

Tiocfaidh Ár Lá: Masculinity, Memory and Authority in Contemporary Republican Belfast

Emily A. Ravenscroft

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Approved by:
Dr. V. William Balthrop
Dr. Carole Blair
Dr. Randall Styers
Dr. Michael S. Waltman
Dr. Julia T. Wood

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Abstract

EMILY A. RAVENSCROFT: *Tiocfaidh Ár Lá*¹: Masculinity, Memory and Authority in Contemporary Republican Belfast
(Under the direction of Dr. V. William Balthrop)

The Good Friday Agreements in Northern Ireland marked the end of a thirty year period of violence known as the Troubles. The shift from “the bullet” to “the ballot box” was a complicated rhetorical move, particularly for the Republican faction, who had a communal identity predicated upon a public memory of 800 years of opposition to British rule. This public memory, articulated in both verbal and material narratives, was used to justify the war. Both the Leader(ship) and the People articulate these narratives, while being simultaneously articulated by them.

In the Northern Irish case, the Leader for a majority of the Republican People has been the Sinn Féin Leader(ship). Their authority is predicated upon an authenticity derived from memories of their embodied masculine performances. Sinn Féin’s authority is currently being questioned by “dissidents.” Their dissonance points to contradictions in the gender performance of the Sinn Féin Leader(ship). In so doing, these “dissidents” contest the foundation of Sinn Féin’s power, particularly in the communities that most earnestly demand the continuity of the nuanced communal gender roles that Sinn Féin supported during the Troubles.

¹ Irish for “Our day will come.” This is a famous Republican slogan.

For my parents

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 1998 the Good Friday Agreement² established a functioning peace in Northern Ireland.³ Major Republican/Catholic⁴ factions, including the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), and major Unionist/Protestant factions, including the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), agreed to hold to ceasefires and work within the power-sharing political system that had

² Though commonly referred to as the Good Friday Agreement or the GFA, the agreement's official name was "The Belfast Agreement." It is interesting to see such religious, particularly Catholic, language used in parlance.

³ Most Republicans refer to the internationally recognized country of "Northern Ireland" as "The North of Ireland." They argue that "Northern Ireland" is an illegitimate state imposed upon the people of the island without their consent. I will use both terms in an attempt to provide some moderation and make my work more accessible to those who find either of the phrases offensive.

⁴The terms Catholic and Protestant in Northern Ireland do not necessarily correlate with regular church attendance. Rather, these titles indicate a political identity with mutually exclusive goals. Nationalists and Republicans are typically Catholic in modern times, though that certainly has not always been the case. These two groups wish to see a united Ireland, with the 6 counties of Northern Ireland joining with the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland. Unionists or Loyalists are typically Protestant, on the other hand, and wish to keep Northern Ireland independent of the south and united with the English crown. Many would assume that this is a fundamentally religious conflict. I disagree. I argue that cultural Catholicism was important in the development of a certain ethos of sacrifice and community, but the religious institution of the Church was not important to the Republican community per se. In fact, the Church, with a few individual exceptions, provided more of an obstacle to the development of a cohesive Republican "critical mass." However, the idea of a "Catholic community" did serve as a psychological weapon given the belief voiced by some Loyalist paramilitary members who believed IRA members could operate/kill with no remorse because they could simply go to confession to have their conscience cleared (see *God and the Gun* by Martin Dillon). I argue that this is/was NOT a religious conflict. Sectarianism is a result of the colonial history of the island. However, this does not mean that the religious implications or identities of this conflict are materially less real.

been established (McKittrick and McVea 305). The peace agreements marked the end of a thirty year period of extreme violence in Northern Ireland known as the Troubles,⁵ which left 3,600 people dead, 1,857 of them civilians (McKittrick and McVea 305). The shift from “the bullet” to “the ballot box”⁶ was a complicated rhetorical move, particularly for the Republican faction. Republicans had constructed a communal identity from narratives that emphasized the memory of 800 years of resistance to British oppression/aggression. These narratives were both verbal, in the form of myths and stories told by community members, and material, in the spatial practices and performances of violence enacted by Republicans. These narratives were used to justify violence intermittently for 800 years and consistently for the 30 years of the Troubles. These narratives then shifted at the end of the Troubles in order to justify the pursuit of constitutional politics by Sinn Féin, the major Republican Party in the North.

These verbal and material narratives do not only justify Republican action, but more fundamentally, construct a Republican identity. Republican communal narratives communicate public memories. These memories legitimize the identity of a Republican People and a Republican Leader(ship).⁷ Both the Leader(ship) and the People therefore articulate these narratives, while being simultaneously articulated by them.

Justification for Study

⁵ There has been increasing discussion about the validity of the term “Troubles” which may trivialize the war fought and endured by the population of Northern Ireland for 30 years. While understanding these concerns, I do not want to impose a different term on that history, given that most locals still refer to the war as such.

⁶ A phrase coined by PIRA volunteer and ex-hunger striker, Danny Morrison.

⁷ This is a phrase I will explain in more depth in chapter 3.

This project makes important contributions to communication studies, Irish studies⁸ and to a larger, more complex understanding of the developing situation in the North of Ireland. This project will also contribute to the field of communication studies a study of some of the nuanced ways that rhetorical practices produce material consequences. Furthermore, although there has been a significant amount of research conducted on the development of the People, there has been limited research conducted on the development of the Leader's identity, the resultant power that this identity provides this/these individual(s), and the strategies used by this/these Leader(s) to maintain that authority. I hope that this project will contribute to the limited present discourse.

The field of Irish studies will also benefit from this research. During the early years of the Troubles, researchers tried to pinpoint one specific cause of conflict in Northern Ireland. Scholars argued, for example, that the root of violence was class differences, religious conflict or the results of colonialism (O'Brien 9). As both the conflict and the research developed, academics provided more complicated analyses, many suggesting that there was no single nodal point from which one could understand the entire conflict (Kelleher 1). Kelleher identifies one common theme in Troubles literature that gets at the basis of all other ascribed causes: identity. Class, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, colonialism and postcolonialism all influence and are influenced by group identities. Kelleher posits that indeed it is identity that underlies the conflict's many contributing factors (1). I agree.

This perspective is further bolstered by Richard Kirkland, who says in his discussion of Northern Irish culture, "We live in an age in which it is practically impossible to speak of politics

⁸ When I say "Irish studies" I am referring to the discipline of Irish area studies instead of Irish literary studies. Though the two fields both use the name "Irish studies," the former is typically housed in an anthropology or sociology department and the latter in an English department...somewhat ironically.

without speaking also of identity.... It mediates our personal memory in terms of collective inheritance and provides the platform from which we launch ourselves on an unsuspecting world. Understood in these terms, identity offers itself, almost uniquely, as a means of ordering the chaos of our experience” (1). Though both of these scholars agree that identity is fundamental to understanding the conflict, they have insufficiently examined how these identities are formed. Researchers examine the ways in which these identities are *performed* but fail to provide analysis regarding the creation of those identities through linguistic or material texts. This is where a rhetorical approach can benefit the Irish studies focus on Ireland.

Understanding the shift in identity narratives that resulted in real material changes in group behavior and consequences also has important theoretical and pragmatic consequences for the people who perform and construct these on a daily basis. To get to the peace process, the Republican Leader(ship)⁹ and People had to rearticulate a Republican identity through the reinterpretation of memory. After 30 years of consistent violence, and 800 years of intermittent violence, undertaken with the goal of ending the union with the United Kingdom, Republican Martin McGuinness, a major Sinn Féin leader, announced that he was “going to the negotiating table to smash the Union!” (McKittrick and McVea 304). Communities shifted from supporting

⁹ I am basing my analysis of Republican leadership upon McGee’s understanding of the rhetorical Leader. I have placed the “ship” of leadership in parenthesis in order to attribute credit to McGee for his theoretical development of the idea of the “Leader” while modifying the term to fit with the Republican situation, in which many Leaders exist in a structured hierarchy. Sinn Féin uses the term “leadership” to designate those individuals in party power. “The leadership” was also a term used by the IRA to classify their command structure, specifically, the Army Council. Thus, in using the term Leader(ship) I try to both call upon McGee’s work, while expanding and modifying the ideal for my current project. Additionally, I have capitalized both the words Leader(ship) and People in order to clarify the times I am using those words as constitutive rhetoric theoretical constructs. I use the lower case (leadership or people) when I am using the terms colloquially.

paramilitary volunteers to supporting political leaders as a “rational” approach to the most important goal that Republicans work toward: a United Ireland.¹⁰

I hope that my research will help these communities document and reflect upon their histories as they move forward. This research will also provide a tactical analysis of different Republican policies so that these communities may make more informed decisions about the strategies they will enact in the future. There is continued upheaval in the Northern Irish power-sharing government. The violence has not simply disappeared but has shifted into other aspects of daily life. It benefits communities and the leaders of those communities who are invested in the government’s stability to provide them with more data regarding the effects of identity constituting narratives. These communities and their political representatives may be better able to constitute and perform identities that are consistent with peace if they better understand the practices of identity creation.

Parameters of this project

I do not seek to understand the entire conflict. To do so would be too expansive and would inevitably cover ground that others have already considered in detail. I will focus this project by selecting only one community, in one geographical location, in one time period. I am focusing on the constitutive mnemonic narratives of Republican identity in Belfast, attending particularly to the contemporary Republican identity formation of the community of Ardoyne in North Belfast. My study begins at the 1969 split of the Provisional IRA from the Official IRA. Though some discussion of factors preceding 1969 may arise, these factors will be viewed in regard to their effects in the post-1969 period. Though I am focusing on the present, it is

¹⁰ Though this is the specific geo-political goal of Republicanism, the ultimate end is to create an all-Ireland socialist-democratic Republic, not simply a unified nation-state.

impossible to understand modern Republicanism without knowledge of its history. This is generally true regarding the study of social movements, but in the case of Irish Republicanism it is particularly important. “An awareness of history, and its uses, has long been a notable characteristic of modern Irish republicanism, an introspective political tradition with a marked preoccupation with the past and its own place within it...even its most outspoken critics believe that modern-day republicanism derives much of its strength from history” (McGarry 1).

My study ends in the present day. This is the more difficult delineation. Every day things change in the North of Ireland. While completing the second draft of this dissertation I heard a bomb explode in the city centre of Newry, about a mile away. Nonetheless, I have found that the broad themes I identified over the past three years have remained consistent. While I cannot predict the specific time and place of hypermasculine, violent events, many of the behaviors that I have identified as salient are replicated in the events that do occur. For example, before the bombing of the court house in Newry on February 22, Republican paramilitaries set up a road block in South Armagh, another Republican stronghold. Masked men held weapons and encouraged locals not to cooperate with the police. These performances are replications of Republican communal memories from the height of the Troubles.

I am focusing on the Republican community rather than the community that this identity formation is primarily seen to be in opposition to: the Loyalist community of Northern Ireland. I am working with the Republican community because the shift to engagement with constitutional politics in 1986 was far more radical than the political movements of the Loyalist community, which has more or less been engaging with politics in Northern Ireland since the formation of the state. Because Loyalists have been engaged in politics for a more significant amount of time,

more research has been conducted on their interactions with the state. The Republican shift has provided the opportunity for a new rhetorical study.

I am working with the Republican community in Belfast. Belfast has been at the center of most of the major shifts in Republican identity formation after the signing of the Good Friday Agreements. This is because the Sinn Féin Northern headquarters are located in Belfast.¹¹ The national parliament is also located just outside of Belfast and thus many of the major policy decisions affecting the movement of Republicanism in practical terms takes place here.

One of the groups I focus on is located in Ardoyne, a Republican community in the North part of the city.¹² Many of my interviewees were also from this area of Belfast. This is also the community in which I conducted the most on-site analysis. I did this for many reasons. First, Ardoyne houses what is generally regarded as one of the most overtly Republican communities in the North. Thus, identifying themes and rituals was easier done here than in other communities. Additionally, the Concerned Families Against Drugs group from Ardoyne engages very openly with the media. Thus, access to materials on and by the group was readily available. Furthermore, Ardoyne has a particular self-reflexivity that is unique, even for as nuanced and articulate a People as Republicans tend to be. In 2002, the community of Ardoyne undertook a project to write their local history of the Troubles. Residents of Ardoyne felt that “Ardoyne is a community that has known its history to be hidden and humanity denied” (3). Thus, they articulated their own history and memory, “from the ground up” (2).

¹¹ Southern headquarters are located on Parnell Street in Dublin.

¹² Please see Appendix 1 for a map of Belfast and Ardoyne.

The over 500 page book was written as “a tribute to the resilience of the living” and to “commemorate the dead through the voices of those who knew them best” (ii). According to The Ardoyne Commemoration Project, “To be from Ardoyne usually means to have been born and grown up in certain streets. It is, in other words, to share a certain sense of place and belonging and to live that out in the contacts, actions and institutions that make up everyday life” (8). This extremely tight knit community has historically been a Sinn Féin stronghold. Yet, Ardoyne was also one of the most intractable communities when it came for Sinn Féin to garner the People’s support for the new Policing Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The IRA would later say they had “lost Ardoyne to the dissidents”¹³ and in my time there I could see and hear a clear shift away from the Republican Leader(ship). Ardoyne is articulated as a community of extremes in the media, most recently in relation to the riots that still flare on their borders during Orange marching season.¹⁴ However, Ardoyne is also a deeply analytical community that engaged both with me, and among each other, in a complex and nuanced way.

Though my interviewees and one group I examine are from Ardoyne, I don’t claim to be representing the views of the Ardoyne community at large. My research may speak to issues of how Republican Ardoyne creates or rejects identity formations, but does not speak to the entire geographic area of Ardoyne in a general sense. The same is true of my conclusions regarding Sinn Féin. Ireland has always had an extremely localized political system. This is pragmatic in the sense that many national powers are devolved to local governments. This is also symbolic in

¹³ Though the army had stood down and were not engaged in active warfare, the IRA still exists as an organization. Individuals, even if they were members of Sinn Féin, acted in their role as IRA volunteers when telling Sinn Féin that Ardoyne was “lost.”

¹⁴ Every year on the 12th of July, members of the Orange Order, a Loyalist organization, march to commemorate the battle of Boyne in which Protestant King William (Billy) beat the Catholic King James to win the throne of England in 1640.

the sense that many people vote for national figures on the basis of their local affiliations. Though Sinn Féin is a national party, indeed, the only all-Ireland party that has a real impact both North and South of the border, Sinn Féin cumann¹⁵ operate quite differently in each community. Thus, the Falls Road Cumann of Sinn Féin of West Belfast is quite different from the Ardoyne Cumann of Sinn Féin. Though there is, of course, a great deal of consistency on the policy level across the cumann, the personalities and temperaments of each society vary. In other words, each has its own identity and history.

The issue of consistency and difference in Republicanism was articulated by Brendan “Bik” McFarlane when I interviewed him. He is a “friend of Sinn Féin”¹⁶ and was the PIRA Officer Commanding (OC) of the H-Blocks¹⁷ during the 1981 hunger strikes. As McFarlane said:

The two main cities up in the North here are Belfast and Derry.... Republicanism works slightly differently in Derry than in Belfast in terms of politics anyway. Not the military end of it. Country areas, traditionally, would have been more conservative and when I say the likes of Belfast would be more radical. I don't even mean it in terms of, you know, left-wing radicalism, I just mean more radical. Where country areas would be inclined to be more conservative in their outlook (Interview).

As McFarlane points out, while there may be great fluency on a military level, the political implications of localism are significant. It would be incorrect to say that Republican identity developed in the same ways throughout the island of Ireland. Of course, some generalizations

¹⁵ Irish for “society” or “fellowship.” This is the title given to the local groups of Sinn Féin activists located around the country. Thus, one may be from the Ardoyne Cumann of Sinn Féin, pointing to how important the local is within the view of the national in Republican politics.

¹⁶ Bik McFarlane is treated by the grassroots as a member of the Leader(ship) because of his close ties with elected members of the Leader(ship), even though his post is voluntary and non-elected.

¹⁷ Long Kesh prison camp, colloquially known as the “H-Blocks” because of its H shape.

and larger arguments have to be made. This project can give some insights into the necessary changes that reflect the lived-in world that all Republicans have to face. However, I will take care to contextualize those broader claims and indicate where differences between localities are particularly important.

Research methodology

I am working primarily from a rhetorical standpoint. Material rhetoric scholars' emphasis on consequences is fundamental to my project. I am interested in the changes in identity that led to drastic material effects in Northern Ireland. Narrated memories of oppression and resistance were manifested in jailed bodies, civil rights marches, and shootings before the Good Friday Agreements. These events constituted a Northern Irish Republican identity centered on resistance and violence. In recent years, the Leader(ship) has been trying to shift Republican identity toward non-violent embodiment and develop a mode of authenticity for both the People and the Leader that operates outside of the pre-existent framework. One of the material effects of this group identity shift was the creation of an enduring peace.¹⁸ Kelleher says, "Irish nationalists¹⁹ remembered the violence of the Elizabethan Conquest as they represented the violence of the 1980's in Ballybogoin²⁰ not so much with monuments, parades,

¹⁸ The trope of peace can be extremely problematic when applied to the situation in the North. In the power vacuum that has arisen with the ending of IRA activity, there has been an increased presence of drug dealers, communal violence and anti-social behavior. The rhetorical trope of "peace" is a particular construction of the Leader(ship) that does not necessarily play out "on the ground."

¹⁹ There is a distinct difference between Nationalists and Republicans, however, the analysis that Kelleher provides proves useful when analyzing Republican populations as well. I will examine this difference in greater depth in chapter 3.

²⁰ Pseudonym for a town in Northern Ireland

or even storytelling but in the bodily practices and sensory perceptions of ‘both sides of the house²¹’” (33). These bodies and their movements not only perform identity but work to constitute communal identity as well. The body is the primary subject of most of the narratives I examine in this project. These narratives are discourses, events, object and practices that are both material and symbolic (Blair *et al* 2-3).

In order to understand specifically the ways that these symbolic and material narratives constitute modern Republican identity, I conducted six months of ethnography in Belfast, with several follow up visits throughout the subsequent year. I approached the ethnographic, data gathering portion of my research using the feminist method articulated by Nancy A. Naples in her book *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis and Activist Research*. Naples advocates initial on-site analysis of data so that follow up interviews may be conducted with interviewees. This meant that I transcribed the interviews in Belfast and spoke with the interviewees about the themes I saw emerging. Naples argues that respectful research encourages participants to have input in the manner in which their stories are interpreted and told. I selected Naples’ method because she emphasizes a collaborative, feminist approach, which I am personally committed to and, more importantly, fits well with the collective, collaborative culture of Northern Irish Republican communities.

Republican communities have historically been harassed by the state, often through the use of police and military informers. Harassment often resulted in individuals feeling a deep lack of agency over their own lives. This can be seen in the quotation earlier provided by residents of Ardoyne who felt they had not even been able to tell their most intimate stories of family members’ deaths. This harassment has led many communities and the individuals within

²¹ Catholics and Protestants

them to distrust outsiders. Because some of my interviewees made exceptions to this rule by speaking with me, I wanted to ensure that they were given agency in the process of writing. I also wanted to make sure that these lines of communication would not close down in my future research.

I established contacts in the Republican community over a period of four years before I began to conduct interviews. Most of my initial contacts were made through the Irish Language community during my four summers of language training in County Dhún na nGall (Donegal). These initial contacts introduced me to other individuals when I moved to Belfast. These secondary contacts then made arrangements for interviews with Republicans on my behalf.²² Once I was introduced to a few members of the community, I was able to more easily establish further contacts. This was facilitated by the fact that I lived in Belfast for several months and Galway for a year and thus was able to be held accountable for my research.

My ability to make contacts was further facilitated by my ability to speak Irish, which demonstrated that I had a personal stake, developed through time and energy, in the larger Republican project outside of this dissertation. I next conducted these interviews with members of the Republican community and created a transcript with some initial interpretations. I then conducted a follow up interview with some and engaged in electronic contact with others, based on their personal preferences.

Though I was initially nervous that some of the higher-ranking Leader(ship) interviewees might put pressure on me to use this dissertation as an opportunity to create a politically favorable impression of themselves and the party, I instead found that I was openly encouraged

²² My research is deeply indebted to one secondary contact in particular. He consistently, throughout my project, went out of his way to assist me in every possible way. I did not interview this individual or wish to name him because of privacy concerns. But I hold a deep gratitude for his generosity and insights.

to develop my own interpretation of the party and its methods as a way of expanding their own understanding of the current landscape. Sinn Féin has been susceptible to criticism that they run their party not like the democratic structure it should be, but instead like a military organization. This is because there has been cross-over between the military leadership and the political leadership. When Sinn Féin entered constitutional politics, they were meant to abandon all of the vestiges of militarism and engage in the ballot box without the threat of the bullet. Trust that this would happen was foundational to the peace process. Any sign of unwillingness to tolerate criticism would be seen as the kind of truncation of debate that happens in military units for the purpose of maintaining security and power. The Sinn Féin members and leaders I met were all willing to engage with my criticism in a constructive manner.²³

I also spent a month in the archives of the Linenhall Library in Belfast. The Linenhall holds the foremost Northern Irish political collection in the world. “The Northern Ireland Political Collection (NIPC) is a unique resource. No other institution in a localised conflict has systematically collected material from all sides. Much less has it been done in the field, and often literally across the barricades” (Linenhall homepage). The library holds an extraordinary amount of firsthand sources and ephemeral materials from the Troubles. I went systematically through over 100 boxes of newspaper clippings, fliers, pamphlets, videos, propaganda and education materials, party policy leaflets, jail letters and communiqués, dissertations, photographs, and interview transcripts. The collection was invaluable in helping me to identify the themes in Republican narratives from 1969 until I began my own research in 2004.

Research questions and thesis

²³ It is worth noting that my position as a researcher and an outsider may have been the cause of this toleration. My analysis holds less weight in the Republican community because I have no Republican lineage and have not engaged in any embodied performance of commitment to the cause. The stakes are not as high when I point out contradictions, as they may be for someone who has served time in prison for Republican action.

I will be guided by the following research questions:

How is the modern Republican identity constituted, both for the People and the Leader?

Who are the People?

Who is the Leader(ship)?

What are the stakes of these identity formations?

These questions will be contextualized within the historic move from violence to peace that took place in Northern Ireland after signing the Good Friday Agreements in 1998 and the present movement away from that established peace as demonstrated by the synecdochal Real IRA attack on British soldiers in Belfast on March 9th, 2009 and the continued escalation of Republican paramilitary activity across the North.

I argue that in the Northern Irish case, the Leader for a majority of the Republican People has been the Sinn Féin Leader(ship). Many members of the Sinn Féin Leader(ship) have also held high places in the PIRA leadership structure (the Army Council). Though many splits from this group have occurred,²⁴ I argue that their Leader(ship) has been relatively uncontested in the previous thirty years. The Leader(ship) has been historically invested with authenticity derived from memories of embodied masculine performances. These memories have served to manifest material and rhetorical power in some individuals and give them the authority to lay claim to the identity of “Leader(ship)” or Leader. These memories typically revolve around the embodied practices of individuals, primarily masculine performances enacted while in the Army²⁵ within the context of jails, missions, protections, and other situations of spectacular violence. One must

²⁴ Indeed, Sinn Féin and the PIRA are themselves products of Republican splits.

²⁵ Most mainstream Republicans will refer to the PIRA, or some of the other major splits, as the Army. The Army may also be known as “the RA.”

prove one's masculine authority to reassure communal members that one is hard enough to stand in the face of police harassment and refuse to be turned into a tout.²⁶ One need not necessarily be a man to perform this masculinity. The notion of proof is extremely important in the creation of authority, because, as long as authority is gendered as masculine, one must prove one's lack of femininity in order to authenticate one's authority. As Paechter argues in *Making Masculinities and Femininities*, "the performance of gender is a reciprocal relation between performer and audience, its meaning will be interpreted in the relationship between them.... Masculinity is more highly valued, and therefore requires greater proofs than femininity" (19).

This authority is not stagnant or monolithic, however. Once authenticity is manifest, it is not perpetual. It must be flexible as the context and subsequent understanding of authenticity shifts. In the present climate, the Leader(ship) is trying to rhetorically de-emphasize embodied masculinity as a mode to achieving the authority to speak for others. This removes the material body from the discourse, which truncates the democratic discussion, or negotiation, of gender that is provided by the masculine female body. Without the body to complicate the rhetorical gender binary, sex and gender become naturally linked in discourse, which denigrates and disempowers those who live primarily in the materiality of everyday life. The Leader(ship) does so while promoting the next generation of leaders, who do not derive their authority from the Army and are not necessarily men. This young leadership is trying to build authority through intellectual performance²⁷ not predicated in violence. The Leader(ship) is questioning the value

²⁶ Someone who serves as a spy for the "State" in the form of a police, MI-6 (British secret service) or, as of 2005, possibly a Sinn Féin informer.

²⁷ Although I do not support the notion of a Cartesian dualism in the process of developing performance, I argue that, in the context of Irish Republicanism, this is an appropriate characterization of the Leader(ship)'s attempts to create a rhetorical separation of body and mind. The Leader(ship) is not trying to break down this dualism; rather

of the body on the line, while simultaneously recognizing that their authority to shift these tropes is predicated upon the authority they received from this form of authenticity originally. Many Republicans still hold the body to be sacrosanct, as evidenced by the prominence of the body in the major Republican identity-constructing narratives that I examine in this project. Thus, the Leader(ship) finds itself in a bound up in rhetorical contradictions.

The Leader(ship) is also trying to shift to authenticity predicated upon rational performances of language use, policy development and attaining voter mandates instead of relying upon the traditional makers of identity. This occurs within the context of Sinn Féin's move "over and up" into more centrist political circles with a middle class, rather than working class, base. Other groups, such as Éirígí and Concerned Families Against Drugs, are contesting both these new modes of authenticity while simultaneously attempting to strategically select which rational performances to engage in more authentically than the Leader(ship) of Sinn Féin.

Chapter 2 lays the primary theoretical groundwork for the project. I examine the relationship between rhetoric and memory, primarily based on the research by Blair, Dickinson and Ott. Blair *et al* argue that "public memory and public memory places...[are]fundamentally rhetorical" (2). My examination of Republican public memory thus requires a rhetorical approach. Therefore, I turn to the theory of constitutive rhetoric to argue that public memory is constitutive of Republican identity. By extension, those who shape public memory also shape communal identity.

In Chapter 3 I explore the history of Republicanism and its major constitutive components. Those components create an oppositional, nationalist, Irish identity that vests the

they are attempting to shift the People away from one end of the dualism to the other, while holding the continuum intact.

political party Sinn Féin with the Leader(ship) to articulate who is a part of the People and who are the “dissidents” outside of that identity. In Chapter 4, I examine the way that Sinn Féin and the People co-create an understanding of masculinity and femininity that both constrain and enable the communally acceptable embodied performances of the Republican People. In Chapter 5, I examine the ways that these gender limitations have proved to be obstacles for the Sinn Féin Leader(ship)’s ability to remain in power in contemporary Belfast. Sinn Féin’s authority is predicated on an ideal masculinity that is violent. If Sinn Féin wishes to uphold its commitment to peace, it must succeed in changing the seat of its authority before it denigrates others who uphold a similarly violent masculinity. “Dissident” groups are also important participants in performing and reforming the gender roles that arise out of the negotiations between the People and the Leader(ship) on the meaning of Republican public memory.

Chapter 2

Rhetoric and memory

My project is primarily rhetorical in nature. Rhetoric is “a set of theoretically stances and critical tactics that offer ways of understanding, evaluating, and intervening in a broad range of human activities” (Blair *et al* 3). I turned to constitutive rhetoric, public memory and material rhetoric to understand the rhetorical work that the Republican community was performing in Belfast. These theories informed my understanding of the rhetorical constructions of identity, authenticity, and authority.

Rhetoric and memory

The contemporary study of public memory grew out of the field of psychology, and then expanded into other disciplines such as anthropology, history and communication (Zelizer 216). However, the consideration of memory has been a part of the discipline of rhetoric since the second century BC, when Greek and Roman teachers developed “memory systems that enabled public figures to speak at length without consulting notes” (Blair 1). The modern rhetorical interest in memory blossomed with the contributions of Maurice Halbwachs who contested that memory should be considered collectively rather than individually.

This history of inquiry into memory, while important for gaining a contextual understanding, does not precisely define the nature of public memory. As one might conjecture, there are a variety of perspectives on the connection between rhetoric and public memory. The most useful of these is provided by Blair, Dickenson and Ott in their new book *Rhetoric/Memory/Place*. The basic position of their work is that “strong understandings of public memory and of public memory places can emerge only by comprehending their specifically rhetorical character” (2). This stance is useful for this project because Republican public memories are articulated not only in verbal narratives, but in material places, performances, rituals and representations (murals, photos, jail art, etc) as well. Blair *et al* emphasize that the rhetorical critic must attend to both the “symbolic and material” character of rhetoric (2).

Blair *et al* provide a concise definition of rhetoric, which is that “rhetoric is the study of discourses, events, object, and practices that attends to their character as meaningful, legible, partisan and consequential” (3). The notion that rhetoric is meaningful has two distinct connotations. First, “meaningful discourses, events, object, and practices carry evocative, affective weight. They create and/or sustain emotional affiliation” (4). The second connotation indicates that a site of inquiry is meaning-full. In other words, “discourses, events, objects, and practices are composed of signs that may take on a range of signification” (4). One of these issues of signification is the “materiality of the signifier itself, as a mode of mediation” (4).

Blair *et al* argue that rhetoric’s legibility “implies...a sense of readability or understandability of expression” (5). This is particularly important to my project. There are, of course, an enormous amount of discourses, events, objects and practices that create the Republican identity. I have selected to study certain discourses, events, objects and practices

because they are particularly salient to the Republican People. A large part of this salience relies on the legibility of certain sites to those people. Thus, while some groups may produce incredibly insightful moments of intervention into Republican identity constitution, if they are not legible to the People, their impact is extremely limited. The same principle applies when the Leader(ship) try to shift the meanings of these discourses. If the “new” meaning in the “new” context is not legible, the People will either dismiss or reject this meaning. A large part of this legibility “is predicated in publicly recognized symbolic activity *in context*. That is, rhetoric typically understands discourses, events, objects and practices as timely, of the moment, specific, and addressed to—or constitutive of—particular audiences in particular circumstances” (5). I will discuss later in this dissertation the importance of the context itself as a rhetorical object that is interpreted differently by different groups vying for Leader(ship) status.

This notion of multifaceted meanings and their salience leads Blair *et al* to argue that rhetoric is also “partisan. That is so...because these phenomena are symbolic, and hence partial...[rhetorical sites] are not ‘neutral’ or ‘objective’ but tendentious. They are understood as deployments of material signs serving as the grounds for various identifications or perceived alignments to take shape” (5). Aligning oneself with a “Sinn Féin Republican” identity or a “dissident group identity” has severe consequences in the North of Ireland. “Dissidents” continue to be monitored and harassed. Sinn Féin Republicans, while not state favorites, are within the fold of the state through political engagement, and thus remove the state’s ability to legitimately monitor their behavior.²⁸

²⁸ This is not to say that Sinn Féin Republicans are not monitored by the state (police, military, and media). It is simply to say that in an allegedly democratic society, such monitoring does not have moral justification. Monitoring those who are allegedly at war with the existence of that very state outside of the state’s norms of acceptable behavior are, on the other hand, rhetorically constructed as legitimate targets of state harassment.

This leads to final characteristic of rhetorical discourses, events, objects and practices: they are consequential. Blair *et al* argue that “the potential of rhetoric to exert effect is the foundational assumption of the field.... Rhetoric has broadened its sense from effect to ‘consequence’ ...and more recently to ‘effectivity (understood as social value or utility, as modes of re-use or circulation)” (6). The authors’ emphasis on consequences is fundamental to my project. I am interested in the changes in identity that led to drastic material effects in Northern Ireland. Memories of oppression and resistance had for so long²⁹ been manifest in jailed bodies, civil rights marches, and shootings that Northern Irish Republican identity was primarily derived from violence and opposition. In recent years, the Leader(ship) has been trying to shift Republican identity toward non-violent embodiment and develop a mode of authenticity for both the People and the Leader(ship) that operates outside of the pre-existent dichotomous, oppositional framework. One of the material consequences of this group identity shift was the creation of an enduring peace. Their embodied practices not only perform identity but work to simultaneously construct communal identity.

These practices are also necessarily public if they are to be consequential. Blair *et al* point out that though “‘public’ [is] understood to describe a mode of action in the circumstances of collective contingency.... ‘Public’ is not an uncontested concept” (7). This nuance is born out in fascinating ways in Republican identity structures. The PIRA was, by necessity, engaged in many non-public activities. Security meant that they could not have the strongest volunteers out in public, conducting meet and greet events with youth. Yet, many of the PIRA activities were pointless if they were not legible and memorable to the People. Republicans could never win a war fought by traditional means against the British. The British always would have more

²⁹ Some would say for 800 years.

guns, more money and more soldiers. What the Republicans could do, which is a tactic many paramilitary groups rely upon, was wage a rhetorical war by military means. Even the “private” moments were articulated “publicly” after the fact, to garner support for the cause. Silence in public, particularly when being questioned, harassed or monitored by the state, was using the trope of the private (non-interaction with ‘the public’) to create a public performance of identity. The notion of the public also becomes complicated when one examines that which the Republican Leader(ship) encourages the People to “remember” and that which they are encouraged to “forget.” For example, most informers/touts³⁰ who were discovered by the PIRA were shot in the back of the head and left on the road to serve as a warning to other would-be touts. This practice has continued, especially in Derry, where on February 26th of this year, the Real IRA killed Kieran Doherty for being an alleged informer. His body was stripped, bound, and left on the side of the road.

However, in a few cases, such as the killing of Seamus Wright and Kevin McKee in the summer of 1972 and of Jean McConville in December of 1972, their bodies were hidden (Moloney 119-123). They were “disappeared.” The IRA did not admit to the killings until late in 1999, when Bill Clinton intervened (Moloney 124). These events were meant to be private, but instead became public. Particularly the killing of Jean McConville, a widowed, poverty-stricken mother of ten, who was passing low-level intelligence to the British military from inside her apartment block, while perhaps understandable from the military point of view, was unacceptable to the People as part of rhetorical identity construction. That level of ruthlessness

³⁰ Members of the Republican community who betrayed their identity by revealing intelligence to the British police or military.

by the Leader(ship)'s³¹ against its own People does not fit with the identity or public memory of either party.

Blair *et al* are careful to point out that the public/private and remembering/forgetting dichotomies are not distinct. To say that that which is not articulated clearly in public memory is necessarily forgotten is a “simplistic restatement of the problem of representation in public memory studies” (Blair *et al* 24). Blair *et al* provide the example of taboos to demonstrate this point. Not discussing an event could be taboo, instead of pointing to a “forgotten” memory. Indeed “the coexistence and modification of memories by one another... [mean that] even seemingly contradictory contents can be held in public memory simultaneously and that the relationships among memories vary” (26). This is something that the Sinn Féin Leader(ship) does recognize. Those memories that they cannot change the meaning of, they instead try to use as moments to be imbricated into and on top of the pre-existent Republican identity. These moments are articulated within the new “peaceful” context of the North of Ireland.

This notion of the public and memory therefore is born out in Republican rhetorical practices. Blair *et al* provide the clearest articulation of the links between the public and memory and between rhetoric and public memory available. Blair *et al* carefully select the term “public memory” rather than other terms available, including “collective memory” or “popular memory,” for example. “We have chosen to use the designator, *public* memory here, because of

³¹ The Leader(ship) here is particularly important. Moloney contends that the order to disappear McConville, Wright and McKee came directly from Gerry Adams, who was the leader of the Belfast C Company at the time. This was the beginning of Gerry Adams' term of Leader(ship) in the IRA and was, as mentioned, a significant split from previous IRA policy. Thus, the lack of popularity of this action could seriously impact upon Gerry Adams' Leader(ship) legitimacy. Though the IRA did admit to the disappearance in 1999, Adams has never admitted involvement. This was enforced in small ways as well. Though Moloney's book was well researched, and is widely regarded as sound scholarship, members of Sinn Féin were told in Cumann not to read the book, since it was full of lies. The book has continued to be attacked as sensationalist propaganda by Sinn Féin. Moloney has been elected Irish Journalist of the Year, was the Northern Editor for both *The Irish Times* and *The Sunday Tribune*. It is extremely unlikely that Moloney lied or made up the material.

rhetoric's emphasis upon concepts of publicity.... We collapse under the sign of 'public memory' those studies taking the stance that beliefs about the past are shared among members of a group, whether a local community or the citizens of a nation-state" (8). They provide the clearest links between rhetoric and the way in which memory is "an activity of collectivity rather than (or in addition to) individuated, cognitive work" (7). Due to the clear links provided, and my grounding in both rhetoric and memories of a collectivity, I too will use their phrase "public memory" to describe the rhetorical discourses, events, objects and practices that constitute contemporary Republican identity.

Blair *et al* name six "consensual (or nominally consensual) assumptions" of memory scholars (8). The first of these is that "memory is activated by present concerns, issues or anxieties" (8). This is clearly the case in Republican Northern Ireland, where the present "peaceful" ends of Sinn Féin require a rearticulation of the memories that used to justify violence. As Blair *et al* note, "Groups tell their pasts to themselves and others as ways of understanding, valorizing, justifying, excusing, or subverting conditions or beliefs of their current moment" (9). However, this because there is an infinite past to tell, "groups talk about some events of their histories more than others, glamorize some individuals more than others, and present some actions but not others as 'instructive' for the future" (9). This is true of Republicans, who have historically glamorized the hypermasculine paramilitary figure in their symbolic and material discourses, events, objects and practices.

The masculine figure was given an authority in Republican rhetoric that relied upon the control over and denigration of the feminine. The stories of male resilience are celebrated, while stories of female "support" fade into the background as "contextual" rather than rhetorical moments to celebrate in and of themselves. These narratives are instructive for the younger

people, who learn how to “act like a man” in the face of state harassment and how to do “women’s work” to support that masculine behavior. The state is feminized as cowardly and irrational in these narratives. Success comes when the masculine Republican drives the state to insanity. This is when the state’s violence loses rationality and they act out in ways that can be articulated as unjust.³² The complication comes when Sinn Féin, by becoming a part of the state, have to try to rearticulate these memories in a way that does not feminize the state, because then they too will become feminized. Blair *et al* argue indeed that “our understandings of and investments in the past change as our present conditions and needs change” (9). The Leader(ship)’s needs have changed. They do not need to garner support for war, but instead for peace. Thus, what narratives, and the ways in which they tell them, will be different.

The second assumption of memory studies is that “public memory is theorized in most scholarship as narrating a common identity, a construction that forwards an at least momentarily definitive articulation of the group. It also offers to individuals a symbolic connection with the group and a sense of belonging to it” (9). These are issues that I will take up in turn in this dissertation. Republicanism is a constitutive identity. I will explain what constitutive rhetoric is in more depth in the next section. Blair *et al* have explained, however, that public memory is an important part of the constitutive process. Republican identity also is bounded by a sense of those who belong and those who do not. There is a clear “in group” and a clear “out group.”

³² Republicans have very strategically exploited moments of violence against them in the media. Much like images of state police beating peaceful protestors in the American South during the Civil Rights Movement, mediated messages of the state acting against “peaceful” Republican protest were exploited internationally to garner support, particularly from America and Amnesty International. Creating public moments of violence against Republicans is a tactic that continues in the Republican tradition today. Individuals opposed to the Orange marches in Ardoyne went and sat in the street with linked arms in front of the parade route to force the police either to halt the march or physically drag and beat them out of the street. The police chose the later and riots ensued. However, because Ardoyne has been designated as a “dissident” community, the media only reported the sensational riots, rather than the previously peaceful protest. However, if the audience they were engaging in such a rhetorical action for were the People of Ardoyne and not for those who read or watch the news, then the protest was legible.

The out group is not only the state, but also “dissidents.”³³ I will look at these tropes in the next chapter.

Third, Blair *et al* say that “public memory is typically understood as animated by affect. That is, rather than representing a fully developed chronicle of the social group’s past, public memory embraces events, people, objects and places that it deems worthy of preservation, based on some kind of emotional attachment” (10). The authors point out that it is very difficult to understand why some memories “stick”³⁴ and others do not, especially because affect is an “a-signifying” intensity that does “not ‘inhabit’ a sign system but circulate[s] by means of them” (22). The complexity these sign systems point to how meaning-full public memory is.

On a theoretical level, I agree. For the purposes of this particular study I have selected to examine the narratives that were most salient to the People. Those narratives evoke a variety of emotions for the People. I determined this salience based on both the quantity of times and quantity of sources in which a particular theme was articulated, and on the quality of emotional attachment the People had to this memory. For example, Bobby Sands, the hunger striker,³⁵ prominently figures in most Republican narratives. He is held up as the ideal to pursue. During the course of my interviews, one person began to cry when speaking of Sands. Another individual angrily exclaimed that Sinn Féin was trying to steal the image of Sands, though

³³ Blair *et al* argue that public memory “constructs identities that are embraced, that attract adherents (as well as dissidents)” (30). This is an incredibly insightful way of thinking about those who are called “dissidents” in the North. They do not buy into the memories narrated by the Leader(ship) and therefore perform an identity at odds with how the Leader(ship) wants the People to understand themselves.

³⁴ A word used by Sarah Ahmed, as quoted in Blair *et al* (24).

³⁵ Though there have been many hunger strikes in Irish history, when one refers to “THE Hunger Strike,” they are referring to the 1981 strike that took place in the H-Blocks, a jail in Lisburn, 14 km outside of Belfast. Ten Irish Republican prisoners, 7 from the PIRA and 3 from the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), died in protest of the prison conditions the prisoners were being kept in. Though the hunger strikes ended without a formal deal, the British did concede to the essence of all five of the prisoners’ demands shortly thereafter.

Sands' story belonged to all the People. Another asked to move to a different topic because he was afraid he was going to break down if he continued to discuss Bobby Sands' sacrifice. Only one of these individuals had ever met Bobby Sands. The emotional attachment to the memory of Sands is collective for the Republican People, and attacking that memory attacks something very central in Republican identity.

Blair *et al* continue that "if the substance of public memory is to be truly public (or collective in any sense), that is shared and embraced as a marker of identity for that group, then two conditions seem to be in play. First, there must be a mode of sharing...Second, though, a memory that is shared must somehow attract a certain degree of adherence on the part of members of the group" (18). These memories of Bobby Sands are shared in the murals, stories, reenactments, commemorations, films and songs about him. The image of Sands attracts a level of adherence by the People, and inspires an idea of perseverance against the cruelty of the state for a righteous purpose. The memory of Bobby Sands remains more salient generally than the memory even of other hunger strikers. Though no Republican would argue that Kevin Lynch, another of the ten hunger strikers, was not a hero, his image, name and story is not as immediately recognizable or salient as Sands'.

The fourth theme of memory studies "posits public memory as partial, partisan, and thus frequently contested...Public memories may be challenged by different versions of the past, by introduction of different information or valuations" (12). Thus, while Bobby Sands is a sacrosanct figure who cannot be publicly attacked, whether or not the Leader(ship) could have done more to save some of the other nine hunger strikers' lives is a subject of great public scrutiny at present. David Beresford's book *Ten Men Dead* caused controversy in Belfast when it was first published because it contended that Gerry Adams had the opportunity to save the last

four hunger strikers lives, but did not in order to gain electoral support for Sinn Féin. Beresford focused on a different aspect of the Hunger Striker narrative and articulated a different meaning for the Hunger Strikes. Instead of the Hunger Striker narrative focusing on sacrifice and stoic perseverance, Beresford's story articulates a narrative of callous Leader(ship) manipulation of the heroes of the People.

“Fifth, public memory is typically understood as relying on material and/or symbolic supports—language, ritual performances, communication technologies, objects, and places—that work in various ways to consummate individuals’ attachment to the group” (13). The artifacts of Republican mnemonic narratives are varied, as discussed above. From murals to reenactments, Republican narratives are told and retold through and by a variety of *techné*.

Finally, “public memory has a history” (14). The authors articulate the extensive research that has gone into trying to unravel the relationship between “history” and “public memory.” They explain that “most of what passes for public memory bears at least some arguable resemblance to or some trace of a ‘real’ past event. Most public memory is not purely or deliberately fictitious, in other words” (17). Some memories are salient to a People and some are not. Many times those narratives that stick tend to do so within a broader affective narrative, such as “Nationalism” (22). Identification³⁶ with these narratives “render[s] belonging [to] a rhetorical configuration” (23). Though Nationalism is certainly at play within the Republican identity narrative, I think the broader concept of gender is more prevalent. Indeed, Tamar Mayer argues in *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, that even when the

³⁶ Referring to the concept forwarded by Kenneth Burke as articulated by Blair et al (23).

nation is viewed as feminine, nationalism itself is viewed as a masculine behavior.³⁷ This is but one example of the ways in which the seemingly “natural” fit between sex and gender can result in contradictions. Complications of the gender-sex relationship demonstrate the degree to which gender is a negotiated rhetorical construct that only achieves its seeming naturalness when a community agrees upon an at least temporarily fixed meaning.

Ultimately, Blair *et al* conclude that “Yes, public memory bears relationships to the present, but those relationships are variable and dependent upon contexts, available rhetorical resources, representational choices, framings by various *techné*, and so forth. Yes, public memory narrates, arguably constructs, shared identities. But it does more than that. It constructs identities that are embraced, that attract adherents (as well as some dissidents)” (30). The idea that memory at least partially constructs identities is a theme that runs throughout the Blair *et al* piece. It is to this idea of rhetoric that constitutes identities, or, the theory of constitutive rhetoric, that I turn next.

Constitutive rhetoric

The theory of constitutive rhetoric was first introduced by Michael McGee in his article, “In Search of ‘The People’: A Rhetorical Alternative.” McGee argues that a rhetorical audience is both the rhetor’s linguistic construction to legitimize collective fantasy and the audience’s response to and acceptance of this identity derived from their desire to participate in the fantasy. According to McGee, the People exist both in a world of social fantasy and in objective reality simultaneously. The People can, however, be drawn by a rhetor from this world of fantasy into

³⁷ This is a concept I explore further in chapter 4 when I conduct a close reading of the foundational document of contemporary Irish Republicanism: The 1916 Proclamation. I argue that the nation is feminine, but the possibility for a powerful feminine nationalism also is present in the document.

objective reality, as the rhetor incites the audience's belief in "a basic set of myths" (245). The audience then responds by constituting the speaker as Leader. The People are subsequently defined in this reality by their collective actions, driven by the myth³⁸ that becomes 'functionally real' once accepted by the audience.

The trouble for the Leader arises "when there is no fundamental belief, one senses a crisis which can only be met with a new rhetoric, a new mythology" (245). McGee argues that some do not buy into this myth and that the political myth "is the central target for those who will not participate in the collective life either because they are hostile to the myth itself or because they have tired of the myth and are not inclined to defend it" (243). Usually, this political myth is passed from one generation to the next, used to bolster members of the same leadership structures seamlessly. These are stable political myths. Other political myths are variable, and subjected to competing interpretations. "The tension existing between competing myths is a product of the contradiction between an individual's impulse to accept 'stable' representations of reality derived from the collective experience of the past, and a contrary impulse to yield to 'vital' impressions of reality derived from personal experience with the life condition" (247).

Ultimately, the stakes are high, both for the People and the Leader. The People must stake their identity as a collective upon the selection of either a stable or a vital myth. The Leader is the "focal point for collective identity" and is only in power so long as the People have "faith in him," her or them (242). This faith is predicated upon the People's willingness to

³⁸ In "Culture, Myth, and Ideology as Public Argument: An Interpretation of the Ascent and Demise of 'Southern Culture,'" Balthrop argues that myth is the "controlling image" that gives meaning to everyday life (341). I supplement this understanding of myth with V.W. Balthrop's 1978 unpublished dissertation, "'British thugs' – 'Fenian bastards': A Rhetorical analysis of the crisis in Northern Ireland." Balthrop's concept of "myth" closely resembles the definition provided by McGee of a "political myth." However, I have selected Balthrop's definition because he explores the nature of "myth" more explicitly and in greater detail.

espouse the particular myth deployed by the Leader at the time. Thus, power, and the subsequent right to guide the People's understanding or knowledge of their own identity, is at stake for the Leader.

This process of the People "coming into being" is further explored and challenged by Maurice Charland. Charland argues that Burke's notion of identification indicates that an audience does not in fact preexist a speech act, but rather participates in and embodies that discourse. Grounded in the Althusserian concept of subject constitution, Charland argues that subjects are in fact rhetorically constituted and experience the Burkean identification process in the course of interacting with and becoming interpellated into ideological discourse. He developed this argument through his examination of the Quebec independence movement, in which its proponents argued that the right to sovereignty was derived from their identification as the *Peuple Quebequis*, a rhetorically constituted subjectivity. In the same way, Northern Irish Republicans argue for a reunification with the Republic based on their identification with communal memories of a time when Ireland was united and free.

Drzewiecka's 2002 piece on constitutive identities of diasporic movements argues for attention to the non-static nature of group identity. Drzewiecka argues that communities "constantly rhetorically recreate and imagine" identities (2). The reshaping of identity, Drzewiecka asserts, is often a political move deployed to meet particular ends. As those ends change, so too does identity. An additional contribution to constitutive rhetoric theory that Drzewiecka provides is an articulation of the oppositional nature of many national identities. For example, the identity "Quebecois" was created in opposition to the Canadian identity. The dialectical nature of group identity is similarly evidenced in Northern Irish Republican identity

transformation. Those dialectics have taken different shapes throughout the 800-year conflict, the most pervasive being Republican/Loyalist.

Kenneth Burke makes an additional contribution to the understanding of the Leader and the People, which is helpful to this project. In *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke conducts an extensive analysis of the rhetoric of Hitler. Burke argues that the Leader is gendered as masculine and the masses (aka the People) are gendered as feminine (199). As a consequence, the Leader is endowed with more agency than the People are. I argue that historically, in the North of Ireland, the Leader(ship) have attained their positions through performances of masculinity, often, hypermasculinity. The Leader(ship) was given the authority to conduct the war because the People, constituted by both men and women, were willing to endorse this gendered myth and accept a feminized position for a variety of reasons. Some of those include a concern with security, the access every boy from socio-economically oppressed areas felt they had to the Republican dream of rising through the ranks to attain glory, and the consistency of this myth with the overarching economic myth that poorer classes were feminized because of their reliance upon state subsidy for survival (again, a lack of agency). However, there was a nuance to this myth that is disappearing in the new political climate. During the war, group gender negotiation was predicated on a multi-leveled hierarchy. This stratification gave varying levels of access to authority and masculinity to individuals on the local level. As the value on local embodiment is denigrated, the People find that they are left with a dichotomous, feminized, denigrated position that offers no upward mobility. These are myths I will examine in far greater detail later in this project.

Most of this research focus on the creation of the People but pay little attention to the agency of the people to simultaneously create the Leader. In the case of Belfast, the present

Leader is the Leader(ship) of Sinn Féin. For many years, the Leader(ship) was the IRA Army Council that spoke through Sinn Féin, which was considered its “poor relative” (McFarlane Interview). In the late 90’s, toward the end of the Troubles, rhetorical power shifted away from the Army Council, at least publicly, in order to give Sinn Féin the opportunity to advance the Republican struggle through politics. Indeed, in 2001, when asked to explain an IRA statement, Gerry Adams announced that, “the days of Sinn Féin interpreting IRA statements is over” (Field Notes 10/14/08).

Today, there is a significant degree of overlap between the Leader(ship) of Sinn Féin and the historical Leader(ship) of the PIRA. The leaders who are most rhetorically salient remain Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Féin; Gerry Kelly, Sinn Féin spokesman for Policing and Justice; Martin McGuinness, Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland; and Bik McFarlane, Friend of Sinn Féin (Moloney). Of these, only Gerry Adams is listed as an official member of “The Sinn Féin Leadership” on the Sinn Féin website (*Sinn Féin Leadership*). However, it is all four of these individuals who are most often discussed in the media and among Republicans in social situations. These four individuals tend to be the four who show up to important commemorations to provide a recognizable Sinn Féin presence.

The reason these four individuals are more representative of Sinn Féin to the Republican People than the exactly equal number of men and women provided on the 18 name list of the Sinn Féin Leader(ship), is because of these four individuals’ “authenticity.” Like McGee, I argue that the constitution of the Leader(ship) in Republican Northern Ireland developed from the audiences legitimating the rhetor’s authority as “authentic.” This authenticity was “proven” in an embodied way that was legible because of its hypermasculinity.

Authenticity and authority

Authenticity is a rhetorical effect. It is a discourse upon which authority, a subsequent rhetorical effect, is predicated. Authority is a rhetorical condition which generates authority. Adorno argues in *The Jargon of Authenticity* that authenticity is a language or ideology that constructs itself through jargon. I argue that he is articulating authenticity as a self-creating, self-perpetuating *rhetorical* concept by situating the practice firmly within the realm of the symbolic. Adorno argues that by arising through jargon, the trope of authenticity excuses the individual from thinking. This may imply that an authentic Republican identity necessarily precludes thinking, regardless of what might or might not be considered “authentic” at any given point in time. While it is not that authentic Republicans are necessarily “unthinking,” I don’t believe that their authenticity is derived from verbalized demonstrations of intelligence. Authentic Republicans put their bodies on the line to demonstrate a masculinity and a commitment to the Republican cause that the “shroud of language” can’t fake or hide. The body must behave intelligently, however, because irrational violence is classified as anti-social and antithetical to the masculine ideal. Masculine violence must be inflected with a symbolism in order to be acceptable and not “dissident.”

In an adaptation of the Aristotelian theory of opposites, Adorno argues that we understand the authentic only through its negation in the inauthentic. However, the dialectical nature of authenticity remains relatively unexplored by Adorno. Additionally, the self remains at the center of Adorno’s criticism, though I would argue that authenticity is necessarily a collective notion that can only be affirmed through its deployment and confirmation by an “other.” Even if authenticity can exist singularly, it can only have consequences collectively.

Rhetoric necessarily requires an audience. So too authenticity requires an external source to develop meaning.

Baudrillard attends more seriously to the social and rhetorical facets of authenticity. For him, authenticity is drawn out of the panic-stricken people who desperately seek a material basis for their nostalgic myths. Authenticity is predicated upon the belief that a cultural trait was lost and its rediscovery and re-embodiment is a return to that better time. Golomb extends on these notions of authenticity by examining the interactions between the nostalgic and the post-modern. He argues that authentic selves become diminished in post-modernity because they can no longer cling to static notions of class and nation as a basis. While I do not think his analysis of the multinational destroying the local necessarily leads to a lack of authenticity, he does relocate authenticity firmly in the collective, in the People. This is useful because it offers the possibility for agency.

The idea of agency is an important one for the Republican People. As identified above, Ardoyne, along with many other Republican communities, has been oppressed by the state in a way that limits its agency. This oppression is “real” in the sense that it is material. Historically, Republicans lived in “a society in which most Catholics were at the bottom of the heap, at best tolerated, at worst regarded as a fifth column intent on undermining the state. The best-paid and most skilled jobs, such as those in the Belfast shipyards where the *Titanic* was built or in engineering factories like Shorts, went mostly to Protestants” (Moloney 43). Republicans literally had reduced economic agency because they did not have access to the well paying jobs. This oppression was also mythic, however. The residents of Ardoyne felt like they had not even been provided the opportunity to articulate the stories of their dead. The agency to articulate a

collective identity, therefore, provides some realm of control to a People whose choices were otherwise extremely limited, sometimes in very dehumanizing ways.

Colin Graham argues that authenticity is particularly important to the Irish in his article “‘Blame it on Maureen O’Hara’: Ireland and the Trope of Authenticity.” Graham works from the a priori stance that authenticity is intricately tied to the effects of colonialism, and that in today’s climate of global capital, authenticity is a notion that can be traded upon. He notes, “Authenticity attempts to defy definition through its ambiguous stresses on origins and teleologies of completeness fused with continual change” (60). The lack of specific origins allows the trope of authenticity to be used in a flexible way for a variety of ends. The inability to specifically define authenticity works well for the Leader(ship) of the Republican movement because they can employ a variety of tactics under the guise of this trope. However, it also becomes difficult for the Leader(ship) because other groups and individuals can also lay claim to the notion and undercut the Leader(ship)’s authority.

Graham goes on to say that the ambiguity of origins is also what requires supplementary commentary to develop its meanings. He states that in the Irish context, the traditional “authentic” is defined in opposition to the colonial “inauthentic.” Revolution is therefore foundational to the idea of authenticity (60). Authenticity and claims to the authentic underlie the conceptual and cultural oppression by dominance. “The nation’s very reason for being, its logic of existence, is its claim to an undeniable authenticity as a pure expression of the ‘real,’ the obvious, the natural” (60). Graham emphasizes the importance of the local, genetic origins of the People rooted in the land and the power that is derived from their claim to pre-exist the colonial. This moral claim is the basis for the justification for revolution, linguistically and materially.

Graham extends this argument by stating that “claims for authenticity move from the ‘revolutionary’ (in all its aspects) to the dominant, following the path of the nation to the nation-state” (60). There is a very clear distinction in Republican ideology between the nation, which is conceived of as the ideal socialist-democratic republic that is enshrined in the 1916 proclamation, and the nation-state, which the Republic of Ireland became when Michael Collins and others moved against other 1916 leaders³⁹ to create a nation-state that would become a stepping stone to the attainment of the ideal. Almost 100 years later, the nation remains mythic and the Republic continues to offer an inauthentic claim to Republican histories. Authenticity is a trope that arises in the narrated memories of the Republican People to identify a Leader(ship) and endow that Leader(ship) with authority.

I use the term “authority” to describe the power that the Leader(ship) gains from the People recognizing and legitimizing their authenticity. This authority is given to what McGee identifies as Hitler being the “champion” or the “advocate” for the People. “The advocate is a ‘flag-bearer’ for old longings” (241). Indeed, the “Leader is himself a kind of fiction, for he wears the magic mask of Kingship, an anonymous face which conceals the powers of a demigod” (242). The power of the mask is of “the kind of face that a timid storekeeper might don to lynch an alleged criminal, to kill an enemy in war” (242). The power of the Leader(ship) role is palpable. When the Leader(ship) takes on the role of advocate, and articulates the longings that bring a People into being, this Leader(ship) has assumed the authority to define the People’s identity. This authority is similar to Foucault’s notion of power as knowledge: the

³⁹ They moved against the other leaders by signing the Anglo-Irish agreement in 1921 which created the partitioning of Ireland. The pro-treaty faction took control of the government in the Republic, and the anti-treaty faction under the command of Éamon De Valera took up arms against them. De Valera later became President of this very Republic.

Leader(ship) retains power so long as they retain the knowledge of who the People are. When this knowledge is lost, so too is the power, and the authority to define those People.

In the case of Northern Ireland, the Sinn Féin Leader(ship) attained power through embodied, masculine demonstrations of authenticity. This power was manifest in the authority to speak to and for the People and to command the People to engage in certain behaviors and performances. This is not unusual for society at war. “The subordination of the individual to the group is crucial to military success. Effective command in battle, which is both difficult and crucial, requires soldiers’ obedience.... The effective operation of the group depends on the ability of individuals to automatically obey commands, to follow directives without question” (Goldstein 2003). The Republican People were fighting a non-traditional war against the state. As such, soldiers, who directly obeyed the command of the Leader(ship) of the IRA Army Council and local battalion leaders, also relied upon the People to hide them, both symbolically (not reveal who the soldiers are when questioned, not engage in behaviors that would reveal their support for those soldiers publicly, provide emotional support to volunteers so they could continue the mission) and materially (literally hiding volunteers under the floorboards of the house, hiding guns in the walls, burning clothing used when bomb making, transporting weapons in clothing and baby prams). Though the command for such behavior was rarely, if ever, directly given by the Leader(ship) to the People to engage in such behavior, the People were manifesting an authority in the Leader(ship) by obeying the requests of the volunteers, who embodied authority at the moment of need. The People demonstrate a submission to the Leader(ship) when they demonstrate a submission to those who submit to the Leader(ship).

This is one of the major shifts in authority that has occurred in the post-war period in Belfast. During the time of war, there was a highly nuanced hierarchy of authority.

“Hierarchical social structures, found widely among animal species, use a layered system of dominant-subordinate status ranks...in which those nearer to the top received preferential access to scarce resources such as food.... These hierarchies [are] innately gendered” (Goldstein 203). The Army Council was the penultimate of Leader(ship). Of course, like other guerilla armies, knowledge of how the rest of the military hierarchy functioned has not been made public. It is clear that there were many levels of Leader(ship) based on geography of the volunteer unit. Food is not the scarce resource being vied for, however. In this case, it is authority and masculinity.

In the post-war period, however, authority has become concentrated only at the top of the pyramid. Though Irish politics are localized, the over-all policies of the Republican People are still determined and communicated from the top, primarily by Gerry Adams, Gerry Kelly and Martin McGuinness in Belfast. Though local votes happen, Gerry Adams is openly vocal about the way he would like the Republican People to vote. The message does not seem dialectical. The message is given as a command. Though consistent with the context from which Adams derived his authority, this communication structure is in opposition to the new, democratic context Sinn Féin has articulated. Though the Leader(ship) has continued to communicate in a hierarchical manner that is acceptable in war-time, the local military commanders and volunteers who gained access to the limited resource of masculine authority, are now expected to renounce all embodied authority and tow the party line. This feminizes the ex-volunteer by dis-embodimenting him/her and commanding her/him to follow unquestioningly, without accessing the proofs of masculinity (Goldstein 356).

These individuals are now a part of the People, with no access to any Leader(ship) authority, thus their authenticity as Republicans comes into question. They do not shape the

knowledge of identity, but instead must simply accept it. They are commanded to “glamorize” the memories of fallen volunteers, the stories of whom they have been commanded to find “instructive,” (Blair *et al* 9). These memories prescribe certain behaviors, by virtue of their being “instructive.” However, if one is denied the opportunity to enact those behaviors, then one has failed to fulfill the authentic Republican identity that these memories articulate. One has failed to “man-up.” Because gender is such a fundamental identity marker in Irish Republican society, one has failed at one of the most basic levels. Resentment of this failure will run not against the self, but against those who have denied the opportunity for this reenactment. This denial is a denial of agency, which, as previously mentioned, is a behavior associated with the state. These memories articulate what is “important, correct, normal, and so forth” (Blair *et al* 6). To not uphold these memories is to be abnormal, a trait unacceptable in hypermasculine discourses. Salient narratives already exist of touts, most often men, who have turned against the People and to the state. These are the touts who are shot, stripped, and left by the roadside. This public humiliation, particularly the stripping naked of the body, is strongly reminiscent of the public shaming of women who did not fulfill expected social roles. The tout is feminized and must be publicly shamed in order to gain back agency for the People. The tout becomes the scapegoat.

The People are denied an authenticity when they are denied agency to the authority gained from the reenactment of “instructive” memories. This denial of authenticity runs to the very core of Republican identity when the denial comes from the very Leader(ship) that the People had put “their faith in” (McGee 242). In some ways, the Sinn Féin Leader(ship) is disempowered because they were too successful at articulating an identity for themselves and the People that endowed them with authority initially.

Memory and identity

Identity is a term I have used throughout this chapter when referring to that which the People use to self-define, that which memories articulate and that which is in flux in Belfast at the moment. A concise definition of identity is remarkably difficult to find in contemporary rhetorical literature. Most authors leave it up to the reader to interpret the term and focus instead on analysis of identities rather than definitions thereof. Some scholars, like John Daniel Cash, equate identity to ideology and use the terms interchangeably. Though he provides an extensive discussion ideology, he does not develop the concept of identity fully, or its relationship to ideology. Even William F. Kelleher Jr., who provides superb analysis of Republican identity in his book, *The Troubles in Ballybogoin: Memory and Identity in Northern Ireland*, does not give a specific definition of identity.

Perhaps this is because, as Parekh argues, one must be careful when defining identity given that it often, like definitions of culture, becomes so broad as to include every attribute of a people (1). Identity is a concept that may not only be broad, but also carries quite different meanings in different areas of study, including differences within a single field. Clinical psychologists, for example, understand identity on an individual level as related to self-image, self-esteem and individuation (Leary & Tangney 3). Social psychologists, on the other hand, explore identity both at the individual and at the group level. Brubaker and Cooper even argue that one should throw out the concept of identity entirely, saying, “we take stock of the conceptual and theoretical work ‘identity’ is supposed to do and suggest that this work might be done better by other terms, less ambiguous, and unencumbered by the reifying connotations of ‘identity’” (1).

In contrast to Brubaker and Cooper, however, I would argue that the term identity is not *encumbered* with meaning, but is instead *rich* with meaning. The definition of identity I will rely upon is found in Máiréad Nic Craith's book, *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland*. She defines identity as "selected or inherited traits that define people or communities as certain kinds of individuals or groups. Cultural identities come into being through the ordering of cultural symbols and rituals" (Nic Craith 5). This definition seems particularly appropriate to this project on the development and transformation of Northern Irish Republican identity. For example, Nic Craith's "selected" traits point to the purposeful manner in which the "inherited" traits (i.e. constitutive public memories) function. Nic Craith's idea of "definition" indicates limitation to a group identity such that any one person is either in the group, or an outsider. Historically, Republican communities have been closed, local communities where trust is predicated upon reputation and availability of retribution if communal norms are transgressed.

This understanding of identity fits well with Blair *et al*'s work on public memory. Blair *et al* argue that memory provides "a symbolic connection with the group and a sense of belonging to it" (9). In other words, memory "forwards an at least momentarily definitive articulation of the group" (9). This mirrors Nic Craith's notion that identity provides a group definition. Blair *et al*'s idea that memories are "partial [and] partisan" and that some "secure more collective attachment than others" (18) agrees with Nic Craith's notion that identity is selective. Public memory, articulated through narratives (both symbolic and material), define an identity for the Leader(ship) and the People from which authenticity, and subsequent authority, is derived. The memories have not changed. There is disagreement over whether or not the context has changed. Thus, what the present purpose is for which these memories must be

deployed depends upon the rhetor, and whether or not they are able to speak to the political myths that are salient with those who retain the identity of the People.

Chapter 3

Northern Irish Republican History

I have specifically titled this section *Northern* Irish Republican history because, although Northern Ireland has been in existence for less than 60 years, the history of those 60 years is significantly different to those who would call themselves Republicans in the South of the island. Thus, while the early history of Republicanism in Ireland would be the same on both sides of the border, the understanding of an oppositional identity is unique to the contemporary Northern identity because of the material presence of both the British and Loyalist opposition.

Republicanism in Ireland

The intellectual basis for Republicanism stretches back to the philosophies of Aristotle and early Athenian democracy. At its most basic, Republicanism is understood to be “the form of government in which power rests with the people instead of a monarch” (Honohan 7). Within this power there is an obligation to balance individuals’ needs and their inevitable interdependence, though these interests sometimes are contradictory. This basic need for government is to regulate the “common interests [which] are easier to overlook and therefore more vulnerable than individual interests” (Honohan 7). This need is predicated upon a belief in the importance of freedom, which “is understood as a political achievement, not a natural

possession of individuals” (Honohan 7). As a result, the laws of the political structure mandate and mold freedom. Freedom can only be achieved through active citizenship, which requires both “civic virtue and political participation” (Honohan 7).

Tomás Ó Fiach contends that the seeds of Republicanism were being sewn in Ireland as early as 1627. At the time there were only two republics of note in Europe: France and Spain. Some individuals, especially those residing in Spain, which was England’s enemy at the time, wished Ireland to become the third. Initially, the idea of setting up a republic was only used strategically to stop two Irish generals, the earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, from making contrary claims to an all-Ireland throne.

Though the 1641 uprising against England failed, primarily because of poor planning and inadequate Spanish support, it did create ties between revolutionary violence and Republican ideals that continue to exist in Republicanism’s modern manifestations. Ireland’s relationship with Spain thus had proven profitable both to the budding Republicans in Dublin and to the Spanish government. Spain received able bodied men to train and have fight on their behalf in the Thirty Years War (Ó Fiach 27). For Dublin “by the 1620’s...there was available to Ireland something which she had never previously possessed in her history—a body of a few thousand professional soldiers, trained in the best European army of the day, tested in numerous engagements and still linked by close ties to the homeland” (Ó Fiach 27).

Ó Fiach makes a very strong case for the ideals of Irish Republicanism existing as early as the 17th century. However, most would argue, and to some degree Ó Fiach concedes, that the Father of Irish Republicanism is truly Theobald Wolfe Tone. Tone declared in his November 1798 court martial hearing that, “From my earliest youth I have regarded the connexion between

Ireland and Great Britain as the cure of the Irish nation; and have felt convinced that whilst it lasted this country could never be free nor happy” (Bartlett 38). Much like Sinn Féin two hundred years later, Wolfe Tone argued for a “new Ireland”⁴⁰ divorced from England’s control. That said, Tone’s version of Republicanism looks very different from the articulations of today. He didn’t necessarily support an independent Ireland, but rather one that was simply not controlled by England. Some writers have argued that what he actually wanted was for Ireland to become a French military colony where most of the oppressive laws in place would remain, but that they would be enforced by a new government (Bartlett 39). Though Tone was a Protestant Anglo-Irishman,⁴¹ he did encourage religious freedom for Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter, which remains a tenant of contemporary Republicanism.

I argue that Tone’s most important contribution to the Irish Republican lineage was his development of the language of Republicanism. As Bartlett points out “Republicanism since the sixteenth century, in the word of one commentator, was ‘more of a language than a programme,’ and the vocabulary had been one of protest, of resistance to tyrants, and of rooting out corruption and instilling (and installing) civic virtue” (41). Republicanism is inherently a rhetorical phenomenon. Though splinter groups from Tone’s time to the present day may violently disagree about the manifestation of Republicanism in policies and institutions, these groups tend to use the same language and deploy the same visual symbols while arguing for, at times, oppositional interpretations of Republicanism. Bartlett continues, “If there was little agreement among republicans on the precise form of republican government, there was universal

⁴⁰ Often referred to as “Éire Nua” by Sinn Féin, which is the Irish for “a new Ireland.”

⁴¹ The Protestant Anglo-Irish were in control of Ireland at the time, with backing from England. The Anglo-Irish enforced the Penal Laws, which “continued to deny political and religious rights to the emerging Catholic and dissenter middle classes...[which was] combined with government restrictions on Irish,” the language of the lower classes (Ó Broin 20).

recognition of the spirit which ought to infuse it” (41). I would argue that this “spirit” is not an essence but rather recognized simply through the repeated deployment of Burkean God terms⁴² such as “tyrant,” “freedom,” “sacrifice,” and “equality.”

One of the most popular early tropes of Unionism also arose during Tone’s time, this being the idea of England as mother and Ireland “being cast in the role of dependent child. Implicit in this child-colony/mother-country relationship was the threat that the ‘child’ would one day grow up and seek independence and separation” (Bartlett 43). This metaphor not only infantilizes the Irish population, but it also provides a powerful feminine figure in the form of England. This is no surprise given that countries are typically referred to as feminine figures that should be loved as a mother and fiercely defended as an innocent, pure lover. This image of commanding mother provides possibilities for the feminist imaginary, albeit through the oppressive power of colonialism. Unfortunately, equating oppression with the feminine also creates the need for the infantilized population to reclaim its masculinity through the subjugation of this femininity. This feminine image is later appropriated by the leaders of the Easter 1916 rebellion in their drafting of the founding document for modern Irish Republicanism, the 1916 Proclamation.

One way to understand the different material articulations of the similar symbolic deployments of Republicanism is to classify Republicanism into “institutional” and “revolutionary” (Livesey 50). These two instantiations are often at odds given that “the institutional sister can be something of an old maid and the revolutionary is almost impossible to understand. Moreover, the revolutionary is the elder sibling; in the final analysis, she defines the

⁴² Burke identifies “god terms” as those vague, but powerful ideals for which one is expected to make sacrifices (Grammar 24). These terms bear significant resemblance to those stable political myths that McGee identifies as being powerful enough to create a People.

meaning of republicanism. It is difficult to give a precise meaning to this variety of republicanism because, unlike other ideologies, it is not grounded in a tradition of political theory, but in a political event” (Livesey 50). This precise tension between dependent, yet, oppositional, Republicanisms can be seen manifest in Sinn Féin’s attempt to straddle the divide between the two.

The language of revolution articulated by Wolfe Tone was carried through the nineteenth century by Daniel O’Connell, Charles Gavan Duffy, John Blake Dillon, Thomas Osborne Davis, Jane Elgee, Mary Ann Kelly, Margaret Callan, and John Mitchell. They were all prolific writers who contributed to such newspapers as *The Nation*, *United Irishmen*, *The Phoenix* and *The Irish People* (Metscher 63-6). Often these contributions were made in the form of poetry or songs that could be spoken or sung in pubs and social clubs around the island. Poetry and songs were far more accessible to the entire population during the time period when Ireland’s literacy rate was not as high as it is today. Thus, the language of revolution spread rather quickly and became part of the everyday articulations of the population. The tradition of revolutionary music, or rebel tunes, continues to this day.

For example, the popular “rebel tune”⁴³ *A Nation Once Again*, written in the early 1840’s by Republican Thomas Davis, is a song that has served as a Republican rallying cry since its creation. The song’s chorus is:

“A Nation once again,

A Nation once again,

⁴³ The colloquial name of the genre of music that celebrates Irish action against the English. Rebel tunes are predominantly sung in Republican pubs when one is well into a night of drinking. There are Irish singers and bands most well known for their recording of rebel tunes, the most notable of these being the Wolfe Tones. I had the privilege of seeing and meeting the Wolfe Tones in Liverpool, England in the winter of 2008. They ended their set with “A Nation Once Again.” The entire audience stood up, cheering, and sang along.

And Ireland, long a province, be
A Nation once again!”

This tune is a standard in pub singing session. When I was in Ireland in the summer of 2002, the local Republicans were organizing a campaign to have the song voted the world’s most popular in a BBC World Service poll. The object was to strike at the symbolic heart of British global power. The Irish Republicans were successful and the BBC named the song as the world’s most popular (bbc.co.uk *World’s*).

The eighteenth century also saw the birth of secret societies in Ireland, including the United Irishmen. The society was initially interested in reform of the government, which was “a parliament unrepresentative of the interests of the propertied classes and supported by colonial power in London” (Ó Broin 22). However, once the government outlawed the society, broke up meetings and jailed members, the society moved “from reform to revolution” (Ó Broin 25). This is a tactic that Republicans continued to use throughout the Troubles. The governmental oppression of that which was articulated as “moderate” led to the justification for radicalism. Thus, the shooting of peaceful Civil Rights marchers in Derry on Bloody Sunday (30 January 1972) led to one of the most successful IRA recruitment drives in its history. The United Irishmen, led by Wolfe Tone, organized an uprising in 1798. “By the end of the summer [of 1798] the death-toll on both sides, from various causes, had been estimated at 30,000.... The post-rebellion retribution by the state ...[equaled] 231 sentences of death, 240 transportations of local leaders, 24 executions and 12 imprisonments” (Ó Broin 26). Ultimately, the United Irishmen “were not wedded to separatism as a matter of principle, but rather as a matter of circumstance. For them Catholic emancipation was the end goal, and by the mid 1870’s separatism appeared the best route by which to achieve it” (Ó Broin 27).

The United Irishmen are alleged to have planned their rebellion in Belfast at Kelly Cellars Pub. This pub is located in the city centre, a historically neutral area where middle class peoples shop and drink. Kelly Cellars, however, celebrates its overtly Republican heritage, proclaiming itself a memory place for tourists (Blair *et al* 35). Most “Troubles tourism” began in Belfast only after the Good Friday Agreements made it “safe” for tourists to travel through the areas where the conflict was most pronounced (e.g Falls Road and the Shankill Road). Parts of Belfast still “in conflict,” such as Ardoyne, have not opened themselves up to tourism in the same way. It seems as though Kelly Cellars is arguing that it is not a site up for negotiation. It has bracketed off its past as something to be “remembered” but not present. There are no pictures of Gerry Adams or even of the IRB, which was the next significant instantiation of Republican organization on the island following the United Irishmen.



Image 1
Photo by author

The Irish Republican Brotherhood, the forerunner to the IRA, was founded by the Fenians. Though initially founded in America under the name of the Fenian Brotherhood, the IRB established its Irish wing on St. Patrick's Day of 1858 (Metscher 66). "The leaders of the Fenian movement, both in the [United] States and Ireland, were lower middle-class intellectuals, but the bulk of the movement was recruited from the rural and urban working classes" (Metscher 66). The Fenians managed to couple "an appeal to agrarian discontent with the demand for legislative independence...[to result in] a powerful mixture. Both the English government and the Irish middle-class interests were at stake. To make matters worse the deliberate secularism of the Fenians was certain to alienate the Catholic Church (Ó Broin 45). Though the Fenians suffered from a lack of arms and experienced soldiers, they did create the ideological groundwork for the present Republican movement. "The IRB continued in existence, albeit in clandestine form, for another 50 years, and played a key part in the emerging nationalist movement for Home Rule and the late nineteenth-century Gaelic cultural revival through to the 1916 Rising" (Ó Broin 46).

The nineteenth century also saw the beginning of a second discourse that would become increasingly important to the Republican identity: socialism and labor rights. Legislation was introduced into the Irish parliament in the 1730's banning Irish labor unions. These bans were overturned in Westminster in 1824 in an attempt to decrease the workplace tension that was escalating in Ireland. The opposite happened, and instead of taking the momentum from labor organizers, it inspired greater movement. "By the 1840s protection for indigenous industry became a key plank of nationalist political rhetoric, and business and labor once again shared key strategic goals" (Ó Broin, 59). Nationalism became a discourse that linked many Republicans of

the Fenian movement to Labor organizers and workers.⁴⁴ Though debates about socialism were present among Dublin's elite in 1886, "it wasn't until 1887 that socialist ideas began to take on a more organized, political form" (Ó Broin 66). That "form" was the Irish Socialist Republican Party.

This party "wanted to actively engage with the working class through campaigns and electoral interventions and to attempt to formulate a meaningful connection between the politics of Irish republicanism and the then dominant European social democratic project" (Ó Broin 85). Their leader, James Connolly, is a massively important figure in Irish Republican politics, both North and South of the border. Connolly "focused on mobilizing unskilled workers into large general unions, determined to use their collective strength and radical strike action to secure improvements in working conditions and pay" (Ó Broin 89-90). Ultimately Connolly could not create electoral success for the party. Strikes were violently ended and labor leaders were jailed. Simultaneously "mass mobilization and militarization through the IRB-inspired Irish Volunteers" began and after the British became distracted by the outbreak of World War I, the Irish Volunteers mounted the 1916 rebellion (Ó Broin 91).

Though the rising was not a military success, the extraordinary brutality with which the British responded to it led the tide of public opinion ultimately to swing in the rebels' favor. In 1918, the majority of the Irish populace voted for Sinn Féin in the general election and in 1919,

⁴⁴ A word of caution here: "Left republicanism is a distinctly modern phenomenon in Irish politics. Despite various attempts by historians and activists to retrospectively read a socialist republican content into eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century radical Irish politics, the reality is that until the formation of the Irish Socialist Republican Party in 1896 no ideological or organizational formation combining these two positions existed. However, this is not to imply that left republicanism has no origins in eighteenth or nineteenth-century Ireland. Clearly, it does" (Ó Broin 72). Ó Broin goes on to argue that the language and themes (which he describes as "currents") of later socialist republicanism comes from this period.

the meeting of the first Dáil⁴⁵ declared Ireland's independence from the United Kingdom. The Irish fought a war of independence against Britain from 1919 until 1921, when the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty created the "Free State," comprised of the 26 counties that today constitute the Republic of Ireland and "Northern Ireland" from the remaining 6 counties in the North. This was referred to as partition. From 28 June 1922 until 24 May 1923, the Irish fought a bitter civil war over whether or not to accept the Treaty and cede the 6 counties of the North to the British. Ultimately, the pro-treaty faction won, led by Michael Collins. On 29 December 1937, the Irish Constitution declares the Free State Éire. On 21 December, 1948, the Free State is officially declared the Republic of Ireland, abolishing any remaining claim the British monarchy has to the 26 counties (Madden).

For Republicans, this history is told within a narrative of a much longer history that precedes Tone's rhetoric. This narrative articulates an identity that is oppositional to different parties at different historical periods.

Republican oppositional identity and the Northern Irish conflict

Balthrop advanced the claim that, in Northern Ireland, Republican and Loyalist identities are created through a Burkean dialectic of merger and division (20).⁴⁶ The history of the Irish

⁴⁵ The Irish Parliament

⁴⁶ While Burke considers the notion of dialectics throughout *Permanence and Change* and *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke first gives prominence on the notion of dialectics in his text *A Grammar of Motives*. Early in this text Burke equates dramatism with dialectics, saying, "'Dialectic substance' would thus be the over-all category of dramatism, which treats of human motives in the terms of verbal action. By this statement we most decidedly do not mean that human motives are confined to the realm of verbal action. We mean rather that the dramatic analysis of motives has its *point of departure* in the subject of verbal action (in thought, speech and document)" (*Grammar* 33). Specifically, "the dialectical considers things in terms not of some other, but of the other" (*Grammar* 33). Burke divides dialectics into three subheadings: merger-division, three major pairs (action-passion, mind-body and being-nothing), and transcendence. The first is the merger-division dialectic, which "are clearly apparent in any system of *classification*, be they the formal and explicit classifications of the sciences or the

conflict demonstrates just how entrenched this dialectical relationship is in the identity of the modern Republican and Loyalist populations. Since at least 1100, England has considered Ireland to be an island of enduring conflict which God has burdened England with the responsibility of bringing peace. These sentiments became especially pronounced in the 1540s when England moved toward Protestantism and viewed Catholic Ireland as a security threat at its “back door” (Smith 25). Thus, in the 1600s England provided Scottish and English Protestants with great tracts of land in Ireland for plantation in an effort to diffuse Irish Catholicism. Though Ireland up to this point had a rich history of diversity in religion and nationality, the arrival of the planters caused the Irish Catholics to turn inwards and fiercely defend a “native” Irish identity (Smith 27). Planters found themselves outnumbered and surrounded by a seemingly hostile Catholic population, causing a “nervous defensiveness amongst the settlers” (Smith 27).

The dialectic at this point was framed in terms of planter/native and Protestant/Catholic. Sectarian violence broke out with increasing frequency, as native Irish turned on the planters “in a violent attempt to reclaim their land” (Smith 27). Protestant planters developed an understanding of Catholics as “treacherous, vengeful, covetous of Protestant land and eager to reclaim Ireland for the Pope. A Catholic stereotype entered the Protestant/settler mind-set that has helped to shape Protestant attitudes and define their own identity ever since” (Smith 27).

classificatory structure implicit in the ‘equations’ of a poem” (*Grammar* 417). Burke harkens back to Socrates’ “Phaedrus” for an understanding of merger (“the comprehension of scattered particulars in one idea”), which Socrates also refers to as “generalization” and division (“the dialectician must learn to carve an idea at the joints, ‘not breaking any part as a bad carver might’”) (*Grammar* 403). Burke notes that Kant conceived of the dialectic as “homogeneity” and “specification” (*Grammar* 404) and Bell labeled the dialectic as “continuity” and “discreteness” (*Grammar* 405). Kant argued that “continuity” was not one of the two opposing terms of the dialectic but rather a third term that functions as both homogeneity and specification, whereby one moment may be, paradoxically, a moment of both unity and division (*Grammar* 405). The principle of merger-division is evident in each of the three major pairs of dialectics, which “generalize the first major steps usually taken towards the localizing of identity” (*Grammar* 418). Each pair relates to other familial concepts, which may be substituted in other contexts. For example, faith-knowledge may be substituted for mind-body and peace-war for action-passion.

The Catholic Irish responded to these stereotypes by maintaining narratives of Irish history that proved them to be anything but crude, unlearned and cowardly. “It was the English insistence that Ireland was a barbarous country which drove the Irish to construct, so as to sustain their own pride, a romantic and consoling counter-image, in which ancient Ireland was displayed as a land of saints and scholars, warlike but chivalrous Celtic heroes, and monks of great learning and Christian zeal, the whole island a light in a dark world” (O’Farrell 4). Importantly, the counter image driven by Catholic articulations of Irish history was created *in response* to Protestant images of Catholic identity.

These stories of Irish virtue were articulated around the implicit notion that it was the English Protestants who were oppressing this culture and were, therefore, uncivilized and uncouth. These myths developed into a very explicit political agenda: “nationalism came to Ireland and found within the Catholic culture a rich seam of ancient myths and folk memories that could be galvanized into an historic right for Ireland to rule itself” (Smith 31). These myths are still deployed to argue for continued Irish resistance to Protestant influence in government and society. Thus the dialectical construction of identity then was extended into mutually exclusive, dialectical agendas for political action. Though the terms “Unionist” and “Republican” were not yet solidified at this historical juncture, these are the political titles that the communities eventually developed for themselves. The dialectical terms were therefore planter/native, Protestant/Catholic and Unionist/Republican.

The Catholic communal identity was developed in opposition to the Protestant identity (Balthrop *British* 20). The Catholic identity was also developed strategically to divide the community from the stereotype that Protestants imposed on their population. Simultaneously, the Protestant identity developed in opposition to the understanding of Catholic identity that

Protestants had developed. These communities continue to engage in this process of internal merging and conscious division from the opposition's identity. Ironically, however, the very process of communal merging required identification and cooperation with the opposition. In order for the Catholic identity to develop around the idea of a self-ruled Ireland, Ireland had to be not self-ruled. Protestants provided (or imposed) the lack of self-rule for the Irish and thus cooperated in the merging of the Catholic community.

This Republican identity was manifested in several communal institutions, one of the most powerful being the IRA paramilitary organizations that enacted this merger/division dialectic in extreme, often violent, performances. The Fenian movement originated on St. Patrick's Day 1858 with the formation of the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood) by James Stephens and Thomas Clarke Luby. They were organized into cells, based in Parishes around the country. Members of the IRB were banned from joining any other organization and were sworn to secrecy. In 1916, IRB members participated in the Easter Uprising, including Michael Collins and Thomas Ashe, who later went around the country enlisting volunteers. In 1917 the IRB joined with Sinn Féin, seeing it as the only other organization that might be successful in helping to form a united Ireland. The two organizations "pursued separate though complementary courses of action" (Coogan 24). After the first meeting of the Dáil, Michael Collins, president of the IRB, declared his organization the Army of the Irish Republic, leading to the use of the nomenclature: IRA (*Oglaigh na hEireann*) (Coogan).

For several years the Irish fought a War of Independence, also known as the Anglo-Irish conflict (January 1919 to July 1921). In 1920, King George V introduced the Government of Ireland Act, which set up the partition and was accepted by Irish negotiators on December 6th,

1921.⁴⁷ The IRA at this point was low in arms and recruits, with little power to stop or protest the partition in an effective manner. The late 1920's saw the IRA regroup and carry out a number of violent operations, while Britain responded by sending veterans from World War I to Ireland to assist the police, which they did in a notoriously brutal fashion. The 1930's to 50's saw upsurges and quelling of violence in regular tides. From 1956 to 1962 the IRA fought a brutal, but ultimately futile, border campaign, attacking military and police posts on the border between the Republic and the North (Coogan).

In the 1960's the IRA lent its support to the Civil Rights movement,⁴⁸ which ended without making any significant gains for the Catholic populations, though support grew significantly for the IRA after Bloody Sunday in Derry. Activities during this time included bombings, punishment beatings, and robberies among other activities (Moloney). During this time, factions began to split from the IRA into such groups as the Provisional IRA (PIRA) and The Irish National Liberation Army (INLA). The most important of these splinter groups was the PIRA, known also as the Provos, who began acting as the major IRA instantiation from their split in 1969. Their prominence continued until the announcement of ceasefire, disarmament, engagement with the peace process and ultimately a declaration of the end of the war in 2005. The British used a variety of counter insurgency efforts to break the PIRA, including the

⁴⁷Collins, from the pro-treaty faction, argued that accepting a 26 county state from the British was a legitimate "stepping stone" to the ideal 32-county republic. The anti-treaty faction argued that they should hold out until the British conceded all 32 counties back to the country of Ireland. When the pro-treaty factions returned to Ireland, having signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty, Eamonn De Valera resigned as the President of the Irish Free State in protest.

⁴⁸ The Civil Rights Association tried to not have the IRA exert influence over it since it claimed to be non-partisan and presented their issues in terms of civil rights and not in terms of a United Ireland. It is also the case that some of the very early leaders of the Civil Rights Movement were Protestants. It was the Loyalist/Unionist community and politicians that accused the Civil Rights Movement of being a front for the IRA.

torturing of prisoners, the internment of suspected republicans and the removal of political prisoner status (Coogan).

In 1994 the PIRA called a ceasefire, releasing a statement avowing:

"Recognizing the potential of the current situation and in order to enhance the democratic process and underlying our definitive commitment to its success, the leadership of the IRA have decided that as of midnight, August 31, there will be a complete cessation of military operations. All our units have been instructed accordingly." (Sinn Féin *IRA*)

The ceasefire was broken in 1996, but reinstated in 1997. "Dissension within the IRA over support for the Northern Ireland peace process resulted in the formation of two more radical splinter groups: Continuity IRA in 1995 and the Real IRA in 1997.... In July 2002, the [P]IRA reiterated its commitment to the peace process and apologized to the families of what it called 'non-combatants' who had been killed or injured by the [P]IRA" (Federation of American Scientists). The PIRA were actively committed to the progression of peace in the North. They supported the signing of the Good Friday Agreements in 1998, decommissioned weapons in front of neutral third parties and in 2005, announced a complete cessation of hostilities.

Most of the paramilitary organizations that were born of IRA splits (RIRA, CIRA, INLA, etc) have been relatively inactive in recent years, with significant infiltration by the Gardai⁴⁹ and MI-5 and MI-6.⁵⁰ Internal factors also played a large part in making splinter groups ineffective. Internal feuding and the direction of primary resources toward drug smuggling and money

⁴⁹ The Republic of Ireland's police force. The official name of the organization is *An Garda Síochána* (<http://www.garda.ie/>)

⁵⁰ The abbreviation of "Military Intelligence, Section 5" which denotes the British Security Service. MI-6 (Military Intelligence, Section 6) is the Secret Service wing of the British National intelligence structure. MI-5 focuses on domestic counter-terrorism and intelligence gathering. MI-6 is responsible for international counter-terrorism and intelligence gathering.

laundering diluted the groups' effectivity. These groups were generally considered unimportant until March of 2009 when the RIRA killed two British soldiers at Massereene army base in County Antrim. The following day, the CIRA killed a police officer in Craigavon, County Armagh. Since these killings there have been increased numbers of viable bombs left at public targets.

On February 22, 2010, a Republican group, unknown at the time of writing, detonated a 250 lb. car-bomb in Newry, County Armagh. Police cordoned off the street but did not remove the getaway car that was found a few blocks away. The police intended to gather forensic evidence from this car. Two days later, Republicans walked up to this car and simply drove it away prompting the leader of the Traditional Unionist Voice party to state, "The fact that it could be removed is not just embarrassing but a telling indication of who really controls South Armagh, evidently, not the PSNI" (Belfast Telegraph *Missing*). Some now wonder if the Troubles are coming back to Northern Ireland.

Nationalism and language

It is common to draw a distinction between Nationalists and Republicans in Northern Ireland. Broadly speaking, Irish nationalism refers to those who hold a particular love for the Irish nation and Irish culture. Nationalists do not necessarily desire a particular political formation and, though Nationalists want the British presence in Ireland reduced, they don't necessarily favor complete succession from the United Kingdom. Republicans demand a complete British withdraw from Ireland. They are committed to achieving, by various means, a 32-county socialist,⁵¹ democratic Republic. Though there is a long history of physical force

⁵¹ The level of socialism varies by group. Éirígí is very committed to socialism while Sinn Féin is decreasingly so.

Republicanism, one does not necessarily have to support violence to be a Republican. As one South Armagh Republican put it, “nationalism is a commitment to the recognition of being Irish while Republicanism is a commitment to an independent Irish 32 county state free of foreign control or dominance” (Interview *Hunt*). One is an identity (*being* Irish) and one is a political project (Watson 67). The latter commitment is predicated on the former identity in the Irish Republican context. All Northern Irish Republicans are Nationalists, but not all Nationalists are Republicans.

Theoretically, there is a significant difference between Republicanism and Nationalism. The Republican worldview moves away from both the liberal and nationalist perspectives. “A republic is a political community of those who have not necessarily chosen one another, but have grown together historically, who share a wide range of reiterated interdependencies and the possibility of collectively shaping their future. This kind of interdependence often results from subjugation to a common authority: the republican hope is that the people can assume such authority themselves” (Honohan 21). Honohan points to the importance of ritual in both the past and the future as grounds for Republican interdependency. The reiteration not only of values, but the manifestation of those values in actions and institutions, mutually create the grounding for commonality. In Republican communities during the Troubles, the IRA remained the authority under which most citizens⁵² operated. Now that the IRA has officially declared a permanent cessation of hostilities and authority has transferred to the Sinn Féin leadership, which

⁵² I believe most Republicans would have considered themselves to be citizens of the imagined, potential Republic during this time. The IRA Army Council had inherited the authority of the Republic’s Leader(ship) from the second Dáil, the last all-Ireland body elected before partition, and therefore the only legitimate authority to speak on behalf of the people of Ireland. Thus the IRA Army Council was the primary authoritative body for those communities who endorsed the collective narrative of the Republic superseding the illegitimate nation-state boundaries of Northern Ireland. Complications arose for this narrative in 1986, when the last surviving member of the 1918-1919 Dáil, Tom McGuire, endorsed Ruairi O’Bradaigh’s split from Sinn Féin and the PIRA to form Republican Sinn Féin and the Continuity IRA. McGuire vested O’Bradaigh’s groups with Republican authority, not Sinn Féin’s (Tonge 115).

ostensibly represents the Republican people in a more democratic way than the Army Council could, due to the conditions of war, Sinn Féin is working to more directly manifest power in the people.

However, to transfer this authority from a centralized, non-democratic council that could not be reasonably questioned without undermining the all-important war effort, to a democratically elected, dialogue-based group of much the same faces has left some significant unease. This disquiet exists among both the “common citizen” and the members of the Army who held their military role as fundamental to their gender performance and social role for upwards of fifty years. This regimented identity articulated an identity that could survive jail, isolation, threat of death, and extreme hardship. The process of creating a sense of commonality in a democratic society is extremely difficult, while the Leader(ship) is attempting to claim authority both from its People who are opposed to the state, and from the state itself. It is no easy task to validate a common identity when the rituals of the Republican People were based on significant power hierarchies and were inherently antithetical to the goals of the state since its inception.

The concept of the nation for the Leader(ship) has become a more complicated notion in the last ten years. The trope of fighting for the nation of Ireland was a strong motivating notion with significant cultural capital during the war. It was a common ideal around which soldiers could develop camaraderie. However, in peacetime, cooperation with those who are fundamentally opposed to the imagined nation of a Republican Ireland is essential to the development of the very same Republic. Furthermore, the Leader(ship) is arguing for the creation of that nation by way of the state, which the Republican people view as the primary blockade to the self-determining Republic for which they fought the war. This creates

significant cognitive dissonance and a level of rational contradiction that becomes hard to overcome among the people whose steadfast commitment to a singular national ideal created the conditions for a successful war campaign.

In broader, global terms, not all Republicans are nationalists. “While republicanism and nationalism are often closely associated, they have conceptually distinct bases. Republicanism is based on interdependence rather than commonality. By contrast, the key feature of nationality is a sense of a common identity; whether based on ethnic, cultural or linguistic grounds, this is often rooted in an ‘imagined community’, and does not intrinsically require interdependence in practices between co-nationals” (Honohan 21). While this may be the case in general theories of Republicanism and Nationalist, it is not the case for Irish Republicans. Republican rhetoric does emphasize a commonality with Loyalists and Unionist⁵³ people in the North. However, those identities remain the “other” that, while accommodated in the Irish state, aren’t necessarily the People of the imagined Irish nation. Even among the various Republican splits, there remains a common sense of Irish identity that is, at least partially, constructed on ethnic, cultural and linguistic grounds.

Republican volunteers and communities are fighting to reclaim a pre-colonized nation, which was Irish in nature. Debates around the reclamation and promotion of the Irish language in the North exhibit these clashes, which reveal fundamentally different conceptions of Irish identity. However, while it is easy to determine who does *not* have the authority to determine the North’s fate in Republican eyes (the British), it is much more difficult to determine who *does*

⁵³ Each of these identities is equally complex and nuanced. Though I do not examine these identities at length in this project, this is not to suggest that these are stable rhetorical concepts.

have the authority to rule in peacetime (Irish speakers, war heroes, local leaders, national figures, etc).

Republicans are currently debating the best way to value the cultural rituals that defined their community and identity while not overvaluing the perceived commonality that necessarily prevents people from taking their place in the Republic. Republicans have no rational qualms about women having a firm place in the development of the Republic. However, what role the increasing Polish immigrant population might play becomes more difficult when one considers that the notion of interdependence is perceived of as predicated upon a long-term investment in the nation. “There are now many new ethnic groups in Ireland and many minority languages spoken by thousands of people. As Irish identity changes and is constructed in the presence of increasing diversity, it will be interesting to see if the symbolic significance of the Irish language for Irish identity will continue to be a factor in the survival of the language” (Watson 74). When communal identity is for so long defined as oppositional and exclusive for security reasons, it becomes more difficult to decide how to incorporate those peoples who do not cut a cross-section in a community’s identity but rather may simply occasionally bump up against very particular tropes of language and geography.

Language is a particularly interesting trope for Irish Republicans and Nationalists. Though the use of Irish came into prominence in the contemporary Republican movement in the jails in the 1970’s, the language had existed in a Nationalist discourse long before this time. Like most languages with a long written tradition, Irish has been divided into different periods: Old Irish (600-900AD), Middle Irish (900-1200), Early Modern Irish (1200-1650), and the Modern Period (1650-present) (Ó hUiginn 5). “Up to the Early Modern Irish period, Irish was the language of the vast majority of the people of the island and much of its literature was written

under the patronage of an independent aristocracy” (Ó hUiginn 8). However, with the Tutor conquest in the 17th century, the members of the Irish independent aristocracy who did not flee the country lost almost all of their power and money and with it the ability to patronize Irish writing. “Plantation introduced English-speaking settlers and English now became the language of administration.... [Irish] was fast becoming the language of the social underclass, a position it had reached by the eve of the Great Famine” (8). During the Great Famine, it was, of course, the poor who suffered the most. Great numbers of Irish speakers therefore either died or were forced to leave the country through emigration.

The language was well in decline by the time of the signing of the Act of Union with Britain in 1801. By the mid 1800’s, Irish was on its way to extinction. “The language revival movement established in the final quarter of the century ensured that this did not happen. Initially the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, and later the more sustained pressure of the expanding Gaelic League, succeeded in eliciting from the state a more permissive response to demands that Irish be given a presence in the state-supported education system (Ó Tuathaigh 26). This pressure was aided in 1904 by explicitly Nationalist politicians in Maynooth, which is one of the first formal ties between Nationalist politics and the language (Ó Tuathaigh 27). When the Free State was founded with partition, a major goal of the new Dublin government was to reestablish Irish as the working language of the people (Ó Tuathaigh 27). The government went about accomplishing their goal through the education system by providing financial reward for the teaching classes in Irish. By 1941, 55% of schools were teaching at least some classes in Irish. However, by the 1960’s the government had abandoned this plan because of political opposition. The dearth was filled by the opening of *gaelscoileanna* (all-Irish language schools) in Dublin, increasing in the 70’s and 80’s and most pronouncedly in the 90’s.

Interestingly, the Irish National Teachers Organization and the Catholic Church were both opposed to *gaelscoileanna* because they threatened the status quo of school and pupil distribution (Mac Gabhann 101-5).

Gaelscoileanna were usually tied to a specific *Gaeltacht*. A *Gaeltacht* was originally a communication network of Irish-speaking people. Presently it refers to geographical locations in Ireland where Irish is the primary language of at least 50% of the population. These areas are designated by the government to receive special grants and support from the *Bord na Gaelige* among other bodies. Many originally saw Irish as an obstacle to material advancement, especially the men who had to seek work overseas as laborers (Ò Laoire 47-50). Residual impacts of this bias remain in everyday practices. For example, most Irish speakers speak in English when they meet a stranger because they assume that the stranger doesn't understand Irish. What this results in is a diminished interest for tourists, decreased economic stimulation for the *Gaeltacht* areas, and the sentiment in political circles that Irish is a private language (Ní Chinnéide 38-40).

While this would seem to indicate that Irish is in serious danger of disappearing all together, in 2002 1.57 million of the 3.9 million population of the South stated that they could speak Irish and 21% said that they used it on a daily basis. 78% were of school-going age. Since Irish has now become a working language of the EU, all street signs in the South, government letterhead, etc. can be bilingual and are not permitted to only be in English. If English is included on the road sign, the font of the English cannot be larger than the Irish (Kelly-Holmes 218-19). The state in the south continued to support Irish through the education system. Indeed, the Republic of Ireland continues Irish as a mandatory subject to this day.

However, in the North, the language has met with greater resistance. “In Northern Ireland the insistence of its unionist majority on asserting the essential Britishness of their heritage resulted in the exclusion of any acknowledgement of the Irish language from the official culture or politics of the Northern State” (Ó Tuathaigh 28). This was deeply problematic for the Irish nationalist minority, who viewed the language as an important part of their ethnic identity, “though it was generally viewed by the state as a predictable aspect of a general Catholic stance of cultural dissent” (Ó Tuathaigh 28). Thus, from the very inception of the state, the Irish language has been intricately tied to a sense of identity. The language was a representation and the use of it a performance of difference and opposition.

The language was seen as specifically oppositional because of the long standing link of “Irish language to Irish identity.... Irishness was constructed in contrast to Englishness. The image of Englishness against which Irishness was constructed was of Protestant people living in cities, playing sports like rugby, football (soccer) and cricket speaking English. The Irish idyll was a rural, Catholic society playing sports like (Gaelic) football and hurling⁵⁴ and speaking Irish” (Watson 66). The Irish language became an important part of the Irish identity, which was “a base on which the argument or project of political independence was constructed” (Watson 67).

Ò Mianàin agrees that speaking Irish is indeed a question of identity, but says that this is not unique because “here [in Belfast], everything is a question of identity” (116). Protestants in particular have a complicated relationship with this trope of “Irishness.” Before the Troubles

⁵⁴ Gaelic Football and hurling are known as the two national sports of Ireland. They are “revived and nurtured” by the Gaelic Athletic Association, a national body committed to the preservation and advancement of “the national pastimes” (www.gaa.ie). They play an important part in creating local community identity, since the teams are all locally based. At the national level, hurling and Gaelic (as it is colloquially known) are still played by amateurs, representing their county.

began, 20% of Protestants identified themselves as Irish. In 2000, only 3% of Protestants considered themselves Irish (MacGiolla Chríost 50). Eventually, the Irish language was classified in the Good Friday Agreements as an indicator of cultural identity. Clause 3 and 4 specifically protect the language along with Ulster-Scots.⁵⁵ Much of the protection is drawn from the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. The UK agreed to sign this charter, and "any action taken on Irish language issues will depend therefore upon the level of commitment which the UK government will display on behalf of the Irish language in respect of the European Charter" (MacGiolla Chríost 45-46). There is extensive debate about the relationship of the Irish language and the Republican political identity in the North. Some authors warn that not all opinions regarding the language necessarily align with the socio-political differences in the North, but instead argue that attitudes toward the language are results of socio-economic class, cultural identity and political ideology (e.g. MacGiolla Chríost 45-50).

O'Reilly argues that there are three discursive themes to attend to when examining the present use of the Irish language: decolonizing discourse, cultural discourse, and rights discourse. He characterizes decolonizing discourse is generally nationalist and considered extreme (e.g. every word of Irish is like a bullet being fired at the British). Cultural discourse tries to depoliticize Irish and remove the Republican associations with the language. Douglas Hyde, the president of the Gaelic League, is the best known example of this discursive strain. Finally, rights discourse tries to break out of the political/apolitical dichotomy and reframe the debate in terms of civil rights. This discourse ignores arguments regarding Republicanism and argues that Irish is a language that anyone can and should be able to learn. This is a form of

⁵⁵ Most Irish-speakers argue that this is not a unique language, but a dialect of Irish. They claim that the Protestants argue that this is a separate language in order to piggyback off of the cultural currency that the Irish language has generally.

discourse that is not depoliticized but rather is multi-politicized (154-67). O'Rourke complicates the discussion of decolonizing discourse by arguing that Irish usually becomes more important to a user's identity when the speaker is confused with the dominant other. She argues that the use of the Irish language is a post-nationalist decision posited to resist globalization and not just to resist the colonial oppressor (276-80). Though identity has been contested since the founding of the Northern State, the Irish language didn't really see a revival in the North until Republicans were imprisoned in large numbers in the 1970's.

On Monday, August 9, 1971 the British began large-scale internment in the North. Police rounded up those suspected of being Republican and could hold them in prison without charge for several days at a time (McKittrick and McVea 68). At that time, the social "dissidents" were all Republicans. Until 1975, all of these individuals were treated as special category, political prisoners and as such were permitted certain privileges not allowed to ODC's (Ordinary Decent Criminals) (McKeown 15). They were allowed greater freedom of movement about the jails, could wear their own cloths, take more visits from family members, and receive letters and newspapers, among other dispensations. Their perceived identity as political prisoners impacted their material existence on a day-to-day basis. Once their political prisoner status was removed under Margaret Thatcher, however, these privileges were also removed. Republican prisoners were given prison clothing to wear and their time became highly structured by the prison guards. This became known as the policy of "criminalisation."

The policy of 'criminalisation' can only be understood, however, in the context of the overall policy of the British government at the time. This was to 'Ulsterise', or 'localise', the conflict by giving primacy of policing to the RUC, not the British Army who had previously held that responsibility; to reduce their own troop levels in the North; and to portray the conflict as a local one between two rival and sectarian communities in which Britain did its best to act as some sort of neutral referee (McKeown 16).

“The prison system became irrevocably committed to playing a central role in the counterinsurgency campaign” (Feldman 149). In order to house the prisoners now categorized as ODCs, the government built the Long Kesh prison camp, which became known as the H-Blocks because of its shape. The first prisoner to enter the H-Blocks under the policy of criminalisation, Kieran Nugent, refused to wear the prison uniform and thus was only given a blanket to cover his naked body. Thus began the blanket protests, wherein Republican prisoners brought to the H-Blocks would ‘go on the blanket’ in protest of the policy of criminalisation (McKeown 16). Nugent rejected the ODC identity being imposed upon him and, in so doing, upheld the ideological basis of the Irish rebel as politically motivated, sacrificing himself for his country rather than for simple personal gain or psychological imbalance like an ODC would. Nugent is reputed to have stated upon entering the prison, “The only way they are going to get me to wear a prison uniform is if they nail it to my back” (irishhungerstrike.com *background*). The struggles that ensued in the prisons were a battle over identity and the material consequences thereof.

The British government tried to break the protests by restricting the few privileges that the prisoners had maintained. They restricted access to the toilet, increased random cell searches, restricted food and increased harassment in the jails. The penal system wanted to maintain the right to assign identity markers rather than permitting personal agency to the individual or group to which he belonged. The prisoners responded by launching the ‘no wash protest,’ during which they refused to maintain basic hygiene, a policy the prisoners continued for three years (McKeown 17). Harassment by the guards was increased during this time period, with the “screws”⁵⁶ coming into prisoner’s cells and turning over their chamber pots onto their mattresses. When prisoners tried to throw the contents of their chamber pots out the windows,

⁵⁶ Derogatory term used by Republicans when talking about jail officers and wardens

guards collected the mess and shoveled it back into the cell. Prisoners eventually smeared their excrement on the walls to protest the treatment they were receiving at the hands of the prison guards (Moloney 205). This protest became known as the “dirty protests.”

In March of 1981, Republican prisoners began a hunger strike, which eventually culminated in the death of ten men. The first to go on strike was Bobby Sands, a young IRA Volunteer, who was elected to the British parliament during his hunger strike. Sands was a prolific writer before his death. In his thesis of the Breaker’s Yard, he argued that the political should not be viewed as subordinate to the military in the Irish conflict and that “the prison cadres were as strategically crucial as the active service units committing violence on the street” (Feldman 162). He was known as a “storyteller *par excellence*” who helped head up the Republican prisoner education program (O’Rawe 80). He and others lectured on Republican political ideology (the five ‘isms’: socialism, non-sectarianism, nationalism, secularism and separatism) and taught Irish language lessons by yelling through the bars of the cell (O’Rawe 48).

“There were four guys, Tom Boyd, Sid Walsh, Jackie McMullen, and Bobby Sands, who were fluent Gaelic⁵⁷ speakers in the whole prison at the start. And from those four guys it went out and out. Within two years everything that was said out the door was in Gaelic” (Feldman 212). According to Séanna Walsh:⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Many prisoners refer to the language as “Gaelic.” However, most current speakers refer to the language as “Irish.” Gaelic is an adjective, not a noun. Additionally, Gaelic is the root language to several different languages with different political stakes: Scotch-Gaelic, Welsh-Gaelic, etc. Thus, in my own commentary I will call the language Irish.

⁵⁸ Séanna Walsh “had a formidable reputation and was known for his unswerving commitment to the republican cause, having spent nearly half his adult life in prison. He also had a strong pedigree—his grandfather had been shot dead by the police in Belfast in the early days of the Northern Irish state, while his own wife was a former

When I went into the H-Blocks in 1977, there were really only six or seven of us guys who had a working knowledge of Irish and at the end of the blanket protest I would say there were about four and a half hundred prisoners, most of them former blanketmen, who were proficient speaking Irish....We totally immersed ourselves in the Irish language. Guys who had not one word of Irish when they came into the jail, within a couple of months were speaking Irish constantly. We would have used it for all communications and passing on messages (Interview).

Though the Irish language existed within a context of blatant institutional power in the H-Block prisons, as inscribed on the prisoners' time, movement and space, its articulations to other identity nodal points allows the language to function as a text that may traverse *and* respond to this power in interesting ways. Initially the Republican prisoners were viewed as a liability to the movement. Once you were jailed, you had a record, and that record meant that the British would be able to more easily track your movements, and those you associated with, upon your release. However, through a variety of rhetorical mechanisms they were able to enact Sands' Breaker's Yard thesis and form a communal subjectivity that became influential in the community outside of the prison (Feldman 162). While Irish language was a fundamental component of this process, dismissing all other aspects of identity construction as entirely unimportant would be a mistake. The confinement of their bodies to a contained, shared space, the development and teaching of political ideologies and the emphasis upon a Republican command structure were of course important elements in this process.⁵⁹

The use of Irish in the H-Blocks first started as a pragmatic tactic, as Séanna Walsh articulates above. None of the prison guards could understand the language and thus messages

Republican prisoner" (Rafter 1). Walsh was also very close friends with Bobby Sands, with whom he served time jail.

⁵⁹ *Iaesmálan na Staire Poblachtach Éireannach*, the new Irish Republican history museum in Belfast on Conway Street, has a superb collection of many artifacts from the H-Blocks. The variety of items in this space profoundly demonstrate the complexity of the Republican prisoner's identity.

could be passed with little interference. Prisoners enjoyed themselves immensely with this tactic, naming the prison guard *faolean*, the Irish word for seagull. This was one of very few words that the guards picked up and they proceeded to greet each other as seagulls for the rest of the time this informant spent in the H-Blocks (Feldman 212). One prisoner recalls,

The first time I heard Irish spoken in the H-Blocks, it was like magic. It was a Cages man who was shouting over to the other wing. What actually had happened was that somebody shouted over with a message, but it was in Gaelic and nobody in the wing could understand it. Tom Bush said for us to tell him to get up and shout it across. That was done, and he said, 'Right got it,' and then bent down to the pipes and passed the message up the cells in English. We were all sort of amazed: 'That was good!' It was like a magician's trick to get a message across from one wing to another. We got up and started shouting, 'Talk some more!' The more you heard, the more incentive you had to learn it. There was something magic about listening to these guys waffling away with each other in a tongue that was once ours, that identified us as somebody separate (Feldman 211).

This sense of language and identity being inextricably linked was repeated by many of Feldman's interviewees. Feldman concluded, "It was a vocality that sought to reaudit a lost history and to be the origin of a new history. This collective voice, learned and devised specialized and secret languages, and thus established the utopian foundations of political community in a linguistic community" (210). Though this was an initially pragmatic move "to communicate to comrades; to exclude enemies; to relieve boredom and stimulate the mind," it eventually became a way "ultimately, through which to express identity. It was therefore a political and subversive pursuit" (McKeown 68-9).

Through the Irish language the prisoners developed a strong sense of historical identity that traced them back to before the Norman invasions of the late 1100's. "The Gaelic kept the whole thing together. The education programs traced the history of Ireland right back to the Ice Age. How Ireland as part of the European continent separated and right the way down through

this history, the Viking invasions, the British invasions right down to the development of Republican ideology” (Feldman 213). This prisoner sees the language as the glue that holds together the pre-colonial Ireland through the anti-colonial Republican movement. This sense of separation arises in both prisoner accounts. They demonstrate the desire for an identity that is not determined by the occupiers but one that pre-exists the occupiers when the two cultures were separate.

In the H-Blocks this sense of identity and the desire for overt resistance to the colonization of culture and language eclipsed the pragmatic reasons for motivating prisoners to learn Irish. The teaching of the language itself, however, was extremely pragmatic and well-organized:

The way we learned it was that a fellow got up and shouted the lesson out the door, the spelling of the words.... At the end of the week, you would set aside a day of storytelling, and then I done the history, Irish history all done in Gaelic from the head. The Gaelic was part of a whole education program that Bobby Sands initiated.... Bobby was the main advocate of cultural separatism. That was the message that came from inside the jails out to the whole community now. Bobby told us that the proof of the pudding was in the eating. The jails proved that when you become culturally separate it breaks the enemy, that it builds walls they can't cross and people within those walls (Feldman 213).

This prisoner articulates the importance of the language as a vehicle for cultural separatism as based on pre-colonial identities. At first, the Leader(ship) in the prisons made the classes compulsory (McKeown 41). However, eventually “the ‘pupil’ became the ‘teacher’ once he had arrived at a particular level of competence” (McKeown 68). This was also necessitated by the lack of a static population in the prisons over any given time period.

The discussion of separatism and pre-colonial identity eventually resulted in significant, material changes to the H-Block structure. *Gaeltachts* were established in the prisons so that entire wings became exclusively Irish-speaking. “The first Gaeltacht wing was established in H6 about 1994/95 and then when we took over as camp staff, we established the second one” (McKeown 208). This was just one manifestation of the important relationship between space, the language and identity. A second instantiation of such can be seen in the writing of Irish on the walls of the cells themselves. Prisoners were often shifted to different cells by guards who were trying to disturb any sense of comfort and camaraderie among the prisoners.

One way that the prisoners learned to deal with this continual trauma was to understand a cell shift as an educational opportunity to improve one’s Irish. There were no textbooks for the language and thus, during lessons, a prisoner would scratch the words onto the wall of his cell. “You would get shifted into a new cell, and there was this massive amount of Gaelic on the wall. You got a whole new vocabulary that you didn’t have before. You were expanding your Gaelic every time you were moved. And you would add your Gaelic on the wall for the next guy who was getting all that combined” (Feldman 212). This new reading material was especially important given that prisoners had no books or TV after their political status was revoked. This practice undermined the intended trauma of the cell shifts and instead made them community-building activities.

Community is obviously important in these performances. The new prisoner would write his own vocabulary on a wall for the next prisoner. The community invested in each member regardless of personal gain. “Gaelic inextricably tied to the mobility and transcendence of the disembodied voice, the solidarity of collective vocality, as well as deep historical resonances, overcame the semiotics of captivity. The acquisition of Gaelic, with all its multiple uses and

manifold social meanings, functioned as a mechanism of decontamination” (Feldman 216). Irish became literally decontaminative during the dirty protests when prisoners smeared their fecal matter on the walls of their cells. Only one small, two-foot square was left uncovered on the wall for the writing of Irish vocabulary. Again, the screws would shift prisoners between cells with the intent of breaking the protest. Many prisoners indicate that, while sitting in a cell covered with your own fecal matter was one thing, sitting in someone else’s was excruciating. Thus, the vocabulary prisoners received in the new cell was even more important to maintaining their spirit under these escalated circumstances.

The pre-colonial lineage of the Irish language interpolated prisoners into an identity that allowed for agency and resistance inside the prison. “Speaking Gaelic inserted the stigmatized and isolated prisoner into a historical lineage that endowed him with a crucial cultural identity, an identity that rectified his loss of self in the total institution” (Feldman 215). Placing this within the anti-colonial context, implications for the greater struggle arise. “There was a semantic and historical equivalence between the colonization of Ireland and the colonization of the [prisoner’s] bodies.... Instead of losing a language and a culture, they had gained a language and a culture” (Feldman 227). Identification and participation in the collective fantasy was clearly evident, given the large numbers of Republican prisoners who participated and the many years that the Irish language held currency in the prisons through many cycles of prisoners. The Republican prisoner subject was created through participation in the language and this placed the prisoner within a historical lineage.

This identity gave the prisoners some degree of agency over time and political action. There were significant constraints placed on the prisoners’ bodies through beatings, enclosure in cells or solitary confinement and the amount of food to be given. There were also significant

constraints placed on the prisoners' time through the introduction of lock up hours, designated meals times, organized toilet breaks and other such structures meant to control the body in space. Because the prisoners were able to use a language that called them into being in a time before the colonial existed, the prisoners were able to articulate the relationship to agency, subjectivity, language, time and space differently than the way that prison system had it organized. The actual physical process of speaking the language and writing it on the walls engaged the prisoner in modes of transcendental resistance to the emphasis on the imprisoned body. Physical, violent responses were not necessary to claim power over subjectivity when the prisoners enacted subtler, less easily reversed forms of agency and protest.

Upon their release, many of these prisoners were particularly committed to the use of the Irish language in education. Séanna Walsh was a prisoner in the Cages and then later in the H-Blocks, where he became a fluent Irish-speaker. Today he serves as the *Roinn na Cultur*⁶⁰ for Sinn Féin. Walsh was also the individual asked to read the PIRA's 2005 statement declaring an end to the war. As he explained to me:

Within a very short time in the early 80's, a lot of us were released. About a few hundred. Guys who had been very interested in and active with the Irish language.... So, you had a large number of ex-prisoners coming out of the jail with interest and motivation with regards to the language and they began to get involved with all sorts of stuff. If you look back to that time, that's when you had this mushrooming of the *gaelscoil* project, particularly in Belfast, but you also got some of it in Derry, where guys had a love of the language such that they wanted their kids to be brought up speaking Irish, so a lot of them got involved with the establishment of Irish-medium primary schools and Irish-medium *crèches* for before the kids started in the primary schools. It just took on a whole momentum of its own... (Interview).

Resistance to the Irish language now has become more subtle than it was in the jails. Some groups are trying to change this connection through engaging in the rights discourse that

⁶⁰ Cultural chair

separates the political lineage from the language. Thus far, this seems to be a rather unsuccessful venture in the North. In the South, where Irish is now the official language, there has been greater success. The language is often sold on T-Shirts, coffee mugs and mouse pads and is used by tour guides to give a taste of “authentic Irishness” to tourists. Fergal Mac Ionnrachtaigh, a Belfast Irish language activist, argues that this capitalist project is part of a broader project of dissociating the Irish language with performative resistance.

What is interesting about that is that when Presbyterians were showing an interest in the Irish language was when they were an excluded group... along with the Catholic Nationalists. With the end of the industrial revolution...when you have a group that assimilated, they are given economic power...and after that their interest in the Irish language waned. So the Irish language went back to what it had always been: the language of the excluded, the language of the poor.... The British government will continue to accommodate the Irish language in accordance with the intensity of the opposition or the campaign on the outside, because it doesn't hurt them, they'll do it if it seems reasonable.... It is something irrelevant that you want to exclude and isolate, but if at some point it raises its head, throw a dog a bone so it goes away.... When, if they do ever get together an Irish Language Act, the Irish language will get the lip service and then it will no longer be seen as oppositional. And so these people always viewed the Irish language as part of that counter-hegemony, anti-colonial, de-colonial model. I can see it always being seen as such. (Interview)

Mac Ionnrachtaigh explicitly links using the language as a mode of resistance to the British state. This particular form of language use becomes a way to create not just a nationalist identity, but an oppositional, anti-British identity.

Many nationalists and language activists argue that the language is an important marker of cultural identity, but do not necessarily support the Republican political project in the North. Nonetheless, Sinn Féin has publicly committed itself to increasing Irish language use, both among its followers and leaders. Sinn Féin continues to use Irish at the opening of almost all

major addresses and offers an Irish language version of its website (*Sinn Féin Gaeilge*). This re-trenches the perceived links between the Irish language and Republicanism in the North.

Sinn Féin: The Leader(ship)

Sinn Féin⁶¹ has gone through several instantiations since its founding in 1905. The party today bears little resemblance to the initial party (Rafter 16), though, of course, much the same could be said of the context that these parties exist in. The “first” Sinn Féin, as Rafter calls it, existed from 1905-1917. This “was the party associated with the writings of Arthur Griffith who attempted to shape a workable political programme and socioeconomic policy that could peacefully deliver Irish independence from Britain” (Rafter 17). This Sinn Féin was characterized by a desire to have a dual monarchy, one for England, one for Ireland. This is perhaps why the modern instantiation of Sinn Féin has written this first Sinn Féin out of its own history (Rafter 17).

The “second” Sinn Féin (1917-1922) was characterized by a commitment to separatism. This party was linked in the Republican narrative to the 1916 Easter Rising. In reality, however, the party did not partake in the planning of the rebellion. “Certainly individual members of Sinn Féin participated in the rebellion, but the party itself was not involved” (Rafter 48). The “third” Sinn Féin (1922-1926) became more Republican in its outlook. This era boasted Eamonn De Valera as its president and thus was an anti-treaty party. However, when De Valera decided to engage in constitutional politics, another split occurred. De Valera’s supporters became known

⁶¹ Sinn Féin is typically translated as “ourselves alone.” However, the phrase literally translates only to “ourselves.” The translation “ourselves alone” comes from a recollection Máire de Bhuitléir had of the Gaelic League’s early slogan: *Sinn Féin, Sinn Féin amháin*” (*amháin* being the word for only or alone). She mentioned this to Griffith, the founder of the Sinn Féin party, when she was in attendance at one of his early speeches (Rafter 44).

as the modern day Fianna Fail,⁶² while the remaining individuals retained the name Sinn Féin (Rafter 54).

The “fourth” Sinn Féin was an isolationist party that operated, relatively ineffectively, from 1926 until 1969. “Those involved with the organization after the 1926 split were the purists, the diehards, those who refused any compromise on what republicans had proclaimed at Easter 1916” (Rafter 71). This era did, however, see a plethora of strong female leaders. Lily McClean, an IRA Captain, insisted that her soldiers drill inside jail despite the filthy conditions in which they were held (Rafter 73). Margaret Buckley was also a Sinn Féin leader during this time. She was “known for her sharp wit and biting put-downs of opponents, and her voice was heard from Sinn Féin platforms for nearly half a century. A powerful public speaker, she never lost her distinctive accent” (Rafter 72). Buckley is an inspirational figure, regardless of political persuasion. “Buckley was the first woman to lead a political party in Ireland -- a feat that was not again achieved until Mary Harney was elected leader of the Progressive Democrats in 1994” (Rafter 73).

The “fifth” Sinn Féin is the modern party that exists today under the presidency of Gerry Adams. This party “claim[s] the Sinn Féin inheritance but it is a selective historical legacy” (Rafter 16). This is unsurprising, given that memory, which is itself selective (partial, partisan) is a tool that is extensively used by the Sinn Féin Leader(ship). “Significant membership overlap exists [between the IRA and Sinn Féin] at leadership and grassroots level. The shared objective is the creation of a united and socialist Ireland. The use of violence to achieve this ultimate republican goal has never been an obstacle, and has been the dominant theme for most of the last 40 years” (Rafter 7). Many of the high ranking Sinn Féin leaders have been open about their

⁶² A political party in the South of Ireland

previous IRA membership. Martin McGuinness and Adams' press advisor, Richard McAuley, have both been forthcoming about their IRA membership.

Adams, however, has always denied being a member of the IRA. Rafter characterizes these denials as "ludicrous," providing extensive evidence as to not only his IRA membership, but also to his Leader(ship) within the organization. Other writers, such as Moloney, concur that Adams was a member of the IRA army council. However, in the days before the July 2005 statement which stated that the armed campaign was at an end, "it was reported that Adams, McGuinness and Ferris had resigned from the IRA Army Council to be replaced by supporters with no strong attachment to Sinn Féin" (Rafter 9).

I argue that unease with the continuity between the IRA leadership and the Sinn Féin leadership is a performance meant to disarm Sinn Féin detractors without undercutting the masculine authority that the Republican People afford the Sinn Féin Leader(ship) by virtue of this cross over. This relies on the Republican People's ability to see beyond the denotative meaning of Sinn Féin rhetoric. This is an effective strategy, based on the belief that "the republican community -- encompassing both Sinn Féin and the IRA -- has always been both sophisticated and highly disciplined. The complex relationship between the two interlinked parts of this community has long been defined by secrecy" (Rafter 7).

The modern Sinn Féin has entered an "era of pragmatism" under the leadership of Gerry Adams (Rafter 5). Until the 1986 *Ard Fheis*, the yearly meeting of Sinn Féin members, Sinn Féin politicians ran on election platforms of abstentionism. Abstentionism meant that Sinn Féin delegates refused to take their seats in parliaments in Belfast, Dublin and London stating that they would not do so until the island was reunited. Sinn Féin delegates argued that these

governmental bodies were the intuitions of an illegitimate government that they would not lend credence to by taking their seats. This was considered standard Republican practice that was meant to demonstrate that the party had the mandate of the People and that foreign governing institutions, such as the British parliament at Westminster, did not.

Changing this policy, which had been in place since the first Sinn Féin, led to a split. Those who upheld the traditional abstentionist policy became known as Republican Sinn Féin, led by Ruairí O’Bradaigh, and its paramilitary wing, the Continuity IRA. The IRA Army Council had inherited the authority of the Republic’s leadership from the second Dáil, the last all-Ireland body elected before partition, and therefore the only legitimate authority to speak on behalf of the people of Ireland. Thus the IRA Army Council was the primary authoritative body for those communities who endorsed the collective narrative of the Republic superseding the illegitimate nation-state boundaries of Northern Ireland. Complications arose for this narrative in 1986, when the last surviving member of the 1918-1919 Dáil, Tom McGuire, endorsed Ruairi O’Bradaigh’s group as the true Republicans, and not Sinn Féin’s. McGuire vested O’Bradaigh’s groups with Republican authority according to the traditional Republican narrative (Tonge 115).

The principle of abstentionism had been sacrosanct until 1986. Yet Gerry Adams’ Leader(ship) managed to hold together a majority of Republicans and get them to endorse this seismic shift in Republican policy. By taking seats in the various houses of government in Ireland, Northern Ireland, England and Europe, Republicans would be recognizing the legitimacy of these houses to serve as, if nothing else, a tool to advance the Republican cause. Adams is one of those incredibly gifted rhetoricians who has “whatever that quality that allows political leaders to win sway not only over their own followers but also the middle ground of voters...He has the charisma of a pop star. When you walk with Gerry Adams down any street in Ireland,

people flock over to him, to shake his hand” (Rafter 6). This quality earned him the appropriately masculine nickname “The Big Lad” among Republican circles (Moloney 93).

Adams made Sinn Féin relevant again. The party was ineffective and unpopular in its fourth era from 1926-1969, and was considered a “poor cousin” to the IRA throughout the beginning of the conflict (Bik McFarlane, interview). Sinn Féin was little more than a “political cheer-leader for the PIRA” (Tonge 103). 1986 changed that. This shift was guided by “what a close associate of Adams categorized ‘the principle of success’-- and he unashamedly defined ‘success’ as ‘the principle that rises above all other principles’” (Rafter 5). And successful it is. Sinn Féin currently seats five Westminster Ministers of Parliament, 24 Members of the Leinster Assembly, and 118 councilors (Sinn Féin *Representatives*). They are the fastest growing party on the island of Ireland and the only all-Ireland party of consequence (Tonge 103). Sinn Féin refers to this institutionalism as part of their revolutionary strategy for “an end to British rule in Ireland...national self-determination [and] the unity and independence of Ireland as a sovereign state” (Sinn Féin *About*).

However, their more militant base, which has spent thousands of lives revolting against all forms of institutionalism, are beginning to question this new “phase” in earnest. While Sinn Féin’s voting record remains strong in the six counties, IRA leaders, who supported Sinn Féin’s signing of the 1998 Good Friday Agreements and their subsequent end to the armed campaign, recently admitted to the local press that they had “lost control of Ardoyne” to dissident groups (McDonald). Ardoyne is a staunchly Republican area in North Belfast that fielded some of the most historic Republican leaders, including Bik McFarlane (Interview *McFarlane*). Though this may have simply been an attempt on Sinn Féin’s part to gain funding support from the government to increase the police presence in Ardoyne, it is a rather hefty gamble to take. If

Ardoyne truly is lost to “dissident” Republican groups, this means that Sinn Féin’s revolutionary credentials are eroding at the base, while simultaneously continuing to cause more “moderate” parties to keep their distance. This “distance” is a result of “strong emotions—which are understandable given the linkage with the IRA” (Rafter 20). Moderate parties, such as the Socialist Democratic Labour Party (SDLP), do not want to risk alienating their own bases, which harbor these strong anti-IRA emotions. As a result, the “hype” that surrounds Sinn Féin “distract[s] from a realistic assessment of the party’s policy positions and political prospects” (Rafter 20).

One of the difficulties Sinn Féin has in harnessing this revolutionary Republican potential at an institutional level is simply the economics of modern nation-states. While “the revolutionary hope of creating a kind of policy that could overcome the alienating effects of modern economics and society remained and remains open, so the forms of the revolutionary republic remain forever over the horizon of experience” (Livesey 51-2). In order for Sinn Féin to create the socialist democratic state it aspires to, it has to attract capital investment from such important capitalist countries as America, which, as history has shown, does not suffer socialism lightly. The attempt to balance the principles and pragmatics of modern economics was addressed by Bik McFarlane:

In order to attain your goal, you need a pragmatic approach.... For example, you know, we attract investment. The only way you get investment in the modern economic world is multinationalism. That is the pragmatic face of things. Now...we need investment.... You get investment from the States. It is a capitalist economy. Those are the facts of life. However, if we get the investment, it can only argue well for the betterment of the lot of the people who work here.... So, people will say: “why do you ask multinationals in? I thought you were opposed to multinationals.” Ok, politically, yes, I am against multinationals...so...that when you get that in, you try to put in as many guarantees, safeguards and long-term stuff as you can.... Our objective is a 32 county, socialist, democratic republic. That’s the objective that we will continue

to fight for. It isn't a matter of militarily tossing the Brits into the ocean tomorrow. Turning the Irish government on its head and saying "we are here to a rule an Irish socialist economy." It doesn't work like that at all. That being revolutionary stuff of past years. It may happen in certain places in the world today but it ain't gonna happen here. And the matter of the attainment of our ultimate objective is that it has to be done slow, drawn out process, and certainly we continue to work towards that and that's what we are about and nobody makes any bones about that" (Interview).

McFarlane's rhetoric indicates the difficulty of balancing the language of revolution and the language of institutional politics. The language of institutionalism becomes even more difficult to espouse in an economic climate where unemployment rates are skyrocketing.⁶³ This is particularly true in working class areas like Ardoyne where, in the past, the language of revolution provided hope and dignity whereas the language of economics provided emasculation and desperation.

The majority of the Republican People remained with Sinn Féin after 1986. This Leader(ship) brought the IRA to ceasefire in 1997, signed the Good Friday Agreements in 1998, decommissioned IRA weaponry from 2001 to 2005 and in 2005 announced a complete cessation of hostilities. This was not an easy matter. As Bik McFarlane says:

All struggles of this nature in essence need to political struggles. The military aspect should only be simply aided to enhance the development of politics and the development of whatever you're doing. That should be an element of the struggle. *Not* THE struggle. But it did take quite a significant period of time for our people within the Republican structures to get that analysis through that this is not a military struggle, it is a political struggle and we are using military means or alternatively we don't use military means and it's only in the latter years here where you have been able to see that development reaching the stage whereby convincing of volunteers and convincing of the support base, which is crucially important, that either you have the military aspect in order to enhance that or you don't have a military aspect in order to enhance that and the choice has to be

⁶³ September saw the largest monthly increase in unemployment claimants in 22 years, new government figures have revealed (Northern Ireland Business news, September 2008).

based on a progressive analysis, ok? So in a sense it was difficult to get people to sort of tie into the politics of the struggle (Interview).

The Army did agree to an end to the violence and Séanna Walsh was selected to read the IRA statement which called for volunteers to “dump arms” and “assist the development of purely political and democratic programmes through exclusively peaceful means” (bbc.co.uk *IRA*).

“Séanna Walsh was the natural choice when the leadership of the Provisional Irish Republican Army looked to confirm an end to its war against the British presence in Northern Ireland, in the summer of 2005...through all the compromises and concessions....Walsh had remained loyal to Gerry Adams” (Rafter 1). Getting the base to agree to this move took a long time and a great deal of effort. As McFarlane said:

So that analysis had to be filtered down and brought into right across the board, through Sinn Féin and through the IRA and then into the community by saying to people, “Look, we have taken this as far as is humanly possible. There is an opportunity to move this whole process forward and in order to attain the goals we set out to do, the retention of a military aspect was no longer a feasible aspect. So, it was extremely difficult, let me point that out, it was extremely difficult, and a lengthy process.... You also find at a grassroots level in our communities, even among activists, you know, some people hold the military struggle as sacrosanct. And find it very, very difficult and say, “you know, if I haven’t got a gun, what am I going to do? If you do not attack and fight people who have invaded the place and occupy the place then what way do you do this?” So, in the short analysis, the short answer, was that we needed to provide people with an alternative method of attaining the same objective without the presence...without a military, active presence (Interview).

The process of convincing the grassroots took “a number of years” according to McFarlane (Interview). At stake were the People’s understanding of their own agency (“if I haven’t got a gun, what am I going to do?”). The fear of impotence is combined here with a near-religious sentiment (“sacrosanct”) that some individuals held for the armed struggle.

Yet, Sinn Féin managed to hold together most of the party and avoid a major split. This is quite an achievement given the many splits that the party and the army have endured in their

100 year history. The analysis that the Leader(ship) developed filtered down (pointing to the hierarchy) to the People and became salient. Things remained relatively quiet in Belfast. Then, in the last year, there has been an increase in violent activity by those who do not buy Sinn Féin's "analysis." These groups were considered largely unimportant and most people believed them to be thoroughly infiltrated. Yet, the rate of violence has continued to rise in the North. What changed?

In July of 2007, Sinn Féin endorsed a "new"⁶⁴ policing service, which effectively recognizes the state of Northern Ireland as a legitimate political entity with a legitimate embodied force. This move came only two years after an end to the armed campaign. The quickness with which this came about is surprising, given that one of the dominant features of Adams' Leader(ship) has been patience. "Patience has been a hallmark of his time as a senior republican leader—time and time again, he has displayed a remarkable willingness to wait for the right circumstances to occur before acting on what was his preferred course of action" (Rafter 102). Endorsing a new police service was a necessary part of joining constitutional politics. Sinn Féin sought control over the police through the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Irish assembly. At the time of writing, an agreement has still not been reached with Unionists about the form this devolution should take.

Locals in North Belfast continue not to trust the police, who they claim abuse their monopoly on "legitimate" violence. Police brutality and political policing were prominent features of the old policing service, the RUC. The RUC notoriously colluded with loyalist

⁶⁴ Many Republicans would argue that the policing service simply changed its name from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to the name of "Policing Service of Northern Ireland" (PSNI) without changing any of the fundamental structures that created such a division between themselves and Republican communities. The RUC was infamously populated entirely by Protestants and, more specifically, Loyalists.

paramilitaries to shoot Republicans. Indeed, an off duty RUC officer walked into the Sinn Féin headquarters in 1992 and killed three people. As *An Phoblact*, the Sinn Féin run Republican newspaper, reported “in February 1992, RUC man Allan Moore ran amok in the Sinn Féin office on the Falls Road, shooting three men dead. Sinn Féin activists Paddy Loughran and Pat McBride as well as Michael O'Dwyer, who was seeking advice at the time, died in a hail of shotgun fire” (*RUC*). In North Belfast, this is not a memory, but an everyday reality.

Concerned Families Against Drugs (CFAD), the anti-drug group based in Ardoyne, maintains a blog (CFAD homepage). One entry on December 2, 2009, details the arrest and beating of several of CFAD’s members by the PSNI.

CFAD Spokesman, Martin Og Meehan was detained by the *RUC/PSNI* at a checkpoint on *Sunday 29th November, 2009*. He was badly assaulted by two members of the patrol who proceeded to spray a number of bursts of *CS Gas* into his face before he was handcuffed and arrested. *Mr. Meehan* immediately demanded medical assistance because he suffers from a serious heart condition and was bluntly informed; he will have to wait until he see's [sic] a *Doctor*. *Martin* eventually seen a '*Police Doctor*' after some two hours who informed the *RUC/PSNI* they needed to take the prisoner to Hospital immediately. Before releasing the former *Republican* prisoner, he was informed that he would be charged with assaulting a *Police Officer* at a later date. *Martin Og* has since contacted his *Solicitor* and the *Police Ombudsman's Office* to pursue a complaint at the heavy-handiness of his arrest (CFAD homepage).

Martin Og Meehan is depicted as a powerful figure (CFAD spokesman) and also a victim (“suffers from a serious heart condition”). In Ardoyne, he is a well-known Republican and has strong Republican credentials (Field Notes 10/11/08). But he also suffers from a heart condition. *Meehan*’s identity as both powerful and weak invite the reader to both respect and pity him. The brutality of a weak man who once was strong is a metaphor for the way that the ex-volunteers are being treated in the modern “peaceful” climate. Sinn Féin should be showing them respect but

instead use the state's body (the police) to rob him of the dignity that he earned on his campaign for Republican ideals.

Sinn Féin is in a difficult position when it comes to practicing politics. Sinn Féin wants to have a strong hand in reviewing police work to ensure that it is just, but Unionist parties do not want Sinn Féin controlling any part of the police, because they claim this control will allow Sinn Féin to dismantle the state. Unionists argue that Sinn Féin is using the cover of being “concerned” about the manner in which the police operates to really dismantle the PSNI and remove any response that the state might be able to pose to militant Republicans. Sinn Féin thus seems to be in a no-win situation. Their connection to Republicans and the Republican tradition make Unionists not trust them. Their relationship with Unionists and the suspicion about Unionism make the Republican community not trust them. Republicans who are subjected to police violence equate Sinn Féin with the police and, thus, Sinn Féin is accused of supporting violence against its own people, which is an action characteristic of a legitimate state. Policing is typically a “major axis of division” in post-conflict societies (Mulcahy 3). Indeed, the author goes on to explain:

In deeply divided societies where state authority is widely disputed, the question of police legitimacy dominates the social and political landscape. The absence of prevailing consensus over constitutional arrangements ensures that state agencies face widespread dissent, opposition and resistance. This problem is compounded for the police given their embodiment of state authority and their centrality to its maintenance. Police involvement in state security and public order ensures that their actions are largely directed against those for whom the state is already viewed as illegitimate.... [In Northern Ireland] policing was perhaps the single most emotive, divisive and controversial aspect of the conflict (Mulcahy 3).

Historically, the local paramilitary members had policed Republican communities. One of the primary functions of these paramilitary members was to protect the local people *from* police.

They did this both by acting violently against the state police and by monitoring their own communities, providing retributive justice and asserting a certain kind of sanctioned violence in order that the police had no need to enter their areas because they would be ineffective in doing so. This was a narrative that Sinn Féin propagated until relatively recently.

Sinn Féin performed a “u-turn” from its historical stance and began to ask its People to support the police (Rafter 16). A debate ensued among the People as to whether or not this could be a legitimate Republican move. This was particularly true in communities that had historically been subjected to Northern Irish Police brutality. One such community in Ballymurphy, is a working class, Republican community. It is also the community in which Gerry Adams grew up. On the wall leading into the Ballymurphy estate, adjacent to one of the largest police stations in Belfast, someone graffitied an oft-repeated phrase: FTPSNI (fuck the PSNI).

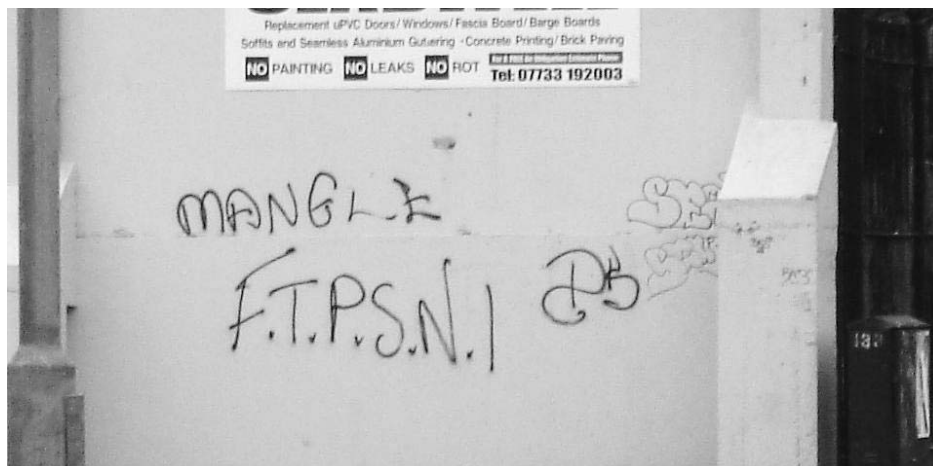


Image 2
Photo by author

Republican⁶⁵ memories of police abuse are certainly aided by the material image of policing in the Six counties. The police put forth a militarized image that emphasizes the Republican feeling

⁶⁵ It is not clear whether Republicans or “hoods” tagged this particular wall. “Hood” is the name given to any anti-social, apolitical person who causes trouble for trouble’s sake, without political motivation for doing so. However,

of being occupied by an invading force from which they are alienated. For example, police stations are built like military bases and police vans look like tanks.



Figure 3
Photo by author



Figure 4
Photo by preachtoreach.com

The police station has high walls that give it the image of a fortress. The police vehicle has riot shields protecting all of the glass areas. The vehicle is square rather than rounded, like police

even if this tagging was done by a hood, the sentiment remains pertinent in Republican communities where the police are not welcomed.

vehicles in the United States. This indicates this vehicle is not for speedy getaways, but for concerted plowing through objects (or people).

Additionally, the police maintain panoptic surveillance of certain communities, which causes these communities to feel besieged. Their image of anti-state becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The identity initially created by the indigenous Irish people of the 1540's, which featured an oppositional, dialectical identity against the Protestant planters, is reinforced in the modern police service. The following image was taken from inside of the Ballymurphy estate.



Image 5
Photo by author

In the foreground one can see a mural that depicts historical violent Republican masculinity. Both of the women depicted are old and are caregivers. They are clearly cast in the role of those needing protection. The young men are surrounded by rocket launchers, AK47's and grenades. To the right of the mural one can see the police watch tower built next to the station immediately across the road from Ballymurphy. The tower is high enough that the police can maintain a constant surveillance of the Republican community without imposing an actual bodily presence. A panopticon has been created, where communities will never know when they are, or are not, being watched, and thus they will engage in some level of self-policing. Of course, this merely

reinforces the desire of these communities to turn inward. Thus the mural that cannot be seen by the police station but can be seen by every individual who faces the police watchtower.⁶⁶

Though Sinn Féin argues that support for the police is part of creating a peaceful, transitional state to a United Ireland, Republican communities view this rhetoric in opposition to the material presence of the police in their communities. Why should the community trust the police when the police create material evidence of a lack of willingness to trust the People?

During the policing debate, Gerry Adams and the rest of the Sinn Féin Leader(ship) became increasingly alienated from the hard-line Republican areas and simultaneously more palpable to the less-radical middle class.⁶⁷ Therefore, there could be some argument that Sinn Féin is not the “Leader” of the Republican movement and therefore my attention to their constitution of Republican identity is misplaced. Daltún Ó Ceallaigh argues, “While the chief organizational expression of republicanism in Ireland today is undoubtedly Sinn Féin, that ideological outlook is not confined to that party alone” (140). The name “Sinn Féin” is Irish for “ourselves alone,” which points to the emphasis Sinn Féin places on both the individual’s consciousness and the group identity, as solidified by its stance against the “other.” Bik McFarlane agrees:

Sinn Féin is the party that is driving that struggle. There are people from outside the party who participate in that struggle, but Sinn Féin is the party that drives that struggle. It is the only party on this island capable of providing the radical politics, the radical alternatives to what exists up here and down in the South. It is the only party that can deliver and drive that struggle forward.... They developed that struggle from a background, which is military, right through politics, and the political struggle is being driven by the only party in this country that can and is able and willing to deliver the radical alternative to what exists and what has

⁶⁶ The watchtower has cameras on it.

⁶⁷ Historically, the Republican “base” was working class. The middle class “moderates” tended to vote for the SDLP (Mulcahy 22).

existed in this country since the inception of the state. And that is Sinn Féin (interview).

Gerard “Big G” McGuigan, a life-long Ardoyne Republican who served as a Sinn Féin councillor during the Ardoyne Holy Cross⁶⁸ dispute, agreed during another interview. He adds:

I believe Sinn Féin is [the leadership of the modern Republican movement]. There are people who will argue with me and who will say that they have abandoned certain Republican tenants which are sacrosanct, but I’m sorry, this leadership, in my opinion, determined not just to take part in the struggle, but are determined to win it. And it means that their pragmatism has had to shape some of the hard decisions that were made....There are things that the real world makes you face, and this leadership faces them (Interview).

McGuigan emphasizes the disjuncture between the head and the heart when he points out that the “real world” sometimes demands pragmatic choices of the Leader(ship), though Republican memories thrive in narratives of overcoming those obstacles which seem like pragmatic road blocks that cannot be.

Historically, Sinn Féin has held the stance that their and every Republican’s primary goal should be the removal of the British from the island of Ireland. At Sinn Féin’s 1998 *Ard Fheis*⁶⁹ the *Ard Chomhairle*⁷⁰ announced that, “Sinn Féin’s primary political objective is the unity and independence of Ireland as a sovereign state and nation. We seek an end to partition and British rule in Ireland and an end to the conflict and divisions that have resulted. These democratic goals

⁶⁸ Many children from Ardoyne attend a Catholic school located on the border with a Loyalist neighborhood. Loyalist residents claimed to tire of seeing the Republican families walk through their neighborhood and commenced protests against the children in the Summer of 2001 (Republican Museum video, “The Holy Cross Dispute News Footage”).

⁶⁹ The party’s yearly convention

⁷⁰ Sinn Féin’s national executive

remain our primary objectives” (Sinn Féin *Ard Chomhairle*). The belief in Sinn Féin’s commitment to these objectives has been questioned in recent months, as the Leader(ship) appears to settle comfortably into positions within the state they have argued is illegitimate.

The degree to which the base “dissent” against Sinn Féin is questionable. In January of 2007, at a special *ard fheis*, party members did vote to support Sinn Féin’s move to endorse a new police service (bbc.co.uk *Sinn*). Yet, since that time, communities of people have been moving away from Sinn Féin and questioning their Leader(ship). Many who claim to be Republicans belong to other, competing groups, such as *Éirígí* or the Republican Network for Unity. Some neighborhoods, such as Ardoyne, have disavowed the “authentic authority” of Sinn Féin entirely. In response, Sinn Féin stripped Ardoyne of the label “Republican,” pushing them to the “outside” of the identity of the People (Watson 67). They were pushed to the outside of Republican boundaries by being labeled “dissident.”

“Dissidents”

After Sinn Féin endorsed the police in 2007, Ardoyne struggled to accept the new police service. In April of 2009, the IRA⁷¹ told the Irish government that they had lost control of the area. “During disturbances in Greater Belfast last Monday organised by republican dissidents, two leading figures in the Provisional IRA told Irish government representatives they could no longer control elements in Ardoyne opposed to the peace process” (McDonald). Once Ardoyne could not be “controlled” by the IRA it was labeled a “dissident” area. This label pushed

⁷¹ Though the IRA had ended the armed struggle at this juncture, and thus ostensibly disbanded, news sources reported that it was indeed the IRA who reported to Sinn Féin that Ardoyne were dissidents, rather than Sinn Féin arguing this themselves. This bolsters my argument that areas such as Ardoyne operate in a narrative of embodied authority. While Ardoyne might not care if Sinn Féin labeled them “dissidents,” they might care if the IRA did...even if the individuals declaring such would have been the same in either organization.

Ardoyne even further away from the coalition of pro-GFA parties. The “dissident” label is a powerful one that carries with it material consequences.

When an area is labeled as “dissident,” the police required less justification for using surveillance, intimidation and violence. This is because those who were anti-state (i.e. Sinn Féin) now are working within the political system, meaning that those who refuse to do so are labeled as “apolitical.” These individuals are characterized as enjoying violence and anti-social behavior for its own sake instead of a political goal. Labeling Ardoyne “dissident” served to fold the Republican Leader(ship)⁷² further into the realm of acceptability by identifying another as “unacceptable.” The “dissident” label identifies a group that must be controlled. Dissidents are those whose hypermasculinity becomes identified as destructive masculinity. As McGuigan says: “my Father, what I have learned off of him in later years, about his Republican dealings, is that his measure of any man was always character. He would have looked at a person who was trying to join the IRA and ask, ‘what stock is he from?’ If he had come from a family that were known to be of bad character it would be very doubtful that my father would have allowed them to join the Republican Army” (Interview). The IRA did not recruit violent men who just wanted to pick a fight and be praised for it. The IRA only accepted those who did not have a history of anti-social behavior. The IRA demanded discipline, with *The Green Book*⁷³

⁷² I do not believe that the Republican Leader(ship) did this maliciously, or wished to see the people of Ardoyne suffer. Though the consequences were negative I do not in any way believe that the individual members of Sinn Féin had a vendetta out for the Ardoyne people. As I understand it, the Leader(ship) of Sinn Féin truly wants what is best for those that they identify as their People. However, whether or not their policies create an environment for this “betterment” in the short and long term is what is currently being debated upon the bodies of the people of Ardoyne.

⁷³ *The Handbook for Volunteers of the Irish Republican Army: Notes on Guerrilla Warfare*, or “The Green Book,” as it was more colloquially known. This text was required reading for all volunteers who joined the IRA, and served as a rudimentary field manual.

emphasizing that “breaches of the guerilla code -- desertion, betrayal, breach of confidence in any way -- must be severely dealt with on the spot” (14).

Those who used the violent context of the Troubles to propagate apolitical, anti-social behavior were severely dealt with. Ten men starved themselves to death to disprove Thatcher’s assertion that their violence was criminal and apolitical. Thus, it is within this lineage and mnemonic narrative setting that Ardoyne found itself. There were anti-social elements that preyed upon the reduced socio-economic status of the area by selling drugs to young people. A group of individuals arose out of this community to combat this problem. They tried to do so within the new structures of masculinity that had been articulated in the post-GFA, peaceful environment.

Concerned Families Against Drugs (CFAD)



Image 6
CFAD homepage

CFAD was established in September of 2008 in Ardoyne, North Belfast. CFAD self-identifies as:

A radical and community-based collective to campaign against the upsurge of drug abuse and associated criminality in the Ardoyne area of North Belfast. Ever since, a number of Sinn Fein- linked Community Workers and certain Journalists have without evidence attempted to smear, vilify and criminalise us... We are an open and independent collective that consist of local parents, residents and community activists committed to tackling illegal drugs, raising awareness and building a safer community. We have also provided a focus for the community

with a series of protests, exposures and of course community lobbying. We are not an armed group, nor are connected to any armed groups (CFAD homepage).

CFAD leaflet streets where dealers are known to live. Members advise drug dealers to turn themselves over to the local priest for a public renunciation of their antisocial ways.⁷⁴ CFAD claims that they had to start the process of communal policing because the PSNI simply did not do the job that the locals had agreed to support in 2007. Reform was promised to them, and they did not get it. Locals claim that the police pay and protect drug dealers to tout on the goings on of the locals. CFAD argues that the police engage in political monitoring of Ardoyne. Locals further claim that the police are being used by such groups as Sinn Féin to silence any organization that disagrees with them through slander (Field Notes 1/18/09).

In the former comment, CFAD implicitly equate the state police service and Sinn Féin. In the larger rhetorical landscape, they have been labeled “dissidents” and as such have been articulated as legitimate targets for police control and as not part of the Republican “People.” Yet, in a material way, the legitimacy of CFAD is provided by the increasing presence of “hoods” in areas such as Ardoyne. Hoods are anti-social men (typically), who have moved into the power vacuum created by the Leader(ship)’s call for the IRA to put down their weapons. Without the communal policing provided by the Provisional IRA’s boots on the ground, and still without communal confidence in the PSNI, the Hoods have increased in power and daring, often fueled by drugs. The emasculation of the IRA has occurred through the removal of the gun.

⁷⁴ Some drug dealers have refused to hand themselves over or cease selling after multiple warnings. In some cases, where groups similar to CFAD have arisen, these drug dealers are shot, as occurred in Derry City earlier this year. However, it is very important to articulate that CFAD is NOT a vigilante organization. In tight-knit, Republican communities such as Ardoyne, however, those elements of the community who would carry out such shootings know how many times a drug dealer has been warned and whether or not he (typically) heeds that warning.

This is a form of castration for soldiers because it makes one vulnerable. Not performing ideal masculinity is typically labeled as a performance of femininity (Goldstein 357).

This extended beyond the individual volunteer and affected the exercise of power in communities at large. One set of graffiti demonstrates the boldness of a Hood in Ardoyne who scrawled on a wall UTH FTRA (up the hoods, fuck the RA [IRA]).⁷⁵



Image 7
Photo by author

The battle for local control over bodies has shifted from a State-Republican dialectic to a community-antisocial dialectic. In 1986, the IRA tightly controlled communities such as Ardoyne, Ballymurphy, and The Falls. People who stole were shot through the center of both palms. People who touted to the police or sold drugs were kneecapped. Republican communities monitored the bodies of their own members so that the state would not gain power

⁷⁵ “Up the...” is a way of celebrating a group in Irish parlance. This can be in regards to a sports team (e.g. “Gaillimh abu!” Irish for “Up Galway!” when discussing a Gaelic football or hurling county match) or paramilitary organization (e.g. one common rallying cry for IRA units was “Up the RA!”)

from the monitoring of them. Yet, with the withdrawal of the PIRA from active militarism, there has sprung a power vacuum in many of these communities.

Some local groups claim that the police undermine the authority of the PIRA without actually providing effective policing to the communities. In response to the increasing presence of drugs and the corollary rise in anti-social violence, some communities have founded local watch groups, such as the Concerned Families Against Drugs (CFAD) group in Ardoyne to function in opposition to, while existing within, the new environment of the state.

Éirígí

Many other groups are labeled “dissident” on the Belfast rhetorical landscape. One such group is *Éirígí*.⁷⁶ “*éirígí* is an Irish socialist republican political party formed in Dublin in April 2006 – coinciding with the ninetieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising. *éirígí* wants to see an end to the British occupation of the Six Counties and the dismantling of the unjust socio-economic system that currently exists in both the Six and Twenty-Six Counties” (eirigi.org). The *Éirígí* communications officer, Séan Mac Bradaigh, explained:

Éirígí started as a vehicle for Republicans to pursue, I know this has become a sound bite over the years but, a socialist republic, an Irish republic based on the principles of equality and justice... a genuine socialist movement... It's to provide an alternative to every political party on the island. So, I know it's difficult to ask the question without asking where people's origins are. A number of people who are in *Éirígí* were once members of Sinn Féin. Obviously, they'll all have their own ideas and reasons for why they're not in Sinn Féin anymore. But *Éirígí* is not defined by its opposition to Sinn Féin. It is defined by its opposition to British rule and to unfair socio-economic systems throughout the island (Interview).

⁷⁶ Irish for “arise!”

Though Mac Bradaigh is clear that Éirígi does not want to be defined in its opposition to Sinn Féin, it is telling that many of its members used to be Sinn Féin voters. Mac Bradaigh uses the same language of anti-British identity (it is defined by its opposition to British rule) that defined Republicanism for 800 years. This lays rhetorical claim to Republican lineage that Sinn Féin has thrown into the ring since its endorsement of the police left many questioning just how far one could move away from the history of Republicanism and still consider oneself a “Republican.”

Mac Bradaigh argues that this commitment to campaigns, as opposed to running for elections, is something that uniquely defines Éirígi. Though Mac Bradaigh does not articulate that this difference is in opposition to Sinn Féin, given that Sinn Féin is the only major Republican party engaged in elections in the North, it is a rhetorical revelation of oppositional identity against Sinn Féin nonetheless. Mac Bradaigh says:

The one thing that sort of defines us is a complete and utter commitment to campaigns. Complete and utter commitment to those type of tactics for your campaigns and the ability to get high quality analysis of these given campaigns and how they fit into people’s everyday lives...into people’s everyday lives via distribution to houses and so on.... So, for example, Uncle EU was a very good use of publicity, where you had one of our members dress up as...it sounds very funny now, but it was a very effective piece at the time...basically our members dress up as, you know Uncle Sam? “We want you”? Basically, during the Lisbon Treaty...[he] challenged on the streets on national TV the three main political parties who were walking the streets canvassing for a “Yes Vote on Lisbon.” Embarrassed them. Exposed the contradictions. Asked about what... the founders of Irish Republicanism would ask about these questions and ask about the Lisbon Treaty and asked about the lack of sovereignty and lack of independence and so on. And it was an excellent piece of work. Not massively confrontational and something that a lot of people could buy into.... Republicanism has come through, in my opinion, I would say, and a lot of people in Éirígi’s opinion, ten years of debilitation, I would say. Ten years of a withdraw from that type of protest. Withdraw from that kind of base level, street politic, which is instantly appealing to people (Interview).

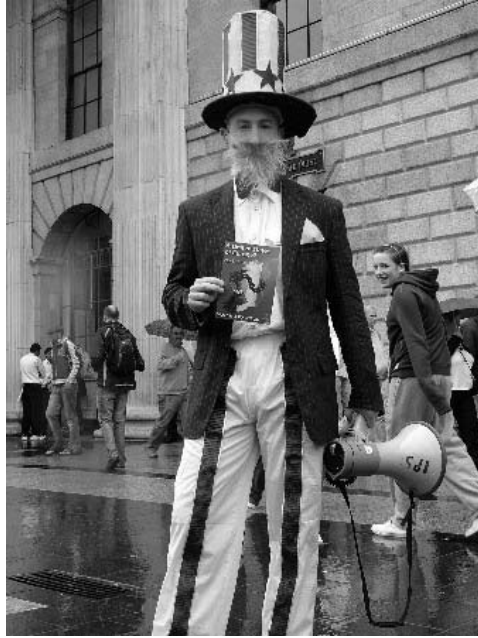


Figure 8
Eirigi.org

Mac Bradaigh argues that the People will not respond to something that is “massively confrontational.” This is in direct opposition to the tactics of CFAD, which are inherently confrontational. Éirígí seem to be relying heavily upon the People’s ability to read such campaigns legibly. Éirígí’s use of technology, such as the internet, to explain their performative protests, becomes a way of encouraging people to hear more of their discourse. If Uncle EU is not legible, he at least is interesting. He is holding an Éirígí flier. This means you may go to the website to find out what this colorful man in stilts is supporting. This opens the reader up into a world of Republican persuasion to which they might not have otherwise been exposed.

Another defining feature of Éirígí is its commitment to the Irish language. Sinn Féin’s commitment to the Irish language is inextricable from its prison history. Their cultural chair learned his Irish in the H-Blocks. Though Gerry Adams’ Irish is often mocked as insufficient, Sinn Féin does claim Irish as its official language. Éirígí, is also committed to the Irish language on a policy level. Mac Bradaigh says:

One of the major facets of countering imperialism has to be reclaiming that identity. Reclaiming your own culture, your own language, your own systems, your own way of life. Not in a racist way. Not in an insular way. But in the reality that you are a distinct nation-state. You are a distinct people. You are a distinct group of people who can manage their affairs in their own way if you need to. So I think that the cultural revival would be as it was before, one of the biggest facets of any kind of real transition in Ireland (Interview).

Éirígí here makes the quite clear the links between Nationalism and Republicanism. They define a national people that, while they do not want to be racist, are based on a particular conception of the Irish race. Though Éirígí is extremely articulate about its use of the Irish language on its website and in my interview with Seán Mac Bradaigh,⁷⁷ what struck me as so significant was the way in which Éirígí members would use Irish among themselves as their everyday language. Most Sinn Féin members I came across would assume that I spoke only English unless they knew explicitly otherwise. Given that I am an American, this is a reasonable assumption to make. Most Éirígí members, on the other hand, assumed that I had Irish⁷⁸ and would begin conversations *as Gaeilge*. When I struggled with the language, members would not immediately revert to English, but would force me, albeit kindly, to work through the vocabulary I did have (Field Notes 1/18/09).

Of course, this could be entirely a process of self-selection. By the time I encountered many members of Éirígí, it was known in the relatively small Republican community of Belfast that I had Irish. But, there was another attitude that Éirígí members approached me with regarding the language. This individual performance of using the Irish language every day

⁷⁷ He literally struggled to find the “English translation” for words at times, demonstrating that Irish was indeed his first language. (e.g. “I’m the...I don’t know what the term would be... oifigeach caidreamh poiblí – I didn’t know the English term!... The running of Éirígí’s publicity department” (Interview).

⁷⁸ This is a colloquialism used in Ireland to mean that one speaks Irish. It is a direct translation from the Irish: “Tá gaeilge agam,” which literally translated means “I have Irish.” The interrogative “An bhuil Gaeilge agat?” similarly translated means “Do you have (speak) Irish?”

pointed to a movement toward a different kind of claim to authenticity and authority. By focusing primarily on campaigns, Éirígí disavows a larger interest in political power. They legitimize their Republicanism by specifically de-politicizing it. This performance Irish-speaking being normal made the implicit argument that speaking Irish *shouldn't* be seen as extraordinary. The tactic of performative protest is another way of articulating implicit arguments. The Uncle EU protest mentioned above heavily relies on individual observers doing the rational work to link the image and the larger argument.

Part of this implicit argumentation, particularly regarding the Irish language, could be due to the environment that some of the younger Belfast activists grew up in. For example, as Fergal Mac Ionnrachtaigh says,

I attended the first Irish language primary school in the North of Ireland, Bhunscoil Phobail Feirste, in the aftermath of the hunger strikes. So obviously that is a big reason I am an Irish language activist. But I would be a product of the post-hunger-strike period in the North of Ireland, which is really where the seeds of the revival are. I was a bit more politicized in my use of the language. Republicans and Republican families would have a massive interest in the Irish language revival and to take it from a marginal issue to a very, very important cultural revival to more general revival in the North of Ireland. So that's my background and that's why I got my PhD. Because it's part of my story, part of my own background and my own position in this revival (Interview).

Conor Mac Stióphán, another Irish Language activist in Belfast shared a similar history,

I would be an Irish Republican. Wee bit of history about myself: so I was born in 1981, so that was obviously linked with the hunger strike. I think what played a big part in my type of thinking would be possibly that I received my schooling through the medium of Irish. An Uncle of mine was part of the Irish language movement inside of Long Kesh and was released from prison in 1980, and from then there was Irish language schools that grew and blossomed in the early 80's. So, I was one of the first children to be educated in Irish nursery school here in Ardoyne (Interview).

Éirígí is a group that has come into being in the generation of the Fergal Mac Ionnrachtaighs and the Conor Mac Stiópháns. Though neither of these two Irish language activists are members of Éirígí, they are part of the base from which Éirígí draws. This is a generation of people that had a different association with memory than those, like Séanna Walsh, who learned Irish by yelling out the doors of a prison cell. Their movement draws on Republican memories as public memories rather than necessarily as individual memories.

Éirígí can take public memories and perform their authentic Republican-ness in the present through similar tactics without trying to claim the sole ownership over any of the memories.⁷⁹ Their use of Irish, personal history, and lack of commitment to a specific guerilla code, as embodied by one group, makes them more likely to support the group *du jour*, and less likely to invest in a particular ideal or identity simply because a Leader(ship) indicates it should be so. As Seán Mac Bradaigh says,

I think they genuinely are what they say, they are a new vehicle for Irish Republicanism... My parents, obviously, well, my parents have been in jail and my whole family's been in jail and obviously that has a big impact on you, but you have to define why you react to circumstances and start thinking about certain things in a wee bit more focused way if the British Army is kicking your door in, obviously. It gets you up. It gets you thinking. I was in the Meánscoil Feirste, and it had a big impact on me as well, an education solely through the medium of Irish, but every single day of the week having to protest for your right to receive that education also will give you an idea of who the state were and what they thought of you and what they thought of you as a citizen.... Éirígí would see itself as having a role in that, not necessarily having the leadership role...[still has a] role (Interview).

For Mac Bradaigh, the collective memory of the jails is a personal memory as well. This is telling, given that he is the one who has been selected to speak for the group. He serves as a representative of the organization, which articulates its base to be “working class in areas like

⁷⁹ Though, of course, each interviewee demonstrates that speaking Irish as a first language means that one does not necessarily claim at least part of this memory as one's own.

West Belfast” (Interview). Personal memories, such as Mac Bradaigh shares here, are widely shared in the “13 poorest housing wards in the city” (Interview). These memories provide the basis for Burkean identification in areas that are already feeling disaffected by Sinn Féin.

However, ultimately, both Sinn Féin and Éirígí are working toward a common goal: the creation of a socialist, democratic Republic. This *must* include the full equality of women, not simply at a policy level, but at a cultural level. Women cannot be consciously or subconsciously thought of as possessions to be protected and defined against, otherwise violence will be the only outlet to those who cannot attain power. It is to this issue of gender and the Republican struggle that I now turn.

Chapter 4

Gender and Republicanism

In this chapter I argue that Republican authority is gendered as masculine in the identity constituting memories of the People and the Leader(ship). This masculinity is militant and material. As such, this masculinity is masked. When a Republican dies, they become unmasked. The dead volunteer is celebrated, but is not feared. The unmasked volunteer resides in the world of symbolism and as such their masculinity becomes inflected with traits that are considered feminine in a gender binary, though the volunteer does not necessarily become a feminine figure. The masked volunteer typically has a perceptibly “male” body which embodies authority and materiality. However, the female body may also be masked, though when it is, it is masculinized. The ties between the sex of the body and the gender of the subject become disrupted and complicated. The female body is given rhetorical, constitutive authority when it is perceived to be gendered in a predominantly masculine way. However, the rarity of the masculine female body demonstrates the general discomfort in the Republican community with unhinging the assumed sex-gender binds.

The ability to wear the mask and resist the state’s attempt to remove the mask becomes “proof” of one’s authenticity as a Republican and as such gives the wearer authority. These gender roles were used to encourage, inspire and create war and warriors. I will examine the

narratives that have built up this masculine/feminine and male/female⁸⁰ dichotomy by looking to the history of women in the Republican struggle. This provides some understanding of those roles which were considered feminine and therefore acceptable for the female body to perform during the war. In the following chapter I will examine how these roles have impacted Sinn Féin's authority in post-conflict Northern Irish Republican communities. I will also analyze two groups, Éirígí and CFAD, who are taking up the mask and subsequent gender roles that have been entrenched in Republican memory and are complicating them in ways that have impact upon the identities of both the Leader(ship) and the People. First, however, I will examine some understandings of gender and its relationship to sex in Western discourses.

Gender and Sex

“Although you sometimes hear *gender* and *sex* used interchangeably, the two concepts have very distinct meanings. Sex is a designation based on biology, while gender is socially and psychologically constructed. Each of us has some qualities that our culture labels feminine and some it defines as masculine” (Wood 23). Though sex is often thought of as designated exclusively by genitalia, sex is in fact determined by chromosomal pairings and hormones, both of which influence the development of internal and external sex organs (Wood 24). While sex is something one is born with, gender is learned. “The meaning of gender grows out of a society's values, beliefs, and preferred ways of collective life. A culture constructs and sustains meanings of gender by investing biological sex with social significance” (Wood 26-7). The interplay between individual performance of these roles and the social expectations thereof co-construct the meaning of masculinity and femininity for a group or society. Masculinity and femininity are

⁸⁰ Male/female refers to biological sex whereas masculine/feminine are social constructions of gender. Western societies tend to tie sex to gender. They expect the male body to be masculine and the female body to be feminine. The female body is expected to perform certain behaviors and fulfill a feminine gender role while the male body is expected to perform other behaviors and fulfill a masculine gender role (Dow and Wood xii-xiii).

defined relationally as well. In Irish society, as in American society, femininity is defined “in contrast to masculinity” and masculinity is understood “as a counterpoint to femininity. As meanings of one gender change, so do meanings for the other” (Wood 32).

Judith Butler complicated these notions further by arguing that sex is not the biological given that many assume it to be. Butler argues that sex is discursively constructed, and though it appears to be a natural state of embodiment, sex is as unnatural as gender (*Gender* 23-4). Sex is often assumed to be the stable precursor onto which gender is attached. However, Butler conducts a Foucauldian genealogy in *Gender Trouble* to demonstrate “the political stakes in designating as an *origin* and *cause* those identity categories that are in fact the *effects* of institutions, practices, discourses, with multiple and diffused points of origin” (viii-ix; emphasis in original). Sex, much like the Republican concept of authenticity, operates rhetorically as a natural fact, though it actually is a rhetorical effect.

Butler collapses the sex/gender distinction because she argues that one is as capricious as the other and both operate discursively in the same manner. Each is written upon the body’s surface and each rely upon performativity for its constitution. Though both sex and gender appear to be natural, neither is, because neither pre-exist the performance thereof. According to Butler “gender proves to be performative- that is, constituting the identity it is purposed to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed” (25). Gender performativity seems to operate in a similar manner as constitutive rhetoric in the sense that it is dependent upon ritual, materiality and a sense of naturalness. Butler argues that “gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (62).

Though Butler's collapse of the sex/gender distinction is useful, I do think there is still some value in examining them as distinct entities in this project because they are rhetorically constructed as separate entities in the Republican lexicon. Republicans, like many other Western peoples, distinguish between a male body and a female body. They sanction the male body to act in discursively constructed masculine ways and the female body to act in discursively constructed feminine ways. When the female body acts in masculine ways or the masculine body performs femininity, there is a disruption of the sex and gender binaries that reveal their instability and unnaturalness. This can be a powerful moment of intervention in Republican identity. While not necessarily subversive, these moments create the possibility of complication.

I will now examine the history of women and Republicanism. Butler argues that the category of "women" is discursively constructed, and that there is no definitive subject that pre-exists. "If there is something right in Beauvoir's claim that one is not born, but rather *becomes* a woman, it follows that *woman* itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end" (33). The history I provide examines the way that Republican discourses constrained and enabled bodies which were socially designated as female and the gendered ways in which those bodies were expected to act. In many situations, these bodies performed culturally masculine traits, which were accepted under "extraordinary" or "unnatural" circumstances. Republicans articulated a "war" and "resistance" context which permitted a degree of gender fluidity in order to achieve material gains for the cause. However, these behaviors, when too effectively masculine and, as such, threatening to male dominance and too clearly disruptive of the natural façade of the gender binary, were prohibited and devalued.

Women and Republicanism

The first Republican women's organization to come into being was the Ladies Land League, which lasted from 1881 to 1882. This group fought to allow tenant farmers to stay on their land, against the will of powerful landlords. Britain had passed the Coercion Act, which allowed for the forced removal of tenants from their land if they could not pay rents. These families were struggling to pay their rent because "Ireland was a predominantly rural country with a peasant economy; the basic economic unit was the household, all the members of which worked on the land or in the declining cottage industries, which were adversely affected by the Industrial Revolution taking place in Britain" (Roulston and Davies xv). The Coercion Act strictly outlawed male organizations from forming to protect the tenants' rights. Since there was no provision for a women's organization, however, the Ladies Land League was formed to collect funds, distribute them to tenants, build temporary homes and provide for the material necessities of the families (Roulston and Davies 4).

The organization encountered great difficulty finding women who could tour the country and set up branches of the Ladies Land League. During this time period, few families allowed women the degree of freedom necessary to engage in these activities (Roulston and Davies 17). This situation was not helped by the negative response of the press. *The Times* stated, "When treason is reduced to fighting behind petticoats and pinafores it is not likely to do much mischief" (Roulston and Davies 22). Catholic leaders argued that society should shame "women who were prepared to 'forget the modesty of their sex and the high dignity of their womanhood' by parading themselves 'before the public gaze in a character unworthy of a child of Mary'" (Roulston and Davies 22). Furthermore, they announced that "sensible people in the North of Ireland dislike to see woman out of the place she is gifted to occupy, and at no time is woman

further from her natural position than when she appears upon a political platform” (Roulston and Davies 23).

Finally, after several months of political agitation by the women’s organization, the police announced that, “where any females are assembled... such meeting is illegal,” and began arresting women and putting them in jail (Roulston and Davies 28). “The women suffered the additional humiliation of being arrested under statutes designed to curb prostitution, rather than being treated as political prisoners like the men” (Roulston and Davies 28). Charles Parnell, a prominent Republican activist, became enraged when he was told upon his release from jail that the women had been able to sufficiently manage the land crisis. He believed the women’s organization would simply hold his accomplishments in place until he was released from prison and able to take the reins once more. When he found out this was not the case, he ordered that the Ladies Land League be suppressed or he would retire from political life entirely (Roulston and Davies 32). This is an example of the violence response to women behaving in too masculine a manner after the extraordinary circumstance of masculine imprisonment was past. Parnell demonstrates the high stakes in perceiving women as feminine actors.

Maud Gonne⁸¹ founded Inghinidhe na hEireann⁸² when she was excluded from joining the Land League after dissolution of the ladies’ organization. However, “the legacy of the Ladies Land League was the bitter realization that if women wanted to be politically active, they had either to form their own organization or accept subordinate status” (Roulston and Davies 39).

⁸¹ Maud Gonne was an Irish revolutionary from England and an all around extraordinary woman. She fought for the rights of Republican political prisoners and left her husband, Major MacBride when it was alleged he beat her (Ward). She is immortalized by W.B. Yeats in two plays and several poems. Yeats was in love with her and proposed four times. She turned him down each time because he would not convert to Catholicism (Gonne).

⁸² Daughters of Ireland

The objectives of Inghinidhe na hEireann included re-establishment of independence for Ireland, the teaching of classes for youth on Irish culture, and the popularization Irish manufacture. They held monthly Ceilidhs (dances), which featured Irish songs and dances. At each Ceilidh a woman would read a paper on a Pagan heroine. Some focused on Irish goddesses and others on their Catholic counterparts (Roulston and Davies 52).

The first time that women took an active, aggressive stance on a Republican issue without the permission and guidance of a male organization took place on behalf of children. “An act had been passed in England in 1906, enabling local authorities to provide meals for school children, but despite overwhelming need for such provision in Ireland, it had not been extended” (Roulston and Davies 82). Women protested with marches and publicity. “Previously, although women were expected to be patriotic, that patriotism could only be expressed through acceptable forms which were inherently passive, like learning the language or supporting Irish manufacture” (Roulston and Davies 82). This public display demonstrated that women could be a powerful force in the Republican movement; however, this was only permitted to take place because the issue fell into the realm of clearly defined women’s interests. This meant that no Parnellian backlash was required to reassert male dominance. Women were permitted to be empowered, as long as that empowerment took place within the acceptable gender binary that upheld Irish patriarchy while dismantling British patriarchy.

In 1914, Cumann na mBan,⁸³ an all-female organization, was founded to advance the revolutionary, violent prospects of the Republican movement. The Republican men, however, had become concerned about the amount of autonomy Inghinidhe na hEireann had developed and thus required Cumann na mBan to include a “constitutional requirement to ‘assist’ the men

⁸³ The Irishwomen’s Council

[in the Irish Volunteers] in their fight for freedom. The history of Cumann na mBan is, above all, an account of the tensions generated by this subordination and of the repeated attempts by some women to establish a greater degree of autonomy for themselves” (Roulston and Davies 88). The Republican men were organized publicly into the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army. Secretly they were also organized into the Irish Republican Brotherhood. The Volunteers made sure to note that there would be work for people “who could not be in the marching line. There would be work for the women” (Roulston and Davies 91). Before Cumann na mBan was even formed, its members were banned from the fighting lines.

The Volunteers originally stated in their manifesto that they would “secure and maintain the rights and liveries common to all the people of Ireland;” but this was a problem because the government did not legally recognize a non-male as a person. Women asked the Volunteers to define what exactly they meant by person. The men responded that they included both men and women in their definition of “people.” However, they refused to include the statement “without distinction of sex” after any place where “people” was included in their manifesto (Roulston and Davies 96). After the Easter Rising in 1916, the general public assumed that any politically active woman was a member of Cumann na mBan. Thus women were constantly subjected to the assignation of meaning and categorization of their activities from people external to their organization.

The Volunteers clearly had little intention of allowing women any part in the Easter Rising of 1916. However, the Volunteers’ orders were confused before the rising and many regiments did not take part in the planned coup. The Volunteers in Dublin were faced with a shortage of soldiers. Still, women were initially turned away at many of the posts set up in Dublin. Men refused to have women in the vicinity, with or without guns in their hands. This

situation was only rectified “when two members of Cumann na mBan managed to reach the GPO⁸⁴ and informed Pearse, Connolly and Clarke⁸⁵ of the difficulties being experienced by women. A hasty mobilization order was then sent out so that by the evening of the first day women were established in most of the major outposts” (Roulston and Davies 110). This demonstrates that women’s latitude to play with their gendering was acceptable as long as it was sanctioned by a masculine figure. This is literalized by Cumann na mBan’s constitutional requirement to provide only “assistance” under the guidance of the male Irish Volunteers. When the Rising concluded, ninety women had taken part in the effort. Though none of the Cumann na mBan women had fired guns, they held indispensable roles as nurses, cooks and dispatch carriers, the latter of which was particularly dangerous as women had to cross through the lines of fire to get to their destinations (Roulston and Davies).⁸⁶ Communication was maintained between the various posts primarily through the efforts of women.

Though the Catholic Church had a long tradition of supporting the poor of their Irish parish communities, the Church abandoned them if the poor had Republican sympathies or in any way supported the 1916 revolution. According to Maire Comerford

I have a terrible recollection of women whose husbands were in jail or fighting and they would have a house full of kids and no income at all. And many of them were in the Republican tradition long enough to be at feud with the parish priest, to have been denounced off the alter...and there was no way of getting them help, except through the pp [parish priest].... It was in their blood and tradition to suffer in the causes of national, religious and personal freedom.... Mothers would face anything if only we could together win our present battle. They thought that

⁸⁴ General Post Office in Dublin which served as the rebel headquarters in the 1916 revolution.

⁸⁵ Leaders of the Rising who were later executed.

⁸⁶ Countess Markievicz did fire her weapon. However, she was a member of Connelly’s Citizens Army, not Cumann na mBan.

they were rearing the first generation of children who would live their lives out in a free country was enough to support us. There the issue lay (Roulston and Davies 149).

After 1916, Cumann na mBan's membership began to shift. More and more young women in their early twenties joined the organization. These women sought more separation from the men's organization because they desired to be seen on their own merit rather than as a subordinate organization to that of their fathers and brothers. Many of these women were drawn to Cumann na mBan through the language of the 1916 Proclamation, which became widely read only after the revolt had been brutally suppressed.⁸⁷ The Proclamation harkened back to the days of the Old Gaelic Civilization, where men and women shared equally in citizenship and women were a valued part of public and private life alike. The perception of this being an original, natural, authentic state gives the concept of sexual equality truth value. Cumann na mBan, like all subsequent Republican organizations, became rooted in this document and demanded nothing less than the complete fulfillment of its promises.

This commitment became problematic later in the organization's life when the Irish Free State was created under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Though the Free State held elections and drew up a constitution, the Cumann na mBan women refused to participate because they refused to recognize the government. Cumann na mBan argued that the new Irish state must be founded on the values of 1916 and believed that those who signed the Free State treaty were compromising those values. Because these women refused to recognize, and therefore participate in, the formation of the Free State government, they could not advocate for equal rights for women under this government. When the civil war broke out between Free Staters

⁸⁷ The 1916 Revolution was initially very unpopular. Great damage was done to the city of Dublin and many civilians were killed in the crossfire. However, when the ten leaders were executed by the British in jail, including James Connolly who would have died from his severe battle wounds but instead was tied to a chair in the jail courtyard and shot by British soldiers, popular support swelled in vocal opposition to such a barbarous act.

(pro-treaty groups) and those who wanted to hold out for an Irish Republic (anti-treaty), Cumann na mBan stood with the latter. “As the death toll mounted in the succeeding months the unenviable task of burying the dead with full military honors was undertaken by Cumann na mBan who, ‘with eyes shut and faces screwed to one side, fired a volley over the graves with revolvers or automatics’” (Roulston and Davies 149). In this context, women were expected to fire weapons, whereas during the 1916 rising they were explicitly forbidden from such actions for a time. Thus, the complication of gender roles is more acceptable in some contexts than others. Unlike during the Troubles, women were expected to uphold a feminine role during the war itself and perform some masculine behaviors (shooting rifles) after the war.

Some women were also imprisoned. These women forged very strong bonds in jail and refused to leave behind comrades when they were released. Though women continued to participate in the struggle in important ways, their efforts weren’t viewed with the same value as the men’s contributions. “As the cult of martyrology has always been a powerful motivating force in Irish history and it has always been men who have paid the supreme penalty, this sacrifice of male lives for the national cause has obscured the continual yet less dramatic sacrifices made by women working for the same cause” (Roulston and Davies 194).

Indeed, it was men who drew up the Easter Proclamation and held the vast majority of leadership roles in the Rising. “Following the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, Clan na Gael⁸⁸ proposed to the Supreme Council of the IRB in Ireland that a rebellion should be organized. It had long been a nationalist maxim that ‘England’s danger is Ireland’s opportunity’” (O’Connor 13). The Irish Republican Brotherhood developed an inner Military Council separate from the Supreme Council in 1915 to begin plans for the uprising. The council was composed of 7

⁸⁸ A support organization for the IRB operating in the United States.

members: Thomas J. Clarke, Padraig Pearse, Seán MacDiarmad, Joseph Plunkett, Eamonn Ceannt, Thomas MacDonagh and James Connolly.

The council met during Holy Week to finalize plans for the uprising and to finish drafting the Proclamation. “It is believed that the actual literary composition of the Proclamation, in language expressive of ideals inherently heroic, is largely the work of Pearse, a view supported by the evidence of Kathleen Clarke in her autobiography *Revolutionary Woman*” (O’Connor 24). Kathleen Clarke also wrote that one of the seven men did not want to give equal rights to women in the document. Though she did not say who this individual was, she did point out that it was not her husband. The Proclamation was presented to the Military Council on the Tuesday of Holy Week where “a few changes were made” (O’Connor 24).

“The final version of the unanimously agreed Proclamation, consisting of two sheets of paper, was given to Thomas MacDonagh for secret keeping. At the meeting of the Military Council on Easter Sunday morning in Liberty Hall, he handed it over to James Connolly to whom had been assigned the responsibility for having it printed” (O’Connor 25). The Proclamation was printed secretly on an old Wharfedale press in the basement of Liberty Hall. 1,000 poster-sized prints were produced on poor quality paper. It was one of these prints that Pearse read to passers-by on the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin to signal a start to the rising. At the completion of the reading, James Connolly shouted “Thanks be to God, Pearse, that we have lived to see this day” (O’Connor 20).

There are two major figures of the feminine in the Proclamation. The first is a personification of Ireland as Mother and the second is the population of Irishwomen to whom, along with Irishmen, the Proclamation is addressed. Ireland as Mother “receives her old tradition

of nationhood” from “the name of God” and from “the dead generations.” She gains this agency not only from the masculine figure of God, but also from dead generations of non-gendered Irish citizens. Mother Ireland links her children to the pre-colonial, authentic, Irish imaginary. She does not claim this authority, however. She serves instead as the medium through which the authority derived from this authenticity flows to her children. Like the women of Cumann na mBan, Mother Ireland is a masculine agent who simultaneously is a feminine, passive tool wielded to assist men in the pursuit of the Republican dream.

Ireland has the ability to summon “her children to her flag.” This language situates Ireland as a military leader with jurisdiction to summon, or command, those tied to her not only as subordinates, but as family members tied to her by blood. Ireland trains and organizes her men “through her secret revolutionary organization, the Irish Republican Brotherhood.” Thus, just as Cumann na mBan is subordinated and tied to the IRB, so too is the IRB subordinated and tied to Mother Ireland. Mother Ireland in turn is subordinated to God, upon whose authority her children act to protect her. The rebellion will commence because “she now seizes that moment.” This is possible because of the support of “her exiled children in America,” who, again, are not designated according to sex but only by their relationship to the Motherland. Her children will obey because she has “full confidence of victory.” Her confidence is reliant upon the embodiment of her children. Thus, while she commands, she also passively waits for her children to fight for her upon her land/body. She cannot act herself, but instead provides the sentience of the land, like a mother to child. This sustenance is provided so that the child may reach adulthood and act (fight the British) without relying upon her. Thus, Mother Ireland remains both powerful and passive simultaneously.

Mother Ireland must be obeyed just as soldiers obey a general and as children obey their parents. The ideal of Ireland as Mother is particularly notable because one of the only areas that Irish society acknowledged the value and sovereignty of women was in their roles as mothers. Certain issues such as care of children and education were the jurisdiction of mothers and were rarely infringed upon by men. A strong femininity and masculine agency may exist for the Mother, but only in certain sanctioned contexts. The first two paragraphs of the Proclamation indicate that the men should fight for Ireland not because she is a frail figure who needs protection, but because she is an authoritative figure to whom they must submit. Ireland demands and receives the obedience not just of her male children, but of her female children as well. All of her children are required to take part in the fight, whether they send money from America or fight from inside the General Post Office. The Mother figure demands her children's help, but she does not necessarily need it. She can rely "first on her own strength." The strength of the Mother outweighs the strength of her children because she can accomplish freedom on her own. However, she may only retain this power when she does not act herself and remains in the position of needing protection. She may demand that protection, but nonetheless is helpless without receiving it.

The third paragraph argues that the people of Ireland have "ownership" over Ireland, which would reifies the way in which Ireland may be simultaneously powerful and docile. In this paragraph, the authors refer to Ireland as the "Irish Republic" and the "Sovereign Independent State" instead of the nation to which Mother Ireland was associated. The relationship between the materiality of the state and the rhetorical concept of nationhood demonstrate the complication of a mother being both a material body that provides substance and power while simultaneously performing a passive subject that requires defense.

The second feminine figure in the Proclamation is that of Irishwomen. Irishwomen are called, along with Irishmen, to the flag and toward freedom. “The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance [not just] of every Irishman...[but also of every] Irishwoman.” Irishwomen are the children of Mother Ireland, who are guaranteed “religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities.” The Proclamation declared a “resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally.” Any differences in treatment between men and women in the past are ascribed to the “alien government,” which indicates that women should not begrudge men for their oppressed status but rather begrudge England. One of the three ways that citizens can “dishonor” Mother Ireland is by “rapine.” Women’s bodies are protected from violation in the name of the nation.

The Proclamation provides a possible ideological foundation for the development of a standpoint for Republican women. Standpoint theory argues that women’s subordinate location in society can lead them to have a greater, more complete understanding of society than those who are in positions of greater social value. In terms of social location, women were devalued, their activities were strictly regulated and their roles were limited. Though many women of this time inhabited this location with a deep sense of its righteousness, a majority of women enacted their invisible labor with a lack of political consciousness. One of the primary reasons for this situation is that these women were never told that things could be different for them. No seminal text such as *The Feminine Mystique* yet existed for Irishwomen. There were not enough women with the time, resources or confidence to travel around Ireland raising consciousness (Ward 17).

Patricia Hill Collins points to the emphasis that Black feminist writers place on the interlocking nature of oppression. The simultaneous oppression of being Black and being

women results in a situation where “minimizing one form of oppression, while essential, may still leave them oppressed in other equally dehumanizing ways” (109). While some women, such as Maud Gonne, were economically privileged, many other women who looked to the Proclamation as a founding document of Republican identity were not only devalued for their sex but also for their socio-economic class, ethnic background (Catholic or Irish instead of Protestant or British) or marital status (being single instead of married). While I believe a standpoint *could* exist for Republican women who read this document, I don’t believe that it existed during its initial publication. However, given that the Proclamation remains a salient text for Republicans today, I do believe that it is likely that it played a prominent role in the development of a feminist standpoint for many Republicans, male and female, who acquired a significant amount of education in the jails. The Armagh women articulated a feminist standpoint in many of their publications and many of the male volunteers in Long Kesh were seriously committed to the study and pursuit of feminism.

At the time of the Proclamation’s initial publication, women were largely conscripted into support roles. They were caregivers as secretaries, nurses and cooks. However, the Proclamation demonstrates that women can take these roles as well as wield weapons. The mother who is supported in this text is not frail or aged but angry and vengeful. She is lashing out against her perceived oppressor and calling both men and women to help her achieve freedom. While this seems initially empowering, it is important to remember that female anger is often depicted as insane, uncontrollable and destructive. Mother Ireland must therefore be controlled so as to not act against her own children rather than the oppositional feminine figure of England. Women can connect the image painted in the Proclamation to their own social location, whether or not they had physically borne children because the role of women entails

care-giving for society at large, not just for biological children. Mother as care-giver gives a woman the possibility for identification, empowerment, and mobilization while simultaneously demanding she act only as a conduit for agency rather than an agent herself.

Women are valuable strangers to the social order or outsiders-within (Hill-Collins 109), who see society from the periphery. “The stranger can see patterns of belief or behavior that are hard for those immersed in the culture to detect” (Harding 129). The Proclamation guarantees both Irishmen and Irishwomen equal rights. The Irishwoman has to be guaranteed these rights because these conditions did not exist for her. The Proclamation notes that the Republic will be built in such a manner as to allow all its citizens to pursue happiness, not just men. The Irishwoman who is positioned at the social periphery can note those areas of inequality far more accurately than men may. The Proclamation’s guarantee of equal rights can help move women from location to standpoint’s political mobilization because the actual possibility of equality is being articulated as the basis for real individual’s deaths.

Certainly all citizens, male or female, could read this document and understand that men died in an effort to rectify social inequality that was being instituted through foreign oppression. However, for women, this document demonstrates that their current state of oppression, both by the state and by the patriarchal nature of society, is unnatural. However, that disruption of gender roles is complicated itself through the simultaneous empowerment and disempowerment of Mother Ireland. In order to honestly achieve the Ireland of equals that the Proclamation claims to aspire to, women would need to be consulted not as mediums, but as agents in and of themselves. Their views would need to be taken seriously.

Standpoint theory also argues that women exist in the materiality of everyday, which allows men to exist in the world of abstract concepts and ideas (Harding 129). Because women were devalued by the state, generally they were not arrested with their male counterparts and therefore they were the soldiers left to bury the dead. They used their devaluation by the state strategically. They had to prepare the bodies, comfort family members and provide the public rationale for the death. The Irish Republican expectation that women will care for the dead extends back to the Christian imagery of the women at the cross who took down Jesus' body, washed it, and prepared it for the tomb. Indeed, it was the responsibility of women to care for all aspects of the spiritual and religious practices of her family (Condren).⁸⁹ However, there is nothing necessary about the exclusive existence of women within the materiality of everyday life. Men often were confronted with the materiality of state oppression in ways that women were not during war time.

However, female time, based in daily routine, was not glorified in the way that men's time was valued. Prison serves as an excellent example of this. When women were imprisoned, outrage erupted not because Republicans wanted soldiers released but because they thought it improper for women to be subjected to prison conditions. Women should be protected, they argued, just like Mother Ireland. Ironically, many Republican women were living on a daily basis in far worse conditions but because their lives were not granted value, their plight went ignored.

Similarly, Republican women's daily efforts to resist the English government went unnoticed. Mother Ireland has been patient while the men trained to fight. Women during this

⁸⁹ In Republican history, this religion was prominently Catholic, though the first Republicans were, in fact, Presbyterian.

time were equipping the men, cooking dinner and doing laundry so the men could sleep and eat enough to sustain them during maneuvers. Women tried to buy products made in Ireland rather than in England, even if local products were more expensive. These behaviors were not immortalized with the same value that the masculine paramilitary member, though they were afforded rhetorical appreciation in the *Green Book*, which points out the degree to which the volunteer relies upon these actions for success. Obviously, these actions had to be valued to a certain degree in order to guarantee their continuation.

Many Republican groups, such as Sinn Féin and Éirígi, argue that sexism, sectarianism and socio-economic oppression are a direct result of British colonialism on the island. As is a typical move in colonized cultures, recapturing the pre-colonial identity becomes articulated as a powerful mode of resistance and anti-colonialism. One way this particular argument is manifest is in the popular genre of paintings of Celtic goddesses and heroines. These women are graphically depicted as powerful creatures to fear. Their unique connection to nature made them uncontrollable and unpredictable, like Mother Ireland's anger. The confluence of female figures between Mother Ireland, the pagan goddesses of Ireland and Catholic saints demonstrate the endurance of these gender roles that expect women to be powerful, but require a control of that power for fear that it be turned against the People. These mythic feminine loyalties are suspect because their unpredictable anger can be turned against their own as easily as it may be turned against the enemy.

Though I have provided an analysis of the feminine in the Proclamation, there is also, of course, a great deal to be said about the masculine as it is enshrined in this founding document. The role of the masculine figure, particularly revolving around the materiality of the male body, I would argue, has dominated modern Republican discourse, particularly since the beginning of

the Troubles in 1969. Women's bodies additionally have been dichotomized into accepting *either* the mother role or the warrior role, without allowing the fluency that the Proclamation called for.

The prominence of the male Republican body in discourse extends to the academic realm as well. Though information is available on the role of women in the Republican struggle until 1969, little information is available on the military role women played in the after that point. Most of the research focuses on the support roles women continued to play, which were typically "feminine." One example that is characteristic of the best of this research is Helen Harris' book *Strong About It All*. Harris interviewed Republican women from the neighborhoods that were most significantly impacted by the Troubles. These women expressed their views about the new state and told stories of the personal trauma they experienced as mothers, sisters, wives and friends of male volunteers. While many of these women may have played extremely important support roles, they continue to be ignored in most of the discourse that the Republican people circulate about who to emulate through the masculine narratives of martyrs and heroes (Roulston and Davies 194).

It is not that Sinn Féin and other Republican groups have not tried to alter this discourse and value the contributions of women within these roles of martyr and hero. For example, Ógra Sinn Féin, the youth wing of the party, released a video⁹⁰ depicting the various roles, including military roles, women played in the Republican movement during the Troubles. This video demonstrates the ways that gender is multifaceted and also temporally contingent, while simultaneously pointing to some fluency between the historical feminine roles expected for women. Sinn Féin has women serving on its executive council in equal numbers to men and has

⁹⁰ Which can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Crhgwt4fAfk> (March 10, 2010).

a party quota policy that says 50% of all seats contested by the party in elections must be done so by women.⁹¹ Additionally, the new Irish Republican History Museum off of Falls Road in Conway Mill, Belfast, has an extensive section devoted to the role that women played in the struggle, particularly the militant role. This is particularly important given that museums often function as powerful memory places (Blair *et al* 33). Museums are viewed as exceptionally “trustworthy,” demonstrating that “one of the oldest of memory’s *techné* seems still to exert a powerful hold” (Blair *et al* 34). A museum will assume “special attention because of its self-nomination as a site of significant memory of and for the collective” (Blair *et al* 34). As a memory place it will “construct preferred public identities for visitors by specific rhetorical means” (36) and is “characterized by extraordinary partiality” (37). The authors also note that, “because of their place-ness, memory places mobilize power in ways not always available with other memory *techné*” (39). The museum “incorporate[s] the products of various memory *techné*” (40) and, as with all memory places, “they do not just *represent* the past. They *accrete* their own pasts” (41).

The museum is dedicated to Eileen Hickey, a lifelong Republican who, as a member of the PIRA, was the “Officer Commanding the Republican Women P.O.W's in Armagh Gaol from 1973 to 1977” (eileenhickeymuseum.com⁹²). The museum started as her personal collection. Some of the following pieces are found on the center wall of the museum:

⁹¹ Of course, the value of quotas is to be highly questioned, given the experiences of the women’s movement in both the United States and Ireland.

⁹² The Irish Republican History Museum’s website

This is not a man's war, but a people's war and very, very much suffering has been borne by the women, be they mothers, wives, political activists or Volunteers and the men ought to remember that without the sacrifice of women there would be no struggle at all.

— IRA statement

Image 9
Photo by author

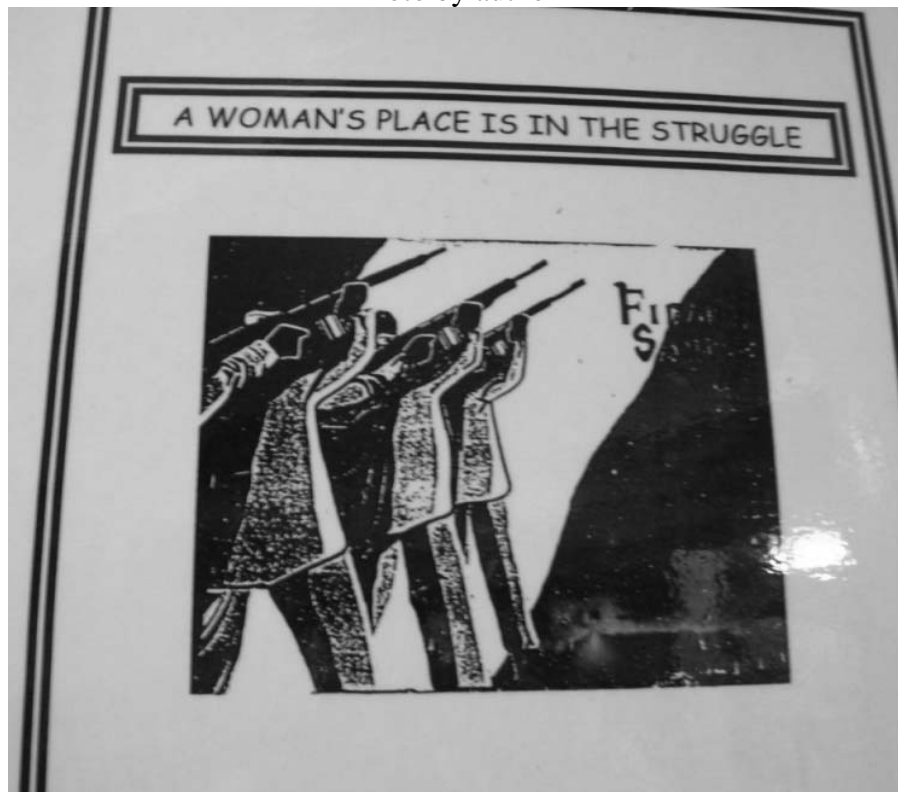


Image 10
Photo by author



Image 11
Photo by author



Image 12
Photo by author



Image 13
Photo by author

The museum clearly provides a powerful narrative of women's participation in and value to the struggle for Irish Freedom. At the same time, the message of empowered women that the museum conveys means that certain details of the struggle are left out. For example, the women in Armagh jail were told to go off of their hunger strike to prevent attention from being drawn away from the men on hunger strike in the H-Blocks. Women were told to come off of dirty protest because the People found the idea of smeared menstrual blood on the wall to be disgusting, rather than inducing sympathy (Aretxaga 128). Women lured two British soldiers to a field after "a heavy night's drinking," where the two soldiers were then shot dead by male IRA comrades. However, IRA found that the Republican people did not welcome the narrative, but

⁹³ "Women began patrolling the streets on a rotating basis to warn the community of the presence of the BA [British Army]. Women would blow whistles while simultaneously banging bin lids against the pavement. These women became known as the Hen Patrol, and in this way many women began to move from fear to defiance" (Irelandsown.net, "Women Freedom Fighters").

found it deeply disconcerting that women, even in war, would behave this way. The story has since been written out of Republican memory (Moloney 97).

The story is problematic because female bodies were performing feminine, straight sexuality by “luring” the soldiers but were behaving in a masculine and callous way by assisting in their death. Female bodies are permitted, even expected to display, certain masculine traits during wartime to forward their cause. The women in image 11 put their bodies on the street in protest and the women in image 12 are jailed. Their apparently female bodies are agents who either took action to get themselves into seemingly masculine contexts (jail) or placed themselves in those situations (protests). Women banged the bin lids, such as the kind shown in image 13, to warn the volunteers of British infiltration into their communities. The loudness of the noise, the body standing against the state body and the overt social resistance are all seemingly masculine behaviors that were praised when performed by female bodies. This unhinging of the sex-gender binary seemed easy in some war situations where the context was considered “extraordinary.” When necessity requires the agency of women then it is endorsed, but only in contexts sanctioned by authentic, masculine authority. Once that society is “normalized” however, these gender roles become more rigid.

The masculine ideal that is celebrated is done so in opposition to a particular narrative of femininity that relies upon its domination. The Sinn Féin Leader(ship) is trying to negotiate this rhetoric in the current post-conflict context. However, this is problematic for the Leader(ship) because their authority is based in the masculine ideal. A performative contradiction exists when the Leader(ship) rhetorically support a view of femininity that undermines the dominance of masculinity upon which their own authority is predicated.

Masculinity and the Republican narrative: The mask

The ideal Republican who is most often talked about, glamorized and presented as “instructive” (Blair *et al* 9) is hypermasculine. This masculinity is embodied and provides an “anchoring of the self” (Blair *et al* 9) in Republican communities. The masculine body is the authentic, and therefore authoritative, body. The authentic body is the body which is the most anti-colonial body (Graham 60). The masked masculine body and the unmasked, dead body are authentically anti-colonial, because, according to Sinn Féin, these volunteers are willing to or have, in fact, “made the supreme contribution for their republican ideal...have made the ultimate sacrifice for their beliefs...[and] epitomized the very ethos of the republican cause” (*Cuimhíonn Glúin* program). Sinn Féin articulates volunteers as the superlative of the republican cause because of their ability to face the unmasking of death. These are the ones who the generations must “remember” and “honour” (*Cuimhíonn Glúin* program). The dead volunteer has died a “good death” for the People. Like the Irish speakers in jail, the volunteers re-member a pre-colonial Irish identity that was masculine because it had not yet been dominated and feminized by the British. Colonization, like all wars, acts to feminize the colonized and to create a “manly” colonizer (Sindha 1). Thus, in what could be described as an anti-colonial war for Northern Independence, the Republican warrior is literally reclaiming his masculinity from the colonizer in combat on behalf of the People. This masculinity is typically reclaimed by the male body, but, as the women’s museum demonstrates, female bodies can open up possibilities for a female masculinity to threaten not the male masculinity, but the colonial oppressor. This masculinity is articulated in discourses, events, objects and practices such as Republican funerals, murals, crafts, marches and performances that serve to re-member masculinity and the Republican body.

“Masculinity is not simply ‘what men do’; it is more of an ideal which encapsulates what ideal-typical men (who may or may not exist at all, anywhere) are expected to think and do”

(Paechter 12-13). “Traditional conceptions of masculinity include independence, instrumentality, aggressiveness, decisiveness and physical strength” (Levy 325). Masculinity within wartime is particularly pronounced as an oppositional identity. Given the emphasis in republican narratives of the unbroken, 800 year war against the British, Republican gender roles are defined within a specific wartime context. “Masculinity often depends on an ‘other’ constructed as feminine. Feminine roles in the war system are performed by women who support war in a myriad of ways, voluntarily and involuntarily.... Cultures use gender in constructing social roles that enable war” (Goldstein 251).

War masculinity relies upon the suppression of emotion as a way of demonstrating self-discipline (Goldstein 267). “If a man is to carry out manly deeds, he cannot be slowed down by taking time to psychologically heal himself after the terrible things he has witnessed and endured” (Goldstein 267). The realm of emotions is gendered as feminine. Thus, the feminine is a less valuable soldier to the cause than the masculine soldier. The “taboo on tenderness” does not exist for women, as long as that tenderness is directed toward comforting one’s own People and not the opposition (Goldstein 267). These roles are not discrete, however, since the necessity of feminine tenderness is provided by the masculine need for such.

These roles are not simply created by the patriarchy and imposed upon women. Many times, women are the strongest enforcers of these gender dichotomies in war time. For example, the wives and girlfriends of many male soldiers during World War I reported disgust at seeing their male partners cry (Goldstein 268).⁹⁴ Though regressive, these women do display an agency here and a masculine claim to control the bodies of their partners. Women also play a part in

⁹⁴ Female sexuality is another trope used to goad men into war. “In the 1922 painting that dominates the stairway of Harvard’s main library ‘Victory’ is a voluptuous female who caresses the soul of a dead soldier being carried away by Death” (Goldstein 295).

shaming men into war, by looking upon those who do not fight as cowards (Goldstein 272).⁹⁵

This shame became a weapon that the feminine figure could wield in a masculine way to submit their partners.

This discourse runs alongside those women who take an active stance against wars. These women are depicted as not strong enough to handle the emotional stress of their men being at war. Thus, these women are depicted as lacking the self-discipline that is so valued in male soldiers, justifying once again their lesser worth in the gender scale. This places these women below the male soldier and paints them as traitors to the nation's cause (Goldstein 272). The traitor takes on the mantle of colonizer and as such is the enemy to be oppressed. The devaluation of women sheds some light on the narratives of female support being invaluable. By celebrating feminine figures who support the war, the Leader(ship) entrenches the value of the masculine at war.

The feminine role is not only to actively support, but to provide a passive body to protect. "Femininity is likely to be a group rather than an individual construction, and relates oppositionally, or to be more precise, in a relation of Other, of dualistic negation, to hegemonic masculinity" (Paechter 13). The feminine body becomes the Other body, in need of protection. Protecting femininity legitimizes and protects masculinity. As one ex-volunteer told me in Central Belfast, "Look, the whole conflict came down to protecting your women. Whether they are sisters, mothers or wives, when they are getting hurt, you have to protect them. An Irish man will always give his own life to protect his women" (Field Notes 9/11/09). This ex-volunteer explicitly described women in his life as possessions and at least partially defined his masculinity in terms of his ability to protect them. In so doing, he performs and proves his masculinity as

⁹⁵ "In Britain and America during [World War I], women organized a large-scale campaign to hand out white feathers to able-bodied men found on the streets, to shame the men for failing to serve in combat" (Goldstein 272).

authentic. “The performance of masculinities and femininities is also, of course, a performance to and for others. Here, even more than to the self, it is successful performance that matters....The performance of gender is a reciprocal relation between performer and audience, its meaning will be interpreted in the relationship between them.... Masculinity is more highly valued, and therefore requires greater proofs than femininity” (Paechter 19).

These cultural narratives are more nuanced than simply saying, ‘you should be this kind of man, and being this kind of man makes you better than women.’ Their sophistication is at least partially what makes them so salient. One of the rhetorical tactics used to make the message less obvious and therefore more difficult to attack, is that the narratives of embodied masculinity are told as cultural memories. Memory is sacrosanct in the Republican tradition (Whittaker 94). Thus, these narratives become difficult to attack. Memories of masculinity reinforce, inspire and consolidate Republican memory (Whittaker 94). “The uses of history as memory not only to keep the past alive but to sustain a loss of deprivation, marginalization, not to speak of the affronts, discrimination, prejudice, and the like has sustained the tensed boundaries of the Irish working-class community extremely well” (Whittaker 94). These narratives are “handed down generationally...[and] are almost as deeply relevant as were myths of the eternal return among the Jews” (Whittaker 94).

The close relationship between power and knowledge reinforces these narratives. Those individuals who own and propagate knowledge are given social power. In a war context, such as Republicans were explicitly facing between 1969 and 1998, and remembering for the 800 previous years, their safety was guaranteed by the Leader(ship) having knowledge of attacks, how to counter those attacks and how to recruit and train future generations to follow these same steps. This knowledge required proof. This proof was provided in a variety of narratives with

which the People identified. However, once the Leader(ship) appeared to be cooperating with the colonial state, which feminized the colonial People, the Leader(ship) appeared to be giving up on their war to reclaim the People's masculinity. The surrendering of their own embodiment as the source of authority and ability to protect the People disrupted deeply salient understandings of how Republican power structures should operate.

Knowledge and power have a reciprocal relationship. Furthermore, "power/knowledge is always gendered. This is because knowledge is gendered (in different ways at different times), and the gendered nature of knowledge has effects at the level of power" (Paechter 18). Many shifted to a new form of knowledge and thus reinforced Sinn Féin's power. "Dissident" Republicans did not, and invested in a variety of new Leader(ship)s at odds with Sinn Féin, which carried varying weight among the People at large.

One of the most explicit narratives of masculinity was found in *The Handbook for Volunteers of the Irish Republican Army: Notes on Guerrilla Warfare*, or "The Green Book," as it was more colloquially known.⁹⁶ The text is legitimized as a stable political myth from which to draw one's guerilla identity. The book articulated the practices required by the masked and unmasked warrior to claim legitimacy. Rituals are important in the creation, reinforcement, and legitimating of masculine authority because of the People's use, like all communities, of panoptic surveillance. This surveillance regulates everyday gender practices and therefore is already deployed to regulate heightened performances of the "masculine body on the line." "Panoptic power relations are therefore spread throughout society as part of the capillary mechanisms of power. They are part of gendered power/knowledge relations, for they require

⁹⁶ I was able to read the most recent public version of the Green Book, published in 1985. I was told several times by Republicans that a newer version existed for the modern Republican volunteer, but I was not permitted to access it for security purposes. One would expect to find the identity relatively unchanged, but the weaponry and tactics updated.

the observer to know the observed, and the observed, at the very least, to know of the existence of the observer” (Paechter 20-21).

IRA volunteers would assume that they were always being watched by state security surveillance apparatuses and thus would find no cognitive dissonance with the “communities of masculinity and femininity practice” (Paechter 21) regulating their behavior. This is the case because volunteers were not only under surveillance by the state and security apparatus, but also by their own communities. The Leader(ship) relied upon the People to discover touts and report them to the Leader(ship).⁹⁷ Additionally, because the masculine ideal was such a defining feature of the communal identity, the volunteers who represented this ideal were monitored by the community to make sure the ideal was properly performed.

“The Green Book” covers the traditions of guerrilla warfare, tactics, and organization and emphasizes the importance of the guerrilla’s relationships with the People. The sixth chapter is literally titled “With the People” (capitalization in original). The opening of the text reads:

No nation has a greater tradition of guerrilla warfare than Ireland. Our history is full of examples of its successful use. We have produced some fine guerrilla leaders whose true qualities have never been fully assessed. Their strength lay in the support they received from the Irish people. In the final analysis it was the people who bore the enemy’s reprisals. Whoever betrayed the cause, or gave up the fight, or suffered loss of spirit, it was seldom the people (pg. 1)

The articulation of the guerrilla forces as Leaders, was created in a reciprocal relationship to the People. This identity is carefully articulated in a way that does not denigrate the People. The text speaks very respectfully of the People, but reserves special praise for the leaders. The most proven of these leaders are those who have become the Leader(ship) that remains in power today. This demonstrates a hierarchy of power that relies upon different masculinities. There

⁹⁷This is not unusual practice for an urban, guerilla war.

must be a non-ideal yet valuable masculinity to uphold or the Leader(ship) and People would fall strictly upon sex lines (all men would be Leaders and all women People), which is simply not the case.

The characteristics of the guerrilla are outlined in a section titled “The Guerrilla.” The Guerrilla is described as follows:

Outside the support he gets from the people among whom he operates -- and this support must never be underestimated for it is vital to his eventual success – he fights alone. He is part of an independent formation that is in effect an army by itself. He must be self-contained...he must find his own supplies. His endurance must be great: and for this he needs a fit body and an alert mind. Above all he must know what he is fighting for – and why (7).

Though he fights alone, he is simultaneously never "alone" in another sense because he is dependent upon the People. It is the fighter/leader who also serves to reinforce the concept of the People. The guerrilla is only described as a “he.” Most writing about the purpose of the IRA indicate that “what” *he* is fighting for is the removal of British colonialism in Ireland and the creation of a socialist democratic republic. Yet, on immediate terms, the volunteer I spoke with indicated it was quite literally about protecting the sex-gender tie. Irishmen gain masculinity from protecting (his) feminine Irishwomen. These two goals are not mutually exclusive. The British retained the power in Northern Ireland. Thus, they retained the knowledge. In so doing, the British became the macro-masculine power and feminized Republican populations through their subjugation. Agency is extremely important in the valuation of different genderings. Femininity under a Republican structure could be valued, whereas when it is imposed by a colonial oppressor, it is shameful.

The notion of proof is extremely important in the creation of authority, because authority is gendered as masculine, and masculinity itself requires constant proof. One must prove one's lack of femininity in order to authenticate one's authority. Though varying shades of gender are permitted to the People, who exist at varying levels of the local power hierarchy, the Leader(ship) of the movement must be the masculine ideal. War is often theorized as an opportunity to prove one's masculinity through "testing" it (Goldstein 252). Gender roles provide motivation to fight. The fear of the ultimate imposed feminization through defeat/surrender encourage populations to keep a losing war going as long as possible (Goldstein 252).

In Northern Ireland, the Leader(ship) crafted two specific images of the Republican ideal: one masked and the other unmasked. This is why the overlap between the Sinn Féin Leader(ship) and the IRA leadership was so important before the end of the war was announced in 2005: many of the masked and unmasked figures found in Republican discourses, events, objects, and practices were deployed through the IRA and not Sinn Féin from 1969-1998. Yet, because there was perceived cross-over between the Leader(ship)s, the authority that came with being the Leader/rhetor who articulates the People's political myths transfers from the embodied IRA to the intellectualism of Sinn Féin, because the IRA body has already "proven" its masculinity through the test of war.

The perception of crossover legitimizes Gerry Adams' role as Sinn Féin President/The Big Lad through the "whiff of sulphur" (Rafter 6). Sulphur is the residue from a weapon firing that one sometimes gets on one's body or cloths. The smell of sulphur functions for Gerry Adams as the spectre of the mask. His assumed war heroics made him a legitimate leader. "Being able to claim legitimacy for one's participation in a community of masculinity or

femininity practice is highly important, because it gives access to symbolic and material goods. This is particularly true for communities of masculinity practice” (Paechter 27). One of the symbolic goods Adams and the Leader(ship) receive in relation to their legitimacy is the right to shape the People’s identity through their ability to select those memories worthy of “talk” (Blair *et al* 9).

During the war, the Republican Leader(ship) primarily visually depicted the body in two forms: as a masked, anonymous volunteer and as an unmasked, specific martyr. The former focused on the volunteer’s body and the latter on the martyr’s face. The masked volunteer was always alive and embodied. Volunteers were only depicted as unmasked once they had died. The Leader(ship) used both photographic and drawn images in ephemeral propaganda and in more permanent murals. The Leader(ship) also used the presence of active volunteers in performance at public ceremonies, such as funerals, to reinforce this image. The People co-constructed this image through their physical presence and support of these ceremonies, the protection of community murals, and the actual performance of the masked man as volunteer from Republican communities.

There are very good reasons for masking the active volunteer in both images and at live ceremonies. Should the masked warrior be identified, they would likely be arrested for membership in an illegal organization. If arrested, they were subjected to interrogation, which could endanger not only them but also, their entire company. They also would then be known to security forces and more likely to be tracked by those forces. The anonymity of the mask thus means that the volunteer has been successful in their war effort. They have not been captured. They have not been defeated. The warrior is still unknown to the opposition. The masked

warrior has denied the opposition the knowledge of their identity and thus has denied the opposition power. Through the denial of power, the opposition is feminized (Goldstein 356).

Additionally, in Western cultures, the dominant is that which is considered normal. It is difference that is raced, sexed, classed, gendered (etc) as abnormal. The normal is invisible (Paechter 13). The normal is typically white, straight, male and rich. However, in post 1969 Republicanism, the normative class has been working class (Interview *Mac Bradaigh*). Thus, the masked volunteer, who is held up as the ideal, is assumed to be white, straight, working class and, of course, male.

There are many examples of images of the masked Republican warrior. One of the most famous images is as follows:

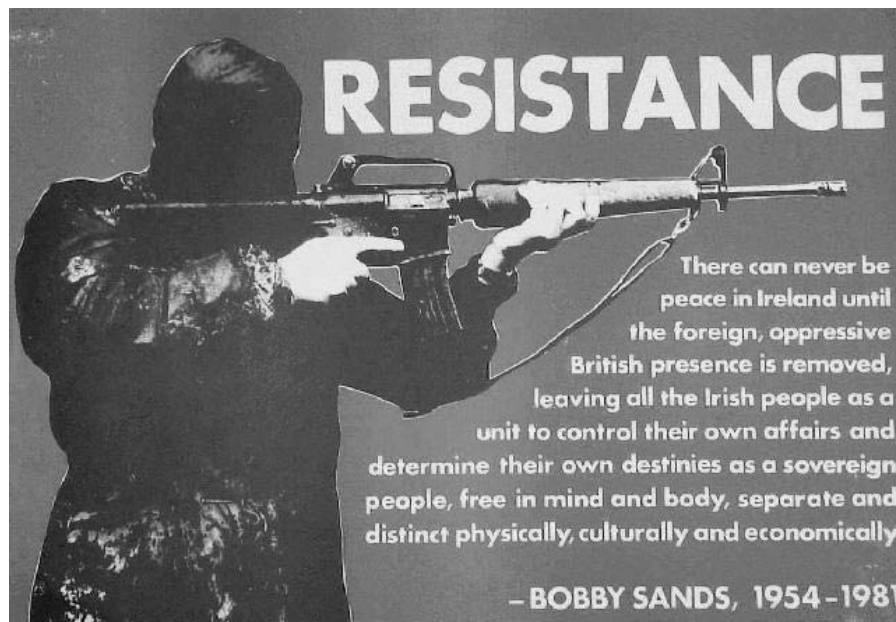


Image 14
Linen Hall Library *Troubled*

According to the Linen Hall Library's "Trouble Images" collection, "This style of poster showing photographs of IRA volunteers juxtaposed with famous quotations from Republican

icons is quite common. The 1981 hunger striker Bobby Sands was the most iconic figure of the IRA campaign of the late twentieth century. This design was also used for a postcard.” They list the creator of the image as “The Republican Movement,” and attribute its origins to 1982. This design can be found on many Republican websites, in Republican calendars, and other items circulated in the Republican community internally.

The mask is a powerful rhetorical tool. It provides the wearer with anonymity such that the individual could be anyone. This anonymity protects the individual in the picture. The anonymity also sends a message to the viewer indicating that this individual could also be your neighbor, be your teacher, be your GAA coach...essentially anyone in your neighborhood could be a paramilitary member. This is both a message that simultaneously comforts, threatens and inspires. The community is meant to feel protected by the masked figure. He can be anyone and thus could always be there in a time of need, much like the masked superheroes. Through this protection, the community becomes feminized, as a group in need of physical protection. Simultaneously, the masked man proves his masculinity by protecting his community from the implied British threat.

He also serves to threaten those who would work against the Republican vision. Should an individual identify one masked man and “tout” to the police, then other masked men will find and punish the informer through their ability to panoptically survey their area from anonymous, hidden vantage points. Finally, he also serves to inspire local youth to join the cause. Because the masked man could be anyone, the message is also “this could be YOU.” The audience most likely to identify with this narrative is comprised of the young boys who learn role modeling from such images (Paechter 40).

The masked warrior appeared in propaganda drawings and paintings, and also often appeared in photographs distributed to newspapers, including the Republican newspaper *An Phoblacht*. These images depicted masked paramilitary members engaging in one of several rituals that defined and justified the masculine authority. One common image was of masked men walking through Belfast or Derry, displaying arms. The following is a typical example:



Image 15
Belfasttelegraph.com *Belfast*

The ritual of walking through the streets most often featured individuals patrolling their local areas. The men in this picture display the strength of the IRA cache of weapons. The gun becomes an extension of the male body, displaying the power and virility of those protecting the area.⁹⁸ They have confident strides and exhibit individuality through spatial distance while also functioning as a unit within the boundaries of the two walls of the alley. This is a metaphor for a

⁹⁸ Some authors argue, quite persuasively, that the weapon is a phallic extension of the soldier's body. Shooting bullets has been likened to orgasm. "The phallic character of weapons has seemingly persisted even as technology has evolved" (Goldstein 350). Condoms were placed over the ends of gun barrels in WWII and the Gulf War to keep sand out, and also as a subtle way of articulating to soldiers the importance of wearing condoms when engaging in sex during war time (Goldstein 350).

common fighting method of cell-based paramilitary units: the individual is able to operate on his own, but also must be able to coordinate with others when required.

The performance of marching through the streets is particularly over-determined in Belfast where there has been an extensive history of conflict arising from the annual 12th of July Orange marches.⁹⁹ Marching has become a way of reclaiming space for those who are marching and spectators supporting the marchers. It carves out a boundary that gives the individuals who are marching the power to articulate an in-group and an out-group with their movements. As de Certeau argues, urban space is a fact, but a city comes into being when this fact is linked with the concept of the “city” (123). A city is not constituted exclusively by its materiality; nor is it constituted entirely by the symbols associated with the perception of the city (e.g. over-determined ideas of a city’s available cosmopolitan lifestyle, cut-throat competition, culture, wealth, opulence, poverty, etc). Rather it is *both* the materiality and the symbolicity that create the idea of “city.”

Similarly, through their marching, paramilitaries change the “fact” of the Ardoyne streets into the concept of the Republican community of Ardoyne. By supporting the marching taking place, both through their non-action against it and through the very material ways in which the communities supported paramilitary members by hiding them under their floor boards and feeding the “boys on the run,” the community members co-construct themselves as the feminized, protected community while simultaneously reaffirming their own identity as the People. De Certeau further argues, “It is the partition of space that structures it” (123). When de Certeau tells the critic to read boundaries as stories, this does not mean to consider only those

⁹⁹Orange marches are held on the 12th of July to celebrate Protestant dominance in Northern Ireland. As such, they become events of violence at flashpoints, where Republicans resist and protest these displays of dominance while Orangemen claim they have a right to celebrate their ethnic heritage. Ardoyne is typically one such flashpoint.

stories discovered in spoken language that are imparted by one individual to another. Stories for de Certeau are also found in the movements of people, the ways that they walk through space and don't walk through other spaces. Even when de Certeau reads footsteps as metaphors through speech act theory, he still does not lose track of the material existence of walking. He attends to the stories' symbolic effects as well as their existence as real people's footsteps on the ground of a city.

The story that these masked paramilitary units tell is one of mnemonic construction and articulation that develops a communal identity both through the positive understanding of who they *are* and through the negative articulation of who they are *not*. The anonymous masked men patrolled the borders of areas both to protect the area and to demonstrate strength. The community allowed this and, in so doing, articulated themselves as insiders while those who were unsupportive were the enemy against whom the units protected the people. This performance was a re-membering.

The masked paramilitary body articulated memories of Republican oppression at the hands of the state. Republicans were burned out of Bombay Street in West Belfast at the beginning of the Troubles in 1969.¹⁰⁰ “When mobs of pro-British loyalists surged into the streets around Clonard, the local IRA had virtually no weapons with which to beat them off. An entire row of houses known as Bombay Street was burned to the ground, and a young boy was shot dead. When the IRA split acrimoniously later that year, the Belfast men who led the breakaway Provisional IRA swore they would never leave their streets defenseless again”

¹⁰⁰ “Republicans have long memories. For them, the attack by loyalist mobs on Bombay Street in August 1969, when hundreds of Catholics had to flee their burning homes, is still relevant today (Kearney 1).

(Moloney 7). The resonance of this memory is found in the mural that Bombay street residents display on the side of one of their houses:



Image 16
Photo by author

The phrase “never again” has been used in many wars to justify violence as a way of “not being victims ever again” (Riley 191). The phrase evokes “real and potential victimhood as justification” for violence, including atrocity (Riley 191). IRA presence on the street remembers the People’s victimhood and justifies their masculinity through their ability to fight against the “real and potential” threat of “another Bombay street.”

Another important ritual involving the marching and marking of space for the masked military man was the presence of a color guard at paramilitary funerals. Members of the martyr’s unit would flank those carrying the coffin through the streets in a public display of the sacrifices they make for the communities.



Image 17
Bobby Sands Trust

When the marching ended at the grave, the color guard would fire weapons over the coffin of the deceased, which is a common practice at military funerals. This signaled the end of the ritual. The performance of firing weapons both defined the deceased as a martyr of the cause, and articulated the color guard as a legitimate military force. The latter of these is a rhetoric that Margaret Thatcher worked extensively to disassemble during her time in office. One way in which she attacked this identity was by reclassifying all Republican prisoners as Ordinary Decent Criminals (ODC's) rather than allowing them to retain political status and the privileges that accompany such an identity in jail. The emphasis on the body in all of these rituals is immediately evident. Not only is the masked individual engaged in a powerful pose in all of the pictures provided, but the body of the deceased is also a prominent artifact for public display. The body of the deceased works in juxtaposition to the strong body of the guard. Funerals are extremely important rituals in Republican memory. One of the most salient Republican phrases, which defined Republican identity for the past century, was spoken by Padraig Pearse, one of the ten executed leaders of the 1916 Rising, at the funeral of Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa.

Pearse said, “Life springs from death; and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The Defenders of this Realm...think that they have pacified Ireland. They think that they have purchased half of us and intimidated the other half...but, the fools, the fools, the fools! — They have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace” (Pearse 134). Pearse claims that the power of the Republican people comes from the graves themselves, around which these intricate rituals are performed. The grave provides a memory place around which the masculine body of the masked volunteer juxtaposes their own virility and anonymous, masked, militant viability to the unmasked, symbolically viable but materially feminized, dead.

The deceased body is an image that features prominently in several Republican mnemonic narratives. One such example is articulated by Sinn Féin on their educational CD *History of the Hunger Strike*. This sixty minute CD, providing a detailed history of the ways that the hunger strike has been used throughout Irish history, is set to music played and sung by Bik McFarlane. The CD states:

Another IRA volunteer, Frank Stagg, died on hunger strike in Wakefield prison in England on the 12th of February in 1976. This had been his fourth hunger strike. After the British government had gone back on previous promises, Frank embarked on his last hunger strike. This time he was allowed to die. When Frank Stagg’s body was returned to Ireland, the Free State government decided that they would deprive the IRA of another opportunity to pay tribute to their fallen volunteer. Special Branch detectives diverted the plane carrying Stagg’s body mid-flight and Frank’s body was taken under escort to a grave in cemetery in Ballina, County Mayo and buried under 18 inches of concrete. His family were denied their right to a proper and dignified funeral. Armed Free State detectives placed a 24-hour guard on his grave, but on the 6th of November, 1976, after detectives had removed their constant vigil, at around midnight a group of IRA volunteers, accompanied by a priest, dug throughout the night, tunneled under the concrete, to recover Frank Stagg’s coffin, blessed it and reburied Frank in the Republican plot just 100-yards away. It had been Frank’s wish to be buried there. The day after Frank Stagg’s died, Gerry Adams, under the pen name of Brownie, said “Frank Stagg died for Ireland, for the Irish People. What were we doing on

the day he died? What are we doing today? Are we worthy of our Frank Stagg's? Of the sacrifices they make on our behalf?" (Sinn Fein *CD*)¹⁰¹

This story demonstrates the importance that the dead body had to proving the virility of the living volunteers over the state. The state realized that a funeral was a powerful site of Republican identity formation and attempted to control the grave as a memory place by imprisoning the body under concrete. Republican patience and masculine self-control led volunteers to wait until the British guard was lowered and then it struck. This tactic mirrors IRA campaigns throughout the Troubles.

This narrative explicitly reminds the listener that the dead require present, embodied, masculine action. The dead determine whether or not one's actions are "worthy" or not. Because the dead cannot speak, and the Leader(ship) has been designated as the rhetor that can choose what these memories mean, the Leader(ship) can interpret whether or not the behavior of the People is worthy of the sacrifice the dead have made. The Leader(ship) speak for the dead. Like a pagan sacrifice, the dead Republican martyrs demand action from the living. However, though the dead lack an agency to speak, they are not feminized. Instead, they are the ideal masculine that is untouchable by the state. The emphasis on the body at funerals and in images of the martyr remains consistent with the ideal of masculine embodiment in the face of state oppression.

The dead function as a mask themselves, used to hide the faces of the Leader(ship) to protect them from the state and the People. Thus, while the literal mask provides the active service volunteer anonymity and freedom from individual assault, the dead volunteer, unmasked, becomes the mask through which the unmasked Leader(ship) can speak. Thus, when Bobby

¹⁰¹ I was told this story with varying detail and "accuracy" on several different informal occasions.

Sands' memory is called upon, the Leader(ship) operate behind a mask that protects them from the People and that flaunts their untouchable Republicanism in the face of the state. When the volunteer is unmasked in death, they are not returned to the unmasked People, but instead, rise above those People. The mask becomes unnecessary because the state is unable to touch the martyr. The People are unmasked because if the state properly identifies the People as the non-volunteer, then the state will have no need to harm them. The unmasked martyr flaunts his/her power in the face of the state.

The other aspect of this narrative that is important was the presence and role that the religious sphere had in the burial of the dead. Though the priest actively assisted this hunger striker in fulfilling his final wish, less than 10 years later another priest would be blamed for being the prime impetus behind the end of the H-Block hunger strike for prisoner political status in 1981. According to the same audio documentary:

Powerful people in powerful positions in Irish society began to take notice of the growth in support for Republicans. One such person was Dungannon Priest, Father Dennis Faul. Father Faul was concerned with this support, he feared that it would continue after the hunger strike and lead to a stronger Republican movement. Father Faul was aware that if a hunger striker lapsed into a coma, his family had the power to legally intervene and allow doctors to begin a process of feeding the prisoner through intravenous tubes. He set about exploiting this and told the families that the prisoners were being allowed to die by the Republican movement on the outside in order that the Republican movement would benefit from this.... Denis Faul's manipulation of the families continued. With no sign of a resolution in sight, the families love for their children, together with their despair with the lack of progress, led to some of them authorizing intervention by the doctors once the hunger striker lapsed into a coma. Mickey Devine died on the 20th of August 1981, after 60 days on hunger strike.... He was the last hunger striker to die. The momentum of the hunger strike was ebbing away and the pressure on the British government to respond in a positive manner decreased. Instead, pressure was heaped onto the families in order to nullify the tactic of the hunger strike. More families indicated a willingness to intervene when the prisoner lapsed into a coma, and in the month of September two families allowed doctors to resuscitate their sons. Another hunger striker ended his fast when it became clear that his family would intervene. On the 3rd of October 1981, the

hunger strike was ended. A statement from the prisoners at 3pm that day declared, 'We the protesting Republican prisoners in the H-Blocks, being faced with the reality of sustained family intervention, are forced by this circumstance, over which we have little control at the moment, to end the hunger strike'" (Sinn Féin, *CD*)

The story feminizes the families of the hunger strikers. The men were strong enough to die but ultimately had no control over their own destinies once they slipped into the near-death state of the coma. One does not have agency in death to control the propagation of one's memory. The families could not exercise the self-control that the masculine prisoners could. The role of the church particularly singles out women, because the spiritual and religious realm was part of the feminine role in Republican society. The rhetor pinpoints women as the traitors, with "suspect loyalties," that resulted in the feminization (death) of the masculine volunteer (Goldstein 341).

The fact that mothers were "targeted" by Fr. Faul is reinforced by one of his admirers, who commented upon Faul's death, "More than any other person, he brought about the end of the hunger strike - and many republicans never forgave him.... He marshaled the families, and particularly the mothers, to reclaim their sons after they had lost consciousness, and to authorize resuscitation" (Hayes 1). Father Faul is thus depicted in this narrative as the enemy to the Republican movement and the volunteer's agency. The mothers become involuntary touts, who turn against their communities because they are not strong enough to themselves be warriors. It is a cautionary tale to other women. The feminine role is to support the masculine individual's decisions, even if they cause great emotional distress (as war often does). This turns back on the idea of Mother Ireland, who has both the "good" power to control her children and the "bad" power to destroy her children if her power is improperly channeled.

Another very important aspect of this narrative and of most narratives involving the dead, is that times of death are the only times that the masculine body is permitted to be publicly,

communally exposed to the nurturing, supportive female presence. The expectation that women will fulfill their feminine role as caregiver to protect and nurture the masculine warrior must take place in private, so that the publicly threatening masculine warrior figure does not appear weak to the enemy. However, the need for comfort is a masculine nuance permitted in the private sphere, particularly in the home, where the Mother figure rules. The feminine women at funerals are not masked. The women who the masked volunteers are protecting and parading in front of are not masked. The unmasked masculine body of the martyr extends their protection to these feminine figures while the masked color guard provides the material protection against the state oppressor.

A volunteer only becomes unmasked when he dies. After he dies, he can be celebrated as a martyr to the cause. He is used symbolically to encourage other able-bodied men to join and fight for Ireland. The image of this martyr is always of a healthy, happy male who was proud to join the cause of Irish freedom. The best example of the unmasked warrior who serves the party symbolically through his death is Bobby Sands, the first individual to die in the 1981 hunger strikes. Though the Republican lore focuses on Sand's painful demise, the public depictions of him always focus on his body during his healthy, pre-starvation jail time. For example, the bodhran¹⁰² pictured below was made by the last Republican prisoners held in the South of Ireland after the Good Friday Agreements secured the release of other prisoners. Republican prisoners often made traditional Irish crafts in jail once they had attained political prisoner status and no longer were restricted by ODC status and regulation of time and activity. Crafts include Celtic crosses, belts, purses and clocks. This articulated the prisoners into the pre-colonial Celtic heritage previously discussed in relation to the use of the Irish language.

¹⁰² A traditional Irish drum

This “Castlerea Bodhran,”¹⁰³ depicts the ten faces of the hunger strikers, their names and explicitly designates them as martyrs. The creators of this bodhran also paint a Celtic cross, as the central feature, ringed by a tricolor, with the four provinces’ coat of arms represented in each corner. At the base of the cross lies a dead figure, which could be either Jesus Christ or Bobby Sands, although the Christ figure seems more likely since the body is not emaciated. If Sands were pictured dead or during the hunger strike, he would be a hollow, starved form¹⁰⁴. The painters chose to depict Sands’ face without a beard at the top left while the dead figure at the bottom of the cross is bearded.



Image 18

Photo by author

The Christ figure at the base of the cross is the only explicit representation of death in this painting. Of course, the image of a dead Christ is followed in Catholic teachings by the injunction to remember that Christ also rose from the dead and, in so doing, saved the world.

¹⁰³ This bodhran was presented to me by a Republican from the Ardoyne estate in North Belfast. Go raibh mile maith agat mo chara. IRB abú.

¹⁰⁴ It is, however, extremely rare to see Sands depicted after he died.

Thus death through the image of Christ becomes a representation for death as a middle ground between the world and eternity.

The picture of the un-bearded Sands in the upper left hand corner of the bodhran, however, may be because Sands is traditionally depicted in a single pose that is drawn from his most famous photograph:



Image 19

The Bobby Sands Trust

Sands is smiling and full of life in this pose. The photograph focuses on his face, as do depictions drawn from this image. In addition to the bodhran shown above, the following two images demonstrate the degree to which this image has come to represent Sands. The first is a large H mural that was erected on Falls Road in 2006 by Sinn Féin as part of the 25th commemorations of the hunger strikes. The second is a picture of the most famous mural of Sands, found also on the Falls Road in West Belfast:



Image 20
Photo by author



Image 21
Photo by author

One reason for the use of this one image of Sands may be that most muralists and, indeed, most prison artists, are amateur. Even if the individual doing the painting is not trained enough to

produce a representation of Sands that is recognizable by facial features alone, the other clues of the red v-neck sweater, wide 70'-collar, flowing brown hair, angled face and wide smile will suffice. What is important about this is that the image that has been designated as the "correct" picture from which to paint Bobby Sands is a picture of him full of life, smiling confidently into the camera, proudly serving the Republican cause. He is just a normal guy in these pictures. It was his involvement in the Republican struggle that made him extraordinary. The subtle argument here is that any "normal" individual in any community could rise to the extraordinary heights of legends that Sands has since achieved. The focus is not only generally on the body of the volunteer, but on the face specifically. The face of the martyr emphasizes not only that they are unmasked but that they are laughing, untouchable, in the face of the colonial oppressor. This shaming of the state is a dominating stance. Through the martyr's death they are re-born over the People, like a Christ figure.

The case of the Hunger Strikers is particularly interesting. These men manipulated time to more carefully articulate and perform the victimization and suffering of their People. As a jailed volunteer, Sands body has proven to be masculine. Sands had operated as a masked volunteer. Sands used the 66 days of hunger strike to transform this masculine body into an emaciated body. Sands creates "another Bombay street" by writing the story of British oppression onto his body. He is masculine enough to take on the bodily pain of the People, like Christ, to suffer for them and through this suffering, triumph over the state. The value of restraint and perseverance is in stark opposition to other hunger strikers' mothers' aforementioned inability to perform the same level of restraint and pain for a purpose. Though Sands is not an overtly violent, hypermasculine, masked volunteer, his body is equally performing "being on the line for the feminine." His resilience in the face of the oppressive,

dominant state highlights his own masculinity and denigrates the states' while simultaneously arguing for the necessity for protection of the People.

The H-Block mural was erected to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the hunger strikes in 2006. The mural remains on Falls Road to the present day. The theme of the celebrations, designated by Sinn Féin, was “*Cuimhíonn Glúin*” (a generation remembers). The injunction to remember Sands, and “never again” be in the situation of forced, unchosen feminization without masculine recourse, is a prevalent narrative not only on Bombay Street, but on the main Republican thoroughfare, Falls Road. These memories are complicated for Sinn Féin in contemporary Belfast. The People *do* remember the Hunger Strikes and they *do* remember Bombay Street. As a result, fear of potential victimhood by the state remains. Now that there is no masculine Army presence to ensure their safety, the People are, once again, the colonized feminine.

Upon Sands death, over 10,000 people are said to have taken to the street to accompany his funeral cortege.



Image 22
The Bobby Sands Trust

The performance of these individuals putting their bodies on the streets was an interesting imitation of Sands' corporeal-based authenticity. Though they all would acknowledge that they suffered nowhere near the extent that Sands had, the long walk in the Irish rain did give a performative identification with Sands' journey to death. More important than an identification with Sands *for* Sands, however, was the performance of bodily quantity on the street *for* the surveying British state. Identity performances are for the observer and their surveillance acknowledges and legitimizes the performance. The individuals marching in this funeral are legitimizing themselves as the People by providing physical "proof" of their devotion to the embodied, paramilitary Leader(ship).

The People march alongside the deceased. Crying mothers and partners¹⁰⁵ are often depicted in funeral photographs. The previously masked volunteer is unmasked and returned to the People, perpetually outside of the grasp of the state. The People must protect this body, in the same way that their safe houses protect the masked volunteers, through their actions which allow them to "deserve" this martyr. The People remain protected by the masked, masculine volunteer.

Bobby Sands is not the only image of the unmasked, dead volunteer who is celebrated. Aside from the nine other men's faces who are depicted on the bodhran and mural above, another excellent example is provided in *An Phoblacht*, the Republican weekly distributed by Sinn Féin. On May 8, 1987, 8 members of the East Tyrone Brigade of the IRA were killed in an

¹⁰⁵ It is interesting that though this time period was highly gendered, language of "spouse" or "girlfriend" was not as prevalent as the more gender neutral name "partner." This is possibly because the idea of a same sex partner was so foreign that the People did not feel the need to use gendered language. However the term has evolved in modern parlance to provide for less gendered assumptions about romantic partnerships than currently exist in the United States. Saying "my partner" in conversation does not designate you as homosexual in modern Ireland.

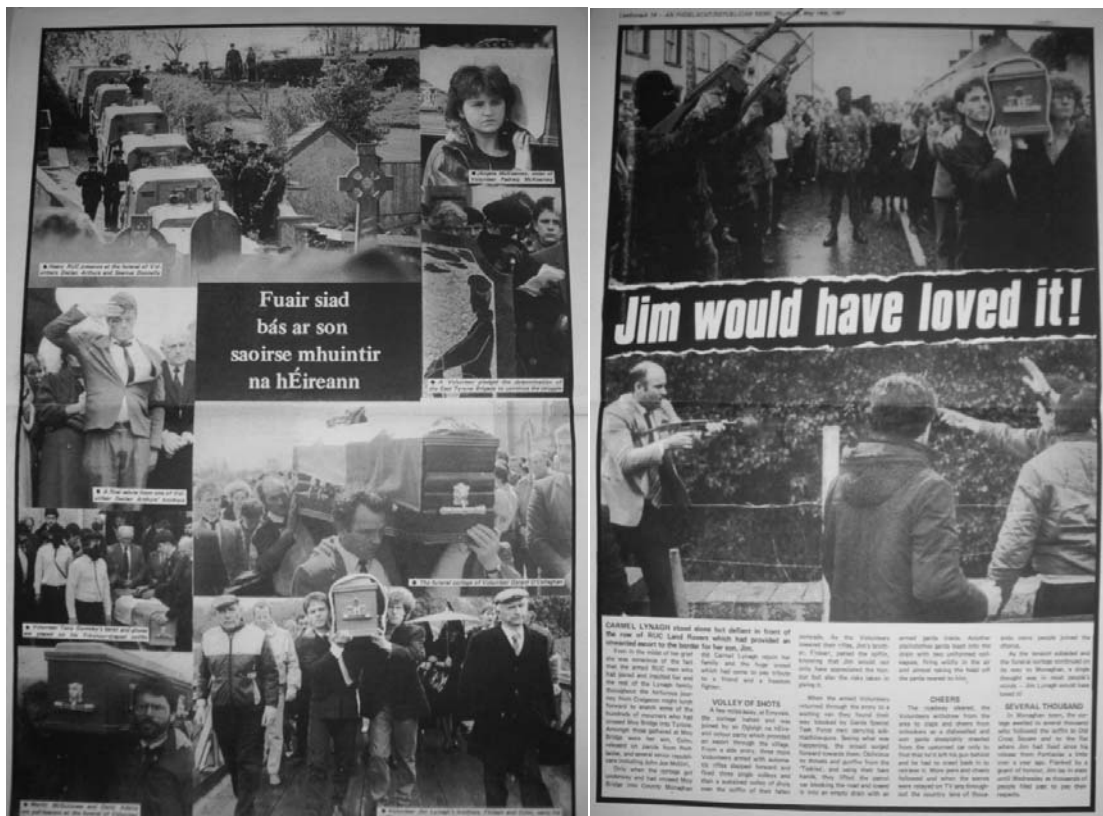
SAS¹⁰⁶ ambush while planting a bomb at the local RUC station. The RUC were clearly tipped off, because they had requested extra SAS assistance the night before. Though the SAS had ample time to arrest these individuals, they instead chose to clear the barracks, wait until the volunteers had detonated the bomb and then shot all 8 of them, and 2 civilians, dead. Though this seems to make sense in a wartime situations, given that the British were rhetorically committed to a policy of criminalization and *not* of warfare, the actions of the SAS contradicts the Thatcher-based anti-political argument (*An Phoblacht Loughgall*).

In the week following the shootings, *An Phoblacht* released a 24-page edition dedicated to the Loughgall Martyrs under the title “*Fuair siad bás ar son saoirse mhuintir na hÉireann*” (“They died for the freedom of the People of Ireland”). This phrase clearly articulates the men’s Leader(ship) and sacrifice, while also articulating a Republican People for whom they could die. The following is a picture of the front page of the paper, which depicts the faces of the 8 “martyrs”:



The center pages of the newspaper were as follows:

¹⁰⁶ Special Forces Corps of the British military. Known in Republican circles for their extreme brutality.



Images 23, 24 and 25
Photos by author

The phrase “they died for the freedom of the People of Ireland” is repeated inside, in a clear effort to shape the memory of their death. In the lower left hand corner Gerry Adams appears, as he often does at funerals, bearing the casket of the deceased, to extend his personal legitimacy onto their death and to gain legitimacy from the ultimate masculine sacrifice in like kind. An unmasked female, the sister of the deceased, appears in the upper right hand corner of the left page, which is, uncoincidentally, directly opposite the picture of the masked IRA volunteers firing shots over the coffin. Additionally, the paper uses the presence of the RUC police in the top left-hand corner photo, to demonstrate the disregard the state has for even the most sacred of Republican rituals.

The presence of female pain at funerals also functions to shame men into going to war.

The memory of the dead volunteer shames the future volunteers into “(wo)manning-up” for the

cause of Republicanism. The use of the martyr's face in murals, newspapers and crafts provides a consistent, and readily available reminder to men of their "duty" and the shame in not taking up that responsibility (Goldstein 272). The question of whether the People are "worthy" of Frank Staggs' death is a question that goads men into proving they are, because masculinity requires greater proof than femininity, though the feminine must also prove its value through support of the masculine.

An interesting complication arises is when female bodies enter the masculine world of paramilitary performance. This only becomes an issue when the female body appears as a masked volunteer. An unmasked female body is worth celebrating because it is operating outside of the dangerous grasp of the state. It is untouchable because if the female body is attacked by the state it would earn the state significant global condemnation. The state is claiming to operate in reasonable ways and randomly attacking women would cause it to lose support among moderate people who don't support violence of any kind and rely upon the unitary gender roles of a stable, patriarchal, capitalist society. This means that the unmasked female body engaged in a legible Republican performance is valuable because it not only forwards the Republican ideal, but also re-entrenches gender norms. The Republican movement could use the materially sacrosanct feminine female body in masculine behavior against the state because of the female body's ability to switch back to a passive feminine role that would earn the state condemnation. Typically, when Republican women paraded publicly, they would do so in traditionally feminine uniforms.



Image 25

Photo by author

The ability to take a large step has been limited by their skirts. The women wear their hair pulled back, but long. In all images of the masked volunteers, not one shows the volunteer's hair because long hair is an easily identifiable feminine (abnormal, gendered) trait. "Throughout history, a shorn head [literally, the lack of hair] has been heavy with meaning.... More commonly, shaven heads have been associated with trauma, brutality and the loss of individuality or strength...shaven heads are still seen as a crisis for women because flowing hair is so tied up in notions of female beauty and, in the days before dyes and extensions...a visible symbol of their reproductive power" (Guardian). Upon entering the military in most parts of the world, men all have their hair cut in the same fashion: a close military shave. However, women still do not undergo this ritual, because of the cultural implications of a woman having her head shorn.

The female bodies in image 25 provides the figure of a masculine, "empowered" woman, whose presence is a fundamental part of the "equality" tenets that form the philosophical basis of Republicanism, while at the same time providing a feminine female body that justifies the need

for the protective masculine body. She cannot run fast¹⁰⁷ (regardless of whether that is attributed to her physical abilities or the skirt she has been told to wear) and thus cannot escape the wrath of the colonial oppressor (Goldstein 159). She needs someone who *can* run fast to provide for her needs. This justifies both her value as a woman worth fighting for, and the masculine value of being a hard enough male to do said fighting. This image shows the way that the Republican movement played with gender norms during the war. The women are both masculine and feminine simultaneously. They are unmasked, but are marching to reclaim space. They are militant but they wear their hair long.

The assumed link between masculine performance and the male body is disrupted when a feminine body acts in a masculine manner. “We expect bodies to be straightforwardly and diamorphically male or female, despite the existence of various intersex conditions, which demonstrate a range of body morphologies and chromosomal configurations.... [T]hus the sex/gender dualism can be said to misrepresent the body, to place too great a reliance on its materiality, without taking into account that this is socially mediated and understood” (Paechter 10). The women in image 25 adopt militant stances with their arms winging out. In Western Society, men are taught to take up as much space as possible in the world whereas women are taught to bodily contain themselves. This is seen through something as simple as sitting practices. Men are taught to spread their legs, take arm rests when available, and demonstrate control over space through occupation of as much of it as possible. Women, on the other hand, are taught to contain themselves in as limited a space as possible. Women are culturally instructed to cross their ankles or legs, which reduces their ability to take up space. Women’s clothing has historically reinforced these practices, including the wearing of tighter skirts and

¹⁰⁷ Running fast being but one example of the assumed attributes a volunteer must display.

heals, both of which restrict fast movement (Goldstein 211). This take up space-contain oneself dialectic is a direct representation of the dominance-submission dialectic found in hierarchical societies (Goldstein 211). Fast movement is articulated in *The Green Book* as a fundamental characteristic of a good IRA volunteer. Restricting a woman in clothing was a more subtle way of restricting her ability to function as a “good” (i.e. powerful, knowledgeable) Leader.¹⁰⁸

Another famous image of the female body acting in a simultaneously masculine and feminine manner is in the depictions of Miread Farrell, the IRA volunteer who was killed by the British SAS while on active service in Gibraltar. Her death caused huge outcry because she, along with her two male comrades, were shot in the back rather than arrested or given the opportunity to surrender. This is the behavior of war, rather than of normalized policing. The British state claimed there was no war in an effort to criminalize the Republican cause. However, the shooting of citizens, particularly female citizens, delegitimizes the state. Thus, though Miread Farrell was behaving in a masculine, war-like way, her female body and its assumed femininity caused there to be even greater outcry against the British state.

¹⁰⁸ Of course, the Irish men historically wore “skirts” in the form of kilts, but the possibility of displaying one’s genitalia was not culturally marked as shameful for men, whereas the display of female genitalia has been marked as shameful and inappropriate.



Image 27
Photo by author



Image 28
Photo by author

Image 27 depicts an unmasked female volunteer. Though it is rare to see a female volunteer elevated to the level of a martyr, in the case of this mural it does follow the general idea that dead volunteers may be unmasked and become the masculine ideal which rises above the People.

The People code her as masculine while simultaneously propagating her femininity to earn her death extra weight in the international community. The women in Image 28, who are unmasked female volunteers in masculine poses, are anonymous in the sense that they do not depict particular women of the struggle. The mural is generally dedicated to “the women of Cumann na mBan, Oglagh na hEireann and Sinn Féin.” None of these women is immediately identifiable. Thus, these women remain masked by their anonymity, without gaining the symbolism of threatening masculinity that comes with the volunteer’s mask.

These were the images propagated by the Leader(ship) during the war of 1969-1998. Sinn Féin committees organized and sponsored most of the Republican funerals, Republican murals on and around the Falls Road and ran the most-read Republican periodical *An Phoblacht*. Sinn Féin sponsored the creation of CDs and videos that propagated the value of the masked, masculine, embodied volunteer and the unmasked, untouchable volunteer. The People bought into these articulations. The People legitimized the Sinn Féin Leader(ship). The People marched at funerals, told stories of dead heroes, reenacted events at commemorations and voted for Sinn Féin in elections. The People legitimized the Leader(ship) hierarchy by supporting local volunteers materially and symbolically. These volunteers gained authority from the authentication as Republicans through embodied, masculine performance. The local volunteers gained authority also from the special knowledge they had of IRA plans that the People did not have access to. Yet, by submitting to the national Leader(ship) and taking orders from the Army council, they simultaneously vested the Leader(ship) with authority.

These political myths were stable for thirty years. In 1998 Sinn Féin signed the Good Friday Agreements. However, the army still existed, and, thus, the potential to protect against another Bombay street remained. However, the Leader(ship) then declared an end to the war in

2005. This, coupled with the Leader(ship) rhetorically investing legitimacy in the body of the police, and not in the body of the volunteer, proved to be a crisis of authenticity which cut at the very base of Sinn Féin authority. Sinn Féin responded to this challenge by attempting to rearticulated legitimacy within a material/body-symbolic/mind dualism. While this may have worked when declaring an end to the military campaign, the People experienced great cognitive dissonance in reading the police as a legitimate body. Ultimately, the police body is not legible to “dissident” communities as authentic because it feminizes the People and forces ex-volunteers, or the young people who dreamed of becoming such, into purely feminine roles that do not have the nuance that they were invested with during the war. This devaluation of the body removes all special knowledge/power from the communities who bought into the narratives of masculinity that were stable for 30 years.

Chapter 5

Shifts in Articulations of Authentic Authority

At the root of authority, is the ability of someone to act as an “author.” In Republican Belfast, those with Republican authority have the right to author Republican identity, for the People and for themselves as Leader. Of course, the process is dialectical and thus the Leader’s identity is reliant upon the People’s participation in and acceptance of that identity. The reader’s interpretation of the author’s discourse helps shape the meaning of a text. In the present climate, the Leader(ship) is trying to rhetorically de-emphasize embodied masculinity as a mode to achieve the authority to speak for the People. The Leader(ship) is attempting to disrupt the dialectics that they have employed in the past 30 years to shape their own, and the People’s, identity.

Until the Good Friday Agreements, the Leader(ship) authored gender roles which were nuanced and unhinged from necessary sex associations. A hierarchy existed which prevented a formal dualism from creating mutually exclusive, discrete gender roles that operated as unquestioned, natural entities. Shades of masculinity and femininity were accepted throughout the society’s hierarchy in whatever form the war effort required. However, in the era of peace, the embodied local hierarchy is dismantled which creates binaries composed of the dichotomous

terms of Leader-People, male-female, masculine-feminine, authority-submission. These binaries truncate the conversation that is necessary in an open, normalized, democratic society. The creative space for the complication of Republican power that existed outside of the state was shut down when Sinn Féin merged the Republican movement and the state. Rather than forcing the state to open up to Republican nuances of gender, the state forced Republicans into state discourses of the “with us or against us” binary. The state does not value the masculine body because it threatens the state. When the state is the Republican Leader(ship) then the masculine body also becomes problematic for Republicanism.

Dissociating the body and authority divests masculinity from the Republican mid-hierarchy, the local volunteer. Those who sought to reclaim this embodiment were designated publicly by Martin McGuinness as “traitors to the island of Ireland” (bbc.co.uk *McGuinness*). Though this may seem to bolster Sinn Féin’s Leader(ship) in the new era of peace, it also undercuts the authority of that same Leader(ship). This articulation also comes into direct conflict with the public memories the Leader(ship) has successfully deployed during the 30 years of the war. Public memory had previously valued the masked, embodied, material, masculine image as the authoritative Leader(ship). By unmasking the Leader(ship) tried to become untouchable martyrs. However, unmasked martyrs rely upon the rhetorical work of others to give their unmasking meaning. The Leader(ship) had previously provided that meaning. Now, they are left without the agency to speak and without others to speak for them.

Sinn Féin’s new articulations of authority

Provisional Sinn Féin was born of the 1969 split when its military wing, the Provisional IRA promised to stand in defense of the Republican People. They would “never again” allow for a Bombay street. As a result of this split, the body became a new political subject. The body

simultaneously functioned as an object, giving power to those who control those bodies (Feldman). During the Troubles, the Leader(ship) predicated its authority on its ability to control embodied masked volunteers and the memories of the unembodied, unmasked volunteers. The feminized People required volunteers to earn their honor by upholding the memory of the dead in embodied performances of masculinity (Goldstein 272). After the signing of the Good Friday Agreements, Sinn Féin attempted to shift the value away from embodied masculinity and instead articulated a value in the ability of the Leader(ship)'s to control other, potentially violent, masculine bodies through their untouchable, unmasked Leader(ship).

The Sinn Féin Leader(ship)'s disembodied control of the body became the way that they articulated their own authority. Control of bodies requires a combination of consent and coercion (Bean 96). While coercion used to be the role of the IRA, Sinn Féin has since instead used the body of the state, the police, to be the coercive force that legitimizes their power. Of course, what this move does is eliminate the volunteer as a site of masculine admiration by placing that body "in the past." The assumption is that this hard body of the past is not valuable in the present. This is antithetical to the Republican tradition of ritual remembrance, celebration, and glorification of the past as the way to develop cohesive Republican communal identity. Thus, the coercive move to denigrate the local hard body runs against the intent of the ability of the Leader(ship) to garner the consent of the People.

Sinn Féin feminizes the bodies of those who grew up in the Republican tradition in an attempt to control those bodies that valued the masked man as the "instructive" memory to imitate. This leaves a generation of young people, in particular, boys, who had been groomed to prove their masculinity in war and are now denied access to that proof. As such these boys can either accept Sinn Féin's devaluation of the mask and then reinvest Sinn Féin with authority

from scratch or attempt through various “dissident” methods to articulate their own masculinity from within the pre-existent mnemonic framework. Sometimes this masculine performance is directed against the state, which is the behavior Republican memory has deemed “instructive” to young people. This is problematic for Sinn Féin when they have become the state.

When Sinn Féin signed the Good Friday Agreements, they did so while being able to control the bodies of IRA volunteers. The Army still existed and thus if the People became victimized, the masculine masked volunteer had the potential to return and protect them. This masculine posturing is demonstrated best by McGuinness famously declaring that Sinn Féin was “going to the negotiating table to smash the Union!” (McKittrick and McVea 304). The message is that Sinn Féin will use their rhetorical power to control the bodies of the opposition. Their control of rhetoric would allow them to force the British bodies off of the island. For the People, the spectre of the mask remained. Rafter articulates this same idea by describing Sinn Féin as existing “in the shadow of gunmen” (1). Rafter uses the “shadow” as a metaphor for the loyalist fear of Sinn Féin’s return to the “bullet and ballot box” strategy of 1986-1998. This is similar to the spectre of the mask, which is powerful enough to remain even when the Leader(ship) un-masks (and in so doing “dies” as an embodied, masked volunteer) and enters politics. We view the same phenomena from a different vantage point.

Adams and McGuinness were able to articulate the Good Friday Agreements “as but a staging post in the republican movement’s ultimate ambition to end the partition of Ireland” (Rafter 14). One of the reasons this articulation of the Good Friday Agreements was salient was because of Sinn Féin’s ability to release prisoners. “Sinn Féin’s securing of a good deal on IRA prisoners, allowing them all to be released within two years, allowed the leadership to sell the deal to most party members as recognition of the validity of the war” (Tonge 124). They “sold”

the deal to the People by “parading...the soon-to-be-released prisoners” (Tonge 125). The metaphor of parading bodies harkens quite clearly back to the memory of the masked paramilitary members protecting the Republican community. Again, Sinn Féin was able to control bodies by securing the freedom of the hardest of those masculine volunteers. What both of these behaviors do however is articulate the value of the mask and its anti-state power because only through its use is Sinn Féin successful.

On July 28, 2005, the IRA announced “An end to the armed campaign” (Rafter 1). The language of the statement is militant. Séanna Walsh begins the statement by saying “The leadership of Oglaiġ na hEireann¹⁰⁹ has formally ordered an end to the armed campaign” (bbc.co.uk *IRA*). The Leader(ship) is able to issue these “orders” with the expectation that their soldiers will follow their command. Walsh continues on to say “All Volunteers have been instructed to assist the development of purely political and democratic programmes through exclusively peaceful means. Volunteers must not engage in any other activities whatsoever.” Though it is understood that the “other activities” of the volunteers that the Leader(ship) are commanding control over are only the military activities. However, when read literally, the Leader(ship) claims the authority to claim control over *all* actions of the volunteers, given that these volunteers cannot engage in “any other activities whatsoever.”

The statement continues on to vest the Sinn Féin Leader(ship) explicitly with the control that the IRA Leader(ship) held over the bodies of their volunteers. Though the crossover between leaderships is broadly accepted, the statement formalizes this by articulating, “We are proud of the comradely way in which this truly historic discussion was conducted. The outcome

¹⁰⁹ The Irish name of the IRA.

of our consultations show very strong support among IRA Volunteers for the Sinn Féin peace strategy.” The statement argues that those who wish to claim the title of “IRA Volunteer” and the associated public memories and meanings must show support for the “peace strategy” which belongs solely to “Sinn Féin.” This is the “comradely” thing to do. To be non-comradely is to be outside of the in-group that has claimed this power in Republican public memory.

The statement continues on to link the future actions of Volunteers with the memories of Republican victimhood and protection against such, “It is the responsibility of all Volunteers to show leadership, determination and courage.... We are very mindful of the sacrifices of our patriot dead, those who went to jail, Volunteers, their families and the wider republican base.... There is a responsibility on society to ensure that there is no re-occurrence of the pogroms of 1969 and the early 1970s.” The statement vests “society” and not the masked volunteers with the duty to protect against the possibility of another Bombay Street. Yet, only through the spectre of the mask does Sinn Féin have the ability to enforce this statement. “Society” is understood as the non-violent, symbolic, linguistic, communicative interaction between rational parties, exemplified by leaders in the political arena. Protection of bodies, and the ability to control those bodies that would wish to harm the People, falls under the control of society, which is under control of its Leader(ship). “Society” also implies that the control of these bodies rests legitimately with the state and the state’s legitimate body, the PSNI.

The statement ends with the phrase, “There is now an unprecedented opportunity to utilise the considerable energy and goodwill which there is for the peace process. This comprehensive series of unparalleled initiatives is our contribution to this and to the continued endeavours to bring about independence and unity for the people of Ireland.” This part of the

statement indicates a clearly different context in which the Republican movement finds itself. There is “unprecedented...energy and goodwill” for the People of Ireland. Gerard McGuigan, lifelong Ardoyne Republican, sheds light on what this change in circumstance were when he says, “The world changed on 9/11. No longer could you just be a little bit pro-violence. The media had been whipped up to such a frenzy that even the slightest thought towards violence condemned you to a situation where the natural sympathy between right and wrong was no longer going to be there for you and I think that this leadership had to make hard decisions with the backdrop of the whole realignment of the world” (Interview). The statement nods to a change in circumstances as if to point out to would-be dissidents that there is no other choice but to accept the path laid out by the Sinn Féin Leader(ship). The inability to chose femininity is the kind of femininity that has been denigrated in Republican memory as the submission of the colonized to the colonizer.

Though this rhetoric points to a purely peaceful, non-violent way forward, they selected a hard-bodied man to assist in the “selling” of this policy. “[Séanna] Walsh had a formidable reputation and was known for his unswerving commitment to the republican cause, having spent nearly half of his adult life in prison” (Rafter 1). Walsh had proven himself while masked and then gained further legitimacy from the de-masked Bobby Sands, who wrote in his prison journals that Séanna Walsh was his “old friend” (Rafter 1). Walsh said in July of 2000, “I don’t think the ghosts of the past can be exorcised, and to a large extent I still carry a lot of those ghosts on my shoulder” (Rafter 2). This is an astute observation. I argue that those ghosts are the specters of Walsh as a masked volunteer that cause him to retain his authenticity in the Republican movement. Those specters nod to an acceptance of the salience of the mask while simultaneously arguing that it is unnecessary.

The first big initiative in what Sinn Féin had rhetorically determined to be the post-war period was the endorsement of a new policing service for Northern Ireland. Brian Fenney, a political analyst in Northern Ireland told the BBC on the eve of Sinn Féin's special *Ard Fheis* on policing that, "sharing power is nothing compared to saying that they recognize the state and urge people to join the police force and support law and order within the state. For a lot of Republicans that will be a step too far" (Kearney 2). Once again, Sinn Féin brought out an authentically masculine body to give the statement legitimacy. The Leader(ship) selected Gerry Kelly to take on the role of the Spokesperson on Policing. Gerry Kelly had a "fearsome reputation in the IRA. Known as a ruthless and fearless IRA operative, Kelly had regularly survived bouts of forced feeding in Brixton jail during a lengthy hunger strike. In 1983 he took part in a mass breakout of IRA prisoners from the Maze prison on the outskirts of Belfast....When the cease-fire came, Kelly's support for it was crucial in winning over the unsure and anxious" (Moloney 381). Kelly not only had the authentically masculine body, but he also recognized the importance of memory to the Republican People and the role it would play in the policing debate. Kelly said, "They [The People] want a police service that for the first time, not just in our lifetimes but this is generational, this is talking to your grandparents or your parents, that for the first time you could have a police service which actually represents the people and acts as a civilian instead of an armed force of the state" (Kearney 2).

Kelly is clearly building on Walsh's statement that the war is over. He articulates that the police force needs to be "civilian" as in all normalized, democratic societies. The police will be responsible to "society," which points to Sinn Féin, as the analysis previously indicated. After extensive debate in different *cumannanna*,¹¹⁰ Sinn Féin held "The Sinn Féin Extraordinary Ard

¹¹⁰ Plural of *Cumann*, Sinn Féin branches.

Fheis on Policing” on 28 January, 2007 (Sinn Féin *Policing*). Sinn Féin carried the motion to support the new Police Service of Northern Ireland by a 90% vote in favor (bbc.com *Sinn Fein*). The “vote on policing was under the Sinn Féin banner, but much of the heavy lifting that had to be done was by the IRA.... It means that the IRA at all levels is still with Adams and McGuinness-and this after the most difficult of all questions that have been asked within republicanism” (Rowan 1). The reporter points out that an end to the war does not necessarily mean an end to the Army. He also points out that the Army directly responds to Sinn Féin now. It is Sinn Féin policy that dictates IRA strategy, and not IRA strategy that dictates Sinn Féin policy as it did for so many years. During the time of the policing vote, the Army was with Sinn Féin and “for all the huffing and puffing of the usual dissidents, there wasn’t the wind to blow the mainstream movement off its chosen course” (Rowan 1).

Sinn Féin argues that the Good Friday Agreements led to a “new era.” Adams was explicit in this metaphor at a Tyrone Sinn Féin rally when he said “Some former activists, including former IRA volunteers, hark back to the 70s or 80s. This is not the 70s or 80s. And some have formed armed groups which purport to be the IRA-None of these groups are the IRA. They have no right to hijack its name or to mimic its actions. They cannot match the IRA for ingenuity, for resourcefulness, for courage or capacity” (Sinn Féin *Delivering*). The era of the IRA is over and resurrecting it denigrates its memory, according to Adams. This new era will be characterized by a “new beginning to policing”¹¹¹ Sinn Féin leaders endorse the idea that we must leave “the policing failures of the past [to enter] into a new policing era” (Sinn Féin *Policing*). The police are uniquely representative of the state. They are the “embodiment of state authority and [are central] to its maintenance” (Mulcahy 3). In Northern Ireland in

¹¹¹ Motion passed by Sinn Féin Ard Fheis, 28/1/07

particular, “Policing itself constituted a major axis of division” (Mulcahy 3), which Sinn Féin used to use to oppositionally identify the state as “them” instead of the Republican “us.” Oppositional identity was important to Sinn Féin’s ability to define itself and the People, but, now, they say, “that time has passed. Everyone knows this” (Sinn Féin *Policing*). A new identity must arise within the bounds of the state, where the body cannot operate legitimately against the state.

The idea of operating within the bounds of the state was, articulated well by Bik McFarlane:

The Brits will always tolerate an opposition, no matter how strong that opposition is, they will always tolerate it within the confines of the parameters that they set out. Now, when you move outside the parameters, that’s when you get slapped and it doesn’t matter, and that’s not just the Brits, that’s in any society, there’s a toleration of participation within the parameters and as long as you are prepared to accept that those are the parameters laid down by the boss that’s it. The minute that you push them, push those parameters out or cross outside of the boundaries, that’s when you get it up the teeth. And the people who have been prepared to do that have been our people, republicans. Always. They have been prepared to take that extra step to take it outside that confinement to challenge them. Because that is where the real challenge comes from. That’s uncomfortable (Interview).

If one changes the word “Brits” to “Sinn Féin” then one can clearly see the conundrum in which Sinn Féin finds itself. They have articulated a Republican People who are always “prepared to take that extra step” and dissent outside of the boundaries that society deems acceptable. Yet, since Sinn Féin is now a Leader of that society generally, they are faced with persuading the People, in a period of only two years, between 2005 and 2007, not to resist the state (their) authority that all of their memories indicate is the natural enemy.

In order for the Leadership to successfully articulate the this new peaceful world of politics as valuable, they must simultaneously denigrate the mask that is posed in opposition to

the state in Republican memory. The Leader(ship) refuses to acknowledge the meaning of the body's actions by "dissident" groups. The "dissident" title places members of these groups outside of the People, who have earned the protection of the Leader(ship). These groups become equated with the irrational, suspect feminine. The uncontrolled body undercuts the important work of the *true* Republicans. Like the Mothers who took their sons off of hunger strike, they didn't have the stalwart selves to accept the controlled, patient embodiment that through its suffering points to the injustice of British rule.

Sinn Féin "maintains its power by turning the political capital and communal solidarity gained 'from the struggle' back against the resistance community from when the movement emerged" (Bean 94). Groups like CFAD or Éirígi have their actions forced into the formal dualism of in-out by the Leader(ship) since the local hierarchy has been dismantled. Communities, such as Ardoyne, that support these groups, also become feminized by extension. These communities are disempowered through the implicit argument (sometimes made explicit) that this community has mis-chosen their authority and, in so doing, have lost their right to self-define as the People. This is particularly difficult for those communities that historically consider themselves the base of the Republican movement, from which the most volunteers and supporters were drawn. These communities feel as though they shouldered the hard labor only to have their work become denigrated and feminized, to the benefit of a middle class that never got their hands dirty. By supporting CFAD rather than the local Sinn Féin community workers, Ardoyne has, as the irrational feminine, been led astray by the non-symbolic, power-hungry body of the "dissidents" who are trying to pull the community back temporarily into an era of violence. The days of dispersed authority are gone. Volunteers used to operate in cellular structures that would get some commands from the overall Leadership and some commands internally (Irish

Republican Army 6). Now, all decisions come from Sinn Féin only, which is no longer seen as resistant to the illegitimate state of Northern Ireland but as complicit. However, this new denigration of the unitary feminine works against Sinn Féin's commitment to include and represent all sexes and genders in their new Ireland of equals.

In this rhetorical setting, it seems that Brian Fenney was also right. This has proven to be “too far” for some Republicans. Those communities where the memories of masked volunteers and the unmasked dead have been most salient are in those communities where the masked volunteers literally marched through their streets. The unmasked volunteers were from their communities. They contributed their members to the army and provided the material and emotional support to volunteers in hiding. These public memories are layered on top of the personal experiences of members of these communities. The masked, masculine volunteer was legible. His image was a stable political myth of authenticity because the People of these communities regarded them as “true.” The People of these communities disproportionately faced the violence of the state and as such felt a unique ownership over the phrase “never again” (Ardoyne Community Project 1).

Sinn Féin continues to try to usher in a new era of disembodiment where garnering votes at the political level is where the authority to author the People derives. Yet, in communities such as Ardoyne, where the body has been at the forefront of memories, every time the body is materially oppressed by the state, past meanings become affixed to present experiences. For example, the police recently entered Ardoyne in an attempt to locate “Dissident Republicans” dressed like so:



Image 33
CFAD Homepage

The police officer chose to wear a mask to protect himself from being identified and targeted by these “dissidents.” Unfortunately, this officer then also attached a meaning of masculinity onto himself that is particularly salient in the community of Ardoyne, where volunteers regularly marched during the war. This officer is claiming a masculinity that forces the community of Ardoyne into a feminized position. He creates a rhetorical context that legitimizes a warlike/non-civilian response. Sinn Féin, as the state, demands a lack of response. They deny the retributive masking. Because the community does not necessarily support this police officer as the new instantiation of authentic authority, the People require another Leader to “man-up,” don a mask and protect them. The police are material contradictions to that dichotomy when they enter dissident neighborhoods looking as though they are prepared for war. The argument that the “war against the state over” is less persuasive when state representatives appear in one’s community dressed as a soldier. His identity might not have been of interest to “dissidents” before, but now that he is dressed to defend himself, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that he must.

Sinn Féin is trying to articulate a symbolically- based authority whereby they control the bodies of others. If they are successful, then Sinn Féin is assigned responsibility for the actions of those bodies. When this masked police body arrests Republicans, it is seen as Sinn Féin arresting Republicans. The police tend to be most active in those neighborhoods that are perceived as “anti-state” (Mulcahy 9). These neighborhoods have been the poorest housing wards of the city, which, historically, are also Republican. By supporting the police, Sinn Féin has had to accept the responsibility for the bodies of the state in these neighborhoods, who they simultaneously denied access to a locally re-membered body of the volunteer. This shift away from the socio-economically oppressed has corresponded, not-coincidentally, with the Leadership’s increasing acceptance by the middle class. This middle class population has historically rejected violence. By denying the value of embodiment they have always been easily imbricated into the state. For this class, financial success cushions the population against needing to engage physically. The middle class is more of a white collar labor force that has been conditioned through work, education and cultural narratives, to value unembodied rationality. This population would not necessarily question the underlying validity of the state, as long as their opportunities to succeed in it were not threatened.

This confirms what Standpoint Theory teaches us about the investment of the socio-economically oppressed in understanding the entire workings of a context. The middle classes do not need to understand the corporeal injustices or inequalities of the state because they have not been subjected to them historically. It is not that they cannot understand the inequalities of the state, they simply have not yet because they are so alienated by the possibility of violent confrontation. Once labor discrimination was removed and Catholics could get jobs, there could be a Catholic, Nationalist middle class. This class could argue, by their very presence, that

Catholics who tried hard, bought into the state, and rejected violent opposition to it are not discriminated against (Interview *Mac Ionnrachtaigh*). The middle and upper classes do not need to understand the perspective of the poor, because they are not subjected to the same oppressions. When Sinn Féin begins to engage in politics, their look as a party became more middle class.

Sinn Féin's move away from their traditional base has been clearly noted by other community groups seeking to fill the Leadership void. For example, Seán Mac Bradaigh argues, "The most important constituency to Éirígí would be working class in areas like West Belfast here.... It would be my opinion that the best way to reach out to people, the people that matter, is to go to the people who matter and to bring the tactics and the strategies and opinions and analyses to those people who matter in whatever form you have to. And that would be where the innovation comes in around tactics and use of protest or use of action" (Interview). Mac Bradaigh identifies the working class, particularly from the West of the city, which has historically been Republican as the "People that matter." Éirígí is returning a level of ownership and agency to those wards that had access to some local leadership in the days of violence. Éirígí provide a structure of acceptable corporeal action that returns nuance to the gender binary and then individual areas can use this rubric to act in a way that attends to the needs and strengths of their community. This is precisely the same manner of military structure that operated in the days of the IRA. Similar behavior is being enacted by CFAD, who re-member the local masculinity of the volunteer by putting their own bodies on the streets. Doing so is a commentary against the police and, by extension, Sinn Féin.

The Republican base didn't just give up on Sinn Féin. There has been, unlike in the past, no clear moment where entire communities split away from Sinn Féin leadership, while others

remained. The entirety of the Republican base struggled to buy into this new narrative of masculinity and Leader(ship). They engaged in private Sinn Féin sessions to discuss the policing initiative. They struggled to work within the bounds of that which Sinn Féin dictated as acceptable in this new society. Yet, as we move forward, the people who are choosing alternatives to Sinn Féin are not choosing the more intellectualized, nuanced gender roles offered by groups such as Éirígi but instead are turning to the embodied “masculine” groups such as CFAD that overtly reject the authority of Sinn Féin. These groups do operate within the gender binaries set up by the state but instead of valuing the disembodied, docile, feminine, they value the embodied, masculine, oppositional end of the binary. Anti-drug groups such as CFAD are gaining ground not only in Belfast, but also in Derry and South Armagh. The materiality of their everyday lives demand the immediacy that embodied action provides.

“Dissidents”: Re-membering authentic authority

Those who do not accept Sinn Féin’s symbolically-based authority are labeled “dissidents.” These groups re-member the Republican identity because they refocus the discourse on the embodiment of Republicanism. The root of dissent is a combination of two Latin words “dis,” meaning “removed from,” and “sedere,” meaning “to sit.”¹¹² “Dissidents” thus “sit apart” from the group. The fact that they sit rather than simply “are” apart from the crowd indicates a level of intractability. There is stability in their position that would require an effort to change.

That there are dissidents acting against Sinn Féin is undeniable. For example, on the Falls Road, a historic Republican stronghold, graffiti now reads “Sinn Féin get off your knees.”

¹¹² <http://www.latin-dictionary.net/>



Image 30
Photo by author

The writer depicts a party that is either surrendering or giving fellatio to the colonial power that they had spent decades fighting against. Both are feminized images in the heteronormative world of Belfast. The masculine individual is the one telling the party to stand up and reclaim its true power, not within the state structure but within its communities. Furthermore, the command being given by the rhetor indicates that “he” is still standing, given that blatant hypocrisy is rarely so openly endorsed.

This command, while metaphoric, focuses on an active body and the correction of wrong being a bodily performance. “For men, these definitions [of correct and incorrect masculinities] shape larger gender performances by enforcing a set of acceptable scripts through which they can establish and ‘prove’ their masculinity. Men constantly face the need to reinforce their masculinity status as it is constantly policed by their peers” (Mullins 8). The “gay traitor” is a “sissy” giving oral sex to the power structure or at very least a coward kneeling at the feet of

state authority. This kneeling is a form of collaboration, like touting, and causes one to be labeled a traitor to the Republican People.

A little further up the road, there is graffiti that implores the reader to “tell Gerry how we really feel.”



Image 31
Photo by author

This message has a tone of anger, frustration and again, calls the reader to action. The rhetor indicates that right now, the emotions that Sinn Féin is claiming that are expressed by the People, are not the “true” or “authentic” feelings of the People. This is a deeper claim that Sinn Féin are no longer authentically authoring the identity of the People. These graffiti artists refuse the Sinn Féin feminization and instead turn the gender binary back on Sinn Féin to argue that the Leader(ship) has begun perform the feminine acts that are antithetical to the foundation of their authority. By feminizing the party in opposition, these artists articulate their own opposition and

therefore their own masculinity. “Gerry” refers to Gerry Adams, the President of Sinn Féin. He is the public face of Sinn Féin and for thirty years has been the international persona most identified with Irish Republicanism. As the formal leader of Sinn Féin, he has extensive rhetorical power to define Republican identity.

In April of 2009, the IRA told the Irish government that they had lost control of the area. “During disturbances in Greater Belfast last Monday organised by republican dissidents, two leading figures in the Provisional IRA told Irish government representatives they could no longer control elements in Ardoyne opposed to the peace process” (McDonald). Once Ardoyne could not be “controlled” by the IRA it was labeled a “dissident” area. This label pushed Ardoyne even further away from the coalition of pro-GFA parties. The IRA demanded discipline, and, as *The Green Book* articulates, dealt with any dissent, “severely...on the spot” (14).

Éirígí have been labeled “dissidents” by several groups and individuals. One excellent example of the anti-Éirígí rhetoric is provided by Alasdair Ross, a British Labour Party Councilor for Ipswich, who wrote on his April 2, 2009 blog “So in the North at least, Eirigi¹¹³ have become just a front for dissident republican groups. Now since the murders last month, Eirigi have tried to accuse the media of falsely linking them to the atrocities, trouble is their spokesman in Lurgan - Colin Duffy has been arrested and since charged with the murder of the two young soldiers in Antrim” (Ross). Additionally, following the July 7, 2009 rioting in Ardoyne, Gerry Kelly stated to the Irish News that

The Orange Order, which demands to march through Catholic/nationalist areas like Ardoyne, Mountainview and the Dales, and those disparate groups of so-

¹¹³ The proper name for Éirígí has *fadas* or “accents” over the first E and the last 2 I’s. I have chosen to quote these sources directly in an effort to properly represent their message, even when they misspell the name of the organization.

called dissident organisations who turned up with the clear intent to cause violence with some formless notion that it would put them on the map.... The Orangemen brought in many who were not from the area. Alongside this...members of Eirigi...and various other members of nefarious organisations...banded together and brought people in from near and far. They were dependent on some disaffected youth to do their fighting for them alongside antisocial elements from around Belfast who torture their own communities year round” (Irish News *Gerry*).

CFAD has also been called a “dissident” organization by Sinn Féin, and by the International Monitoring Commission, which distributes a yearly report on the actions of paramilitary groups in the north (Rowan 1). *The North Belfast News* provided an excellent example of the sort of discourse surrounding CFAD in the media in their November 9, 2009 edition. The article reads, in part, “As well as pointing to the threat from dissidents as being the highest in six years yesterday's IMC report also flagged up the rise of what it described as ‘vigilante organisations’ such as the Ardoyne based Concerned Families Against Drugs. The report said CFAD and another self professed anti-drug group in Derry, Republican Action Against Drugs ‘have undertaken attacks, including the use of pipe-bombs’ In Ardoyne over the Twelfth of July...members of CFAD were...accused of whipping up tensions, and being involved in rioting, claims they denied. The group admitted however to marching on houses of alleged drug dealers and distributing letters highlighting any dubious activities” (Belfast Media).

Both of these “dissident” groups deny that they are dissident. They both, however, are articulating embodiment and authority in ways that undercut Sinn Féin’s new narrative of non-embodied authority predicated upon the control of other masculine bodies. Many groups who have been tarred with the title of “dissident” claim that they are the “mainstream Republicans now” (Derry Journal). They claim that Sinn Féin is the group “sitting outside” of the Republican ideal. Ruairi O’Bradaigh, one of the most prominent faces of “dissident” Republicanism, as the

leader of Republican Sinn Féin, argues that Provisional Sinn Féin has “abandoned the republican ideal” (Belfast Telegraph *Fighting*). The *Irish Daily Star* ran an interview with Paul McGlinchey, “brother of INLA chief of staff Dominic” on July 24, 2007, where he is quoted as sharing almost identical sentiments. McGlinchey says, “From where I stand, I don’t feel that there is anyone who is representing the idealism of republicanism as I knew it and fought for. The only group is (socialist republican organization) Eirigi. But I am too old and it is time for young people to take the cause forward.” McGlinchey, through his personal embodied (literally genetic) connection to authentic Republicanism only finds hope in one group: Éirígí. It is to Éirígí and one other “dissident” group that I now turn in order to examine the ways in which these groups complicate gender expectations for the People and the Leader(ship).

Éirígí

Sinn Féin needs to be able to control bodies to maintain authority. One way that Éirígí disrupts that authority is by acting in public ways that Sinn Féin cannot control legitimately. Éirígí focuses on campaigns that put bodies on the street as a way of reclaiming space through performative protest. Because protest is meant to be “acceptable” within a normalized state, if Sinn Féin end this protest coercively, they point to their own lack of power. Yet, to let it go on proves they do not have the consent of the people.



Image 32
eirigi.org

Historically, the reclamation of space is equivalent to the reclamation of masculinity. However, that marching has previously been performed in Republican memory with visible weapons. The “weapons” that Éirígí wield are those that are permitted in a “civil society.” Those “weapons” do not extend beyond their bodies. By publicly marching, Éirígí act in defiance of the state, and, as such, in defiance of Sinn Féin. Because Sinn Féin is now a part of the state, embodied protest becomes difficult for Sinn Féin to enact and organize without seeming hypocritical. If Sinn Féin needs to protest against the state with bodies on the streets, then they both deny the value of acting in an only symbolic manner *and* deny that they are in control of the state. The latter means that the People are in danger of being victimized again. Thus, Éirígí is not concerned with constructing a consistent gendered image for their group. Instead they are focused on highlighting the contradictions in the femininity of the Leader(ship) that is performed in opposition to Sinn Féin’s rhetorical valuing of masculinity. By pointing out Sinn Féin’s femininity, Éirígí implicitly devalue the Leader(ship) within the meanings of Republican public memory.

Éirígí's emphasis on materiality and embodiment is articulated by Seán Mac Bradaigh when he says, "A group of six people in the early seventies established what became known as the Irish language movement in Belfast.... Their ethos was 'na habair é dean é,' don't say it, do it. And I think if a group as small as that can do things like that then an organized and a focused group on an island wide basis can do equally good things" (Interview). Action is valued while talk is denigrated. Éirígí turn the Sinn Féin dichotomy against the party by attaching the memories of embodied masculinity to that which Sinn Féin is not performing, nor is able to perform now that they have rejected embodied masculinity. The materiality of masculinity in opposition to the state is best demonstrated by an image that is featured prominently on the Éirígí website:



Image 33
Eirigi.org

The masculine bodies are literally upholding one another. They are placed in opposition to the state in position (sitting/standing), color (muted/bright), and environment (protecting the land/protecting the industrial of the truck). Their unity is in opposition to the individualism of

the police, none of whom touch one another. However, the image also feminizes the Éirígí activists. They are sitting while the state stands in the position of power (Goldstein 252). This is a stark contrast to the image of the masked volunteer marching through the streets. Their protest relies upon the symbol of resistance being legible to the People. Though only men look at the camera, women are present in the group. The complication of masculinity being powerful and femininity being passive harkens back to the way that these two gender roles were played with and exploited for the People's benefit during the war.

While Éirígí may protest being labeled “dissidents,” there is also power in the term. Éirígí's very existence protests against the idea that the Northern state is a “normalized” society. This is a direct attack on Sinn Féin position that a new police force is required *for* the normalization of Northern society. Rather than attacking the specificity of the police, Éirígí protest the very premise on which those police are justified. As Seán Mac Bradaigh says, “This ‘normalization’ idea of Irish society, that it's a fully functioning and capitulated? ... It's a very, very different state from that all-together. I mean...5,000 British soldiers stationed here, which are more than there are stationed in Iraq. That's not a normal society. 10 British army bases, the second largest spy base in the world, outside of England, on Belfast's coast. That's not a normal society” (Interview). The disjuncture between Sinn Féin's symbol use and the material reality is a powerful point for Éirígí to make because Sinn Féin did the 30-year memory work of embedding the value of the material within Republican communities.

Éirígí don't provide an alternative within the current government structure because they question the validity of that government in the first place. They are focused on “exposing those contradictions” that Sinn Féin has propagated by simply putting bodies on the street. They are not interested in constructing Republican identity. Rather they wish to undermine the identity

that Sinn Féin has propagated. The focus is on complicating rather than restructuring. This is because “Republicanism has come through, in my opinion, I would say, and a lot of people in Éirígí’s opinion, ten years of debilitation, I would say. Ten years of a withdraw from that type of protest...[you want to be] creating, in as many places as you can, an awareness of the folly of the state as it is and what it could potentially be if people were only to take ownership of it themselves” (Interview). Éirígí clearly resonates with the Republican memory of embodied masculinity. The “last 10 years” began with an IRA ceasefire, which led to the removal and control of these bodies. This began the “debilitation.” Though Éirígí has extended theoretical analyses of socialism, Irish history and gender on their website, the performances that they engage with the “People” directly is embodied.

Éirígí perform a re-memberance of a past that articulates the embodied time of Republicanism as the ideal. This may partially be because in working class communities, “embodiment” is a fact that cannot be changed. Most of the labor remains “blue collar” if it can be found, which is increasingly difficult in the modern economic climate. The Republican narrative has celebrated this embodiment and articulated it as masculine, giving value to this labor. When the body is denigrated, and articulated as feminine and in need of control, this extends to the everydayness of working class reality. The denigration of the body leads to the dichotomy that resists complication. This denigration removes the power of performance and as such, forces the de-materialization of gender structures. The sense of labor’s value shifts from the working class to the middle and upper classes, who already retain economic power in society. Many times, however, this labor is simply not available. Christopher Mullins noted in his research with gangs from the poorest areas of Chicago and Los Angeles in the United States, “With the loss of more traditional industrial job opportunities, young working-class men sought

new avenues for establishing their masculinity in the eyes of themselves and others. Street and pub fights had long stood as one way to do so. Being in control of your own actions, acting independently of others, being self-sufficient, were essential pillars of street masculinity” (50). Though pub fights are certainly evident in working class communities, Éirígí’s marches also provide a method of attaining the symbolic power of embodiment. Though masculine and valuable, this is a practice that may be performed also by female bodies.

The presence of the past is abundant in the communities that Éirígí articulates as “most important.” Murals that glamorize the masculinity of violence are abundant in these communities. For example:



Image 39
Photo by author

Communities continue to hold ritual celebrations, known as “commemorations,” of local volunteers on the anniversary of their deaths. Communities continue to re-member the past, in direct contradiction to new Sinn Féin authority. Sinn Féin attempts to control these bodies by endorsing the commemorations and making sure that a Sinn Féin representative is available at as many of these commemorations as possible. However, their presence also points to the

disjuncture between the past and the present tactics of Sinn Féin, which is a disjuncture that undercuts the salient justifications for the war that circulated for thirty years.

A further mnemonic intervention that resulted in a palpable sense of the presence of the past came with the release of Steve McQueen's film *Hunger*. *Hunger* chronicles Sands' hunger strike and was released during the end of my time there. The film circulated rather widely throughout Ardoyne in bootleg copies. As Bik McFarlane, who took over as OC from Sands in the blocks when Bobby went on hunger strike, said:

The film *Hunger* is due out next week. And it's a factual account of Bobby Sands going through the process, arguing with the priest, and dying of hunger strike. And, you know, how do you make that up? It happened. And it's documented. And when it was sent down for consideration for the Camera D'or or what was it? At the Cannes Film Festival, and it was put in for that. And in England, the Brits went "woosh!" [makes hand motion showing swooping in] as quick as they could to try and undermine it. And yet it happened...27 years ago. But they want to undermine it. They don't want it to have credibility. They don't want people to see it (Interview).

McFarlane contends that the British understand the rhetorical power of memory. By protesting against it, "the British" lent the film a certain degree of legitimacy that oppositional Republican identity has always relied upon. If the state endorses a rhetorical artifact, it becomes suspect because then it does not fit into the oppositional identity structures that rely upon the image of Republicans fighting *against* something (the state, loyalists, criminalization, etc). This becomes more complicated when Sinn Féin *is* the state. This is particularly true of those narratives that have wide Republican legibility. Bobby Sands remains a figure that all Republicans claim partial memory ownership over. This became quite clear to me when I was in

a black taxi¹¹⁴ on my way to city centre from Ardoyne. A young man, around age 16, said to me, “I was watching that film *Hunger* there the other night and I remember when Bobby was dying and it was just like that” (Field Notes 11/4/08). This individual repeated a sentiment I had heard in many forms from other members of the Ardoyne community. Those who were not even alive and didn’t have immediate, individual access to that “memory,” have used this film to intervene in that memory and claim it individually. Individuals can access the public memory of Sands and his fight against the meaning of the state, even if those individuals have been raised in a post-ceasefire, post-Good Friday Agreement, Sinn Féin led state.

In the film, prison guards brutally beat prisoners. The prison guards also wear uniforms remarkably similar to those worn by the police in Belfast. The guards wear a blue uniform with badges and hats that are evocative of the state’s embodiment: the police. At one point in the film, the guards wear riot gear to terrify the prisoners. Thus, the guards become masked. The bodies of the state in this film are similarly protected against, and therefore justify, oppositional Republicanism. The film gained salience throughout Republican communities, particularly when the British legitimized it through their efforts to de-legitimize it. The film was highly legible and salient. The image of state brutality is made material in the presence of masked police entering “dissident” communities. The “present concern” of the police “activates” memories of state brutality and the oppression of the body (Blair *et al* 8). It articulates the present People into the narrative of Republican identity and constructs “senses of communal belonging” (Blair *et al* 8). This communal identity is embodied, oppositional and provides a feeling of value and power to

¹¹⁴ Black taxis are shared and drive in routes similar to buses. They came into use in Republican neighborhoods when Republicans began to hijack and burn out buses to protest the state. The state stopped sending buses into these areas and so Republicans began to ship black cabs over from England to operate in place of the buses (Interview *Tour*)

the People who are being disempowered and disembodied by the state and the decreasingly salient rhetoric of Sinn Féin.

Within this context “Éirígí’s position is very, very clear. There is no room for support for a British police force on the island of Ireland. I mean, if we want to change the constitutional reality on this island, the people who will protect best British law is the police force, so supporting them, I don’t see would be conducive to that sort of position” (Interview *Mac Bradaigh*). Éirígí has a clear position that is consistent with Republican memory. Though their justification is highly nuanced,¹¹⁵ the position they support is also highly legible. There is no effort needed to articulate the consistency of Éirígí’s position with Republican memory.

These public memories of police brutality are layered upon the individual identities of the members of Éirígí. An excellent example of the legibility of state violence against the working class people is articulated by Seán Mac Bradaigh’s own history:

My parents, obviously, well, my parents have been in jail and my whole family’s been in jail and obviously that has a big impact on you, but you have to define why sort of you react to circumstances and start thinking about certain things in a wee bit more focused way if the British Army is kicking your door in, obviously. It gets you up. It gets you thinking. I was in the Meánscoil Feirste, and it had a big impact on me as well, an education solely through the medium of Irish, but every single day of the week having to protest for your right to receive that education also will give you an idea of who the state were and what they thought of you and what they thought of you as a citizen. What they thought of you as a person (Interview).

¹¹⁵ “The capitalist, western model of policing serves no one’s needs in terms of how it’s deployed at the minute. It costs millions of pounds to imprison people, millions of pounds to forcefully police areas, and there’s minimal investment in preventative structures. And all of the things...Éirígí would have it as a core belief that the main causes of anti-social behaviour and crime are poverty and inequality and segregation. Discrimination against various class groups and social groups. That would be the cornerstone of all low level crime, which would be the thing that would annoy people in these areas the most. Now, you have police resources sort of used in an after-the-fact manner to deal with that...You have a service where maybe someone will come in to use some type of force to punish or to do whatever and it’s basically just a vengeful thing, which serves no purpose what-so-ever for a community who genuinely wants to have its young people engaged in different types of activity or whatever else. So, it would be a very clear analysis of what type of model of policing just does not work. It doesn’t work in Manchester or Bolton or Boston or Philadelphia or anywhere else” (Interview *Mac Bradaigh*).

The oppositional identity of the People and the State is clearly articulated by Mac Bradaigh. The state's imposition extends beyond his body to his very identity. The state oppresses the Irishness of his identity by intervening in his "right" to an Irish language education. He had to protest for that identity to be embodied (in a classroom, speaking Irish). In the process, the protest becomes a part of that identity process and links his individual identity to a group in opposition to the state.

By focusing primarily on campaigns, Éirígí disavows a larger interest in the political power of the state that Sinn Féin have now drawn upon. Éirígí legitimize their Republicanism by specifically placing themselves in opposition to "politics." They certainly have powerfully politicized symbols, but do not engage in the material structures of "politics," which are run within the bounds of the state. Because Sinn Féin now exists within the structure of that state, there is no viable "politics," in an electoral sense that can exist outside of the bounds of the state. This goes to show that among the "dissidents," "politics" is still considered a "dirty word," as it was during the pre-1986 *Ard Fheis* time period (Rafter 5).

Éirígí becomes complicated when one examines their tactic of performative protest. Two of the protests mentioned previously, the hoisting of the Iraqi flag, and, earlier, the intervention of Uncle EU, heavily rely on individual observers doing the rational work to link the image and the larger argument.



Image 35
Eirigi.org

The Iraqi flag may not be legible to the People, especially when it does not activate a “present concern” (Blair *et al* 8) for working class people in a struggling economy. Bodies on the top of the state’s building represent an opposition to and domination over that state. The masculine performance of climbing and posing on top of the building/material state, feminizes the state by activating the dominance-submission dialectic of top(masculine)-bottom(feminine) (Goldstein 211). However, the presence of the Iraqi flag complicates this message by adding in a symbol that has no resonance with Republican memory.

Additionally, Éirígí use protest as a means of being an uncontrolled body, but they do so in a way that draws on the reservoir of Republican memory of protest, primarily the hunger strikes. The hunger strikers used their bodies to highlight the injustices of the state. Éirígí bodies highlight the “contradictions” of the state. However, they do so unmasked. By unmasking they make the argument that they *should* be untouched by the state. They are

operating within the bounds of acceptable protest and as such the state cannot legitimately enact violence against them. Their actions do not give meaning to a masked masculine counterpart. They focus on the deconstruction of the state message rather than the construction of a Republican counter-message. Though they perform the “material supports” (Blair *et al* 8) of the Republican memory of the hunger strikes, they do not pose a “live” threat to the state. Éirígí put Sinn Féin in the position, as part of the state, to expose their gender as well as the larger gender structures of the state. If they act violently against the feminized, symbol-using protesting People, they justify the defense of those People by the masked masculine figure. If Sinn Féin do not act against the feminized body of the People, they are not in control of those bodies and as such, are themselves feminized. Thus, Éirígí may provide the justification for the masked, masculine body, but because they are not linked to any paramilitary organization, they simply provide an opportunity for that embodied opposition rather than a body itself. Ultimately, then, Éirígí is not about reconstructing the gender of the People. It is about highlighting the gender contradictions of the Leader(ship) and in so doing, devaluing that Leader(ship).

The ideal masculinity faces new constraints in the present, particularly when those who have historically asserted their masculinity violently live in the areas hardest hit by the global recession. When one cannot “protect your women” because one cannot provide for those women, one’s sense of masculinity comes into serious question. Éirígí bodies are complicated for the state, because though they are not controlled by Sinn Féin, they also carefully operate within the bounds of acceptable democratic protest. Furthermore, by being at least partially made up of the same faces that Sinn Féin Leaders were jailed with, Sinn Féin is invited to internal reflection as well (Interview *Mac Bradaigh*). As Fergal Mac Ionnrachtaigh says “It is much more difficult to fight back against your former comrades than it is to fight against the

colonial power. It is much more difficult to fight against the tricolor than it is to fight against the Union Jack, and that is the thing about it” (Interview).

Éirígí uses methods such as marching that should be acceptable to a truly democratic state. Because they do not use violence in these protests they should not pose a threat to the safety of the People and thus should have no need to be controlled. Yet, Sinn Féin’s Leader(ship) is predicated on the ability to control bodies. This authority is based in the history of the IRA structure, which would not permit dissent of any kind. Éirígí are flaunting their dissent, yet, because they are doing so within the boundaries of a democratic society, Sinn Féin cannot silence them without losing their claim to serve a normalized society. Thus, Éirígí’s presence in groups large enough to garner attention, in and of itself serves to “point out the contradictions.” Other groups push these boundaries more blatantly as a way of forcing Sinn Féin’s hand. One such group is the Concerned Families Against Drugs, or, CFAD.

Concerned Families Against Drugs

CFAD claims that they had to start the process of communal policing because the PSNI simply did not do the job that the locals had agreed to support in 2007. Reform was promised to them, and they did not get it (CFAD homepage). Locals claim that the police pay and protect drug dealers to tout on the goings on of the locals. CFAD argues that the police engage in political monitoring of Ardoyne. Locals further claim that the police are being used by such groups as Sinn Féin to silence any organization that disagrees with them through slander. They label Sinn Féin workers in the area “community *in*activists” (CFAD homepage). CFAD contest that Sinn Féin members are “deeply involved a smear campaign against our group and activists” (CFAD homepage).

Martin Óg Meehan¹¹⁶, son of the veteran Republican Martin Meehan, wrote the following on the popular Republican site, The Irish Republican Socialist Forum, on behalf of CFAD:

“Concerned Families Against Drugs (CFAD) condemn yesterday's political raids in the Ardoyne area of North Belfast. Over recent weeks, a number of members from well-paid community groups have engaged in a series of underhand activities towards our members. Which culminated in yesterday's political raids on the homes of CFAD members and their relatives. These activities have ranged from intimidation, threats, innuendos, back-stabbing and name-calling. When that did not deter our activists from stemming the influence of known Drug Dealers...CFAD believe yesterday's PSNI raids were part of a bigger political plan to undermine and intimidate our group. Rather than targeting and disrupting criminality and the sale and distribution of drugs. The PSNI raided a number of homes in Ardoyne including, a Pensioner suffering from terminal cancer, the widow of a local Sinn Fein murdered by Loyalists in collusion with the Crown Forces and the victims of recent burgleries. Far from finding anything, these heavily-armed stormtroopers left Ardoyne, as they entered - with nothing!”

In response to his post, one individual wrote “SORRY TO HERE [sic] ABOUT THE RAIDS ON HOMES KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK DONT LET THE PNSI /SF/:BRING THE GOOD PEOPLE OF ARDOYNE AN[D] BEYOND DOWN” (Irish Republican Socialist Forum).

Meehan describes the police as “heavily-armed stormtroopers” which conjures up the image of the violent, masked state moving in to harm the People. The People are feminized by Meehan in this statement, which is consistent with Republican memory. They are widows, the elderly and “victims.” They are those individuals who typically are thought to be in need of protection. They are at the mercy of the state. The People in this narrative are the mirror image of those Catholics of Republican memory who were burned out of their homes on Bombay Street in 1969. Yet, from within the People, there is the possibility of a local hierarchy emerging which will provide protection. Thus the People can be simultaneously masculine and feminine.

¹¹⁶ Óg is the Irish word for small. It is often used to denote a Jr.

The responder to this statement directly equates the police and Sinn Féin, arguing that the police body is the Sinn Féin body. Thus, the Sinn Féin body is now acting violently against its own People. The Sinn Féin body thus becomes the identity against which the Republican People must construct their own. The defense of the local people used to be left up to “the IRA, which was truly the people’s army” (Interview *McCabe*). Now, because the army has been laid to rest, new groups are called upon up to take that role.

CFAD go a step further than Éirígí, however, and articulate themselves as the protectors of the People. They do so through a series of images they have released of both the masked and unmasked individual. The first image was distributed by CFAD on leaflets and also included on their website:



Image 36
CFAD homepage

The masked man in this picture is holding his hand up in a “stop” sign. The reader is meant to assume it is a man because he is masked, therefore masculine, and therefore male, though, of course (s)he may not necessarily be such. His unidentifiable, anonymous features make him seem menacing. He serves to threaten drug dealers and to cajole locals into taking an individual stand against drug dealers themselves through information or action. He is representative of the

Republican memory of masked paramilitary members patrolling and protecting the Republican community. These memories are particularly salient in Ardoyne, where masked patrol was a regular performance.¹¹⁷

The use of the hood instead of the mask is an adaptation of this memory to the modern context. This new mask is “activated by present concerns” (Blair *et al* 8). “Hood” is a term used to describe anti-social, apolitical, violent individuals who are terrorizing Republican people. Hoods are most often linked to the growing drug trade in Belfast. Hoods are drug users and dealers who take advantage of the “mentally ill” or weak and coerce them into drug use (CFAD homepage). “Hoods” are so called because they often wear sweatshirts with hoods. Without the communal policing provided by the Provisional IRA’s boots on the ground, and still without communal confidence in the PSNI, the Hoods have increased in power and daring. The photo of graffiti earlier that read “U.T.H., F.T.R.A. (up the hoods, fuck the RA)” demonstrates the boldness of Hoods in Ardoyne.¹¹⁸

The battle for local control over bodies has shifted from a State-Republican dialectic to a community-antisocial dialectic. CFAD’s use of a hood in their own image then is a way of reclaiming and complicating the masculinity of the mask from the anti-social Hoods. Whether or not Hoods have selected their clothing because of the powerful resonance of covering the face in Republican public memory, their use of the hood provides them with the masculine potential for violence that images of the paramilitary members relied upon.

¹¹⁷ I draw this conclusion from my examination of over one hundred images of masked patrols in the Linen Hall Archives in Belfast. Of the 32 images of urban patrols, 8 of them were of Ardoyne patrols. This is more than any other area was represented.

¹¹⁸ “Up the...” is a way of celebrating a group in Irish parlance. This can be in regards to a sports team (e.g. “Gaillimh abu!” Irish for “Up Galway!” when discussing a Gaelic football or hurling county match) or paramilitary organization (e.g. one common rallying cry for IRA units was “Up the RA!”)

CFAD focuses on taking power away from the Hoods “with a series of protests, exposures and of course political and community lobbying.” Their goal is to “identify, expose and confront the scourge of drugs in Ardoyne” (CFAD homepage). Identification and exposure indicate that CFAD will “un-mask” the dealers. They want to remove the anonymity and masculinity that wearing the hood provides to the Hoods. By using this image, CFAD are reclaiming the mask as their own. A masculine body is only unmasked in death in Republican memory. Thus, the Hoods are being symbolically killed when they are un-masked/un-hooded.

CFAD complicates the trope of the mask. CFAD released the following picture to the Irish News, which was publishing a story on the group:



Image 37
CFAD homepage

Rather than these individuals being unmasked through death, they unmask themselves to demonstrate their rejection of the state. Rather than being unmasked by the state in arrest, they claim agency and unmask themselves to mock the state’s impotence. They flaunt their untouchability, while simultaneously recognizing that such is mnemonically reserved for the dead. The two men pictured are clearly display strong, normative masculinity in line with the

masculine-ideal of the traditional IRA man. While CFAD has many members, including women, ex-prisoners and young people, the bodies that they chose to bring to the forefront are young, strong males. One must be a “hard man” in order to pose for a picture that will be distributed to enemies including the PSNI, Sinn Féin and drug dealers. One CFAD member expressed sadness that the community was required to self-police. The protestor said that in the days of IRA patrols "we wouldn't have had to do this. The IRA sorted out scumbags" (Breen). The speaker endorses the public memory of the IRA masculine body which protected the community against the attacks of the kind it remembers from Bombay Street in 1969.

The pose of the two men pictured is also significant. The men stare directly into the camera. Staring is a masculine trait meant to demonstrate dominance. The feminized other is meant to “lower eyes, avert gaze, blink” as a way of demonstrating submissiveness (Goldstein 211). Having a clear dominant-subordinate hierarchy is actually meant to preserve order in communities because it prevents creatures from “tear[ing] each other to pieces” (Goldstein 210). The ideal of masculinity reinforces in a direct way the protection of the feminine, submissive, Other through the bolstering of that hierarchy. There are two audiences viewing this image. One is the state, which, in the form of Sinn Féin is meant to be dominated by the CFAD male gaze observing the feminine viewer. The second audience is the People, who CFAD are trying to articulate into their own Leader(ship)-People relationship. By validating a People, CFAD are hoping for mutual validation of their Leader(ship). This is a modern Republican People set in communal memory who may rise up and, regardless of sex, adopt masculine and feminine roles, to varying degrees, simultaneously.

Of course, it is significant that these individuals are not wearing masks themselves. The image strongly resembles many images of the Republican martyrs who were immortalized in a mural in Ballymurphy estate:



Image 38
Photo by author

The men in the mural, like the men in the picture, stare dominantly out at the observer. The building in the background represents the community, as does the wall the two men in the photograph are standing in front of. The men in the mural clearly carry weapons and the men in the photo do not. However, both men in the photo have their hands in their pockets. The viewer cannot see what is in the photographed men's pockets and indeed, cannot see below their waist. There is a vague suggestion then of the potential of weapons, though of course it is highly unlikely that material weapons are being carried by these men.

The men in the photo are unmasked. Their choice to appear as such articulates their agency. These men were not un-masked by another. These men removed their own masks. They maintained bodily autonomy. They claimed their untouchability without a moment of death imposed by the state. The Hoods, who are “exposed,” are unwillingly un-masked. The imitation/re-membrance/performance of the instructive masculinity of the Republican mural articulates a new generation of men who have taken that instruction seriously. These men reclaim their masculinity in the present context. However, the state isn’t a passive agent that accepts mocking. The state recognizes the history of unmasking as an elevation beyond embodiment through the death of the volunteer. The salience of the necessity of death for the unmasked, masculine, embodied Republican is perhaps best exemplified by the arrest of the man on the right, Aidan Ferguson, soon after the release of this image.¹¹⁹

CFAD reported this arrest on their website saying, “An Ardoyne man arrested last week in connection with an alleged gun attack on the RUC/PSNI during the 13th July riot and later released 'unconditionally'. Has said his arrest was politically motivated because of his involvement with anti-drugs group, CFAD” (CFAD homepage). Ferguson is later quoted in the article saying, “I have had a number of death threats, most recently after my arrest because of my involvement with CFAD. I have also been warned by leading members of Sinn Fein and others linked to the Party in North Belfast that I was going to be charged with something and end up in prison'.... I was used as a political scapegoat for the rioting. The cops needed to be seen to do something and picked me” (CFAD homepage). In a stark material consistency with the Republican narrative that articulates death for the unmasked, Ferguson has received death threats

¹¹⁹ Aidan Ferguson was identified in the CFAD article that covered his arrest. This information was public and easily accessible. If it had not been, I would not have specifically identified him.

from some and the threat of prison from others (prison functioning as temporary death through removal from society).

As Ferguson was getting arrested he yells, “Go get Bobby Storey to do this for you!”¹²⁰ Bobby Storey was a well-known Hard Man who was in charge of intelligence for the PIRA during the Troubles. Storey was the masculine body Sinn Féin used in Ardoyne to sell the policing initiative alongside Gerry Kelly (Irish News *Spymaster*). Ferguson is referencing Sinn Féin’s use of hard bodies such as Walsh’s and Kelly’s to “sell” their policies to the base. Ferguson’s arrest became a performance of Sinn Féin power over the community. Simultaneously, his resistance became a synecdoche for larger community resistance. This is the moment of coercion that comes with consent in the attempt to attain power. Ferguson is pointing out that Storey’s unmasked authority relies upon the spectre of the mask that Sinn Féin is currently denigrating. Sinn Féin’s attempt to remove the body from discourse is contradicted by the presence of its authority and the bodies it uses to reinforce that authority.

When the BBC put this video up on their website and showed it on television, they pixilated every officer’s face but did not do the same for Ferguson or his wife. The BBC masked the police and unmasked the Ferguson (CFAD homepage). The BBC tries to feminize Ferguson by removing his agency to unmask himself. Perhaps even more damaging, the BBC did not pixilate this man’s house number and, within hours, his wife had also received death threats from a Unionist paramilitary gang. Ardoyne is a closed Republican estate community and thus its infiltration by media that could traverse physical space ended up providing knowledge and power to the external Unionist group. The BBC did remove this video from their website shortly after the woman pictured had received death threats, but the damage had been done. She was

¹²⁰ Video of the arrest is available on CFAD’s homepage.

forced to move into a different house with a new baby, while her partner was being held for questioning over some shots that had been allegedly fired during 12th of July rioting in the area. (CFAD homepage). This story was used by CFAD to demonstrate the abuse of Sinn Féin's state power against the People (mother with young children) just as was the case in 1969 Bombay Street.

CFAD are attempting to reclaim the power in Ardoyne by refusing to give consent to the police. In so doing, they refuse to have their bodies controlled by Sinn Féin. This performance articulates Sinn Féin as inconsistent with Republican memory and therefore inconsistent with Republican identity. Losing the power to shape identity means that one has also lost the claim to Leader(ship). As the CFAD blog read on December 2, 2009, "*Concerned Families Against Drugs (CFAD)* demand the immediate end to *RUC/PSNI* harassment and intimidation and call on fellow community groups and Politicians to show solidarity with us. We also call upon those so-called Republicans attempting to smear us, to have a shred of decency and join the 21st century" (CFAD homepage). CFAD equates the police here with the old "policing service" that was renowned for its violent sectarianism. By calling the PSNI the RUC, they are pointing out that Sinn Féin has been unsuccessful in bringing about this "new era of policing."

Additionally, by arguing that Sinn Féin needs to "join the 21st century," CFAD implies that the Leader(ship) is not dealing with the present concerns of the People. This turns Sinn Féin's rhetorical attempts to articulate the masculine body as in the past against itself by pointing out that those who uphold and perform memory are those who are relevant today. CFAD call upon others to join them, not only in the deconstructive efforts that Éirígí engage in, but in their attempts to re-member/re-embodiment the memory of Republican masculinity. Doing so would bring power back to the local body and "protect" the People against the violence of the state.

The attempt to equate the actions of CFAD and the Hoods ends up articulating the performance of unmasking within the rhetorical structures set out by CFAD. This ultimately acknowledges their author-ship and authority.

The International Monitoring Commission's 22nd Report, released in November of 2009, "alleged that Concerned Families Against Drugs (CFAD) were, 'a vigilante group who was responsible for a number of punishment shootings and pipe-bombings of suspected Drug Dealers' in the North Belfast area" (CFAD homepage). CFAD met with the IMC and requested that their name be removed from the report, explained that they were not a vigilante or paramilitary organization, and requested a public apology. CFAD is not the organization carrying out militant attacks against local drug dealers. However, they have re-membered a masculinity that justified this behavior in a war context for 30 years. Whether or not CFAD is in any way connected to the actual violence is of little consequence when it comes to the labeling of the group as "dissident," which connotes that they are simply a group of apolitical, irrational thugs. This label creates the rhetorical landscape where such shootings are possible.

By labeling this group "dissident" Sinn Féin has attempted to remove their ability to give salience to the re-memberance of this Republican memory. As dissidents they would not be permitted to be a part of the People. As outsiders, their actions would provide a nodal point against which to perpetuate the oppositional identity of the Republican People. The People would define their identity as *not* CFAD or any of the meanings of masculinity that they carry. However, "at its core, hegemonic masculinity is based upon the legitimation of gender definitions that require the subordination of women to men and the subordination of non-hegemonic masculinities (for example, 'sissies' or 'punks') to the dominant form" (Mullins 8).

The masculinity of CFAD requires the subordination of Sinn Féin's new masculinity. CFAD appear to be gaining ground in Ardoyne, which means, by extension, Sinn Féin is losing ground. Control of territory is a fundamental part of masculine performance (Mullins 150). Controlling territory means one controls the bodies in that territory. Territoriality is consistent with Republican memory's value of materiality. Thus, the very fight for territory legitimizes CFAD masculinity because it articulates that there is a fight *to* fight. This rejects Sinn Féin's argument that Northern Ireland is in a "new" context that does not require the presence of anti-state embodiment. The idea that things have changed and the time for violent masculinity "is passed" is undercut by Sinn Féin's use of masculine bodies to legitimize their own symbol-using, feminine, un-masked engagement with, and acceptance of, the state. This is the environment in which the People now have to make a choice: re-member their identities or, after 800 years, find a new identity.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The connection between authority and masculinity remains strong in modern Republican Belfast. Yet, in an environment of “purely political means,” many groups are struggling to retain the People’s sense of dignity, purpose, and, most importantly, identity. The Leader(ship)’s authority is predicated upon a dualism of gender that turns back on itself and ultimately undermines their authority. During times of violence, the body was the primary nodal point with which to prove masculinity and authentic authority. The body became masculine when it carried the potential of material violence from behind the mask. Bodies that successfully operated behind the mask, including Séanna Walsh, Gerry Kelly, and Bik McFarlane, had an enduring authenticity based on the spectre of the mask. This spectre was meant to place them above the realm of materiality, making them untouchable. However, because every member of the Leader(ship) has unmasked, there is no embodied authority left to articulate their ideal masculinity. As such, it is not legible and unwittingly provides the basis for the masked authority against which the Leader(ship) is currently fighting.

In the new environment of the peace process, the Leadership has shifted value from the nuanced discourse of embodied performativity to the dichotomous, unembodied rhetorical

context that they hoped would bolster its Leader(ship). Yet, the Leadership still retains its authority from mnemonic narratives of embodiment that prove masculinity and Republicanism. This has not been lost on the People, who see the body as operating under new constraints. The body was constrained in prison during the Troubles, which was a salient Republican narrative, made even more poignant for younger generations by the film “Hunger.” Thus, the Republican People have a public memory of the importance of fighting against constraints on the body. The new constraints of Sinn Féin control over bodies is seen within the context of this memory that demands the People who take up Republican oppositional identity to resist this state-based control.

Bobby Sands’ hunger strike depended upon the material bodies of the Leader(ship) and the People. His own body was crucial to his elevation to martyrdom and untouchability. The People layered his body with meaning during his 10,000 person strong funeral procession and continue to do so today with the various images depicting him as a martyr. Similarly, the People co-created the masked military members as communal police. They bought into the volunteers’ articulation of space both linguistically (they are “volunteers” and not “terrorists”) and materially (the People’s presence at military funerals, the hiding of volunteers in their safe houses, providing the intelligence and support the *Green Book* articulates as so important, and by using these volunteers and the feminine other as the narrative of the ideal gender-roles to offer to their children).

In order for the Leader(ship) to successfully articulate the “new,” unembodied context as legitimate, they must simultaneously denigrate the material. The Leader(ship) refuses to acknowledge the value of the body’s actions by CFAD and Éirígi, labeling both groups “dissident.” This title places members of these groups outside of the Leader(ship), who have the

power to identify the People. CFAD and Éirígí become equated with the Other of Republican narratives which is the irrational, suspect loyalties of inauthentic bodies like the Hoods. These others undercut the important work of the authentic Republicans. However, the narrative is not just authored by Sinn Féin and accepted by the People. The People have understood the denigration which has been turned against them as Sinn Féin acting in the role of oppressive state. The state is something that the authentic, masculine, re-membered Republican will resist.

Various problems arise for the Leadership through these articulations. Their own authority is based on memories of embodied masculinity. Their authority depends upon the spectre of the mask remaining legible. Yet the spectre of the mask also mocks the state that they now endorse. If they successfully argue that embodiment belongs to a time past and downgrade the salience of militarized masculine narratives, they too lose their authority.

When Sinn Féin begins to engage in politics, their look as a party became more middle class. However, rather than “raising with your class,” Sinn Féin “raised above” its class (Bean 99). Previously, the cultural capital that came with being an authentic Republican “did not result in a social mobility that took them *outside* their community; it essentially confirmed their place *within* it” (Bean 99). Sinn Féin has begun to rise outside of its community into the “higher” socio-economic classes of the state at large. This placement outside of the community of the People seriously undermines their credibility, authenticity and authorship of Republicanism.

The People are struggling to live within the new context that has been articulated by Sinn Féin. There is a lack of local embodied Leader(ship) and no one in the community has access to proof of masculinity. Additionally, these societies struggling to live in a new sense of temporality. Violence provides an immediate sense of action. There are clear, tangible signs

that *something* is being done. Every police vehicle that is made to look like a tank or every time someone gets arrested for politically motivated violence, those communities are reminded that they are succeeding, because the state feels under siege. These groups do not need to start a war, nor do I have any belief that that is their goal. However, their very presence indicates that this is not a normalized society. And this all works to undermine Sinn Féin's claims to represent the Republican ideal and to be steward to its values.

Patience and compromise are required under the umbrella of politics. It is a new, slower Republican temporality without an emaciated corpse to carry through the street at the end to prove state injustice and mock the state in its moment of defeat. There is an absence of Republican bodies. Sinn Féin can only point to the police body as the visible sign that it is in control. This police body runs against the thirty years of carefully crafted memory that Sinn Féin used to build its Leader(ship). This "long war" temporality is not punctuated by spectacular corporeality. Simple things exacerbate this problem. For example, in Ardoyne, there is a complete lack of sporting facilities that may provide a more positive outlet for corporeality. Sports such as hurling, a traditional Irish sport dating back thousands of years, emphasize self-control and cooperation (Goldstein 301). Fighting on the field is not permitted. Women's hurling, Camogie, is highly valued in Gaelic circles as well, certainly far more than women's sports are traditionally valued in the United States. The point at which Ardoyne does not even have a pitch on which to play Gaelic games is the point at which young people are left with a great deal of time and no physical outlet to perform the gendered roles their communal narratives demand of them.¹²¹

¹²¹ Ardoyne does have a GAA club, the Ardoyne Kickhams, they just do not have local facilities. Additionally, the GAA, the national organization which protects and promotes Gaelic culture, is constantly attacked rhetorically by

Sinn Féin is in a very difficult position. Every policy Sinn Féin wants to push through the government is subjected to opposition by Unionist and centrist parties. When they compromise with that opposition, the Republican People feel let down, while the Unionist people tend to complain (often in national media sources) about the radical programs Sinn Féin is trying to institute in the state (Interview *McFarlane*). It takes enormous courage and persistence to not simply give up the fight in this environment. The Leader(ship) continue to try to bring Irish Unity into the conversation (Sinn Féin *Unity*) without scaring the Unionist People out of the conversation entirely. Violence is a clear demonstration of unwillingness to compromise. Politics and dialogue take far more patience and involve deep risks to a Leader(ship) that is literally putting its own People's identity on the line. I don't think the members of the Leader(ship) to whom I have spoken do this carelessly. I do believe that members of this Leader(ship), many of whom have embodied their commitment to Republican ideals over decades, take each move they make very seriously.

If the party is going to be flexible on behalf of their People in governmental policies that partially create an identity, then it cannot wisely apply the inflexible, silencing term "dissident" to an entire community of People who believe they are fighting the same fight for Irish freedom as Sinn Féin. This equation with the masked anti-social Hoods activates Thatcher's hated criminalization lexicon. This is particularly true in the context of Republicanism because most Republican identity narratives are firmly rooted in a deeply ingrained sense of oppositional identity. Telling a People that those narratives now exist in an entirely different context, one where it is not that we *cannot* fight, but that we *will not* fight, takes continual rhetorical work.

Unionist politicians who claim it is a cover for paramilitary or dissident activity. Please see <http://www.ardoynegac.com/>

Sinn Féin's position is difficult. Irish Republicanism has historically been entirely unwilling to compromise on some core issues. The support of the police used to be one of those issues. Now, Sinn Féin has found itself compromising on those very issues. They frame this in terms of a tactical change though the People see it as giving up the struggle (Rafter 3). Sinn Féin continues to try to represent as many of the Republican issues as possible, without spreading their political capital too thin. They are subjected to attacks from all sides, and have returned those attacks whether the individuals delivering them are doing so for political gain, or because they wish to express genuine criticism. This difficulty is expressed by Bik McFarlane when he says:

We're not going back, we're going forward. And trying to see that can be very, very difficult. We have many, many arguments in these areas and in other areas around the country. And, you know, some people found it a wee bit too hard to take and moved away. Most people stayed together. One of the key factors that we pinned on any discussion group or in any debate in relation to activists and support base was, "if you have a disagreement, ok, fair, we'll listen to it." Now if your disagreement is to such an oppositional extent, then give us an alternative. Tell me where we're going wrong. Tell me what I need to do. Let me bring it back. But give me the alternative." If you're not going to do that, do one thing. Have your say and have your politics. Have your disagreement. Do not fall out with us. Do not walk away from us. Have your disagreement but continually communicate with us. Come to the house, come to the street, and tell me you disagree with what we're doing, because we are not infallible, we don't always get it right and somewhere down the line you may have an analysis that we would say "yup, ok, we made a mistake." But don't walk away (Interview).

This brings up the question of the responsibilities that the People have to the Leader(ship). It is easy to assume that now that Sinn Féin is in power, they should function as any other political party in a normalized society should. They should represent the People and the People themselves should be moderate and willing to compromise with the majority. Yet, Northern politics are not normalized insofar as the voting populace remains steadfastly polarized. McFarlane argues here that engaging in the deconstructive rhetoric of Éirígí or the regressive

masculine performances of CFAD turns their backs on the way “forward.” The People too must consider the position that Sinn Féin is in carefully.

These communities have been turned inward for 800 years, with the only external discourse being provided through the mouthpiece of designated publicity leaders. These communities simply do not have a culture of open discourse that is required for true democratic participation. These communities feel that Sinn Féin has continued to issue communication in a hierarchical, military style (Bean 93). This manner of communication encourages the People to develop an identity structure that idealizes a militarized, masculine body.

Military communication is “totalitarian” (Bean 93) and does not tolerate dissent (*Green Book* 14). Democracy relies upon debate, which, by definition, requires support *and* dissent. The dissent that has typically been valued in the Republican community has been embodied. Sinn Féin has attempted to feminize embodied dissent, but Republican memory has feminized symbolic/linguistic dissent. The fear of not “acting like a man” means that men in communities must either reject Sinn Féin’s new definition of masculinity or reject the party. Some are finding it easier to reject the party than to reject decades of memory that is written, spoken about, imaged, performed, and otherwise reinforced and re-membered in the everyday life of the People.

When one takes a step back and examines where the Republican movement is today, it is hard not to wonder if indeed the British colonial structure has won. The primary Republican Leader(ship), in the form of Sinn Féin has compromised their principle of non-constitutionalism and in so doing have engaged with and legitimized the existence of the state itself. Much of the literature on Northern Ireland deals with the state as a post-colonial entity. The IRA declared an

end to the war and major parties are working toward a state of normalcy. Yet, as Fergal Mac Ionnrachtaigh points out, “colonialism effectively becomes more reasonable and more sensible in that it becomes clever. So it is power with indirect control.... All the Brits are doing is continuing economic exploitation without being actually there” (Interview). This makes one wonder, has the war been lost? Have the people been placated through neocolonial structures? Has the removal of blatant sectarianism in jobs and housing been enough to cause Republicans to give up on their long term vision of a free, united Ireland? Will the downturn in the economy leave people desperate for a way to justify that deprivation through political action or violence against the state and its representatives? Will the new voices of Republicanism have any bearing on the future of Belfast specifically, and the North, generally? Will these various groups of “dissident” Republicans join forces to create a new umbrella group of Republicanism and start the war again? Of course, none of these questions can be answered with certainty. However, based on my time in Belfast I would argue the following:

The North will return to a higher level of violence than we have seen since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Though a full scale civil war, of the kind we saw during the Troubles will not take place, the increasing presence of drugs will fuel a frustration that will legitimize communal policing. This will be combined with rhetoric celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising. 2016 will be a year flooded with symbolic actions and strategic violence. The increasing divisions between paramilitary/“terrorist” groups and states on a global scale have created the kind of networks necessary to move guns and volunteers internationally, while simultaneously shutting down one of the most important funding/material support bases for Republicans: America. The understanding that young Republicans have of technology and media will aid in the advertisement of their actions, making even low level

violence more visible. The economic downturn will leave many men out of work, particularly in the 13 poorest housing wards, where the primary trade is skilled and unskilled manual labor. As long as Ireland is not building buildings and men are able to collect from the dole, there will be the time and the will to justify their masculinity in ways that have been rhetorically salient in Republican public memory. The base will move away from the Leader(ship) as long as the Leader(ship) is perceived to be insulated economically through their “cushy government jobs” from the suffering of the People (Bean 99). When the Leader(ship) appears to rise above rather than rise with, they are replaced by members of the local hierarchy who more evenly distribute power through more flexible gendered practices.

Ultimately, the state will not fall through violence. The apathy and placation of large swaths of the population North and South will prevent a full scale war for independence. The South doesn't want the North and the North cannot survive on its own. Poor communities will be further ghettoized and eventually will turn inwards in a war between drug dealers and local Hard Men. The divide and conquer strategy of the colonial state has worked. The state has beaten the most important rhetorical bodies of Republicanism not through internment, but through co-optation and appeasement. As long as the strong Irish-American relationship remains in place and the American media continues to create an everyday fear of terrorism, paramilitary members will be unwilling to access the most immediately available cache of weapons from Islamist radicals. Drug dealers and crime families, such as the McCarthy's from Limerick, however, have no such limitations on weapon acquisition.

Eventually Ireland will be reunited. If it is done within the policy articulations of the Good Friday Agreements, it will not feel like a victory for Republicans, which may be necessary to not alienate the 6 counties' Loyalist population. However, this reunited Ireland will most

likely be another middle class, capitalist state rather than the socialist, democratic Republic for which generations of Irish men and Irish women sacrificed their lives. The rhetoric of capitalism has been even more detrimental to the Republican dream than English rule has been. Reuniting the two halves of the island will prove to be logistically difficult. Small steps that include the incorporation of two economies, health care systems, etc. may prove to be “too much of a hassle” to those who don’t particularly care about the North in the first place. Some of the small steps to reduce the perception of “hassle” have already been undertaken by Sinn Féin. It remains to be seen how successful these cross-border efforts are.

Sometimes I get the impression that Sinn Féin is hiding its true revolutionary intentions through their participation in Stormont. I wonder if the everyday steps that they are taking to devolve policing and justice powers, to create a democratic environment, to emasculate the violent portions of the People aren’t openly discussed because they are trying not to draw attention to themselves. It is almost as if they are simply hoping that the Unionists won’t notice them chipping away at the foundations of the state and creating the environment for a new state to come into being. If this is the case, they have to be very careful, because they are so successfully telling narratives of state support that their base has believed them and therefore are turning away. At the same time, the narratives of Republican treachery remain salient in the Unionist community. It seems as if they will lose both their own People, and the opposition.

I intend to continue this interrogation into modern Republicanism in the North. My next move will be to South Armagh, where “dissident” activity is materially strongest. The rural population in South Armagh has much closer ties to conservative Catholicism. Their proximity to the border of the Republic means that they feel far more integrated into the 26 counties already. They also are more insulated from the politics of Belfast. When the violence restarts,

this will be the Republican stronghold from which the British will be most injured. I would first like to expand my research for this project by interviewing female volunteers to understand how they understood their own gender performance and what messages they felt like they received privately that I may not have been able to publicly access.

The final question I would ask of Sinn Féin is “what does labeling someone a ‘dissident’ do for/against you?” I believe the word is being read within a lexicon of criminalization and dichotomous gender configurations that ultimately end up undermining the party’s own authority. The final question I would ask of the People is “if Sinn Féin does not accurately shape the identity you hold for yourself, who does?” Adding a deconstructive perspective to the debate is valuable in a democratic society. However, if there is hope that the North will one day exist outside of the temporality of spectacular violence then a viable understanding of what that materiality will look like must be provided.

Appendix

Maps

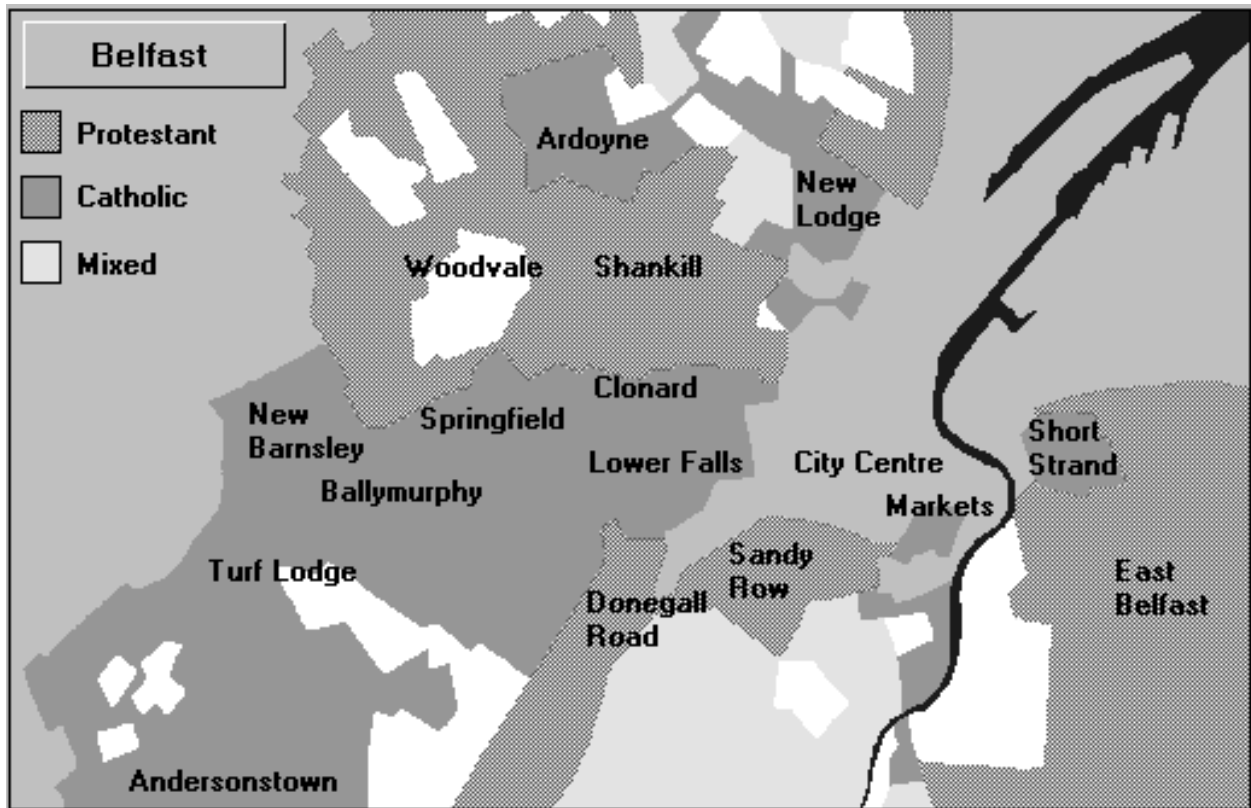


Image 39
Linen Hall Troubled

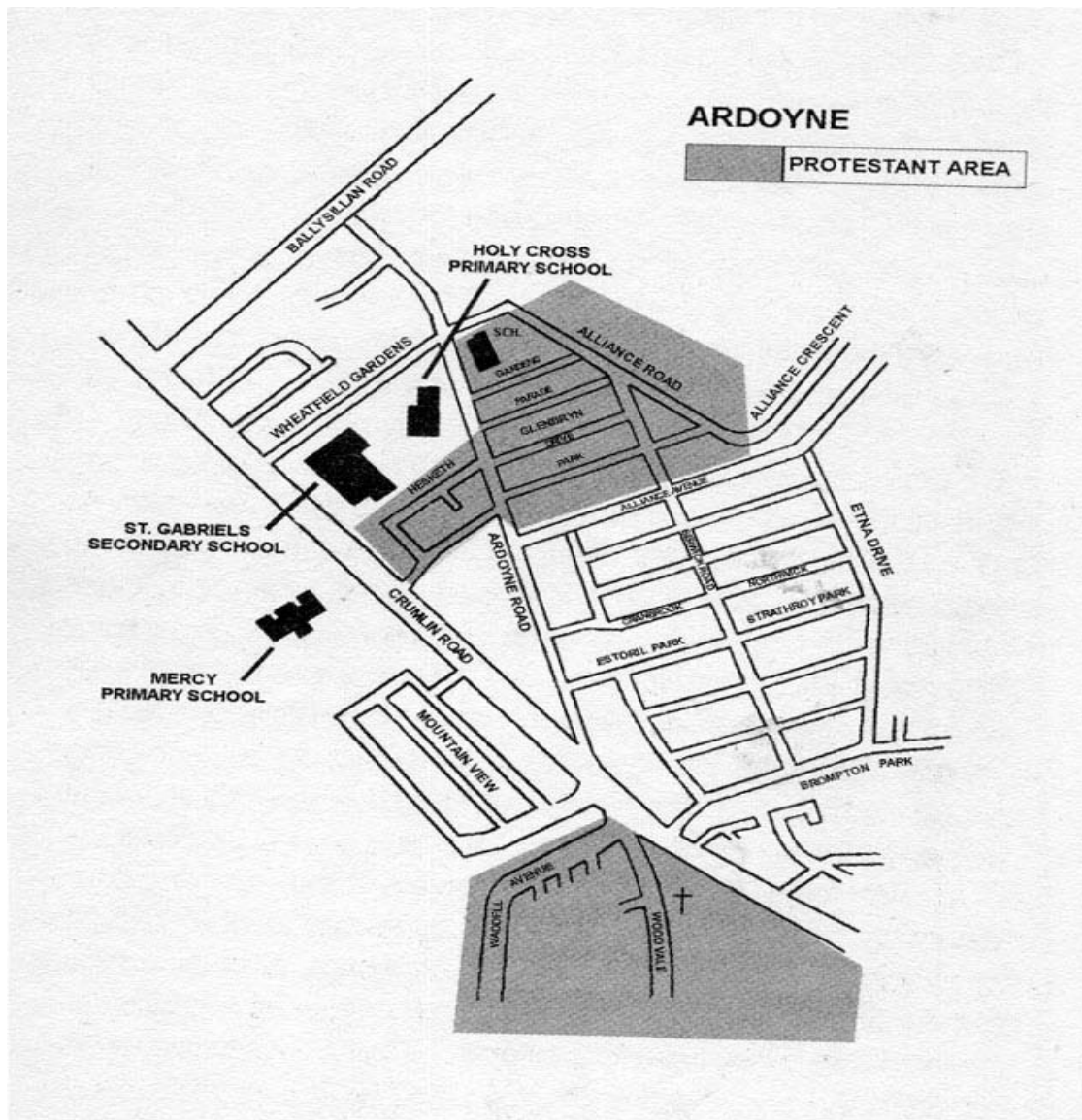


Image 40
Linen Hall Troubled

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---9/11/08.

---10/11/08

---10/14/08

---11/4/08

---1/16/09

---1/18/09

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