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Memes, masculinity and mancession: *Love/Hate's* online metatexts

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Abstract

Since it first aired in 2010 on Radió Teilifís Éireann, Ireland's national public service broadcaster, Irish crime drama series *Love/Hate* has enjoyed record audience ratings. However, while serious TV critics and the show's producers have praised it as a complex and incisive commentary on crime in Ireland, the more participatory online cultures of the *Journal.ie*, Twitter and Facebook have constructed a distinctly less highbrow set of discourses around the show. This analysis of the *Journal.ie*'s Daily Edge recaps demonstrates how participatory Laddish humour and what Jean Burgess refers to as the "vernacular creativity" of memes have functioned to prioritise a cohesive set of engagements with *Love/Hate* that are underpinned by fantasies about the recuperation of male power. Moreover, by creating a sense of "in-groupness" around the series, the Daily Edge and its tertiary texts have produced a heavily gendered sense of consensus about who "we" in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland are.

Keywords:

Memes

masculinity

Love/Hate

mancession

post-Celtic Tiger

tertiary text

Journal.ie

metatext

Notes

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4. Herald.ie, December 7, 2011.
5. McGuirk, "Love/Hate - Series 2," 227.
6. Quinn, "Gender Traps and Genre in the Irish Television Drama Love Hate."
7. Nagle, "I wanna Destroy the Passer by," 228.
8. Fiske, Television Culture, 125.
9. Negra, "Adjusting Men and Abiding Mammies."
10. Negra and Tasker, Gendering the Recession.
11. Negra, "Adjusting Men and Abiding Mammies," 48.
12. Ging, "New Lads or Protest Masculinities"; Men and Masculinities in Irish Cinema.
13. Kimmel, "A Black Woman Took My Job."
14. Kimmel, Manhood in America; and Tasker and Negra, Gendering the Recession.
15. Negra, "Adjusting Men and Abiding Mammies," 44.
16. Ibid., 48.
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18. Ibid., 47.
19. The Irish gangster cycle of the late 1990s/2000s includes *I Went Down* (1997), *Crush Proof* (1999), *Flick* (2000), *Saltwater* (2000), *Accelerator* (2001), *The General* (1998), *Ordinary Decent Criminal* (1999), *Last Days in Dublin* (2001), *Headrush* (2002), *Intermission* (2003), *The Halo Effect* (2004), *Man About Dog* (2004). *Dead Bodies* (2003), *Freeze Frame* (2004), *In Bruges* (2008), *Savage* (2009) and *Perrier's Bounty* (2009).
20. Negra and Tasker, *Gendering the Recession*, 2.
21. Chibnall, "Underworld England."
22. Monk, "From Underworld to Underclass."
23. Leigh, "Get Smarter."
24. Messner and Montez de Oca, "The Male Consumer as Loser," 1882.
25. Chibnall, "Underworld England," 2.
26. Ging, "New Lads or Protest Masculinities?"
27. Lacey, "One for the Boys?"
28. Strate, "Beer Commercials: A Manual on Masculinity."
29. Messner and Montez de Oca, "The American Beer Consumer as Loser."
30. Ging, *Men and Masculinities in Irish Cinema*, 41.
31. Connell, *Masculinities*, 111.
32. Savran, *Taking It Like a Man*.
33. Key examples include *Falling Down*, *The Passion of the Christ*, *Magnolia*, *American Beauty*, *Fight Club* and, more recently, *Birdman*, *Whiplash*, *Unbroken* and *Gone Girl*.
34. Wardrop, *His and Hers*.
35. Derrington, *Pyjama Girls*.
36. Molony, "House and Home: Structuring Absences in Post-Celtic Tiger Documentary."

37. Carroll, Affirmative Reaction.
38. Ibid., 44.
39. Marwick et al., "Dolphins Are Just Gay Sharks."
40. Miltner, "There's No Place for Lulz on LOLCats."
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Shifman, Memes in Digital Culture, 15.
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45. Nagle, "Not Quite Kicking Off Everywhere."
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49. Burgess, "Hearing Ordinary Voices." Burgess' concept of "vernacular creativity" describes the blending of traditional folk activities with contemporary media knowledge and formats. According to Burgess, these creative practices play a key role in self-representation and contemporary literacies.
50. Hallam and Marshment, Realism and Popular Cinema, 92.
51. Creeber, "TV Ruined the Movies," 125.
52. Chibnall, "Underworld England."
53. Ibid., 3.
54. Warshow, "The Gangster as Tragic Hero."
55. Ibid., 3.
56. Whelehan, Overloaded.
57. Attwood, "Tits and Ass and Porn and Fighting."

58. Ging, "New Lads or Protest Masculinities?"
59. Hughes, "Love/Hate - A Gangster Drama that's More Addictive than the World Cup."
60. Negra, "Adjusting Men and Abiding Mammies."
61. Nagle, An Investigation into Contemporary Online Anti-feminist Movements.
62. Bosco was a children's television programme on RTÉ in the late 1970s and 1980s.
63. 'It's help I need, not hassle' is a much quoted phrase of Fran's from S4E1.
64. 10 November 2014.
65. This is a pun-based joke. Bord na Móna is a semi-state company in Ireland responsible for harvesting peat.
66. Lacey, "One for the Boys?"
67. Monk, "From Underworld to Underclass," 178.
68. Ibid.
69. 19 October 2014.
70. 5 July 2013.
71. See <http://thedailyedge.thejournal.ie/love-hate-exam-funny-1877589-Jan2015/>.
72. "Skanger" is a pejorative term for somebody presumed to be from a low social class and to have questionable taste and morals.
73. Marwick et al., "Dolphins Are Just Gay Sharks," 643.
74. Miltner, "There's No Place for Lulz on LOLCats."
75. Kuipers, "Humor Styles and Symbolic Boundaries."
76. Meyer, "Humor as a Double-edged Sword."
77. Negra, "Adjusting Men and Abiding Mammies," 55.
78. Fiske, Television Culture.
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81. Ibid.

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