On the Terrace: Ritual Performance of Identity by the Shamrock Rovers Football Club Ultras in Dublin

A thesis submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Music (Ethnomusicology)

Tufts University

19 May 2012

Advisers: David Locke and Rich Jankowsky

Abstract

This thesis draws upon the author's fieldwork conducted in Dublin, Ireland, focusing on a particular group of Shamrock Rovers Football Club supporters called *ultras*. The primary focus of the SRFC Ultras is to create an aural and visual spectacle through mass crowd participation in the hope that such modes of expression will have an advantageous effect on the outcome of the game and create an evocative response from individuals watching it. The Ultras' desired aesthetic aims to transform spectators into participants who sing throughout the match, wave flags, light off marine flares, and present hand-made displays. Such performative activities actualize a distinct community that revolves around the Shamrock Rovers sporting narrative. Songs, chants, and all other elements of "atmosphere" are a communicative act between opposing teams based upon the unfolding match. Such experiences revolve around conflict, activating an array of emotions and experiences that would not occur in day-to-day life.

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INTRODUCTION

On May 16, 2012, I arrived in Dublin airport from Boston to see gray skies outside the airplane window. After a substantial wait in line, I stood before a middle-aged customs officer who asked me what I would be doing in the Republic of Ireland. Through the fog of my jet lag, I attempted to explain my interest in researching Irish football supporters in the League of Ireland, the Republic of Ireland's domestic professional league—that I was interested in Shamrock Rovers Football Club, based in the suburbs of Dublin, and that I was especially interested in football chants…

Performative Spectating in Dublin

Because of my interest in the musical (and more encompassing interest in the performative and expressive) aspects of sports fandom, I looked to Ireland, which has cultivated a rich and diverse set of ritual fan practices connected to soccer. The Shamrock Rovers Ultras' (SRFC Ultras) style of support has many similarities to other sporting cultures across Europe and South America, but is unique as well. In Ireland and in Europe, sports are often a site of active fan participation. Watching sports is a form of entertainment for many casual observers, but it also has the potential to develop into "more than a game," an abstract concept rarely elucidated, perhaps because many of us can't quite put our fingers on its meaning. As an individual follows a particular sports team, that team becomes a symbol, a constructed entity that represents what the supporter makes it. Spectatorship can lead to a more proactive form of participation—singing and dancing—the creation of a space in which emotions aren't subdued but amplified, where the reactions of others have the potential to affect others' inner and outer dispositions.

This thesis is about the performance-oriented aspects of fandom of the SRFC Ultras in Dublin. There are of course different ways of supporting one's team, however, my focus lies with the individuals who have chosen to take a physically proactive approach to "support," the complex effects of atmosphere on the individual, and the subsequent reactions of what many of them would come to call their "natural" inclination to participate through song and expressive movement.

Across Europe and South America, football matches have become a designated location in which the everyday rules of society have the potential to change, allowing for and even shaping various forms of expression. Despite the lack of ethnomusicological work on music in sport, football songs and chants are an integral aspect of supporter atmosphere in the creation of a collective identity and its actualization within the matchday setting.

...My conversation with the customs officer continued. "Apparently Shamrock Rovers lost 3-0 in Sligo this past weekend," he commented.

"I saw."

"Well," he said, passing me back my passport. "Just make sure to stay away from the Ultras."

The SRFC Ultras and the Commercialization of Football

Though it is the goal of this thesis to focus on the physical attendance of football supporters and their interaction with the unfolding game and each other, it is essential to recognize that this is occurring amidst the mass globalization and commercialization of football. Across the globe, fans can watch the world's best players in the English Premier

League, all captured by multiple camera angles in high definition. This is certainly its own kind of spectacle. Globalization has affected Ireland as well. The vast majority of Irish football supporters follow English clubs—a virtual fact—preferring to watch games on television, itself a powerful example of globalization and the force of the English league. The financial might of the richest football clubs has thus created a global fan base in which fans gather around their televisions watching the likes of Manchester United in places all over the world, such as China, Africa, and of course, Ireland.

Carlton Brick unpacks this very process, in which, "the relative affluence of the postwar period and the development of integrated and affordable transport networks facilitated greater geographical mobility and accessibility to 'non-local' teams" (1994, 10). Furthermore, "The increase in television ownership and the increasing centrality of sports coverage within broadcast schedules heightened this already manifest tendency away from the 'local'"(ibid). England's Manchester United, for example, has marketed itself as a global brand, with an extensive retail network that extends well into Ireland (Brick 1994, 11).

In contrast, the League of Ireland is a minnow, capturing only a small minority of the Irish population's attention. Shamrock Rovers, arguably the richest and historically the most successful club in Ireland, are made up of both professionals and semi-professionals with part time jobs (Mac Guill 2011). In comparison, the London-based Tottenham Hotspur pay one of their star players, Gareth Bale, more than $820,000 for two months of work, equivalent to Shamrock Rovers' yearly salary for the entire squad (ibid). The English Premier League, as the pinnacle of sporting achievement, attracts fans all across the globe, along with the majority of football enthusiasts in Ireland.

The Shamrock Rovers Ultras are to be the focal point of my research, whose goals are centered around the creation of an off-the-field spectacle that rivals the events transpiring on it. Such performative behaviors have garnered mixed opinions amongst the public, who have interpreted (and often misinterpreted) the Ultras' actions as that of a hooligan element. Eoghan Rice, author of *We are Rovers* and lifelong Rovers fan, notes the negative perception of the media and Irish society towards the community of Rovers fans.

> The thing I've always said about Rovers fans—it's a very small snapshot of society. You get the best people in the world in there and you get people who I have no time for at all. They've always been there if you go back before my time and into the 70's. Football violence was a very big problem in Ireland. (Personal Interview, June 21 2012)

The connection between hooliganism at Shamrock Rovers matches and the Ultras is a misperception by the Irish public, which is unsurprising considering the Irish public's lack of first-hand knowledge and the at times aggressive nature of football ritual amongst Rovers supporters, which includes the Ultras. However, the public's misconceptions of the purposes behind chants and displays may come from a lack of understanding that songs for the Ultras are largely symbolic, rather than reflective of an actual violent element. Rice clarifies the SRFC Ultras' intentions.

> The whole notion of Ultras is completely alien to people over here. Suddenly people were looking at these guys and they have flags, they have flares they're letting off, they're doing all this kind of wild stuff and it was all about color and festivity and atmosphere. But people are naturally scared of what they don't understand and so people just assumed this Ultras crowd, they're doing something totally different—something we've never seen, they must be dangerous. So people just assumed Ultras were this group hell bent on destroying Irish society basically, whereas they were just a bunch of lads having a bit of craic at a football game. So the

> Ultras basically began to pick up all this flack. (Personal Interview, June 21 2012)

The Shamrock Rovers Ultras, who consist of around twenty members, are thus united by the commonality of their support for Rovers and the way in which they choose to express it. However, they also see themselves as a part of the greater Shamrock Rovers community, which is not always the case with other football clubs' ultras groups. The SRFC Ultras are often the spark that ignites the singing section of their home ground, Tallaght Stadium. Because the SRFC Ultras utilize vocal and bodily expression influences and interacts with the broader Rovers community, it will be necessary to view their roles in this context in the following chapters. All followers of Shamrock Rovers Football Club are members of just that—a club—a vast minority who support their local team amongst a sea of Irish football fans who follow the likes of English powerhouses like Manchester United (Rice 2006). A term indicative of their resentment, the Rovers supporters refer to fans who would rather watch British football on the television as barstoolers, which they hardly consider "real fans" at all. The general feeling that no one outside of Tallaght Stadium's grounds could possibly understand them must add meaning to their cries as they sing, "nobody likes us, we don't care."

The Influence of the *Ultra* Movement

The individuals that comprise the SRFC Ultras have developed a loyalty to their local football clubs through continued attendance at matches, ultimately leading to a certain style of support utilized by Ultras groups throughout the world. This style is meant to create atmosphere at matches by waving flags, lighting flares, singing, using expressive body movements, and making visually stunning displays. However, the Ultras

are the extreme on the spectrum of fans in how they choose to support their club. "A football fan will go to a match, might do a bit of singing and waving flags at the start of the match, then when that goes down, sit down and watch the match—and there's nothing wrong with that," said Karl, one of the SRFC Ultras (Personal Interview, July 1 2012).

However, the SRFC Ultras' actions are often the spark that alters the behavioral parameters in the stadium that leads to singing and dancing amongst the broader Rovers community. Dal Lago and De Biasi describe the role of Ultras in Italy, certainly one of the most influential Ultra scenes in the world:

> In the environment of the stadium the cultural task of the *ultras* is to conduct a spectacular display associated with the footballing spectacle, by a lively and persistent choreography of collective support, with big banners and flags, firework displays, choruses and chants which, sometimes, involve everybody in the stadium. (1994, 80)

This description of the Italian Ultras' performative role suits the SRFC Ultras in terms of their style of support. In addition, Dal Lago and De Biasi describe the social parameters surrounding Ultras.

> In Italy, the *ultra* style of support has never been dominated by any particular social stratum or any specific youth style. The unifying element for the youth of Italian *curvas* (stadium ends) has always been support itself, and not social consumption, or class status, or political belief, or musical fashion, etc. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the peculiar autonomy of *ultra* rituals within the stadium. (1994, 79)

Though many Ultra groups across Europe have specific political affiliations, the SRFC Ultras operate under the belief that their group should remain apolitical. Similar to the Italian Ultras, the SRFC Ultras draw members from all walks of life, economic and

social, united by their belief in supporting their club, Shamrock Rovers. However, their affiliation with Shamrock Rovers FC is purely unofficial.

> If a member of an official football club can be said to be a citizen of the football world, an *ultra* has to be considered as a militant…Many young people who usually attend the match in the *curva*, do not have any commitment to the *ultra* club in their everyday life. For them, *ultras* are more or less a reference group...These young spectators are supporters who go into the *curva* on Sunday…and they find a scenario and a choreography already prepared by a few committed *ultras*. (1994, 79-80)

Similar to the Italian style, the SRFC Ultras are a smaller group of young men whose goal it is to spark mass participation of the singing section through chants and flag-waving in Block M of Tallaght Stadium. In this sense, the SRFC Ultras are in many ways the figureheads and are often the leaders of the singing section. Additionally, the SRFC Ultras' lack of "official" connection with the Shamrock Rovers administration lends to the group's credibility. They are not funded by and therefore not under the influence of the board or directors. This makes their voice on the terrace their own.

Like any performers, Ultras can do a good job or a bad job of creating excitement. Thus, much like the game itself, the SRFC Ultras would often evaluate the atmosphere of the previous game, discussing the many variables that may have affected the collective energy of the Rovers support. The SRFC Ultras' ideal for perfect atmosphere would be non-stop singing from a large repertoire of songs, waving of home-made flags, standing for 90 minutes, or even better, dancing. Though song and dance are utilized by the SRFC Ultras, quality is not based upon standards of Western art music (e.g., intonation, etc). Music in this context is judged based on its ability to generate various emotions and reactions, be it laughter, feelings of camaraderie, anger, or disdain towards opposition (even to the point of dehumanization).

Singing and chanting is also important because supporters believe they can influence the outcome of the game. Finn describes the power of supporters' influence on the emotions of players and managers, while acknowledging the simple fact that its effects on the game are unquantifiable:

> Strange powers are attributed to soccer supporters. Simple observation does show that the sports crowd is not a passive audience, but the extent of any direct impact on the game is arguable. None the less, it is still commonly believed that supporters are able to influence events directly. Beliefs in the power of the crowd are expressed in various forms by players, managers, supporters and sportswriters…
>
> Supporters of one team can be believed to have an intimidating effect on the opposing team. This belief is common. Crowds are 'hostile'. Managers and players issue pleas for their own support to be vociferous. (Finn 1994, 97)

These beliefs are most certainly held by the SRFC Ultras and are one of the main reasons to sing. Ultras groups are serious about supporting their teams because success on the field is symbolic—the players' performance must live up to their expectations of what they feel the club embodies. But this definition will vary amongst different teams. The team's successes and failures are the fans' as well. But sport is interpretive and reputation is not always based on winning or losing. A team's style of play, be it attacking or defensive, or their perceived fighting spirit, can all inspire respect or disdain. An Ultra group's performance is a highly versatile form of collective expression, which is inherently connected to their daily lives and experiences. Thus, the SRFC Ultras' songs and chants can also teach us a lot about their subculture and the environment that surrounds them.

In some cases, Ultras groups can be a source of violence, clashing with opposition Ultras. The Al Ahly Ultras based in Cairo are one of the most high profile and extreme

examples of supporters who use football as a springboard to send political messages, sometimes escalating into violence. Their vocal and politically fueled chants resulted in a stadium riot in which Egyptian security forces are rumored to have had an interest in making an example of them (bbc.co.uk, 2/1/2012). In the end, 74 supporters were killed in the stadium. I provide this example to show the versatility of ritualized performance, its power, and its ability to reach vast audiences. The social context surrounding any group of Ultras and their subsequent message can vary drastically. However, the violence associated with other Ultras around the world may well play a role in the misperception of the SRFC Ultras within Irish society as well.

Logistically, group chants and songs allow for the voice of a particular group to be heard by large audiences. Messages can be disseminated almost instantly across the stadium, to the opposition supporters, to the coaches, to the players, and to each other. TV recording and broadcasting further allows supporters to be heard by an even broader audience. Vocal supporters, including Ultras groups, have the potential to exert influence on large numbers of people. Essential in the goal of the Ultras' performance is creating an emotional response. Different groups, be it players, the opposition supporters, or Rovers supporters, will most certainly have different reactions to what they see, hear, and even feel. Chants and songs in the sporting context have the potential to express volatile messages, to bring collectives even closer together, and to incite conflict amongst their rivals and potentially the surrounding community.

Negotiating Between the Stadium Space and the "Outside World"

Football and music can ultimately provide an insightful lens in which scholars can further learn about society and why individuals are drawn to football and atmosphere as spectacle. Richard Giulianotti's approach is a good place to start.

> My position…is that the social aspects of football only become meaningful when located within their historical and cultural context. Football is neither dependent upon nor isolated from the influences of that wider milieu; instead, a relative autonomy exists in the relationship between the two. (Giulianotti 1999, xv)

Furthermore, I argue that crowd atmosphere and chants are the byproduct of fans' construction of collective identity and the ensuing conflicts with opposing groups that occur, all of which are inherently connected with the "real world." The SRFC Ultras are no exception. This will be further discussed in Chapter 1. Yet conversely, crowd performance in the stadium utilizes carnival and ritual characteristics to create a space that for 90 minutes attempts to separate itself from the rules of the outside world. Fishwick notes that in British football, "The ninety minutes provided excitement, debate, achievement and freedom to behave as one wanted which consequently brought a 'new kind of solidarity and a new kind of sociability'. The game's spiritual qualities provided a temporary escape from life's realities" (Giulianotti and Armstrong 1997: 5-6). The stadium world is itself a contradiction because it is separated from many of the rules and obligations of reality, yet spectators incorporate that very same reality into the sporting narrative, into their own collective identities, and into their opponents, hence the constructed symbolic meaning behind victory and defeat.

In Tallaght Stadium, jobs or money lend no status to one's role as a supporter. Symbolic capital, in essence—prestige, is acquired based on the success of Shamrock Rovers and the quality of the Ultras' support. In this context, "Bourdieu argues that accumulation of symbolic capital is just as 'rational' as the accumulation of economic capital, particularly since capital may be freely converted from one form to another…" (Bliege and Smith 2005: 223). The effects of crowd atmosphere are far-reaching and diverse. It is most certainly internal and external, and I argue that an important part of the football-spectating process is Bourdieu's notion of the "internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality," in which supporters internalize their surrounding experiences and ultimately express themselves based upon it (Wacquaint 2005: 316). Within football, music is an integral component of the process in which individuals actualize a collective identity and often attain a profound sense of belonging. The stadium is thus a space in which supporters can gain access to a newfound social sphere and even acquire status along the way—important circumstances to consider throughout this thesis.

The Stadium as a Borderland

More than a space that bends reality and reshuffles the social structure, football stadiums bring together differing collectives and pit them against each other. For this reason, football inherently creates symbolic conflict between groups. The production of atmosphere in the form of physical expression is the product of this perceived symbolic clash. As a site of multi-group interaction, the stadium can be conceptualized as a borderland, which Rosaldo argues "should be regarded not as analytically empty

transitional zones, but as sites of creative cultural production that require investigation" (Rosaldo 1989, 207-208). In addition, Gupta and Ferguson write:

> The term does not indicate a fixed topographical site between two other fixed locales (nations, societies, cultures), but an interstitial zone of displacement and deterritorialization that shapes the identity of the hybridized subject. (Gupta and Ferguson: 1992, 18)

This broader conceptualization of the borderland as more of a zone than a line in the sand suits the interactions of home and away supporters in the football stadium. Their description of borderlands as deterritorialized is but the first step in a ritual process that reterritorializes the stadium space as a spiritual home for the SRFC Ultras and other long-time Rovers supporters. Due to the segregation of home and away supporters (in stadia) in Ireland as well as the rest of Europe, interactions between the SRFC Ultras and opposition supporters is limited to collective communication through mediums such as displays and songs. Communications directed at the opposition are generally inflammatory and thus serve to further the divide between collectives rather than mix the two identities together. Nonetheless, I argue that the creation of an Other strongly influences the Rovers identity and legitimizes its existence.

Furthermore, borderlands can be interpreted as "simultaneously a zone of cultural play and experimentation as well as of domination and control" (Donnan and Wilson 1999, 39). Lavie argues that, "the borderzone is not just a dangerous space, but a festive one, because of the creative energy liberated by the common struggle of resistance" (Lavie 1992, 93). The stadium space is most certainly a battle for various types of capital. Victory on the field is but one way to outdo the opposition. Creativity and cleverness are valued in the creation of displays that often insult the opposition. Ultras groups that can

maintain an energetic atmosphere for the entire match will also earn respect from the greater League of Ireland community as well as other Ultra groups. In this sense, the borderland is the site of multiple contests taking place both on and off the field. Ultimately, symbolic capital is earned in multiple ways, occurring simultaneously within the 90-minute span of a game.

In this context, football stadia can be interpreted as cultural borderlands. Home or away, the stadium is a site of collective struggle, a mixture of performative behaviors that incorporate ritual and the carnivalesque. Opposition supporters interact, yet they are perpetually segregated. This collective communication does not foster understanding, but rather reinforces the divide. This struggle sparks creative forms of aggression resulting in mass celebration, mourning, or anger, all dependent on the unfolding events on the field and in the stands.

Addressing the Academic Void

This thesis attempts to fill a void in ethnomusicology in the arena of music and sport and seeks to contribute to the growing literature on music and conflict. Amongst the existing academic work on football, music and chants are referenced quite often, yet perhaps due to the disciplinary focuses of most academics, the integral nature of music in football has been left more or less untouched (with the exception of Gary Robson's book on ritual and habitus amongst supporters of Millwall FC in London). A good place to start in conceptualizing music's role in football is realizing that music does not just "reflect" these "underlying cultural patterns and social structures. Rather, they provide the means by which hierarchies of place are negotiated and transformed" (Stokes 1994,

4). Chants and displays are not a statement of fact. Rather, they are a commentary. They are actions with intended effects. They are a form of shared emotional expression.

Though football in academia has found a niche in sociology and has begun to emerge in the anthropological realm as well, it has seemingly only attracted the continued attention of a small group of scholars, based predominantly in Europe (i.e. Giulianotti and Armstrong 1994, 2001, Giulianotti 1999, Giulianotti, Bonney and Hepworth 1994, Giulianotti and Williams 1994, Bromberger 1993, Robson 2000). Vidacs believes that sport is often overlooked in academia because it is seen as "trivial" or as "just a game" (2006, 336). Furthermore, she feels that sport can often be regarded as an "opiate," a diversion from the happenings of real life (ibid). Lastly, Vidacs senses that scholars are dissuaded from researching sport because of a lack of "researchability" (ibid). By writing an ethnography about football supporters firmly based in field research, I hope to further debunk all three of the issues highlighted by Vidacs. Fiachra, one of the leaders of the SRFC Ultras, suggested a more useful frame of mind when approaching the football stadium as a borderland: "It's not about the football, forget about the football, it's about everything *but* the football. That's the best way to explain it and the only way to explain it" (Personal Interview, 7/5/12).

Understanding Atmosphere and its Purposes

In this thesis I argue that the football stadium, and for our purposes, Tallaght Stadium and its other League of Ireland counterparts, are physical spaces in which standard societal rules change in ways that allow the creation for various modes of collective communication and expression. Football in this context may start as "just a

game" to the outsider, but is constructed into an ongoing narrative by spectators. This process of narrativization is a natural process of sports spectatorship. Football, for this reason, is a platform in which collective identities are built around sports teams, where players become beloved or hated, opposition detested, and status is acquired. The stadium as a borderland is separate from the outside world, yet intrinsically connected.

Crowd atmosphere is a natural and creative product of the sporting narrative of which the SRFC Ultras are a central component. As part of crowd atmosphere, vocal expression is an integral component and it is useful to distinguish the auditory components of the matchday experience. Collective verbal interaction can best be defined as either songs or chants. For the purpose of this thesis, songs are defined as anything that include a melody, whereas chants do not. Just like songs, chants are always participatory and have the potential to be short and repetitive. Because continuously high levels of noise are the idealized aesthetic, short chants are strategically important because they are easy to learn and even a first time attendee at a match can pick up on these almost instantly. Short and repetitive chants matter for their lyrical content, but arguably hold more power through their actual delivery or performance.

The repertoire of songs on the terraces at Tallaght Stadium are also quite varied. Some songs have a lot of words and multiple verses, which naturally take a longer time for individuals to learn. As such, only regular supporters will tend to know them. Contrastingly, other songs have no words at all, but instead are repeating melodies sung in vocables such as "na na naaa" or "daa da daa." Songs such as these are meant to be repeated for potentially long periods of time. In addition, the Ultras always man someone on the bass drum, which can be used to signal the beginning of specific chants or songs.

It also serves to enhance the volume and emotional resonance of the atmosphere by adding driving rhythms that reach the farthest corners of the stadium space.

Bodily expression also accompanies vocal expression and is generally viewed as a natural occurrence—something that the ultras did not tend to think much about. When I asked two of the younger guys, Colm and Dan, about their physical presentations, they didn't have a simple answer. "It's passion I suppose," said Dan (Personal Interview, 6/17/12). "I couldn't see myself singing a Rovers song with my hands in my pockets. You just have to be standing moving."

"It's just a natural thing at this stage I guess," Colm added (ibid). This physically "natural occurrence" consists of clapping, often with the arms extended above one's head. The supporters on the terraces also dance to celebratory songs and others will wave large flags intermittently throughout the games. Ultimately, chants, songs, and body movement are all important aspects of atmosphere.

By discussing these components of atmosphere, I will show that music has five important functions. First, chants and expressive bodily movement, only acceptable within the realm of the stadium borderland, serve to create a spectacle rivaling the game that is taking place on the field. Combining characteristics of ritual (Santino 2011) and carnival into the *ultra* style of support, the crowd spectacle attracts new fans and alters acceptable modes of behavior. As will be further discussed in Chapter 2, Jack Santino argues that actions—and in the stadium context, chants and displays—can adopt elements of both carnival and ritual. However, they can also be differentiated from each other because "festival ends," whereas ritual "has a direct and ongoing effect on everyday life" (2011, 68).

Secondly, songs, chants and displays serve as ways to change the outcome of the game. Third, songs and displays serve to educate new supporters about the collective identity of the club and its relationship to opposing clubs. Alternately, for seasoned supporters, songs and chants evolve into ritual that actualizes the community and its outgroups through dialogic conflict.

Bourdieu's notion of habitus (to be further unpacked in Chapter 3) will play an integral role in describing the ritual effects of crowd atmosphere amongst Shamrock Rovers supporters, who, as coined by Bourdieu, "internalize their externality" (1977, 72) and ultimately as experienced supporters "externalize their internality" through a learned repertoire of songs that can vary in meaning and emotional effect depending on the context in which it is sung. However, emotional expression of identity only begins to explain the versatile role of chants in the live sporting context.

Fourth, music becomes a versatile mode of collective communication and even conversation that is directed not only towards players, but also towards coaches, opposition supporters, or within the collective. The cumulative effects of crowd atmosphere are multidirectional and reflexive. This process of "regulated improvisation" (Bourdieu 1977: 79) offers a broad range of expressive and communicative meaning. Chants and songs in this context are "dialogic and situational" (Becker 2004: 73). Collective participation in all aspects of crowd atmosphere, including flag waving, singing, lighting flares, and making crowd displays ultimately creates different emotional effects—and subsequently, reactions.

Fifth, body language and music can generate high energy and a multitude of emotions, allowing supporters to engage in a shared emotional experience. Songs and

displays often incite conflict with the opposition, regarded two-dimensionally and unforgivingly as the enemy. Group 'performance' can also elevate to states of rhythmic entrainment. As a result, spectators identify more and more with the Shamrock Rovers community and the SRFC Ultras and their wider worldview of their place within Irish society changes. I aim to highlight and further expound upon the functional purposes of music throughout the following chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 1 shows that spectators inherently "narrativize" football matches, which results in the creation of plotlines that include heroes, villains, and team rivalries. I regard this unintentional "transformation" of what was once "only a game," as an act of play—in essence, "making something that was not there before" (Schechner 1993, 28). In this regard, the football narrative is constructed in a way that gives meaning to the outcome of the game and makes possible all subsequent performative acts. As such, the stadium's physical qualities also promote "interaction ritual" (Collins 2004), which unites supporters through a common focus (the game) and creates an environment where collective emotional expression and carnivalesque behavior are not only allowed, but are an expectation amongst the Ultras.

Chapter 2 addresses the characteristics of ritual and carnival that are present in stadium atmosphere and songs and begins to elucidate the varying effects of both aspects. Songs and displays both serve to construct and express a distinct Rovers identity. In addition, the history of Shamrock Rovers and concepts of "home" are important aspects of the collective identity that further highlight the importance of the stadium space in which performed ritual occurs. Aligning with Bourdieu's notion of habitus, fans initially internalize the surrounding environment and over time externalize the Rovers identity

through songs, chants, and displays. Because of the construction and ritualized maintenance of a unified Rovers identity and a common focus on the game, an imagined community exists that unites the Ultras with the broader fan base.

Chapter 3 elucidates the Ultras' relationships with other LOI clubs, showing that the ritual and carnival effects in the borderland can create deep-seated loyalties to Rovers and simultaneously powerful hatred of their opposition. Rovers' songs work to dehumanize their biggest rivals, Bohemians FC, who the Ultras sing about at every match, no matter the opposition. Songs, chants, and displays in this context are tools in which to incite conflict and enact symbolic violence. Further, I argue that the Ultras' performed hatred of Bohemians paradoxically makes them an integral part of the Rovers identity. As I consider such processes (and the excitement it can evoke), I move forward with the understanding that there can be "positive meanings in certain types of violence, even when they seem to…threaten the world order as we know it" (Araujo 2010, 219). For the Ultras, chants and their carnivalsque and ritual elements become a mode of resistance against certain aspects of Irish society and British cultural domination, reinforcing their own perceptions that no one likes or understands them.

Lastly, I argue in Chapter 4 that songs and displays are versatile in communicating intended messages from the Shamrock Rovers collective. In addition, Thomas Turino's contribution to semiotics, particularly his ideas regarding signs and semiotic chaining prove useful (1999, 222). Signs—or in this case, songs, body language, and displays—are imperative amongst the Ultras because they are "the catalyst for an effect" (1999, 223). In essence, semiotics help us to understand how the Ultras' physical and vocal expression represent their internal passion and commitment, which serves to

create energy and evoke varying emotions amongst the Rovers collective, players, and the opposition fans. Such energy and emotion can rise to levels that can cause varying states of rhythmic entrainment (Becker 2004). Dedication, passion, and loyalty represented through performance of chants have evocative potential, magnified by masses of participants. An important ingredient in the triggering of these effects is collective repetition. Further, context is essential when considering a particular rendition of any song, playing a large part in determining what emotions and meanings can be derived. In particularly powerful moments of repetition, the singing section holds the ability override emotionally negative events on the pitch, transcending the sporting narrative.

The Ultras' ability to stoke emotions through unique displays and clever messages earns them symbolic capital (Bird and Smith 2005) and respect throughout the Irish footballing community and the worldwide Ultra community. The ever-evolving, production of atmosphere is not only a way to express volatile emotions, but can also be interpreted as a form of behavioral rebellion and a source of empowerment for members who may or may not possess large amounts of economic capital in the outside world. Though status for the Ultras does not tend to extend past the wider football and Ultra communities, the ritual effects often do. Crowd atmosphere and collective singing create a strong sense of belonging that supporters internalize as permanent aspects of their identities. The stronger a supporter identifies with Rovers and The Ultras, the blurrier the lines between the stadium world and the real world become.

1 NARRATIVIZATION AND THE STADIUM RULES

> *Through the turnstile and into another and altogether more splendid kind of life, hurtling with conflict and yet passionate and beautiful in its art.*
>
> *–J.B. Priestly, The Good Companions*

Play and the Sporting Narrative

Before tackling the complex emotional attachments and the resulting physical expression associated with football, it is necessary to take a step back to explain why synchronized and collective chanting occurs, since after all, singing, dancing, flag waving, lighting flares, and the creation of an overall carnivalesque spectacle are nonexistent outside of the stadium context. Though the goal of the SRFC Ultras is to create such an atmosphere at every game for the entire 90 minutes, the fact of the matter is that the stadium atmosphere is dependent on spatial and situational factors that may stoke or put a damper on its production. Evocative moments are not a given, nor are they a constant occurrence. This chapter will discuss the development of the "game" into a narrative that is constructed by its spectators. I will demonstrate how, as a form of play, the narrativization of the game within the stadium borderland becomes a space of alternate reality. This space adopts an altered set of behavioral rules, which in the ideal spatial and situational circumstances instigates song and dance—or atmosphere. Finally, this chapter will outline the spatial and situational elements that can play a major role in the amplification or reduction of performative activities and atmosphere.

* * *

It was Monday, the 21st of May, the day of Rovers' away match against Monaghan United. The "Hoops Supporters Club" was running a bus to the game, meeting outside Liberty Hall in Dublin center. As the time got closer to the 5 pm departure, several Rovers supporters began congregating on the streets, clad in green and white. Some wore jackets with the Rovers crest, or hooped scarves, or jerseys—they all stood out from the throngs of people busily brushing by on their ways home from work. A spectrum of older men sat at the front of the bus discussing the upcoming match with each other. The younger guys who congregated towards the back of the chartered bus all knew each other. Most of them were part of the Ultras who sang in Block M the last Saturday at Tallaght Stadium.

Everyone handed over 20 Euro for the bus and pulled out cans of beer from their backpacks. I sat next to Karl, who was bemused by my presence on the bus as an "American researcher." Karl was always easy enough to spot, in his green jacket, jeans, and Adidas Gazelles—worn in various colors by almost every one of the Ultras. It was impossible for anyone not to like Karl, who was inclusive and friendly to just about everyone. If there was ever a diplomat within the Ultras, it was Karl. He knew everybody. Mick sat across the aisle, wearing a black Rovers jersey and jeans, discussing the last match against Drogheda, the state of the team, and the importance of the match tonight. Sligo, the league leaders, had lost, and Monaghan was very weak opposition that everyone knew Rovers needed to beat. With a win here, Rovers would be back in the race for the league title.

* * *

Football, like any sport, starts as "just a game" until it is theatricized by the spectator. Sports are not fascinating for the technical aspects alone, but also for the constructed plotlines. This is why a singular game means very little to the uninformed spectator. Context gives a perceived purpose to each game. The Monaghan game mattered because the Ultras' wanted Rovers to win the league. Because the league leaders, Sligo, had lost earlier that week, Rovers' game could have been a turning point in the season and a chance to catch the league leaders. On the field, if a player hurts a Rovers player, he becomes a villain. A star player is a hero to the supporting fans. Alternately, other games can take on multiple layers of importance. For example, Rovers' rivalry with Bohemians FC is based on a long history of close games on the field as well as hooligan violence off the field, showing that multiple narratives can be woven at the same time. These multiple threads add multiple aspects of meaning to the result of the game. In essence, historical events (on and off the field) form the ongoing plotlines and establish varied meanings and importance to matches. Though players come and go, past events often retain their meaning for supporters in present rivalries, developing into a mythologized narrative.

For this reason, watching football is a creative act—it is an ongoing and evolving narrative. Spectators who come back eventually become supporters. In essence, the football narrative, and for our purposes, the Rovers narrative, is an ongoing construction created by those that watch it—it is an act of play. Huizinga helps to conceptualize play, regarding it as separated from "ordinary" life (1950, 8):

> Play is distinct from "ordinary" life both as to locality and duration. This is the third main characteristic of play: its secludedness, its limitedness. It

> is "played out" within certain limits of time and place. It contains its own course and meaning. (1950, 9)

Supporters who narrativize Shamrock Rovers matches adopt these aspects of play. Tallaght Stadium separates its inhabitants away from the outside world where they can watch their team perform under a prescribed set of rules initiated by a starting time and concluded after two forty-five minute halves. In this sense, there is a distinction between the stadium world and the outside world.

However, the distinction between the two worlds is hazy rather than black and white. Roger Titford has noticed the present-day match experience is not so much an escape from the everyday as it used to be.

> …in 2005 all the commercial messages make sure your everyday life follows you every step of the way, even into the stadium toilets with ads asking you about "your WKD side." There are messages even on the back now of your favorite player's shirt, reminding you of that questionable loan with HFS…And when the referee supports the same commercial sponsor (Emirates) as the Premiership [The English League] leaders you cease to bother wondering where it will end. (2006, 313)

The stadium borderland, though a site of play and creative production, is porous. Titford's account of the commercial invasion within English stadiums is applicable to Ireland as well, albeit on a smaller scale. Advertisements and food vendors are all examples of the outside world entering into the stadium space. Laws still apply—racist abuse is a prosecutable offense, as is violence. Conversely, performative stadium behavior such as chanting can begin on the walk to the stadium, on the supporters bus, or in the pub before and after the match. Therefore, the stadium boundaries are a permeable

entity in which the outside can sometimes enter and the creative products of play from inside can sometimes leave the ground.

Schechner's theory regarding play, exemplifies football's narrativization and the resulting permeability of the "real" world and the stadium borderzone.

> A coherent theory of play would assert that play and ritual are complementary, ethologically based behaviors which in humans continue undiminished through life; that play creates its own (permeable) boundaries and realms: multiple realities that are slippery, porous, and full of creative lying and deceit; that play is dangerous, and because it is, players need to feel secure in order to begin playing; that the perils of playing are often masked or disguised by saying that playing is "fun," "voluntary," a "leisure activity," or "ephemeral"—when in fact the fun of playing, when there is fun, is in playing with fire, going in over one's head, inverting the accepted procedures and hierarchies; that play is performative, involving players, directors, spectators, and commentators in a quadrilogical exchange that, because each kind of participant often has her or his own passionately pursued goals, is frequently at cross-purposes (Schechner 1993, 26-27).

Schechner's conceptualization of play's permeability is important because of the atmosphere's long-term effects on the SRFC Ultras (and many Rovers supporters for that matter). They don't stop being Ultras once the game is over. The creation of identity in conjunction with Shamrock Rovers within the stadium borderland is not temporary. In addition, the "performative-creative" act of narrativization of Shamrock Rovers' football matches cannot simply be considered as "fun" (Schechner 1993, 29). Games have the potential to evoke a much broader spectrum of emotions, which may include joy, but just as often bring disappointment and heartache. In essence, the game is "a contest *for* something or a representation *of* something (Huizinga 1950, 13). Thus, supporters, without any deliberate effort, are the cause of the "transformation" from game to

narrative. As supporters begin to associate themselves with their team, the game evolves into a struggle for prestige.

Furthermore, the borderland becomes a space in which "the passage of realities is perceived as a…smooth, even imperceptible, flow" (Schechner 1993, 27). Schechner's notion of play is not "real" versus "unreal," but rather a birthing of "multiple realities" (1994, 28). In this scenario, the SRFC Ultras' stadium realities are separate and inapplicable to the outside world. The roles that they take on and the status that they assume at matches mean little to nothing to the person on the street. After all, the majority of football enthusiasts in Ireland would rather watch the English Leagues, where very few Ultras exist.

Schechner's concept of play as a multiple reality also applies on a more personal and internal level. The subsequent musical activities that occur as a product of narrativization can develop individuals' "sense of self-understanding or self-worth" and foster "a sense of belonging to preexisting social groups" (Rice 2007, 23). Reentering the "outside world" after the game does not erase their internal identification with Shamrock Rovers and the SRFC Ultras. Because of this emotional and identificatory permanence, the borderzone may evolve out of play, but its effects must be regarded as real as well as permanent.

Christian Bromberger also notes the dramatic qualities of football that may have elevated football past the status of being "just a game."

> One can also add that popularity of football, as practice but above all as spectacle, rests on the range of its dramatic qualities, on the scale of the great genres of theatrical representation which have fascinated the West. It faithfully respects the classical trilogy; unity of place, of time, of action—a factor favouring the phenomenon of 'communion' between the

> spectators and the players, the former following the whole match, contrary to what happens in road cycling, for example. *But the dramatic force of football derives above all from the considerable place occupied by chance, by the incertitude as to the outcome of most matches.* (Bromberger 1994, 117)

Bromberger makes an important point—that sports are the one form of drama where no one knows what will actually happen. Theater and movies are dramatic because the spectator does not know the outcome, but the fact that football has no script—that it unfolds in real time—opens up the act of spectatorship to a range of possibilities based on the fact that onlookers believe they can have an impact on the events on the field. It is the combination of the unknown and the hazy separation from reality within the borderland that offer an ideal space in which to alter traditional societal rules and standard modes of behavior. As behavior transforms into a stylized and performative act, the shared and simultaneously internal experience affects Rovers supporters, opposition supporters, and players—influencing the sporting community's own narrative. The SRFC Ultras' central role in the singing section sparks songs and bodily movement that simultaneously reinforce and impact the Shamrock Rovers narrative.

The Stadium Space and its Rules

"At football games," collective reactions and expression are conducted in a manner that adopts aspects of carnival. Vocal and physical expression becomes much more pronounced, loud, and aggressive. In comparison to every day life, the stadium becomes a space in which emotional reactions (i.e. sadness, anger, joy) are encouraged. Further, the content of many songs encourages or depicts violence in ways that would be unacceptable in most social circles. Allowable behavior reaches extreme ends of the

emotional spectrum. The alteration of behavior becomes an important aspect of the crowd spectacle. Though this is an essential component of the Ultras' mentality, it is not only unique to the Ultra culture. John Dorney, now in his thirties, tells his experience at his first ever Rovers game from when he was nine, before the Ultras existed.

> I watched open-mouthed as Jody Byrne, the Dundalk goalkeeper (and former Rovers player), distracted by the abuse that he was getting from the terrace, swung absent-mindedly at a back pass. The ball careered off his ankle and slowly, painfully, trundled into his own net. "The lads", as other Rovers fans used to call them, roared, equally in derision as in celebration. I was hooked. Here was a world where you could not only act obnoxiously, you could do it with hundreds of like-minded people and not only that, but you could actually be rewarded for it. (2011, weplayonfridays.com)

Dorney's account, though some twenty years ago, describes very well the carnivalesque modes of behavior that occur at Shamrock Rovers matches. Bakhtin's concept of the "marketplace crowd" aptly depicts football supporters because of their ability to adopt a language of their own (Skradol 2012, 86). Along these lines, Eoghan Rice adds, "…it's a little bit of a rebellious thing…[to be] suddenly in with a bunch of lads who are screaming their heads off, screaming all sorts of abuse at players, referees and everything" (Personal Interview, June 21 2012). Not only is rowdy crowd behavior a significant source of excitement, it can become a source of empowerment for those involved, an inversion of roles in which mockery and lewd behavior are directed at high-status professional footballers. This type of activity is par for the course.

In addition, these altered parameters of behavior are "liberating…fearlessly subverting oppressive social norms" (Skradol 2012, 86). It is not surprising that those attracted to the singing section are often teenagers who are only beginning to get a taste

of independence. Predating the Ultras, carnivalesque behavior remains an important aspect of what the Ultras do. Very much a regular occurrence, "spontaneous bouts of euphoria" coupled with an "inversion of the social order" characterize the stadium borderland (Armstrong 2006, 194).

Further, the stadium rules can be ruthless and unapologetic. Individual taunts and collective chants at players are a common occurrence, often with the purpose of making players lose their concentration. Such behavior is meant to give Shamrock Rovers an advantage on the field—but it is also fun. Competition in the stadium is an acceptable place in which the Ultras can exert their dominance over another group.

> You couldn't talk like that abusively about anyone in most circles that I know. They'd be like, "what's that about, he's so aggressive." But at football it's ok. Even when you're playing football and you go in on a hard tackle and you hurt them, you're like, "are you ok?" But when it happens at a Rovers game it's like, "let him die." Or like someone has the ball and you don't like him—"take him out, break his legs!" So it's different. (Ó Brolacháin, Personal Interview 7/25/12)

Fiachra's comments on aggressive supporter behavior are also important because of the impermanence of the stadium rules. Though the aggressive and euphoric aspects of the borderland are an advantageous trait in many regards, it is so only within the confines of the stadium, inaccessible and essentially non-existent until the next match. Thus the behavioral transformation of the Ultras and the singing section is only temporary, ending usually as the players and supporters leave the stadium, to be reestablished at the next game. As such the borderland is a place of impermanence.

Altered behavior most certainly extends into the chants and songs that are sung throughout matches, which very often challenge the status of the opposition and offer commentary on real-life events.

> There was a lad who played for Cork back in the mid-90s whose marriage break up ended up in the papers —you can see where this is going—and he used to get a particularly hard time when they played Rovers. They had all sorts of songs about what had happened and he used to get this for 90 minutes. I remember at one stage Cork scored a late goal to win the game against us and the entire Cork team ran over to the Rovers fans basically with their two fingers up at us. It had touched a nerve, to put it politely. (Eoghan Rice, Personal Correspondence, 6/21/12)

Songs are an important aspect of the carnival atmosphere because they allow the individual to actively participate in an environment where the rules are drastically different than that of the outside world. Because of the nature of the songs and some sensitive content, Eoghan asked me to leave out the specifics of this particular story, indicative of the at-times ruthless nature of the singing section. Despite the drastic change in social norms, the stadium borderland is a permeable space. Supporters incorporate aspects of the outside world into their songs in order to say things that they could not outside the stadium space. There is safety in numbers within the crowd, which makes confrontation both entertaining and without risk—players must do their best to ignore the jeers of the fans. Similarly, taunts from the Ultras directed at opposition supporters are usually symbolic, without any real intention of physical confrontation. The carnivalesque behavior in the stadium does not apply to the players who must abide by a relatively strict code of behavior. This is a key source of tension and entertainment for the Ultras, who often taunt the opposition. Players who break the game's code of behavior will be penalized and can be mentally knocked off their game. Eoghan's example is a bit

complicated however. It is evident that the Rovers' fans taunts affected the Cork players, but in this scenario did not necessarily impact their performance in the way they had intended. Nonetheless, the Ultras believe in both the positive and adverse effects of chants. Carnivalesque aspects of the stadium borderland extend into music, allowing supporters and the Ultras to celebrate amongst themselves and confront their enemies, which they believe influences the outcome of the unfolding narrative.

Interaction Ritual in the Stadium Space

The guys were relaxed as the game kicked off, chatting amongst themselves, smoking, and occasionally singing or shouting their own individual commentary about the unfolding game. The first half ended at 0-0 without much drama, but the guys were starting to get agitated about fifteen minutes into the second half as Rovers failed to break down Monaghan's stingy defense. Rovers were making careless errors, losing possession of the ball, and couldn't capitalize on their chances in front of the goal.

As another shot flew over the crossbar and with frustrations mounting, the Ultras chanted, "Come on Rovers," echoing each other back and forth in a call and response. Most of the other supporters simply watched, rarely singing today. Engrossed and invested in the outcome, knowing they needed to win, the Ultras flung abuse as desperation rose. Kev started singing "Come on Rovers" as the team got a free kick very close to Monaghan's goal, but the ball sailed well over the bar. "Come on Rovers" came more and more often as the game wound down and the deadlock continued. The players played with urgency, trying to move the ball up the field as quickly as possible, but couldn't keep possession of the ball, to the chagrin of the Rovers support and the Ultras.

More supporters began to join in on the chants. No one could hear any Monaghan supporters over the shouts of Kev and Alex, who could barely contain themselves. Rovers were better, but it just didn't matter.

* * *

It is important to note that changes in behavior only occur under specific circumstances—this section focuses on the physical and spatial conditions that promote high-energy and performative participation. When these variables come together, the stadium environment can become charged with energy and emotion. These parameters are essential not only in promoting an altered set of rules, but also in beginning to develop an understanding of the effects of "interaction ritual" that form strong social bonds between Shamrock Rovers supporters (Collins 2004, 48). Anne Heider and Stephen Warner employ Collins' "interaction ritual" in their study of sacred harp singers, whose religious rituals have many similarities to the processes occurring in the stadium amongst Shamrock Rovers supporters.

The first aspect of "interaction ritual" is "'bodily co-presence', where people are assembled in the same space, affecting each other by their presence" (Heider and Warner 2010, 88). This is most certainly the case in football and more specifically with the SRFC Ultras and the Shamrock Rovers singing section, who deliberately pack their numbers into Block M, a small section of Tallaght stadium. Schafer and Roose add that the stands allow "spectators to follow the game(s) from only a few metres away, watching themselves and other spectators in the stadium more closely, and also allowing for a more intense, noisier, more resonating atmosphere which generates emotions more easily" (Schafer and Roose 2010, 237).

Specifically, songs and chants play an integral role in the feedback of emotions and excitement within the confines of a densely populated space. “Bodily co-presence” in the context of participatory singing relates to John Blacking’s concept of “fellow feeling,” which Suzel Ana Reily interprets as “an awareness and sensitivity to other people, to the ‘other self’…” (2006, 147) An integral aspect of fellow feeling (and the participatory nature of the ultras) is “bodily empathy,” or “the awareness of synchronicity with the physical movements of others around in a musical situation” (ibid). Collective participation (and thus collective communication and the sharing of emotions) is made easier when individuals are physically closer to one another. Being in a group of entirely like-minded individuals who wish to participate also makes singing easier. The participatory element at the Monaghan game was low-key in part because the away section was mixed with some who wanted to sing and others who were not interested. Many of these individuals would have sat in the Family Section at Tallaght Stadium. The diluted mixture of potential participants and non-participants meant the spatial separation inhibited the production of atmosphere. To communicate one’s emotions through a chant or a song across the stadium is exponentially more difficult, though not necessarily impossible. Thus, “bodily co-presence” requires the presence of like-minded individuals in close physical proximity.

The second piece of the puzzle is the “barrier to outsiders,” which can be initially intimidating if one doesn’t know the songs of the singing section. To be a part of the Ultras or even Block M, it is important to “participate, not just to watch and listen” (Heider and Warner 2010, 88). Furthermore, atmosphere is stoked by the presence and energetic support of the opposition, who are physically segregated from Rovers

supporters. The Monaghan trip showed the effects on crowd atmosphere when opposition fans are almost nonexistent. Songs are not only a celebration of self, but also a form of communication between groups. For this reason, it is unsurprising that the away game at Monaghan was a relatively quiet affair until the very end when the Ultras realized late in the game that Rovers might not win. Even then, their communication was directed to the players on the field, not the opposition—not always the case during games when Rovers play teams who bring stronger numbers of supporters. The effects of singing in the stadium context construct and reinforce self and "other." Integral to participatory singing, then, is the opposition's reaction to the song. Segregating the home support from the away support reinforces the "us vs. them" construct and opens up channels for collective communication and increasingly volatile emotions.

Third is the "'mutual focus of attention', where those present pay attention to the same thing…" (Heider and Warner 2010, 89) In this case, the unfolding football game is the irreplaceable focal point of the collective's attention. Songs and chants are subsequently tied to the events on the pitch, either as a way to affect the outcome or as a reaction to events that have just occurred. Additionally, the choice of songs, and subsequently the importance of the game, can also take on meaning based on the Ultras' constructed identity of the opposition.

One example would be a song the Ultras have sung when Rovers play Dundalk FC, who the Ultras generally look down upon as a somewhat backward and unbecoming town. The Ultras would amuse themselves with songs like "The Dundalk Family," to the tune of The Addams Family, adapting the lyrics to their own situation: "Their mother is their brother, their daughter is their sister, the Dundalk Family!" Such songs two-

dimensionalize their opponents' supporters and relegate them to caricatures of themselves as backward inbred hicks. This is but one example in which the constructed identities of both Shamrock Rovers and their opposition become ways in which spectators apply additional meaning to the action on the field. The game is the shared focal point that all meaning is built upon. The "mutual focus of attention" is inherently spatial, requiring the physical presence of supporters in which to begin communicative singing in conjunction with the game.

"Fourth is what Collins calls the 'shared mood' these ingredients produce, which can best be described as exhilaration, even ecstasy in the sense of being taken out of oneself and into another, larger, collectively defined space" (Heider and Warner 2010, 89). In the case of football supporters and Shamrock Rovers, the shared mood can be euphoric, but can vary drastically depending on the outcome of the game. As we will see later on, shared suffering can be a stronger bonding force than shared euphoria. Chants and songs play an integral role in sparking a collective reaction and evoking meaning from and the continuous Rovers narrative. Shared mood requires physical presence and participation within the stadium space.

As is evident based on Heider and Warner's interpretation of interaction ritual, many of the variables that promote the ideal atmosphere are spatial and physical—where such circumstances will help to inspire individuals to participate in singing and flag waving. This includes the quantity of supporters of both teams, their segregation to different parts of the stadium, and the density of the space in which the hardcore supporters are located. These parameters help reinforce the notion of the collective and

the "other" (Schafer and Roose 2010, 237). Fiachra and I touched on the intricacies of the variables that affect atmosphere:

> M: It's interesting how the vibe can vary at different games.
> F: It's weird now that you talk about it, some games there are times where you can't figure out why that game had such good atmosphere or that one was so bad.
> M: It seems like the results are important but there's this back and forth with the actual support and their fans.
> F: Well for starters, you're kind of embarrassed if you can hear the other supporters saying, "you're not singing," you know? And you often hear us singing something like, "we forgot that you were here." If the other crowd is quiet we'll usually slag them for it and that'll usually get them to start singing. The opposition has a big impact. Have you seen us play University College Dublin?
> M: No.
> F: You know that's just going to be terrible because they don't have fans and no one cares about them at all—so it's just going to be a horrible atmosphere. We'll score a goal and we'll all cheer when we're pushing for a goal, that's it.
> M: So you feel atmosphere is dependent on the opposition?
> F: Of course the match matters too. If we go 2-0 up in the first ten minutes, unless it's against someone really big that we shouldn't be beating that way, in which case we'll kind of have a party for a while. But say it's someone we expected to beat, if we go up 'too soon' that kills it. You'll have an initial celebration after the goal but after that the game's over and everyone just stops singing. So really, the ideal thing for atmosphere is big opposition or a club that we really hate. (Fiachra O Brolachain, Personal Interview 7/25/12)

Fiachra underlines the importance of the presence of opposition supporters and identifies two more variables which can have an effect on group singing and the production of atmosphere, which are the histories between Rovers and their opposition and of course the ongoing events on the pitch. If Rovers have a contentious history with a club, this will have a drastic boosting effect on the atmosphere, further evidence that the constructed narrative plays an integral role in the production of atmosphere. As a foil to Fiachra's example in which atmosphere reduces if a game becomes lopsided, the Monaghan game

showed that atmosphere builds if a game remains close for an extended period of time. In both cases, the narrative affects the atmosphere and alters the behavioral parameters within the stadium, creating an environment that incorporates aspects of carnival, which can even become aggressive and emotionally volatile.

The parameters described that change the stadium space "further a sense of community that, in many cases, even exceeds social positions or personal differences. For the time of the game, and for some time before and after that, it establishes a 'casual sociability' amongst potentially very different spectators" (Schafer and Roose 2010, 235-236). Thus, "interaction ritual" reinforces the carnivalesque and aggressive alterations in the social parameters, where outside status and background no longer affect the interactions of supporters in the context of the stadium borderland. A potentially emotional and conflict-laden space, the stadium space offers a uniquely evocative experience, as "modern societies develop in a way that increasingly suppresses, substitutes or regulates emotions" (Schafer and Roose 2010, 229).

As spectators narrativize sports and eventually become supporters, the stadium borderland emerges as a place in which many aspects of spectatorship promote a collective and emotional experience. The dramatic qualities of the game also play an important role in the emergence or lack or atmosphere at any given game, varying drastically depending on the context of the match. Ritual interaction and the football narrative can spark the beginnings of shared emotions and the construction of a united collective, entirely separate from the factors that unite or segregate them in the outside world. When all these variables come together, the stadium becomes a space in which

atmosphere is produced, predominantly in the form of chants, songs, displays, and flag waving.

The final variable in the production of atmosphere is the Ultras themselves, whose job is to enhance atmosphere and get people singing and waving flags. Now that the spatial and physical variables that impact atmosphere have been established, I will shift focus in upcoming chapters to the ritual effects of participatory performance in the stadium borderland. The upcoming chapter will describe the aspects of carnival and ritual within the SRFC Ultras' incorporation of displays, bodily movement, and song, and will unpack the role of songs and chants in constructing permanent notions of an imagined Shamrock Rovers collective.

2 LEARNING AND PERFORMING IDENTITY

The previous chapter notes the many outside factors that contribute to atmosphere and the communal effects that they can bestow upon Rovers supporters. It also characterizes the behavioral differences between the outside world and the stadium borderland. As we now focus on the performative behavior of the Ultras and the surrounding supporters, Chapter 2 will introduce additional paradigms of thought in order to best conceptualize their actions.

The Ritual and Carnival Aspects of Collective Performance

As has been established in Chapter 1, the Ultras' behavior adopts distinct aspects of carnival. Jack Santino argues that ritual is not only present in "obvious rituals of life-cycle passage and calendrical transition such as New Year's rites," but also in public events, which can be "aimed at transformation, both personal and social" (2011, 61). The performative aspects of expression of the Ultras certainly fall into this category, which Santino argues has gone relatively unrecognized in scholarship (2011, 62). Further, he asserts that there is a "porous" connection between festival and ritual—that there is "a lack of recognition that the carnivalesque can and does overlap with seriousness of intention, direct action, or implicit social change" (ibid).

In this regard, it is imperative to recognize when analyzing the Ultras' behavior that "high spirits or even riotous behavior do not indicate the presence or absence of ritual seriousness of an act," and that "festivity may, in fact, mask seriousness of

purpose" (ibid). Furthermore, "…the carnivalesque is often [ritual's] tool. Very often, festivity, celebration, and the carnivalesque are the modality of the ritualesque: they are the way norms are questioned and alternatives suggested" (Santino 2011, 67). I believe that Santino's conceptualization of the carnivalesque and ritualesque is a versatile paradigm in which to analyze the performative aspects of the Ultras' behavior. Both carnival and ritual can be described when analyzing the Ultras' incorporation of music in the crowd atmosphere. I intend to show that atmosphere, and especially songs, contain layers of meaning and serve many serious purposes despite their occurrence under the guise of celebration.

The Ultras' displays, singing, and dancing utilize the altered stadium rules (see chapter 1) in order to not only celebrate, but also to confront pivotal historical and current events that they seek to engage with. This opportunity is only temporary, usually occurring on game day within the confines of the stadium or on the supporters' buses. However, this window of time allows for collective activities to occur that can have potentially long-lasting effects.

> As Handelman suggests, the world is set right-side-up again after the festival; participants return to quotidian life. Festival ends. Ritual, on the other hand, has a direct and ongoing effect on everyday life. Changes wrought by ritual are carried into the world and are incorporated into everyday life as part of a new status quo. (Santino 2011, 68)

Santino's observation of the permanence of ritual and the impermanence of the carnivalesque within festival exemplifies the activities and effects of song and bodily expression on the terraces. Altered rules accompanied by the carnivalesque characteristics of behavior open up avenues in which the repetition of songs and collective movement have a more permanent effect on those participating. Thus, songs

and bodily movement not only reflect a collective identity, but also allow supporters to internalize it, reinforcing the existence and shared characteristics of the Shamrock Rovers community. Aspects of carnival ultimately make the serious nature of ritual possible.

It is notable that Barley Norton and Rachel Harris define ritual as "communal activities set apart from the everyday through varying degrees of formalism and performativity" (2002, 1). The stadium borderland (see chapter 1) serves as this barrier in which these learned activities can occur. Of course it must be understood that ritual in this context is a constructed term for the purpose of analysis—it is etic—rarely talked about in day-to-day activity by the Ultras. In addition to Santino's remarks on the permanence of ritual, Norton and Harris' overview on the purpose of ritual serves as a useful reference point in which to identify the many effects of singing for the Ultras. I have listed the first five (out of seven), which I feel are relevant to the stadium activities of the supporters in Block M.

> (1) structure ritual time – to create a "virtual" time which creates a sense of shared experience and to collapse the temporal boundaries between past, present and future;
> (2) structure ritual space – to acoustically mark out the space in which rituals are carried out and in religious rituals to collapse the boundaries between "human" and "spiritual" worlds;
> (3) articulate and/or transform ethnic and gender identities and differences, and social values and hierarchies;
> (4) express and/or evoke emotion;
> (5) promote healing. (Harris and Norton 2002, 2)

The first two have been touched upon in the previous chapter in relation to Collins' theory of interaction ritual and serve to elucidate the spectator experience in relation to the stadium space and the collective's focus on a singular unfolding event. The rest prove relevant as we begin to zoom in and focus on the physical and vocal activities of

the Ultras. The fifth aspect of ritual is most likely referenced in a way that implies physical healing, however I suggest that ritual in this scenario can also serve to promote the healing of emotional wounds, which will be discussed further in chapter 4.

Defining the Rovers Community as "Imagined"

It must also be understood that the greater Shamrock Rovers fan base (which includes ultras, hooligans, as well as more casual fans) adopts similarities to Benedict Anderson's theory of the imagined community. Though Anderson refers primarily to the nation, the Rovers community can be compared and contrasted to his criteria—"It is imagined because the members…will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (1983, 15). The Ultras, though well connected to many other Rovers supporters, do not know everyone in the singing section, let alone in the entirety of the stadium. In this sense, the Rovers community is "imagined." However—unlike Anderson's definition, which states that members only know theoretically of their compatriots' existence, this does not apply here because supporters are actively engaged together in musical dialogue with their attention focused on the same game. This is a connection within the imagined Rovers community between its members, though those connected may not necessarily know one another. Supporters participate together in the physical and vocal act of rooting for a common outcome and creating dialogue between themselves and the opposition's fans.

On the other hand, the Ultras' relationships with each other are entirely interpersonal because everyone is well acquainted with all the members of their group.

Personal relationships and friendships are not only established during games, but during the many hours that it takes to create banners and displays. Thus, creating atmosphere evokes strong feelings of togetherness within the Ultras, but songs in this context also serve to actualize the greater collective as well. The Ultras' style of support reflects how closely they situate themselves within the greater community. Fiachra, one of the leaders of the Shamrock Rovers FC Ultras, explained that other Ultras groups in Ireland don't always adopt the same mentality.

> Sligo does really good artsy stuff. They have really good, technically and aesthetically brilliant displays, but I don't think it really adds to the atmosphere. Generally they're lacking something. I also don't like the way them, Derry, Pats, and a few other smaller clubs—again trying to prove how separate they are—they move away from the main body of fans. Derry do that and it's one of the stupidest—there's twenty of them over in a small stand and then the other thousand of them are in another stand and I just don't see why they do it that way, and I'd never like to see us doing it that way. (Personal Interview, 7/5/12)

Fiachra exemplified the Ultras' own value on the group's involvement in the greater community. Karl at one point described it to me as a "big dysfunctional family." Fiachra also alludes to how the Ultras' own incorporation of their activities amongst the greater fan-base feeds back upon itself, creating a stronger, more evocative atmosphere. Anderson does not stress the community's "falsity," but rather likens it to an "imagining" or a "creation" (1983). Shamrock Rovers is such a community, built from the ever-constant narrativization of Shamrock Rovers' past, actualized and often initiated by the Ultras through songs and displays in the present.

The Rovers community is also similar to Anderson's conceptualization of the nation because it has "finite, if elastic boundaries" (1983, 16). Anderson stresses that, "No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind." Along these same lines, the

Shamrock Rovers collective needs its opponents in order to exist. Pitted against one another in the stadium space, football sparks a struggle between the opposing communities who have constructed perceptions of their own collective identity as well as that of their opponents.

The rest of this chapter will expound further on Harris and Norton's third and fourth bullet points, which incorporate the construction of the Shamrock Rovers narrative and how ritual aspects of songs and displays serve to "transform…social values and hierarchies" (Harris and Norton 2002, 2) from the outside world. This is accomplished in the stadium space by educating newcomers and reinforcing the shared identity of the Shamrock Rovers community through chants and displays. Such activities also serve to "express and evoke emotion"—a response to the ritual process (ibid). Additionally, it will further discuss the manner in which existing songs can be adopted unchanged, or lyrics can be altered to existing melodies in order to evoke varying emotions and responses. Such songs define, reinforce, and actively comment on the Rovers narrative, addressing current and past events. In this context, collective singing as ritual serves to actualize the imagined Rovers community and define a collective identity that lasts long after the game has ended and the carnivalesque components of performance have dissolved. This ritual process is both a reflective and a communicative tool that is directed towards players and opposition supporters. To understand the Ultras' ritualized use of displays and songs, it is necessary to revisit the past in order to understand how constructed identity affects present-day collective expression.

A Brief History of Shamrock Rovers

Shamrock Rovers Football Club was founded officially in 1901, and has over the last century become the most successful football team in the history of Irish domestic football, accumulating seventeen league titles and twenty-four Irish cups. (A league championship is contested over the span of a nine-month schedule, while the FAI Cup, or Football Association of Ireland Cup, is a single elimination tournament that takes place in between league games.)

By the 1920s, Rovers had settled into their new home ground at Milltown Road in Ringsend, Dublin. The park grew over the years as covered stands and terraces were built surrounding the pitch (shamrockrovers.ie). It was in these formative years that Shamrock Rovers first donned their green and white, horizontal striped jerseys, which have been worn ever since, earning them the nickname "The Hoops." Glenmalure Park, as it was called, became the site in which Rovers earned many of their trophies. The club was eventually bought out by the Kilcoyne family, who lured the present coach of Dundalk, Jim McLaughlin, to Shamrock Rovers. He oversaw the club during their four-year title-winning streak between the years of 1984 and 1987.

However, despite this unprecedented period of success, the end of the 1987 season was met with tragedy for supporters of Shamrock Rovers. "…The news leaked out that the Kilcoynes had sold the Milltown ground for property development. Fury erupted amongst the Hoops faithful who boycotted the alternative venue of Tolka Park and the club was brought to its knees. In 1988 the Kilcoynes sold out to a consortium of interested fans led by John McNamara but efforts to buy back Milltown failed and the

ground was lost forever" (shamrockrovers.ie). This defining moment in Rovers' history was an emotionally scarring event for many of the most devoted supporters.

> I dug up a bit of the pitch, as many people were doing, and stuck it in a crisp bag. I kept it in a Chinese takeaway dish for around three years. I used to water it regularly so it was still growing and I put little Subetteo men on it. Unfortunately, one day I dropped something and it hit the shelf that I kept the grass on and a part of Glenmalure Park flew across the room and fell into countless little bits. I tried putting it back together but it was gone. (Macdara Ferris 2006, 143)

The stadium was torn down and transformed into a housing development, but Milltown and Glenmalure Park are far from forgotten, even today.

The sale of Milltown and the departure of the Kilcoynes led to a trophyless drought and crippling financial debt in the amount of 3 million euro that left the club without a home (Rice 2006, 183). Over this span, they were nicknamed by opposing supporters, who relished Shamrock Rovers' hardships, as "Ireland's Nomads." Over the next two decades, Rovers rented out their opponents' stadiums all over Dublin as the club looked for new investors and planned to build a stadium in Tallaght, a suburb of Dublin. However, "the chairman had gambled on a policy of high spending in the hope that Tallaght stadium—first promised in 1996 but as of yet still not constructed—would provide sufficient funding to repay the debts" (Rice 2006, 184). "Ultimately, it was a failed policy and one that almost brought an end to Shamrock Rovers FC" (ibid).

In 2001, the SRFC Ultras were founded and began making their presence known at matches, adding a new and exciting dynamic to the grim circumstances surrounding the club.

> It just seemed like this thing we were involved in was dying slowly every single week. That's another interesting thing about the Ultras—the club was on its knees completely. The Ultras did breath new life into it. Rovers used to be pretty depressing to be honest. They kind of put more energy, more life into the club, and I don't know, they kept people's belief going a little bit, like this might actually work, like there's actually a point in keeping going to this dying institution. It was Irish sport's longest funeral basically, for years dying that little bit more. So the Ultras did breathe life back into it and you have to give them credit for that. The young people going into the games would have seen all these flares and flags and smoke bombs or whatever and kids love all that. It certainly kept a generation of people interested—it kept them going. I think in a lot of ways the Ultras served the survival of the club because they went very close to the wall in 2005 and we'll never know I suppose, but without the Ultras, would enough people have been left to actually save them? (Eoghan Rice, Personal Interview)

It is hard to pin down the long-term effects of the Ultras on the survival of the club, but it is clear that they enhanced the match-going experience and boosted morale during an era in which spirit was particularly low.

On the financial side, talks with investors fell through time and time again as the club struggled to pay its debts. As a final potential investor backed out, a last ditch plan was put into place—a group of supporters called the 400 Club launched a successful buyout of Shamrock Rovers (Rice 2006, 189). After humiliatingly being relegated to the lower division in 2005, Shamrock Rovers managed to pay their debts under a fan-owned and democratic style of management. They were re-promoted in 2006 and now reside in the newly built Tallaght Stadium, which was built in 2008 (shamrockrovers.ie). Since their promotion back to the League of Ireland, Shamrock Rovers have won the league twice—in 2010 and 2011, reestablishing them as the most decorated (and also the most hated) club in Ireland. However, Rovers' fight for survival from the late 1980s to the late

2000s has left its mark on the club and its supporters despite the club's improved circumstances.

Actualizing the Rovers Community through Performance

The history of Shamrock Rovers Football Club is an integral aspect of collective identity within the Rovers community. This kind of information is often disseminated to young fans through books, stories, and more prominently through singing and presentation of displays during matches. In particular, songs and displays tend to reinforce the most crucial aspects of Shamrock Rovers identity, which both celebrate and reflect on definitive moments of the club's history. Often celebrating past glory, songs and displays demonstrate a pride in success. Songs serve as constant reminders of the legendary Rovers team that won the "Four in a Row" in the 1980s. "Shamrock Rovers 1901" embodies many of the important aspects of the collective Rovers identity.

Shamrock Rovers 1901
Tallaght's the place that we belong
Green and white's the colors we do wear
Nobody likes us we don't care.

The song continues without lyrics to the same tune, much like an instrumental section:

Na na na na na na na,
Na na na na na na na, HOOPS!

"Shamrock Rovers 1901" includes numerous reference points, including the official year of the club's founding, the club's adoption of a new home in Tallaght, and commonly used references to the club's colors and their traditional "hooped" jerseys. Finally, the song frames the collective's outlook as one that is pitted against the world, a common trend that will be discussed further in chapter three.

"McLoughlin's Aces" has also stood the test of time as a song that references past glories of the 80s, which is still a definitive aspect of present-day Rovers identity.

Oh the lads you'll never see us coming
Fastest team in the land
You'll never see us coming
All the lads and lassies, smiles upon their faces
Going down to Milltown Road
To see McLoughlin's aces.

Often sung with particular emphasis on "Going down to Milltown Road," "McLoughlin's Aces" is a strong reminder of Rovers' past successes under the legendary coach Jim McLouglin. Its current use reflects the importance of the club's past in the collective's presentation of itself, both to its own members, the players, and to their opposition.

In contrast, the Rovers collective is also defined by the club's twenty-year struggle in which fans suffered through financial drama and subsequent failures on the pitch. As a result, the theme of home, both old and new, is a recurring topic within the Rovers repertoire, referencing the sale of Milltown and the years of homelessness in which the club rented various stadiums. Songs also recount the conclusion to this heartache, telling of the new stadium built in Tallaght. "Take Me Home Milltown Road" serves as an ideal example:

(To the tune of "Take Me Home Country Road" by John Denver)

Take me home, Milltown Road
To the place I belong
Tallafornia saved the Rovers
Take me home, Milltown Road.

Despite the "conclusion" to the homeless years, songs still tend to reflect the more painful segments of Shamrock Rovers' history and incorporate them into the present collective identity. The second verse begins:

Take me home—HOOPS HOOPS—Milltown Road—HOOPS HOOPS!
To the place I belong
Tallafornia saved the Rovers
Take me home, Milltown Road.

The second line of the second verse injects a bit more excitement, incorporating "hoops" into the lyrics, which is a commonly used term in many of the Ultras' songs. However, the tone usually becomes more somber as the crowd sings the final line, "Take me home, Milltown Road."

Tales of success and failure impact not only the identities of Rovers supporters who were physically present at these events, but also the new fans, including many of the Ultras, who have since learned of the club's history through stories, songs, and displays. The duality of success and failure are contrasting themes that have come to define the imagined Rovers collective. Many of the Ultras were taught about Rovers history through their fathers, as is exemplified by an excerpt from *The Four in a Row Story*, in which Colm, Fiachra, and Andy, all members of the Ultras, were interviewed:

> "I have been well-informed by my dad," says Andy, "he told me about how great the team was and all about what happened to Milltown. I have seen photos of Milltown and I often think of all the heartbreak. I would be angry with the Kilcoynes for what they did, it has been passed on from my da towards me."
>
> While older supporters might be skeptical regarding how deep the feelings of the young lads could possibly go, Colm provides some food for thought. "Although we weren't even born then we were affected too by what happened to Milltown," he says. "We all started supporting Rovers during a time when the club had no home of their own. We were not affected as much as the people who were there during the Four-in-a-Row but we were still victims..."
>
> ...Fiachra admits to being not behind the door when it comes to reminding others of the success of the time. "It was an historic achievement and a record for Ireland so we remind the opposition of it and we also remind our own players of who they are playing for."
>
> This they manage to do by joining with others in singing about McLaughlin's Aces and Going Down the Milltown Road as well as that other song We Won Four In A Row…While these lads are living in a

> different era…they all have a good knowledge of the great successes and great players of the past. (Goggins, 121-123)

Goggins' passage shows the oral dissemination of Rovers' history through generations of Rovers supporters and the subsequent actualization of this taught identity through song. Songs and displays can educate newcomers, but also reinforce aspects of the imagined Rovers identity that include formative events and contrasting themes of success and failure. Fiachra also shows that songs are not just a reflexive tool, but are also directed at players and opposition. Songs reinforce the game's contextual meaning within the greater narrative, referencing events that have already taken place.

For individuals who regularly attend games, it is almost impossible to avoid learning Rovers' history—the collective and performative aspects of communication (song, displays, etc.) initiated by the Ultras reflect the current definition of the Shamrock Rovers collective. Songs reflect the complexity of the narrative constructed by Rovers fans, in which supporters recognize their success, but also actively choose to remember past hardships as a part of the current identity. Intrinsically connected to these polarizing aspects of Shamrock Rovers is the idea of home and the emotions that are still clearly attached to Milltown, a place that no longer exists, and Tallaght, the place that "saved the Rovers."

The Ultras' concentration on the theme of home in their choice of songs also reveals that the stadium borderland is not a neutral space, but rather is territorialized by Rovers supporters and the Ultras alike as "their home" ground. Martin Stokes asserts that "'places' constructed through music involve notions of difference and social boundary"—certainly the case for the SRFC Ultras in the stadium borderland, where the collective is actualized in the face of conflict (1994, 3). Richard Giulianotti argues that

the creation of atmosphere is a primary reason for the individual's fond associations with a particular place, asserting that "topophilia," or "the deep affection of people towards particular social spaces, or 'places'," is relevant for many football supporters (1999, 69). This is because a "psychosocial relationship to these spaces has emerged, as they acquire an embedded meaning" (ibid). For the Ultras and the greater imagined community, this emotional connection with place can be seen in their particular focus on the transition from Milltown to Tallaght. Themes of home, homelessness, success, and failure are all aspects of a collective identity reinforced by the performance of songs and displays during matches.

In this sense, the present-day collective identity that is reinforced and actualized is strongly based on past events. However, this also means that new events can shape the collective identity of the club, indicating that the Rovers' identity is a malleable concept, able to be shaped by the present. Tim Rice explains the constructivist standpoint, that "…identities are always constructed from the resources available at any given moment" (Rice 2007, 24). In the case of Shamrock Rovers, I argue that present events can alter collective identity, but that selected memories of definitive events can also have a potentially long shelf life. Their lasting power is strong (as is evident from the reference points from the 1980s that are still relevant for Rovers supporters), but it seems that they lose potency as they become farther removed from the individuals that actually experienced them. This would in part explain why songs sung at Rovers games more often reference events from the 1980s onward. Additionally, the "Four-in-a-Row" in the 80s also serves as arguably the strongest reminder of Rovers' superiority over their opposition, reinforcing the collective's belief in its own identity as "Ireland's Number 1."

However, it is not only what is said, but also *how* content is performed by the Ultras that gives the atmosphere at Shamrock Rovers games its power, attracting newcomers to its ranks. This helps to ensure the collective's strength and continued existence. Davy offered his perception of the Ultras' contributions.

> We're getting something done—we're giving something back to the club. We give off a positive atmosphere and we attract fans. That's one of the reasons that I enjoyed Rovers so much [when I started out], looking at the likes of flare displays and banners and flags. It's one of those things that attracts people to football and it's one of the more important parts of the matchday experience. Yeah you're watching live football, brilliant, that's exactly what we want, but we want to make it even better. (Davy Doyle, Personal Interview, 7/16/12)

Part of Davy's motivation for being a part of the Ultras is his belief that the creation of atmosphere strengthens the Shamrock Rovers community. Music and carnival atmosphere thus educate supporters in a way that keeps them coming back, incorporating them into the collective. Paul Donohoe reflected on his first impression of the newfound *ultra* style of support.

> During a game against Bohs in 2001, someone managed to get their hands on a load of flares. And the thing is for me, I remember being at that game, and I wasn't involved in the organization of it, but I remember seeing pictures and it just looked so fucking cool. I think that's what it was. It made what had been drab and boring bright and colorful and noisy. So it added a whole new aesthetic to the matchday experience. (Paul Donohoe, Personal Interview, 6/15/12)

Songs and displays serve to disseminate the Rovers' collective history and to reinforce it in visually and aurally exciting ways. This was particularly vital as a mode of survival during the years when Shamrock Rovers FC was fighting for its life on and off the field.

However, this still remains an important aspect of music's role in promoting the collective's growth.

The Ultras, many of them teenagers, are a prime example of supporters who are initially attracted to the aurally and visually spectacular style of support taking place in the stands. The sheer volume of the densely packed singing section reverberates around the roofed terraces, out onto the pitch and across the field to the away supporters, providing a space in which high energy and varying emotions are generated. The combined aural, visual, and physical components of the matchday experience create this spectacle in the stands. Voices lock together in conjunction with bodily movement—what Newbie, an Ultra, called "a big wall of color and motion" (Personal Interview, 7/8/12), which creates "the physical realization of the imagined community" (Anderson 1983, 149).

These aspects of singing, dancing, and flag waving get many supporters "hooked," as is evident from the Ultras' extremely consistent attendance rate at all Rovers games. The constant exposure, repetition, and eventual participation in the performative acts fittingly embodies Bourdieu's notion of habitus. For the Ultras, the recurring "internalization of externality" ultimately leads to their "externalization of internality" (1977, 72). Habitus is described as "the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities propensities to think, feel, and act in determinate ways…" and is an apt description of the Ultras' mode of expression of identity and emotions (Wacquant 2005, 316). Songs are a versatile medium for communication and expression because even the same song can have varying meaning depending on the situation in which it is introduced. However, because of their

finite repertoire of songs, expression can best be described as "regulated improvisation" (Bourdieu 1977, 79). Supporters use an internalized repertoire of songs in order to express unique messages that address unfolding events in real time. A League game against Shelbourne FC illustrates this point.

* * *

At halftime in Tolka Park, as rain poured down onto the field, the Ultras stood amongst the rest of the Rovers support under the terraces talking about the events of the first half against Shelbourne FC. The announcer crackled on the loud speaker, announcing the youth team's most recent success, having won a local tournament. They looked quite young and couldn't have been older than twelve, wearing baggy Shelbourne jerseys and training bottoms. In standard procedure, the team along with their coaches walked to each stand and hoisted the trophy in triumph to the applause of each section of fans. Assuming a kinder sporting reception, the youth team raised the cup in front of the Rovers support.

To the glee of everyone in the away section, someone burst out, "You'll Never Play for Rovers!"—a song usually sung at opposing players during in-game situations. The chant caught on in a split second and the stand got louder in volume, repeating the phrase over and over. In the confusion, the young players looked around in the rain, wondering how exactly to react. The youth coaches, equally unprepared, and with little other option, chose finally to laugh. The kids began to smile and the team eventually walked away as the crowd continued to sing.

* * *

In this scenario, the Rovers support reappropriated a relatively standard chant in an original way, not only reminding the young players of the altered rules within the stadium space, but also rejecting the players', coaches', and administration's somewhat foolish presumption that the trophy presentation would elicit a brief and polite applause. Rather, Rovers supporters chose to poke fun of the youth players because of their inability to cope with the situation and their naïveté
in raising the trophy in front of them. Ultimately, this altered presentation of a well-known chant elicited a much different meaning and therefore created a much different reaction amongst the youth players as well the Rovers supporters than it would have during a senior-level match.

Navarro argues that, "habitus is especially developed through processes of socialization and determines a wide range of dispositions that shape individuals in a given society" (2006, 16). Thus, as supporters and the Ultras internalize the limited body movements and songs, they are able to participate in the sung expression and commentary that occurs in response to the unfolding narrative and current events on the field. The chant directed at the Shelbourne youth team worked because everyone already knew the song's more typical usage and therefore understood the joke associated with the song's reappropriation. Navarro also adds that human behavior "may vary in accordance to the social environment, because unstable social domains may produce unstable systems of dispositions that generate irregular patterns of action" (ibid). In the stadium space, the on-field events are an unpredictable variable that elicits a broad range of reactions, which are often expressed through songs and chants. Thus, songs in varying contexts can be an effective tool that creates infinitely versatile meanings and expressions

within a limited repertoire of collectively learned songs. Nonetheless, songs with varying contextual meanings also constantly serve to reinforce and actualize the imagined Rovers community as part of the matchday experience.

Creating Chants

A few weeks before I arrived in Dublin marked the 25th anniversary of the sale of Milltown, which initiated two decades of turmoil for the club and its followers. *Extratime.ie* reported on an event organized to commemorate and reflect on the loss of Rovers' old home.

> On Friday to commemorate that last game, Shamrock Rovers and their club's Heritage Trust organised a walk from the monument outside Milltown to Rovers' new home in Tallaght.
>
> The walk began with a small ceremony in Milltown that was addressed by former Rovers player Mick Byrne, scorer of the last Rovers goal in Milltown, in front of a crowd of around 200 club supporters. The fans then set out on the 10km walk to Tallaght Stadium ahead of that evening's game against Dundalk. (Ferris, 2012)

The event was a reflective procession that symbolized the club's trials over the last quarter-century. The walk led to Tallaght for that night's match. Karl, having shown up with a group of the Ultras with cans in hand, found the moment to be ripe for the adaptation of a song.

> So on this march it was a two mile walk from Milltown to Tallaght, everyone was drinking and had cans, so safe to say we were fairly drunk. So we were all thinking there has to be a good atmosphere at this game. This was against Dundalk, another club that we hate. So two days before that, Louis Kilcoyne had died. He had sold Milltown, really fucked the club up and in my drunken state I thought to get going:
>
> "Louis Kilcoyne your wife's a widow,
> you've been replaced by a dildo."

> That got going the start of the second half and was sung for the whole match. So the next weekend we're playing at Tallaght and the place was hopping singing this song. (Karl Seale, Personal Interview, 7/1/12)

Karl explained how the Shamrock Rovers version was created to the melody of a traditional Irish tune called "The Lonesome Boatman." Occasionally Karl and several of the other Ultras make a trip up to Belfast to watch Cliftonville Football Club and their Ultras group, who the SRFC Ultras have an informal friendship with. (This friendship is allowable because Cliftonville play in the Northern Irish league, meaning that Shamrock Rovers rarely play them, and therefore aren't threatened by them from a competitive standpoint.) One such visit gave Karl the idea for his own version of the song.

> The way that started, it's a republican song, an IRA song. So we're up at Cliftonville [Football Club], which is in Belfast, and they're a very Catholic club anyway—very pro-Republican. And as I said, originally there were no words to the song, it's a tune. So Cliftonville and all the IRA sing [to the tune] about how Princess Diana was killed in a car crash, with Dodi Fayed, who she was engaged to. They sing to that tune, "Oh Princess Di was riding Dodi when her head fell off her body…" And then also there was a big Unionist fella called Billy Wright and he was killed in jail, so the Cliftonville fans also sing to that tune, "Oh Billy Wright, your wife's a widow, you've been replaced by a dildo" (ibid).

Karl's story about how he came up with his song and its subsequent popularity with Shamrock Rovers supporters elucidates the process in which songs are created and collectively sung. First, the altered rules in which songs are performed allow supporters to approach difficult situations in ways that wouldn't be acceptable under normal circumstances. In what would usually be considered vile and explicit in everyday life, aspects of the carnivalesqe allow supporters to use verbal imagery as commentary that taps into the community's perceived anguish.

Second, adaptation and reappropriation of songs is common practice. Though originality is highly valued, borrowing and altering previously used ideas is not necessarily viewed as copying if it is used in an original manner in which to say something new. Newbie asserts his own view that originality can still emerge out of products that already exist. “I think the word is ‘cultural disembedding’, where you take one culture from an area where it started and put it into another culture,” he said during our interview. “Every single area of life has that sort of thing. If that didn’t happen, then hip-hop music would still only be in certain areas of New York and people would only play stuff in certain areas and certain cities.” (Sam Leadbeater, Personal Interview, 7/8/12)

Nonetheless, the ways in which Karl’s song was created and subsequently sung still seemingly emerges out of his experiences in the stadium space, which engulfs the participant in a narrative that sparks reaction and commentary in the form of songs and displays. The method that the Ultras use to communicate and express themselves is nonetheless based on an internalization of experiences that they reappropriate and subsequently externalize. Though made out of “old” pieces, the song expresses a unique message regarding an entirely unrelated situation even though the song was originally meant to be sung at Cliftonville’s games. Karl’s creation can thus be described as “regulated improvisation,” while still being considered original by the Rovers community.

Karl also reflects the developmental process in which reactions to the collective performance of songs over time can develop one’s personal resonance with the music’s content.

> Just from hearing songs for years and years at matches…It's like how do you know your favorite band's songs? It's from listening to them and just joining in with them. When you're joining in on a song you're subconsciously learning them. You're not thinking what are the words, they're just going in your ear and out your mouth and after loads of times they get stuck in your head, ya know? (Karl Seale, Personal Interview, 7/1/12)

Karl's enjoyment and willingness to learn chants is indicative of his personal identification with the content—as he learns he can actively express himself as a part of the greater community. For the Ultras in particular, singing becomes second nature, an essential component of habitus.

"The Lonesome Boatman" also embodies both aspects of carnival and ritual in a commentary that recalls the collective pain of the loss of Milltown and the recent news of Louis Kilcoyne's death. Where "respecting the dead" is common practice, the march and the ensuing game became a space where, dead or alive, Louis Kilcoyne's actions could be commented on freely. These long lasting feelings of hurt were conveyed in a celebratory fashion by utilizing lewd humor in an entirely unapologetic fashion. At the same time, the long-term ritual effects of participating in performative acts within the stadium are evident in Karl's song. Implicit in the making of the new lyrics to "The Lonesome Boatman" is Karl's commentary on an event that occurred right around the time that he was born. The selling of Milltown was not a personal act of malice towards him, nor was he a Shamrock Rovers fan when it happened. Nonetheless, his creative reaction to the event indicates that atmosphere and music serve a ritualistic purpose in which supporters are bonded together through the collective act of singing. Furthermore, collective singing allows a diverse set of individuals of differing ages and backgrounds to share an

imagined Shamrock Rovers identity. In this sense, the past remains relevant to the newer generation, including the SRFC Ultras, who reinforce the imagined community through their song choices that actualize events from days gone by.

In addition, songs often sung at Rovers games tend to evoke a common set of shared emotions. Newbie commented that he particularly enjoyed singing "Build Me Up Buttercup," an R&B hit by The Foundations, for its evocative qualities. It is arguably one of the most popular and frequently utilized songs at Rovers matches.

> There's nothing about Rovers in the song or anything. But I think "Build Me Up Buttercup" actually does fit because the lyrics, "why do you build me up just to let me down baby," and most of our fans who've been going for a long time would have gone through years and years of heartache and despair and we finally got a vein of success after terribleness and all those years of draught. It does actually fit quite well. (Sam Leadbeater, Personal Interview, 7/8/12)

"Build Me Up Buttercup" is sung entirely unchanged, unlike "The Lonesome Boatman," but still adopts an alternative meaning that references Rovers' woes between the 1980s and the mid-2000s. The song is understood by the Ultras and the regular supporters to reference the homeless years, and more specifically, the time period in the 2000s when a number of potential backers to the club backed out of investing in the club, continually dashing supporters' hopes that the club would move into its own stadium. As Becker describes, "a *habitus of listening* suggests…a disposition to listen with a particular kind of focus, to expect to experience particular kinds of emotion, to move with certain stylized gestures, and to interpret the meaning of the sounds and one's emotional responses in somewhat (never totally) predictable ways." (2004, 71) Thus, the ritual effect of songs in the stadium space does not simply actualize a shared collective identity;

it also has the potential to evoke an intended set of shared emotions because of the song's collectively understood reference point.

Songs that last the test of time seem to not only reference past events, but tend to have adaptive meanings. "Build Me Up Buttercup" in this sense is not just an emotional reference point, but holds current weight as well. Despite the unchanging nature of the lyrics, songs in this regard can acquire various layers of meaning.

> M: So do you feel like that song has as much meaning now?
> N: I do actually. I was gonna say we're doing well now—not so much this season—but the last few years we've been doing fantastically well. Singing that song has had kind of a 'we told you so' vibe to it. We are finally back where we belong. And then when we are losing games, that song is again back to its original defiant meaning of "we'll never die" (Sam Leadbeater, Personal Interview, 7/8/12).

Newbie notes that "Build Me Up Buttercup" can be utilized in different situations, where the same lyrics can have an entirely different meaning. He also further elucidates his own perception of the Rovers collective identity—that "Build Me Up Buttercup" embodies the community's resilience in the face of adversity. Thus, supporters reinforce and actively express the perceived qualities of the imagined community through song. Gary Robson argues in his analysis of chants at Millwall FC in London that the purpose of "ritual language and communication" is to "operationalize, enact and experience them" (2000, 167). Thus, the full power of the chants comes not only from their content, but primarily through the collective act of singing, which actualizes the community during the game.

Songs, as a part of the crowd atmosphere, serve to reinforce a learned imagined community, as taught by fathers, friends, and by the singing section. The defining moments of the club, dating farther back than many of the Ultras have actually

experienced for themselves, serve to create a shared identity between the generations of Rovers supporters, allowing young and old to grapple with the club's polarized self-image. Success and failure, home and homelessness—these themes are chosen by the supporters who define the identity of the club. As new supporters internalize their surroundings and learn of the importance of the Rovers narrative, chants become a way for them to express themselves in various ways—in essence, externalizing their internalities. Collective singing serves to actualize the imagined community's identity and re-actualizes the evocative aspects of Rovers history, for young and old to understand and to feel. Newbie was especially drawn to the community's resilience in the face of hardship—the "We'll Never Die" attitude. But songs are not static in meaning. Rather, they are flexible, changing with the times and dependent on the context in which they are sung. They can reference both the past and the present. Karl's song showed that songs are also used as an active commentary, not simply a representation of a static idea. Songs become flexible in that they can vary in meaning depending on the context in which they are introduced. The Ultras play a significant role in prompting songs and sparking atmosphere. The physical act of collective singing serves to actualize the imagined community, and over time changes supporters' own perceptions of self and establishes a spiritual ownership over the stadium space. In its creation, the permanence of ritual is evident. "Rovers has made people who they are—and that's the thing about Rovers," said Davy. "It changes you" (Davy Doyle, Personal Interview, 7/16/12).

3 CREATING CONFLICT: THE SRFC ULTRAS, THE LEAGUE OF IRELAND, AND ENGLAND

The impressions you make when you're a teenager stick with you. I guess that's why I'll always love Tony Cousins, I'll always associate Waterford with getting knocked out of the cup in '97, and I'll always, always fuckin' hate Bohs.

–Eoghan Rice
(Personal Correspondence, 8/28/12)

By examining the creation and performance of songs by the SRFC Ultras and the greater Shamrock Rovers community, it is evident that supporters incorporate a mythologized history into their present-day collective identity. From a broader perspective, certain characteristics of Jane Sugarman's definition of "national myth" can be used to describe the Shamrock Rovers community (Sugarman 2011, 33).

> National myths assemble in a narrative form a variety of symbolic and metaphoric constructs. Their primary role is to constitute a basis for group identity, particularly in times when new circumstances prompt a group to redefine its character and internal composition. Frequently such myths draw on past events, but in a way that addresses present circumstances and purposes (ibid).

Though Rovers' history is not "national," Sugarman's theory proves most useful in observing the way selective events in Rovers history form a canon that defines the community. It will also be helpful in this chapter because of its primary function: to form a common identity and a "unified sense of purpose" in the face of conflict (Sugarman 2011, 35). Though the future of Shamrock Rovers has been in doubt in the past, the existence of their enemies is necessary for their own survival as a community. In this sense, the Rovers community is further defined by its relationships with other LOI communities and the larger spectrum of Irish society.

As part of the spectating experience, conflict is an integral component of the sporting narrative that is created around singular games, into seasons, and then years of competition between Shamrock Rovers and their opposition. This chapter suggests that group camaraderie not only emerges from the actualization of collective identity, but is further enhanced by Ultras' shared enemies, who rouse powerful forces of anger and aggression as part of the footballing experience. I argue that songs not only reflect these animosities, but also serve as an allowable mode of symbolic conflict and violence within the stadium space. Similar to the Ultras' internalization and externalization of their love of Rovers through song, hatred is bred in a similar fashion, through constant exposure to conflict in the sporting narrative and the reinforcement of aggressive attitudes and behavior through performance of songs and the presentation of displays.

Shamrock Rovers' unparalleled success over the past century against the multitude of clubs across the country has cast them as the most hated club in Ireland by other supporters in the League of Ireland. Though the Ultras will claim to hate numerous clubs that they play, they specially reserve their hatred for Bohemians FC and their supporters. Much like the collective Rovers identity, hatred is bred based on selected moments in the Rovers narrative, but animosities are also reinforced constantly through aggressive behavior in and around the stadium space between both communities, reflecting the porous nature of the borderland. Songs reflect, but also actively embrace the Rovers community's negative standing in the eyes of all other Irish football supporters—further uniting the Ultras and the Rovers community together in defiance against all others. However, this is only one aspect of the Ultras' perceptions that "no one likes us, we don't care." The Ultras' very existence is in part due to the greater social and

cultural context in which they live—unable to escape their perceptions of the imposing cultural influence of the British. The Ultras have sought in their own way to resist and recreate their own identities through performance, perceiving their own collective standing in Ireland as that of a vastly disregarded and misunderstood minority. Ultimately, the Ultras' relationships with the greater Irish community, the League of Ireland community, and Bohemians FC profoundly impact their own definition of themselves, further increasing their collective solidarity against the world.

Brandon Randolph-Seng's research and theories on social identity proves useful in examining how Rovers situate themselves in the broader social context. The Ultras' separation of themselves from communities that support other teams complements the idea that "people will adopt social identities that maximize difference between one's own group and other, non-self groups" (2012, 337). "These perspectives lead to the prediction that the likelihood of identification with any given ingroup increases to the extent that a relevant outgroup is also present, because an outgroup provides a critical reference point that can be used to define the ingroup and distinguish it from other groups" (2012, 338). The Shamrock Rovers narrative fittingly contextualizes the Ultras and the Rovers community not only within the League of Ireland, but also their perceptions of Irish society. Thus, the ritual and performative aspects of being a part of the Ultras, as well as the Shamrock Rovers community, places individuals within a small group that allows them to distinguish themselves from the vast majority.

Further, Randolph-Seng observes the long-term effects of activity between different groups, arguing that activation of relevant social identities can occur such that "relevant ingroup and outgroup symbols, and not necessarily ingroup and outgroup

individuals themselves, may…activate relevant identities…" (Randolph-Seng 2012, 338). Through vocal actualization of collective identity and conflict in the stadium space, continued participation in collective performance can alter supporters' perspectives and opinions regarding opposing supporters as well as their broader position in society.

As this chapter continues, my analyses will revolve around Samuel Araujo's argument regarding the conceptualization of music and violence. Referencing "contemporary Western political philosophies that emphasize academic standards of distancing, neutrality, and objectivity," Araujo argues that this approach should be questioned because these "stances seem to have failed to produce concrete alternatives to violence in its extreme forms…" (2010, 218)

> This has resulted in a paralyzing and dangerous tautology leading us to our last and perhaps more provocative conceptual argument, which revolves around the following ideas: (1) This tautology might be surpassed only by grasping violence as structurally central to social forms. Here violence is understood as a concept to be theorized, and not as an a priori denial of order or as a rule-breaking exception within society. (2) This position may require acknowledging positive meanings in certain kinds of violence, even when they seem to (and particularly when they do) threaten the world order as we know it.

Though violence is a real danger, it is also uncommon, largely enacted symbolically through displays and songs, which can elevate levels of aggression, emotion, and tension from the Ultras without breaking any specific rules of the stadium space. Verbal abuse and a sung mythology of violent encounters, with the ability to trigger heated emotional responses from opposition supporters, is in fact tolerated by the Garda (Irish Police) until physical violence breaks out.

The Bohs Rivalry

On my last night in Dublin, I met with a few of the Ultras for my "going away" session at the pub that Fiachra worked at near St. Stephen's Green. Several pints in and reflecting on my assimilation into the group, the guys asked, "You do hate Bohs right?" Everyone waited for my response and I knew there was only one correct answer. "Of course!" I shouted to unanimous looks of approval and affirmation. As the drinks continued to flow, songs were sung with gusto. During that evening at the pub I recall the lads singing a song—"Ooh Max Jack, he used to be American but he's Rovers now!"

* * *

Within the Shamrock Rovers narrative, Bohemians FC, their cross-city rivals, plays a central part as Enemy Number 1. Within this role, the Bohs community is intrinsically connected to the Ultras experience. As I realized in the pub, being an Ultra and being a Rovers supporter meant loving Rovers, but it also meant hating Bohs. The conflict on the pitch and the ritualized forms of abuse in the terraces are yet another performative aspect that fosters unity between the Ultras and the greater Rovers community. Whereas other opponents are not always taken seriously, Bohemians are an entirely different matter. Davy reflected this sentiment during our interview.

> M: Do you think you can pinpoint what you hate when it comes to Bohs [Bohemians] fans?
> D: Jesus, do you have enough tape there? The fact that it's just a huge rivalry. It's programmed into you if you're a Rovers fan of recent times that Bohemian FC are the number one enemy. It's like the Israelis and the Palestinians in a way. You know if you're an Israeli that the Palestinians are going to fucking hate you, excuse my language, they're going to hate your guts. You might not have done anything to them and any Bohs fan, nobody's done anything on me, but I still don't like them as a club. The way they go on, the way they act, their colors, everything like that is just,

> it's mad how much I hate them. I can't wear anything red and black because it just reminds me of them and it's disgusting (ibid).

"Programmed" to hate Bohs, Davy recognizes the fact that he has never been personally targeted by Bohemians supporters, is quite straightforward about his disdain towards them as a group, a commonality amongst the Ultras and the greater community. His own disgust at Bohemian's colors indicates that his feelings are permanent ones, extending past the stadium space and into the outside world. Furthermore, it is indicative of Randolph-Seng's observation that "outgroup symbols" can "activate relevant identities" without direct confrontation after a certain amount of continued activation (2010, 338). These emotional activations can develop within the stadium through ritualized communication of collective chants or through aggressive acts in the surrounding territory that the Ultras perceive as "enemy territory." Such an example is "Ireland's Number 1," which effectively contrasts Rovers with Bohemians.

We are Shamrock Rovers
We're Ireland's Number 1
And when we play the Bohs
They always fucking run
We'll chase them down the road
And into Phibsborough too
And if we ever catch them
We'll beat them black and blue.

"Ireland's Number 1" constructs a particular relationship between Rovers and Bohemians, constructing Bohs as cowards in comparison to a brave and aggressive Rovers contingent. Such songs serve to stoke negative emotions between the two groups in the stadium space, who are in earshot of each other.

The Ultras' aversion to Bohemians supporters is reinforced and actualized by one's experiences in the stadium; however, conflict inside the stadium space can expand

into the surrounding urban space on matchdays, further reinforcing animosities between the groups. Davy recounted his own memories of walking to Dalymount Park, where Bohemians play their home games.

> It's weird because going up to Dalymount there's such tension. Usually I would walk from O'Connell Street to Dalymount Park, which is about a fifteen, twenty minute walk. But there's so many side streets going down that road, the tension in the air of where somebody is. You could get attacked going up to that game. You have that thing in the air where you're always looking over your shoulder but as soon as you get onto Phibsborough Road, it's kind of like you're not getting attacked, but now you're at a game where there's somebody you hate in front of you and you're not allowed to go over and do anything but you can shout, scream, give them whatever, flip them the bird, give them the two fingers and then just give them absolute abuse for ninety minutes and it's something that I love doing. Even this year, even with the police in Ireland, they treat you like fucking scum at Dalymount. Even giving them abuse is something I look forward to in Dalymount. It's just something about the away game that brings out the best in people. (Davy Doyle, Personal Interview 7/17/12)

Davy's impressions of the walk into Bohemians "territory" in comparison to the actual stadium experience indicate the porous nature of the stadium borderland. Though ill will and aggression is stoked inside the stadium space, violent behavior generally occurs outside it. Implicit in Davy's observations is his wariness towards actual violence, but his enjoyment of symbolic conflict that takes place inside the stadium where trading insults between the two supporters groups is a constant occurrence. Remarking that the away trip to Dalymount brings out the "best" in people is indicative of Davy's ideal experience. In this sense, the stadium space is an effective and acceptable outlet for aggression. For Davy and many others, this type of conflict is something to look forward to. It is participatory entertainment at its finest. Though he is not particularly interested in getting

in a fight outside the ground, standing in the away section at Dalymount provides high levels of tension, but with a relatively low risk of physical violence.

Karl's more extreme experiences of traveling to Dalymount Park can begin to elucidate for the neutral observer the beginnings of his ill will towards Bohemians supporters.

> We used to get this bus, the 16, which would be handy for me because I live in town and it would be handy for all the lads from Tallaght because it would bring them into town and they'd get connecting buses. We used to go past these run down apartments, which was a Bohs area, so lots of Bohs fans would wait and break the bus—attack the bus. I'd been involved in it many times fighting against Bohs fans so that's all the fighting I've been in. When you go to a Rovers away trip, you do have to be, I'm not going to say *prepared* for a fight because 99.999 percent of the time there's no trouble, but there's always a chance. It takes one asshole to start trouble so you always have to have it in the back of your head, ok we're going to Bohs we're going to Cork—there could be a chance of something happening here. (Personal Interview, 7/1/12)

Entering into a pre-existing rivalry such as this, younger fans (such as many of the Ultras) often have reasons based on formative experiences in which to look critically upon opposition supporters. Such experiences and stories lead to the Ultras' mutual hatred for Bohemians and a conceptualization an "enemy territory" surrounding Dalymount Park. "Bohs away is very special to me because you can just sense the tension as soon as you get to Phibsborough—because on one side you have Rovers fans walking to the ground and on the other side you have Bohs fans walking to the ground and you can nearly feel the fucking hatred," said Colm in our interview (Personal Interview, 6/17/12). Similar to supporters' topophilic reactions to their home grounds, Giulianotti uses the concept of topophobia to describe the feelings of fear and anxiety induced by other spaces, in this case Phibsborough Road and Dalymount Park. For supporters like Colm, the mixture of

fear and exhilaration upon entering enemy territory adds to the matchday experience and primes him for participating in the volatile atmosphere within Dalymount, further reinforcing and renewing the hatred between the two communities.

A History of Conflict

Where much animosity is drawn from actual experience, much is also drawn from the rocky histories between the two clubs, which is weaved into the collective Rovers narrative. During my interview with Eoghan Rice, I asked him why there was animosity between the two clubs and why the Ultras hated Bohs. In describing the rivalry, Eoghan started by explaining the clubs' pasts.

> I think what happened was that Bohs were historically an amateur club, and they never paid their players. They were also—this is sort of irrelevant at this stage, but they were a Protestant club back in the day. They were founded by people back in the day who had links with the British army—a lot of clubs were back in those days. Even back in the '40s, Bohs wouldn't play on Sunday because it was the Sabbath. A lot of their players were college students whereas ours would have been dockers, so Bohs were always just a little bit different than everybody else, and they finished bottom of the league pretty much every year for thirty years. I think what happened was, in the '70s Rovers became rubbish—in the '20s, '30s, '40s, '50s, '60s, we were always winning stuff.
>
> So Rovers were really, really bad and Bohs scrapped their amateur status and became semi-professional like everyone else. So all of a sudden Bohs became very good and actually managed to win the league in the '70s. So you had this sudden shift of power and I think that's where the roots of it come from. We've got these blokes from the north side winning the league and we've never even heard of them before! (Personal Interview, 6/21/12)

Eoghan emphasizes the competitive shift in power on the field that played a large role in the beginnings of the Rovers-Bohemians rivalry. This aspect indicates the importance of on-field events. A similar level of talent is an important aspect in the continuation of such

rivalries, establishing a greater emotional payout when Rovers win and extreme disappointment and anger when they lose. The higher the emotional stakes of a rivalry, the more important the match becomes.

However, much of the perpetual animosity between the two clubs is due to off-field incidents involving violent encounters between the two clubs' hooligan elements. Referred to as "casuals," this group of Rovers supporters would organize fights with rival casuals. Though the Ultras know them, they do not fight with them. While Eoghan expounded on some of the on-field drama, Karl made it evident that there was more to the story—"People were mental for fighting, they really were. That's where the whole thing with Bohs comes from" (ibid). Fiachra explained the origins further.

> As far as I understand, the rivalry started—there was another club called Drumcondra who started where Shelbourne play now who folded, and they were the main rival to us at that time in terms of on the pitch as well as off it. So when they went, Bohemians became the biggest northside club and as you know in Dublin, there's this kind of northside-southside divide. Also just the time of Bohemians being our biggest rivals coincided with the birth of hooligan culture with England and the 80's. We were the only clubs big enough to do it like the English did, so that's how it started. That kind of thing was starting to get popular—lads just meeting up in gangs and fighting. I think there were two main gangs in Dublin who used to meet up in the city center at night and just fight each other. One was called the Balls Bridge Hoop Boys, that's near Ringsend where we're from originally, and Cabra Skins, which is a Bohs area. And then basically that rivalry and the fighting between them carried to football because most of the lads supported Rovers anyway and the other guys supported Bohs and so the rest of them started going and then the fighting really got bad then. Now that's the story—obviously I wasn't alive, that was the '70s. (Personal Interview, 7/5/12)

As much as Bohemians' improvement on the field contributed to the rivalry, Fiachra makes it clear that events off it were of equal importance in the creation of an aggressive and violent stadium space. Eoghan observed that "it's that old cliché about the war no

one remembers what it started about—they just know they hate each other" (Personal Interview, 6/21/2012). Important in the perpetuation of decades of hate is the inherent attitude that a loss on the field or off requires retaliation. "Any rivalry like that, any hatred like that, it's always tit for tat," said Fiachra. "If they do you over one week then you'll try and beat them up the next week, so it just builds up on itself" (Personal Interview, 7/5/12). A long string of violent interactions between Shamrock Rovers supporters and Bohemians supporters serves as the basis for intense hatred between the groups in the present. The past is integral in recreating and reinforcing volatile relationships between the two communities. For this, songs provide a pivotal role.

Constructing Bohs and Actualizing Conflict

Songs sung by the SRFC Ultras play a large role in recreating pivotal moments of conflict between the two clubs. Lyrics recount moments of victory—sometimes on the field—but more often off of it in brawls.

> M: So you feel like the rivalry is connected by the violence between the opposition support?
> F: Yeah, definitely. Even though most people wouldn't take any part of it we all still sing about it. All those songs about Bohs, nearly every single one of them is about fighting, and there are real old songs that we don't sing anymore that were about fighting Bohs as well. Back in the day it used to be very blatant. Now they have fights in housing estates and down streets where no one really goes so it's only the guys who really want to fight where it's not as visible. Apparently a few decades ago people would just run up to the other end, and the whole thing was to try and take the end of the other fans and kick them out of their stand. So that was going on during the game, the whole stands fighting each other, just mass brawls. So I suppose it's the memory of that as well (ibid).

Though fighting was seemingly more rampant in previous decades, emotional tension is still effectively stoked through symbolic violence in the form of songs with provoking

lyrics that often serve to further fuel the fire between the opposition supporters who are "nearly in spitting distance" at Dalymount Park (Colm Burne, Personal Interview, 6/17/12). This song, like many, is directed at Bohemians as the "red and black."

[To the tune of "Bad Moon Rising" by Creedence Clearwater Revival]

I see the Rovers fans arising
I see there's trouble on the way
And if you're red and black
You're gonna get a smack
I see the Bohs run away.

Lyrics tend to emphasize the courage of Rovers supporters in the face of violence, validating and defining the collective as they sing together. Thus, Shamrock Rovers' history of hooliganism is symbolically used in the present to actualize characteristics of strength and bravery. Additionally, songs effectively recreate and generalize Bohemians as a two-dimensional Other, but are also meant to stoke antagonisms between the two groups of supporters, which are located exceptionally close to each other within the space of Dalymount Park. The Ultras and the singing section regularly sing songs referencing Bohemians FC, regardless of whether or not they are actually playing them. The song "We are Rovers" effectively deconstructs and recreates Bohemians as two-dimensional others.

We are Rovers, super Rovers
No one likes us, we don't care.
We hate Bohs, Orange bastards
And we'll fight them anywhere.

Sung at most games, regardless of the opposition, songs reinforce and actualize the notion of "us versus them" as well as an "us against the world" state of mind. The Ultras'

songs often amplify stereotypes regarding the identities of the teams and their supporters. Referencing Bohemians' Protestant roots with the symbolic color orange, this stereotype is based on a small grain of truth. However, "We are Rovers" relegates the Bohs to "orange bastards," which hardly reflects the demographics of the club's supporters in the present. "Truth" is not necessarily the point in this type of mutual hatred between the SRFC Ultras and Bohemians supporters. The Ultras' reconstructed version of the Bohemians identity is more fiction than reality.

Though songs and chants construct an image of the Bohemians identity for the Ultras, they are also important as modes of collective communication—and instigation. For the SRFC Ultras, songs are not only meant to be heard by the Rovers community, but are also intended to be heard by the Bohemians supporters. Thus chants are an interactive medium that stokes conflict between the two groups, often in unique ways.

> The games that have the best atmosphere are where the crowds are shouting at each other—you'll sing one at them and then they'll come up with a response back. Like I've seen weird ones where there's a spontaneous response. I remember at Bohs once, we were beating them 2-0 in the cup in the semi final when they were really good and we weren't very good, but we were in the semi final beating them 2-0. We were going crazy and they started singing "We are top of the league," and the whole Rovers crowd just like that (snaps), "You are out of the cup." Everyone was on the same wavelength. That kind of stuff is brilliant. (Fiachra, Personal Interview, 7/5/12)

This particular example serves to show the collective back and forth that can occur between both communities. Songs and insults can be based on the unfolding events on the field, providing unique responses in ways that aim to outdo their opponents. The ability of the Rovers supporters to collectively provide a clever response to outdo the Bohemians supporters is a scenario in which they established both their symbolic

dominance on the field and in the stands. Other insults come from the Rovers "repertoire" of songs, such as "We Are Rovers" or "Rovers Fans Rising," which both utilize preestablished constructions of Bohemians identity in which to further elevate tension between Rovers and the opposition supporters.

The Rovers-Bohemians rivalry seems to expand on Richard Giulanotti's observations on football rivalries and symbolic conflict. Giulianotti notes that "two club rivalries remain the norm in most cities, with spatial dimensions again serving to cement the oppositions" (1999, 11). Both Rovers and Bohemians are located in Dublin—Bohemians in the north of the city and Rovers in the south. This has lead to a perceived northside-southside rivalry between the supporters of both clubs. However, this perception is seemingly more myth than actual fact.

> It's kind of one of the myths that there's a northside/southside divide. There's not at all—it's an east/west divide. The northeast of the city is absolutely rolling in cash, just like the southeast is. It's the northwest and the southwest, but there's always been this myth of north/south and people play along with it maybe because it's fun to slag off northsiders I guess. So Rovers became part of the northside/southside thing even though Rovers historically had loads of fans from the northside. Even today loads of fans come across the city (Eoghan Rice, Personal Interview, 6/21/12).

The spatial aspect of the Rovers-Bohemians rivalry seems to be another mythologized dimension to the relationship between the two communities. Where Giulianotti argues that rivalries are often reflected by spatial, social, or ethnic conflict within society, it seems that Rovers and the Ultras' relationship with Bohemians is constructed based on a mythologized spatial narrative, past dramatic on-field moments, and past brawls between hooligan factions of both clubs. The constant repetition of inflammatory content in and outside the stadium space reinforces animosities in which the Ultras continually seek to

outdo the Bohs support in an attempt to establish dominance over their outgroup counterparts.

Rovers' relationship with Bohs, enacted through ritualized conflict in the stadium, becomes an integral part of the Rovers identity and their collective narrative. This is evident in the continual referencing of Bohemians through chants—even when Rovers are playing other teams. Rovers' successes even relate back to their rivalry with Bohemians.

> There's probably too many songs about Bohs. You see people often complaining about the number of songs, but it's just that they're our biggest rivals—we really hate them. Almost any success is added to it by the fact that that's a failure for Bohs when we win. The amount of times we're on the TV winning a game and everyone's singing "Are you watching Bohs scum?" It's also kind of a way of letting smaller teams like Sligo know that they really don't matter at all. (Fiachra, Personal Interview, 7/5/12)

Chants thus reflect the fact that Bohemians are intertwined in the Rovers narrative and serve as the enemy that the Ultras and the Rovers community require. For many of the Ultras, success has added meaning because it is achieved at the expense of their greatest rivals. Bohemians, though despised by the Ultras, are integral to the Rovers narrative.

> With Bohs right now we laugh at them because they're in the situation that they're in—they owe the bank 4 million euros. That will cripple them financially and they will never exist again and that's all well and good, I'd laugh at them for that—but then there's no rivalry. St. Pats are there but they're not Bohs and as much as I hate them, I'd hate to see them leave. It's like some Celtic fans with Rangers.[1] Rangers are there to be absolutely hated, but without them what is there? (Davy, Personal Interview, 7/17/12)

[1] The Celtic – Rangers rivalry is one of the most famous in the history of club soccer. Playing in the Scottish Premier Division, both teams reside in Glasgow, Scotland. Celtic, founded by Irish Catholics, has very strong Catholic roots whereas Rangers have very pronounced Protestant roots. This has led to a historically heated and often violent rivalry. However, last season Rangers went bankrupt and were

Though the relationship between the Rovers and Bohemians communities are rife with animosity and riddled with occasional bouts of violence, Davy indicates that this is in fact something that he wants. In this context, peace and harmony are not the ideal. Instead, the opposite is a source of excitement and fascination within the stadium space. "Obviously when we play Bohs we always sing about how they're about to go bust and all that, even though it would really be terrible if there was no Bohemians," said Fiachra. "It would be awful for us, but they don't need to know that." (Personal Interview, 7/5/12)

Thus, the Rovers community needs the Bohs community in order to create the desired matchday experience that balances on the edge of physical and symbolic violence. Physical violence is a reality, but it is also a rarity. Yet, its presence is necessary in recreating the matchday experience. Many more supporters, especially the Ultras, relish the symbolic violence and conflict that takes place between opposition supporters in the stands and through the events on the field. As Robson elucidates, "Such songs are not for arguing with because ritual thus enacted is neither explanatory nor discursive. Its core purpose and power lie in its capacity to activate an experiential sphere located, as Bourdieu has it, on the other side of discourse" (Robson 2000, 170). Songs in this scenario do not necessarily reflect societal circumstances, but rather construct and enact conflict in the present based on past events, reinforcing and continually stoking emotions between the two communities. They are used with the purpose of creating a tension-filled experience that actualizes violence in a non-violent way. Much likes Geertz' depiction of the Balinese cockfight, "The slaughter in the cock ring is not a depiction of how things

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relegated four divisions into to the Scottish Third Division, effectively ending the rivalry between the two teams.[1]

literally are among men, but, what is almost worse, of how, from a particular angle, they imaginatively are" (2005, 81).

Ultimately, the stadium space and the ritualized performance of songs and chants serve to actualize the historical events that led to the rivalry. Additionally, chants reinforce and even foster animosity amongst supporters both young and old, uniting them against a common enemy as a part of the Rovers narrative. In this way, supporters use songs to actualize a mythologized rivalry based on past events. Much like the shared Rovers identity, the Bohemian identity is constructed and reinforced through chants in a way that two-dimensionalizes them into "Bohs scum," or "Orange bastards." Though based on facts, the Bohemians community is a demonized caricature, surely not how Bohs fans view themselves. Activity in the terraces serves to incite conflict and recreate violent acts in ways that serve as an aggressive but allowable outlet for many supporters, though in rare instances emotional turmoil can spill over into physical violence. This aggressive, animosity driven experience is one of exhilaration, further uniting Rovers supporters and Ultras together against a common enemy that defines their very existence and their collective qualities in the face of conflict.

Communicating with Players: Breaking the Fourth Wall

The football players' code of conduct, which insists on professionalism, contrasts drastically from the carnivalesque behavior of the fans in the terraces. This difference in allowable behavior between fans and players quickly presents itself as an opportunity for fans to get under the skin of the opposition, most often achieved through collectively improvised chants. Such behavior reflects the SRFC Ultras' belief that anyone who plays

Rovers is the enemy for those 90 minutes. Chants also serve as a way to impact the outcome of the game by attempting to affect opposition players' mental dispositions.

> When you get wrapped up in something you want to participate in it, you know? So its almost like an involuntary thing, you just find yourself getting swept up in the thing and you've become involved in it, because you desperately want to do anything that you can to influence the outcome of the game. And you think if I get involved in this chant or if I hurl abuse at this bloke, that might give us the edge you know? (Eoghan, Personal Interview, 6/21/12)

In the spirit of "professionalism," players and coaches must ignore fans if they wish to remain on the field. Nonetheless, fans often get the better of players, which is enjoyable and often quite funny. Such participatory behaviors also serve to construct reciprocal animosity between the Rovers support and the opposition players and fans, reinforcing the notion that games are anything but "friendly." Derogatory chants in this sense reflect the carnivalesque aspect of participatory performance—that inside the stadium all opposition players and supporters are temporarily the enemy. It also elucidates the fact that comments made by the Ultras do not always reflect their actual political views or their personalities in the outside world.

Fiachra told me a story about Shamrock Rovers' Europa League game against their London counterparts, Tottenham Hotspur, a much richer club with a bigger following that plays in the prestigious English Premier League.

> We played them and it was famous because their manager, Harry Redknapp, was currently in court for tax evasion and he went mental because our whole stand started singing "You Should Be in Jail," and he went crazy. He started pointing at the fans and gave out—clearly in England their fans aren't half as good because he's not used to even the smallest bit of abuse. That was great. So basically if there is an angle we can use to rile the opposition up, we'll use it.

> M: And is the purpose basically just…
> F: Just to annoy them. That's the thing, it doesn't even matter who you're playing—when you're playing them you don't like them. (Personal Interview, 7/5/12)

Fiachra and the Ultras often find ways to interact with opposition players and coaches, despite their opponents' best efforts to ignore them. This memory became a way in which Fiachra could claim superiority over the English leagues in ways other than on-the-field talent. Playing in the big leagues made Tottenham's coach "soft," unable to handle the taunts that were so commonplace in the Irish leagues. Furthermore, such moments serve to exemplify the enjoyment derived from the opposition's reactions to their comments, and that for 90 minutes, anyone and everyone is Shamrock Rovers' enemy. Contrastingly, his actions as part of the group did not reflect his character or behavioral tendencies outside the stadium context.

Additionally, away trips to Derry, a Northern Irish team, exemplify the Ultras' willingness to use political context in order to put off players and opposition fans, even at the expense of their own real-life political beliefs.

> Derry are just such easy targets—they get so wound up, so we have so many songs about "Ian Paislies Red-White Army," and "Thatcher Built Your Floodlights," and "What's It Like to Have a Queen?" One time we all went up to Derry and we all held up our passports with the harp on it, so we do that kind of thing. (ibid)

Despite the Ultras' predominantly Republican political views supporting a united Ireland, it is a higher priority to revel in the two supporter groups' differences, goading the residents of Derry over the fact that many of them want to join the Republic of Ireland, but can't. "Even though most of us outside of that game—if we hear someone say

Londonderry, we'd be very angry, said Fiachra. "We definitely see Derry as part of our country, but when we're playing them we tell them that we see them as part of Britain."

Fiachra's distinction between the Ultras' attitudes towards Derry within the stadium space in comparison to their attitudes towards them outside of it indicate the slippery notion of the Ultras' constructions of outgroup identity. The Ultras' perception of outgroup identities can be temporary, but for others are more permanent. The high risk of violence outside Dalymount Park between Rovers and Bohs supporters indicates a lasting construct between the two groups, whereas this may not necessarily be the case with a team like Derry City. In this scenario, the Ultras will say anything to get the edge on the field in order to get the result that they want. Negative reactions from players and supporters alike are thus based on the perceived symbolic animosity behind the chants, though only low levels of animosity actually exist. In this scenario, chants do not necessarily "reflect on the reality of the object because it is part of our experience." (Turino 2008, 9) Thomas Turino argues that such actions in the performative and ritual context are "perceived as fact" (ibid). Creating conflict in such cases is indicative of the shades of "hate"—that some outgroup relationships, especially with less competitive clubs, may be more playful in comparison to the deep-seated roots of violence in Rovers' relationship with Bohemians.

"No One Likes Us"

ER: I worked for the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) for a few years. I'll always remember one time, I was down in Sligo and there was no game on. We were doing an event with a few journalists. I went in there—it was a totally empty stadium. I talked that day to the secretary, the groundsmen, the manager, and a few players, and unprompted every single one of them launched into a tirade against Rovers. None of them even knew I was a Rovers fan! They just fucking hate them. I was talking to the groundsman about the

weather or something like that, and he just launched into this rant about Rovers fans—and that's what you get now everywhere. I mean, Sligo is probably an extreme example because they've a whole chip shop on their shoulder, but you get that everywhere. Recently, Rovers have become media darlings. A lot of other fans will complain about the media loving Rovers, and I find that hilarious because we were the biggest villains ten years ago. We were being blamed for everything—World War II was our fault! And so now you've got this sense that Rovers are the establishment club, which is bizarre for me.
M: In all their rants, what were they going on about?
ER: Everything—Rovers fans mostly. I think the groundsman was complaining that we wrecked the stadium a few weeks earlier. The manager had personal disputes with the Rovers manager—they didn't like each other so he ranted about him. I think the players were giving out about the fans as well, and I can't even remember what the secretary was giving out about. But they're just obsessed—you kind of get the impression that if you walked into a pub in Sligo and asked someone what time it was they'd just start abusing Shamrock Rovers. It's that level of complete obsession where they hate us more than they love their own club. Their own club is just a vehicle for them to hate us more than anything else. (Eoghan Rice, Personal Interview, 6/21/12)

* * *

As supporters integrate themselves into the Shamrock Rovers community, their outlooks often change as to how the rest of the world perceives them. As a general rule, Rovers fans feel that all other League of Ireland supporters look upon them with especially reserved disdain. This aspect of Rovers' place within the greater League of Ireland is widely reflected in the songs that the Ultras sing.

We're Shamrock Rovers
We're Ireland's Finest
No one likes us
We don't care.

"Ireland's Finest" is one of many songs that fittingly describe the duality of Shamrock Rovers' existence, and their fans recognition of themselves as both the best club in Ireland and the most widely hated. The strong reactions amongst opposition supporters towards Rovers is similar to Carlton Brick's description of a scenario in England occurring with Manchester United, in which they have in essence become "everybody's

'local rivals'" (2001, 15). Much like Manchester United in England, the animosity towards Rovers in conjunction with their on-field successes is an attempt by rival fans to belittle their achievements (ibid).

> The 'other' of United operates as a means of displacing the powerlessness felt by fans both within the cultures of their own clubs and the cultures of football more generally… The irony here is that the process of 'inauthenticating' United, of making them less significant, results in the opposite (ibid).

Shamrock Rovers are the most comparable example of this process in Ireland, which has effected their perceptions of their place within the greater sphere of League of Ireland football. Similarly to United, this perceived attitude towards Rovers and the Ultras seems to be more of a source of empowerment than the opposite.

As Shamrock Rovers reestablished their success on the pitch and became financially stable, they were examined by the Independent Assessment Group, which "hailed them as being a model club—a far cry from the depths to which the club had sunk just fifteen months before" (shamrockrovers.ie). After a game against Dundalk in which there was "fan trouble," Bohs supporters questioned if Rovers would receive a fine for their fans' behavior (Karl, Personal Correspondence, 8/20/12). "It was spoke about on the Bohs forum…to which another responded, 'A fine? Not for the 'model club', sarcastically stating that we are loved by the FAI…" said Karl. "We were on a bus back from Longford in the cup (I think) and the whole talk of the 'model club' term came up and one of the older lads came out with this and within five minutes the whole bus was singing it" (ibid).

[To the tune of "The Model" by Kraftwerk]

We're a model club

We're looking good
Oohhhhh, oohhhhh
We're gonna win the league it's understood
Oohhhhh, ohhhhhh

Ta la la la la la la.

Karl's story about the group's response to the Bohs supporters' jealousy shows that Rovers supporters chose to embrace the hatred as well as their title as "the model club," rather than deflect it. The song not only actualized the group in the face of conflict, but was also an act of empowerment for the Rovers collective. Rovers' place in the broader sphere of the League of Ireland not only contributes another dimension to the Shamrock Rovers identity, but also allows the community to respond in a way that unites and empowers them in the face of continual adversity.

Additionally, the Ultras' emerging perceptions of and identification with the collective Shamrock Rovers identity is seemingly at odds with their place in the broader shadow of Irish and even English culture.

> That's the thing—people in Ireland who don't watch LOI just don't get it at all. They do not get the Ultras thing because it doesn't exist in England so it's not in the culture or the media so they don't even understand it. The way people I'm sure in Germany or Italy, even if they have no interest in football they know what it is, people are that much in to football, they get it because it's more part of the culture I suppose. (Fiachra, Personal Interview, 7/5/12)

Because the *ultra* style of support is not embedded in English culture, most people outside of the League of Ireland have a hard time understanding what being an ultra entails. Thus, by adopting a foreign style of support and a collective identity, the Ultras find their own way of life at odds with the outlook of the greater Irish society, which is pervasively influenced by the heavy presence of English culture—especially in the

media. Newbie elaborated on the Ultras' actions as a mode of resistance to the heavy British influence.

> Irish football has always been a whore little brother of English football. Our crowds are shit, our quality of football is nothing compared to England and our supporter culture would be an imitation of that. Which is fair enough in my opinion. English fans have pioneered themselves as well, but I think people back in 2001 started to think, well let's move away from that a little bit, let's start borrowing further afield from a different kind of culture, so they used the Italian/European model of support and that became the benchmark for Irish sport. Every decent sized club in Ireland has a group. So that's why I think some of that stuff gets used—it's a way of distancing ourselves from English supporter culture.
>
> It might not be conscious, but there's definitely a bit of that I think. Most people in this country only care about English football. We take a bit of pride about the fact that many Irish fans go over to United and sit in stadium full of 78,000 in silence—but at home games we get 4 or 5 thousand and at away games it could be only a thousand people and it's still much, much louder than those English stadiums. We take a bit of pride in that. (Newbie, Personal Interview, 7/8/12)

Aside from the Ultras' own awareness of the animosity directed towards them by all other LOI clubs, there is also a conscious rejection of the presence of English culture in Ireland. The choice to adopt a style of singing and support from different areas of the world makes a statement about the Ultras' rejection of certain aspects of modern Irish society. In this sense, "Music can be understood…as a regime of self-creation (subjectification) and as a tool of resistance to those regimes" (Rice 2007, 28). Furthermore, Rice asserts that "…the ideology of creativity often associated with music gives the sense that composers and performers of music have the power, the agency if you will, to model new and alternative forms of behavior not given by the 'rationalized schemes' of everyday familial and government discourse and discipline" (ibid). The Ultras' alternative style of performative behavior is such an activity that has understood

implications as a rejection of the present cultural circumstances that pervade Ireland. This is understood within the group, but not necessarily by the society that they aim to distinguish themselves from.

The use of body language and chants are thus empowering on multiple levels, containing layers of meaning and purpose. The participatory act of bodily and vocal participation is designed towards the instigation of conflict at matches. Chants allow supporters to internalize and externalize the Ultras and the Rovers community, which in effect changes individuals' perspectives regarding their relationships with outgroups such as Bohemians, the League of Ireland community, and the greater Irish community. Outgroups are essential to the Ultras' existence because they help to further define the Ultras and Rovers communities by situating them within a broader context. The Ultras' relationship with Bohemians is recreated by selected moments of conflict between the two groups, which effectively fuels present day animosities. Bohemians are constructed in chants as "scum" or "orange bastards." Songs in this context serve to actualize the enemy and instigate the emotional tension between the communities. They also reflect the Rovers community's attributes in the face of adversity—such as bravery and strength. Though such acts are largely symbolic for the Ultras, it is undoubtedly a source of exhilaration and empowerment for participants. Being a part of the Rovers community also expresses a multi-dimensional sense that "no one likes us, we don't care," be it on a footballing level or a societal level that rejects the perceived cultural status quo in Ireland. This new identity alters individuals' perceptions of the outside world—that people outside the collective can't (or won't) understand them. "Young men like to feel like they belong to a cause even though its only football, said Karl (Personal Interview,

7/1/12). “They like to have the idea that we’re hated by everyone, and it’s me and these guys who are going to stick together and represent and we don’t care. So *no one likes us and we don’t care* (laughs). I love the whole idea” (ibid).

4 GENERATING EMOTION: CHANTS AND DISPLAYS AS A COLLECTIVE DIALOGUE

As has been elucidated in chapters 2 and 3, songs and chants aid in constructing and actualizing an imagined Rovers identity. Additionally, displays, chants, and physical movement play a strong role in creating identities for Shamrock Rovers' opponents—ones in which the outgroup is presented as a caricature of itself. The Ultras are often at the center of these creative and performative behaviors.

This chapter highlights the improvisatory nature of songs and demonstrates that performative expression is both proactive and reactive—based on past meetings between Shamrock Rovers and their adversaries, trades of players between clubs, and the interactions between the fans of opposing clubs. It also shows that fan activity hinges on the unpredictability of the game itself. Inherent in this unpredictability is the belief that energized communicative behavior in the stands can actually impact the events on the field as well as the stands. This chapter further expounds on specific moments at a Shamrock Rovers game against Cork City in Tallaght, and a second match against Shelbourne at Tolka Park. These narratives can help elucidate how and when songs are introduced and the subsequent emotional responses that can occur. Though matches are inseparable from the surrounding history, social, and political context, this chapter aims to focus on the performative moments and the varying effects of the Rovers repertoire of songs.

Transforming Songs for Participation

As we examine chants and songs as stylized modes of communication, it is necessary to understand how supporters may react to varying circumstances. Such circumstances will influence the performed collective response. Unfolding on-the-field events are often interpreted as "positive" or "negative" in relation to the common interests of Rovers supporters. The highest priority is for players to represent the ideals of the community by exhibiting high energy, maximum effort and ultimately by overcoming their opponents. Performative reactions are often based on how players represent the community. Simultaneously, performing chants helps to actualize the qualities of the community. Also, performance is often conducted in relation to the performative activities of the opposition support.

Collective use of chants and songs can be grouped into several categories of functionality. During positive moments, chants and songs are utilized as a form of 1) *celebration* or 2) *boasting*. Conversely, chants can serve as a response to negative events by attempting to 3) *motivate* players or to 4) *express solidarity* during difficult times. Other songs, as discussed in Chapter 3, are meant to 5) *provoke or react to conflict*. Such actions have the potential to yield varying emotional and physical responses from supporters and players alike, and can be conceptualized as components within an ongoing collective dialogue. The nature of this type of participatory performance is both proactive and reactive, being influenced by the game, which reactively impacts both players and spectators.

Inspiring Participation

Songs at Rovers matches, as classified by Thomas Turino, are adapted from "presentational" popular music styles and transformed into "participatory" music by reappropriating chosen melodies and lyrics. Turino argues that our Westernized conception of *presentational music* "involves one group of people (the artists) providing music for another (the audience) in which there is pronounced artist-audience separation…" (2008, 51-52) Contrastingly, *participatory performance* "is a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role" (2008, 26). The role of the Ultras is then to incorporate as much of the crowd as possible, creating a large audio-visual spectacle that will have the greatest impact on the events on the field.

> That's another funny thing is, some of the best Ultras, I'm talking about individuals, aren't really fans of the sport of football. The whole idea of Ultras is, win lose or draw, get the best atmosphere out of the group of the hundred or thousand people that you have. So obviously now our job is to get the normal football fan up and singing. If we're beating our biggest rival 3-0, he'll get up and sing. If we're losing to them 3-0, it's going to be a lot harder to get him up to sing. So if we're losing, get together scrape together, if we're drawing, come on keep it going try and get another goal, and if we're a miles ahead, 3-0 ten minutes to go, it's all about the celebration. If we're behind or drawn it's "Come On Rovers," if we know we're gonna win it's celebrate and it's singing songs that get in their face. Like against Bohs it's like "What's the score?" *When the chips are down, get behind them, if times are good, celebrate—that's what I think the main thing is.* (Karl, Personal Interview, 7/1/12)

As an Ultra, Karl sees the group as leaders of the singing section, often taking the initiative to begin chants at the appropriate moments. Thus, the behavior of the Ultras and the rest of the singing section at Rovers games is participatory, where "sound and motion

are conceptualized more importantly as heightened social interaction" (Turino 2008, 28). Karl also indicates the presentational ideal of the SRFC Ultras—that songs should be sung during the full ninety minutes of the game. Utilizing songs that are novel, familiar, and repetitive allow for this ideal to be achieved. Thus, the Ultras spearhead the transformation of presentational music into participatory music, giving appropriated songs an entirely new purpose.

For instance, "The Lonesome Boatman" is a commonly known Irish Republican folk tune, which after being initially matched with the lyrics, "Louis, your wife's a widow…" is now sung without words as a repeating, *celebratory* melody—easy to pick up for new supporters. Very little about any additional melodic meaning was articulated to me by the Ultras during our conversations, however, the general acceptance of "The Lonesome Boatman" melody is indicative of the political tendencies of the Ultras, who generally believe in a united Ireland. Nonetheless, the main goal of the Ultras was not to further any political agendas, as they recognized the divisive nature of politics. More important than the implicitly political references of "The Lonesome Boatman" was the fact that it is a familiar song, and is thus easy to learn.

As such, many songs and chants are short, one-liners, which tend to incorporate common words such as "Shamrock Rovers," "green and white," and "hoops." One such example, adapted from a German Ultras' version (and this is the entire chant) is "S-R-F-C, We-are-Shamrock-Rovers." The rhythmic placement of the words and the drum beat give this song a "Continental European" flavor, making it both interesting for Dubliners and very easy to learn. Borrowing melodies and lyrics makes singing evocative and enjoyable within the altered parameters of the matchday experience.

For songs in which words are being changed in order to create alternate meanings, melodic choices often appear to be strategic in that the words must fit into the tune. Though certain song melodies do have additional implications (such as "The Lonesome Boatman"), melodies and rhythms are often reusable vessels in which lyrics are reinvented or adapted. "Often a lot of those songs start with a group of Rovers fans drinking in a pub, messing around coming up with versions of songs, and in the end between a group, they'll come up with the best version of that song," said Fiachra (Personal Interview, 7/5/12). Thus, many new songs are in fact a new version of a previous song that may have been sung by a different supporter group.

"We-are-Shamrock-Rovers" proves to be an ideal example in which an identifiable rhythm was knowingly taken from a group in Germany and adapted for use by the SRFC Ultras. "Often at a game you're singing something, and a different version will come into your head and you might try and get that going" (ibid). Though song melodies can add further meaning to the performance of songs, melody choice is not usually thought of with this in mind. Instead, melody and rhythm in this context can be best elucidated as "melodic codes," which "are recognized easily and quickly" (Summitt 2000, 131). Furthermore, "A code has an identifiable stylistic profile, a bundle of recurring, packaged details, such as rhythm, melodic contour, the number of melodic repetitions, [and] vocal quality…" (ibid) Familiar melodies and rhythms are strategically convenient because they already exist as a part of the habitus of participants on Block M.

Furthermore, melodies and rhythms that are novel and fun prove to be integral to the participatory nature of atmosphere and the matchday experience. Perhaps obviously, the successful dissemination of new chants as well as the shelf life of any particular chant

will often correlate strongly with the amount of individuals who enjoy its musical elements. For example, in the fall of 2012, "I Follow Rovers," based off of Lykke Li's hit song, "I Follow Rivers," became very popular amongst the Block M regulars because of the overwhelming majority's enjoyment of the melody and the rhythm in which it was delivered. It was also a widely recognized reference point because of the original song's popularity in Ireland. As one might expect, their very first performance was limited mostly to the Ultras who had learned it ahead of time (I watched from my computer back home, as it was caught on video and posted on Facebook) (Sep 12 2012). Since its introduction, however, this particular chant has become quite popular amongst the supporters in Block M. The simplicity of the lyrics and its repetitive nature would prove to be important in the success of the chant's quick dissemination throughout Block M.

I – I – follow
I follow you, Shamrock Rovers
I follow you.

A catchy tune with simple lyrics such as these can be learned without necessarily having to hear multiple performances and can spread quickly through the singing section on Block M, making it an accessible, and subsequently a successful song. Melodic codes thus prove vital to the instantaneous and mass participation of supporters in Tallaght Stadium.

In contrast, songs like "A Little Respect," by the pop group Erasure, were more difficult for me to learn at the ground because of the long verses and multiple stanzas. Nonetheless, "A Little Respect," has earned popularity because of its added meaning—in this case, its feminine overtones within the context of a masculine event such as that of a

football match. The melodic codes in "A Little Respect, in particular the lyrics, are somewhat complicated, making it hard to learn in the terraces.

I try to discover
a little something to make me sweeter,
Oh baby refrain
From breaking my heart.

I'm so in love with you,
I'll be forever blue
That you give me no reason
Why you're making me work so hard.

That you give me no,
That you give me no,
That you give me no,
That you give me no soul.

I hear you calling,
Oh baby please (sung in high falsetto)
Give a little respect to me (sung in high falsetto)

As this is only the first verse, it is evident that "A Little Respect" requires a bit of extra effort for supporters to learn. "I remember getting back from Estonia and we were all looking up the lyrics," said Newbie (Personal Interview, 7/8/12). "We have to learn this now. I had never even heard the song before." The humor related to the lyrics and the incorporation of falsetto into the chorus makes for good entertainment and generates a fair amount of laughter in the terraces. In fact, the falsetto part is seemingly the pinnacle of the song as most people who do not know the lyrics will join in for the chorus. The rare song such as "A Little Respect" may require "extra practice" for individuals to learn them, but individuals will take the time to properly learn songs if it strikes a particular chord with them. "We all think we're the best fans in Ireland, the best club in Ireland," said Newbie (ibid). "At the same time we have this self-deprecating sense of humor." For

Newbie, "A Little Respect" performs a unique statement about Rovers supporters, acting as an anthem that further distinguishes Rovers from their opponents. In this scenario, the catchiness of the tune and the added meaning behind the lyrics make the difficult lyrics worth learning for many Rovers fans. Nonetheless, "A Little Respect's" jestful melodic codes, such as lyrics and vocal style, have made it an important song within the ultras' repertoire.

"A Little Respect" also shows that codes such as vocal presentation and style vary depending on the song and the situation in which it is used. Davy would joke about his voice cracking due to his effort and volume levels on more serious chants, but this would be less likely to happen in the more light-hearted performance of "A Little Respect," where volume is less important than lyrical content and the incorporation of falsetto. Vocal performance is indicative of the varying nature of chants and songs in the matchday context—that they can be aggressive, but can at times also express more lighthearted sentiments as well. Effective performance and conveyance of these ranges of emotions through the use of dynamics helps participants to make increasingly nuanced interpretations of songs' meanings and also inspires participation and camaraderie throughout the singing section.

Participation through Collective Dialogue

Because songs have intended recipients who must process varying messages and meanings based on the current situation, lyrics, melody, and rhythm, the participatory-presentational paradigm must be explained further to understand their reactions. Chants are participatory amongst Shamrock Rovers supporters, but are also presented to

audiences (such as opposition supporters and players), in turn inviting collective dialogue between groups. In the altered context of the stadium borderland, chants and displays serve as a mode of stylized interaction between members of the singing sections and the players on the field, designed to elicit varying emotions and physical responses. As Karl describes, each chant correlates with recognizable scenarios. If the team is pushing for a goal or is losing, the call-and-response, "Come on Rovers," provides the intended emotional spark that the players require. If they are winning, celebratory songs such as "Dale Cavese" or "The Lonesome Boatman" suit the situation. These tunes utilize catchy melodies and can repeat indefinitely (theoretically of course). Chants and songs also allow the singing section to communicate with players as well as the opposition support, and in this sense are both "dialogic and situational" (Becker 2004, 74).

Songs, displays and body language are the basic building blocks in which the Ulras stoke emotions and build atmosphere. Davy elucidates the effects of the people around him:

> If we play a derby against Bohs you'll see in the crowd there's a lot of people that are up for the game. It's pumping you up and that develops into the atmosphere. So anything like that I just thrive. (Personal Interview, 7/16/12)

Emotional expression initiates an expanding chain of physical and vocal effects, a common occurrence in the singing section. Repetition of melodies, short chants, or verses within the Rovers' repertoire has an additional purpose, prolonging and amplifying the emotional and physical effects of collective participation. The longer such repetition continues, the greater the atmosphere becomes—like a kind of emotional "feedback." The continuous and often repetitive nature of the community's repertoire of songs often

elicits moments of rhythmic entrainment (Becker 2004). These experiences alter participants' perceptions of themselves within the broader Shamrock Rovers community. Ultimately, such activities coincide with increasingly frequent and intense levels of participation, emotional investment and attachment to "the club."

Finally, the Ultras' creative responses to on-the-field stimulus and outgroup provocation have the potential to earn them prestige within the League of Ireland community and the greater worldwide Ultras community. The Ultras' investment of time and economic capital in their endeavors often leads to accumulation of Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic capital," which Bird and Smith articulate as the rational accumulation of prestige (2005, 223). "For Bourdieu, the highest profits in symbolic capital can be attained when individuals act in ways that reliably demonstrate lack of interest in material acquisition by engaging in conspicuous consumption or conspicuous generosity. The value of the display in terms of its symbolic capital lies in the cost of the investment in terms of time, energy, or wealth" (ibid). The Ultras' behavior fits this conceptualization of symbolic capital because of their time and monetary investments in the club through season ticket expenditures, travel, and hours of work on displays that are presented at the beginning of matches.

The Ultras' performative actions help to explain their underlying rejection of the commercialism that pervades football, that the intangible benefits of involvement in the Rovers community are more valuable than supporting a foreign "brand," such as Manchester United or Celtic FC in the United Kingdom. Unlike displays, songs are spontaneously created and disseminated at matches. For this reason, displays symbolize an unarguable level of dedication based on physical labor and time spent. Integral to the

atmosphere, displays invite mass participation through song and chants. The Ultras' beliefs infer that the inherent value of football spectatorship and the right to *belong* to the community comes from physical presence and participation. "If I'm sitting here and I'm shouting for Wayne Rooney to score against Liverpool [on the TV], I'm in a very passive way supporting Manchester United because I've somehow convinced myself that this has an impact on my life," Eoghan told me (Personal Interview, 6/21/12).

The Semiotics of Displays, Physical Movement, and Chants

If we can acknowledge that physical, aural, and visual displays of "coded" expression contribute to the development of "emotional feedback" at Shamrock Rovers matches, it becomes necessary to look further in depth at the various actions of individuals and how they have the potential to further elicit similar actions and emotions in others. Thomas Turino's interpretation of Peircian semiotics can help to elucidate what these performative aspects represent and how they foster excitement, furthering emotional expression amongst the Ultras and the singing section. Semiotics can help us to understand the "dynamic nature of perception and thought" (Turino 2008, 11) at Shamrock Rovers matches.

When we consider how crowd atmosphere begins, it is necessary for individuals to emit a certain body language, to sing, to wave flags, or to light flares. Any of these actions can be considered as signs, which Peirce and Turino define as "anything that is perceived by an observer which stands for or calls to mind something else and by doing so creates an effect in the observer" (Turino 2008, 5). Signs can be visual, aural, or linguistic. An "object" is an "idea indicated by the sign" (ibid). For instance, the song

"Build Me Up Buttercup" (see chapter 2) recreates a historical event, reconstructing emotions and reflection amongst participants. However, signs are never entirely predictable since "no two individuals' experiences are identical" (ibid).

Turino argues that signs and their objects cause effects. An effect can be "(1) a sense or a feeling; (2) a physical reaction or response; and (3) 'a more developed sign in the mind' including sonic, tactile, olfactory, and visual images as well as word-based symbolic thought" (ibid, 11). For instance, as an individual begins to sing "Build Me Up Buttercup" at a Shamrock Rovers match, this sign will often elicit an effect in the form of another individual beginning to sing along, perhaps because of the song's reference to the homeless years (which is the object), an evocative reference point, that for many, elicits a stylized vocal response. This effect begins a "semiotic chaining process," which, in this example, will result in a behavioral domino effect where the entire section begins to sing "Build Me Up Buttercup." Turino interprets the semiotic chaining process in such a manner: a given sign-object relation (a) creates an effect (a) which becomes the next sign in the chain (b), standing for a new object (b), creating a new effect (c), and yet another effect (c), which becomes another sign (d) etc., until this line of feeling/reaction/thought is interrupted," (ibid, 11-12) which could be a dramatic on-field event in the context of the football match.

Of course the "Build Me Up Buttercup" example indicates a theoretical response without giving context to the beginning of the song. Within the semiotic chain, the context in which the song was originally introduced (or the sign that caused the effect of the first individual to sing "Build Me Up Buttercup") plays a role in the level of emotion and the length in which "Build Me Up Buttercup" is subsequently sung. In essence,

context is an integral part of the object. A song can last around thirty seconds or it could potentially last for minutes (or the entire game) under certain circumstances. In the correct environment, spectator participation often produces volatile emotions and subsequent reactions from a repertoire of learned behaviors.

Displays: Sparking Participation through Meaning

The beginning of Shamrock Rovers' match against Cork City held special significance for the Ultras as well as the club, and the days leading up to the game had been filled with hard work in the creation of a special display. "Last week someone passed along—Mr. Joe Merriman." The announcer's voice echoed around the stadium as the supporters stood in silence. "Joe the Hoop, as he was affectionately known, was at the heart and soul of this club, Shamrock Rovers. He was a member, a volunteer, a trustee at the Rovers Heritage Trust, and a family member of our very own Ultras. This club will be a lesser place without him around and he will be deeply missed by all. Tonight we take solace in his vision of the Ultras." (vimeo.com)

Everyone stood still and clapped for Joe for a minute and I wondered what exactly they must have been thinking about at that moment. The mantra of the last two days had been, "This has to be perfect. This isn't just any display. This is for Joe." Keith lit a solitary flare from Joe's old spot in Block M and six black flags were raised from behind the barrier on the sideline of the East Stand. He stood confidently, his arm raised, eyes towards the sky with a smile on his face. The banner we painted last night hung on the barrier. "Ciao Joe. Sarai sempre con Noi." You'll always be with us. Karl explained the banner was in Italian because it added class, but it also reflected the Italian roots of

the Ultra movement. The banner of Joe was raised a few rows down in front of Keith. It really did look like him. Smoke began collecting under the roof of the East Stand and made its way onto the pitch. In the smoky haze, the referee blew his whistle to start the game.

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A mainstay of the Ultras' style of support is to create large, hand-made banners that incorporate linguistic and visual imagery. These displays are presented at the beginnings of matches, usually as the players walk onto the field. Displays are also utilized in conjunction with large flags called *tifo* and smaller flags that are waved on the terraces. Crowd covers and flares are also used as the display is presented towards the field and the other stands, constructing a visually and aurally exhilarating experience for participants. The display component takes hours to make and is presented just once.

Despite the brief amount of time in which choreographed displays are presented (maybe 1-2 minutes), the beginning of the match is often used as an opportunity to provide the spark that can cause a chain of physical and emotional reactions from surrounding supporters, setting the tone for the rest of the match. These initial moments of choreography by the Ultras are essential for influencing the levels of emotional feedback created by supporters in the form of bodily expression and song. Karl observes the effects of displays:

> Displays are a lot of hard work and sometimes you really don't want to go and measure things or tape things together, but when you're at the match and you do a display and the feeling you get, the vibe you get, you see the whole atmosphere that's being generated from what we've done, it's worth every second of it. And when you go back on Facebook the night or the night after a match and you see pictures of what we've done, it makes it all worthwhile. (Personal Interview, 7/1/12)

As one of the creators of these displays, Karl takes special pride in the effect that its presentation has on the crowd, to the extent that he regularly finds the group's work bouncing around the Facebook community as well as various international Ultra web sites. An integral part of Karl's experience as an Ultra is the emotional (and subsequently) physical interactions that he fosters with members of the Rovers community. Prestige is often acquired through the creation of an especially well-crafted and creative display. The Ultras are judged in part based on their ability to involve the crowd through their work.

Displays provide this "spark" to the atmosphere not simply because of the visual craftsmanship, but because of what it means to the people that view it. Dan and Collie, two of the younger Ultras reflected on the significance of the Joe display with me.

> D: I was far more nervous about the display than the match. I really didn't mind if that display had gone as well as it did and we had even lost, that display in my mind was more important.
> C: The significance of it, you know the whole memory of Joe. You just didn't want anything to mess up…And with Joe's wife there…
> D: Yeah the family would have appreciated it.
> C: For them to see how much Joe meant to the club.
> D: And I sent out a message to other groups in Ireland who Joe was. He was one of the first Ultras in the country. There would have been none of this if it wasn't for people like him. Any time a member of any Ultras group dies there's always respect. (Personal Interview, 6/17/12)

Dan and Collie weren't the only ones who felt intense pressure to get Joe's display right. The seriousness of the event that sparked the creation of the display could not be misrepresented with a slip up in the presentation of the banner. The underlying meaning represented through the presentation of the display held evocative power. The display became the best way the Ultras knew how to pay their respects to Joe and his family who were in attendance. As discussed by Collie and Dan, its presentation effectively

symbolized a well of pent up emotions for many people and also spurred reflection about the loss of an individual that had played a large role in the Shamrock Rovers community. The size and obvious homemade characteristics of the banner displayed perhaps the most obvious symbol of devotion and respect: the sheer time spent in its construction. Such meaning behind the display, the object, sparked the atmosphere at the Shamrock Rovers-Cork City match.

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Mick's recognizable rhythm on the drum signaled to the crowd the first chant. The word "HOOPS," echoed from the East Stand in conjunction with the rhythm. The black flags went down and the colored tifo shot up in front of Joe's banner, filling the section with colorful stripes and shamrocks. More flares went off as Liam and I ran the crowd covers up the stairs, covering Block L and N. The Ultras and the rest in block M shouted "Hoops!" to the consistent rhythm of the bass drum, transitioning into the wordless song, "Dale Cavese," a fitting song—a celebration. The singing section sang the melody again and again as they danced in place, arms wrapped around each other's shoulders. Newbie gave me a hug as I made it up the stairs to my spot next to the aisle. Smoke trapped under the roof was stained red from flares as the crowd danced and Mick struck the drum. Sometimes he struck the drum on the beat, giving the tune a more traditional rhythm, but other times he went off the beat, employing a more Latin rhythm. Intonation in Block M didn't matter as long as you belted out the words as loud as you could. I caught a glimpse of Keith, holding his flare out, looking up at the sky, smiling.

The game started out slowly and Newbie said he thought the display might outshine the game itself. This didn't stop the Rovers support from having a good time.

Someone in Block M belted out, "Cooooork Ciiityyy FC," and was quickly joined by everyone else in the section. "You ain't got no history! 24 Leagues and 17 Cups, now that's what I call history!" The chants today were seamless.

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Choreographed efforts such as the display for Joe make an emotional impact on the greater Rovers community. In the Maldron Hotel after the match, drinking a few pints, my landlord, Fergus, led me to several other men that he knew. Only after he told them that I had helped create the display did they pay me any attention. The men introduced themselves and shook my hand.

Alex, an Ultra that travels to games from Arklow, recognized the impact of Joe's display.

> It's kind of a sense of pride when a display comes together. Like the Joe display was unbelievable and it's kind of a sense for yourself that it's something you participated in looks great, but if it also helps the team, even better. Even if it doesn't help the team, there's still pride in yourself because you've helped make the club respectable. It's going to draw people's attention to it. That night against Cork, one of my friends, Chris, he's a Cork fan but he sent me pictures from the away end. So when an away fan is taking pictures of a display, you're getting the recognition that you want to get. And even on the world stage on ultrastifo there were lots of pictures posted up and people were saying good things about it. It's kind of nice to hear that people appreciate what you do. (Personal Interview, 7/13/12)

Displays stoke emotions by presenting points of reference that hold meaning for individuals within the crowd. Though the reactions from within the singing section most likely differed from those of the older men I met in the bar afterward (odds are they sat in the West Stand, which is more "family" oriented), the display had an evocative impact on both parties who recognized its significance. In addition, the display was recognized by

the greater Ultra community on ultrastifo for its symbolic significance, but also for its success as an audiovisual spectacle. In this sense, the Ultras' earned prestige was twofold.

The cleverness of the message and the style of presentation is an important aspect of the display for Colm and Dan.

> C: Sometimes it's nicer to beat the other team on the terrace than it is to beat them on the pitch.
> M: So what does outdoing another Ultras group entail?
> C: It's a list of things. It could be the display—
> D: It's being a bit smart because anyone could hold up a banner and say—
> C: "You're a cunt. "
> D: It's the idea that is in the display, which has to be original. You can't be copying other people.
> C: That's one thing that's really frowned upon with Ultras across Europe. To copy is just…you'd get ridiculed for it. (Personal Interview, 6/17/12)

In this sense, displays often play a role in initiating dialogue between opposing supporters groups. Clever displays that outdo one's opponents are valued to the extent that they can be as important as the outcome of the game itself. In particular, the Joe display was all the Ultras were talking about before the match—Cork City never entered the conversation. Displays and chants that outdo opposing ultras will earn greater respect within the ultra community, earning the SRFC Ultras prestige.

Karl recalled a rare moment when the SRFC Ultras found themselves on the wrong end of an interaction.

> It pains me to say it but we were caught out once. We refer to Sligo as the "Bitter Reds." They call themselves "The Bit O Reds," but we call them the Bitter Reds, because they're bitter culties—they hate anything to do with Rovers. So we had a banner two minutes before kickoff, this is at Sligo, that said *The Bitter Reds* in red writing. We're thinking oh that's great, and still to this day we don't know how they knew about it. Did they guess it? Did someone rat us out? So they held up a banner that said, "Not bitter, just better." And they're sticking their middle finger at us. So even though we were on the wrong end of it that was a great example of right we're going to be smart, no we're going to be smarter. (Karl, Personal Interview, 7/1/12)

Displays serve to initiate dialogic banter between opposing supporters' groups and play a large part in how the group is perceived by the larger Ultra community. Such collective communications indicate that prestige comes from different sources. A club's success on the field very often yields the most symbolic capital, but an ultra group's smarts, their artistic ability, and their ability to create an intimidating atmosphere will earn them (albeit grudging) respect from their rivals.

As evidenced by my interaction with Fergus' friends after the Joe Display, the SRFC Ultras' choreography has a significant impact on Rovers supporters as well. In this sense, displays can create differing emotional responses based on who the recipient is. For a Rovers fan, the SRFC Ultras' display might elicit shared approval and appreciation, but for the opposition it may elicit anger. Clever displays can undermine their opponents and effectively evoke emotion and create a physical response in the stadium space.

Perhaps most importantly, the source of a banner's legitimacy and emotional impact is based on the personal investment made toward its creation. He compared the SRFC Ultras to You Boys in Green (YBIG), the official supporters group of the Irish National Team.

> A: They're not really liked by the Ultras groups in the country because they're funded by the FAI [Football Association of Ireland].
> M: Really.
> A: Yeah, the FAI pay for their banners—they're all printed banners. Joe's stuff, we painted it ourselves—the lads painted it and there was hard work put into it. YBIG uses a printing company. Our own work is there, they [YBIG] get everything funded.
> M: So that decreases the value of it?
> A: Yeah…I'd rather support here [Rovers] and put my own time into a display than get something printed. There's no sense of pride—say you ordered a banner—it might look amazing but it's been ordered, it's been printed by someone else. It's not your own time your own effort put into

> it, and when people appreciate it there's no sense of pride because you haven't made it. You might have designed it but you haven't made it. (Personal Interview, 7/13/12)

Respect is not earned simply through visually stunning work alone, but must be made by hand--at least in the eyes of the Ultras. This accumulation of symbolic capital is then based not only on the money invested in the creation of displays, but the countless hours devoted to their creation throughout the season. Chants, like talk, on their own can be cheap, but hand-made displays are physical evidence of one's dedication and passion. Thus, the relationship between chants and displays are symbiotic, both contributing to an elevated emotional experience. Pierre Bourdieu explains the value and of symbolic capital, which can elucidate the meaning and subsequent reactions behind the Ultras' displays.

> The objects endowed with the greatest distinctive power are those which most clearly attest the quality of the appropriation, and therefore the quality of the owner, because their possession requires time and capacities which, requiring a long investment of time, like pictorial or musical culture, cannot be acquired in haste or by proxy, and which therefore appear as the surest indications of the quality of the person. This explains the importance which the pursuit of distinction attaches to all those activities which, like artistic consumption, demand pure, pointless expenditure, especially of the rarest and most precious thing of all…namely, time… (1984, 281)

The Ultras acquire status by cleverly utilizing the altered rules of the stadium borderland. Their ability to evoke the emotions of others through the means of displays, flags, flares, body language, and song can ignite a chain of emotional and physical responses. Displays become especially important because they represent the sheer amount of time and manual labor that was required for its brief presentation. Consistent involvement in the making of displays separates the singing supporters from the SRFC Ultras. Originally, there were

different levels of involvement. “A lot of people would just get involved on matchday and just help out and stuff,” said Newbie during our interview (7/8/12). “Then there’s the core group who do stuff in their own free time with it—spend a lot of money and waste a lot of time—well not waste, but you know, lose a lot of time to it, which is what we [the Ultras] do.” The display itself is a symbol of their passion, a physical manifestation—undeniable and evocative. This presentation of their devotion to the task, which earns the group notoriety and prestige, sets the tone, amplifying the singing that continues throughout the match.

Performative Interaction Between Groups

A few weeks after the Joe display, Fiachra, Karl, and I took a taxi to Tolka Park from city center for Rovers’ away game against Shelbourne. For a Dublin derby game, there were fewer Shelbourne supporters than everyone expected. The Rovers contingent, located near the midfield line, was facing away from the game and towards the Shelbourne Ultras, singing “Where the fuck is your support—where the fuck is, where the fuck is, where the fuck is your support?!” But several minutes later, Shels scored, sparking wild celebration from the hardcore support in the terrace behind the goal. After a few initial moments of silence and disappointment in the Riverside Stand, the Rovers support started chanting a rhythmic call-and-response with each other, “Come on Rovers—Come on Rovers—Come on Rovers!” as the team scooped the ball out of their own net and resumed play. Several minutes later, Rovers equalized. Collie and a bunch of others rushed down the terraces, leaning over the railing, as close as they could get to

the Shels supporters, and gave them the finger, laughing as they sang, "You're not singing at anymore!"

* * *

Introduction of songs is directly related to the events going on both the pitch as well as in the stands. The Rovers supporters' first song had little to do with the game itself, but was indicative of the inherent desire for conflict between supporters groups. "Come on Rovers," on the other hand, was initiated directly related to the events on the field—Shelbourne had just scored and the chant was directed towards the Rovers players. The beginning of the Rovers-Shelbourne match illustrates how the surrounding environment influences the behavior of the Ultras and the Rovers community. However, on-field events play an integral role as well. Paul interpreted the reactions of the crowd.

> If you're at a game and it's just a game and there's not really that much happening and you start to pick a song—it's not that it doesn't go with the rhythm of the game—it's that there is no rhythm to the game. It's kind of flat and you're just kind of singing because that's what you're meant to be doing, but if you're one-nil behind it won't go flat because people are trying to get behind the team. (Personal Interview, 6/15/12)

The repetitive call-and-response of "Come on Rovers" is both proactive and reactive. It is a direct response to on-field events and also an attempt to give a mental and emotional boost to players in hopes of changing the course of the unfolding game, but also establishes a physical relationship between members of the singing section. Alex believes that the Ultras' style has a greater impact than singular shouts of "Come on" or "Fuck's sake!" He indicates that chants have differing effects on Rovers support or the opposition. "You're making the away team feel intimidated by having a good atmosphere, a

boisterous atmosphere, an intimidating atmosphere—trying to make them nervous and hopefully help your team" (Personal Interview, 7/13/12). In comparison, "If you're sitting down shouting 'come on' you're not actually helping your team, whereas if you're standing up singing properly, if you're singing in unison with twenty lads singing the same song at the same time, it sounds better than one person shouting abuse" (ibid).

Alex elucidates that organized and collective participation provides an emotional and physical reaction that singular efforts cannot elicit. If a supporter aims to express a feeling through the learned repertoire of music, this provides the surrounding crowd with the tools to actively express that same emotion in the context of that moment. Though it cannot be claimed that every individual is feeling the *exact* same thing, it is clear that collective participation allows an audience to magnify the evocative capacity of any given moment. Through synchronization of movement and songs, moments within the singing section are undeniably shared experiences. It is through this potential evocative effect that chants have the potential to change the physical dispositions of players and supporters alike.

Such effects lead to collective interaction. Eoghan explained his theory of the meaning behind repetitive chants such as "Come on Rovers."

> It's almost like you're trying to transport your energy to the players, so you're not just letting them know that the fans are there, but you're saying to them that we have this level of energy, this level of commitment, you need to replicate that out there where it matters. So you're trying to get that sense of energy into it. It definitely works because you can tell at a game with no atmosphere the games do fall flat. And the two things feed off each other, because if the game gets interesting the fans respond to that. (Personal Interview, 6/21/12)

The Ultras believe that their actions in the stand have an impact on the game. Eoghan's shows that "Come on Rovers" is a boost to players because it is an object of the supporters' dedication—their "level of commitment" (ibid). This object is meant to have an effect on the Rovers players on the field. The interactive nature of chants and songs indicate that supporters in the matchday context are simultaneously participants as well audience members, interacting within their own collective and being effected by others.

The Rovers' supporters multiple dispositions towards the opposition supporters behind the goal and the game on the field exhibits the layers of communication that take place and the multiple layers of ongoing competition in the matchday context. On this particular day against Shelbourne, there was no real competition between supporters because the Rovers fans far outnumbered them. They voiced their contempt right from the start, singing "Where the Fuck is your Support." Further, the results on the field are important to the Ultras for the emotions that both sides experience. This explains why the fans ran down to the guardrails to give the enemy the finger after scoring. Rubbing salt in the wounds of the Shelbourne supporters—knowing and relishing the pain they are feeling is an essential aspect of the outgroup relationship. Karl brought it back to Bohemians—"there's no better feeling of leaving Dalymount after beating Bohs and knowing their fans are absolutely fucking raging," he said (Personal Interview, 6/26/12). " But it goes both ways because when Bohs beat us you see how happy and delighted they are and I feel like shit—I feel like I've been booted in the stomach."

Repetition and Collective Transcendence

The repetitive nature of many of the songs also has the reflexive effect of creating emotional feedback, in which emotions amongst the group continue to build, where individuals continuously feed off the people around them, creating a continuous chain of signs and effects within the crowd. Alex describes the nature of repetitious songs.

> A: I like the tunes, like "The Lonesome Boatman," even though it's just a tune. "Dale Cavese." Loads of other songs that have tunes that have drum beats. If you have someone good on the drums like Karl or Mick, you can keep 'em going and it sounds great because the sound reverberates around the stadium.
> M: It sounds like repetition is very important.
> A: Yeah, keep it going.
> M: Talk to me about that.
> A: There's been times when it's just been me and Sam singing, me and Fiachra—it could be just two or three people singing, but if you keep it going someone else will join in and then someone else over here will join in and then it builds and gets around the stand and you could have the majority of the section singing along, and it will expand and expand. Even in the West stand you might get someone singing, and the longer it goes on the louder it gets, the more on the back of the opposition team it gets. It's basically like building layers.
> M: So if it started for you in a situation where it's gotten louder and now it's starting to taper down, would you stop or would you keep going?
> A: No I'd keep going until I was the only person singing. If there are another one or two people singing I'll keep going unless my voice actually just gives up, like Davy's does a lot.
> M: I can't remember what game this was at—I was standing behind you. I remember singing and it would eventually die down, but you guys would keep really singing and that was something that impressed me.
> A: You sing and support your team for ninety minutes through song, through color, through flag waving, whatever. You support your team for ninety minutes whether you're winning or losing or drawn. You just keep behind your team because you never give up. (Personal Interview, 7/13/12)

The dying moments of a chant are another opportunity to make a statement about one's dedication and passion. Alex's statements show that vocal presentations of grit and

determination can reignite the singing section, the layers of voices building back upon each other in greater intensity than before.

Furthermore, the Ultras employ clear musical techniques that help to elongate a given rendition of a song. With either Karl or Mick on the bass drum during games, they will often cue the beginning of chants—a remarkably effective tool for inspiring participation. On its most basic level, the bass drum is very loud, and as such, can effectively stoke emotions and excitement, reverberating around the terrace. Karl or Mick will alternate rhythmic patterns between verses or melodic cycles in order to keep chants musically fresh, thus keeping supporters involved for as long as possible. In a particular rendition of "The Lonesome Boatman" at a game against St Patrick's Athletic that I attended, drums were employed with heavy strokes on every quarter note, but were alternated on subsequent repetitions with a reggaeton beat, giving the traditionally Irish tune a distinctly Latin flavor. In addition, drums can signify the continuous nature of a chant. This is often done by switching to eighth notes for the last two beats of a melody's cycle, leading up to, and emphasizing the first beat of the beginning of the melody. Such relatively simple musical techniques used on continuous chants such as "Come on Rovers" and wordless songs like "Dale Cavese" and "The Lonesome Boatman" play a part in the creation of exhilarating shared experiences.

Vocal techniques can also reignite lessening participation. For the call-and-response chant, "Come on Rovers," as the singing is dying down, an individual may cut off the dying chant—almost as an interruption—restarting the lyrics "Come on Rovers," but very slowly, establishing a new rhythm that quickly gains momentum and quickens in pace. All of these factors can contribute to effective repetition of chants. Ultimately,

repetition has strong emotional effects on its participants. Fiachra recalls a particularly exciting experience that hinged on collective repetition.

> F: I think it's better if you can keep the one song going constantly for a long time. It just sounds good and it builds a rhythm to the drums. The first time I remember seeing that at Rovers was just incredible—it was the end of the 2004 season, we were away to Pats. It was a shit season, we did nothing and finished eighth or something. But yeah, the Ultras just lit flares from the start non-stop for forty-five minutes and for that 45 minutes you couldn't even see the game—the stand was just full of smoke. And they were letting off about two or three at a time.
> M: They must have had so many of them.
> F: They probably used up about forty. I was trying to count but I lost count at 25 because they just kept doing it. And for those forty-five minutes we sang "Build Me Up Buttercup." For forty-five minutes, Buttercup and flares. I didn't even see the game—no idea what happened in that first half. It was brilliant. (Personal Interview, 7/5/12)

For individuals, repetition leads into moments of rhythmic entrainment, actualizing a celebration and resulting in exceptional moments of exhilaration and joy. Judith Becker describes rhythmic entrainment as "a structural coupling, of a changed interior, personal consciousness in a musical domain or coordination" (2004, 127). "Bodies and brains synchronize gestures, muscle actions, breathing, and brain waves while enveloped in music. Many persons, bound together by common aims, may experience revitalization and general good feeling. The situation is communal and individual, music descends on all alike, while each person's joy is his or her own" (ibid). Thus, exceptionally intense moments such as these can be extremely important in not only sending a message to the players or the opposition supporters, but also have an inward effect on the group, solidifying the collective through repetition and a shared emotional state. Particularly exhilarating experiences such as Fiachra's serve as pivotal moments that define the Ultras' experiences and inspire continued involvement in the participatory process. It also

reveals that the ideal ultra experience can entirely absorb the attention of the group, transcending the game itself and focusing inward on the physical and emotional "togetherness" that is being created. This moment was particularly special not simply because it was a celebration, but because it was a celebration that transcended the context of the disappointing season. Becker continues, "If speech rhythms can entrain, if rhythmically flashing lights can entrain, if bodily gestures can entrain, how much more powerful is musical ritual entrainment with a pulse that penetrates to our bones, with melodies that thrill…" (ibid, 129) Thus, the Ultras ultimately have agency in creating a certain type of atmosphere or vibe—one that rejects the emotional tendencies of the run of play.

Some of the most powerful reactions in the terraces occur when the Rovers team on the field can't properly represent the characteristics that the Ultras have come to identify with. "When I was on the bus today, what I had going through my head was if we lose tonight all I want to see is Rovers fight for it—go down fighting," said Alex (Personal Interview, 7/13/12). "If we lose 2-1 or 3-2, it's still a loss, but at least we showed some fighting spirit. It's better than our recent 4-0 loss to Bohs, which was horrible. There was no fight in the team." The attitude of never giving up, of always showing pride in being "Shamrock Rovers" is ingrained in the imagined Rovers identity.

Certain moments during times of failure can define the collective in the eyes of supporters, taking precedence over the unfavorable and uncontrollable events unfolding on the field. Newbie recalled a memory in which Rovers supporters shifted attention away from the game on the field.

> We were away to Pats in '07…this was before the bandwagon, and the weight of expectation, when everyone was a supporter in the true sense of the word…at about the 88th minute, we were 5-0 down. Pats fans were all celebrating and going mad, and everyone in the away section (there was a pretty big crowd there) held up their scarves and sang, "We'll Never Die"…
>
> *[The Rovers flag is white and green*
> *Its colors draped our glorious team.*
> *And though our Milltown home is gone*
> *Our flag defiant flows along.*
>
> *While we are here*
> *We'll never die*
> *We'll keep the green flag flying high.*
> *Shamrock Rovers will never die*
> *Shamrock Rovers, Shamrock Rovers*
> *We'll keep the green flag flying high.]*
>
> …[we] absolutely belted it out. I remember looking over at the Pats fans, they stopped celebrating and just stared at us in disbelief. I hadn't been going very long at that stage and it made me realize that whatever happened on the pitch, Rovers would always be a cut above everyone else. I was actually moved to tears by that to tell you the truth. (Newbie, Personal Correspondence, 9/18/12)

Newbie explained the moment further during our interview: "it kind of defined us—yeah we're shite, but we're still Rovers, it doesn't matter" (Personal Interview, 7/8/12). In one of the club's lowest moments, before the acquisition of Tallaght Stadium and the resolution of their financial woes, during a game in which the team was being dismantled in front of their eyes and Pats fans were literally laughing at them, the symbolism behind their rendition of "We'll Never Die" could not have been more powerful. For Newbie, this moment was pivotal in his conceptualization of the Shamrock Rovers identity. This collective display of undying spirit in the face of seemingly insurmountable adversity shows that participatory music in the sporting context has the ability to override surrounding events—that participants' actions rather than players' ultimately define the

characteristics of the community. Repetition in this context was evocative in a drastically different way than Fiachra's telling of the forty-five minute rendition of "Build Me Up Buttercup," however, both events were particularly memorable because, for the participants, they overrode the proceedings on the pitch.

Related to such examples of repetition, Olaveson notes, "The key to effervescent assemblies and the collective representations they arouse is the joining of feelings and ideas. Emotions, especially intense ones, 'spread to all other mental states that occupy the mind,' and pervade and contaminate representative objects, in other words, symbols" (2001, 98). This seems especially applicable to Newbie's story, in which group singing had a very specific meaning and a (at least perceived) shared emotional effect on Rovers supporters in the context of that moment. Further, "…one of the functions of ritual, though not the only one, is to 'make the obligatory desirable,' in other words, to encourage a society's members to conform to the norms, values, and ultimately, moral behaviour embodied in its dominant symbols" (ibid). Such moments of intense emotion, which allowed Newbie to derive such profound meaning, may well have been pivotal in the survival of the Rovers collective.

Chants are inherently dialogic—they have an intended purpose of making an impact on the game and the opposition supporters, but they also have a reflexive effect on the collective and the participating individual. The symbolic meaning behind the starting of a chant, a display of one's "level of commitment," has the potential to yield varying emotions and physical reactions from the participants' habitus of learned responses to changing scenarios. Each version of a song is inherently different because the referenced object behind the chain of sign and effect can never be the same. Such interactive modes

of participatory performance are proactive and reactive, created in response to prior events with the intent of affecting the Rovers community, the opposition, and the players—all in different ways. The pleasure of these interactions is derived not only from the Ultras' ability to affect the emotions of supporters and players, but also from understanding the anguish of their opposition—and reveling in it. Such chants and displays also serve to draw newcomers to the Ultras and the Rovers community, and it does it in a way that offers a spectrum of emotional experiences that are a rarity outside the stadium space. The Ultras' ability to stoke the emotions of the Rovers community and their opposition earns them prestige within the League of Ireland and the international Ultra communities.

Ultimately, chants and displays are "objects," representing something deeper than the "signs" themselves. Thus, the meaning behind one supporter's beginning of "Come on Rovers" at a match has the potential to elicit a chain of effects spurred by the symbolic meaning behind the first individual's chant. Such vocal and physical presentations can evoke a variety of emotional responses, as evidenced by Fiachra's and Newbie's stories. Physical, vocal, and visual displays of dedication, grit, and pride in "Shamrock Rovers" are also meant to spur on the players in the belief that participation can impact the outcome of the game. Ultimately, the chain of signs and effects results in the building of emotional feedback, where vocal and physical expressions of emotion increase in intensity, resulting in moments of rhythmic entrainment. These instances offer shared experiences and deep-seated notions of belonging for dedicated supporters, emphasizing the agency that fans have in defining the Shamrock Rovers community. Collective repetition transforms the purpose of participatory chants from influencing the match and

the audience to, in rare moments, transcending past it into a momentary state of collective celebration that can rise above the match. As the Ultras' performance overshadows the match, players no longer represent the club, but rather the collective defines itself through its own actions in that moment. In the stadium world, the supporters hold the key to overcoming even the most dire of circumstances that they themselves have constructed through the sporting narrative.

CONCLUSION

Conceptualizing Music in the Sporting Context

Sport has thus far remained on the periphery of ethnomusicological discussion, however, football spectatorship offers an ideal opportunity to discuss the intersection of music and sport. As established in Chapter 4, participatory music is an integral feature of the spectator experience. Chants and songs in the sporting context require further study because of their prevalence in communities all over the world. Each community utilizes the same basic components in order to express varying information. I reiterate Alex's statement here: "Everyone wants to bring color to the stadiums—flares, pyro, smoke, flags," said Alex during our interview (7/13/12). "But it's what's on the flags and what you sing about that makes your group individual." It is my hope that this thesis opens the door to the further discussion and unpacking of the role of music within the stadium space.

Thomas Turino's recategorization of music helps to elucidate how the Ultras' chants hold a different, and perhaps an unconventional purpose in the context of Irish society. The SRFC Ultras do not equate their activities to traditional notions of "presentational music," which instead occupy an entirely different sphere than the music that one might see performed in Dublin nightclubs or at concerts in the city's famous Phoenix Park. Returning to my very first interaction in Ireland with the customs officer at the Dublin Airport, it is unsurprising that Irish ultras have been viewed with mistrust by the greater public. Where else can such a group activity occur that allows for the outward displays of a broad spectrum of emotions? This can be perceived as a rarity in Western

culture, where restraint is the status quo and public displays of emotion, especially amongst strangers, are often viewed with discomfort (Schafer and Roose 2010, 229).

During my last session at the pub with the lads, after everyone was loosened up, Fiachra put on a playlist of all the pop versions of the songs that the Ultras sang at matches. The songs no longer filled the room as background music, but instead became a centerpiece as the guys chatted and sang the songs playing over the speakers. The Ultras' songs contrasted with the previous ones—these songs inspired participation, evoked camaraderie, and created nostalgia for the Ultras' exploits on the terraces in Tallaght. Amongst friends, Karl and others saw opportunity for altering lyrics in order to fit the current circumstances—in this case, I was leaving for Boston the next day. Karl changed the lyrics of "Oh Twigg of Scotland" to "Oh Max of Boston." The Rovers repertoire of songs is expansive, but finite nonetheless. However, its adaptable nature makes expression specific to nearly any situation.

The Sporting Narrative and the Carnivalesque

Chapter 2 argues that watching sports is a creative act—one that adopts the "classical trilogy" of any Western theatrical drama: "unity of place, of time, of action" (Bromberger 1994, 117). The important separation between theater and sport is that the outcome of an athletic contest is not decided ahead of time. Thus, the performative behaviors of the Ultras are drawn to the sporting arena in part because of its interactive nature and its potential impact. The Ultras hope that displays, flares, flags, and chants will influence the unfolding narrative on the field and in the terraces. This creative act of play and performative action transforms the stadium space into an alternate reality, where

"the fun of playing…is in playing with fire, going in over one's head, inverting the accepted procedures and hierarchies…" (Schechner 1993, 26-27)

The lewd and unforgiving content in songs reflects the carnivalesque nature of the stadium borderland, in which only limited lyrical content is considered off limits (a prevalent exception would be any kind of racist comments). The stadium borderland is a space laden with conflict, partially because of the inherent nature of sports, but also because conflict in a collective setting is desirable—enhancing the atmosphere. "You don't walk down the street in Cork telling people to fuck off," said Eoghan (Personal Interview, 6/21/12). "You'd be battered! People like me are very polite people in normal society, but you get away with things like that in football and it's all part of the theater of the game. It's not that you actually have anything against these people. It's part of the spectacle and creating an event around it. For 90 minutes you and them are convinced that your rivalry is the only thing in the world that matters" (ibid). Eoghan shows that "hate" has many shades of gray and can constitute an act of play with little real malice or can represent actual (and sometimes violent) antagonism, especially in the case of Rovers' relationship with Bohemians FC. The stadium borderland is a volatile space because of its temporary nature, only open for a few hours on game day, and then closed until the next week. The altered rules of the borderland also redefine status, where outside prestige means nothing and aggressive behavior is permitted—and even encouraged.

Songs as Points of Reference and Commentary

As established in Chapter 2, such expression emerges from a preexisting habitus of chants and songs that is acquired as newcomers are exposed to and eventually absorb

the songs that are sung at matches. This repertoire becomes a proactive and reactive mode of collective expression, influenced by ongoing events and influencing them in turn. Songs, chants, and displays serve to actualize the past in the present, creating shared identity and shared feeling for newcomers and veterans alike. Though the imagined community congregates in the same stadium to watch the same match, its members cannot know every one of their kind. The SRFC Ultras, singing in Block M, are united with the Rovers community through their common interest in the success of the team, but also through their shared past, actualized in matchday situations through presentations of visual displays and chants.

Songs reflect the community's continual struggle to come to terms with the club's many successes on the pitch and its fight for financial survival along with its subsequent relegation to the first division in 2005. Though songs are quick to highlight Rovers' strengths and prestige as "Ireland's Finest," with "24 Leagues and 17 Cups," the community has demonstrated the necessity to remember what Eoghan recalled as "Irish sport's longest funeral" (Personal Interview, 6/21/12). This approximately twenty-year period is referenced and reflected upon in songs such as "Build Me Up Buttercup," which in the context of Rovers takes on specific meanings regarding the perpetual disappointment of the potential investors that backed out ("Why do you build me up just to let me down?"). The Ultras reinforce the necessity to remember these events rather than to forget. The past plays an important role in the present-day construction of the community's identity.

Chosen and immortalized, the content of their repertoire reflects the multi-dimensional nature of the community's identity—attempting to come to terms with

fluctuating historical periods of dominance and obscurity, as well as their place within the broader spectrum of world football. Continued reflection does not simply reflect a desire for "fun" or an enjoyable experience (though they are often fun, especially when Rovers win), but rather something with deeper emotional resonance that coincides with the historical narrative they have chosen. By "enacting and experiencing" chants, supporters begin to identify on an internal level with the community (Robson 2000, 167).

However, songs are not simply static references to historical events. They are appropriated into the stadium context, often with adapted lyrics, but other times left untouched in order to make relevant and current commentary based on the context of the sporting narrative. Unchanged lyrics are always utilized with an implicit meaning that relates to Rovers. The meaning and emotional effect of the same song can vary drastically based on the context in which it is introduced. Thus, context is pivotal in discerning the meaning of any particular rendition. The crowd's version of "You'll Never Play for Rovers" directed towards the Shelbourne Youth Team (Chapter 2) was particularly memorable because of its effective use in a non-traditional context.

Songs and chants also provide a current and collective mode of commentary. Karl's lyrical adaptation of "The Lonesome Boatman," whose lyrics mocked the death of Louis Kilcoyne, (the owner who sold Milltown, sending Shamrock Rovers towards financial ruin) was a specifically relevant chant when it was introduced. After its initial introduction, "The Lonesome Boatman" was altered, to be sung without words because the lyrics were no longer relevant to current events (however, the tune has proved itself to be a popular "celebration" song).

Negotiating Outgroup Relationships

Chapter 3 argues that songs and chants also reflect the Ultras' and the greater community's perception that "No one likes us, we don't care." In a football league that the Ultras feel is financially neglected by its own governing body (the Football Association of Ireland) as well as the general public, most prefer the higher footballing standards of the English and Scottish Leagues. (How odd would it be to see swarms of New York Yankees fans living in Boston, with few Red Sox supporters to be seen, and Fenway Park occupied by only several thousand supporters?) The SRFC Ultras would argue that to watch solely for the football is to miss the whole point. As historically the most successful team in Ireland, Shamrock Rovers are also the target of the rest of the league's animosity. Brick argues that such opposition supporter attitudes are common reactions to the greater fortunes of their rivals (1994). Ironically, such behavior makes teams like Shamrock Rovers more prevalent than ever within their comparatively small, but devoted, sporting communities. Such animosity from their domestic rivals and such ambivalence from the rest of the world is reflected in the Rovers community's music, but also highlights the value of loyalty within the community and the romanticized notion that all they have is each other.

Many members of the Ultras also viewed their style of support as an implicit rejection of the British style. The creation of the Ultras can be viewed as a search for an alternative form of expression that extends past the long shadow of the British in Ireland. By creating a unique visual and aural spectacle, the Ultras see their actions as a way to demonstrate superiority over their culturally dominant counterparts. The English Premier League in is often described as "sanitized" by the SRFC Ultras, where fans sit to watch

the match. Newbie views the *ultra* style "as a way of distancing ourselves from English culture" (Personal Interview, 7/8/12). Most people in this country only care about English football," he said. "We take a bit of pride in the fact that many Irish go over to [Manchester] United and sit in a full stadium of 78,000 in silence." He added, "In England they sit down for the whole game and then they stand up for fifteen minutes at halftime and then they sit down again, which just seems the wrong way around to me. It just seems natural to stand up and support the team" (ibid). The Ultras' actualization of the Rovers community and differentiation of themselves from England can be seen as its own act of rejection and empowerment.

The Ultras have incorporated songs with roots in Italy and Germany (Dale Cavese is a prime example though there are many more). The call-and-response and repetitive aspects of singing have slowly changed the supporter experience since the Ultras' official founding in 2001. Incorporation of popular music also gives Rovers' repertoire a unique flavor, which many of the Ultras take pride in. Newbie called to mind Erasure's "A Little Respect": "That's another one that the casuals [a different group of Rovers supporters] started singing in Estonia," he said (ibid). "The ones that are genuinely unique are the ones I really like because it's cool to have something that's just ours." Part of the SRFC Ultras' prerogative is to express the group in a way that exhibits their uniqueness. In this regard, originality earns the group prestige throughout the *ultra* community.

Conflict as a Part of the Rovers Narrative

Bodily and vocal expression is also geared towards Rovers' opponents, indicative of a desire for conflict. As supporters begin to indentify with the Rovers community, their

perspectives towards outgroups change as well. These relationships revolve around antagonism, but they are also essential to the existence of the Rovers community, and thus, are an integral part of the matchday experience. The stadium borderland is unavoidably and desirably, a space in which controlled conflict occurs, where the home team must defend their space as the visiting team enters hostile territory.

The SRFC Ultras construct and reinforce the identities of their opponents, often caricaturizing them as two-dimensional versions of themselves. Bohemians are frequently referred to as "scum," but the Ultras adopt various names for most of their opponents. St Patrick's Athletic is commonly referred to as "the junkies" due to the high numbers of addicts that frequent the methadone clinic near their stadium in Inchicore. Fittingly, songs (especially against Bohemians) reference past hooligan violence, reconstructing such events through vocal reenactment, inciting further conflict and collective discourse. Such dialogue builds an atmosphere in which the threat of violence becomes its own source of exhilaration—part of the performative experience for the SRFC Ultras. The aggressive and expressive nature of the SRFC Ultras may in part lead to the greater society's misinterpretation of their actions.

The Ultras' final display of the season against the newly crowned League Champions, Sligo Rovers, received a lot of heat because they presented a banner that said "Ireland's Number 1" and another with the number 17, their League Titles won, in conjunction with an amazing pyro show (www.ultras-tifo.net, 26 October 2012). A Sligo fan commented on Facebook: "It's just a pity that those scum bags that call themselves Shams supporters spoilt the party before, during, and after the game. They should be banned from every ground in the country" (27 October 2012). Though the Ultras' actions

are inflammatory, reveling in symbolic violence and the threat of danger, the group is not interested in inciting actual violence, nor would they ever promote it. For the Ultras, there is undoubtedly an emotional rush in its enactment, but not necessarily in the real thing. Outsiders cannot always make this distinction. The Ultras' actions, based on the carnivalesque nature of the stadium borderland can thus be misconstrued as representations of violent or immoral character in day-to-day life.

Themes of success and failure, and of "us against the world," are essential components to the Rovers narrative. This constructive act of play creates an alternate world in which previous games begin to define the importance of upcoming matches. The history of a club impacts the characteristics of the community's identity as well as their interactions with their opponents—as is evident from Shamrock Rovers long rivalry with Bohemians FC. As added meaning becomes attached to each game, spectators become supporters who are invested in its outcome. Bourdieu's notion of habitus elucidates this process, in which individuals "internalize their externality" (1977, 72) and ultimately "externalize their internality" through chants and displays.

Individual Change and Effects of Collective Participation

The transition towards the externalization of internality begs to consider what changes occur in the individual. "Davy's Chant" offers a final example in which to discuss how songs and the overall atmosphere change its participants. Davy talked about his own behavioral transformation at Rovers matches, in particular focusing on the personal effects of a call-and-response chant that he leads.

> M: So you said when you're at Rovers games you can act completely different. Do you want to talk about what that would be?
> D: Outside of Rovers I'm a quiet enough fella. Don't get me wrong I have my moments, but I'm quiet, I keep to myself. But at Rovers games I'm out there, I'm right in front of everyone and everyone recognizes me because of that. I'm outspoken at Rovers. I say here wave that flag we need flags up come on let's do this, whereas if it was anything else I'd be like "would you just do that for us please." It changes your attitude, you get into it, you get pumped. There's a different function in your head.
> M: So for you, is that something that you like? Being able to act differently?
> D: Yeah, I can't go anywhere now without being known because I shout things, and they shout back. The call and response has gotten me well known and that's great because now people know where it's coming from, who it is. I wouldn't have done that three years ago. There's no way I would have done that three years ago. (Davy, Personal Interview, 7/16/12)

During Shamrock Rovers matches, Davy's behavior changes from that of a soft-spoken college student to one of the leaders of the singing section. Davy's call and response has earned him a significant level of notoriety amongst Rovers supporters, especially those that reside in Block M. His interactions with the singing section boost his confidence and allow him a moment during the game to give a display of emotion where the spotlight falls on him. Davy shouts and the crowd responds:

Shamrock! (crowd: Shamrock!), Rovers! (Rovers!) x2
We're Ireland's Number One! (We're Ireland's Number One!) x2
Dublin's Green and White (Dublin's Green and White!) x2

In the stadium space, Davy shows that the Rovers community operates under a different social hierarchy, in which outside-world social and financial status is irrelevant. Instead, experience, loyalty, and specific skills such as artistic ability, sewing, and general experience on the terraces are all factors in which a more relevant hierarchy is established. Davy takes pride in his credibility as an Ultra. One can relate the Ultras'

elevated status in the borderland to Geertz' notion of "deep play": "Men go on allegorically humiliating one another and being allegorically humiliated by one another, day after day, glorying quietly in the experience if they have triumphed, crushed only slightly more openly if they have not. *But no one's status really changes*" (Geertz 1972, 78). Outside the borderland, the Ultras resume their day to day lives, their social standing relatively unchanged by the events that occurred within the stadium walls.

In addition, collective interaction and its evocative power plays an important role in the permanent construction of identification with "ingroups" and their respective "outgroups." Davy's words are not simply representations of the club's name, Shamrock Rovers, but are a physical and aural display of his dedication and passion for the club. "Davy's Chant" serves as a final example of the ways in which songs represent Turino's interpretation of *objects*, which represent something greater than their lyrical content. Thus, songs have potential to elicit an emotional and subsequently, a physical response. Reactions build off one another, creating a noisy atmosphere and continued participation. The lyrical content in Davy's chant is perhaps the lesser aspect in comparison to its presentation—the *way* that Davy says it. "As soon as my name is chanted I know exactly what will happen," said Davy during our interview. "You take a gulp of water and you just scream" (ibid).

Status is linked with one's dedication to the Rovers community. In fact, it was a point of pride for Davy when he mentioned that his voice would sometimes give out during his chant—indicative of the physical exertion he put into the performance. For this very reason, "Davy's Chant" is especially popular and elicits an extraordinary response from the crowd in Block M. This particular example shows that one person can begin the

semiotic chaining process, where feelings of exhilaration build through stylized responses to a habitus of a preexisting repertoire of songs and chants.

The Ultras' idealized matchday aesthetic would recognize "Davy's Chant" as one piece of a 90 minute-long participatory experience in which song endings flow into the beginning of the next. This continual participation leads to emotional feedback, in which emotions build based on the stylized physical and aural expressions of surrounding supporters. Emotional feedback describes the semiotic chaining process in which signs elicit continuously louder and more emotional responses. Those responses become signs in the next phase of the chain. A greater the number of signs (i.e. multiple singers) can also elicit stronger emotional responses from surrounding supporters.

Further, repetition serves the purpose of making continuous participation possible, while prompting varying responses from players and supporters alike. The belief that displays of dedication can motivate and inspire players is a primary motivation for many of the Ultras to create the visual and aural spectacle at each game. Repetition in different circumstances can also lead to rhythmic entrainment, where the experience is both "communal and individual," and "bodies and brains synchronize gestures, muscle actions, breathing, and brain waves while enveloped in music" (Becker 2004, 127). Such activity physically actualizes community through synchronized movement and speech that creates lasting perceptions of group identity and characteristics in individuals.

Repetition also leads to moments reminiscent to collective effervescence, where "emotions, especially intense ones, 'spread to all other mental states that occupy the mind,' and pervade and contaminate representative objects, in other words, symbols" (Olaveson 2001, 98). Collective effervescence depicts the emotional connection to

physical action, and the emotional reactions that are created out of such physical action. As evidenced by Newbie's story of the rendition of "We'll Never Die," vocal interaction can create and reinforce deep-seated notions of belonging and communal identity. Further, group performance in rare but important moments allows the collective to transcend the events on the pitch, defining the community based on their actions in the stands rather than the actions of the players on the field.

As supporters of Shamrock Rovers, the SRFC Ultras have accepted the Rovers narrative along with the common goal of positively influencing the results of the football club. To accept this constructed reality within the stadium borderland, the Ultras must also deal with the inherent unpredictability of the narrative that they follow each week along with the possibility that the players, as representatives of the club, cannot always represent the characteristics that the community wants to embody (i.e. fearlessness, loyalty, love of club, perserverence). Many of these characteristics are hard to display in the outside world on a regular basis. As one incorporates oneself into the community, he or she is granted the opportunity to actualize these traits, many of which extend past being a "winner" or a "loser." *How* the team performed becomes in many respects more important than the actual result. Similarly, how the crowd represents itself through ritualized action has the power to override disappointing representations of the community on the field in exceptional circumstances.

Newbie's "We'll Never Die" story holds evocative power because of the community's ability to not only persevere, but to define itself on its own terms, transcending the matchday narrative that they create. These ritualized, transcendental moments are especially significant because they are rarely attainable in the outside world.

The nature of the stadium borderland allows supporters to define themselves based on the quality of their collective performance. Stylized actions not only actualize the collective, but an idealized definition of the group. This activity affects individuals' perceptions of themselves in and outside the stadium space. By actualizing the traits of the Rovers community, one internalizes those characteristics and takes them outside the stadium. Time and again, the lads reiterated that if one chose it, being an ultra was "a way of life." In such circumstances, stadium activity influences individuals' conceptions of their own identities and activities in the outside world.

The participatory nature of the Ultras' chants, songs, and displays ultimately serves the growth of the Shamrock Rovers community, drawing newcomers (very often teenagers) into the aural and visual spectacle of the singing section on Block M. Getting "hooked" often coincides with newcomers learning and ultimately internalizing the community's conceptualization of itself. Karl's time with the Ultras started similarly. "I knew after that first match [with the Ultras], I wasn't going back to standing where there was no atmosphere" (Personal Interview, 7/1/12). "Why have I been wasting the last two years?? It was such a buzz, a natural high. Today in the east stand you get kids coming down to us, and when I say kids I mean people fourteen, fifteen, sixteen asking for flags, and I know it's the exact same thing—it shows how the torch is being passed" (ibid).

This window into the Shamrock Rovers sporting community allows for an alternate perspective on Irish life within the sphere of ethnomusicology, away from more touched-upon subject matter often centering around Irish traditional music and dance. That does not mean that such music is irrelevant to the construction of national (or regional) identities—however, it is my belief that elucidating the participatory nature of

sports offers a modern and equally relevant look into alternative facets of community and identity in Irish life.

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