

# 1 Clubs, Closets and Catwalks: GAA Stars and the Politics of Contemporary Irish Masculinity

Michael G. Cronin

In October 2009 Dónal Óg Cusack published his autobiography, *Come What May*. In the following weeks this event received exponentially greater coverage in the Irish media than would usually be accorded to a sports memoir. There were several salient reasons for this. Since 1999 Cusack had been goalkeeper with the Cork hurling team, one of the few teams considered capable of challenging the dominance of Kilkenny in the national championship; they had won the All-Ireland Final in Cusack's inaugural year and again in 2004 and 2005. But along with their success his team had also become noteworthy for their disputes with the governing board of the GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) in Cork. The team had twice gone on strike to demand better conditions for players and to protest at what they saw as ineffective management. The second of these strikes, in the winter of 2008–9, had been particularly protracted and bitter, and Cusack, along with his colleague Seán Óg Ó hAilpín, emerged as the chief spokesperson for the players. This role augmented his ongoing advocacy for GAA players on a national level through the Gaelic Players Association (GPA), of which he is Chair. Hence Cusack had an unusually high profile, not only as a leading player, but also for his engagement in GAA politics. Nevertheless the publication of his book mainly generated such widespread interest, far beyond the usual confines of sports coverage, because he spoke publicly for the first time about being gay.

In December 2010 RTÉ broadcast an hour-long documentary charting a year in the life of Paul Galvin. Like Cusack, Galvin was a long-standing member of a highly successful GAA team; he made his first appearance as a county footballer with Kerry in 2003 and when the documentary was broadcast he had played in six successive All-Ireland Finals, of which Kerry had won four. Nevertheless his reputation was mixed.

Generally considered one of the outstanding footballers of his generation, his performances were integral to the success of this Kerry team; that was acknowledged by his elevation to captain for the 2008 season. However, Galvin was unable to actually lead his team onto the field of play for most of the championship that year as he was suspended for three months by the GAA disciplinary authorities following an incident where he knocked a notebook out of a referee's hand. These extremes of virtuosity and ignominy were captured by the documentary, *Galvinised*, which begins with Galvin being named Player of the Year in October 2009 and then receiving two lengthy suspensions for violently attacking opposing players during the 2010 season.<sup>1</sup> His aggression and volatility on the football field, along with the subsequent disruptions to his playing career, partly explain why the interest of the Irish media in Galvin exceeds that accorded to most other GAA players.<sup>2</sup> Strikingly, *Galvinised* takes this excessive media interest in Galvin as one of its main themes, while also being yet another instance of the same phenomenon. Likewise, in the documentary Galvin expressed his dismay at the media intrusion into his life while simultaneously demonstrating that he was actively expanding his media profile, modelling in fashion shoots and presenting a music programme on local radio. He also spoke at length about his interest in men's fashion, and about leaving his job as a schoolteacher to return to college as a student of fashion. In January 2011 Galvin began writing a weekly column on men's fashion for the *Irish Independent* newspaper.

There are clear similarities here: two works of life narrative by virtuosos but controversial GAA stars. However, the media response varied sharply in tone – heroic for Cusack, comic for Galvin – and offered quite different interpretations. For commentators, the meaning of Galvin's story resided solely in what it told us, or failed to tell us, about his life and was not seen to have any broader significance beyond that. This was an entirely individual drama, in which Galvin was either a flawed tragic hero struggling to control those psychic forces constantly threatening to undermine his talent, or a vain and foolish dandy, distracted from the real business of football by the vacuous glamour of media and fashion.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, Cusack's story was seen to have powerful reverberations beyond his own life. He was an exemplary figure, whose honesty and courage offered inspiration to other sportspeople and encouragement to queer youth. His coming-out raised challenges for institutions like the GAA, while encouraging reflection on the condition of contemporary Ireland.<sup>4</sup> Journalists repeatedly cited two incidents from the book to illustrate the persistence of homophobic attitudes: the response

of Dónal Cusack senior to hearing his son was gay and a quite shocking incident where a spectator had used a megaphone to hurl abuse at Cusack during a game. The reiterated use of these two figures identified homophobia with minorities (older people struggling with new cultural norms; dysfunctional and disturbed individuals) and as a problem that needed to be managed – while also helpfully locating homophobia elsewhere, far from the worldview of the writer. Moreover, in this view, while Cusack's story demonstrated the challenges that confronted lesbians and gay men in Ireland and in sport, the *publication* of his story demonstrated the degree to which questions of gender and sexual identity had been progressively sorted out in Irish society over the last few decades. Thus, for Terry Prone, writing in the *Evening Herald*, the generally positive response to Cusack's coming-out demonstrated the successful transformation in attitudes towards sexuality that had taken place in Ireland in the last decades of the twentieth century. Prone implies that this was a process entirely driven by the media and she makes no mention of social movements – unsurprising perhaps given her profession as a PR consultant. She concludes that the proof of this progressive transformation is that Irish people are now 'unshockable' by such revelations and are focused instead on economic matters.<sup>5</sup> This progressive narrative also took on a geo-temporal dimension, in which Ireland was moving from a position of backwardness closer to the norm; in a further variant on this, rural Ireland, and the cultural complex for which 'GAA' stands as a metonym, was also slowly moving closer to a metropolitan norm of civility.<sup>6</sup>

Clearly one should not underestimate the positive significance of Cusack's story; the narrative of personal integrity and communal solidarity, as well as the performative effect of Cusack's public persona as an openly gay GAA star – offering others the possibility to reimagine their lives, expanding the scope for freedom and challenging received ideas. Cusack's willingness to deploy that public persona for progressive political ends was demonstrated by his participation in a campaign against homophobic bullying in schools in April 2012.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, as this chapter will argue, Cusack's memoir demonstrates the degree to which the modern sex-gender system in early twenty-first-century Ireland is far from settled, but remains deeply unstable and contradictory. This is inevitable, since that sex-gender system is part of the structure of capitalism – and we can hardly believe that contemporary Ireland has 'progressed' beyond capitalism and its periodic crises. Reading them together, we can approach Cusack's memoir and Galvin's film as narratives mapping the individual subject's negotiation of hegemonic



masculinity, and, specifically, the cultural embodiment of that masculinity through sport. As we will see, their narratives foreground sharply two aporias of modern Irish masculinity: the ongoing tension between homosexuality and heterosexuality, and the desire for an authentic experience of masculinity within late capitalism – a desire that is impossible, and predicated on devaluing the feminine as inauthentic.

We should not assume that Cusack's and Galvin's engagement with hegemonic masculinity is distinctively troubled, while that of their teammates, for instance, is unproblematic. On the contrary, hegemonic masculinity is best understood not as something more as less successfully embodied by individual men but as a reified identity which takes shape through institutions, practices and discourses. As R. W. Connell argues, hegemonic masculinity 'is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same' but 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.'<sup>8</sup> As Connell's definition suggests, hegemonic masculinity allows us to recognize that masculinity is historically determined, and predicated on complex power relations. On one hand, hegemonic masculinity underpins the 'patriarchal dividend', as Connell puts it, which accrues in our society to all men qua men; this dividend takes a symbolic form but is also a material fact in capitalist societies, where men's average earnings far outstrip the average earnings of women, for instance, and the burden of domestic work and caring falls disproportionately on women.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless the patriarchal dividend is hardly distributed equitably between men, no more than is any other resource under capitalism. Evidently, the modern sex-gender system interacts structurally with the systems of class and race relations, as socialist-feminist and Marxist-feminist thinkers have extensively demonstrated.<sup>10</sup> The concept of hegemonic masculinity allows us to map the uneven distribution of power, not only between genders but also within masculinity.

A dominant or hegemonic masculinity structurally requires subordinate forms of masculinity. In the twentieth century homosexual and gay masculinity chiefly served this structural function, as 'the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity.'<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless while sexual object choice was the most salient faultline between dominant and subordinate masculinities, even within heterosexual masculinity there were further subordinate masculinities marked as effeminate and therefore inauthentic. Following Judith Butler, we can say that hegemonic masculinity is a normative ideal, and one with

complex effects: authorizing the patriarchal privilege enjoyed by men, while simultaneously regulating and disciplining them.<sup>12</sup> There is no clear-cut division to be drawn here between dominant and subordinate, minority and majority. Gay men and men marked as effeminate may nevertheless successfully accrue to themselves varying amounts of the privilege bestowed by hegemonic masculinity. Likewise, the denomination of certain forms of masculinity as subordinate does not merely serve to reassure those men whose subjectivity is not encompassed by such denominations; on the contrary, it serves as a constant and anxious reminder that the privileges of normative, heterosexual masculinity are always provisional, requiring constant endeavour and self-policing; for this reason homophobia is not, contrary to liberal pluralist aspirations, a lingering problem to be expunged but a structural component of the capitalist sex-gender system.

Kevin Floyd has mapped an early twentieth-century cultural transition from 'manhood' to 'masculinity'.<sup>13</sup> The nineteenth-century concept of manhood was an inner essence, a capacity for independence, self-control and self-mastery; its opposite was not womanhood but childhood. In short, it was the hegemonic ideal of a phase of capitalism primarily organized around production. By contrast its twentieth-century analogue, masculinity, 'had to be performed: it was a physical demonstration not a moral or ethical code. And what this performance held at bay, its opposite ... was not immaturity but femininity'.<sup>13</sup> Paradoxically, masculinity was a reaction against the routinization, deskilled labour and bureaucratization of urban life in the advanced capitalist societies, while simultaneously making the male body conducive to the intensified consumption that was ideologically marked, and devalued, as feminine.<sup>14</sup> The performance of masculinity meant acquiring a repertoire of skills and virtuosity, and thus compensated for the routine imposed in the factory or office. Moreover, these skills were invariably associated with nature and orientated away from the feminine domestic space (fishing and hunting) or involved transforming that domestic space into a location of manual labour (DIY and home improvement). Accomplishment in these skills required the acquisition of various forms of technology and the consumption of information through various media.

Modern organized sport clearly exemplifies this paradoxical dynamic. It offers player and spectator an excitement and intensity of purpose largely absent from the sphere of alienated labour, and does so through the acquisition and display of specialized, embodied skills; in the twentieth century sport became an exemplary site of what Floyd terms 'labour without capital'.<sup>15</sup> But those decades when the modern sex-gender system

emerged were also the period in which sports became increasingly organized, regularized and capital intensive – including the foundation of the GAA and the codification of hurling and Gaelic football. These processes have intensified in our own period, with most players now highly specialized technicians and organized sport increasingly imbricated with corporations. In other words, organized sports promised men a refuge from the alienation of modern capitalism, but did so through an experience that was intensively routinized and commodified. Moreover, part of the intensity of experience promised by all-male team sports was the emotional relationships with other men made largely impossible elsewhere by the policing of masculinity, and the repudiation of homosexuality which this required. Thus, team sports became in the twentieth century an exemplary site of homosociality, and, as a structural corollary, of homophobia.

In *Come What May* Cusack discusses a strategy used to strengthen morale in his club team, Cloyne. In 'truth meetings' the team members would freely assess each other's performance, on the understanding that there would be no recriminations outside of the meeting. These were, as Cusack puts it, 'frank and manly conversations.'<sup>16</sup> That certain modes of address, specifically direct and unvarnished ones, may be more 'manly' clearly informs Cusack's prose style; short, declarative sentences, terse observations and fidelity to the rhythms of oral speech.<sup>17</sup> But while the style instantiates Cusack's passionate commitment to personal integrity and honesty, the content actually describes the careful management of knowledge. In this memoir being gay is not, for the most part, about sexual attraction and emotional attachments – these are never discussed apart from a brief declaration that 'I get more out of men. I just do. Always have.'<sup>18</sup> Rather it is primarily about processing the knowledge that one might be attracted to other men: 'since I was thirteen or fourteen I knew this about myself. And that was it. I just knew it was a bit different. I thought about it but never had any problems dealing with it. Anything I have done in life I need to be able to say afterwards that I did it for the right reasons. It's the same with this thing.'<sup>19</sup> It is noteworthy that these straightforward assertions are undermined somewhat by imprecise locutions: the repeated, indefinite 'it'; the recurring, non-specific 'this' and 'thing'. Likewise, the flow of the narrative becomes elliptical whenever he describes leaving his teammates to go alone to a gay nightclub to meet men, in Cork or on team holidays, lapsing into silence and resuming next day when he is back with the team.

While just over two pages are devoted to this internal confrontation with knowledge about himself, two and a half chapters are given to recounting his disclosure of this knowledge to others. This begins with

talking to a small group of close friends in his teens and early twenties. Then there is a more extensive and detailed account of telling his family and his teammates in the years just before the memoir was published. While the responses are positive and supportive, the discussions were prompted by the threat of public disclosure: rumours circulating around Cork and on the internet in early 2006, the now-defunct *Ireland on Sunday* newspaper about to publish a story later that year. So while these were 'tough, earnest conversations where you had to be genuine with everybody' – again we notice the attribution of 'manly' qualities to communication – his account nevertheless conveys an atmosphere of crisis and a scramble to control the flow of information.<sup>20</sup>

None of this is to accuse Cusack of dissembling or to chide him for not being sufficiently 'out' or for not telling us more about his private life. Rather it is to illustrate how the structure and style of Cusack's narrative demonstrates the impossibility of achieving that towards which he aspires: 'since I was young, in my head anyway at first, I've known that I'll sleep with whoever I want to sleep with, I'll fall in love with whoever I want to fall in love with, I'll be with whoever I want to be with ... I hate labels, though.'<sup>21</sup> While his polymorphous vision of sexual freedom may be attractively utopian, the emphasis on managing knowledge indicates that Cusack, like the rest of us, is inevitably entangled in that dialectic of regulation and freedom that forms us as modern sexual and gender subjects. He is the legatee of the twentieth century's 'labelling' apparatus; the reifying nexus of knowledge, truth and sexuality variously experienced, indicatively by lesbians and gay men, as oppressive and stigmatizing or, in the reverse discourse of gay liberation, as transformative and empowering. In this 'world-mapping' as Eve Sedgwick described it, 'every given person, just as he or she was necessarily assignable to a male or female gender, was now considered necessarily assignable to a homo- or hetero-sexuality, a binarised identity that was full of implications, however confusing, for even the ostensibly least sexual aspects of personal existence.'<sup>22</sup> This epochal shift, at the end of the nineteenth century, from a hermeneutic of legitimate and illegitimate acts to a hermeneutic of normal and deviant identities was organized, as Sedgwick puts it, 'around a radical and irreducible incoherence.'<sup>23</sup> Specifically, this modern sex-gender system, emerging, as we have noted, within a crisis of accumulation in capitalism, was distinguished by two internally contradictory axes of thought. One is the difference between a *minoritizing* view that 'there is a distinct population of people who "really are" gay' and a *universalizing* view that 'sexual desire is an unpredictably powerful solvent of stable identities ... that apparently



heterosexual persons and object choices are strongly marked by same-sex influences and desires.<sup>24</sup> The other is the difference between viewing same-sex object choice as a matter of *gender transitivity* or *gender separatism*. Does same-sex object choice situate one in a liminal position between genders, and necessitate some form of cross-gender identification, or does same-sex object choice situate one even more centrally at the definitional core of one's own gender? The implications of this incoherence for the social production of masculinity were intensely volatile. A distinct and historically devalued category of masculinity was identified against which normative heterosexual masculinity was to be defined; a category which must be repudiated, even to the point of violence. At the same time, there is the ever-present anxiety that this devalued masculinity is not in fact a distinctive type at all but a tendency or potentiality internal to normative masculinity and against which one must be internally vigilant.



Figure 1.1 Paul Galvin in a promotional image for *Galvinised*  
Source: Ken O Mahony.

Cusack's memoir demonstrates how firmly we remain within the regulatory ambit of this system. His favoured metaphor of labelling implies that there is something solidly secure to which the insubstantial, disposable label can be attached. In other words, being gay is a question of knowledge we can wrestle with, whereas masculinity is a given, requiring no such intellectual or emotional labour. In a nuanced, reflective reading, Eibhear Walshe argued that Cusack's book could prove to be a 'Trojan Horse ... unsettling the accepted norms surrounding Irish male identities.'<sup>25</sup> This reflected a more general expectation in the Irish media that the historically novel conjunction of 'gay' and 'GAA' symbolically distilled in Cusack's identity would progressively broaden the valorized, hegemonic Irish masculinity embodied by the modern sports star. But this expectation is undermined by Cusack's own determination in the narrative to preserve that valorized masculinity from his sexuality. We have already noted, for instance, how the narration swerves into uncharacteristic indirection and opacity whenever he mentions his sexual encounters with men. More significantly, there is a marked contrast between the reticence about his emotional relationships with lovers, or even gay friends, and the intensity, articulacy and lyricism with which he describes his emotional relationships with male mentors and fellow players; at the first training session after he has come out to the county team a teammate 'sat down beside me for the team meeting and put his arm on my shoulder. Just like that ... that arm, the arm of one of the great heroes, it meant a lot.'<sup>26</sup>

The world created in this book is most vividly inhabited by 'heroes' and 'warriors' – 'laoch' as Cusack describes them, using a Gaelic term. It is a predominantly masculine world – references to women, most notably his grandmother, are deeply appreciative but limited – and markedly patriarchal; his relationship with his mother is uncomplicatedly nurturing but his father features much more prominently. Above all, the book creates an intensely homosocial world: a small group of men bound together by an unremitting routine of physical training and intense psychological and emotional preparation. A group of men sharing a driven, singular obsession; a fetish, one might even say on reading Cusack's highly charged descriptions of hurleys, jerseys and pre-match rituals. Other parts of his life also get fairly short shrift in the book – his work as an electrical engineer and part-time publican, family relationships, charity work in Zambia and so on – and he is anxious that this overwhelming investment in sport will leave a painful gap after retirement.<sup>27</sup> Clearly though, the boundary between these parts of his life and hurling is not so deeply problematic for him as is the boundary

between being gay and being a hurler; nor, as the management of knowledge about his sexuality demonstrates, do these boundaries need such intense emotional labour to maintain. In this respect Cusack's memoir foregrounds how the homosexual simultaneously disturbs and reaffirms the homosocial. One of the few sexual encounters mentioned takes place while on a team holiday in Vietnam. The account is terse and opaque, emphasizing drunkenness and the exciting but lonely, compulsive aspect of cruising, ending with this observation about his teammates: 'my night had its own history that they aren't imagining and that doesn't really matter. I'm back with the boys. One of the team'.<sup>28</sup> There is a characteristic note of defiance about the pleasures offered by gay life and its coterie skills. But there is also a strong urge to securely locate those experiences elsewhere – somewhere he goes briefly before returning to the real core of his life, to what really matters.

At first glance, Paul Galvin's fashion interests offer a much less promising wedge with which to dislodge hegemonic masculinity; fashion is conventionally surface and artifice, while sexuality is depth and truth. Moreover, there is the danger of merely reversing the misogyny underpinning the response to Galvin's film. For instance, when David Kelly criticized Galvin's courting of publicity and ostentatious style he resorted to cross-gender comparisons: 'Galvin has pursued the Katie Price approach'; 'sporting a cleavage that would make even Georgia Salpa blush'.<sup>29</sup> Clearly, it would not take us very far to merely counter this with a celebration of some supposedly more progressive, feminized masculinity embodied by Galvin as avid but discerning consumer. As Connell wryly notes, the 'Sensitive New Man' is a 'media figure used by first world advertisers in marketing clothes made by third world women at rock bottom wages'.<sup>30</sup>

Alternatively we might consider Galvin's impractical, stylized and camp self-presentation as being like a form of drag (using Susan Sontag's astringent formulation of camp as 'failed seriousness', not the vernacular euphemism for 'kitsch' or 'gay').<sup>31</sup> As Butler famously argued, drag or gender parody is always ambivalent in its effects. The failure on which the drag performance depends – that discrepancy between the gendered body performing and the stylized cultural attributes of the gender being performed – undermines our belief in a coherent link between a 'natural' body sexed as male or female, a binary set of cultural norms marked as masculine or feminine and a similarly dichotomized sexual identity. The performance of gender on stage illuminates, however fleetingly, the degree to which we are all always performing our gender.<sup>32</sup> However, as Butler subsequently warned, this does not guarantee that drag is necessarily, or only, subversive. Demonstrating that gender norms are not

natural but ideological does not mean they are not 'real', in the sense of being profoundly deep-rooted and resistant to change – on the contrary, to recognize gender as ideology is to confront precisely the difficulty of transforming those norms. Moreover, the drag performance may not necessarily be motivated by any subversive intent but by a mournful longing for a reified gender ideal. In other words, the failure of the drag performance may equally serve to reinforce our presumption that there is a 'real' masculinity or femininity which is clearly not being accomplished here. Crucially, there is no gender parody that uniformly subverts or reconsolidates gender norms: both effects are present simultaneously in each performance.<sup>33</sup>

In *Galvinised* the recurring juxtaposition of Galvin the fashionista, wearing his trademark skinny jeans and improbably low-cut top on the Manhattan streets for instance, with Galvin the footballer, wearing his Kerry jersey and shorts on a grassy pitch, may serve to reinforce as 'normal' and 'authentic' the masculinity embodied in the latter image. This is certainly the effect it had for David Kelly. 'The football fan in you', as Kelly puts it, will watch the film wishing Galvin would realise that the football pitch is where he can most properly be himself. Kelly concludes: 'all we know is that it would be a damn sight more preferable to see him trotting the turf in green and gold next summer.' That archaism, 'trotting the turf', suggests an instinctive human activity unfolding on a primordial landscape; with this brief phrase, the entire apparatus of modern sport rhetorically disappears – that GAA matches take place on expensively cultivated pitches, in front of paying spectators with players honed through scientifically programmed training. And 'green and gold' as a synecdoche for Galvin's Kerry jersey usefully erases the corporate logo now emblazoned on all GAA wear. All of which emphasizes the unself-conscious authenticity of the masculine sphere of sport as against the artificial, narcissistic sphere of fashion, which, as his cross-gender jokes at Galvin's expense show, Kelly considers to be distinctively feminine.

But that reference to 'green and gold' also reminds us of those rhapsodic passages about the Cork jersey from Cusack's memoir. Evidently team sport generates a fetishizing of the jersey – the object mediating the social relations of team, club and county and the intense desires invested in them – as strongly as any fetishizing of the brand or designer label among those interested in fashion. We might also wonder why the images of Galvin as fashion model produced such unease in Kelly's inner football fan. While confirming the authenticity of the masculinity embodied by Galvin as footballer, might not the stylized artificiality of Galvin the fashionista simultaneously alert us to the equally stylized



performance of masculinity on the football pitch? In fact, *Galvinised* offers striking evidence of the labour and money required to produce the 'natural' masculine body on display during a football game. One segment shows Galvin, alternately talking to camera or speaking in a voice-over about his training routine, while strenuously working out, using the expensive technology available in a modern gym. Perhaps Kelly's unease indicates just how little distance there actually is between the spectacle of Galvin displaying his body in fashion shoots and that of Galvin displaying his body on the GAA pitch.

Galvin's film and Cusack's memoir each chart this intensive working on the male body demanded by modern sports. Cusack is strongly committed to preserving the voluntarism of GAA players but demands that they be treated as professionals – given access to health care and other services, proper diet, membership of a gym, and so on. Outlining the history of the Cork disputes, he presents this as a question of players being respected by the organization. But his detailed descriptions of the players' arduous personal training regimes suggests that giving their bodies a professional level of care actually translates into Cusack and his colleagues exploiting their bodies ever more assiduously. Cusack and Galvin differ considerably in their styles of self-presentation and in their politics – the film's style emphasizes Galvin's brooding isolation, for instance, while Cusack's memoir situates him firmly in a community; Galvin never broaches the topic of player welfare that so concerns Cusack. But what their narratives share is a rigorously individualist commitment to projects of physical, intellectual and emotional self-cultivation, in which being styled for a fashion shoot, training in a gym or on a playing pitch or attending a 'truth meeting' represent different facets of the same labouring on the self to maximize the profits that self can yield. This extension of neoliberal logic to one's self severely limits any optimistic reading of these narratives as indicating some transformation of gender and sexual relations in contemporary Ireland. Perhaps the best we can hope is that these stories bring into sharper focus the faultlines of hegemonic masculinity in modern Ireland, as well as alerting us to that distinctively late capitalist condition in which regulation is experienced as freedom.

## Notes

1. *Galvinised*, Loosehorse Productions/RTÉ, 2010.
2. This coverage also extends to Galvin's volatile and violent behaviour off the pitch. In January 2010 the Irish media reported that he had been suspended

from his teaching post after striking a pupil with a duster. In October 2011 he was involved in a brawl in a Dublin pub with the comedian Oliver Callan. As it happened, this incident led to another celebrity 'coming-out' in Ireland. Callan responded to Galvin's claim that the comedian's sketch about him was homophobic by asserting, rather puzzlingly, that it could not be homophobic since he, Callan, is gay. Niamh Horan, 'I'm not homophobic I'm a homosexual, reveals comic Oliver Callan', *Sunday Independent*, 30 October 2011.

3. For an example of the former response see Tom Humphries, 'Galvin's true battle now the one with himself', *Irish Times*, 11 December 2010, 5. An example of the latter is David Kelly, 'What's eating Paul Galvin?', *Irish Independent*, 27 December 2010, 35. It is worth noting that Humphries does not refer in this article to his own role as writer on the documentary.
4. For a discussion of the implications for the GAA see Gerry Carroll, 'GAA must now show support for Dónal Óg', *Evening Herald*, 21 October 2009. Some examples of responses dwelling on the wider repercussions include the editorials in the *Irish Independent* and *Irish Times* on 24 October 2009.
5. Terry Prone, 'Dónal is gay and so what? We're so far past being shocked by such admissions', *Evening Herald*, 19 October, 2009. An even more complete account of Irish sexual and gender politics was offered one year later by Declan Cashin in his 'round-up' of various well-known Irish people who are now openly gay, including Cusack; 'Why it has never been easier to come out as gay in Ireland', *Irish Independent*, 10 November 2011.
6. Unsurprisingly perhaps, this geo-temporal interpretation was strongest in articles written by Irish journalists for British media. See Tom Humphries, 'Dónal Óg Cusack: "There was no torment or agonising"', *The Observer*, 15 November 2009. Again, in this article Humphries did not acknowledge his role as ghost writer on Cusack's book. See also, Mark Simpson, 'Irish sport star says he is gay', *BBC News* <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8324347.stm>>.
7. Ciara McGrattan, 'Tir na Nóg', *GCN* (April 2012), 22–3.
8. R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2nd edn, 2005), 76–7.
9. *Ibid.*, 82.
10. See Rosemary Hennessey, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2000). See also Nancy Fraser, 'Feminism, capitalism and the cunning of history', *New Left Review* 56 (March/April 2009), 97–117.
11. Connell, *Masculinities*, 78.
12. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), 1–34.
13. Kevin Floyd, *The Reification of Desire: Towards a Queer Marxism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 88.
14. On the gender politics of consumerism see Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 61–90.
15. Floyd, *Reification of Desire*, 109.
16. Dónal Óg Cusack, *Come What May* (Dublin: Penguin Ireland, 2009), 137.
17. For a useful discussion of the relationship of gender to prose style see Scott St Pierre, 'Bent Hemingway: straightness, sexuality, style', *GLQ* 16 (3) (2010), 363–87.
18. Cusack, *Come What May*, 96.

19. *Ibid.*, 95.
20. *Ibid.*, 197.
21. *Ibid.*, 95.
22. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet* (London: Penguin, 1990), 2.
23. *Ibid.*, 85.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Eibhear Walshe, 'A Trojan Horse for unsettling Irish male identities', *Irish Times*, 29 October 2009, 13.
26. Cusack, *Come What May*, 195.
27. *Ibid.*, 247.
28. *Ibid.*, 99.
29. Kelly, 'What's eating Paul Galvin?'
30. Connell, *Masculinities*, 139.
31. 'In naive, or pure, Camp, the essential element is seriousness, a seriousness that fails. Of course, not all seriousness that fails can be redeemed as Camp. Only that which has the proper mixture of the exaggerated, the fantastic, the passionate, and the naive.' Susan Sontag, 'Notes on Camp' in *Against Interpretation* (London: Vintage, 1994), 283. The essay was originally published in 1964.
32. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 187-9.
33. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (London: Routledge, 1993), 124-8.