

A RHETORIC OF PEACE AND PROTEST: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS, SEMIOTICS
AND THE MURALS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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ABSTRACT

A Rhetoric of Peace and Protest: Discourse Analysis, Semiotics and the Murals in Northern Ireland

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This dissertation offers an examination of applied protest rhetoric through a unique form of public discourse that promotes a problematic accessibility for individual, regional, and global audiences. The nontraditional rhetoric found within the murals in Northern Ireland engage viewers in a process of interpretation that opens up the opportunities for peace. The significance of this dissertation on the semiotic discourse analysis of the murals in Northern Ireland is found within its contributions to rhetorical and semiotic scholarship, the Northern Irish communities, and the world at large. This study connects the murals of Northern Ireland to deliberative, epideictic, and forensic forms of nontraditional rhetoric, and a tradition of storytelling from the Paleolithic cave paintings of France to the visual discourse of the virtual environment. This analysis incorporates multiple methodologies that include semiotics, classical rhetoric, and discourse analysis. In addition, this dissertation expands upon the scope of semiotic studies of public art through the connections found between the political murals and the language of semiotics. This dissertation displays the interconnected nature of visual and verbal iconography that promotes alternative interpretations in Northern Ireland as it moves towards peace.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Any discussion of the events in Northern Ireland is not complete without a listing of the primary abbreviations employed in conversation and headlines.

CIRA	Continuity Irish Republican Army
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
INLA	Irish National Liberation Army
IRA	Irish Republican Army
LVF	Loyalist Volunteer Force
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
NIRA	Northern Irish Republican Army
PD	People's Democracy
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
RIC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
RIR	Royal Irish Regiment
RIRA	Real Irish Republican Army
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
UDA	Ulster Defense Association
UDP	Ulster Democratic Party
UDR	Ulster Defense Regiment
UFF	Ulster Freedom Fighters
UKUP	United Kingdom Unionist Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force

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PREFACE

Northern Ireland is not simply a territorial location filled with mountains, rivers, and urban centers. It is a state of mind and one that has been hotly, often violently, debated for generations. As is the case with most contentious topics, more than one or two general, simple opinions about potential resolutions abound. In this case, almost as many different points of view exist as the population. These opinions range from middle-ground moderates to fractious extremists who appear unwilling to share common ground.

Though the number of differing opinions regarding the conflict and subsequent search for peace, the loudest voices continue to hold sway in a variety of media—press, film, and the Internet. In addition, the book or essay provides an ideal space for both moderate and extreme ideological voices to raise respective thoughts and to evaluate beliefs and to judge how those beliefs are expressed. Each voice, found in Northern Ireland's discourse communities, possesses multiple positions within a dialogic environment and at the same time equally valid opposing voices or counterstatements.

This project recognizes differences to be explored as *philosophical pairings* rather than as antithetical opposites. It is hoped that by bridging that complex gap between the poles of extremist thought a rhetoric of peace can be located that encourages Northern Ireland's dynamic movement towards a lasting peace.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MURALS: CONTEXT, FORM, AND CONTENT

In Northern Ireland, walls speak. First filled with public images of static, ritualized celebration and initially painted to mark the annual celebration of the Battle of the Boyne, the murals of Northern Ireland represent not only an act of Unionist celebration but also a dynamic process of partisan¹ (both Nationalist and Unionist) political protest and a search for peace. These murals invite engagement with viewers on both micro and macro levels² of discourse. Each mural presents the viewer with a discursive *utterance*³ that employs the three classical branches of rhetoric—forensic (judicial), epideictic (identity construction), and deliberative (policy). Additionally, various aspects of proxemic, verbal, and nonverbal codes appear in the performance of a speech act as reaction, *mimesis* (imitation), or response to the utterances of other murals and current events. Various semiotic representations found within the rhetorical form of each mural contain both *philosophical pairings*⁴ and interpretable signs, weak or strong, that encourage viewers to determine interpretable signs present. The pairings of mother/warrior, bullet/ballot, heroes/devils, myth/history, grief/celebration, and life/death represent the paradoxical nature of appearance and reality found in various semiotic representations within the murals. Semiotic interpretations of textual⁵ and discursive elements (content) within the murals fluctuate contextually. As such, the interpretation of

a particular *visual code*,⁶ loaded with cultural specificity, contributes to a new understanding that may spiral Northern Ireland towards lasting peace.

The determination of the images found within the murals opens up opportunities for multiple interpretations. The various local versions of interpretation contain a number of intertextual and culturally specific references that are organized by “fields, axes, subsystems, and partial systems” that though “often not coherent with each other” have been “articulated according to specific cultural perspectives” or narratives (Eco 44). To make these specific references available to a larger audience, the Northern Irish communities have created a spectrum of *restricted visual codes* that limit meaning. Each of the *restricted visual codes* contains finite possibilities for each sign. Not only do these codes target and restrict both communal and cultural references for a localized audience but they also reduce possible interpretations for outside viewers.

Embedded with conflicting and culturally restricted codes, these semiotic representations depict hostile events. They also record ever increasing frustrations through a dialogic process that sets in motion a dynamic rhetorical process which requires reinterpretation of partisan struggles and the escalation of hostilities. These murals underscore Northern Ireland’s struggle towards establishing national identity through preselected details that limit or restrict their codes. Like the novel, a “phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice,” the murals confront viewers with representations of harmony and cacophony. The heteroglossic⁷ force (centripetal and centrifugal) determines the “multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships” (Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel” 261-63).

Painted on the walls of Northern Ireland, these visual icons—unfurled flags, masked gunmen, prisoner portraits, or white larks—initiate a dynamic process (discursive, rhetorical, and semiotic) that articulates possibilities for both protest and peace in Northern Ireland.

Similar to the citizen activities found within the democratic *polis*⁸ of ancient Greece, both sides of Northern Ireland's conflict currently use quotidian sites that synthesize issues, fears, needs, and desires in the guise of murals. These representations blend past events with current issues and future dreams. The visual code records the language of these murals and spills images that open discourse to heighten community introspection and identification.

Through a politicization of public space, Neil Jarman notes that as artifacts these murals “create a new type of space, they redefine mundane public space” and “can be used to claim and define new politicised places as readily refining or restating old arguments on existing sites” (par. 15). Politically contextualized in location, use, and structure, these murals offer themselves readily to the Northern Irish communities as a mode of ancillary⁹ rhetorical discourse. Filled with semiotic representations, the murals publicize problems, issues, and expectations that face a larger community divided by ideological, religious, and cultural isoglosses (boundaries) as well as the physically manifested boundaries—peacelines.¹⁰ New activist murals, community and partisan alike, appear regularly to broadcast opinions about social and cultural issues that dominate the media headlines. These issues include parade routes, fair employment, arms

decommissioning, political prisoners, and community security as well as the continued search for a lasting peace.

In ancient Greece, art fused culture instead of fragmenting and dividing social, political, and religious purposes. John Dewey postulates in *Art as Experience* that “the arts of drama, music, painting, and architecture . . . had no peculiar connection with teachers, galleries, museums. They were part of the significant life of an organized community”—the *polis* (7). The twentieth-century combination of political activism, civic orientation, and conceptual art¹¹ reflects the social turmoil of the early 1980s and furthers current discourse within Northern Ireland’s community murals and underscores Nina Felshin’s point that “activist cultural practices are typically collaborative” (11). These cultural practices contain a number of different process-oriented methodologies that involve community understanding and participation.

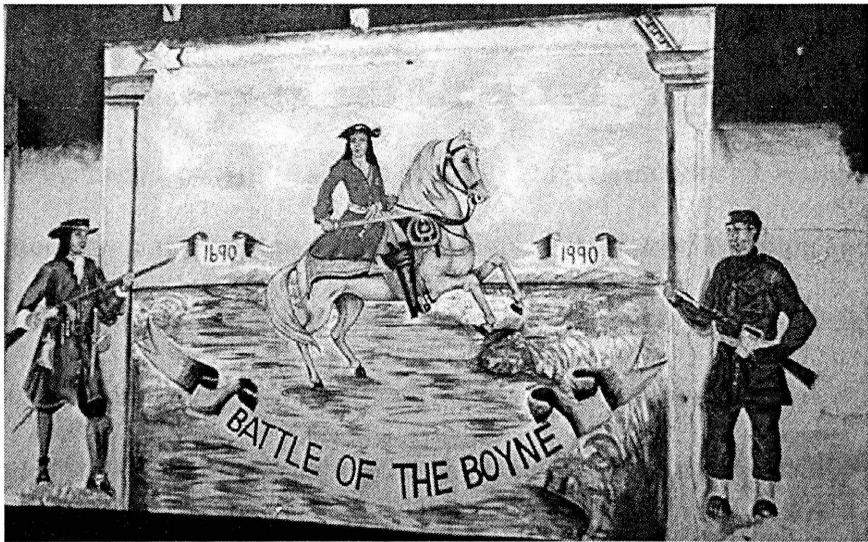
Community artists are ““distinguishable not by the techniques they use . . . but by their attitude towards the place of their activities in the life of society”” (Kelly 16). Community involvement, as well as the artwork’s public accessibility, functions as “a critical catalyst for change, a strategy with the potential to activate both individuals and communities” (Felshin 12). By extension, the process proposes community cohesion and synthesizes public opinion in order to codify rhetorics of peace and protest.

Though production of particular murals may be limited to a select artistic team that plans and creates them, sometimes artistic teams modify the process by inviting local residents to assist with their production. Once begun, the entire community enters into the dynamic semiotic process of interpreting the mural as discourse. Felshin points out that a

community's participation "through interpretation—a key strategy of activist art—is impossible if ambiguity and obscurity, however provocative aesthetically and intellectually, bar comprehension" (25). When completed, the contextual shift from the artistic team (encoder/authorial voice) to viewer (decoder/reader voice) encourages readings of even the most ambiguous representations that may change with each viewing. Meaning rests with the viewer as multiple interpretations emerge. These emergent interpretations are a result of changes in *kairos* (a combination of time, locale, audience, and circumstance). One viewer might see a mural that portrays a plastic bullet victim or "an apparent collection of simplistic clichés" such as police, children, soldiers, or flags. However, another viewer may see in the same mural a tragic loss "if the victim was a friend." Then an "apparently simple message can conjure up a myriad of emotions and considerations about life, death, the state justice" (Rolston, "Culture, Conflict and Murals: The Irish Case" par. 20). All possible interpretations—abstract to concrete—use language to formulate a discourse analysis from available visual signs and symbols.

A survey of mural activity in Northern Ireland from the early twentieth-century to the present provides both a social and historical context that seeks to clarify the contribution of nontraditional rhetorics (the murals included) to Northern Ireland's public discourse, identity construction, and power structure. Historically, Unionist mural paintings served as "an assertion of the Protestant people's sense of British identity" (Jarman 83). The discursive, semiotic, and rhetorical representations that appeared in the murals "became not merely a reaffirmation of unionist identity, but [also] of a new variant in the Protestant ascendancy, a state ruled by one party and founded on the

exclusion of a large minority of the population, the nationalists” (Rolston, *Politics* 21). The later appearance of Nationalist murals released silenced voices and transformed monologue into dynamic dialogue. As a result, current murals present responses to and engagements in community discourse by announcing social, political, religious, and identity issues.



King Billy—Fig. 001

On Belfast’s Blythe Street, a mural representation of Benjamin West’s 1780 painting *The Battle of the Boyne* depicts King William of Orange astride a white horse as it steps across the water’s edge. With his saber raised high, William rallies against the insurgent forces of his enemy, James II. Freshly retouched to honor the Glorious Twelfth,¹² the King Billy mural¹³ (Fig. 001) beckons community members to celebrate Unionist identity. As a way to honor and announce the start of the Orange Order’s annual marching season, Unionist murals began to appear on Northern Ireland’s neighborhood walls. Colin Coulter asserts that for Unionists, the “creation of wall murals became an

important element of the cycle of rituals through which the devotion of Ulster Protestants to the Stormont regime was actualized.” Additionally, the presence of party leaders at the unveiling of a new or retouched mural reinforced power structures in the Unionist community/hegemony¹⁴ (Coulter 202). Belinda Loftus¹⁵ points out that the majority of early Unionist murals are mimetic. She proposes that the murals are “directly based on postcards, cheap prints or even tea-towels” and that they depend on “a complex tradition of Williamite imagery developed between the Dutch monarch’s campaign in Ireland in the 1690s and the early years of [the 20th century] . . . [D]epictions of William III have played a particularly significant part in the developing [Unionist] tradition” (10). All but forgotten in the rest of Britain, King Billy continues to figure in Unionist neighborhoods where a notable community leader might be a more relevant choice.

Both Loftus and Rolston¹⁶ agree that the Unionist mural movement first began in 1908 in Belfast. That mural was later followed by a Derry mural in 1926 (Loftus 10). Loftus asserts that the “hey-day” for Unionist murals did not arrive until the years “between the two world wars” and reasons that this mural explosion was the result of a “mixture of practical and political factors.” In addition, she points to “massive unemployment” and “fierce sectarian conflicts” as important motivators (11). With their high status in the community, muralists “were permitted, even encouraged, by community and state to use their skills, however rudimentary, to celebrate William’s victory and the unionist state eventually built on that victory” (Rolston, *Politics and Painting: Murals and Conflict in Northern Ireland* 24).

During the years following World War II, Unionist murals expanded upon traditional depictions of King Billy to include a collection of images such as the visit of the Prince of Wales to Northern Ireland as well as the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary (Loftus 12). Both Loftus and Rolston note that the painting of Unionist murals began to decline in the 1950s and 1960s. In discussing the “notable decline in both the number and range of loyalist murals,” Loftus cites a number of potential factors that include urban redevelopment and population movement. She concludes that the renewal projects, with the “demolition of large areas of housing in Belfast, particularly off the Shankill Road, in East Belfast, and in Tiger Bay removed a large number of the old wall-painting.” Additionally, the population shifts, with a “growing influx of Catholic inhabitants since 1969” to the Ormeau Road area, “discouraged the maintenance of the traditional murals which were still in existence there” (12).

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe report that the time period following 1945 and the establishment of the Welfare State saw a shift from earlier dominant paradigms in Britain. Further, they conclude that “the expansion of a Keynesian State in which the interests of the different sectors were no longer defined along clear-cut class lines” had moved towards a deeper “articulation of a variety of antagonisms, within both the State and civil society, which allows a ‘war of position’ against the dominant hegemonic forms” (75). Rolston (agreeing with Laclau and Mouffe) reasons that the creation of the British welfare state resulted in a shift in both Unionist and Nationalist identities and provided a need for the creation of murals that highlighted and celebrated Unionist connections to England (*Politics* 24). Coulter observes that the “gradual erosion of

political confidence among the ranks of Northern Irish Unionists was chronicled on gable walls” throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Coulter adds that the “neglected portraits of King Billy . . . left to deteriorate in many loyalist areas provided crude metaphors for the dramatic decline in the political fortunes of the unionist community” (203). These observations trace significant highlights and shifts in the development of Unionist murals as the structure of Unionist political dominance underwent dramatic changes during the last half of the twentieth century.

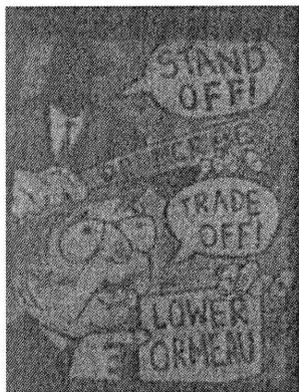
In addition to the declining number of murals in the Unionist neighborhoods, Loftus reflects on the changing face of the muralist. She observes a “declining involvement in loyalist wall-painting of older men. Because of this decline, she claims that “Most of the mural-painters in recent years have been untrained teenagers or young men.” Loftus uses this transition from generation to generation and the “declining skill of those involved in loyalist wall painting[s]” to support her claim that the “gradual replacement of the old elaborate scenes by simple flags, badges and heraldic emblems” is skills-based rather than articulating “a hardening and simplification of their political attitudes” (12). In spite of the changes in imagery, the murals continue to remain “a focus for communal feeling, a reminder of the Protestant heritage, sometimes a memorial.” These memorials serve “as the traditional backdrop to the eleventh[-]night bonfires” with imagery that contains a “complex history and contemporary role” (14). This motif offers conflicting visions of Unionist identity and an unstable future. The image of King Billy riding his white horse continues to appear as an identifying marker in Unionist neighborhoods.

Loftus notes that traditionally these murals “have not been sited on the interface between Protestant and Catholic communities but well within Protestant territory.” The implication being that “their role has been to serve as a focus for Protestants’ celebration of their heritage, rather than to act as a challenge to the Catholic community.” However, she later states that these murals are “by no means sacrosanct” and have been the victims of “Protestant as well as Catholic graffiti [sic] scrawled across them.” Additionally, she cites a November 1982 Radio Ulster interview broadcast in the series, *Community Artists*, in which a Unionist mural painter describes his forays into Catholic neighborhoods to view Nationalist murals and his awareness of Nationalists in his own Protestant neighborhood. In the interview, the artist claims that ““I’ve brought them down sometimes. . . . Mostly girls. A couple of blokes came down to see it. And they all notice it when they’re driving by”” (13-14). The appearance of Catholic graffiti on Protestant murals marks the perceived boundary that divides Unionist and Nationalist neighborhoods may not be as static as previously believed. Each of these observations records the dynamic flow of ideas as well as a mutual awareness of visual utterances found within the murals.

The permeability of previously defined boundaries is underscored by the recent presence of shared visual representations, albeit in image/vehicle only, such as Cú Chulainn, the red hand, and the masked gunman within the mural utterances. The collective murals represent various interpretations of a community’s mindset. However, each individual mural records interpretations of differing mindsets with the semiotic process continuing up to and possibly beyond the removal of a mural. Rolston argues that

“two opposing political constituencies” with two “distinct, separate, and mutually exclusive sets of political aspirations” incorporate similar visual signs. Rolston would argue that shared vehicles of metaphors contain disparate tenors. Also Rolston asserts that little or no common ground exists between Nationalist’s and Unionist’s use of similar imagery. Further, he believes that those attempts to find a “commonality” is “wishful thinking.” Both the use and appropriation of shared imagery engage the viewer in intertextual semiotics that incorporate past, present, and future interpretations of those images involved (“From King Billy to Cú Chulainn: Loyalist and Republican Murals, Past, Present, and Future” 8). In Northern Ireland textual references interact with layers of other such occurrences in the same way that intertextuality does in text discourse.

On Belfast’s Artana Street, a mural depicts a caricature of John Hume, leader of the SDLP, offering the Lower Ormeau as a “trade off” to a Drumcree marcher (Fig. 002).



Trade Off—Fig. 002

Begun twenty years after the Unionist mural movement, the Nationalist murals first appeared during the protests surrounding the hunger strikes of 1981. At the time, the Nationalist community faced a number of legislative obstacles, such as the 1954 Flags and Emblems Act,¹⁷ in its attempts to create a cultural identity.¹⁸ The act provided an

effective silencer for public displays of Nationalist identity. It prohibited the use of the Irish flag, or tri-color, “in situations in which it could cause a breach of the peace. In practice, the RUC interpreted any display of the flag as provocative, no matter how hidden from unionist gaze,” (*Politics* 72). The 1980 death of Michael McCartan, “shot by a member of the RUC while painting the word ‘Provos’ on a wall on the Ormeau Road in South Belfast,” underscores the possible dangers involved in public displays of “republican political culture” (“From King Billy” 8).

In *Politics and Painting: Murals and Conflict in Northern Ireland*, Rolston identifies three separate waves of mural activity within the Nationalist communities. Each subsequent wave reflects community concerns over issues—past, present, and future. The first wave of Nationalist mural activity¹⁹ began to surface in the early 1980s. As an extension of the Hunger Strike awareness campaign, the painting of murals publicized both Nationalist concerns and Nationalist protests. In addition to honoring and mourning the hunger strikers, this first wave of mural painting introduced a number of social issues that addressed unemployment and the justice system.

The second wave of murals, which followed the first wave, consisted of a period of campaign efforts for Sinn Fein. Supporting Sinn Fein’s campaign, these murals focused on historical themes that underscored the legitimacy of the Nationalist movement



Ireland-Catalonia Connections—Fig. 003

by using symbols that connected current activities with “the supreme heroes of the republican tradition” (95). Other murals linked the Nationalist struggles to international ones, such as the Basque movement (Fig. 003). These murals “spoke of an ideological affinity between groups fighting against repression and for self-determination worldwide” (Rolston, “From King Billy” 16).

The third wave explored the promotion of different social reforms. These include fair employment and state-sanctioned repression as well as the role of paramilitary cease-fires as “an attempt to provide political space for the negotiations that were necessary for progress” (19). Rolston includes the murals produced after the Good Friday Agreement²⁰ within the rubric of his third wave. However, recent murals—concerned with community policing, arms decommissioning, mourning, and community building—more accurately comprise a fourth wave of murals in which graffiti is a particular instance of a mural that is an immediate response that could act as an initiator of the *spiral of negotiation*. As a spiral that can lace the partisan gap, this particular wave (the fourth wave classified for

first time) contains murals that are initiated by internal and external forces focused on a future of community and trust. Though they acknowledge partisan concerns regarding community-building initiatives and the future, these murals also further the peace process and community identity. This fourth wave promotes negotiation and the possibility of harmony and peace by initiating the *spiral of negotiation*.

Since the early 1980s, Nationalist murals have sought to transform the previously static medium, which celebrated current dominant power structures, into a dynamic process of public discourse that examines and challenges assumed paradigms. By challenging the paradigm, the murals extend the dialogic process towards peace. Noel McGuigan notes that the murals “demanded the viewer’s attention in a way that the graffiti and posters they replaced did not” (16). The murals of Northern Ireland—painted on the gable-ends of homes, walls of schoolyards, sides of business parks, and storefronts—act as a unique public forum for discursive utterances of identity, sorrow, outrage, fear, faith, and culture. Thought, experience, and identity are dependent on “systems of signs already existing in society which gives form and meaning to consciousness and reality” (Bignell 7). As such, Jarman recognizes the importance of these murals as semiotic visualizations of protest when he asserts that they may be “the primary symbolic artefact of the late Troubles” (par. 31). McGugian observes that when absorbed at a glance, the appeal of the murals—comprised of a localized audience and recognizable signs—is “direct and easily understood.” Perhaps McGugian’s observation is too simplistic because it restricts the semiotic process of reinterpretation. These murals draw the viewer’s attention with messages, painted in bold colors and prominently

placed, to be “taken in by the passer-by whether on foot or in a vehicle.” They do not “have to be read even when accompanied by written statements,” viewers revisit and reinterpret as the context changes (16). McGugian’s observations call for a static world rather than a dynamic, fluid one. Initially painted to raise public awareness, Nationalist murals continue the dynamic process of political discourse and give public voice to opinions and communities previously silenced.

Use of multiple methodologies offers a vision of multiple possibilities available for the adventurous rhetorician exploring uncharted spaces and gaps. By “reading it crookedly and telling it slant,” Cheryl Glenn argues for creating a prismatic landscape of inter-connecting by-ways and scenic routes. Her argument extends the tradition of rhetoric into previously unexplored territory as well as exploring the “traditions that engender and span the sexes, disciplines, cultures, ethnicities, and racial constructions.” Visual rhetoric explores the interplay of form, content, context, and dialogic nature in the murals of Northern Ireland through the multiple methodologies of discourse analysis, rhetoric, and semiotics.

Visual symbols (the elements of the iconic code used for visual discourse analysis) hold semiotic content and rhetorical strategies found in panels (contextual space) filled with synecdochal text of color, images, graffiti, and line drawings. These graphics hold the semiotic content of the murals. Scott McCloud points to a long tradition²¹ of visual texts that includes Pre-Columbian images, Egyptian hieroglyphics, the Bayeux Tapestry, and William Hogarth’s “A Harlot’s Progress” in which each artist creates a visual narrative that includes juxtaposed images in a sequence to produce a

rhetorical effect on the viewer. McCloud's definition of comics as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" offers a sentence-level simplification (20). Though not physically juxtaposed to the others, each mural acts as a panel, or storyboard, that reifies its previous versions and entwines it with other murals around Northern Ireland. Individually, as well as collectively, these murals convey a form of cultural information that seeks to elicit multiple responses that range from identification to estrangement.

Discourse analysis of these murals utilizes concepts couched in visual symbols to understand societal and cultural interactions as a means for understanding meta-connections among language, information, and knowledge. Discursive structures "may be described in terms of the social rhetorical actions accomplished by language users when they communicate with each other in social situations and within society and culture at large" (van Dijk 13-14).

Rhetorical offices—forensic (judicial) rhetoric, which focuses its attentions on the historic in order to accuse, honor, or defend the actions of the past; epideictic (ceremonial) rhetoric, which turns its focus towards the present as a way of commemorating, praising, vilifying, or blaming current and past events or individuals; and finally, deliberative (legislative) rhetoric, which exhorts or persuades with goals and aspirations for the future—functions as ways for the communities to examine the past, present, and future of Northern Ireland. Containing different rhetorical styles and forms, these *kinds*²² of rhetoric²³ address an audience with "three primary purposes in listening:

to hear advice about the future, or to pass judgement on some action in the past, or merely for the sake of interest in a speech or subject as such” (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* 70).

Like words, the intensity level of abstraction in pictures as well as images varies. McCloud reports that “Some [images] . . . so closely resemble their real-life counterparts as to almost trick the eye. Others . . . are quite a bit more abstract and, in fact, are very much unlike any human face you’ve ever seen” (McCloud 28). Charles Sanders Peirce asserts that “it is necessary for a sign to be a sign that it should be regarded as a sign for it is only a sign to that mind which so considers and if it is not a sign to any mind it is not a sign at all. It must be known to the mind first in its material qualities but also in its pure demonstrative application” (142). In *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Umberto Eco adds that “*the conditions of necessity of a sign are socially determined*, either according to weak codes or according to strong codes” (38). In both internally and externally motivated murals²⁴ the viewer is provided with images that contain “referencing associations that point to contexts . . . [that] may be generated by the form of the image, the content of the image, or both” (Foss 218). Mural form, content, and context provide viewers with an intertextual string of “events, objects, and qualities” with which they are able to make a connection.²⁵

This analysis accepts the challenge of the 1970 recommendation of the National Conference on Rhetoric²⁶ and Sonja K. Foss to expand the role of rhetorical criticism to include the study of visual symbols. Foss notes that visual images “constitute a major part of our rhetorical environment” and “now have the significance that public speeches once

did” (Foss 210-11). Echoing the Wingspan challenge, this research extends traditional rhetoric to include the visual. This analysis of murals expands text by entwining the visual with the verbal. Analysis of visual discourse (structured forms and content) merges private ideology and identity with the public sphere. Semiotic and rhetorical strategies present in the Nationalist and Unionist murals offer forms for visual discourse analysis in which the *look act*²⁷ invites audience engagement with visual text.

NOTES

¹ Partisanship within the greater Northern Irish community consists of different member communities that support diverse political, social, and religious ideologies. In Northern Ireland, Unionist refers to those (predominantly Protestant) “who wish to see the union with Britain maintained. . . . It should be noted that not all Unionists support Loyalist groups.” Loyalist refers to “one who is loyal to the British Crown.” In Northern Ireland, Loyalist generally refers to a person who, “gives tacit or actual support [to] the use of force by paramilitary groups to ‘defend the union’ with Britain.” Additionally, the term Nationalist refers to those (predominantly Catholic) “who hold a long-term wish for the reunification of Ireland. . . . It should be noted that not all Nationalists support Republican groups.” At least two different branches of Irish Nationalist thought—Republican and Constitutional—exist. Republican Nationalism requires “tacit or actual support to the physical use of force by paramilitary groups;” Constitutional Nationalism “reject[s] the use of physical force as a means of achieving a United Ireland” and encourages “nonviolent or constitutional means to try to persuade their opponents of reunification [with the Republic of Ireland]” (Melaugh, “Glossary”).

² van Dijk asserts that the analysis of micro and macro levels of discourse strives to clarify discourse and determine ways that it differs from an “arbitrary (incoherent) set of sentences.” Macro level discourse analysis evaluates the “meaning of a discourse as a whole” while micro level discourse analysis examines the non-arbitrary and coherent relationships of “sentences [or utterances] that immediately follow” or are related to each other within the discursive context (9).

³ Bakhtin points out that as a “link in the chain of speech communication,” the utterance focuses on its own object as well as “others’ speech about it,” and it “cannot be broken off from the preceding links that determine it both from within and from without, giving rise within it to unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic reverberations” (“The Problem of Speech Genres” 94).

⁴ As opposed to the concept of antithetical pairings, Perelman proposes that *philosophical pairings* differentiate “between appearances which correspond to reality and those which do not and are deceptive” (127).

⁵ Goodwin provides a definition of text as “a physical manifestation of the social processes governing meaning-making, that this manifestation reproduces the structures and systems constituting the social environment, and, finally, that a text is thus intimately bound to its contexts: namely, bound to those other texts that give rise to, and that are addressed by, the text’s messages” (96-97). He extends the idea of text to include “messages communicated by a wide range of perceptible media” including his own use of visual imagery “reproduced on paper” (97).

⁶ Nöth points to Ursula Oomen (1975) who uses *visual code* to designate graphical elements of visual communication and credits to J. Bremond (1968) and Léa Martinez (1972) as using the term *iconic* for the same designation (473). See Nöth, *Handbook of Semiotics* (Bloomington: U of Indiana P, 1995).

⁷ Centered within social and historical contexts, *heteroglossia* refers to a process of decentralization, a fracturing of language to keep language dynamic and growing, to counterbalance the processes of narrowing that creates a unified language (Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel” 272).

⁸ In her essay, duBois asserts that the Athenian citizen viewed life and the visual arts as inseparable parts of a whole (9). In addition, she notes that it is not until the writings of Plato that the *polis* begins to experience a categorization of its civic makeup (3).

⁹ Menzo proposes ancillary rhetoric as a “fourth kind of oratory” in which “the visual image is the primary medium of communication, and it is directed toward a mass audience” (165).

¹⁰ McDonald explains that approximately twenty peacelines, walls made out of “concrete blocks . . . corrugated iron fencing, palisade sheeted fencing and ornamental brick wall” divide Nationalist and Unionist neighborhoods as a preventative and protective measure (par. 2). Additional peacelines divide sectarian neighborhoods in Derry and Portadown “where the Northern Ireland Office has recently built a permanent barrier between the Catholic Obins Street and the Protestant Corcrair Roads, on the main route to Drumcree church” (par. 15).

¹¹ The Conceptual Art movement holds with the idea that an artwork’s meaning, “resides not in the autonomous object but in its contextual framework. This idea that the physical, institutional, social, or conceptual context of a work is integral to its meaning influenced many subsequent developments in the 1970s, including the expanded notions of sculpture and public art” (Felshin 20).

¹² In his work, Jarman provides an in-depth examination of the Northern Irish parade system. The Glorious Twelfth marks the annual celebration of King William III’s defeat over the forces of James II. Traditionally, the Northern Irish Orange Order engages in a series of parades, bonfires, and mural painting to celebrate the defeat of James II’s forces at the Battle of the Boyne River. These annual revels take place during week leading up to July 12 (e.g. Glorious Twelfth). Another book by Jarman, co-authored with Dominic Bryan, *Independent Intervention: Monitoring the Police, Parades and Public Order* provides an effective tool for the role of human rights observer interested in

monitoring the Northern Irish parade disputes. See Jarman, *Material Conflicts, Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland* (Boxford: Berg, 1997) and “The Place of Murals in the Symbolic Construction of Urban Space,” *Symbols in Northern Ireland*, ed. Anthony Buckley (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1998) 81-98.

¹³ The murals depicting King William III are known euphemistically as King Billy murals.

¹⁴ Laclau and Mouffe assert that *hegemony* is “a key concept in understanding the very unity existing in a concrete social formation” (7).

¹⁵ Loftus’s article provides an informative insight into the history and tradition of Unionist murals. Nevertheless, her observations and conclusions, throughout the article, appear to be contradictory (10).

¹⁶ The works of Loftus (“Loyalist Wall Paintings” and “Will the Real King Billy Please Stand Up?”) and Rolston (“The Writing on the Wall,” “Ireland, Colonisation and Politics,” “From King Billy to Cú Chulainn: Loyalist and Republican Murals, Past, Present, and Future,” and *Politics and Painting: Murals and Conflict in Northern Ireland*) trace the earliest renderings of Unionist mural activity from newspaper articles and personal accounts.

¹⁷ In addition to the Public Order Act of 1951, the April 1954 Flags and Emblems Act “enabled the government to control non-violent forms of political opposition, and effectively outlawed the public . . . display of nationalist allegiance among the minority population” (Kelly par. 16). It resulted in the suppression of public expression of Nationalist identity as well as banning “the display of the Irish flag in Northern Ireland” (“A Brief History of Northern Ireland 1919-1999”). The act was later repealed in 1989 as part of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985.

¹⁸ Rolston notes that though “not outlawed, many [Nationalist] cultural activities were marginalized.” These activities—GAA activities, *céili* (a party with dancing and music), traditional music, and the Irish language, “existed far from the eyes of the unionist majority and without the support of the unionist state” (“From King Billy to Cú Chulainn: Loyalist and Republican Murals, Past, Present, and Future” 14).

¹⁹ Rolston points out a smattering of earlier Nationalist murals, or Ur murals that existed before the first wave of hunger strike murals. They consisted of scrawled slogans and simplistic designs that were hastily done under the cover of darkness (*Politics and Painting: Murals and Conflict in Northern Ireland* 73).

²⁰ The Agreement is officially known as the Agreement. Reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations it has become known as the Good Friday Agreement in order to commemorate the day that it was signed by the negotiating party members—Good Friday 1998.

²¹ Brunskill describes Henri Cosquer’s discovery of Paleolithic drawings found in an underwater cave in the Mediterranean as well as the 1994 discovery of the Chauvet Cave (C7).

²² Burke notes that these three kinds of rhetoric are dependent on the “functions or duties of the rhetorician,” the interests of the audience, and the situation at hand (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 70).

²³ Nöth points out that form has undergone several different transformations in which it is equated with rhetorical style, or *elocutio*, Todorov’s ‘internal characteristic of a type of discourse,’ and Bally’s “expressive (‘affective’) value of language, in contradistinction to its nonstylistic referential (‘intellectual’) function.” He also asserts that form, or style, “is a matter both of selection and combination”—structure (344-45). Nöth discusses the role of visual form, or structure, in the “context of the semiotics of painting” and Zemsz “postulates an analogy between sentence and visual forms, since the latter represent an object and its attributes” and can be extended to the utterance (452).

²⁴ As a focal point for arts projects, internally and externally driven, Northern Ireland has played host to a number of different peace projects. Though neighborhood muralists have initiated some of these projects, others have originated in the United States as “good will” missions.

²⁵ Foss focuses her attentions on the positive attributes that the viewer is likely to connect. By ignoring the problematic aspects of the image the opportunity to effect social change is lost. In the case of the Northern Ireland murals, it is just as likely that the viewer may connect or associate with the cultural tensions and pejorative qualities that challenge both artist and observer in the search for peace (210-24).

²⁶ Foss cites Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black eds., *The Prospect of Rhetoric: Report of the National Development Project*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971) 221.

²⁷ In “Dia-logic: A Dialogue in Images between Edwin Janssen and Janneke Lam,” Lam explains that the term *look act*, a visual version of speech act, sprung from his visual dialogic with Edwin Janssen as a “performative aspect of our communication . . . relational and inevitably emotionally charged” which allowed for “our visual reactions to one another” (22).

CHAPTER TWO

DEPICTING THE PAST: MURALS AND THE PUBLIC COURT

The 1921 installation of the Stormont regime¹ and its eventual removal² in the 1970s supported the social inequality which existed on both class and religious divides. Where class conflicts brought social change to the working classes in England, the focal point for Northern Irish politics revolved around the constitutional question. Anywhere else in the United Kingdom “the call for civil rights could be seen as an ordinary demand for political change. But in the north . . . it was transformed into a question of Green and Orange” (Hughes 21). Like earlier civil rights activities, the events in 1969 and 1972 triggered a heated reaction from Unionists who saw the “campaign as an attack on the state itself” (Lee 19). This assumption was reinforced as the tension levels rose within the Bogside area of Derry with the January and April RUC³ invasions and “acts of wanton destruction on property and persons” (*Bloody Sunday Trust* par. 2). The later activities by the British Army reversed earlier reactions⁴—“with the army, not unreasonably, now assumed to be on the unionist side” (434). While several Nationalist groups⁵ viewed the civil rights march as a movement against deprivation and the 1972 march as a protest against internment, Unionist groups viewed both marches as attempts by Nationalists to “establish territorial rights, to further the cause of a united Ireland” (Campbell 27).

During the 1960s, attempts by Prime Minister Terence O’Neill to enact sweeping reforms that included the Catholic population resulted in raised tensions and a hostile sectarian environment throughout the North.⁶ Instead of acting as an equalizing force, O’Neill’s policies exacerbated Northern Ireland’s “legacy of resentment and mistrust” by accentuating differences between Nationalist and Unionist communities (Whyte 342). Lining community streets, the murals present a public audience with rhetorical and *legal*⁷ semiotic signifiers that define notions of justice, illustrate past events, and engage in public discourse that connects past to present. Historical narratives, illustrated in the murals, examine the structural restrictions, contexts, and circumstances surrounding the Northern Irish Troubles⁸ as a series of structural conflicts—political, economic, religious, and cultural. Images within the murals represent encoded texts when the interpretations of them illustrate either justifiable or wrongful acts. A detailed identification and interpretation of signs within the murals results in a visual discourse analysis that equates the *look act* to particular rhetorical and semiotic strategies.

Rooted in Northern Ireland’s past, the public judiciary invites viewers to examine evidence, to define as well as refine opinion, and to determine the validity of conflicting charges. Both Aristotle and Cicero acknowledge that judicial rhetoric is also known as forensic rhetoric. Cicero remarks that this particular rhetorical style and inquiry examine “what is just” (*De Inventione* Book II 25). Aristotle explains that with judicial rhetoric the advocate and the audience examine circumstances, motives, and actions of the past in order to prosecute or defend based upon “what has been done,” and its ends are the nature of the “just [*dikaion*] and the unjust,” as well as the “other considerations incidental to

these [ends]” (48-49). Aristotle’s explanation on judicial may be extended from the verbal to the visual. In their discussion of forensic rhetoric, both Aristotle and Cicero provide inventional topics that assist with the interpretive process of these murals.

Presenting persuasive developed (e.g. through invention) arguments, murals attempt to establish an advocacy for either the prosecution or the defense. Reflecting each stage of the judicial proceedings, the murals—advocating for a particular side—use classical topics and issues to promote diametrically opposing narratives that foster a *syzygistic* position wherein viewers observe a wide spectrum of partisan extremes and are left with an opportunity to supply interpretive possibilities between these positions. Rhetorical and semiotic strategies such as *diacope* (a gap in repetition), *allusion* (indirect reference), *proxemics* (nearness in space, time, and order), and *proecthesis* (introduction) are incorporated into the mural surfaces as a narrative structure that underscores focused themes (issues), organized points (topics), description of events (evidence), and direct, powerful visual delivery (claims). Whether discussing a series of historic invasions, the role of Hunger Strikers, the behavior of paramilitary organizations, or the actions of the British government, Northern Irish communities use public⁹ murals to explore definitions as well as debate the meaning of justice and injustice through visual representations of judicial rhetoric.

Practiced in the courtroom, judicial rhetoric focuses audience attention¹⁰ on the past and initiates dialogue that explores narratives and counter-narratives within the framework of partisan murals in Northern Ireland. Judicial discourse follows a prescribed pattern. First, it identifies issues; next, it develops topics; then, it explores evidence; and

finally, it establishes interdependence between the audience and the particulars of the case. As evidentiary text, the murals hold all of the strategies prescribed in judicial discourse. Their visual representations identify issues, develop those issues into topics, continue with an examination of the evidence, and encourage a dynamic engagement with an audience.

Utilizing public walls, Northern Irish communities have incorporated the classical procedural issue¹¹ as a means of challenging or supporting traditional notions of law and justice. The transference of a judicial venue from the semi-public law courts¹² to the court of public opinion creates a discursive space in which advocates rationalize current actions by scrutinizing past events, vilifying enemies, and celebrating heroes. The murals record judicial rhetorical practices that tie both Nationalist and Unionist claims and justifications to local and global audiences. The resulting visual presentation engages viewers in a dynamic discursive process that examines localized instances of *status quo* for alternative global possibilities.

Both prosecution and defense argue the validity of their respective cases by challenging the opposition's credibility. First, the prosecution summarizes narrative threads to describe the nature of the crime and a probable chain of events that reveal the defendant's motive, means, and opportunity. Then, the defense counters with evidence that undermines the prosecution's case as well as provides alternate narratives to support the defendant's claim—"not guilty." Other benefits include undermining the opposition's arguments by challenging the credibility of critical evidence as well as ameliorating potentially damaging testimony. These *look acts* parallel and expand the process

described where the visual has an immediacy that the verbal does not. As such, synthesis and intertextuality entwine the symbolic to reality. For this reason, Nationalist and Unionist murals display unified, yet problematic,¹³ cases that challenge the opposition and engage in a dialogic communicative process that moves beyond the absolute action of historical restrictions and opens rhetorical opportunities for the symbolic action of language.

In prescriptive judicial rhetoric, the opening statement establishes an advocate's *ethos*, invites the jury to accept the presented case, and frames the case for claims and arguments that follow. Additionally, the opening statement guides future narrative structure and development "by outlining the plot, describing the characters, depicting the setting, attributing the motives and portraying the action" (Snedaker 134). Employing the features of judicial rhetoric, Nationalist and Unionist murals become a contextual canvas for presenting opposing narratives and interpreting them as a means of defining and expanding concepts such as justice, nationality, and expectations.

Within the case structure, the primary focus of both direct and cross examination is to establish a power relationship with witnesses and challenge the credibility of opposition witnesses that restricts the development of a particular narrative. Though direct and cross examinations may appear to be a simple exchange of information, this dialogic process contains complexities that result in synthesizing information, inviting multiple interpretations and creating new possibilities. Where the prosecution argues a claim of criminal behavior from one context, the defense counters with claims of either

innocence or justification from alternative scenarios. Both direct and cross examinations provide the audience with socially constructed evidence¹⁴ that requires evaluation.

Narrative *lexia* (multiple reciprocating connections) among visual testimonies and established records in the murals present an opportunity for viewers to “dialogically construct the evidence” (Schuetz 348). Testimonial and non-testimonial evidence echo community concerns that underpin both cases and create *semantic junctions*.¹⁵ These junctions explain the paradox between appearance and reality in presented evidence and inferred connections. From a selected position within the murals, the viewers argue a contextualized interpretation and establish or fracture community justification for arguments. The audience responsibility requires it to evaluate the preponderance of evidence to determine its validity.

The concluding narrative of a trial—the closing statement—allows an advocate the final opportunity to interpret the case for an audience. Here an advocate is aware of the types of evidence used by the opposition and counters with “persuasive skills and techniques in a relatively unrestricted manner” (Frederick par. 1). Closing arguments weave rebuttal arguments and narrative structures together with larger community contexts.

To establish a case (either prosecution or defense) to local and global audiences, Nationalist and Unionist murals present supporting evidence, via *philosophical pairings* and *restricted visual codes*, for arguments based on classical stasis theory issues: conjecture, definition, and quality. Andrea Lunsford and John Ruszkiewicz posit that stasis theory is a “way of categorizing arguments.” Stasis theory, developed by the

Greeks and Romans, contains a series of questions “posed in sequence, since each depended on the question(s) preceding it” (14). Illustrative questions used in stasis theory follow: Did something happen? What is its nature? What is the quality? What actions should be taken? As part of the discovery process, the questions of stasis theory work to “determine the point of contention in an argument” (14). Depending on the circumstances and the outcome of the judicial hearing, the accused is either cleared of any wrongdoing or is believed to have committed a wrongful act.

To explain the inventional process in stasis theory, Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz recognize that contextualized facts and definitions “help to distinguish the conditions that are essential and sufficient for determining” community interpretations regarding the quality of the event (118). Where arguments from conjecture involve assertions that “can be proved or disproved with specific evidence or testimony,” definitional and qualitative arguments reveal community interpretations of the evidence (15). Thus, community definitions of justice, law, nationality, and criminality are reinforced by evaluative and conjectural arguments that establish both nature and quality of the act. By conflating the four different types of judicial narrative—opening statement, chief examination, cross examination, and closing arguments—the visual representations of narrative *lexia* found within the murals’ narrative structure seek to define, justify, accuse, and defend past partisan actions. These representations are direct extensions of symbolic action.

To promote audience understanding, Nationalist and Unionist murals draw a viewer’s attention towards contextualized interpretations of law as well as just and unjust acts both historic and contemporary. Community contexts and definitions of justice and

law determine the visual representations used by the defense or prosecution. Nationalist and Unionist ideologies and interpretations of law and criminality influence community definitions of the just (peace) and the unjust (protest). While Nationalist murals challenge specific or civil law, Unionist murals assert the merits of civil law over the unstructured nature of common law. Law¹⁶ (specific and common) highlights the dichotomy between absolute rules and permissive procedures. Both help to determine discursive and visual representations within the murals. Though the murals of justice explore both word and spirit of the law, looking for peace, murals that focus on protest decry acts of injustice. Through visual representations of community perceptions and fears, both Nationalist and Unionist murals promote recognition of the negative space¹⁷ between assertion and reality. This gap—perhaps a cavernous abyss—identifies the space across which a bridge of peace can be extended.

Visual renderings of historic, economic, religious, political, and ethno-nationalist suppression reveal Nationalist definitions of Unionist and British injustice of both recent and distant past. Protesting dominant power structures that encourage structural suppression, Nationalist murals reject and challenge specific laws in Northern Ireland. In these murals, claims are made regarding the nature of Catholic suffering in the face of official legislation. Additionally, these murals show historicized instances where the rule of law has failed to protect minority interests. Focused on prosecuting the institutional power structures of British and Unionist governments, the Nationalist community establishes a collective *ethos* by depicting historic and current events that illustrate the acts of the majority as it oppresses minority interests. Images found within Nationalist

murals underscore authority as well as develop logical and emotional appeals that lay out strategic challenges to the opposition's credibility and motives.

Accepted by Unionists, civil law reflects the guiding principles of Northern Ireland's relationship with Great Britain. Through the murals, the Unionist community presents a counter-narrative that both challenges the Nationalist call for common law principles and develops a narrative that illustrates the Unionist social and political ideals.¹⁸ Though Unionists have not typically experienced similar dilemmas¹⁹ with the official British and Northern Irish infrastructures, they have engaged in the dialogic process by establishing their own definitions of justice and injustice. Specific, or civil, law is accepted in the Unionist community murals as the structure of governance for Northern Ireland.²⁰

In the judiciary, the webbed texts—visual interlocked with verbal—underscore established arguments and show the accumulation of historical moments that entwine past to present. As such, the semiotic and rhetorical possibilities of the slogans can be seen as verdicts after all the arguments have been laid out via visual testimonies. As a rhetorical and semiotic strategy, the art of portraiture provides both subject and patron with vast opportunities for social and political control that document community heritage and celebrate historic events. Articulating claims of injustice and innocence, both Nationalist and Unionist communities present viewers with representations—battle-scenes, allegories, and portraits—that justify themselves and implicate the enemy. This dynamic process accounts for idiosyncratic interpretation and understanding that may

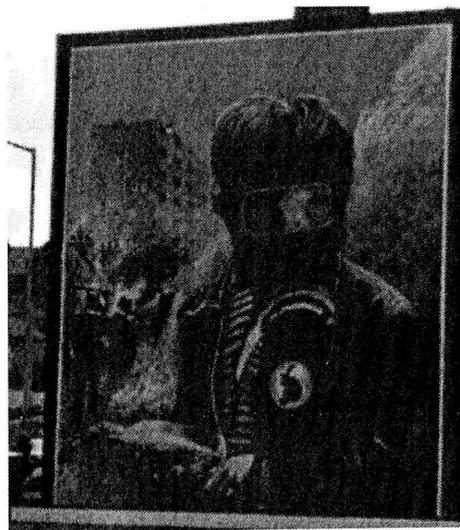
promote discord. Nonetheless, participation in the process initiates further interpretations that in turn can arrive at a new understanding that may reject parochialism for peace.

In both Londonderry²¹ and Belfast, Nationalist and Unionist communities seek to expand the boundaries of painting traditions—battle-scene,²² portraiture, and allegory—as a way to articulate Nationalist claims against dominant power structures and Unionist charges of genocide against the Catholic Church. Contextualized use of images—burning buildings, town gates, and memorial portraits—portrays Unionist challenges of historic revisionism and forwards charges of criminal acts (murder, genocide, and mayhem) by Nationalists. These murals record the conflict of the wrongful acts/events/sites. From this record, wrongful acts/events/sites record conflict, and from them reinterpretation can reinforce remorse and reason. By recalling and reinterpreting, the dynamic process permits the choice of peace. In other words, moving from stasis (the acts/events/sites) to dynamic engagement promotes potentials for possible peace.

The repeated depictions of both events and victims (Great Hunger, Bloody Sunday, Hunger Strike, or Bombay Street) support Nationalist arguments against Unionist injustices. Images of famine victims, political prisoners, hunger strikers, and protest victims illustrate Nationalist definitions of justice. For Nationalists, social structures (agreed upon by the established ruling majority) do not apply equitably to all inhabitants of Northern Ireland. Rejecting the *status quo*, Nationalist murals challenge much of Northern Ireland's civil law. The Unionist-led government designed these discriminatory laws to maintain control over the shifting population demographics.²³

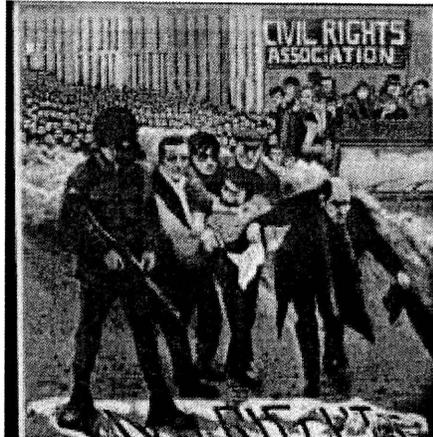
In Derry, two monochromatic murals depict battle-scene moments in the Troubles²⁴—the Battle of the Bogside²⁵ and Bloody Sunday.²⁶ The use of a monochromatic technique to replace the tradition of bright colors distinguishes the murals from their surroundings and emphasizes their emotional impact through that differentiation.

The Battle of the Bogside mural (Fig. 004) shows a foregrounded youth preparing to lob a petrol bomb into the fray nearby. His only protective gear (a gas mask) acts as a mirror that reflects the Irish tri-colour. Pinned to his jacket, a badge outlines Ireland with the six counties of Ulster painted in white relief to the darker Republic of Ireland. In the



Battle of the Bogside—Fig. 004

background a group of soldiers stands with their backs to the viewers and looks over the chaos of the burning buildings. Both references to Ireland highlight the Republic's presence in Northern Ireland's Troubles. In contrast to the unprotected youth, these soldiers are dressed in full protective gear and carry automatic weapons.



Bloody Sunday—Fig. 005

The Bloody Sunday mural (Fig. 005) portrays a synecdochal moment in the 1972 protest march. In the background, chaos reigns as the mural shows the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association truck, the marching heads of protestors, and the clash with the soldiers. The People's Democracy (PD) truck, carrying Bernadette Devlin and other members of the PD and the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association (NICRA), leads the marching crowd in its call for equitability. In the foreground, a priest leads a group of men away from the smoke and conflict towards safe haven. In their arms, the men bear away the figure of another man—wounded or dead—in the classical style of history painting conventions (e.g. Christ-like). In the opposite corner a soldier, dressed in full protective gear, stands watching the conflict. The red stains of blood on the civil rights banner stand in stark contrast to the black and white mural and emphasize the soldier's militaristic position on the banner. Carrying a rifle, he stands on a bloody and torn banner for the civil rights protest.

Conventional markers of the traditional battle-scene painting (conflict, smoke, and weaponry) appear throughout the two Bogside murals. These modifications to other painting conventions underscore the rhetorical and semiotic impact of these murals. The armed forces, representatives of the Unionist-led government, articulate Unionist desires to maintain control in the face of a “Peoples’ Revolt.” Either the soldiers stand as a group facing a common enemy or a single representation of power stands firmly on the bloody and battered civil rights banner. In either instance, the soldiers are well armed and well protected against any assault. Supporting current Nationalist claims of injustice, the visual representations of fully armored police²⁷ remind viewers of official sanctions against any challenge to the state. Contrary to the tradition of battle-scenes, neither warring force is an army. The opposition that seeks civil rights consists of civilians—men, women, and children—standing, unprotected, in the face of an officially sanctioned storm. Their weapons are the word, the rock, and the petrol bomb. By modifying the conventions of the battle-scene, the muralists depict scenes *in medias res* that intertextually connect to the *tableau vivant* and encourage viewers to explore the unbalanced nature of the Troubles.

Even as these particular civil rights murals suggest threats of official suppression through the presence of fully armored force, references to a community’s willingness to attain the goals of acceptance and equality by any and all means necessary surface. The images of the youth, the priest, and the blood establish intertextual connections to past acts of Irish rebellion and foreshadow future goals of peace. Though these murals argue

persuasively against the injustice of Unionist actions they also advocate for hope, peace, and acceptance.

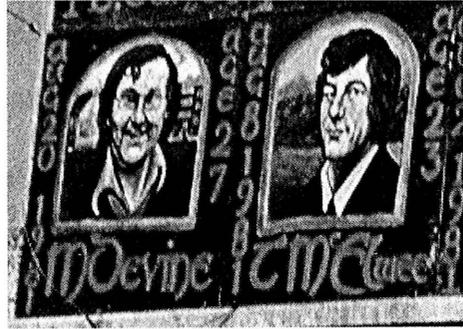
In Belfast's Falls Road neighborhood, Nationalist murals commemorating the Hunger Strikers present viewers with individual and group portraits of those men who died "for the cause." One particular mural (Fig. 006) depicts smiling hunger strikers floating in a liminal half-light over the darkened outline of Long Kesh's H-Block.²⁸



Hunger Strikers and Maze—Fig. 006

It shows the audience a 'best face forward' version of the strikers—glowing and transcendent in their martyrdom and in direct opposition to the stark jailhouse photographs that appeared in newspapers throughout the strike period. The representations of the ten hunger strikers as smiling and transcendent strengthen Nationalists' hopes in the face of British inhumanity and articulated community frustrations with the British system. This mural delivers images of "every son" rather than the criminal element²⁹ incarcerated for the "good of the community." The darkened outlines of the prison as well as several expressionist-style crosses focus the Nationalist

indictment of British criminalization policies and the Northern Irish prison system. Poetry written by Bobby Sands, during his incarceration, underscores and reinforces intertextual connections between the hunger strikers and a larger Nationalist mythology.³⁰



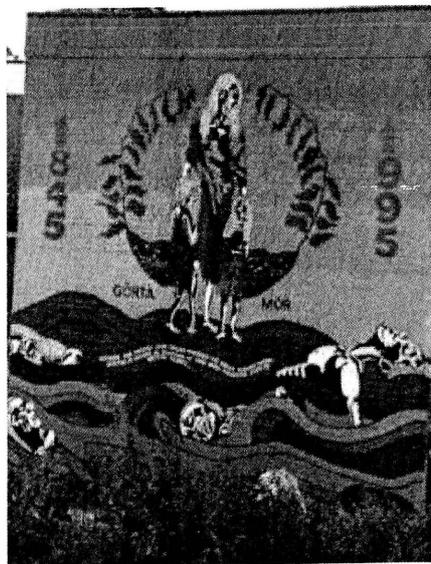
Strike Portraits—Fig. 007

The portraits of the hunger strikers provide viewers with a doubled indication of the spaces they inhabited—geographically and historically. As representations of the heroic sacrifice to “the cause,” the strikers’ plight³¹ dramatizes an appeal to community identification. Other depictions of the hunger strikers included the portrayal of individual strikers (Fig. 007) as well as collective portraits intertextually connected with a variety of Nationalist themes that include the events of the 1916 Uprising and the Young Irelanders. By 1981, the ten hunger strikers, physically dead, had joined with other members of the Nationalist heroic elite. In their wake, a previously ambivalent Nationalist community found its voice to challenge the opposition and was shouting for action.

Acting as testimonies to the strength and endurance of the Nationalist cause the depictions of the hunger strikers appear as counterstatements to the government’s policies on criminalization and Unionist reactions.³² However, the Unionist community “saw

[that] murderers [were] going on hunger strike and eventually dying, and the Unionist reaction was that it was good enough for them” (Campbell 28).

In Belfast, two Famine murals (Fig. 008 & Fig. 009) depict semiotic representations of dying figures, withering plants, and gravestones. Claims made by these contemporary allegories of Northern Ireland echo past Irish indictments of British abuse and neglect stemming from the Famine where “allegations of ‘souperism’” (the act of proselytizing for conversion to Protestantism while serving soup to the starving) “hindered relief efforts” and revealed sectarian “resentment and suspicion that lay not far below the surface” (Boyce 110). Left to Ireland’s landlords, much of the famine relief efforts brought about conflicting results. While other famine murals directly accuse the British government of active genocide, these two murals rely on intertextual references to imply culpability.



Famine Memorial I—Fig. 008

One of the Famine³³ murals (Fig. 008) portrays a monochromatic rendering of the iconic figures³⁴ of a woman with two children standing in front of a setting sun. Flanking the iconic trio are *diacopic* representations of potato plants where the leaves show the metaphorical transition from greening growth to blackened blight. The two plants rise from decaying potatoes. Beneath the feet of the woman and children are the rolling greens and browns of the earth as well as the monochromatic figures of the dead. Acting as a form of *epexegetis* (explanation) the Gaelic³⁵ text—“*Górta Mór*”—is embedded above the horizon line. Whereas the Nationalist use of the Gaelic language dramatically marginalizes the victims, the black paint emphasizes the finality of the famine. Below the horizon, an inscribed accusation claims that “When the potato crop failed causing the Great Hunger people watched in despair as shiploads of food were escorted away by British troops.” The inscription appears to be carved out of the earth and follows the crest of the land. Written in English, this inscription presents a testimonial of the Nationalist indictments of English involvement and of British imperialism.



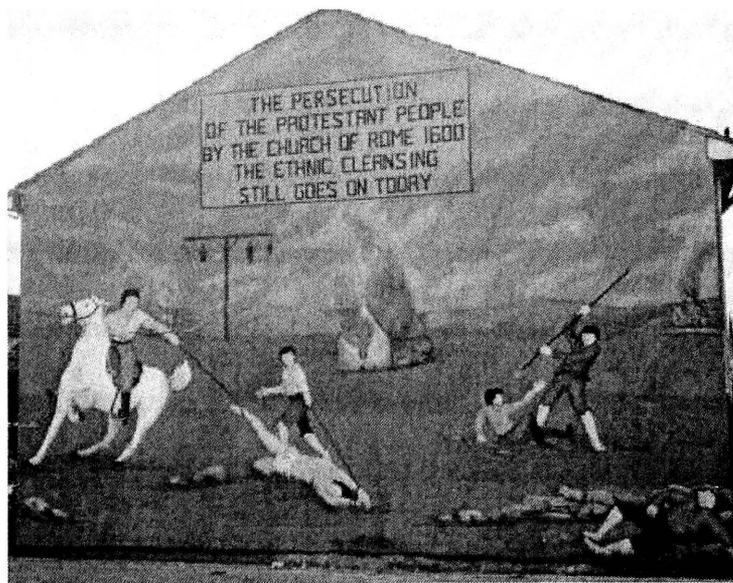
Famine II—Fig. 009

A second famine mural (Fig. 009) on Leanadoon Avenue is painted in a monochromatic color scheme. In the foreground, a woman crouches, a visual *tnesis* (interposition of a new element in the midst of a compound), between two chipped gravestones. Her pale face (half hidden by the fall of her hair and shrunk by the hollows of her cheeks) is dominated by her eyes. Her robe drapes heavily around her slight frame. She frowns down at the plant in her hand. The leaves of the blighted potato plant droop, lifeless. Behind her stand the remains of a once thatched house and the stark outlines of barren trees. Similar to the “*Górta Mor*” mural, the verbal text is embedded, etched into the faces of the gravestones. Dividing the question, the second famine mural asserts claims that not only did “Nature sent the potato blight” but also that the “Government & Landlords created the Famine.” This division (an enthymeme) suggests that while the British may not be to blame for the famine’s origination the resulting devastation lies at the feet of those in power. The actions of many raised the specters of remembered hostilities.

As strategic diacopic and tmesic images, the depictions of famine victims highlight the appeals to *pathos* by separating repeated (*repetio*) images of desiccating potato plants and gravestones. Included in the mural content, the text’s location adds to the arguments amplified by layered representations of desolation. Thus the events of the famine presented through effective rhetorical and semiotic strategies support Nationalist claims of past persecution and genocide as well as current mistreatment, injustices, and wrongdoing. Even so, these murals illustrate a monologic testimony to a heteroglossic narrative. In an effort to promote Nationalist claims of injustice, the representations of a

distinctly Gaelic/Catholic interpretation of history are emphasized in spite of recorded acts of assistance and death from both communities.

The Unionist murals make claims about the nature of Protestant suffering and sacrifice in the face of moral and cultural persecution. Too, they show historicized instances in which the rule of equitability has failed to protect the interest of loyal citizens. Intent on prosecuting perceived persecution, the Unionist community collectively establishes its *ethos* by depicting events, past and contemporary, that illustrate the acts and victims of Nationalist anarchy.



1641 Massacre—Fig. 010

As an illustration the Belfast's Shankill neighborhood a mural (Fig. 010) continues the changes to the battle-scene tradition and presents viewers with an alternative interpretation of the Catholic role in Northern Ireland. This particular mural depicts a synecdochal moment during the Hiberno-Irish Uprising of 1641.³⁶ In the background, flames shoot from the thatched roofs of homesteads and people hang dead

from scaffolding. The foreground contains a tableau of people fighting, killing, and dying. A man rides a white horse and his partner ties up a half-naked man. Another man with a pike stands over a crouching figure while a last man is sprawled across a broken stone wall—dead.

Through a progression of event references, including unvoiced inferences to post-partition border attacks by the IRA, the 1641 Massacre mural confronts viewers with a rhetorical and semiotic tangle between the 1641 uprising and contemporary Nationalist activities against the established power hierarchy. The tangled semiotic web is underscored by a parenthetical verbal chunk (“The persecution of the Protestant people by the Church of Rome—1600. The ethnic cleansing still goes on today”). Rather than embedding its contextual references, the Unionist 1641 Massacre mural trumpets a parenthetical text chunk that blasts the citizen-against-citizen conflict and targets events in the seventeenth century to current trends towards a secularized Northern Ireland. The resulting intertextuality develops through the inscription that articulates Unionist claims that Nationalist crimes continue to the present day. When the viewer reads this verbal text a differentiation among the people involved in the skirmish becomes apparent.³⁷ As such, the parenthetical use of verbal text articulates both a “memorializing [of] Catholic treachery and [a] celebrating [of] Protestant deliverance,” which resulted in a highly speculative number of casualties ranging from 2,000 to 200,000 (Foster 85).³⁸ The distant past restates itself in the correspondences encoded in the visual images of this mural. The 1641 conflict represented here implies a correspondence between the seventeenth century and the post-partition IRA attacks on Unionist settlements and the current trends to

secularize Northern Irish society. Changes in a society intent on seeking out common ground amplify community concerns over ethnic cleansing.

Allegorizing contemporary Unionist concerns over changes in Northern Irish politics, an Apprentice Boy mural in Derry commemorates the April 1689 beginning of the Siege of Derry³⁹ (Fig. 011). Like other Williamite⁴⁰ events—the Battle of the Boyne

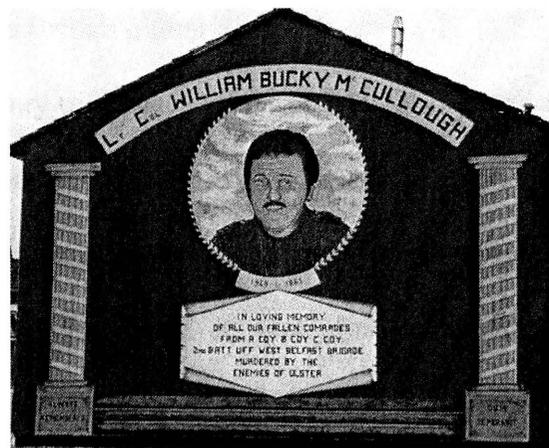


Shutting the Gates—Fig. 011

and the Battle of the Diamond—the moments surrounding the Siege of Derry have become sacrosanct despite documented allegiances⁴¹ that conflict with Unionist history. The mural shows a group of men, dressed in period specific clothing, bearing arms. Intent on completing their task against any form of opposition, the men distribute their defense both internally and externally. While a couple of them point their swords inwards to fend off potential internal strife the others struggle to close the city's gate against an external and unseen threat, James II. A banner of red, white, and blue describes the event as the “Shutting the Gates of Derry” and marks the mural as a representation of the beginning of

the siege rather than the relief of June 1689. By illustrating the siege's beginning rather than the ending, viewers are warned that Unionist misgivings regarding external threats are ongoing.

The portrait of William “Bucky” McCullough hangs at the center of a memorial mural (Fig. 012). His placement within the restrictive space (surrounded by clouds)



William “Bucky” McCullough Memorial—Fig. 012

stands in contrast to the openness of the hunger strike portraits, with pastoral backgrounds. The restriction begins a process of *apotheosis* (deification or exaltation) from “Bucky” to all “buckies.” In other words, Bucky stands as himself as well as other dead comrades. His smile, the olive drab sweater, and military-style epaulets. The military attire designates McCullough’s membership in a paramilitary⁴² organization. Surrounding his portrait, a classical memorial setting bears the epigraphs (“*Quis Separabit*” and “Always Remembered”). Painted with the appearance of being etched, the pilasters appear to be wrapped with yellow ribbon. Below the portrait a scroll with the inscription for McCullough’s memorial reads “In loving memory of all our fallen

comrades from A. Coy, B. Coy, and C. Coy 2nd Batt. UFF West Belfast Brigade murdered by the enemies of Ulster.” The incorporation of military regalia—rank levels, insignia, and power structures— extends praise to the members of the Ulster Defense Association, the Ulster Volunteer Force, the Ulster Freedom Fighters, and the Irish Republican Army because they have engaged in an armed conflict with each other as well as with the forces of the British military.

Where the military references establish William McCullough’s death to the defense of Ulster against the enemy, the civilian terminology of “murder” by the “enemies of Ulster” underscores Unionist interpretations of the Nationalist community as inherently disloyal⁴³ to the Northern Irish State. Traitors are not eligible for equal status in the “war.” The Unionist absolute denial of the IRA as anything more than a group of murdering thugs appears in the verbal references to “murder” and “enemies of Ulster” found in the memorial mural. In contradistinction, Nationalist interpretations of loyalist paramilitary organizations mirror the Unionist opinion of the IRA.

Interpretations of particular verbal and visual codes, narrative *lexia* loaded with cultural specificity, become relevant to new understandings of the Northern Irish conflict as well as providing historic and contemporary explanations for Nationalist and Unionist definitions and debates. Consistent reliance on these culturally preselected codes restricts the viewer’s participation in a semiotic process of interpretation. In each case, Nationalist and Unionist communities continue to maintain and support a preselected corpus of interpretive codes through which to examine forms of discourse. This restriction results in a static, often deadly, rhetoric. However, the process of rhetorical and semiotic

interpretation fluctuates contextually with the viewer. Images that present prescriptive viewers with a testimony to the strength and endurance of one side while acting as counterstatements to established agenda continue to be open to alternative and dynamic interpretations by viewers. Thus as symbolic representations, embedded in simplified and ritualized narratives, both Nationalist and Unionist murals reveal not only dramatized claims of injustice and professions of innocence but also cries for acceptance and appeals for peace.

Visual depictions of events, historical and contemporary, have provided both Nationalist and Unionist muralists with a rich supply of rhetorical, political, and artistic materials with which to prosecute each other and the British Government; they also provide justification for the violent acts. Nationalists and Unionists continue to construct evidence that cuts away the presence of alternative narrative structures that might challenge the dominant narrative—Catholic or Protestant. The result reduces history into a set of “talking points” that both highlight partisan evidence and deny other possibilities. This denial validates the need for the semiotic process as Northern Ireland seeks to move away from one static position (protest) to another (peace). The space between the extremes further illustrates the benefits of other interpretations and pinpoints the value of alternatives. As such, recent attempts⁴⁴ to unite the community and alleviate the partisan tensions and hostilities provides both Nationalist and Unionist communities with an unprecedented opportunity to disrupt established semiotic, discursive, and rhetorical frames.

NOTES

¹ Initiated in June 1921, the Parliament of Northern Ireland sought to govern the six counties (Hennessey 18). Eventually moved from Belfast's City Hall to the Stormont building, the Parliament of Northern Ireland became known as the Stormont Parliament. Perceived as state sanctioned discrimination against the Nationalist community, the Northern Irish government was led by Unionist ministers who considered Nationalists, and their denial of the established partition between North and South, to be minority citizens as well as traitors (52). In 1972, the Northern Ireland Act "suspended the Northern Ireland Government and vested all powers of the Governor and Government in a newly created Secretary of State for Northern Ireland" and established Orders of Council wherein "the Parliament of Northern Ireland would have the power to legislate" but such legislation "had first to be approved by both houses of the Westminster Parliament" (207-8).

² This event allowed for the re-instatement of British government and military forces and promoted the enactment of various treaties and agreements that have worked to create a society divided by mistrust (Hennessey 207).

³ Under the Special Powers Act the creation of Northern Ireland's Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) replaced the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC). Additionally, the establishment of reserve forces known as the Specials became the subject of political and human rights controversy (Hennessey 33).

⁴ Lee reports that after a number of incidents such as the Protestant rejoice over the "Tory victory in the British general election, in April 1970," the counter productive nature of "17,262 house [arms] searches in 1971" and the rise in IRA recruitment between 1970 and 1971. Lee notes that "one decisive turning point in Catholic attitudes to the army, and one hesitates to suggest there was, because of the feeling that if it was not one thing, it would have been another, it was probably the thirty-four-hour curfew imposed on the Falls in July 1970 to facilitate 'arms searches'" (434).

⁵ Unlike the 1968 NICRA march, the 1969 People's Democracy march from Belfast to Derry, which resulted in Bloody Sunday, was considered incendiary and was "denounced by both Nationalist and civil rights leaders" (Hennessey 151).

⁶ Lee provides an informative analysis of the historical background surrounding the intricate activities of the British, Irish, and Northern Irish governments as well as the public response to those activities (411-57).

⁷ Eco describes the goal of a specific semiotics "the 'grammar' of a particular sign system, and proves to be successful insofar as it describes a given field of communicative

phenomena as ruled by a system of signification” (4). Legal semiotics, a particular sign system, follows the grammar of semiotics. Paul notes that legal semiotics is used to describe a style of semiotic analysis used through the judiciary to “describe the rhetorical similarity between arguments employed in a wide variety of contexts” (1823). Paul’s discussion echoes Jackson’s earlier opinion that legal semiotics “may be regarded as a dual semiotic system, the language in which it is expressed and the discursive system expressed by that language” (Jackson 3).

⁸ The conflict in Northern Ireland has been euphemistically referred to as the Troubles.

⁹ Habermas discusses the nature of public as “the carrier of public opinion” where “its function as a critical judge is precisely what makes the public character of proceedings—in court, for instance—meaningful” (2). As an open forum for community discourse public can appear as “that sector of public opinion that happens to be oppose to the authorities” as well as a manner in which to “provide communication among members of the public” via numerous forms of media such as the murals (2).

¹⁰ In his discussion on the different aspects of argument, Cicero lists the issues as conjectural, definitional, qualitative, and translative. He concludes that one of the issues will “always” be “applicable to any case; for where none applies, there can be no controversy” (*De Inventione* Book I 21). Balkin notes that Cicero’s explication of the general topics in *Topica* and *De Inventione* were written “for the benefit of advocates.” As such, Cicero provided advocates with two separate heuristics: “to analyze a factual situation as a legal problem” and “to devise arguments for interpreting the law and applying it to a case in one way rather than another” (par. 10). Chappell recognizes that for judicial rhetoric, the audience takes on the role of the jury, which is “empanelled to enact the values of a larger public by deciding whether and to what degree a set of evidence matches legal definitions of criminal behavior or civil liability” and engages in the rhetorical act of determining “correct judgements” (391).

¹¹ Cicero concludes that a procedural (translative) issue occurs when it becomes “necessary to transfer the action to another court because the proper person does not bring the action, or it is not brought against the proper person or before the proper court, or under the proper statute, or with a proper request for penalty, or with the proper accusation, or at the proper time” (*De Inventione* Book II 219). Chappell notes that the transfer from the semi-public courtroom to the streets underscores the primary goal of judicial rhetoric as “the articulation of public knowledge and public values” via Aristotle’s “arguments in popular terms” (391).

¹² Tonge explains that in 1972 the Diplock Report “recommended the introduction of trial without jury” as a part of the emergency measures and as a way to “circumvent

the problem of intimidation of jurors” (71). He cites four main criticisms of the juryless Diplock Courts that include doubts regarding the “neutrality of the judiciary.” Differences in conviction rates where “over 90 per cent [sic] in cases involving offences related to paramilitary activity” contrasted dramatically with “almost unanimous acquittals of the security forces.” Problems with the “admissibility of uncorroborated evidence . . . in which the prosecution relied upon the evidence of informers” and decisions in 1988 to permit judges to “draw negative conclusions if a defendant exercises the right to silence” probably explain the change (71-72).

¹³ Shirlow and McGovern note that those who reduce community multiplicity to a “two traditions model” find it “wholly unproblematic as well as politically calculated” since it “permits the interpretation that the conflict is more about religion and history than it is about issues such as class, socio-economic competition and the impact of shifts in the character of Irish society” (3). Though there is not always clear consensus within the intragroup, the debates that ensue within the intragroup do not translate easily into the intergroup conflicts. As such, they are set aside during the creation of the murals. The most testimonial murals tend to reflect the larger concerns that face each community.

¹⁴ Schuetz suggests that rather than being objective, research and legal evidence “is socially constructed” and is dependent on the structures of discourse found within research or trial setting (348).

¹⁵ Johnson coins the useful term *semantic junction* that identifies the intersecting point in which community use of words or images to serve multiple or conflicting meanings within the same boundaries.

¹⁶ According to Aristotle, specific law incorporates “written law under which people live in a polis,” later asserting that specific law can also be “defined by each people in reference to themselves” (102). Where Aristotle defines situational justice as either specific or common, Cicero divides them into the categories of legal or equitable. Statutory, Religious, and Custom are three examples of legal justice and debate “what is just and fair to all” (*De Inventione* Book II 233). Customary law “is thought to be that which lapse of time has approved by the common consent of all without sanction of the statute” (*De Inventione* Book II 232). Equitable issues examine “cases in which there is a question of the nature of justice and of the principles of reward or punishment” (*De Inventione* Book II 233). Unwritten, common law works with “a common principle of the just and unjust that all people in some way are divine, even if they have no association or commerce with each other” (Aristotle 102).

¹⁷ Zelanski and Fisher point out that though positive space is that “part of the work that physically occupies [the] space [or form]” and that negative space is that

“previously filled area that was cut away to reveal the form [or the absence of image]” (278).

¹⁸ Hodge and Kress assert that in most socially constructed environments “there are inequalities in the distribution of power and other goods” which results in “divisions in the social fabric between rulers and ruled.” As such, the group in power generally seeks to promote itself and its interests and actively engages in attempts to maintain the *status quo* through a logonomic system of rules that are “specifically taught and policed by concrete social agents” (3-5).

¹⁹ In *Ulster’s Uncertain Defenders*, Nelson reports that as members of the dominant community, Unionists have been able to work within the system in order to have needs met. However, she points out that class differences presented the Unionist working class community with problems similar to those in the Nationalist working class community (42). Additionally, Nelson notes that the power hierarchy within the Unionist community is structured with disciplined deference in mind. Though class divisions are observable, the constitutional issues surrounding Northern Ireland’s existence have traditionally trumped any class related conflicts. As such, Orangeism “emphasised the solidarity of Protestant society, where the common bond of religion outweighed class differences” and acted as an agent for “diffusing class tensions” (42).

²⁰ In their study of Northern Ireland’s identity structure, Hayes and McAllister assert that while “not all Protestants claim a Unionist identity” approximately 70 percent of Northern Ireland’s Protestant population claim a Unionist identity that includes a number of variations—British, British-Unionist, and Unionist (“Ethnonationalism, Public Opinion, and the Good Friday Agreement” 35-38). Additionally, the study showed that the majority of these identifiers aligned themselves with pro-state ideologies stating that “strong pro-state beliefs are most prevalent among the Unionist parties” with less than half of these voting for the Good Friday Agreement (45). Hayes and McAllister concluded that “Protestants, in general strongly pro-state, were concerned about measures which would potentially undermine the constitutional position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom” (44).

²¹ Originally renamed Doire, meaning oak, the city has undergone a series of name changes and debates. Recently, “commentators have adapted a procedure of making a first reference to the city by its official name and each subsequent reference by the name Derry” (Melaugh, “Glossary”).

²² Within the larger tradition of history painting is the genre of the battle-scene, which shows a moment of war, one that precedes or follows a battle between warring armies.

²³ In his panel discussion on the Irish peace process, McGrath noted that the percentage of Catholic voters in Northern Ireland has risen to 43 percent.

²⁴ Both the Battle of the Bogside, begun as a protest against the Apprentice Boys march, and Bloody Sunday, the civil rights march from Belfast to Londonderry, mark the beginnings of the current Troubles.

²⁵ Intent on celebrating events surrounding the Siege of Derry, the Apprentice Boys prepared for the annual march with thousands of participants expected. Requests by the Nationalist community either to cancel or reroute the march were summarily rejected. The planned march continued, but not without protest from the opposition. Building barricades against potential invasions by the marchers, the Nationalist community sought to prevent possible invasions of Derry's Bogside. After days of rock throwing and petrol bomb confrontations between Northern Irish police forces (supported by the marchers) and Nationalist protestors, Stormont requested that the British government intervene. In August 1969, the British Army was mobilized as an intervening force to stabilize increasing partisan tensions. Initial response to the British military's arrival was mixed. A "relieved reception given the troops in Catholic areas" resulted in a "sullen reaction among Protestants" (Lee 429).

²⁶ The January 1969 civil rights march, where some "participants imagined they were engaged on an Ulster version of the Selma to Montgomery march" resulted in assaults, "serious rioting and inevitable police brutality" as well as "increased tension" between the Catholic and Protestant communities (Lee 422-23). Originally considered harmless by Sir James Craig, approximately 80 students "set out from City Hall in Belfast to march to Derry on 1 January 1969" (Elliott 414). On their way, the students met up with violent and planned attacks, first at Burnollet Bridge and then again in Derry City. Elliott reports that the official inquiries into the events surrounding the 1969 march found that "off-duty B-Specials took a prominent part and the RUC seemed more in sympathy with the attackers than the victims" (415). One of many repercussions of the New Year's Day march came from the RUC as it "rampaged through Catholic areas in the city" of Derry (415).

²⁷ The presence of British military added new levels of tension that included violence by hard-lined Nationalists in addition to the moderate voices of the civil rights marchers.

²⁸ In his discussion on the Northern Irish prison known as Long Kesh, Morrison reports that it was "converted from an RAF base in 1971 into a 'temporary' camp for the republican internees," and was enlarged to accommodate loyalist prisoners in 1976 (par. 1). In 1972 Long Kesh was renamed the Maze by the British government. Danny Morrison relates that though the names 'Long Kesh,' 'The Cages,' 'The Maze,' and 'H-

Block' all designate the same geographical location—"compounds of four Nissan huts, a toilet block and an exercise yard, surrounded by British army watchtowers and an ocean of barbed wire"—the name alterations represent markers in the changing status of the inmates (par. 4). The internees were considered prisoners of war until 1976 when the government ended political status for prisoners. At that point, the prisoners embarked on a campaign to regain POW status that culminated in the 1980 hunger strikes.

²⁹ In response to the strikers attempt to change public perception of Northern Ireland's conflict, Margaret Thatcher's claim that "'We are not prepared to consider special category status for certain groups of people serving sentences for crime. Crime is crime is crime; it is not political'" hardens the British position (qtd. in Hennessey 261). This definitional position on crime and criminals reinforced the British government's policy of criminalization and incited heated reactions from hunger strike supporters. Hennessey records that though "the [IRA] Provisionals had been forced to accept that the Thatcher Government would not concede 'political status'" the larger implication of the hunger strike was the "radicalising effect of the protest on the Catholic population" (262).

³⁰ Elliott locates the roots of contemporary hunger striking in Ireland's distant past. She relates that rather than changing native customs and laws, the Irish monastic tradition "Christianized the native practice of fasting to enforce unmet claims" (14). The tradition of hunger striking has been used regularly as the ultimate form of Irish political protest against injustice.

³¹ Focused on establishing official political prisoner status and challenging the British discourse of criminalization, the Nationalist prisoners in the H-Blocks embarked on a series of increasingly intense strikes—Blanket, Dirty, and Hunger. Protesting the changes to prisoner status—from political to criminal prisoner—the Nationalist prisoners refused to wear uniforms provided by prison officials, disrobed immediately and went "on the blanket." Moving from the blanket strike to the dirty strike and finally to the hunger strike, the protestors provided officials with a list of five points to be addressed by the British government. Hennessey reports that these demands included: no prison clothing or work; permission to organize with one weekly visit, one letter out, one letter and one package in every week; free association with other prisoners; and the entitlement to full remission of sentences (Hennessey 260).

³² Reflecting on his interpretations of Derry Unionists reactions to the deaths of the hunger strikers, Gregory Campbell remembers that "people in my community being pleasantly surprised whenever the hunger strikers died" (28).

³³ The event surrounding the Great Famine caused "social disaster on an unprecedented scale" and has been permanently etched into the folk memory of Ireland (Boyce 107). The result of a fungal disease (*phytophthora infestans*), the potato blight

first appearing in 1845, continuing in 1846, and returning again in 1848 brought about the devastation of standard food supplies. By the end of 1849 “the worst of the Irish famine, at least, was over,” and by 1851 approximately 800,000 people were dead (107). Death, a result of emigration via the “coffin ships” as much as hunger and fevered disease, occurred en masse. Boyce points out that the British policy of laissez-faire economics was more of “an aspiration rather than a reality” and that though the government was “aware of its need to play some sort of role in mitigating the disaster” it was not “in the business of providing state support on any considerable scale” (109). See

³⁴ This particular trio, Bridget O’Donnell and her children first appeared in the 22 December 1849 “Conditions of Ireland” column in the *Illustrated London News*. Since that time renderings of the picture have appeared fairly regularly as an iconic depiction of the Famine.

³⁵ O’Reilly notes that whether considered to be “a valuable part of Irish identity” or a threat, the use of the Irish language (Irish Gaelic rather than Scots Gaelic) continues to provide fuel for heated debates (43).

³⁶ Initially assisted by the Hiberno-Irish, the native Irish population embarked on a reactionary rebellion against the Ulster settlers in 1641. Elliott points out that the leaders of the rebellion quickly lost control of the situation and regardless of how “moderate the aims of the initial rising, that breakdown of order [de]generated into vigilantism” (101). The actions of the Ulster Irish and the resulting Protestant reactions—*lex talionis*—degenerated into acts of extreme cruelty and vendetta killings. Elliott concludes that whatever the instigation and outcome of the conflict, “1641 destroyed the Ulster Plantation as a mixed settlement and made religion for the first time the main justification for dispossession” (102). Farren and Mulvihill assert that the uprising of 1641 was “seen by Protestants as a clear warning of things to come if the Catholic population were not thoroughly suppressed” (4). Indeed, the lasting effects of the 1641 rebellion can be found within the anti-Catholic sentiments that continued well into the nineteenth century and reappeared in the twentieth century.

³⁷ Considered a religious conflict and the “first bloody landmark” of the Ulster region, the Irish insurrection of October 1641 is said to have left “an indelible mark on their [Unionists] attitudes and beliefs that remain[s] even into the present day” (“The 1641 Rebellion” par. 12). Elliot points to a variety of activities that went into creating a situation whose “net effect was to provoke in reality what was feared in theory, for the Ulster Irish rebelled in October 1641 in the firm conviction that they were themselves about to be attacked” (99). The actions of the Viscount Wentworth, England’s Long Parliament, and the spread of anti-papery propaganda, denying “that papists could be loyal” and asserting that the presence of a “papist conspiracy to destroy Protestants’ ‘law and religion,’” worked together to fuel Catholic concerns regarding the future (100).

³⁸ Other casualty estimates put forward by various Unionist web sites range from a count of 50,000-200,000 to statements that while “the authenticity of the event is undisputed, only the number who died is unclear” (“An Overview of Events in the History of Ulster” par. 8). However, Foster suggests that while historian W. E. H. Lecky relates a “hesitant estimate of 4,000 casualties . . . a figure of 2,000 may be nearer, but must remain speculative” (85). But Elliott recognizes that while English reports “laid claim to anything up to 150,000 Protestants massacred, when the number of Protestants in Ulster may not have been much above 30,000” the probability is that “as many as 12,000 may have perished, the majority from cold and exposure after being stripped of clothes and possessions during an unusually cold winter” (101).

³⁹ “The Siege of Derry” reports that the letter asserts that ““all our Irishmen through Ireland is sworn that on the ninth day of this month they are all to fall on to kill and murder man, wife and child of the Protestant religion”” (qtd in “The Siege of Derry” par. 4). Found in County Down, the Comber letter warned of the impending death of northern Protestants by Catholics. The arrival of the letter raised sectarian tensions even as the forces of King James II advanced to garrison in Derry City. Though the actual siege runs from April to June 1689, Unionist ideology has the time span run from the beginning of December 1688 with the discovery of an anonymous letter. Anthony Buckley notes both Governor Lundy’s inability to choose between supporting either James II or William of Orange and the decision of Derry City’s apprentice boys to support William and shut the town gates against James’ force. The decision to close the gates by the Apprentice Boys moved from the problematic actions that brought months of hardship to the citizens of Derry City to the heroic bid for freedom against ‘popish’ tyranny. At that point, James lays siege upon the city as well as putting down a wooden boom across the River Foyle. Several months later William’s troops arrive via relief ships including the Mountjoy. After some struggle the Mountjoy breaks the boom, and the besieged city of Derry is relieved.

⁴⁰ Indeed, Unionists describe William of Orange as the protector of the Protestant *ethos* while James is traditionally related to all things vile as a result of his connection to Catholicism.

⁴¹ Davies records that historical allegiances during the conflict between William and James are not as religiously divided as Unionist history has articulated them. Filled with periodic bouts of rebellion and conflict, the history of Ireland during the seventeenth century is deeply joined to monarchical bids for power throughout Europe. By removing the European influences and the Pope’s support of William’s efforts, the Unionists have provided themselves with an absolute hero instead of a “personally quite tolerant” monarch, or ““the Dutch usurper,”” invited by “the English [who] had unilaterally deposed a legitimate king” (615). The support between the English Parliament, Spain,

Savoy and the Holy Roman Empire supported William of Orange in his bid for the English throne. Meanwhile, James had the support of King Louis XIV of France. Davies notes that the Williamite-Jacobite conflict was more concerned with William's interest in "defending his holdings against France" than with a fight against Catholicism (615).

⁴² In Northern Ireland the development of secret or paramilitary organizations both follows and continues a longstanding tradition that originated in the eighteenth century. The 1795 formation of the Orange Order occurred in "County Armagh after a clash between Protestant and Catholics at the 'Battle of the Diamond'" (Hennessey 2). Throughout the nineteenth century the secret societies underwent a series of mutations that included a development of political ideology. Pulling his force from the roster of Covenant signers, Sir Edward Carson formed the first Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). The 1913 creation of Carson's UVF presented Northern Ireland with a Protestant force of "around 100,000 men between the ages of seventeen and sixty-five," many of whom became casualties during the Battle of the Somme (Taylor 22). In "Cuchulain and an RPG-7: The Ideology and Politics of the Ulster Defense Association," McAuley explains that the descendants of the secret societies, founded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the contemporary paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland continue to maintain "an important channel for both articulating social grievances and for reproducing sectarian ideology" (45). Hayes and McAllister, adds that as a means of community protection against perceived external threats, communities formed secret societies that utilized "direct action to express agrarian discontent" and voiced growing frustrations against the landlords rather than religious populations ("Sowing" par. 5). However, by the second half of the eighteenth century northern societies had divided themselves along distinctly sectarian lines and formed groups like the Protestant Peep O'Day Boys and the Catholic Defenders to reflect those divisions. At the end of the eighteenth century the Peep O'Day Boys and the Defenders had been "replaced by two organizations with overtly political goals, the Orange Order and the United Irishmen, respectively" (par. 5). Officially considered illegal, paramilitary organizations have used the history and tradition of secret societies as a starting point for developing community support, reinforcing ancient fears, and asserting political agendas.

⁴³ Hennessey notes that traditionally Unionists have "believed that Nationalists had always been disloyal to the Crown and in pursuit of an Irish Republic" (63). Variables involved in this interpretation of disloyalty include the Nationalist refusal to take an "oath of allegiance to the Government of Northern Ireland" as well as the community's long-range goal of a united Ireland. However, Hennessey reports that an *Irish News* article argues that it is the Unionist community, with its rebellious reaction against the British Parliament regarding Home Rule, that speaks of disloyalty rather than the Nationalist community. The article, according to Hennessey, notes that "by every test Catholic citizens in Northern Ireland were as loyal as any government could desire. They obeyed laws, paid their taxes, and lived in friendship with their neighbours" as well as

having representatives who “performed the duties of an official opposition, and with the exception of the IRA, the ‘Catholics of Northern Ireland have for a long time recognized that the Northern Parliament has come to stay for a long time, and have abandoned any connection they had with unconstitutional or secret political movements’” (69).

⁴⁴ Lee provides an informative analysis of the historical background surrounding the intricate activities of the British, Irish, and Northern Irish governments as well as the public response to those activities. Both the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1920) and the 1920 Act of Ireland authorized the creation of a Northern Irish state. Public reaction to these two agreements was mixed. While the Unionist community of the Ulster area was pleased to have this arrangement, the Irish Free State was divided by the decision and fell into Civil War. The reaction of Northern Irish Catholics was one of disbelief that was quickly followed by abandonment. Over the next fifty years, a number of British-Irish-Northern Irish attempts at community bridge construction include the Downing Street Agreement, the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, and the Sunningdale Agreement. Though approved by Westminster and Downing Street as well as the Republic of Ireland, most of these attempts have been met with hostile reactions from the Unionist community (411-57).

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRESENT: HONOR, DENIAL, AND EPIDEICTIC RHETORIC

Inspired by legends, events, and rivalries, the murals in Northern Ireland stand as discursive texts. These texts engage viewers in an interactive discovery process that expresses both the ineffable and the fragmented development of identities and relationships among the Northern Irish communities. Constructed long before the 1921 installation of Northern Ireland's partition,¹ Nationalist and Unionist identities are celebrated through common heritage and value hierarchies.² Connecting group membership to actions, symbolic or real, the community murals in Northern Ireland allow viewers to explore the webbed connections between epideictic rhetoric³ and the articulation of community dynamics. To that end, visual elements of epideictic rhetoric are incorporated to engage the audience in the construction of both hero (protagonist) and villain (antagonist) representations. Additionally, motivational, diagnostic, and other forms of framing processes⁴ reinforce the focus of epideictic rhetoric in assisting the collective's articulation of community desires, values, and goals. Thus, representation functions as a prime strategy "when trying to come to an understanding of the shared impulses and visions generating or guiding a social group" (Steiner 34).

Employing the walls as a forum for community self-expression and identity formation, Nationalist and Unionist groups engage in a discursive exchange that shares

values, symbols, and ideologies with supporters, detractors, and observers. Based on shared conflict over common heritage, Northern Ireland's divided community identity is visually reinforced by divergent concrete expressions of commonly held abstract principles or value hierarchies. By combining visual representations—a church, an orange sash, a lark, or a hero—Nationalist and Unionist murals dramatize instances of community tradition embedded with generations of static ritual. As such, both Nationalist and Unionist communities establish, maintain, and celebrate collective partisan identities based on shared or conflicting value structures. They invite viewers to participate in look *acts* that celebrate restricted community identity and motivate predicted community action. By focusing on “myth[s] of collective ancestry” and legitimizing myths,⁵ Nationalist and Unionist communities highlight conflicts and differences, marked by indicators of “common origin” and social dominance seek to articulate ethnic identity,⁶ rather than exploring cultural commonalities and shared value structures (Horowitz 41-52).

Though many values are “shared by a great number of audiences,” expression and prioritization of those values characterizes community in question (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 81). In Northern Ireland the abstract value⁷ of loyalty is solidified through the concrete concepts of religion (Catholic or Protestant), citizenship (Irish or British), and community (Nationalist or Unionist).⁸ While shared abstract values “may be admitted by many different audiences,” the hierarchy, the way in which concrete values are arranged in terms of importance, is more relevant than the actual values (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 81). Woven together by way of a series of symbols that reflect

group ideology, a “uniquely human and inevitable way to deal with the uniquely human and inevitable problem of bringing together what is known and what is felt,” a community defines itself as for or against ideological aspects of the larger social construct (Steiner 7). In the case of Northern Ireland, community identity “evolves and celebrates its unique *ethos*, its particular patterns of emotional response, its myths, its moral prescriptions and codes” (32).

In its advocacy of the collective identity, the protagonist community motivates its membership with indicators (images and symbols) with which members can identify. As such, amplified representations of community identity and ideology found within the murals engage viewers through *interpellation*.⁹ While Nationalist murals highlight a nostalgic Gaelic past, Unionist murals use images that underscore allegiance to the United Kingdom. As protagonist, both Nationalist and Unionist communities engage in a series of *status battles*¹⁰ that use the murals to establish legitimizing myths, illustrate a particular value hierarchies, and determine the antagonists. Simultaneously, the process attempts to recruit or to cause the antagonist to accept a position when and if a recruit accepts the opposition’s value hierarchy, and then progress has been made towards peace.

In the position of protagonist, Nationalists articulate community allegiances to a restricted set of identity and value structures through visual representations of Catholicism (Mary) and Ireland (the United Irishmen). In each instance, these semiotic representations encourage viewers to identify with the Nationalist community as it seeks to articulate identity. By establishing a heritage of legitimizing myths that connect the Nationalist community with the ancient House of David, the tradition of revolution, and

the Gaelic past, Nationalist murals echo Elliott’s suggestion that the roots of contemporary Nationalist identity “of an ancient national faith, of unswerving fidelity, and of ultimate triumph” were developed in the early stages of Irish history and were well established by the eighteenth century (126). As such, viewers are shown a collection of highlighted *lexia* that layer elements of Irish loyalty (political, economic, cultural, and religious) one on another.



Queen of Ireland—Fig. 013

For instance, Belfast’s Dover Street mural (Fig. 013) dramatizes an iconic vision of the Virgin Mary holding an infant. She watches over the sleeping child—protecting it. In a beatific burst of holy light the pair floats above choppy ocean waves. Politicized, the Virgin Mary’s presence since the 1641 massacres represents the “protectrice exclusively of the Irish; the Saxons won’t defeat her” (157). Though the Catholic community has experienced much hardship in the pursuit of faith, the protective qualities of Mary will see it past the rough seas. Embedded among the clouds, a six-pointed star hangs above

the vision of Mary and child. A blue aura and glory (a set of crepuscular rays) outline their image. Considered the Star of David, the six-pointed star positions Mary within the House of David and underscores her role as Queen of Heaven. To the right, a white dove—perhaps intertextually a lark when seen within the rhetorical context of Bobby Sands—soars towards Mary. Embedded within the geographical boundaries of Nationalist territory, this *systrophe* (collection) of religious iconography illustrates the importance of and loyalty to Catholicism within the Nationalist identity. Viewers are invited to recognize that the Nationalist community’s dedication to their chosen faith is recursive as it brings elements of the distant past into contemporary settings. Semiotic representations found in the mural assert community *ethos* and loyalty via an authoritative religious heritage.



A New Harp Restrung—Fig. 014

Additional instances of semiotic interpretation may be seen on the South Link Road (*An Nasc Theas*)¹¹ where a landscape mural (Fig. 014), commemorates the 200th anniversary of the 1798 rebellion.¹² It is framed in Celtic knotwork and yellow paint. The numbers in the four corners form a *chiasmus* (a crossing pattern of inversion). In the air, hangs an iconic image of a golden harp, and arched, above the harp, the verbal text (“It is new strung and shall be heard”) a form of *euche* (a prayer or vow) that reminds viewers of earlier promises of equity and vows to keep them. Across the bottom of the mural, a group of men bearing pikes marches past a river valley towards the unknown. In addition to providing a sense of place, the depiction of the lush rural landscape, a river valley at either sunset or sunrise, recalls a history filled with the pastoral. Locating the United Irishmen in the rural landscape—away from the urban center and its requisite political machinations—evokes a psychological effect that amplifies Nationalist loyalty to the land as well as connections to other revolutionary sacrifices (Hugh O’Neill, Wolfe Tone, the Easter Rising, and the Hunger Strikers).

Written in Gaelic, the words “*Na hÉireannaigh Aontaithe*” identify the marchers as the United Irishmen. The political use of the Gaelic language reinforces Nationalist assertions that these revolutionaries were intent on creating a new Ireland of economic, political, and religious equality. Indeed, Camille O’Reilly reports that in addition to the use of Gaelic as facilitating audience participation,¹³ it is commonly inferred that by learning Gaelic “the Irish people can come to know who they really are and reclaim their true identity and heritage” (59). By connecting the 1798 revolutionaries to a specifically Gaelic form of nationalism,¹⁴ the semiotic representations found within the mural

transmute a heteroglossic movement into a univocal articulation of Nationalist loyalty to a unified Ireland. Through a rhetorical strategy of negative space, or *sideshadowing*,¹⁵ the Nationalist expression of community “conveys the sense that actual events might just as well not have happened” (Morson 118). By embedding the membership of the United Irishmen deeply within a tradition of Irish revolution Nationalists ignores the multi-denominational background of the original membership. Additionally, it glosses over the elements of division within the United Irishmen regarding the economic, political, and social emancipation of the Irish community. In the denial of divergence in *shared reservoirs*,¹⁶ boundaries are marked and the rebellion of United Irishmen becomes an “event that succeeds in making a positive change . . . [that] become[s] a important aspect of a group’s identity” (Volkan 82). Semiotic representations found within the Nationalist murals seek to negate oppositional elements of Northern Irish heteroglossia and celebration a unified façade of identity as well as of value hierarchies (loyalty).



Bobby Sands-Prophet—Fig. 015

For instance, a Nationalist portrait-style mural of the hunger striker, Bobby Sands (Fig. 015), smiles from the side of the Sinn Fein office in West Belfast. On either side of the framed portrait a pair of seals, bear the harp symbol of Ireland and the verbal inscription (“Equality. It is new strung and shall be heard”). Intertextually connected to the United Irishmen mural (Fig. 014), the semiotic representations of the newly strung harp and the revolutionary figures highlight instances of loyalty to the future of the Nationalist community. A linked chain frames the portrait. Shattered in two places—above and below—a phoenix¹⁷ rises from the flames destroys the top links as it soars towards the sky while a lark crashes through the bottom links in its flight from captivity. A background of glory lighting divides the background of blue, yellow, red, orange, and green paint to amplify the flights of both phoenix and lark.

A verbal inscription below the portrait identifies Sands as “Roibeart O’Seachnasigh/Bobby Sands/Irish Republican/Revolutionary, Poet, Gaeilgeoir, Visionary/1954-1981.” Initiator of the 1981 Hunger Strikes, Sands worked with other prisoners to transform a series of ineffective and insular protests over political status into an internationally recognized movement for Nationalist rights. The first to strike, Sands was elected as a Member of Parliament during his fast. In May 1981 Sands was the first striker to die and transform criminals into martyrs. The Gaelcization of his name marks the beginning of Sands’s external *apotheosis* (deification or exaltation) into “a new cultural mold, remaking his identity” as well as reinforcing the integral connections between Nationalist ideology and a Gaelic Ireland (O’Malley, *Biting at the Grave* 45). In each of these descriptors the audience is introduced to a Nationalist hero whose memory

continues to be a unifying *lexia* for various Nationalist sub-communities as well as a motivation for community action.

While the United Irishmen mural (Fig. 014) celebrates loyalty to the country of Ireland, the Sands mural underscores the value of loyalty to the Nationalist community through sacrifice, strength, and effort. As such, the process of re-visioning both enables the Nationalist community to deny the established rule of law and highlights the failure of previous Nationalist party policy—abstention.¹⁸

Where the Nationalist community asserts that loyalty (faith, country, and community) is best articulated through a Gaelic united Ireland the Unionist community seeks to celebrate its identity via cultural allegiances to Britain and Scotland. Primarily focused on maintaining Northern Ireland's constitutional *status quo*¹⁹ and union with Great Britain, Unionist murals present viewers with depictions of Unionist insecurities in the face of external forces that seek dynamic cultural change. As such, the Unionist community murals declare “the present state of Northern Ireland as legitimated by the will of the majority of the people living in the province” and consider the Republic of Ireland's claims to the north to be a “kind of imperialism” (Buckley and Kenny 3). For Unionists the value of loyalty—country (Britain) and community (Ulster)—is best depicted through semiotic representations that demonstrate union and sacrifice. To that end, the Unionist community engages in the process of *sideshadowing* that ignores seemingly irrelevant elements of the Northern Irish heteroglossia.



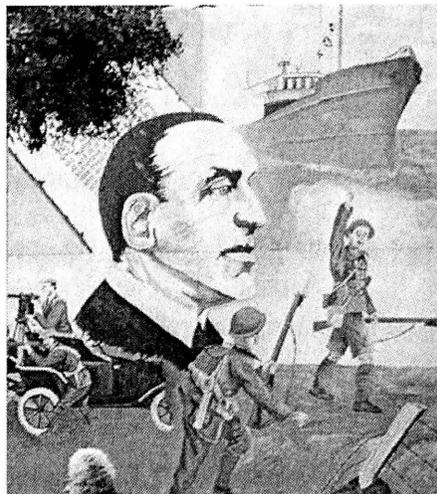
Queen of Hearts—Fig. 016

Though the semiotic representations, found in the Queen of Hearts murals (Fig. 016), connect Northern Ireland to Britain's monarchy, those images simultaneously deny the presence of alternative points of view as well as the changing face of Britain. Just as the physical features change so does the Unionist perception of the British public and its government. Alliance with "an antiquated perception of the United Kingdom as an unalterably Protestant country" denies the dynamics of contemporary politics (Davies 191).

Ostensibly a memorial to the Princess of Wales, the Queen of Hearts mural and its Union Jack backdrop underscores the allegiance of the Shankill neighborhood to British citizenship. As such, "identification with the Crown, as distinct from Parliament, also distances them [Unionists] from the rest of British society, particularly at a time when there has been increasing public disquiet over the monarchy" (Parkinson 14). The additional presence of a Union Jack flag, hanging above a UDA flag, and the painted

curb (red white, and blue) reiterate the value of loyalty to Britain via the Crown. Flanked by a pair of red roses, Diana’s pose, her royal accoutrements—crown, smile, and black dress, continue to emphasize values of loyalty in this part of the Unionist community. The focus of community identification that links Northern Ireland to Great Britain via semiotic representations of the monarchy provides Unionists with an opportunity to maintain a loyal citizenship whilst ignoring acts of perceived “bad faith” by the British Parliament.

Painted in a polychromatic technique of umber, black, and white, the portrait of Sir Edward Carson’s²⁰ profile (Fig. 017) gazes towards a horizon. Surrounding the portrait is a collection of Unionist moments that emerge in light and dark shades of

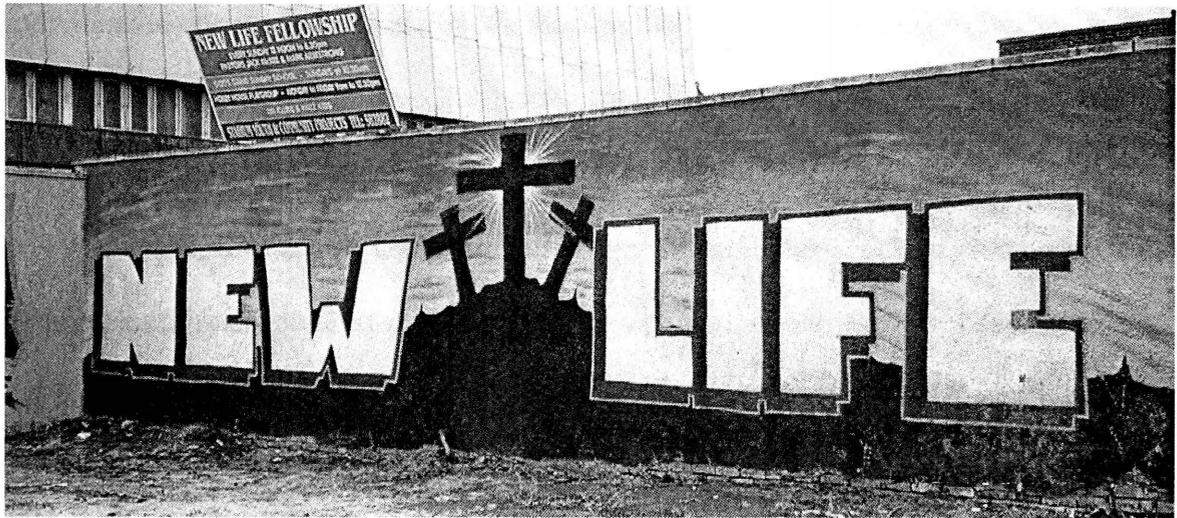


Edward Carson—Fig. 017

orange. Below him, two separate depictions of armed conflict— the paliogic use of blood sacrifice for “king and country”—play out. On the right, a representation of the 36th Ulster Division²¹ shows soldiers at war as they breach the barbed wire fence. On the left, a group of armed men, possibly Ulster Volunteers, participate in a gunfight against an

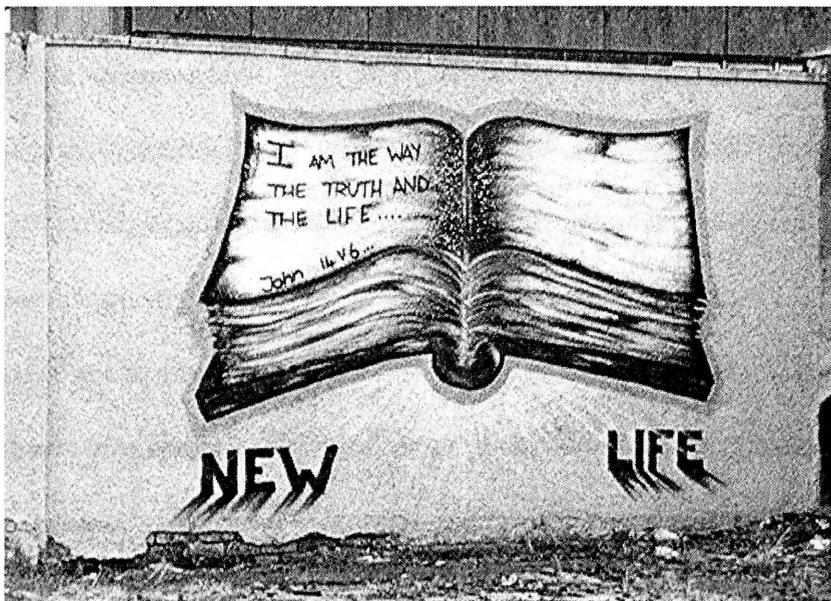
unseen force. In contrast to the reminders of sacrifice to the Union with Britain, the images behind Carson inform a distinctly Ulster Unionist identity. The signed Ulster Solemn League and Covenant of 1912²² acts as a moment of *peristasis* (amplification related to circumstance) as it amplifies the attendant conditions connected to Ulster's loyalty to Britain. Given the contextual references to military and extra-military activity the looming ship presents implied references to earlier Unionist gun smuggling. The *diallage* (compilation) of these celebrated moments, through multiple semiotic depictions of Ulster culture and history, presents several rhetorical assertions together to articulate a single point—loyalty to the Unionist community. The mural presents viewers with a portrayal of Unionist loyalty and sacrifice to Ulster. Further, it denies the presence of Nationalists in World War I. This denial embeds a potentially subversive message within the signing of the Ulster Covenant.

An example of the Unionist connection to loyalty through religion appears in the biblical tableau found in the New Life mural (Fig. 018 & Fig. 019). Initial interpretations of the New Life mural recognize the indexical quality of an advertisement for a nearby Protestant church—the New Life Fellowship. Further examination interrogates the relationship of represented images and their connection to Unionist identity formation. Indeed, Duncan Morrow records that for Northern Ireland's Protestant community



New Life I—Fig. 018

biblical interpretation “invests Protestants with a universal significance by identifying with Jesus on the cross, the persecuted innocent” that underscores the community’s



New Life II—Fig. 019

“part in the struggle [as one] of universal good in the battle against evil” (60). The parenthetical use of the biblical verse underscores the Protestant belief in the right of the

individual to connect with God directly through biblical verse rather than through a priestly intermediary. Elliott reports that the Bible becomes an “anti-popish symbol and political weapon” for fundamental Protestants intent on remaining with the angels (156).

In Northern Ireland, communication, even communication intent on drawing negativism from the audience, assists in expressing a community’s sense of identity. As the means of establishing community solidarity, the protagonist community engages in a process of self-definition that emphasizes distinct differences between these two communities. To that end, a community will engage in a divisive process of scapegoating and othering of communities that do not share value priorities or common heritage. By dramatizing difference through cultural shibboleths, partisan communities use rhetorical strategies to highlight divergent value structures and ideologies (political, cultural, mythological, and religious) that result in the development of an antagonist. As such, the establishment of an opposing community, or antagonist, not only motivates the protagonists to “follow certain lines of collective action” but also casts the opposing community into the guise of the Other²³ (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 186).

A form of social exploitation, the rhetorical construction of the Other “dehumanizes and diminishes groups, making it easier for victimizers to seize land, exploit labor, and exert control while minimizing the complicating emotions of guilt and shame” (Riggins 9). Intent on creating a unified sense of community identity, both Nationalist and Unionist communities engage in a process of identification by way of division and Othering to establish and maintain priorities in value and myth systems.

For the Nationalist community, representations of the Other take on the appearance of externalized abusers. Images found within the Nationalist murals engage in a process of division that portrays the opposition as a looming threat to freedom and equality. Additionally, semiotic representations of the in/out metaphor²⁴ transfer any internal threat to community solidarity to the margins. Whether depicted as a flag waving mob or with a linguistic turn, the antagonist community is presented as a dehumanized victimizer moving in from the outside to disrupt a community's value hierarchy.



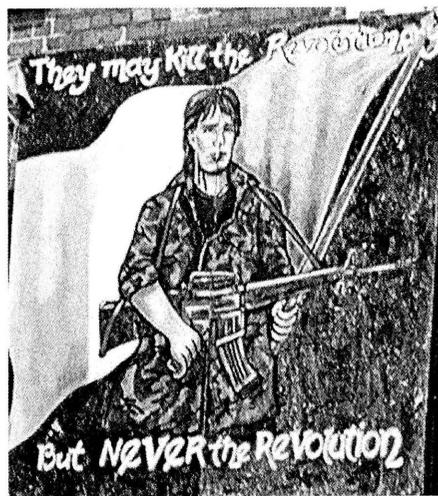
Bombay Street—Fig. 020

As an illustration, the Bombay Street mural (Fig. 020) demonstrates the rhetorical principle of demonizing the Other. A woman holds a scared child as she looks back, past the bank of burning buildings, towards a mob standing in the swirl of fire and smoke. Though no one among the massed throng stands apart a single flag (the Union Jack) punctuates the smoke-filled darkness. Recalling a moment of the past to dramatize contemporary concerns over the Nationalist community's sense of security (physical, political, and social), the mural presents the audience with an ominous antagonist in the

unruly Unionist mob. The darkness of the shadows and the placement of the mob on a raised horizon line, above the woman and child, amplifies potential interpretations of an abuser-victim relationship between the two communities.



Bombay Street (details)—Fig. 020



Revolutionary—Fig. 021

Further evidence of the rhetorical patterning encoded with the Other can be observed in the Revolutionary mural's (Fig. 021) claim ("They may kill the

revolutionary, but never the revolution”). The armed soldier, dressed in military camouflage, stands in front of an unfurled Irish tri-colour. In an act of community solidarity, the viewer is invited to recognize both an element of belonging—through the flag, the soldier, or the revolution—and a sense of threat—from outside the community in the guise of “They.” Through the linguistic substitution of “them” the Nationalist community denies the potential of internal conflict. The additional reminder that the revolution itself cannot be killed reinforces the idea of community solidarity with its refusal to die. Any external force (organization, community, or individual) intent on killing the revolutionary will be ultimately unsuccessful. The elliptical palindrome has revolution double back on itself. When revolution reevaluates itself, then reevaluation replaces revolution with peace.



Free Ireland I—Fig.022

Similar to the portrayal of the antagonist as “them” found in the Revolutionary mural (Fig. 021), the linguistic representation of the antagonist community as “fools”

echoes the verbal text of the Free Ireland mural (Fig. 022 & Fig. 023) on R. P. G. Avenue.²⁵ The painted shields of the four ancient provinces of Ireland frame a red circle slashed by a fist bound in a manacle and chains. The manacle is inscribed with the logo “Made in Britain” and adds a claim of enslaved oppression for the collage of Irish imagery surrounding the fist. Above, a phoenix soars from the flames of a burning building—Stormont. Conjoined with the parenthetical declamation (“The fools. The fools. They have left us our Fenian dead and while Ireland holds these graves Ireland unfreed shall never be at peace”), this collection of visual representations underscores the Nationalist interpretation of antagonist as the oppressor. In contrast to other depictions of



Free Ireland II—Fig. 023

the antagonist as an external and hostile force intent on destruction, images found within this particular mural highlight the teleological implications that a unified Ireland is the only possible outcome. The mural portrays the antagonist community as misguided in its interpretation of the situation and its refusal to accept the inevitable conclusion.

The Unionist portrayal of the Other as an external force intent on change (economic, social, political, or religious) appears regularly in the community murals.

Referring to it as a form of “siege mentality” commentators note that Unionist concerns “focused on the threat to Northern Ireland from within [primarily from the Nationalist community] and without [not only from the Irish republic but also from the British Parliament]” (Hennessey 62). As such, any organization, community, or individual who disagreed with the *status quo* was the antagonist and thus, the Other. In Unionist murals the presence of the Other becomes apparent through the processes of externalization, negation, or dehumanization.

The memorial mural to McCullough (Fig. 012) engages in a similar form of identity denial as the Nationalists’ Revolutionary mural (Fig. 021). By collecting those groups who stand in opposition of Unionism into one mass “enemy,” the McCullough memorial effectively relegates demands from the Other to an external force intent on disruption of the union. In its parenthetical references connecting ethnic cleansing to the Catholic community, the 1641 mural (Fig.010) reinforces protagonist fears of the violent potentials of the antagonist. In a similar vein, the Carson mural (Fig. 017) and the Siege of Derry mural (Fig. 011) depict the presence of the Other as an ominous threat portrayed as being “just beyond” the frame of the mural. Through the use of *backshadowing*, which connects cultural memories of historical moments with contemporary events, the Unionist murals amplify the community fears of the antagonist (Other).

Based on a set of socially constructed prejudices—either realistic or unrealistic—a community’s “collective, positive sense of self is strengthened by viewing members of one’s ‘in-group’ as superior to members of other ‘out-groups’” (Miller and Schames par. 18). This process of division where one community (in-group) differentiates²⁶ itself in

opposition to another (out-group) “is only functional when [both in-group and out-group are] cast in a relational context” since “‘others’ cannot exist in isolation” (par. 20).

Developed through membership connections to actions, symbolic or real, the murals contain semiotic and discursive representations that take on a central role in building community identity as well as vilifying enemies through stereotypes²⁷ or absences. To maintain a restricted community *status quo* it is important that boundary frames are put in place to restrict interpretations, challenge ideologies, and identify antagonists. As a result, rhetorical differentiation between communities that formulate an us/them distinction is an inevitable element of community building and identification that “dehumanizes and diminishes groups, making it easier for victimizers to seize land, exploit labor, and exert [control] while minimizing the complicating emotions of guilt and shame” (Riggins 9). Thus visual representations, via diagnostic framing, show viewers that “some event or condition . . . [is considered to be] problematic and in need of amelioration” and that blame rests firmly on the shoulders of the antagonist.

Nationalist and Unionist communities utilize the murals to celebrate and honor community identity. Through a divisive form of epideictic rhetoric that articulates community identity as distinctive, many other murals appear to incorporate both foundational value systems, inherent in the separate communities, and potential openings for inclusive discourses. The re-vision of legitimizing myths or the introduction of new myths challenge static hierarchies by blending contemporary and postmodern discursive processes. The result of the blending transcends territorial boundaries and celebrates the multiplicity of identities found within the Northern Irish *heteroglossia*. Dynamic power

relations that incorporate hierarchical-attenuating²⁸ paradigms present both Nationalist and Unionist communities with an unprecedented opportunity to engage in social and cultural inclusivity.²⁹ A reexamination of the partisan murals, “based on intersubjectivity,” works to “accommodate the multiple understandings of social and political reality that exist in Northern Ireland” (McCall 13).

For example, two murals that illustrate a potential space for reexamination are the portrait of Bobby Sands (Fig. 015) and the New Life tableau (Fig. 018 & Fig. 019). As such, the Sands’s mural invites viewers to envision the contemporary Nationalist movement as not only another phase of an on-going Irish/Gaelic struggle against imperialist forces but also an opportunity to engage in the possibilities of peace. Exhorting that “Everyone, Republican or otherwise, has their particular role to play,” Sands’s declaration is followed with an elliptical moment of silence that ends with a reminder to the community that “our revenge will be the laughter of our children.” In that aporetic gap between exhortation and reminder, the audience is invited to examine its own role in Northern Ireland’s conflict. The statement that ultimately “our revenge will be the laughter of our children” reminds the audience that violence is not the solution. Additionally, the rhetorical implications of the word “our” establish a connection to the collective community of Northern Ireland that transcends the us/them dichotomy.

Similarly, the rhetorical strategies found within the New Life mural (Fig.018 & Fig. 019) invite viewers to look past static interpretations of Unionist sacrifice to the possibilities of peace found within the celebration of life. The verbal text celebrating “New Life” appears in block lettering across the mural’s horizon line. Each letter grows

incrementally larger than the last to expose the expanding ring of a rhetorical gyre that shouts the message of potential inclusiveness for the larger Northern Irish community. In both frames the verbal text “New Life” leaps out in large, bold lettering. The bold text advertising “New Life” reminds viewers that religious loyalty and sacrifice, even death, come with their own rewards. The expanding message of new life echoes the gospel of John inscribed on the next wall. The mural’s left extension shows the Bible opened to a verse from the Book of John “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life . . .” (John 14: 6). The quotation acts as a seed for potential growth that both transcends the static text of the book itself and suggests that even in death new life expands in metaphorical regeneration.

On the horizon, the sun either rises or sets behind three shadowy crosses, a visual *synecdoche* (substitution of part for whole), protruding from a cairn-like mound of earth—the hill of Golgotha. The larger cross, flanked by two smaller ones, glowing—a seemingly unearthly light. The empty, but lighted cross in the center calls forth intertextual allusions. The crucifixion of Christ and the sacrifice of others for the good of the community, the possible re-readings of Ireland’s past. Morrow notes that the rhetorical allusions engage the audience to “‘read back’ the events of the North of Ireland into a mythical reading of the Bible” (60).

Though value structures, identification, inclusivity, and scapegoating all exist along the “wavering line between identification and division,” both Nationalist and Unionist communities continue to seek opportunities to construct cultural identities that necessarily establish the presence of divisions that move beyond those same divisions³⁰ (Burke, *Rhetoric* 45). Current articulations of community identity through the visual

continue to reinforce restricted stereotypes and ideologies. McCall notes that the historical presence of ideology based in modernity “provided the conditions for the development of the Irish nation from its ethnic origins . . . and the means by which the national ‘imagined community’ could be developed and consolidated” (34). The availability of media—from print culture to hypermedia—helps to facilitate a socially constructed sense of identity as well as reinforce the construction of the antagonistic Other. The culturally restricted semiotic and discursive representations are readily apparent in the murals and continue to take a central role in reinforcing partisan community identities. Their rhetorical force raises audience awareness about identities that share both symbols and ideologies.

NOTES

¹ From its seventeenth-century plantations to its twentieth-century partition, Northern Ireland has been a structurally unstable state founded on years of developing ethnic identities and boundaries. Intent on control by way of power struggles; members of communities categorized as the Gaelic-Irish, Old English, and Protestant repeatedly invaded and antagonized each other. Later, a variety of treaties and legislation thwarted initial bids for Catholic emancipation and provided Protestant communities with the early power structures necessary to develop a unified Protestant identity and suppress the Catholic voice. It is not until the official separation of Northern Ireland from the southern Free State that established identity and value structures became tacitly sanctioned by a Protestant state. Partition was officially established by the Boundary Commission, “which deliberately excluded three of Ulster’s ancient nine counties for having too many Catholics” and it was later reinforced by “a provincial Parliament at Stormont, which accordingly enjoyed an in-built Protestant majority” (Davies 919). Protestant victories as well as the conditional Unionist allegiance to the Conservative Party in England ensured political power and economic security until the dissolution of the Stormont regime in the 1970s. Until that point, Northern Ireland’s official identity was as Prime Minister James Craig announced—a “Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people” (qtd. in Hennessey 122). Displays of Catholic resentment faced “denigratory Protestant and English discourses” and official oppression; it was apparent that it was “the Protestants, not the Catholics, who had won” (Ruane and Todd 45).

² Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca assert that similar “values may be admitted by many different audiences, but the degree of their acceptance will vary from one audience to another” (81). As such, it is the actual hierarchy of the argument’s values that is “no doubt, more important to the structure of an argument than the actual values” (81).

³ A form of rhetoric in which “praise is based on action,” epideictic rhetoric is traditionally envisioned as a form of speech that “makes clear the greatness of virtue” (Aristotle 84). In his reexamination of traditional rhetoric, Perelman extends the goals of epideictic rhetoric as a way to “strengthen a consensus around certain values which one wants to see prevail and which should orient action in the future” (20). He argues that previously held explanations of the epideictic have been limited to the role of the rhetor and asserts that “the epideictic genre is central to discourse because its role is to intensify adherence to values” (19).

⁴ Snow and Benford explain that in social movement theory frames are “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environments” (137). Hunt, Benford, and Snow expand on the earlier definition of frames by pointing out that paradigmatic frames allow

communities to focus the audience “on a particular situation considered problematic, make attributions regarding who and what is to blame, and articulate an alternative set of arrangements including what . . . actors need to do in order to affect the desired change” (190). Motivational frames inspire audience members to action via the articulation of “appropriate vocabularies of motive or rationales for doing something for the cause” (191). In addition to pointing out problematic situations, the diagnostic frame establishes potential scapegoats by “imputing traits and motives for those who are viewed as having ‘caused’ or exacerbated the problem” (191).

⁵ In “Peering into the Jaws of the Beast: The Integrative Dynamics of Social Identity, Symbolic Racism, and Social Dominance,” Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, and Fredrico argue that as aspects of social dominance theory, legitimizing myths are “those attitudes, values, beliefs, stereotypes, attributions, and ideologies that provide moral and intellectual justification for systems of group-based social hierarchy within all three hierarchical systems (age, gender, and arbitrary-set)” (97). The effectiveness of legitimizing myths depends on “the degree to which they promote or contradict a given group-based hierarchy” and on the relationship to hierarchy enhancing or attenuating functions and the factors of “consensuality, embeddedness, certainty, and mediational strength” (98). Through the framed presentation legitimizing myths both Nationalist and Unionist communities celebrate their roles as protagonists and challenge the opposition as antagonists as well as support perceived positions in both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

⁶ Horowitz explains his definition of ethnicity as those indicators or distinctions that incorporate “differences identified by color, language, religion, or some other attribute of common origin” (41). He argues that many of the current ethnic conflicts are related to types of indicators that are not easily connected to visible differences and “indicators of separate identity . . . come to represent as symbols the traits said to be associated with the groups” (41-47). In the case of Northern Ireland, difference is discovered through various indicators—religious, political, and linguistic.

⁷ Taking abstract ideas and values—loyalty, fidelity, charity—as a “starting point” for the construction of concrete values, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca define a concrete value as “one attaching to a living being, a specific group, or a particular object, considered as a unique entity” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 77).

⁸ A number of different sub-communities exist within these larger communities. In each instance, the sub-communities develop value structures based on different priorities or principles.

⁹ Althusser explains *interpellation* or hailing as an act through which “ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals . . . or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects” (174).

¹⁰ Steiner's status battles are "characterized by the desire of one social group to extend (not monopolize) the symbols of its style [and] to see its unique style and normative standards and definitions widely applied and publicly legitimized by others." These battles "have the potential to glorify the primary group with the measure of status reflecting "the degree to which that group's values are honored or (ideally) adopted by competitors," to "define itself in terms of what it condemns, forbids, excludes" what it abhors, and to have "antagonistic habits or definitions officially rejected, condemned, or criminalized" (24).

¹¹ In Nationalist neighborhoods there is a tradition of naming streets in Gaelic in addition to the official name provided by city planners.

¹² A political reform movement comprised of a coalition of religious denominations, the United Irishmen "derived their concern for radical political reform from the political excitement and opportunity created by the American and French Revolutions" (15-16). Intent on constitutional, political, and economic reform for a growing Catholic middle class, the Catholic Committee joined with the United Irishmen to revolutionize the system. By 1798, the militant connections between the United Irishmen and the Irish Defenders heightened, and the Rebellion of 1798 was underway. Though the actual rebellion was short lived, starting in May and ending in June, it created quite a stir resulting in the demise of the Irish Parliament and the 1800 Act of Union.

¹³ O'Reilly notes that a sense of both audience inclusion and exclusion in understanding the Gaelic slogans "transforms the observer from being a metaphorical outsider into an insider" or vice versa (57).

¹⁴ In addition to the more militant strains found in Northern Ireland's Republican traditions, Nationalism contains sub-communities who continue to "reject the use of physical force as a means of achieving a United Ireland" while supporting actions that are either "nonviolent or constitutional" as a way to attain one of several goals—social and economic equity as well as the eventual reunification with the Republic of Ireland (Melaugh "Glossary"). Depending on context, each sub-community prioritizes its value structures differently.

¹⁵ Morson describes *sideshadowing* as a narrative device that "projects [onto the present]—from the 'side'—the shadow of an alternative present, . . . [To] see what might have been and therefore changes our view of what is" (11).

¹⁶ Volkan argues that the concept of shared reservoirs (a collection of shared markers—religious, cultural, and historical) is reinforced by way of the larger community (104).

¹⁷ The phoenix is a traditional symbol of Irish nationalism.

¹⁸ Hennessey reports that in the 1920s “Nationalists refused to participate in the decision-making process that set the new boundary” between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland (52). Subsequently the Unionists interpreted this refusal as unwillingness “to participate in the political life of Northern Ireland” (52). By denying the legitimacy of partition and the subsequent Stormont Parliament the Nationalist party embarked on a policy of abstention that resulted in both an ineffective opposition to Unionist politics and a continuing tradition of political abstention in the face of discord.

¹⁹ Initially considered important to the Unionists community as a device to maintain Northern Ireland’s partition from the Republic of Ireland as well as reinforce unity with Great Britain, the issue of protecting constitutional *status quo* “becomes a religious issue based on the transparent fear that anything stemming from greater contact across the divide moves Ulster closer to the concept of a united Ireland” (Eames par. 16).

²⁰ As the leader of the Irish Unionist Party during the Home Rule debates, Sir Edward Carson organized an anti-Home Rule campaign that included creation of the Ulster Covenant of 1912 and the recruitment of the Ulster Volunteers in preparation “‘to go it alone’, long before London or Dublin resigned themselves to the arrangements” (Davies 917-18). Carson later “defined the Unionist duty, as citizens, as to obey the law” provided that the government did not tamper with the citizen’s rights “for the subversion of political status was not government but revolution” (Hennessey 12).

²¹ Recruited from Carson’s Ulster Volunteers, the 36th (Ulster) Division joined the British troops in World War I and fought at the Battle of the Somme. Hennessey concludes that the deaths of the 36th supported Unionists’ interpretations of their loyalty and “sacrifice for king and country” as well as reinforcing their “worst fears of nationalist disloyalty” through Nationalist protests against conscription (Hennessey 4).

²² Written in 1912, “Ulster’s Solemn League and Covenant” was drawn up to protest Irish Home Rule. Unionists signed on to the document’s statement that Home Rule “would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster, as well as the whole of Ireland, subversive to our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship and perilous to the unity of the Empire.” An assertion of loyalty, the Covenant presents readers with an example of the Unionist *ethos* of loyalty—“we, whose names are underwritten, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George V.” However, declarations to defend “our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy” of Home Rule as well as protestations that “in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to

refuse to recognise its authority” suggest potentially a rebellious quality to both the Covenant and its signers. Approximately 218,206 Ulster men were present to sign the Covenant with another 228,991 Ulster women signing a parallel document (Ulster Society, “The Document” par. 6-7). Carson later used the signatory list as a means for recruiting the Ulster Volunteers.

²³ Tracing the concept of Other to Plato, “who used it to represent the relationship between an observer (the Self) and an observed (the Other),” Riggins notes that contemporary use, though more restricted, refers “to all people the Self perceives as mildly or radically different” (3).

²⁴ Lakoff and Turner suggest that one metaphorical pairing that supports concepts of inclusion and exclusion is the in/out metaphor. Representations of this metaphor provide communities with a sense of internal security by forcing the negative to an external position.

²⁵ The renaming of this particular street to R. P. G. Avenue in celebration of the automatic weapon is its own rhetorical moment.

²⁶ Miller and Shames cite P. Berman’s observation that “the intensity of intergroup resentment may increase when the ‘other’ is nearly but not quite the same as the ‘self’” (par. 21). The actual differences between Northern Ireland’s partisan ethno-nationalist groups cannot be easily broken down by physical appearance.

²⁷ Riggins records that as “one of the major discursive strategies that ensure[s] that differences between people are recognized,” stereotypes “are an apparatus of power” (9-10).

²⁸ Hierarchy-attenuating influences “are those social institutions, traditions, and ideologies that tend to promote a greater degree of group-based social equality” (Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, and Federico 102).

²⁹ Horowitz’s definition of inclusivity is that ethnic communities are “defined by ascriptive differences, whether the indicium of group identity is color, appearance, language, religion, some other indicator of common origin, or some combination thereof” (18). He notes that communities “that were once one may have split centuries before, with each of the resulting groups remaining largely endogamous” and that the resulting communities present a situation where conflicting parties are physically similar while being ideologically divergent (52). He adds that “individual group membership other than birth criteria—conversion, marriage, passing, ‘forgetting’ origins, and the like—as well as the merger of subgroups.” Horowitz then shows that the boundaries between groups tend to be permeable in nature—dynamic rather than static (52). Thus he argues for

process of reorientation of community assumptions via language, which joins the two “principles of membership—birth and choice” as a way to establish community affiliation and kinship (55).

³⁰ In his discussion of the peace process framework, Volkan argues that both sides of a conflict engage in an accordion-like dance in which parties move forwards and back to maintain grassroots community support as well as relocate comfort zones (101).

CHAPTER FOUR

CHANGING THE FUTURE: DELIBERATIVE RHETORIC IN THE MURALS

On 10 April 1998 the Good Friday Agreement was signed by all members of the negotiating parties.¹ The Agreement represents a concerted effort to honor the memories of past suffering and to demonstrate the determination to place violence in the past. The signers agreed that the way to peace is “through a fresh start, in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all” (Good Friday Agreement 1). Since the initial signing, and the later ratification by the people of Northern Ireland,² the Agreement has become the subject of attack as well as interpretation and reinterpretation from all sides within the larger Northern Irish community. By focusing attention on the separate issues involved in the Good Friday Agreement, both Nationalist and Unionist communities engage in deliberative rhetorical³ discourse as a means of articulating ongoing changes in Northern Ireland. Both communities participate in the deliberative political process via community murals by utilizing public space both to assert issue priority and to promote policy change in an ongoing attempt to facilitate intercommunity rapprochement.

Northern Ireland’s constitutional position, a satellite within the larger United Kingdom, continues to be a source of cross-community debate, which has resulted in a

series of agreements and initiatives—the latest being the Good Friday Agreement. One result of the Good Friday Agreement is in the potential change of Northern Ireland’s position within Great Britain. Its future will be determined by majority vote every seven years. Where Nationalists argue that the future of Northern Ireland lies in its ‘natural’ (geographical as well as cultural) connections with the Republic of Ireland, Unionists insist that the maintenance of Northern Ireland’s ‘formal’ (economic and institutional as well as cultural) union with Great Britain is of utmost import. Northern Ireland’s constitutional shift from static to dynamic as well as external political influence⁴ presents both Nationalist and Unionist communities with paradigmatic challenges that are visually articulated via the wall murals.



Slán Abhaile—Fig. 024

The Nationalist community articulates its calls for policy changes—economic, political, social, and cultural—through the Slán Abhaile (Fig. 024) murals. The community both demands an end to British involvement in Northern Ireland and

challenges British collusion with the Unionist majority. Located across from the Milltown cemetery,⁵ the mural's semiotic representations underscore Nationalist claims regarding Britain's intrusive role in Irish affairs. The central element of the tableau is an iconic portrait depicting a British soldier dressed in full protective gear and carrying an automatic rifle. Behind him stands a seemingly quiet neighborhood as well as a rendering of another mural found in the Milltown neighborhood. The internal mural depicts images of a phoenix rising from the fire and a sunburst against a blue background. Below the phoenix, the date 1916 burns brightly in oranges and yellows against a green backdrop. The raised fists of the 1916 revolutionaries appear from behind the soldier's arm. Framed by images articulating current Nationalist perceptions, the internal 1916 mural establishes connections between earlier Irish rebellions against British control and contemporary concerns over British involvement in Northern Irish affairs.



Slán Abhaile (details)—Fig. 024

Surrounding the central image of the soldier is a series of icons semicircled with a directive to alter British policy in Northern Ireland. To the left and right of the central image are semiotic representations that further demonstrate Nationalist arguments. In the upper left corner, a pair of hands close around the grip of a pointed pistol. The cuffs of the jacket are depictions of two flags—the Ulster Flag⁶ and the Union Jack. Beneath the

image is the phrase “End Collusion.” In the bottom left corner, a single lark unfurls its wings against three strands of barbed wire. Unlike the other representations, the lark’s unfurled wings and tail feathers explode past the confines of the image boundary challenging perceptions of imprisonment. The accompanying directive calls out “Release POWs.” In the upper right corner, a skeleton’s skull appears garbed in a set of halved uniforms (one black and the other green). Each half uniform marks the skull as being part of both the Royal Irish Regiment (RIR) and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). The slogan beneath the skull portrait reads “Disband the RIR RUC.” The final image, found in the bottom right corner demands an end to an automatic Unionist veto⁷ (“End Unionist Veto”). This image presents viewers with an outline of Northern Ireland in the context of the larger island. Juxtaposed to the green of Ireland, the North is covered with the Union Jack flag. Forwarding deliberative arguments that challenge the existing internal influences inherent in East/West connections between Britain and Northern Ireland, Nationalists insist that traditional Northern Irish politics and policies must be changed before progress can be made on peace initiatives.



Nationality—Fig. 025

Arguing against further Irish involvement, Unionists insist that the affairs of Northern Ireland are internal and should be dealt with as such. For example, the Unionist

Nationality mural (Fig. 025) on Newtownards Road presents viewers with a deliberative challenge to the North/South connections between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Painted (red, blue, black, and gold) against a white background, the Nationality mural presents viewers with a series of rhetorical challenges that argue against external Irish influence in the national interests of Ulster. A mixture of images and text work to reinforce and emphasize the main Unionist claim that “Our Message to the Irish is Simple—Hands Off Ulster—Irish Out. Our Conflict is about Nationality.” Two golden bibles proclaim that “We will maintain our faith and our nationality” to become a visual diacopic frame. This framework parenthetically flanks the semiotic *commoratio* (emphasis is added via varied forms of repetition) of a pair of red hands (one open and the other clenched). The centralized text of the mural emphasizes Unionist rejection of Irish involvement “several times in different words” (Lanham 190).

In addition to its focus on questions relating to Northern Ireland’s constitutional status, the Good Friday Agreement includes initiatives on the issues of human rights, decommissioning, policing, security, prisoner status, and equitability. Through these various issues, partisan sub-communities have sought to facilitate policy change as well as establish value hierarchies centered on community building.⁸ Noting the similarities between past and present, Martin Mansergh provides a historical context for British and Unionist reluctance to negotiate the issues. He relates Henry Grattan’s opposition to the 1800 Act of Union and William Pitt’s exclusion of the Catholics⁹ to contemporary concerns over Nationalist promises of nothing in return for meeting agreed preconditions (200). The past echoes present concerns over concessions provided to the opposition.

At present, the debate over arms decommissioning prevents any progress in the peace process. Ruane and Todd point out that the issue of decommissioning “reveals much about the possibilities and limits of the peace process as a whole.” This revelation pinpoints restrictions from perceived power structures and historical context (“The Belfast Agreement” 26). For the Unionist communities, the decommissioning of paramilitary organizations underscores “a public and universally acknowledged . . . the legitimacy of Northern Ireland and British rule” and demonstrates “a sign of normalisation of politics, of the stability of new institutions” (26). Though all sides recognize that paramilitary decommissioning is a symbolic gesture, Unionist politicians argue that the performative act removes the threat of violence and strengthens their bargaining position.

Nationalist perceptions of the symbolic gesture of decommissioning differ remarkably from the Unionist community. In Nationalist neighborhoods, the act of weapons decommissioning reveals concerns about community safety. In his address to Conway Mill, Gerry Adams cites past police activities as he reminds his audience “the network of homes which used to nestle in the shadow of this mill bore the brunt of an RUC and B Special led pogrom in 1969 against Catholics across this city” (par. 2). For Nationalist neighborhoods, fears that the act of decommissioning will leave the “community defenseless in the face of loyalist attacks” harbor an unwillingness to appear defeated since “it is extremely important to republican identity and pride that they were undefeated: that the struggle was not lost with the ceasefire but continues in a new, peaceful phase” (Ruane and Todd, “The Belfast Agreement” 26).

Nationalist concerns are delineated in the visual representations found in the Bombay Street¹⁰ mural (Fig. 020). Flames flow from the doorways as the semiotic representations establish community *ethos* through historical evidence as the Bombay Street community presents its case against IRA decommissioning. For Nationalists, the events surrounding the burning of Bombay Street have taken on a notoriety. Images laden with rhetorical strategies (a woman clutching a frightened child, flames pouring from burning homes, and a mob waving torches and a flag) illustrate fears and underscore concerns regarding past actions by the antagonist. For instance, the fear in the faces of the woman and child establish connections via visual *pathos* and appeal to the viewer's sympathy. Flames and burning homes fill the distance between the pair and the shadowy mob. Meanwhile the Union Jack, flying in the smoke-filled background, invites the viewer to recognize community concerns over potential repetition of past actions where "just as in the past . . . in which the forces of the state seemed to have sided with their attackers" (Elliott 418).

At the end of the twentieth century, Unionist political parties have argued that paramilitary decommissioning, primarily the IRA, is a priority for any effective progress towards peace. Arguing that "the crisis [surrounding the peace process] will only be resolved by Republicans fulfilling their obligations" and that in "the absence of decommissioning there will be no progress," David Trimble asserts that the peace process is a sham without it (Trimble, "Without Decommissioning, Proposals Will Not Work" par. 4). In addition, Unionist political leaders claim that any attempts to compromise over decommissioning will be met with distinct internal political opposition.¹¹ Though a

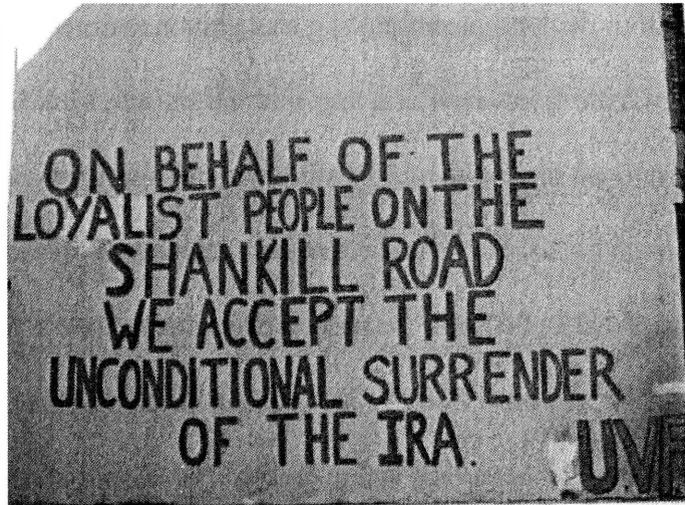
number of Unionist murals articulate deliberative proposals on the issues of prisoner status and parade routes, there is a distinct absence of murals demanding any specific movement on the decommissioning issue. However intense the political debate over paramilitary disarmament becomes, the lack of murals that support political demands demonstrates apparent neighborhood ambivalence to decommissioning. Rather, the murals suggest an intensified celebration of the weapon. As such, any suggestion that the primary hurdle keeping Unionist politicians “from the negotiating table and discussion of the Framework Document [or the Good Friday Agreement] is an absence of progress on the permanent decommissioning of weapons would be, to put it mildly, an oversimplification of reality” (Mansergh 200).

The proliferation of murals that depict armed paramilitary gunmen in Unionist neighborhoods continues to celebrate the gun and contradicts political demands for decommissioning.¹² The slogans of two different paramilitary murals (Fig. 026 & Fig. 027) as well as visual representations of automatic weapons reinforce the Unionist



Resist Eire Involvement—Fig. 026

contradictions. For example, the mural on Sandy Row's Snugville Street (Fig.026) asserts that the "Ulster Freedom Fighters will resist any Eire involvement in our country" and acts as a form of contextualized plaque explaining the continued use of weaponry.



IRA Surrender—Fig. 027

The second mural in the Shankill neighborhood (Fig. 027) bears a slogan painted on a white background, the blue lettering is outlined in red. Through *antirrhesis* (counterstatement) the UVF declaration acts as a rhetorical rejection of the IRA's ceasefire and proclaims victory ("On the behalf of the loyalist people on the Shankill Road We accept the unconditional surrender of the IRA—U.V.F."). The red, white, and blue color scheme acts as a doubled rhetorical strategy that not only tempers the IRA ceasefire but also demonstrates a marked reinforcement of the tribal boundaries and establishes continued Unionist allegiance with Great Britain.

Primarily a symbolic gesture, paramilitary decommissioning highlights the ideological difference between Northern Ireland's political bodies and both Nationalist

and Unionist communities. Politically, “any attempt to make [IRA] decommissioning a condition of its entry into the executive constitutes a renegotiation of the Agreement. . . . [it] does not have weapons to decommission: that is a matter for the IRA which makes up its own mind” (Ruane and Todd, “The Belfast Agreement” 25). Unionist politicians envision the act of decommissioning as a gesture through which militant Nationalists can show that they “had truly renounced their past and were committed to democracy and the rule of law” and the continued refusal of the IRA to adhere to decommissioning mandates is seen as tantamount to state sanctioned terrorism.

When interviewed, an official spokesman¹³ for Tony Blair agreed that the release program “was ‘certainly the most unpalatable and awkward part of the Northern Irish peace process’” (Mulin par. 6). Additionally, Iris Robinson¹⁴ rails against the prisoner release program noting that while the police are being “consigned to the history books on the altar of political expediency,” terrorists and murderers are being “released from prison after as little as two years, and . . . elevated into government” as well as being “offered places on the very body that has authority over the police” (par. 11). Robinson later describes the future as a “terrifying nightmare” with recently released terrorists “terrorising their communities . . . engaging in racketeering, extortion, and gangsterism,” rather than the “bright new future” presented by the supporters of the Good Friday Agreement (par. 12).

Though both Nationalist and Unionist murals use rhetorical strategies to demonstrate community concern for and remembrance of those community members currently incarcerated for violent and partisan activities, further analysis makes it

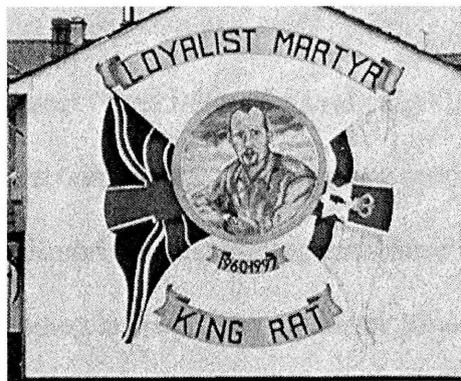
apparent that community support does not extend to the opposition. Indeed, newspaper interviews with family members of victims underscore the *philosophical pairing* of hero/devil that becomes apparent with the release of prisoners like Michael Stone¹⁵ and Patrick Magee.¹⁶ In each case, victims and survivors have expressed trepidation over the imminent release by labeling the respective prisoner as a murderer or butcher. Family members like Sally McErlean (Michael McEarlean's mother) reflect that "I feel very bitter because I think people look at him [Michael Stone] as a hero—and to me he's a devil" (qtd. in McCall par. 14). Breen reports that though the prisoner release scheme leaves many people with misgivings, many recognize that the plan may "consolidate the peace process" ("Very Bitter Pill' for Families of Victims" par. 8). Contrary to the antagonist's use of pejorative language to enforce the status of Otherness onto the prisoners, the protagonists seek to promote a sense of community solidarity by rallying around the heroic actions of the prisoner.

The current program¹⁷ of Nationalist and Unionist prisoner release delineates another major sticking point for community members on both sides of the partisan divide. Considered to be "qualifying prisoners" by the Agreement, those prisoners affiliated with organizations under an unequivocally established and maintained ceasefire "including transferred prisoners, convicted of scheduled offences in Northern Ireland or, in the case of those sentenced outside Northern Ireland, similar offences" are to be placed on "an accelerated programme" for release (30).

Since the 1960s beginning of Nationalist internment, the issues of prisoner status and release have been integrated into Northern Ireland's culture of protest. For instance, a

series of hunger strike portraits (Fig. 007) help the viewer to see the strikers not only as individuals, smiling in natural settings, but also as iconic representation of the collective group of Nationalist prisoners interred in the prisons. Each portrait is painted separately with the striker smiling against a pastoral background and in direct contrast to the reality of the institutional setting of their final days. Surrounding each portrait, inscriptions contain both names and death dates for the strikers.

Considered a hero to the Unionist paramilitaries, Billy Wright (a.k.a. King Rat) sits as the focal point for a portrait mural (Fig. 028). Found in Belfast's Shankill



Billy Wright Memorial—Fig.028

Neighborhood, this depiction of Wright, flanked by British and Ulster flags, presents viewers with an image of a man loyal to Ulster as well as Great Britain. Though the dates, inscribed on the banner below Wright's portrait initially refer to Wright's life further interpretation of semiotic signifiers including the rhetorical *eulogia* (praise or blessing) found in the top banner ("Loyalist Martyr"), suggests that Wright was killed by the opposition. Additional information regarding Wright's death¹⁸ causes viewers to recognize Wright's mural to stand as a representational mural for Unionist prisoners as well as a memorial mural to a dead hero.

In addition to representations of specific prisoners, both Nationalist and Unionist murals contain abstracted visual representations to underscore community solidarity with those who have been incarcerated for political crimes. As such, the abstract murals articulate a series of rhetorical strategies that underscore a form of corporate identification¹⁹ and encourage connections between community and prisoners. These abstract murals display iconic forms of visual *braggadocio*,²⁰ such as red fists, broken chains, and unfurled flags, act as signifiers to draw out a collective sense of duty from those community members who are hesitant to express solidarity with individual prisoners.

For example, the abstract “Free Ireland” mural (Fig. 022 & Fig. 023) on R.P.G. Avenue invites the Nationalist community to engage in a process of unlayering that reveals the multiple forms of imprisonment Nationalists have suffered. Central to this mural is a manacled and bleeding arm clasping an Easter lily—a traditional symbol of peace. Attached with three different chains, the manacle is inscribed with the phrase “Made in Britain.” Behind the chained arm is an outlined map of Ireland painted in green against a circular white background. Framed in orange and painted against a brilliant blue background, this center image is flanked by four coats of arms designating the different provinces of Ireland (Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connacht) as well as a verbal invective to “Free Ireland.”

High above the central image are visual representations painted against a lighter blue backdrop that act as a form of rhetorical echo to the message below. Against the light blue backdrop a phoenix rises from the flames pouring out of a classically styled

building. Flanking the phoenix, a pair of dates: 1916 and 1991. Where the 1916 date provides the building with the intertextual references to the 1916 Easter Uprising and Dublin's General Post Office, 1991 suggests an expansion of context to include Nationalist struggles against Northern Ireland's past governments in Stormont. The centralized use of the Gaelic "Caisc" ("Freedom") amplifies the messages found within the mural below.

Similarly, on Blythe Street two different abstract murals are displayed that illustrate elements of community solidarity with Unionist prisoners. Where the first mural recognizes the paradoxical nature of prison life within the context of a larger Unionist community, the second mural, by a Unionist paramilitary group, reminds the larger Unionist community that its defenders are imprisoned and need to be released. Both murals articulate Unionist claims by addressing prisoner issues through abstract imagery rather than realism. Painted on a fiery orange and yellow background, the UFF Red Hand mural (Fig. 029) presents viewers with South Belfast's visual *opatio* (exclaimed wish) to "Free Our Prisoners." The verbal text of the mural underscores semiotic representations that support paramilitary concerns about imprisoned brethren.



Free POWs—Fig. 029

A single, red fist explodes from a blue flourish to break through the shackled wrists of two other red fists. The severed fists not only establish direct synecdochal references to Unionist POWs, but the fists also reveal allusions to Northern Ireland's mythology. Dara Mulhern reports that the legend of the Red Hand tells of a competitive boat race between "two chieftains [who] were racing across a stretch of water in a bid to be the first to reach the land and claim it as his own. Realising [that] his foe would touch the land first, one chieftain cut off his hand and threw it onto the shore, thereby claiming the land before his adversary reached it" (par. 1).

Behind the fists hang two unfurled flags—the Ulster flag as well as the Ulster Defense Association. Below the dynamic movement of the red fists is an outlined map of Northern Ireland. Inside that outline is a depiction of a prison, painted in monochromatic grays. Though initial interpretation of the "prison in map" image further underscores UFF demands regarding conventional prisoner, status deeper analysis suggests that Ulster itself, and thereby the Unionist community, is the actual prisoner. The absence of any

references to Great Britain in this mural and the prevalent references to the red fist as the rescuer warns viewers to recognize the self sufficiency of Ulster to protect itself.

A third issue of import to Northern Ireland's culture of protest is the issue of policing that has provided Northern Ireland with a solid whipping post. Original assumptions consider the RUC to be an armed force intent on maintaining Northern Ireland's Unionist social *status quo*.²¹ Nevertheless, the RUC police force has recently found itself under opposing forms of scrutiny. In its response, Sinn Fein notes that though the Patten Report fell short of desired goals, the later Police Act "cannot deliver the new beginning to policing required under the Good Friday Agreement" (par. 7). In its response to the initial Patten Commission report, the Social Democratic and Labour Party asserts that "police forces in the democratic world have had to adapt and adjust to social change in society in recent years" and argues that "the RUC cannot be exempt" from the changes (par. 4).

The Nationalist claims of RUC and British collusion²² with Protestant paramilitary organizations range from arms support to the murders²³ of Rosemary Nelson and Pat Finucane. Repetitive calls for removing the police force appear throughout Northern Ireland. To illustrate, the Slán Abhaile mural (Fig. 024) depicts five of the Nationalist issues. In the upper right corner a portrait of a skull wears two different uniforms. Additionally, the figure holds an automatic weapon that reinforces Nationalist concerns of RUC and British collusion. Skulls and authoritarian uniforms coalesce into a rhetorical strategy that dramatizes multiple perceptions of Northern Ireland's police force. The Nationalists believe the police force to be "the most visible, line of defence of

a State which they have difficulty accepting as legitimate” (Wilson par. 6). The rhetorical effect binds the Nationalist consciousness with the depicted images to maintain the perception of the polices’ repressive violence.²⁴ Initially, the iconic images maintain the pejorative interpretation held by the Nationalists (repressive violence). However, other iconic images suggest amelioration. This amelioration stems from a deliberative argument for equity in the police force (“Disband RUR RUC”). These icons, on the one hand pejorative (repressive violence) and on the other ameliorative (disbandment), pose possibilities to initiate an internal *spiral of negotiation* . For Nationalists, the ameliorative interpretation establishes opportunities “to feel genuine ownership over the police” and “to believe that it will no longer be tarred with the *causes célèbres* of the past . . . and that the ‘canteen culture’ will not be inhospitable to them” (par. 6).



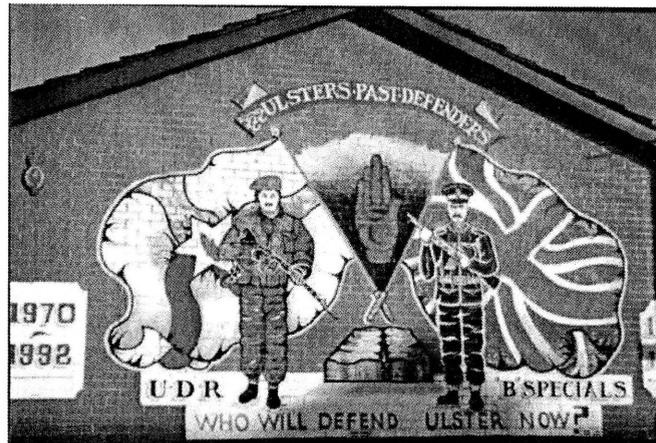
Disband RUC/End Collusion—Fig. 030

Covering the walls and trashcans, multiple orange, white, and black promotional posters are pasted over a Collusion mural (Fig. 030) calling for the disbandment of the RUC. The poster’s black abstract icon of a police officer morphs into a skeleton draped with an orange sash. The sash acts as a rhetorical and visual signifier that links Northern

Ireland's police force to both the Orange Order and the Unionist community. As a rhetorical strategy, the layers of visual references underscore Nationalist beliefs that they have "never been able to identify with or share ownership of the police" as well as that "too often the RUC has failed in terms of impartiality and fair treatment" (SDLP par. 3).

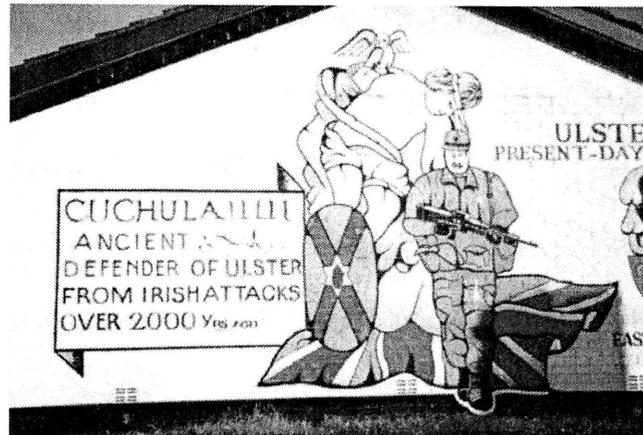
The Good Friday Agreement and the subsequent Patten Report, call for both restructuring and renaming Northern Ireland's police force. The Good Friday Agreement proposes that the police force "must be capable of maintaining law and order including responding effectively to crime and to any terrorist threat and to public order problems" (26). Likewise, the Patten Report seeks to alter the structure of the RUC while dealing with the issues of "governance, accountability, and transparency" as well as "matters of composition and culture" (Wilson par. 6). Even so, both mandates face considerable Unionist opposition that argues against any attempts to modify the RUC and derides them as "the Balkanization of policing, and the emasculation of the police's anti-terrorist capabilities" by the Unionist political community²⁵ (par. 6).

Unlike decommissioning, debate on the policing issue the has found its way into the murals as the Unionist communities seeks to find a way between traditional rule of law and a deep sense of abandonment. Though interaction between the Unionist community and the RUC has been traditionally familial,²⁶ the recent events of the peace process have strained previous relations. Hennessey notes that where the RUC is "generally seen as 'ours' rather than 'theirs'" many in the Unionist communities find "it difficult to come to terms with the idea of a non-aligned police force" (292). As a result, the vacuum left by the RUC is filled by various paramilitary organizations.



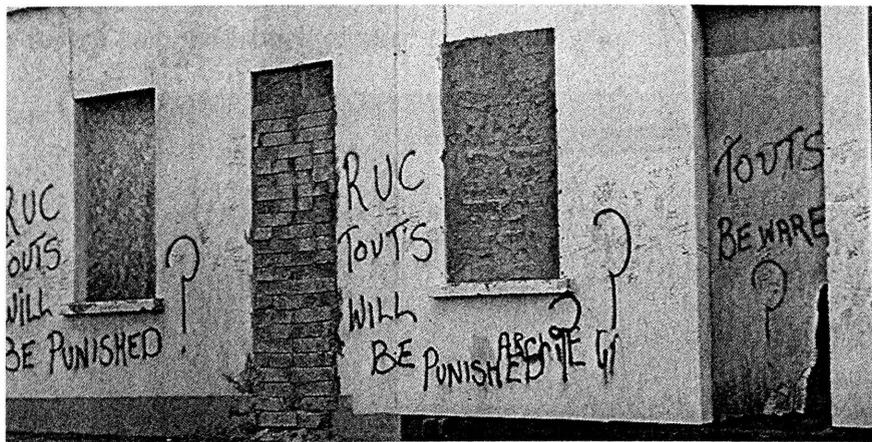
Ulster's Past Defenders—Fig.031

The Newtownards Road Past Defenders mural²⁷ (Fig. 031) introduces the viewer to a pair of armed men standing on a white altar-like table and in front of a pair of crossed and unfurled flags. A banner hanging above the mural describes the men below as “Ulster’s Past Defenders.” On the left, an Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR) soldier, dressed in a green camouflage uniform, stands in front of the Ulster flag. His rifle is pointed downwards. On the right, a member of the B Specials (former Northern Irish reserve police force), painted in a monochromatic black and white uniform, stands in front of the Union Jack. He points his rifle skywards. Between the flags a red hand, open and facing forward, hovers against a rising/setting sun background. Beneath the flags a golden book lays open upon the table that also acts as an inscription. The images are flanked by a pair of plaques that commemorate the time covered by the UDR (1970 to 1992) and the B Specials (1920-1970). The accompanying question (“Who will defend Ulster now?”) is answered by the Cuchulain mural (Fig. 032) down the street which suggests the paramilitary organization, the Ulster Defense Association (UDA).



Ulster's Present Defenders—Fig. 032

On the one hand, the Silvio Street graffiti (Fig. 033) reinforce potential concerns surrounding the RUC. But on the other, the graffiti can begin a dialogue that initiates an internal *spiral of negotiation*. Scrawled in spray paint on the walls of a closed building, the messages act as an element of a whisper campaign.²⁸ The verbal messages (“RUC



RUC Touts—Fig. 033

Touts will be punished?” and “Touts beware?”) present viewers with potential threats to the Northern Irish police force in the form of questions. Not only do the pejoratives and threats reinforce and transform previously benign questions into challenges to police

authority, but they also stress current, factionalized community reactions (internal *spiral of negotiation*) to the position of the RUC in Unionist neighborhoods that have existed since the beginning of the peace process in 1996. As a particular type of the fourth wave murals, graffiti begins the internal *spiral of negotiation* that challenges the community to change in ways that makes itself not only more appealing to the Unionists but also to the Nationalists. The graffiti points the way to improve community relations.

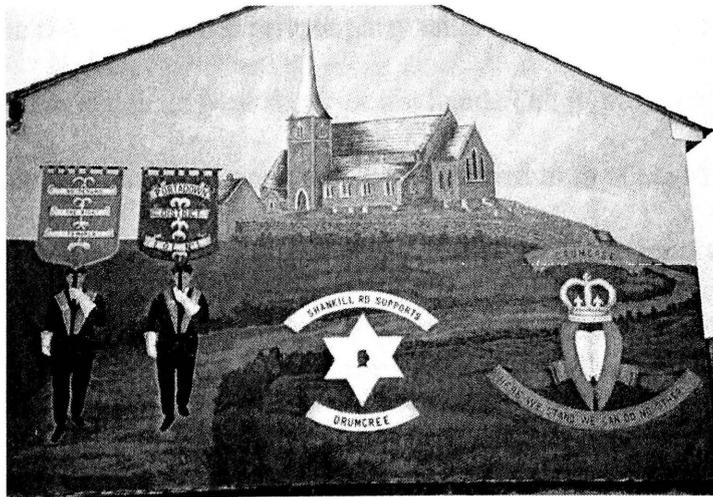
Although the specific issue of partisan parade routes is not explicitly discussed within the pages of the Agreement, debates over “marching season” parade routes continue to be flashpoints of discord that consistently threaten to end attempts to bring about rapprochement. Considered a right rather than a privilege by the Protestant community, the Orange parades and routes represent a set of double edged identity markers that celebrate Unionist loyalty to the community as well as ignore perceived degradation for the Nationalist community.



Reroute Marches—Fig. 034

One Nationalist mural, on Dromara Street, calls for an end to sectarian marches (Fig. 034) and challenges viewers to recall the Good Friday Agreement as evidentiary support for a proposed change to “Let’s make it work.” Using a textual citation (*logos*) pulled from the Good Friday Agreement that supports “the right to freedom from sectarian harassment,” in conjunction with familial imagery forms a *systrophe* (collection) of semiotic representations wherein the protagonist community establishes its *ethos* and calls for a recognition of the larger purpose, peace.

A Shankill area mural that supports the Drumcree marches (Fig. 035) offers viewers a landscape of ritualized tradition. Asserting that the parade routes are an integral element of Protestant tradition, the Orange Order insists that “two hundred years ago the founding fathers decided that parades were an appropriate medium to witness for their



Support Drumcree—Fig. 035

faith and to celebrate their cultural heritage” (par. 2). On the hilltop, a church stands surrounded by tombstones and a stone wall. An empty lane connects the church to two men, dressed in black suits, black bowler hats, white gloves, and orange sashes as they

march towards viewers with the authority and tradition of the Orange Order. They bear a pair of banners—one orange, the other purple—marked with gold insignia and scrollwork. Marching in support of their brethren at the Drumcree standoff,²⁹ these two Orange marchers carry banners that read “We demand the right to march” and “Portadown District LOL No. 1.” Other verbal inscriptions reinforce the Unionist demands to march declaring that “Shankill Road supports Drumcree” and “Drumcree Here we stand we can do no other.”

Whether the signifiers within the murals articulate Nationalist calls to change the political infrastructure or Unionist concerns over cultural oppression, it is apparent that both communities are actively engaged in the deliberative process. As such, the visual representations underscore the effectiveness of mural painting as a form of non-traditional rhetoric that extends the private party talks to the streets and engages both communities in a public debate over the issues at hand. The murals publicly encourage viewers to examine the numerous partisan issues outlined in the Good Friday Agreement. To that end, both Nationalist and Unionist communities set forth opportunities for debating issue priority, develop policies to benefit the larger Northern Irish community, and “acknowledge the substantial differences between our continuing, and equally legitimate, political aspirations” (1).

NOTES

¹ In his article, Ingraham lists of the parties included in the Stormont peace talks. The parties elected to the talks include the following: Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP), Sinn Fein (SF), Alliance, United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP), Protestant Unionist Party (PUP), Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC), and Labour Coalition. See

² In "Ethnonationalism, Public Opinion and the Good Friday Agreement," Hayes and McAllister assert that "although a majority in both communities had voted in favour of the Agreement, only a bare minimum of Protestants (51 percent) had done so" and cites *The Irish Times/Telefís Eireann* exit poll, which reports that approximately 99 percent of Catholics voted for the Agreement (31).

³ Cicero notes that deliberative rhetoric is most comfortable "in a political debate and involves the expression of an opinion" (*De Inventione* Book 1 17). Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz expand by noting that deliberative rhetoric seeks to "establish policies for the future" (12). Arguing for reform to the *status quo* through practice or policy proposals, the deliberative rhetor looks at past evidence to inform the future as the means by which to "call for some kind of action" (192). Beth Simone Noveck, in "Transparent Space: Law, Technology and Deliberative Democracy in the Information Society," adds that in a deliberative democracy communities concentrate "on self-governance by means of [an] ongoing reflective debate" that assumes "an even balance of power among individuals within communities, in particular a balance in the conversation within the public sphere" (par 2-3).

⁴ The continued involvement of American, British, and Irish governments in the Northern Irish peace process creates a forum for debate regarding Northern Ireland's future locations—political, economic, and cultural.

⁵ Known as the Republican cemetery, the Milltown cemetery is located at the top of the Falls Road and is the burial place for a number of members of the Irish Republican movement.

⁶ This particular flag is also known as the Red Hand of Ulster and has been adapted/adopted by Unionist paramilitary organizations.

⁷ Though Nationalists refer to the Unionist principle of consent as a specifically Unionist veto, members of the Unionist community contend that this principle is "is enshrined in law and is accepted by all" and "safeguards our constitutional future" (McGimpsey par. 6-7).

⁸ Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca assert that with an appeal to community-building values it is possible for partisan leaders to “induce the hearer to make certain choices rather than others” as well as “justify those choices so that they may be accepted and approved by others” (75).

⁹ Grattan argues that Pitt excludes “the Catholics . . . he reasons, that hereafter, in a course of time, (he does not say when) if they behave themselves, (he does not say how) they may see their subjects admitted to a course of discussion (he does not say with what result or determination)” and promises nothing in return for Catholic attempts to meet the preconditions (qtd. in Mansergh 200).

¹⁰ Elliott reports that in August 1969 a number of Belfast and Derry neighborhoods were burned as part of a lengthy skirmish between civil rights protestors, the police force, and sectarian mobs. Thus the “traditional frontier zone between the Falls and the Shankill”—Bombay Street—was burned when a Protestant mob, “believing, with some justification, that they were being attacked by gunmen from within the monastery’s precincts,” set fire to the neighborhood (417-19).

¹¹ Breen reports that a “leading anti-agreement figure says: ‘We believe that despite his tough words [David] Trimble wants to compromise on decommissioning. We are hoping to tie his hands so comprehensively that he can’t’” (par. 9).

¹² Gilligan notes at least two distinct interpretations of the word peace in the context of the Northern Irish Peace Process. The first interpretation is “the absence of conflict” wherein “‘terrorism’ has been identified as the main problem in the province” (par. 8). In other words, the paramilitary ceasefire articulates an act of non-violence “that places the emphasis on an enlightened outcome, peace” (par. 8). Gilligan’s second interpretation emphasizes peace as a process (par. 8). Gilligan points out that where the first definition of peace appears to be a moment of stasis between two conflicts, the second involves a “recognition that the paramilitaries do have genuine grievances.” The second underscores a dynamic “two-way process of give and take between the protagonists in the conflict” and “the principle of inclusion which lies at the core of the peace process” (par. 8).

¹³ In his article, Mulin quotes an official spokesman for Prime Minister Tony Blair.

¹⁴ Member of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) led by Rev. Ian Paisley.

¹⁵ Bell reports that on 16 March 1988, Michael Stone entered the Milltown cemetery and fired on the IRA funeral for the Gibraltar Three (Mairead Farrell, Daniel McCann, and Séan Savage). Deemed “‘a man who would do absolutely anything’” by his

fellow paramilitaries, Stone killed three and wounded several others at the funeral as he “tried to wipe out the core of the republicans in public on television” and entered Unionist history as a hero (755).

¹⁶ Bell records that in September 1984 Patrick Magee (a.k.a. the Brighton Bomber) registered at Brighton’s Grand Hotel and “secreted twenty or thirty pounds of commercial explosives . . . behind a panel in the bathroom wall” with the expectation that the explosion would collapse the Grand Hotel on top of the Conservative Party’s October conference. Though four people were killed and thirty-two others were injured, the primary target of this explosion—British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher—escaped unharmed (686-87).

¹⁷ There are approximately 401 prisoners who have gone through the release program as set down by the Good Friday Agreement. However, a number of occasions have arisen where the prisoners have been returned to prison.

¹⁸ Leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF), Billy Wright was shot by INLA gunmen in December 1997. Though incarcerated in the Maze prison, Wright was shot when INLA members “smuggled two guns into the H-Block and apprehended Wright as he was being transferred to the visitor’s block shooting him at least three times” (“The Billy Wright Murder” par 3).

¹⁹ Burke’s ideas on corporate identification as well as the function of society assert that identification “with some corporate unit (church, guild, company, lodge, party, team, college, city, nation, etc.)” assists communities to develop a sense of duty (*Attitudes towards History* 266).

²⁰ Burke notes that by way of *braggadocio* “the modest man can indulge in the most outrageous ‘corporate boasting’” as he identifies himself with the corporate unit and engages in “profuse praise of this unit [and thereby] he praises himself” (*Attitudes towards History* 266).

²¹ Since Northern Ireland’s partition, “the RUC has been a core element in the unionist community and there has been a strong sense of identification between the police and the unionist people. . . . However, the strong identity between the unionists and the RUC has been a major part of the problem” (par. 3). An August 2001 report notes that the issue of policing “has been at the very heart of the political fault-line in our society” and that few other issues have “been more difficult, more divisive and more controversial in the history of the north of Ireland” (Social Democratic and Labour Party par. 1).

²² McKittrick reports that an Irish government document from Dublin to the Northern Irish Secretary “cites evidence from military intelligence files and from the

diaries of Brian Nelson, and army double agent who had infiltrated the Ulster Defense Association, suggesting that Nelson was involved in 15 murders, 15 attempted murders and 62 conspiracies to murder” (1). Additionally, McKittrick notes that the document “adds that there are patterns ‘which tend to confirm widespread suspicions that elements in the security forces were used, at the expense of the rule of law, to prosecute a campaign against those deemed enemies of the state and to conceal what that entailed and who was culpable” (1).

²³ McKittrick reports that an Irish government document from Dublin to the Northern Irish Secretary reveals “new evidence [that] includes allegation that named officers in the Royal Ulster Constabulary procured the murder of Pat Finucane, and that RUC Special Branch had detailed advance knowledge of the murder plot” (1).

²⁴ MacGinty points out that several of the different tactics used by the RUC against the Nationalist community include the policies of “‘shoot to kill,’ the policing of paramilitary funerals, supergrass trials etc.” (par. 2).

²⁵ The Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) asserts that primary change to the structure of the RUC is the need “to have many more Catholics serving the community in the police . . . [via an end] to intimidation” as well as the “support from the Catholic community for Catholics who join the police” (par. 3). As such, the party argues that “the Patten Commission has allowed itself to be diverted into a gratuitous insult by stripping the service of its [RUC] name, badge, and flag” in spite of the RUC’s service to the community (par. 4). Additionally, the UUP insists that other recommendations found within the report “will require careful study” (par. 6).

²⁶ Recruited from primarily Protestant neighborhoods and “from the Unionist tradition,” the traditional attachment of the Unionist community for the RUC’s membership exists as a result of sharing similar symbol and value structures. Additionally, the RUC’s “main mission, upholding the security of Northern Ireland, matches unionism’s principal political goal” (MacGinty par. 2).

²⁷ Though this particular mural was photographed in 1996, Rolston provides a 1992 photograph of the mural with a white background rather than blue. Recent adaptations include the framing of dates into plaques as well as the creation of the altar/table beneath the Bible and the two soldiers. Additionally, the ‘B’ Special figure has been retouched in monochromatic paint motif and the Ulster flag contains less shadowing than previous versions.

²⁸ A form of rhetorical dehumanization, the whisper campaign strategy presents an audience with commonplace epithets and rumors that seek to actively undermine the subject (Ferguson 472).

²⁹ In “Drumcree: An Introduction to Parade Disputes,” Bryan traces the history of Orange Order parades. Begun in 1795, the Orange Order continues the approximately 200 year traditional July 12th parade from the Drumcree church to Portadown, where Dan Winter’s house is located, via the Garvaghy Road. For the past several years the parade route has come under a great deal of scrutiny. Arguing for religious freedom and cultural expression, members of the Orange Order insist that the organization’s annual march along the Garvaghy Road represents a tradition that is, according to Ian Paisley, “the very heart and foundation of our heritage” as well as at the “very heart and foundation of our spiritual life and . . . the future of our families and of this Province that we love” (qtd. in Bryan par. 5). In his observation of Unionist marches and parade routes, Bryan reports the confrontations between the Orange Order and Nationalist protesters. Additionally, Bryan points out that the Orange Order “claim[s] an uninterrupted ‘tradition’ of parades reaching back into the eighteenth century” and that the parades, themselves, represent a both a reinforcement of political *status quo* (symbolic stasis) and a continued “confrontation between the powerful and the relatively powerless” (par. 20-21).

CHAPTER FIVE

NEGOTIATING NEW SPACE AND FUTURE PEACE

Throughout the summer months Northern Ireland's communities engage in an annual tradition called "Marching Season." During this time community organizations, such as the Orange Order and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, gather together and parade through the streets as a way to celebrate cultural and community identity. The importance of the parade spirals from the local to the global. The parade establishes the exact locations and the actions, interactions, and negotiations of the participants. As both an element of Unionist heritage and a home for members of the Nationalist community, the Drumcree parade route has become a focal point for protest, debate, and dialogue that reinforces tradition and promotes the oscillating nature of the *spiral of negotiation*.

The twelfth of July marks the Orange Order's march in Portadown to commemorate both King William of Orange's victory over King James II at the Battle of the Boyne and the formation of the Orange Order. The annual parade route, from Dan Winter's homestead to the Drumcree Church, is also known as the Garvaghy Road—a predominantly Catholic neighborhood. Because the annual event parades through a Catholic neighborhood, marchers are subject to various attempts to prevent the march. These attempts include rerouting discussions, Nationalist protests, and police barricades. These preventative measures result in actions intent on moving the parade forward. In

expressions of solidarity with the Drumcree marchers, Unionist communities across Northern Ireland participate in roadblocks and demonstrations that protest any ban of the parade's progress. As such, the location of the Drumcree parade and the participants (Unionist marchers/protesters and Nationalist protesters as well as police, media, and audience) opens new space labeled here as a *spiral of negotiation*, a process through which the community calls for peace can be addressed.

Like the tradition of parading, the wall murals found in Northern Ireland are interlaced “with the world[s] of politics [and culture]” and “shaped by the broader political world” as well as being “an important element in creating that world” (Jarman, *Material Culture* 253). Where earlier studies of the Northern Irish mural tradition have explored historical, political, or cultural aspects of the murals, this analysis introduces a fourth wave of murals that maintains and transcends culturally specific boundaries. This new space offers locations for multiple interpretations that demonstrate not only traditional animosities but also transgressive challenges for peace. This new space is a result of multiple interpretations that present representations of Northern Ireland's complex identity via signifiers of rhetorical hybridity¹ found within the murals.

In depicting the Northern Irish community's attempts to open the space from conflict to peace, these murals dramatize Northern Ireland's opinions, memories, conflicts, dialogues, and hopes. This analysis began with a series of queries about the role of the murals as a form of public discourse. In other words, how does the public discourse, found in the murals, engage viewers to affect change whether it be in justice (forensic), identity (epideictic), or policy (deliberative) rhetorics? To that end, this

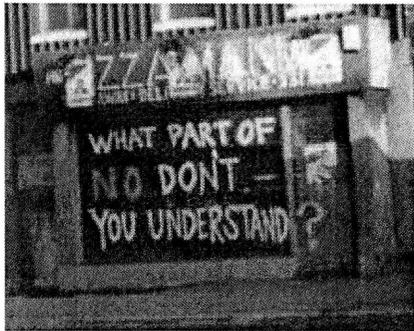
investigation examines the disassociation expressed in the three previously identified waves of mural activity and classifies a fourth wave of murals in which the signifiers demonstrate a dynamism of multiplicity as interpretations extend past the partisan divide and open opportunities for negotiation followed by the development of peace. As such, the murals have been analyzed via the terministic screens of forensic (justice), epideictic (identity building), and deliberative (policy initiatives) rhetorics. Multiple methodologies, particularly semiotics and discourse analysis, not only highlight the ways in which classical rhetoric continues to inform contemporary usage, but they also reveal opportunities for alternative interpretations of the visual and verbal to spin the *spiral of negotiation*.

Forensic (judicial) rhetoric focuses on the historic as a means to accuse, honor, or defend the past. The murals open a form of new space (beyond the courtroom) in which both communities engage simultaneously in acts of prosecution and defense that ground current grievances in the past. As such, the visual signifiers present the viewer not only with testimonies and evidence that either justify or condemn the actions of the accused but also with the possibility of negotiations for peace.

Intent on the construction of identity, community members use visual signifiers to either celebrate the Self or to denigrate the Other. These images of community identity construction include the examination of preselected value hierarchies, scapegoat construction, and individualized self-expression as the means to reinforce the legitimizing myths. The *spiral of negotiation* offers a way to reevaluate these myths and to re-vision the Self in worlds offered by new myths made possible within the new state.

With the focus on deliberating policy change within Northern Ireland's social, political, and economic structure both Nationalist and Unionist communities have engaged in public debate via the wall murals. As such, interested parties intent on change—or even those intent on maintaining the current status—have presented arguments and counterarguments through semiotic representations. In either case, the murals initiate a dynamic process of deliberative dialogue that opens new space for the *spiral of negotiation* in which to discover future peace.

Though members of conflicting sides seek to span the partisan positions and engage in community-building activities such as the Good Friday Agreement and the power sharing initiative there comes a point where the “togetherness [has] created [a] palpable anxiety” and the negotiators step away from the peace talks (102). At this point, members, engaged in the *spiral of negotiation* and intent on creating new space, by re-visioning legitimizing myths reestablish community bonds and strengthen initiatives for peace within the communities. When visual representations of armed men; moments of “chosen glory”² appear within the murals to reinforce legitimizing myths, multiple interpretations of re-visioned myths spin the spiral that can seal the sides together. Regardless of the conflicting space that exists, the *spiral of negotiation* can expand to include disparate positions.



What Part of No—Fig. 036

For example, the “What Part of No” mural (Fig. 036) presents the viewer with the question “What part of No don’t you understand?” Painted on a black background, the red of the “NO” contrasts with the yellow of the surrounding text (“What part of . . . don’t you understand?”). One instance of the intertextualized argument loops the verbal text of the mural with Anti-Agreement campaigns within both Nationalist and Unionist communities. As such, the “What Part of No” mural (Fig. 036) reveals community concerns as well as a resistance to change. Though public vote ratified the Good Friday Agreement and presented politicians with a mandate to move towards the achievement of peace (re-visioned myths), the concerns of extremist communitarians (legitimizing myths) are underscored if return to the paradigm³ of “either/or” politics rather than those of “both/and” (*spiral of negotiation*).

Other murals within both communities illuminate the transcendent possibilities of peace in addition to the visual representations of the inherent contradictions found within each community. Fourth wave murals, such as “Bobby Sands-Prophet” (Fig.015) and “Queen of Hearts” (Fig. 016), illustrate the multiplicity of interpretations that help facilitate Northern Ireland’s search for a lasting peace. Though initial interpretations of

both murals provide viewers with a distinctly nationalist⁴ focus both establish community allegiances and unveil implied negative space that opens opportunities within the *spiral of negotiation* that can allow the parties to simultaneously unite the space and maintain individual community identity (101). Although the image of Sands (Fig. 015) presents viewers with a recognizable martyr to the cause of Irish republicanism, the verbal text (drawn from Sands's own work) notes that "Everyone, Republican or *otherwise*, has their own particular role to play" (emphasis added) and later adds that "Our revenge will be the laughter of our children." As such, the inherent contradiction appears in the depiction of a Nationalist hero. This hero expresses a message of peace that can potentially fill the partisan divide.

Similarly, the "Queen of Hearts" mural (Fig. 016) presents viewers with a memorial to Diana, Princess of Wales, and connects the Unionist neighborhood of Shankill to British nationalism. However, further analysis of this particular mural shows that instead of simply being a British figure, Diana (the queen of hearts) has transcended the monarchy by becoming a global icon. Considered the "black sheep" of the royal family, Diana reveals the inherent contradiction found in the Unionist community, which seeks to maintain connections with Britain (even though Ulster insists on its distinct identity) even as the British consider Ulster to be a provincial and backwards colony. The rhetorical use of the epithet "Queen of Hearts" presents viewers with a Unionist depiction that parallels the Nationalist use of Mary as "Queen of Heaven." As such, this visual representation transcends the concepts of Unionist nationalism and offers a *spiral of negotiation* that potentially unites the partisan divide.

Through visual signifiers via the murals, Nationalist and Unionist communities have begun a dialogic exchange of reconciliation that opens a progression towards new space. Additionally, it is relevant to recognize that the *kairos* of both mural (in the respective neighborhood) and viewer guides interpretation. This investigation offers alternatives to previously held assumptions of interpretations as static and challenges viewers to look for potential indicators of peace embedded within the visual texts.

These images, replete with localized cultural connections and interpretations, undergo dramatic revisualization when viewed from a change in *kairos*. As such, preservation of these murals via archival projects (accidental, amateur, professional, and academic) raises questions about the changing nature of *kairos* and cultural hybridity. The transference and presentation of locally specified murals into hypertext and other technological spaces (film, television, and newspaper) open further opportunities to explore recent community demands for cultural specificity and the postmodern dilemmas caused by hybridity and power structures. These questions are notable given the potential effects of mass dispersion as an element of the *spiral of negotiation*, which grows incrementally with every viewing of the murals. In each case, the rhetoric within the murals continue to challenge the viewer to rethink, to revision, and to reinterpret them for both global benefits and a lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

NOTES

¹ Pirott-Quintero suggests that as a “representation of the mutual borrowings, intersections and exchanges that occur in culture” the concept of hybridity “often bear[s] traces of past cultural expressions, as they rework and expand the concept to allow for more complex and dynamic representations” (par. 1-2).

² Volkan notes that “chosen glory” is “the mental representation of a historical event that induces feelings of success and triumph . . . can bring members of a large group together” as well as a way to build esprit de corps (81).

³ Citing Ulrich Beck and Wassily Kandinsky in their discussions of both “either/or” and “both/and” political paradigms, Wilson reports that where “either/or” politics represents “separation, specialization, clarity” the ideas involved in “both/and” politics are underscored by “simultaneity, multiplicity, uncertainty” (par. 1).

⁴ In his essay on nationalism in Ireland, Halliday point out that both Catholic nationalism and Protestant unionism, “that two main forms of communal ideology,” and forms of nationalism that “they are political ideologies making claims about community, history, land and entitlement” (par. 30).

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