turkish, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican or "Negro minstrel." In a throwback to stage Irish depictions, *Good Housekeeping* offered ten-cent instructions for "A Pat and Patsy Party, An Irish Affair," suggesting outfits for the adult St. Patrick's Day host and hostess: "He should wear a bushy fringe of red whiskers and a large green bow tie. The hostess might wear an Irish costume made up of a short, green skirt, white blouse, and a tight green bodice laced together in front." ("Ireland, New York" 306–307)

78 Although there has long been institutional support. For example, Casey notes the establishment of the Irish Industrial League of America in the first years of the twentieth century "with the avowed intention of encouraging the sale of Irish-made goods of every description in the country" ("Ireland, New York" 183).

79 By 2009, the organization was renamed the North American Celtic Traders Association (NACTA).

80 Evidence for this is culled from NACBA's newsletter *Seanchai* and my own observations and interactions at the Celtic Marketplace Trade Show in Lombard, Illinois, Sept. 2003.

81 Although today with "the Troubles" off the front pages and "Celtic Tiger" respectability, this group has been subsumed within the broader and more sanctioned Irish-American audience.

82 And if you have an obvious Irish-sounding first or surname, chances are that you are on one of the so-called "ethnicated mailing lists" which catalogue companies use to find you. As Naples explains:

> We rent or purchase mailing lists from other catalog companies. We also rent or sell our lists, as well. Much research is done beforehand. Naturally, we only rent lists having an Irish theme. Many lists "segment" or breakdown lists according to categories, for example, ethnicity. If it is Irish, we buy it. Eighty percent of catalog shoppers are women, so we prefer them and often purchase "generic" lists of women only. Some lists segment even more precisely, such as by first name. If the names are Molly, Kate, Bridget, etc., we always buy them.

83 As Jim Collins rightfully accuses much cultural studies of doing these days (14).

84 Indeed recently while at a conference a couple of colleagues revealed how the Irish-dancing-themed Folgers coffee advertisement just made them feel good!

85 So-called by an employee of Enterprise Ireland, who wishes to remain anonymous.

86 “Warm woolens, cozy cashmere, dapper Donegal tweeds… if your Irish eyes are smiling at the thought of such attire, Aireagal is your kind of catalog. Based in County Donegal, Ireland, this catalog aims to give American consumers Irish clothing with a twist. “It’s clothing that has a traditional feel with a bit of modern innovation,” says managing director James Gaffney. Named for the highest mountain in County Donegal, Aireagal first mailed October [2002] to 240,000 prospects. While the niche is specialty Irish clothing, Gaffney says the company is not specifically reaching out to the Irish-American community. Only about one-third of the catalogue’s customers are of Irish descent; its target audience is upper-income, educated baby boomers. Prices range from $9.99 for Celtic silver hatpins, a best seller, to $3,500 for custom-made Irish wedding gowns. Other products include $29.95 sterling silver Celtic crosses, $64.80 Irish Spring Stoles, and $58.50 Veronique Irish Silk Neckties. The Aireagal catalog and Web site, launched simultaneously, are performing 7% above expectations, Gaffney says, with the Internet accounting for 17% of sales. This fall the company plans to promote the catalog with a space ad program in a mix of Irish-American and mainstream publications. The company is also working with the Royal Mail in the U.K. to launch a British version of the catalog. In addition, Aireagal is looking into possibly opening factory-outlet-style stores in Ireland.

Product category: clothing and accessories First mailing date: October 2002 Target audience: Frequency: seven annual editions Competitors: House of Ireland, Cashs of Ireland Number of pages: 68 Size: 10-1/2" × 8-1/4" Telephone: 800-838-9018” (Weinstein). At the time of writing (2014), Aireagal had gone out of business.

87 As Lunt and Livingstone note, “hitherto, very little research has explored the meanings of objects. For all the social sciences, the relations between people have been considered paramount and research has been slow to recognize the social nature of people’s relations with objects” (65).

88 There is considerable debate surrounding the various terms used to describe these types of groups. Some researchers use “supremacists,” “white power,” or “hate” groups, although very few of these groups actually label themselves this way. Some of the more militant/violent groups use “nationalist” to describe themselves, but more common is “separatist” (popularized by the National Alliance in the 1980s). In this work I use “white supremacist” as it both summarizes their ideological position (superiority over nonwhites) and “white” (as there are nonwhite supremacist groups).

89 “Deviant” is used and meant to connote this group’s perceived place and ideology vis-à-vis sanctioned and ancillary audiences examined in this work (and because they are more overt in their expressions of whiteness and racism more generally).

90 I am not suggesting that “Celtic” and “Irish” are equivalent terms or identities. However, among the audiences analyzed in this work, the two are repeatedly conflated, and this is especially the case among deviant consumers.

91 “The Limo” episode of *Seinfeld* is often rebroadcast in the US on St. Patrick’s Day.

92 Although not much is known about this group, according to the Anti-Defamation League, the Celtic Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in 2003 joined an anti-immigration rally in Texas alongside other white nationalist groups including Aryan Nations, The National Socialist Movement, and White Revolution (adl.org).

93 With, interestingly enough, a slightly teenage girl bias according to Quantcast.com.

94 The official Government of Northern Ireland version does not have a union jack in the top left-hand corner. “It is perceived as a Loyalist UDA flag, and the absence of the Crown suggests a more independent stance, due to a disillusionment with Britain and mainstream Unionism,” according to the University of Ulster’s Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN) Web site.

95 For the longest time, I assumed this was St. George’s Cross!

96 I once caught a glimpse of the Stormfront flag on a US televised European soccer match. The camera panned repeatedly over the section where it flew presumably without the commentators, camera operators, or producers realizing its significance.

97 Aryan Brotherhood “members make up less than one-tenth of one percent of the nation’s prison inmate population, yet the white power gang is responsible for 18% of all prison murders” (Southern Poverty Law Center *Leaders*).

98 “The 2001 MSNBC television special, Skin Deep, which examined tattooing and other contemporary body modifications, reported that twenty percent of the American population is tattooed. Although the validity of this statistic is speculative, a 2002 survey by the University of Connecticut produced similar findings” (Kosut 1036).

99 She notes that “through tattooing, many middle-class tattoo customers are now exploring their ‘Celtic roots’” (DeMello 202).

100 Established in 1928, *The Irish Echo* is, according to its Web site, is “the largest circulation Irish American newspaper” (“About Us”).

101 Many white residents viewed the Puerto Rican flag as a symbol of that group “claiming their turf” and a sign for others to keep out of their neighborhoods.

102 Founded in the mid-1980s, according to the Anti-Defamation League, the Web site of which goes on to state:

> By appealing to widespread resentments and successfully attracting prominent conservatives, the Council of Conservative Citizens has been able to recruit numbers of relatively moderate individuals into an organization that maintains strong connections with extremists. Its record demonstrates that CCC has not tried to break away from its racist antecedents. Instead, it has adopted not only its predecessor's racial attitudes but also its strategies, deriving from them the tools to advance a racist agenda from the grassroots to the senior levels of American government. (ADL *Extremism in America*)

103 US Senator Trent Lott once told its members that they "stand for the right principles and the right philosophy" (Beirich and Moser, "Communing"). They also posted "evidence" of President Obama's Kenyan birth posted on their Web site.

104 RTE (*Radio Telefis Eireann*) is the major television network in Ireland.

105 Gaelic for "A hundred thousand welcomes."

106 From Roediger:

> The important recent work of the population specialists Sharon M. Lee, Barry Edmonston, and Jeffrey Passel underlines this point. Their projection for the year 2100 show a US population 34 percent mixed race, up from about 8 percent today. (Less than a third of the latter percentage actually chose the new "multiracial" category on the 2000 census). The Asian American / multiple-origin population, in these estimates, will rise to 42 million in the next century, rivaling in size the 56 million US residents whose ancestry is "purely" Asian. Among Latinos, the 184 million persons of Latino/multiple-origin ancestry will vastly outnumber the 77 million whose ancestry is Latino on both sides. Among African

> Americans, lower rates of intermarriage will result in 66 million persons with African American ancestry on both sides and 39 million person of African American / multiple-origin descent. Among "whites," the "pure" population is projected also to outnumber the white/multiple-origin one by 165 million to 90 million. ("All About Eve" 599–600).

107 Again, Roediger:

> In a 1996 poll white respondents estimated whites in the United States population at 49.9 percent. The accurate figure was 74 percent. They thought that the United States was 23.8 percent African American, twice the enumerated Black population. At 10.8 percent, Asian Americans existed in the white psyche in 3 ½ times their numbers in the census. Hispanics were imagined to constitute 14.7 percent of the population; they represent 9.5 percent. ("All About Eve" 600)

108 The regional group that includes Florida and other Southern states is known as the Confederate Hammerskins.

109 Rock Against Communism is most commonly used to describe the genre of white power/neo-Nazi hate music popular among racist skinheads and others in Europe and North America. From the Anti-Defamation League:

> Despite its name, RAC more often than not contains no references to Communism at all, but focuses on racism and anti-Semitism. In the 1980s, rock promoters in Great Britain put on a series of 'Rock Against Racism' concerts. In response, various white supremacist bands, led by Ian Stuart and Skrewdriver, held 'Rock Against Communism' concerts. The term eventually became used to describe the style of music, and later still came to be used as a general term for white power

> music. Many prefer RAC to other names used to describe such music, such as 'hatecore,' because the acronym does not make explicit the music's racist nature. (ADL "Rock")

110 Before the death of founder William Pierce and their subsequent decline, the National Alliance was the leading supremacist group in the US.

111 Incidentally the "young girls in Irish costumes" continue to occupy a prominent place in the photo display of the event on the National Alliance's Web site, even though the dancing school and teachers were quick to distance themselves from the group upon learning of the Alliance's ideology from the Irish consulate. One teacher in particular repeatedly asked the organization to remove pictures of her dancers from the National Alliance Web site. Almost two years after the event, the teacher remained unsuccessful in her efforts.

112 I don't want to give the impression that all supremacist groups are invested in using Irish/Celtic angle to recruit new members and appeal to wider audiences, but *some* definitely are and with considerable success.

113 "In targeting international markets, 'Riverdance – The Show' contains themes that are global, such as emigration and justice" (O'Cinneide 107).

114 I heard Celeste Ray speak about this topic at the Celtic Popular Culture Conference at the Center for Celtic Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2002. She also makes these claims in her book Transatlatic Scots.

115 McArthur also makes note of "ethnography's tendency to political quietism," in contrast to the very political purpose of cultural studies (McArthur 348).

116 I am not suggesting that all whites share white nationalist beliefs, but white nationalists are useful to examine as they are both straightforward in their prejudices (while most are not) and represent a far larger segment of the population than their numbers suggest.

117 Based in Pennsylvania, "The mission of Celtic Cultural Alliance is to preserve and promote the Celtic culture, through education, musical presentations, and traditional competitions in athletics, piping and dance. On Columbus Day weekend in 1988, the first Celtic Classic was presented by a small group of individuals, organized as Celtic Fest, Inc. The goal of this dedicated group was to create an event that symbolized the Celtic spirit and history, and to provide the impetus for an organization that focused on promoting the Celtic culture. This organization has now evolved into Celtic Cultural Alliance to better communicate the overall goals of the organization. The first Celtic Classic, in Historic Downtown Bethlehem, was attended by approximately 30,000 people from Southeastern Pennsylvania and Western New Jersey who braved snow squalls and an average temperature of 47º. The venues for this inaugural event included the Sun Inn Courtyard and the Community Arts Pavilion, along with the Grand Pavilion and Parade Grounds, which are still a part of this nationally-acclaimed event" ("Celtic Cultural Alliance").

118 The Southern Poverty Law Center notes that "Nazi symbology was common until it was banned, along with slurs like 'nigger,' in the spring of 2008" (SLPC "Stormfront").

119 "Racism is never an unitary practice" (Lentin 2.12).

120 Helen Davis in her authoritative work on Stuart Hall addresses this concern noting that identity "is not simply a question of identity-shopping. Identity is in constant production and exists at the point of intersection between the individual and other determining structures and institutions" (162).

121 In the 2000 census, approximately one-fifth of the white population in the US claimed Irish or Scotch-Irish ancestry ("Ancestry [First Ancestry]").

122 As noted earlier, although obviously not the same, in contemporary US mainstream culture the conceptual categories "Irish" and "Celtic" are conflated more often than not.

123 The thirty-four US states hosting at least one Irish-themed festival in the early 2000s: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. (Author's research)

124 The fifteen US states that hosted a Celtic festival in the early 2000s: Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. (Author's research)

125 "Irish Fest is by far the most colorful Irish cultural event in the United States or possibly anywhere in the world. Certainly, color was enhanced immeasurably in the early years by a policy that gave free admission to anyone dressed as a leprechaun" (Moloney, *Festivals* 432).

126 For example: "In performance, Flatley is the centre of a deafening storm of sound and fury that takes tackiness to undreamt-of heights. He gets to wear the glitziest costumes from a company wardrobe of startling vulgarity especially for the women, all big Nashville hair and tarty dresses. He gets the role of shining defender of good against evil in a ludicrously inflated pseudo-mythical story that tries to glue the evening together. He gets to dance all the male solos, except for a couple allowed to Daire Nolan as the invading Dark Lord, Don Dorka, a kind of

Irish Darth Vader, whose soldiers in sci-fi masks and black overalls look like Star Wars mechanics" (Meisner n.p).

127 Launched in March 2009 in New York, it serves over 1.4 million unique visitors a month, with 70,000 e-newsletter subscribers and has continued to grow with each passing month, easily surpassing all other Irish American websites ("About Us," Irish Central)

128 In 2001 Dollywood introduced its popular Festival of Nations, a month-long celebration of dance, food, and culture from around the world featuring more than 300 performers and artisans. ("About Us Dollywood")

129 It can also be seen to a lesser extent in the on- and off-screen personas of Gerard Butler, who, though Scottish, played an Irishman in *P.S. I Love You* (2007).

130 "*Scrubs* is an Emmy and Peabody Award-winning American comedy-drama that premiered on October 2, 2001, on NBC. It was created by Bill Lawrence and is produced by ABC Studios (previously known as Touchstone Television)" ("Scrubs"). Since 2009 the show has been broadcast on ABC.

131 "The role of Dr. John Michael "J. D." Dorian is played by Zach Braff (romantically involved with Dr. Elliot Reid) and Donald Faison plays Dr. Christopher "Chris" Duncan Turk (married to head nurse Carla Espinosa)." ("Scrubs").

132 The typical reader of *GQ* is 34, college educated, single, and earns an above-average income.

133 Season 4, episode 5, in 2008.

134 Although admittedly this type of womanizing is also celebrated, as in Brett Michael's successive reality shows and *Real Chance of Love*, both on VH1.

135 Although it should be pointed out that Flatley's Irishness could not save him from critics in terms of gender particularly in *Lord of the Dance*.

136. According to Fox, the "almost bride" of the show Randi Coy is "planning to use some of her winnings to take her family on a trip to Ireland for her dad's upcoming 50th birthday" ("My Big Fat").

137 "As this book goes to press and in a period slightly preceding and following the visit [referring to President George Bush controversial stopover in Ireland], Irishness has gone decidedly down-market, seemingly becoming de-exoticized as national air carrier Aer Lingus transforms itself into a budget airline offering bargain basement transatlantic fares. An apparent status change has themes of Irishness relocating from middlebrow dramas to reality television and the only openly Irish-themed offering in primetime, the ABC sitcom *It's All Relative*, equating Irishness with intolerance and homophobia" (Negra, *The Irish in Us* 13).

138 In Dollywood, "A Touch of Ireland" gift shop offers "a variety of authentic items from the Emerald Isle" ("A Touch").

139 In Branson, Missouri, for example *Spirit of the Dance* show has played every season since 1999. "The world champion dancers of the Irish International Dance Company sound like a runaway express train and their frenzied skill and military precision sends shivers down your spine. Not one Irish dance shoe steps out of line as their thunderous feet perform as one, with an excitement that leaves the audiences screaming for more. This award winning spectacular has brilliant lighting, dazzling costumes and breathtaking choreography. With thunderous applause and standing ovations, Spirit of the Dance is one of the greatest dance shows ever" ("Spirit of the Dance"). The 2009–2010 season Branson also featured "The Twelve Irish Tenors."

140 His signature moves include the Celtic Cross and the Celtic Knot ("Dave Finlay").

141 “A key area of research here is the possibility of a multiplicity of meaning. How can a product mean several things to several segments? As consumers become more diverse, this issue becomes more urgent. It is not unusual for meaning-managers to find themselves required to speak to several segments with a single product, communications campaign, or retail outlet. If the task of loading a product up with a single set of well-chosen and designed meanings has proven difficult, the management of several distinctly different meanings within a single product must test us to the limit”. McCracken, *Culture and Consumption II*, 185.

142 http://www.tvguide.com/tvshows/kathy-griffin-my-life-on-the-d-list/episode-7-season-3/192178 (accessed August 11, 2013)

143 For example this is a term that O’Cinneide uses noting that as a result the 25-34 age group in Ireland is “as demanding and sophisticated as anywhere else in the world”. O’Cinneide 5.

144 Keohane, 5.

145 http://riverdance.com/the-show/the-journey/2013-3/ (accessed August 6, 2013)

146 Lentin 4.12

147 Parry, R8.

148 Riding, 2:1.

149 Walsh, I3.

150 Pareles, E10.

151 Rockwell, E1.

152 Walsh.

153 “The notion of the “popular-national” (or, more frequently “national popular”) is one of the most interesting and also most widely criticised ideas in Gramsci’s thought . . . It is important to stress, however, that it is a cultural concept, relating to the position of the masses within the

culture of the nation". Hoare and Nowell Smith, 421. ". . . the 'national popular'" as ". . . a crucial site for the construction of a popular hegemony". Hall, *Gramsci's Relevance*, 26.

154 Thinking here about Sean Williams' work on Irishness in Japan but could also include the popularity of what is typically thought of as Irish pub culture operating throughout the world (and not just the white western world).

155 Sharon M. Lee, 85.

156 http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x118krr_totally-biased-with-w-kamau-bell-sesame-street-blues_fun (accessed August 12, 2013)

157 "Wearing Irish Cool" by Stephen McKinley Irish Echo, March 5-11, 2003, www.irishecho.com (accessed February 23 2007).

158 Ibid.

159 http://www.irishcentral.com/story/news/periscope/mayor-bloomberg-outrages-irish-americans-with-inebriated-irish-hanging-out-of-windows-comments-115692999.html (accessed August 12, 2013)

160 http://www.irishcentral.com/news/Irish-Seven-Course-Dinner-menu-item-in-Illinois-joins-ranks-of-other-Irish-stereotypes-210458461.html (accessed August 12, 2013)

161 http://abcnews.go.com/Business/dennys-apology-falls-short-irish-famine-smear/story?id=9988336 (accessed August 12, 2013)

162 www.irishcentral.com/news/Anti-Defamation-Federation-battles-against-derogatory-assaults-on-the-Irish-123535224.html (June 9, 2011)

163 http://irishadf.webs.com/ (accessed August 12, 2013)

164 http://irishadf.webs.com/ (accessed August 12, 2013)

165 Hochschild, 642.

166 http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/hate-crime/2011/narratives/victims (accessed August 12, 2013)

167 http://www.dcu.ie/imrstr/firstissue/oboyle.shtml (accessed August 12, 2013)

168 A 2007 edition of the American Girl catalog included an Irish Dance costume and book" (book titled My Lucky Charms) includes an embroidered dress; a button-on brat, or cloak; wrist cuffs; knit socks; shoes; and a headband wig". Interesting as wrist cuffs very Lord of the Dance! On the same page, ballet outfit, dance and team spirit.

169 http://shop.mlb.com/search/index.jsp?kwCatId=&kw=st.%20patrick%20s%20day&origkw=st.+patrick%27s+day&sr=1 (accessed August 12, 2013)

170 http://www.irishcentral.com/news/Popularity-of-Irish-food-in-the-United-States-has-never-been-higher-153218425.html#ixzz2bmFSJMy8 (accessed August 12, 2013)

171 Halter, 198.

172 Smyth, Ailbhe, 150.

173 Crenshaw, 623.

174. Richard Dyer, *White,* 1.