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REVIEWS

Ardoyne: The Untold Truth
Ardoyne Commemoration Project
Beyond the Pale, 2002
PBK: IBSN: 1900960176 £14.99
HBK: ISBN: 1900960184 £24.99
pp. 543 (including: index, photographs, map)

How to reform and reconstruct civil society in the wake of institutionalised brutality and internecine conflict has emerged globally as an issue of sometimes intractable proportions. Often central to this process is the notion that the truth of terrible times and deeds has to be acknowledged and faced, rather than swept into the dustbin of collective amnesia and the lid firmly closed. With its origins arguably in the Nuremberg trials, this approach has evolved into the truth and reconciliation commissions that have proliferated in the last ten years from South Africa to Argentina. As varied as the commissions are - reflecting the varied histories and local situations that have created them - the underlying principle uniting them, that it is impossible to move on without both 'owning up' and 'owning', seems now to command considerable consent.

While a truth and reconciliation commission for Northern Ireland is still in principle an open issue, the British state's approach, in the Victim's Commission of 1997, and the Bloomfield Report a year later, provides no encouragement for thinking that we will see one while the United Kingdom remains the civil power. Given the direct or indirect implication of the state in many of the deaths and much of the violence of the past thirty or so years this is disappointing but not surprising.

Local oral history initiatives of the kind that has produced this book have developed, in Belfast and elsewhere, in the vacuum left by the absence of anything resembling a commission. What we have in this remarkable and essential book are stories about violent deaths, and also, necessarily and thankfully, about lives: the lives of the dead and of those who survived them. Interspersed with these individual histories is an unfolding collective history of the area since the late 1960s. It should be required reading for anyone who pretends to an understanding of 'the Troubles'. The individual stories are impossible to deal with here: there is none that I wish to focus on, and none that I would choose to leave out. The collective local history is excellent, and stands in itself as a contribution to our better understanding.

As explained in the Introduction, at least four themes have informed and inspired the Ardoyne Commemoration Project's work. The first of these is the exploitation of the relative calm, if not peace, in the wake of the Good Friday Agreement to create individual and collective spaces for, and moments of, reflection. The extensive process of interviewing kin and friends that lies behind the ninety-nine stories here - ninety-nine deaths, the first in 1969, the last, lamentably, in 1998, after the Project itself had begun its work - has been more than an exercise in data gathering. It has actively permitted the exploration of pain, loss, and a welter of other feelings that people had for too long turned their backs on, in the business of getting on with life under nigh intolerable circumstances.

In the second place, this is the reclamation of history by those who don't usually get to write it. Anyone who reads this hefty volume - although it cannot be done at a sitting, and the individual stories are better read individually, one at a time, if only to keep a decent perspective on the human beings concerned - will come away with a view of the Troubles very different from the public accounts of state, media, politicians and most

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academics. The virtues of oral history shine through this account: the voices are authentic and often authentically moving, pathos is strangely absent, as is sentimentality. In addition, the difference that it makes to root the collective story in a very particular place shapes the whole thing. The view from anywhere else - obviously enough - would have been different.

The third theme follows on from the above. In this account the 'two camps' model of the conflict simply does not hold, cannot hold in fact. The struggle that we witness developing in these pages is three-cornered: republicans, loyalists, and the state are active participants (I'd want to add the Irish state too, albeit at arm's length, but that's a different argument). The notion that the British state might be neutral, acting as a referee between two warring factions, is given no truck, and deserves none.

Finally, there is an attempt in this project to move beyond the 'hierarchy of victims' that has informed government thinking about these matters, and that frames, whether implicitly or explicitly, much comment and popular understanding. By adopting a criterion of inclusion that admitted all the dead with a legitimate claim to have belonged, at one time or another, to the Ardoyne - having died in the area is not the point - the Project has attempted not to judge further who counts as a victim.

The Project's volunteers would, of course had to have been heroic beyond reasonable expectations had they managed wholly to achieve this. Victimhood is an intensely political issue. As they themselves acknowledge, the spatial criterion is not wholly straightforward or innocent. Nor, in being true to the voices of those that they interviewed, have they been able to avoid the importation of hierarchies of evaluation of one kind or another.

This, necessarily, dramatises the complex nature of truth. It is an elusive commodity. This book offers us one area's truth, many different people's truths, and a truth rooted in republican politics. These do not always agree with each other, and are all important and valuable. Between them, and within them, there is a reality that has to be attended to and respected if the north of Ireland is to move forward; along with a host of other realities, many utterly different. How that might be achievable is a task that has scarcely been imagined yet.

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On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast
Scott A Bollens
State University of New York Press, 2000
Hbk: ISBN: 0791444139 $26.50
Pbk: ISBN: 0791444147 $25.95
pp. 415 (including: appendices, footnotes, bibliography & index)

Bollens has produced a fascinating comparative analysis of urban policy in two cities, both of which are located within wider contexts of intense ethnic and national conflict. The book has focused mainly on the last 30 years in each instance, examining Belfast primarily since the introduction of direct rule in 1972 and Jerusalem since 1967 when Israel took over Jerusalem and the West bank.

There have been many comparisons between the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Israel, but no others have tried to tease out the distinctiveness of *urban* policy in the two

locales. This is a big task, not least because Belfast and Jerusalem occupy different places within different governance and planning systems. The comparison may be rather stretched when Bollens claims that 'each city is the most populated within its own country' (p. 35) because disputes and conflicts are focused on the very existence of the two 'countries'. Neither are unified 'ethnic' nation states: Northern Ireland is only a 'country' as a constituent element of the UK – and that is precisely what Irish nationalists object to. The existence of Israel, too, is not accepted as legitimate either by most Palestinians living within the state or by huge numbers of people outside that state. Despite such objections, I consider that Bollens has made an extremely valuable contribution to the literature on both urban policy and divided societies.

The case studies of Jerusalem and Belfast are both located within a longer historical framework, but Bollens' primary objective was to assess 'how *current* regimes approach and utilize urban policy' (p. 37, emphasis in the original.) His research included extensive interviews with experts and key participants in Jerusalem (40 interviews) and Belfast (34 interviews.) This in-depth study of participants' views, experiences and accounts greatly enriches Bollens' descriptive analysis of urban policy in the two cities. The fact that the interviews were carried out between October 1994 and March 1995, however, suggests that the author's objective of discussing current regimes – perhaps inevitably – will become overtaken by events. The study may best be seen, perhaps, as an historical analysis of how things stood in the two cities, and their wider societies, up to the mid-late 1990s. Even so, there *is* much of contemporary relevance in this book.

The structure of the book is clear and logical, comprising four parts: part one gives an overview of issues relating to cities and urban policy within divided societies; parts two and three consider, respectively, Jerusalem – 'the fallacy of partisan policy' – and Belfast – 'greyness where color matters' (US spelling in original); part 4 attempts to compare and contrast the experiences and lessons in the two cities. The first part of the book attempts to tease out the extent of urban policy autonomy. This is difficult in any instance and ferociously so in the intensely divided societies and cities under investigation here. Bollens utilises the now fairly conventional distinction between 'divided' and 'polarized' cities, using the latter term to refer to the imposition of ethnic and/or nationalistic divisions. His interest seems to centre largely on ways in which policy can better manage such distinctive contexts, whilst recognising that the resolution of conflict – if possible – may have to be attained at a wider social scale. Overall, the message appears to be that the limited autonomy of urban governance is especially restricted polarized cities

In part 2 Bollens argues that planning in Jerusalem was one-sided, being based on an essentially *partisan* logic which excluded Palestinians from both power and opportunities. Although he does not use the expression, I was left with a feeling that Palestinians were 'planned against' by the hegemonic Israeli planning and administrative machinery. Bollens moved into more optimistic analysis towards the end of this part of the book, considering how 'peace' might lead to different urban policies and arguing that planning could offer considerable insights into better managing conflicts and future urban development. In contrast to Israeli partisanship, in part 3, he considers that planning in Belfast, under the auspices of direct rule administrative agencies, sought to *neutralise* conflicts – thus introducing what may have been beneficial 'greyness' into highly charged conflict. His interviews revealed that planners and policy makers were well aware of intense conflict, and in practice often incorporated such awareness into policy, but typically preferred to discuss matters using more technical and apolitical expressions. However, Bollens also suggested that future arrangements might need to take on board and directly address the distinctive ethno-religious dimensions of local conflict.

Although this review is written three years after the book's publication, I am struck positively by the contemporary relevance of Bollens' analysis to ongoing disputes and debates in Northern Ireland and specifically I agree with his case for a more open style of policy making and implementation. His conclusions about urban policy 'on narrow ground' are also still applicable, especially regarding the very limited autonomy of city governance to address divisions which have their roots outside the 'urban' arena, that separation may often 'breed contempt' (p. 342), that 'neutrality is not necessarily fair' (p.341) and that majority rule – albeit 'democratic' - may not be well, suited to such divided contexts. Sitting here in Derry/Londonderry (i.e. a city where there is even ethno-religious-national conflict over what to *call* the place!), and considering the current divisions in the Ulster Unionist Party, I am struck by the continuing relevance of Bollens' claim that 'genuine political leadership seeks accommodation, but divisive political leadership is easy and rewarded' (p. 342). I am neither qualified nor arrogant enough to comment on the situation in Jerusalem, save to say that it is hard to avoid the fear that the Arab-Israeli conflict appears set to last at least another 30 years, no matter how efficient and enlightened urban policy makers and planners may be.

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The People's Peace Process in Northern Ireland
Colin Irwin
Palgrave/Macmillan, 2002
HBK: ISBN: ISBN 0333962486 £57.50
pp. 326 + vii (including: tables, index)

When Colin Irwin conducted the eight public opinion polls on which his book is based, he did so on the premise that 'most people, most of the time, want peace' (p.xx). As the principle investigator on the Peace Building and Public Policy in Northern Ireland project, Irwin sought to strategically utilize polls as a peace building activity and new form of political discourse. This was accomplished by means of facilitating dialogue between the public, politicians and media.

The process of formulating and drafting the questionnaires was undertaken in collaboration with all the political parties elected to take part in the Stormont Talks. This embedded poll development within the context of negotiations and reinforced the importance of poll results for the negotiating parties. Irwin argues that the public opinion polls helped support efforts for a political settlement 'by increasing party inclusiveness, developing issues and language, testing party policies, helping to set deadlines and increase the overall transparency of negotiations' (p.11). The author's insights and observations generated from this experience have been synthesized to create a framework that can be applied to improve the prospects of successful outcomes in other conflicts.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first section covers the context and impact of each poll and the technical matters of poll design, evaluation and management of results. The second part demonstrates how results were publicized and includes the newspaper reports as well as information on the role of parties in drafting the questionnaires. The author's emphasis is on practical methodologies that can be replicated rather than on theories of conflict mediation and negotiation. The first section of the book is exceptionally useful in this regard. In particular, the comprehensive "Peace

Polls Check List" is intended to help others develop and use polls as an instrument for peace building in other divided societies.

Unfortunately, the clarity and organizational flow that characterized the majority of the book is lost in the chapter entitled 'The Drafting of Consensus and Decommissioning Story'. The aim of this chapter is to provide an example of poll development in its several stages of revision. The lack of clarity is in part due to the fact that the drafts of the poll were not clearly delineated from the commentary, making it difficult to follow and weakening the usefulness of the chapter. However, this flaw can also be attributed to the sheer complexity of the project and indicates the difficulty in formulating a questionnaire that was satisfactory to all participants without undermining its utility in accurately gauging public opinion.

In an otherwise easily readable book, Irwin effectively demonstrates how these social science methods of inquiry and analysis were utilized in targeted ways as mechanisms of support for the peace process. This is especially evident in the chapter entitled 'Polling as Peace Building', wherein Irwin identifies a series of general peace-building problems, relates them to the Northern Ireland experience, and then provides suggestions on how public opinion polls can assist in overcoming these common setbacks.

Irwin makes a strong case for how polls can be used to map out common ground among political parties. For example, Irwin tracks the development of a common language and neutral terms for the drafting of a settlement. Each question included in the polls not only had to be suggested by a political party, but also had to be approved by all other political parties to remain on the final draft of the questionnaire. This forced political parties to adjust their rhetoric and use non-inflammatory terminology. The replacement of partisan language with agreed neutral terms is required for an acceptable settlement and in this way assisted in achieving a consensus in Northern Ireland.

Irwin is careful not to overstate his case. He acknowledges that no conflict can be resolved solely by public opinion polls. However, every avenue should be exploited to prompt desired change in these conflicts. While much has been written on conflict resolution and the Northern Ireland peace process, Irwin's book on public opinion polls provides an in-depth analysis of an aspect of peace building that is often overlooked and not strategically used to enhance the prospects for successful resolution. This book is suitable for politicians and policy-makers in this regard. It is also an appropriate text for informing journalists on potential impacts, both positive and negative, resulting from the publication of public opinion polls. The publication of results must be carefully managed to not create further polarization between communities by focusing on areas of disagreement and provoking adversarial debate. Irwin's book is fitting for academics interested in peace building and the Northern Ireland peace process and is a great resource for detailed statistical reports.

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Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland.
Lentin, Ronit and McVeigh, Robbie (ed)
Beyond the Pale Publications Ltd, 2002
PBK: ISBN: 19009601618 £10.99
pp. 248 (including: bibliographical references and index)

Encounters: How Racism Came to Ireland.
Rolston, Bill and Shannon, Michael
Beyond the Pale Publications Ltd, 2002
PBK: ISBN: 190096015X £6.99
pp. 108 (including: bibliographical references and index)

Throughout the summer of 2003 there were an increased number reports in the media on racist attacks throughout Northern Ireland and in south Belfast, the Police stepped up its security after pipe bomb attacks on two homes. The Equality Commission of Northern Ireland also referred to the high level of racist attacks in Northern Ireland compared with Wales or Scotland (see BBC News Thursday 10 July, 2003, Race attack family to leave NI', BBC News Thursday 21 August, 2003, 'Lessons in battle against racism'). It was therefore with great interest I approached the two volumes *Encounters. How Racism Came to Ireland* and *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland*.

Lentin and McVeigh's edited volume *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* focuses on modern day Ireland (both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland). It does, however, include necessary historical pointers and references. What brings the two works together is the simple truth that racism in Ireland is nothing new. Throughout Irish history there have been cases and instances where Ireland has experienced different cultures - leading both to subjugation as well as mutual respect. Reading *How Racism Came to Ireland* my impression is rather that racism in the Irish context is something present throughout Irish history, particularly with reference to the travelling community.

Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland quotes a number of statements made by representatives from various organisations (including political parties) in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland that are breath taking in their explicit prejudices. In this respect Ireland is not markedly different from other European countries, I have heard similar prejudices articulated in Sweden. What is more unusual, or so it seems to this reviewer, is the lack of a political counterweight, or rather the difficulties that Irish society in general has dealing with these issues. This makes the arrival of *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* very important, not just as an academic work but also as informative work. The introductory chapter, 'Situated racisms: A theoretical introduction', by Robbie McVeigh and Ronit Lentin puts the contributions in a theoretical setting as well as placing Ireland in a European context. Their chapter also provides the reader with an increased understanding of legal developments and political developments over the last couple of years. Several chapters in *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland*, amongst them Drazen Nozinic's chapter on the experiences of a refugee in Ireland and Shalini Sinhas chapter on women of colour in Ireland, are powerful testimonies of a different Irish reality to the one presented by the homely images of *failte* hospitality, cráic, shamrocks and Aran jumpers that are commonly used to represent Ireland. Nozinic and Sinhas's chapters, and the contributions made by Rosaleen McDonagh and Deepa Mann-Kler, are perhaps the strongest contributions, as they are personal testimonies. This is important because, just as Ronit Lentin writes in her chapter 'Anti-racist responses to the racialisation of Irishess', there is a need to involve racialised ethnic groups in research on racism and not merely treat groups like 'research subjects'. The involvement of racialised groups in action research is increasingly a feature of

research on the topic in Northern Ireland (see e.g.: Multicultural Resource Centre, 2001a & 2001b). On occasion, *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* is heavy reading, as some of the chapters, important as they are, are theory heavy and not always very accessible.

If *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland* is more 'contemporary', Rolston and Shannon, in their book *Encounters* provide the reader with a comprehensive historical overview, ranging from the Vikings to the latest legal and political developments. They have rescued racialised groups from what they refer to as 'the footnotes of the history books' (2002: 6). *Encounters* provides an historical outline of racism in Ireland and provides fascinating details such as the claim that Dublin had the second largest black population of 'any 18th century European city' (p. 67). Rolston and Shannon point out that a survey of Ireland and racism shows an 'ambivalent legacy' (p. 5). It includes those who struggled against racism, such as Daniel O'Connell's campaigns against American slavery and his refusal to accept the financial support of slaveholders, and those, such as the majority of Irish Americans at the beginning of the twentieth century, who have been outspoken racist bigots.

Encounters is somewhat easier to approach, perhaps, than *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland*, it provides an important and also necessary account, if not a thorough analysis, of a under researched aspect of Irish history. Both books add to the growing number of titles in the field on racism and anti-racism in Ireland, both North and South of the border and, for those who are interested in learning more on the topic, both volumes also have substantial and impressive reference sections.

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Unsafe Haven: The United States, The IRA and Political Prisoners
Karen McElrath
Pluto Press, 2001
HBK: ISBN: 0745313221 £45.00
PBK: ISBN: 0745313175 £13.99
pp. 176 (including: foreword, notes, bibliography, index, appendix)

In the topographical-iconography of the Irish Catholic the United States was viewed as having the same quasi-religious impact as Fatima and Lourdes. With its perceived commitment to 'truth, justice and the American way' and superficial sympathy with 'smaller nations' the US became the natural haven for anyone who felt the need to get as far away from the Royal Ulster Constabulary/Garda Síochána as it was possible to do. Memories linger still of fading pictures of President Kennedy above Irish fireplaces and of older brothers seeking to make their fortune on the streets of Boston and New York. For some the US symbolised affluence and pleasure, whilst for others it represented a place

of sanctuary, sufficiently distant from the problems associated with the 'troubles'. In this book by Karen McElrath such perceptions are challenged as misconceived.

McElrath examines US policy in its dealings with Irish Republican fugitives from Ireland. She persuasively argues that US policy on immigration and deportation is best understood in the context of the relationship between the US and the government of the applicant's country of origin. The 'troubles' differ from similar conflicts around the world because Britain, the state that has been involved in perpetuating human rights abuses in Northern Ireland, is a close ally of the US in international affairs (see e.g.: Human Rights Watch, 1991).

McElrath traces the changing approach of the US to Irish Republicans seeking to enter the country. Her starting point is the clandestine visit of Eamonn DeValera (1919-20) aimed at turning American public opinion away from the 'special relationship' which was in the process of development between the US and Britain. In many ways the undiminished US support for Britain since then, particularly since the late 1960s, is the underlying theme of this interesting book.

In a chapter on media caricatures McElrath points out that during the 1970s and 1980s the British Foreign Office attached their anti-Republican propaganda to Cold War anti-communist propaganda. They attributed a Marxist connection to Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams, a connection which, incidentally, was thoroughly laughable to anyone who was familiar with the political views of the leadership of Sinn Fein, especially at that point in time.

McElrath's treatment of the relationship between Thatcher and Reagan during the 1980s, which allowed the British to influence US foreign policy, will be viewed as a fresh approach to this issue because of the increase in intensity of the focus on Irish political prisoners in the United States. McElrath also draws attention to Reagan's influence on Thatcher when she speculates on the possibility of a different outcome to the 1981 hunger strike if he had intervened.

Despite the end of the military campaign, and the desires of leading Irish Republicans to run executive departments of a devolved British Assembly, Republicans continue to get caught in the headlights of US foreign policy. For example, it was reported in the Dublin-based *Sunday Tribune* (2nd September 2001) that Sinn Fein were reconsidering the visit by Gerry Adams to Cuba and his meeting with Fidel Castro. Their reason, announced a spokesperson, was that the peace process was at a critical moment and that Adams would be best placed in Ireland to deal with any contingency. In truth the growing opposition within the Irish lobby in the United States to such a visit is probably closer to the reason for the about face. Indeed, Peter King, Republican Congressman and long time supporter of the Sinn Fein cause, was most vocal and advised against the visit. In spite of these difficulties, it is interesting, and perhaps a measure of Adam's personal confidence in his leadership of Sinn Fein, that he decided to continue with the visit and allow himself to be photographed alongside the Cuban leader himself.

Another example is provided by the Colombian affair when three alleged IRA men were arrested and charged with providing support to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) movement in August 2001. The lengthy meeting between Rita O'Hare, Sinn Fein representative in Washington, and US officials is evidence of the concern in republican circles that a crisis in relations was already well advanced. In the wake of September 11th attacks on the US the administration has, with some success, used the Colombian affair to further pressurise the Republican Movement over the issue of decommissioning. On April 8th 2002 the London based *Guardian* was able to comment

that the republican leadership was under pressure at home and in America following the arrests in Colombia of three IRA suspects allegedly involved in the training of FARC rebels. The *Guardian* report linked the arrests in Colombia to a second, unilateral, act of decommissioning by the IRA.

McElrath's approach of placing the issue of immigration controls and extradition in an international relations context helps us to understand the apparent shifts in US policy towards Irish Republicans. Commentators discerned a shift by the Clinton administration towards favouring Irish Republicans against the wishes of the British Foreign Office, (signalled by the granting of a visa to Gerry Adams in 1994). They now suggest that there has been a shift back to favouring the British Foreign Office under Bush. McElrath helps us to understand that there is an underlying continuity in the US approach to Irish Republicans, under both administrations they have been subordinate to US interests abroad. Post September 11th this means that the British will continue to be viewed more favourably than Irish Republicans.

Perhaps it is time to confine that dusty, aging portrait of John F. Kennedy to the attic where it belongs now that, thanks to McElrath, we know that he was more in sympathy with the British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan at the time than with those he claimed as his own during his visit to Ireland in 1963. In *Unsafe Haven* McElrath has made an important contribution to an Irish understanding of our giant neighbour.

Reference

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Plural Identities – Singular Narratives: The Case of Northern Ireland

Máiréad Nic Craith

Berghahn Books 2002
PBK: ISBN: 1571813144 £50.00
HBP: ISBN: 1571817727 £18.50
pp. 235 (including: map, tables, bibliography & index)

Máiréad Nic Craith, an anthropologist and professor at the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages at the University of Ulster's Magee Campus in Derry/Londonderry, has produced a very accessible, informative and carefully researched monograph in which she lays out a well-crafted argument about the complex relationships between the construction of memory and identity in Northern Ireland's divided society.

In essence, the book analyses the difficulties that proponents of exclusive identities in Northern Ireland face in legitimizing their claims to the bases of these identities. A central problem for proponents of exclusive identities, Nic Craith points out, is that the source materials that they attempt to use to construct their 'imagined community' are often simultaneously claimed by their opponents for the other community. Tracing the dynamics ensuing from this particular way of constructing communal identities through Weberian and Geertzian 'webs of significance', such as history, religion, mythology, sport and language, Nic Craith finds that there is more that the two communities in Northern Ireland have in common than separates them. Given the ferocity of the conflict in the past and the occasional escalation even five years after the Good Friday Agreement, this cannot come as a surprise to anyone who has heard of the narcissism of minor difference and its real-world consequences in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Southeast Asia and

elsewhere. Yet, the fascination that I developed for this study stems from the meticulous way in which Nic Craith proves how much this is the case in Northern Ireland. The richly detailed accounts about how the two different communities lay claim to certain parts of Northern Ireland's history, traditions, cultural heritage and indeed every-day customs are fascinating and provide a wealth of evidence about how identity becomes politicised and how deeply people care about its foundations once they feel threatened in their claim to exclusivity.

Thus, there are a number of dimensions of identity in Northern Ireland today that are, in one way or another, claimed by both traditions – the sense of suffering and persecution is as vivid among Protestants as it is among Catholics (p. 70f.), Celtic heritage is as important to some Loyalists as it is to Nationalists and Republicans (pp. 83ff.), mural painting has become a tradition in both communities alike. By the same token, however, the two communities in Northern Ireland are as divided as ever, and this divide extends into each community as well. Different rituals (marches, parades and commemorations) separate not only two traditions, but have also erected (political) barriers within them. The persisting inter- and intra-communal divisions have their sources also in efforts to score political points on the back of invoking certain traditions and not others, the intra Unionist debates over the relative merits of an Ulster-Scots language and heritage versus Gaelic language and heritage being one case in point here (Chapter 5).

All of this begs the question whether there is a way out of the entrenchment of difference and separateness in Northern Ireland, which is now even constitutionally legitimised in the form of the 'two-traditions' paradigm that is such a prominent feature of the Good Friday Agreement, and with which Nic Craith takes issue on several occasions. In a way, her answer is symbolised by the cover photograph – Maurice Harron's sculpture 'Hands across the Divide' in Derry/Londonderry. She thus argues for the 'affirmation of hybridity' (p. 195) in the process of creating a true Northern Irish identity that can be embraced not just by the two main communities in the province, but also by all other ethnic and religious groups.

Politically/institutionally, Nic Craith suggests rights of self-government, special representation rights and group-specific rights that would allow different groups to express (and live) cultural difference if they so desire (p. 198). Clearly, and in the author's own admission, this is not something that can be easily or soon achieved and certainly not as long as 'unionists and nationalists will continue to vie with one another over the status of the *two* traditions' (p. 200, my emphasis). Even so, Nic Craith sticks with her solution of a 'multilayered approach to tradition that does not confine itself simply to the erection of dual symbols of Britishness and Irishness or the redefinition of a single local or global tradition' (p. 201). Dissolving traditional boundaries and binary oppositions would open the way towards the expression of cultural difference that does not threaten the legitimacy of other traditions and would pave the way towards a broader appreciation of a rich cultural heritage in Northern Ireland (ibid.).

This is a review written by a political scientist about the work of an anthropologist. While the two disciplines' methodologies and perspectives may be (partially) incompatible, their subjects are often identical. Nic Craith's excellent volume proves that there is a lot of potential for cross-fertilisation even if, in their final analysis, anthropologists and political scientists may disagree about what can be done to address a particular problem.

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The Elusive Quest: Reconciliation in Northern Ireland
Norman Porter
Blackstaff, 2003
PBK: ISBN: 0856407305 £14.99 ?23.70
pp. 304 (including: index)

There is a breach in the literature on Northern Irish politics. For too long there has been insufficient engagement between area specialists in the field of Northern Ireland and normative political theorists. Partly this has emanated from the inability of political theorists to provide models that can be applied to the complicated, antagonistic scenario that exists in Northern Ireland. At the same time, however, there has been a tendency amongst area specialists to view politics in Northern Ireland in traditional terms focusing on the ethno-national divide and ignoring theoretical perspectives beyond those that dominate the politics of conflict resolution such as consociationalism. Whilst understandable perhaps, this situation is one which reinforces the 'two traditions' paradigm in Northern Ireland and fences off a range of debates in political theory which potentially offer new avenues for understanding politics there. Slowly, however, the task of filling this void has been taken on by a range of theoreticians who want to challenge the dominant narratives in Northern Irish politics and establish non-conventional readings of the nature of the conflict. It is in this light that we should welcome Norman Porter's most recent contribution to debate in Northern Ireland.

Porter has come to assume an iconoclastic position in debates on Northern Irish politics. He is a unionist who openly challenges the orthodox canon of unionist thought and he has had to endure considerable criticism (not least from David Trimble) in advancing his cause. What is clear, then, is that Porter's critical reconstruction of unionist politics is a courageous enterprise, albeit one that is only partially successful. Although the book does not wear its political affiliation on its sleeve, it is mainly directed at unionism. Indeed, nationalists may well recoil from the central argument that reconciliation takes place *within* Northern Ireland rather than in Ireland as a whole.

Porter makes a demanding argument for reconciliation in Northern Ireland but recognises that reconciliation is a 'hard taskmaster'. The scale of his task is large but not insurmountable because, although he understands difference and the mistrust between communities in the North, Porter does not believe that the conflicts are irreconcilable. What is required, he contends, is a move beyond strategic posturing from political actors and an understanding that a healthy society requires more than the balancing act which has enabled relative peace to be established in Northern Ireland. To be clear then, reconciliation involves much more substantive change in the mindset of people in Northern Ireland than that involved in the peace process thus far. The just society is not merely established through political procedures but must also involve acts of forgiveness, repentance, shame and apology. For Porter, reconciliation is not merely a process but 'a moral and political ideal'. In this sense, reconciliation is a clarion call for harmony to replace antagonism – a worthy ideal perhaps, but a rather difficult one to envisage in Northern Ireland where victimhood is hotly disputed. A clear pre-condition for a strong form of reconciliation requires acceptance from particular groups that they were in the wrong.

Porter is aware of the obstacles that such a normative ideal faces in the North but does not believe that they are unconquerable. He cites examples of how reconciliation has taken place to some extent in Australia, although their applicability in the Northern Irish context is debatable. Furthermore, whilst Porter could probably produce examples of reconciliation in the North, the book does not explain how we are to deal with the new conflicts and animosities which will arise in any pluralistic society. In itself, then, reconciliation offers a form of closure on old conflicts and injustices but it does not

necessarily provide a regulative ideal that can help us deal with the disagreements of tomorrow. Porter is critical of the 'peace without reconciliation' scenario that has evolved in Northern Ireland as insufficient but it is not immediately clear how reconciliation can provide the basis of a future polity there given that it is primarily focused on the past. In other words, how can we state that the ideal of reconciliation is the most appropriate method of dealing with conflicts that have not taken place yet?

Porter criticises those who he sees as promoting a cynical perspective that fails to challenge the ingrained prejudices and bitterness of Northern Irish society. Here he depicts a range of villains but, most notably, Arthur Aughey from within the ranks of unionist commentators and a less specific group of 'radical pluralists' influenced by post-modern and post-structuralist thinkers such as Foucault, Rorty and Derrida. His claim is that these cynics develop a relativist position whereby differences in Northern Ireland must be accepted as they are. As a result Porter claims that they essentialise groups either side of the ethno-national divide and construct impediments to reconciliation by insisting that the plurality of values that exist in Northern Ireland are incommensurable. In short, these commentators stick their heads in the sand rather than engaging with the potential of reconciliation. This would be a serious charge but it is built upon something of a caricature of both Aughey and the less specified 'radical pluralists'. The implications of radical pluralism are neither that we do nothing about existing conflicts nor do they entail that we accept a cultural relativist position regarding groups in Northern Ireland. Instead, they are predicated upon the idea that conflict and disagreement is constitutive of politics and therefore that the enforcement of a moral ideal such as reconciliation could potentially hamstring the normal processes of democracy. What this entails is an acceptance of the contingent nature of democratic politics and a shift away from the fetishistic attachment to 'problem-solution' that dominates the literature on Northern Ireland.

Porter is to be congratulated for his willingness to take on many of the shibboleths of Northern Irish politics and to put the case for a reconstructed unionism. Moreover, he demonstrates the wealth of new arguments that can be brought to bear by an engagement between political theorists and Northern Ireland area specialists. Ultimately though, despite its rigour, Porter's argument is not persuasive for reasons of which he is well aware. The strong case for reconciliation makes demands which I fear are unattainable in Northern Ireland, although clearly there can be spaces in which a weaker version could operate. What is more worrying is the danger that the pursuit of reconciliation could serve to camouflage the unavoidability of conflict and disagreement in a 'normal', democratic politics. This is as true for Northern Ireland as anywhere else in the world.

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Signs of War and Peace
Jack Santino
Palgrave, 2002
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pp. 284 (including: photos, bibliography & index)

In the summer of 2003 the murals of Belfast's gable walls captured the media spotlight, not, as is often the case, as a backdrop to yet another report about conflict in Northern Ireland, but rather as a news story in their own right. A team from BBC's *Newsnight*

programme came to report on the plans to paint over some of East Belfast's loyalist murals and replace them with figures of famous local heroes, prominent among them Van Morrison, C.S. Lewis and George Best. The whitewashing of overtly militaristic images of men in balaclavas toting AK-47s, and their replacement with more anodyne figures drawn from the arts and popular culture could be said to capture in microcosm the beginnings of a broader shift in the iconography of Belfast's contemporary urban landscape. It is with this iconography and the use and display of public symbols that Jack Santino, a US-based Professor of Folklore and Popular Culture, is concerned with in his book *Signs of War and Peace. Social Conflict and the Use of Public Symbols in Northern Ireland.*

*A*n explication of 'some of the dynamics of public display performances in the context of guerrilla war', (p. 7), Santino has chosen to concentrate his attention on 'the nature of public display and its relationships to class-based aesthetics, tradition, and popular style', as well as 'contest, conflict, and civil war, and the ways in which they are all intimately intertwined, both in Northern Ireland and throughout the world', (p. ix). Among the symbolic aspects of the cultural landscape that he sets out to interrogate and which he considers 'constitutive of the violence on some levels but oppositional to the violence on others', (p. ix) are the parades, bonfires and effigy burnings, spontaneous shrines, wall murals and painted kerbstones that in large measure comprise the visual iconography of the Troubles. More than a catalogue of signs and symbols, however, *Signs of War and Peace* interweaves substantial passages of personal testimony, a product of the author's ethnographic fieldwork, which sheds new light on the capacity of what he terms the 'marked culturescape' to perpetuate a state of war as well as making tangible the very personal impact of conflict on the lives of ordinary citizens (p. 30).

In the opening chapter 'History, Conflict, and Public Display in Northern Ireland', Santino sets the scene with an account of his personal journey towards this research topic. Initially interested in carrying out an ethnographic study of Halloween as practiced in the North, Santino later expanded the scope of his work to incorporate an analysis of the many symbols and aspects of public display that prevail there. In particular, he set out to investigate 'the ways in which public symbolic forms are used socially, how they have contextual and historical meanings and how these meanings are reconstructed and recreated in particular interactions and negotiations', (p. 2). He argues, as many have before him, that in a fractured society like Northern Ireland, where identities are hotly contested, symbols become enormously powerful, 'the two sides each manifesting its existence, its identity, and its political position in simplistic, if colourful images', (p. 2). In the chapters that follow Santino ranges over a broad sweep of symbolic spaces, which he discusses across a range of continuums, chiefly, process versus product, commemorative versus performative and public versus private.

In chapter two, for example, he considers issues of public display and presentation through the lens of the Lambeg drum and the wall mural, as well as the kerbstone painting and parading rituals that are so ubiquitous in the towns, cities and countryside of Ulster. The role of assemblage, that is, 'the juxtaposition of elements that can be and often are displayed as discrete units in order to modify, strengthen, or otherwise develop a symbolic public statement', forms the focus of the third chapter, (p. 50-51). Arguing that 'the idea of assemblage provides an entrée into the multiple sets of narrative struggle expressed symbolically through competing visualities', (p. 60) Santino extends his analysis of all things symbolic to include shields, arches and flags, bonfires, effigies, flags and banners. People's motivations in creating and maintaining shrines are discussed in the fourth chapter, 'Rituals of death and politics'. Anchored around the incident on 5th February 1992 when masked gunmen shot dead five men in a betting office on the Ormeau Road, Santino demonstrates that the memorial which subsequently developed outside the shop can be viewed 'as an emergent tradition internationally, and locally as

another one of the multiplicity of visual expressions of emotion in regard to the violence and the killing in Northern Ireland', (p. 75).

In the penultimate chapter, 'Conflicts' Santino places his subject matter in broader, comparative context by exploring some other axes by which to view public events in Northern Ireland. He examines at length the 'clash of symbolism inherent in the public drama over the death of Diana', in order to delineate his point and contrast it with the clash of traditions in the North. The extent to which this analysis of a woman who had become for some a symbol of 'a contemporary, bright, active woman, trapped in a loveless marriage, who chafed against a rigid Victoria hypocrisy', (p. 102) is relevant in a book about the symbols of war and peace in Northern Ireland is debateable. While he argues that the conflict between the royal family and the British people which prevailed in the aftermath of Diana's death was 'expressed through – and constructed of – symbol and custom, flowers and flags', (p. 101), the fact remains that the clashing traditions in Northern Ireland are not between elite royalty and their popular subjects, but between two broad factions that largely share the same class. In the final chapter, 'Shared style and paradox' Santino draws on Bakhtin's work on carnival and the carnivalesque in order to explore the Apprentice Boys March in Derry. He describes 'watching the parades and the streets of Derry, thinking that in fact many of the participants did seem to be rather trashing the city … So I wondered as I wandered – this urine, or this splotch of drying vomit on the sidewalk – are these carnivalesque?', (p. 118). He goes on to explore the concept of tradition, metaphors of border and box, as well as discourses of race and territory.

Signs of War and Peace effectively demonstrates that the cultural landscape is central to the ways in which citizens of Northern Ireland imagine themselves and that 'space – claiming territory and the power and right to name it, to traverse it, to celebrate it – is a recurrent trope in the north of Ireland', (p. 16).

Santino successfully exhibits his commanding knowledge of these many and varied symbolic spaces, matching this with an impressive ability to integrate personal testimonies. His analysis offers a range of worthwhile insights in what is a relatively short text (the book is 135 pages), although at times the sheer range of landscape symbols explored, their inevitably overlapping nature, as well as Santino's sometimes cloying prose, makes for an unwieldy narrative. Nonetheless, this is a book which will undoubtedly be of interest to scholars of Northern Ireland's politics, culture and visual iconography. In interrogating practices of display it makes a useful contribution to an already substantial body of literature, while its particular strengths rest in the author's interdisciplinary approach and substantial use of fieldwork, ethnographic data and interviews.

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Bloody Sunday and the Rule of Law in Northern Ireland
Dermot P. J. Walsh
Macmillan Press, 2000
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Pbk: ISBN 0-333-72288-4 £22.50
pp. 349 (including: index, notes and references)

This book provides a welcome change from the reality accounts of Bloody Sunday that have been published to date. Walsh is not specifically concerned with the killing of thirteen unarmed civilians by British soldiers on 30th January 1972, instead he focuses on the wider impact of Bloody Sunday for the law and politics in Northern Ireland. Walsh points out that: 'even in neutral circles the events of Bloody Sunday rocked public confidence in the rule of law and the integrity of the government to the core' (p. 12). This public confidence was shattered with the publication of the Report of the official inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday. Lord Widgery's Report, Walsh maintains, demonstrated that in relation to Northern Ireland there was no impartial legal system. The obvious bias of the Report undermined faith in the rule of law and helped to exacerbate conflict in Northern Ireland.

Public confidence in the rule of law is vital if the law is to be either adhered to or upheld. In seventeenth Century the United Kingdom moved beyond the rules and procedures used in the legal systems of the Continent. Secret rules and procedures were pushed aside amid a new dawning of 'open justice' and 'public' hearings. Despite the public nature of our hearings and trials it is apparent that all public and open hearings have been and still are restricted substantially where the law and politics collide. In Northern Ireland law and politics have clashed and Bloody Sunday is perhaps the most obvious example of this.

Walsh shows that politics and the law were already in conflict before the terrible events of Bloody Sunday. In chapter two he sets the day in context. He outlines the political links of the judges and attorney general in Northern Ireland. He fills in the background picture through an outline of the marches and protests that led up to Bloody Sunday. He outlines the special powers given to Ministers and handed down to police officers, most notably the power, exercised extensively by the Unionist government, to intern suspects without a trial. All of this, he suggests, shows that the rule of law had little scope even before the events of Bloody Sunday.

Walsh is also critical of Lord Widgery's interpretation of the remit of the Inquiry and suggests that it was applied so narrowly that at times he omitted to consider the relevant law at all. Walsh suggests that such errors could be considered negligent of a Lord Chief Justice. He argues that Lord Widgery squandered the opportunity to restore public confidence in the equal application of the rule of law during this initial inquiry. The failure to prosecute the soldiers 'merely fuelled a widespread belief that the victims had been murdered by the agents of the state in the knowledge that the state would not render them accountable to the law for their actions' (p. 24). This reflects the underlying opinion of the nationalist population of Northern Ireland.

In the subsequent chapters the author then takes the reader through a detailed but necessary review of the criminal law applicable to Northern Ireland at the time of Bloody Sunday. He, for example, looks at the law governing the use of lethal force in self-defence and asks if the interpretation of the law by the security forces and the Courts before and since Bloody Sunday created 'an environment in which the security forces were encouraged to resort to the use of lethal force when they considered that necessary to the pursuit of security policy?' (p. 170). Walsh points out that at least one member of

the judiciary, Lord Justice McGonigal, raised concern that the law was providing 'unlimited licence to the security forces' (p. 177).

The problem is wider than just the issue of the use of lethal force. Walsh points out that when the law is manipulated by the forces of the state '[i]t loses its aura as a steady and unquenchable fountain of impartial justice and becomes just another tool to be used by those in power to achieve partisan security and political objectives. The rule of law is inevitably set to one side in this process' (p. 216). Walsh periodises and discusses the various ways in which the criminal justice system became another tool to serve political objectives in Northern Ireland. 1972-1975 - Military strategy (continued from 1970); 1975-1979 - Criminalisation Policy (establishing the authority of the no-jury Diplock Courts); 1979-1985 - Supergrass Policy (reliance on accomplice evidence); Early to late 1980s - Shoot-to-kill policy; late 1980s to 1990s - Collusion between security forces and loyalist terrorists (p. 233).

Walsh clearly outlines the difficulties faced by the Saville Inquiry (established in 1998 to re-examine the events of Bloody Sunday) and he comments briefly on the issue of witness anonymity. Highlighting the need to keep confidence in the rule of law at the forefront of the inquiry he points out the links between Master of the Rolls, Lord Woolf and the British Military and suggests that it raises an appearance of bias. He qualifies his statement to ensure that the reader is fully aware that he does not suggest bias but is only commenting on appearance and not substance. In the concluding chapter he outlines the obstacles that the Bloody Sunday victims and their families encountered in their attempts to achieve justice.

Bloody Sunday and the Rule of Law is an excellent analysis of the application of the rule of law and its interrelationship with security policy in Northern Ireland. Although the language in the mid-section is legalistic in style, it is easy to follow and clearly demonstrates how the rule of law was manipulated by the political and military establishment at every available opportunity, culminating in a complete breakdown in the rule of law. Although the book paints a bleak picture of the rule of law in Northern Ireland Walsh ends on an optimistic note. He is hopeful that the Good Friday Agreement and the reform of policing and the criminal justice system will herald a new beginning for Northern Ireland. He rightly comments that the timing of the Saville Inquiry is extremely important and that it signals a renewed attempt at rebuilding confidence in the rule of law.

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