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Travelling memories, the afterlife of feelings, and associative diffraction in oral histories of Northern Irish migrants to Britain during the Troubles

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes an innovative analytical framework for understanding memory work in oral history interviews with migrants who experienced the Troubles in Northern Ireland before migrating to Britain. Integrating theories of diasporic subjectivity from migration studies with conceptual developments in oral history and current research on memory, temporality and the history of emotions, it focuses on transnational dynamics in 'travelling memories' of the Troubles brought to Britain by first-generation migrants; the long temporal 'afterlife of feelings' attached to conflict memories; and the process of 'associative diffraction' whereby chronologically sequential memories are interrupted, fragmented and recombined in achronological sequences linking diverse temporal moments and spatial locations. The utility of these concepts is explored in an intensive analysis of memory dynamics and subjectivity in a single interview, with Siobhán O'Neill, who grew up Catholic, working-class and queer in nationalist/republican West Belfast at the epicentre of conflict violence, and moved to London in 1986. The article argues that the specificities of individual migration stories such as Siobhán's resist conventional generalisation, and offers a new theoretical and methodological framework for the systematic investigation of quotidian experiences, memories and silences that are unexplored in the established historiographies of the Troubles and the Irish diaspora in Britain.

KEYWORDS

Northern Irish Troubles; conflict memory; Northern Irish diaspora in Britain; oral history; temporality

Introduction

During the years of the Northern Irish war colloquially known as the Troubles, from the first killings in 1966 until the republican and loyalist paramilitary ceasefires of 1994, roughly 200,000 people migrated from Northern Ireland to Great Britain.[1] In 2001, the Census found over 295,000 Northern Ireland-born residents in Britain, comprising arrivals during the conflict and the early years of the peace process and from earlier waves of

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migration stretching back to partition and the foundation of the Northern Ireland State in the 1920s; making this 'Britain's fourth largest born-abroad group'.[2] In the light of the scale and significance of this population movement, Johanne Devlin Trew, author of the only book-length study of migration from the North, considers it 'remarkable' that 'the relationship between migration and the Northern Ireland conflict has remained largely unexplored'.[3]

A corresponding lacuna has been identified in the nascent field of research on histories, memories and legacies of the Troubles in Great Britain. Graham Dawson and Stephen Hopkins find 'relatively little systematic research to date',[4] and link this to what they call a 'cultural and political amnesia with regard to the history of the British State's coercion and neglect in Northern Ireland', and to 'the silences [. . .] that characterise British attitudes towards the legacies of conflict' in the era of the peace process.[5] The effect of this public lacuna has been 'to seal off from wider visibility and understanding the historical and current experiences of those groups and individuals most seriously affected by the Troubles'.[6] Among these groups and individuals are the tens of thousands of migrants from Northern Ireland whose identity and experience is commonly subsumed into a supposedly homogeneous 'Irish in Britain' community that has been constructed largely in terms of Catholic migrants from the Republic of Ireland; a problematic construction, particularly for Protestants from the North, who have remained 'largely invisible' in England.[7]

This article addresses these lacunae and the relations between them on the basis of an oral history project titled *Conflict, Memory and Migration: Northern Irish Migrants and the Troubles in Great Britain*, which we carried out between 2019 and 2022.[8] Our project explores the intertwined histories of emigration from Northern Ireland to Britain and of the conflict in and over Northern Ireland, whilst challenging the tendency in existing historiography to segregate the post-1945 trajectories of the two societies and polities. It does so through the prism of oral history interviews focused on questions of lived experience, memory, subjectivity and identity. Seventy-one interviews, mostly lasting between one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half hours, were carried out for the project. Fifty-two of these were with first-generation migrants from the North who were settled or had once lived in one of three British cities (London, Manchester and Glasgow) in the years before, during and after the Troubles, and 19 with the children of such migrants.[9] A life-history approach to interviewing was adopted, guided by light-touch prompting on the basis of a loose agenda of open questions inviting interviewees (in the case of the Irish-born) to remember and reflect on their 'migration journeys'[10] from departure to settlement, and on their experiences of the conflict in both Northern Ireland and Britain.

Our critical approach to interviewing, listening and interpretative analysis of the life stories in our recorded interviews is grounded in what we will call 'the Portelli tradition', after the pioneering Italian oral historian Alessandro Portelli whose work has significantly shaped a post-positivist epistemology and methodology sensitive to the specificities of oral accounts as the creations of living people.[11] Work in this tradition is based on four key ideas. Oral history involves acts of memory, which always return to the past 'afterwards', from a standpoint and perspective in the present. Remembering is a process of making sense of past experience and its significance in the present, not (just) an account of 'how things were' and 'what happened' in the past. While affording a valuable perspective on historical events that have an objective existence, memory is a subjective experience that

involves emotional, affective and psychic dimensions of meaning and feeling and is bound up with affirmations of personal and social identity. As an articulation of subjectivity, memory is represented in available cultural forms—encompassing language, narrative and the body—that communicate in an oral history interview through intersubjective relationship and dialogue between the interviewee and the interviewer.

One theme in our wider project focuses on the ways in which first-generation migrants remember their experiences of the conflict and afford distinctive perspectives on its significance and how it has been understood and remembered within lived cultures. When formulating our research questions, our assumption was that these interviewees would have detailed stories to tell us about their experiences of the Troubles in the places where they settled in Britain. Guided by the existing literature we anticipated hearing about the impact on their lives of the armed campaign of gun and bomb attacks in England conducted by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) from 1973 to 1997; about the repercussions of the hegemonic discourse of the British State and mainstream media that instituted a set of reductive binary oppositions in which 'British' signified benign law and order and 'Irish' signified evil terrorism; and about their encounters with State surveillance, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and popular anti-Irish racism, as well as their involvement with Troubles-related activism.[12] In the light of Dawson and Hopkins' argument about the amnesia and silence characterising British political and cultural responses to the conflict, we wondered whether migrants arriving from Northern Ireland found any spaces and opportunities in the places where they settled to narrate, have recognised and process emotionally, any disturbing experiences of the conflict 'back home'; and how they communicated about 'the Troubles in Britain' to their families, friends and former colleagues who had remained there.

While these themes do feature in our interviews, new questions and ways of thinking have emerged, sparked by listening to what our interviewees wanted to talk about and attending to the affective intensities of their remembering and narration. Contrary to our initial assumptions, we have been surprised to discover, for many of our interviewees, greater evident interest in talking about their experiences of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the rich detail and emotional depth of their memories relating to this episode in their 'life trajectory',[13] and the sense conveyed of its profound formative and continuing significance, often unresolved and unsettling. This discovery has led to a shift in our thinking about the conflict and its impact on migrant lives and subjectivities in two main ways. Firstly, noting how, in our original set of research questions, our enquiry into experiences of the Troubles 'in' Northern Ireland tended to be framed in terms of their role in the decision to migrate, we have been brought to recognise their *extended temporal significance* within migrants' lives and life stories. Secondly, we have been struck by the fluid *transnational interconnections* made by British-based migrants with their previous lives and selves. The memory work undertaken by our interviewees to negotiate and narrate their temporal relation to the conflict lived in Northern Ireland 'back then' also entails a spatial relation to the conflict 'over there', mediated through these subsequent life experiences and positionalities 'over here' in Britain.

Responding to these two insights has led us into exploration of the 'travelling memories' of the Troubles that migrants took with them to Britain and have continued to live with ever since, and the ways in which these 'mnemonic forms and contents are filled with new life and new meaning in changing social, temporal and local contexts'.[14] Our aim in

this article is to engage in such an exploration through a detailed reading of one particular interview. To begin, we identify conceptual and methodological resources for this task. Drawing on, and contributing to, the literature on migration, oral history theory and practice, and research on memory, temporality and emotion, we propose a new dimension of analysis for wider consideration in historiography and cultural studies concerned with the Troubles and the Irish diaspora in Britain, and in studies of conflict memory and migration in other contexts.

Theory and method: oral history, memory, subjectivity and the time-spaces of diaspora

Our interest in these themes of temporal and transnational negotiations in diasporic experience and memory is echoed by, and draws on, critical work in migration studies.[15] Current theories of diasporic subjectivity emphasise its liminality, occupying a position (according to Avtar Brah's influential concept) 'in "diasporic space" located between "here" and "there"'.[16] Of particular interest for this article is Anne-Marie Fortier's queer perspective on migrants' complex relationship to the place of departure, figured as 'the childhood home'.[17] Contrary to those lesbian and gay stories of estrangement telling how 'one has to move out in order to come out'[18] – 'to leave "home" in order to realise oneself in *another* place'[19] – Fortier argues that experience of the childhood home is 'not simply left behind, nor [. . .] isolated and detached from present lives'.[20] Rather than conceiving identities as sequentially tied to demarcated life stages situated in distinct and segregated spaces, she suggests that migration creates opportunities for the migrant subject to reassess the experiences of its younger self and the 'culture of normality'[21] within which it then existed, from a positionality in this other place. Informed by new configurations of desire, attachment and estrangement, such reassessment 'opens up the possibility that the childhood home can be lived differently in its re-membering'.[22] Memories of childhood consisting of associations with particular 'places [. . . ,] faces and bodies [. . .] and emotions'[23] connect and mix with associations derived from subsequent locations of 'home', in such a way that the diasporic subject revisits where it came from but now as 'an outsider' shaped by multiple belongings.[24]

Considered in these terms, Northern Ireland migrants to Britain have undertaken a journey out of diverse spaces impacted unevenly by violent conflict and its constitutive pressures into new environments that are differently, and less intensely, affected by the Troubles.[25] Our migrant interviewees travel with and continue to reflect on memories of their younger, formative conflict experiences, that are now reassessed and reworked from the vantage point and cultural context of the lives and identities they have fashioned in the British towns and cities where they were living at the time of their interviews (between 2019 and 2021), and other locations at other times. In these spaces they have made new homes and social relationships, some have encountered the violence of the Troubles enacted in Britain, and most have had to contend with the responses and silences, knowledges and ignorances concerning the conflict on the part of British people and institutions. Here, while undergoing an experience of becoming and self-making, they don't 'leave behind' their subjectivity formed in the course of the conflict. As studies of the affective and 'traumatic' impact of conflict violence on people who continued to live in Northern Ireland have shown, its psychic

effects are profoundly disturbing and difficult to absorb emotionally, and persist, sometimes for decades.[26] In this long '"afterlife" of emotion' – a concept that points to 'the ways in which feelings "live on" dynamically in time' – the affective residues of conflict retain a 'potential for longevity but also for recurrence, re-emergence, ebb and flow, repetition'.[27]

The dynamic temporal afterlife of feelings originating in experiences of the Troubles in the North of Ireland tends to disrupt any linear chronological narrative of the migration journey and manifests in the form of a more complex temporality in which, as Fortier argues, 'different states and moments have no beginning or ending but rather extend into one another'.[28] This phenomenon is familiar to oral historians. As Graham Dawson observes:

> Oral history interviewees are responding to questions and prompts by interviewers who are often interested in establishing a chronological history of their experiences according to a linear timeline; and interviewees often make efforts to organise the memories evoked through this dialogue in accordance with such a timeline. However, the feelings aroused in and by these interviews are not always amenable to such a narration. Rather, they give rise to memories that jump about from one temporal moment to another.[29]

In the interviews conducted for our project, exploration of these fluid states and moments is facilitated by the flexible life-story approach adopted by our interviewers (Barry, Fearghus and Jack), who guided interviewees to 'tell their story' from departure to arrival, settlement and subsequent life through open questions and gentle prompts, whilst granting them freedom to follow the flow of their memories backwards and forwards between Britain and Northern Ireland as their interests arise and are stimulated in the act of telling. In critical interpretation of our interviews, a linear chronology of an individual's life trajectory can be traced in and reconstructed from this dynamic flow of memory, but we are also concerned to understand the complexities of temporality in the narration and what they can tell us about the meanings and feelings evoked by the remembering of migration experience and its relation to the conflict.

Central to our analysis of how these temporal-spatial dynamics shape the movements of memory and flows of feeling within an oral history interview, is Dawson's concept of associative diffraction.[30] This draws on psychoanalytic thought on the unconscious association of ideas,[31] seen as the psychic grammar connecting memories of diverse past experiences to what Freud termed the 'day's residues' of current thoughts and feelings.[32] Diffraction affords a metaphor for the temporal disturbance in memory-flows as they encounter affects that cause interruption, break-up and dispersal, oscillation between multiple temporal moments, and associative convergences across significant locations in 'time-space'.[33] Approaching our oral history interviews in these terms, we aim to tease out the specific dynamics of diffraction affecting their conflict memories from Northern Ireland within life stories of migration narrated from their 'present' positionality and efforts towards subjective composure.

The influential concept of composure, first proposed by the Popular Memory Group at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and developed by Dawson and Penny Summerfield, understands acts of personal remembering and storytelling to be shaped by conflicts within subjectivity *and* to be in dialogue with wider cultural narratives and discourses.[34] As summarised by Dawson,

> The story that is [...] told is always the one preferred amongst other possible versions, and involves a striving, not only for a formally satisfying narrative or a coherent narrative of events, but also for a version of the self that can be lived with in relative psychic comfort – for, that is, subjective composure[35]

Furthermore, as Summerfield describes it, '"Composure" inevitably involves narrators drawing upon and interacting with the discourses about the past that circulate in the public domain in the search for a way of telling their own story that is satisfying, meaningful and affirming'.[36] The breaking-up and temporal dispersal of memories and their re-articulation in new achronological combinations through associative diffraction complicates such efforts, which have to contend with psychic states, feelings and embodied affects derived from diverse times and locations.

Composure should thus be understood not as an achieved outcome fixed in a singular form of 'my story', but as an ongoing, fluid process of self-narration that ebbs and flows over a life course according to the psychic life of memory, emotion and affect within the internal world as this interacts with available cultural narratives and the changing circumstances of the external, social world. In the telling of a life story, a preferred version of the self may be protected against threats to its equanimity from unsettling, anxiety-laden and potentially overwhelming affective states, by means of a 'defensive composure' that confines these to a walled-off area of the psyche where they can be consigned to a forgotten past. When the self has both the capacity and opportunity to admit disturbing feelings, tolerate, digest and reflect on them, and make sense of their provenance and effects, their integration and 'containment' within the stories it tells about its own lived experience makes possible 'reparative composure'.[37] The endeavour towards composure may oscillate between these two modes, not only as a matter of internal psychic work but 'an inescapably social process' dependent upon 'social recognition, with its power to confirm that the versions of self and world figured in a narrative [...] resonate with the experiences of others' to whom it is told.[38]

The intersubjective space of an oral history interview may afford opportunities for social recognition of interviewees' experiences and memories that are not readily recognisable in the cultures of everyday life, and thereby enable the composure of a more integrated life story. But conversely, interviewees may find they lack a language or cultural form to convey experiences that may be complex and disjointed due to diffraction, that remain unsettling, or that don't fit into recognisable discursive frameworks; and interviewers may be unable to respond to or encourage their attempts to convey such experiences. Summerfield's concept of discomposure is widely used to refer to such discordance. Observing that 'composure may not always be achieved' in an oral history interview, Summerfield argues that: 'A particular terrain of memory or line of enquiry, or an uncomprehending and unsympathetic response from an audience, may produce discomposure, that is personal dis-equilibrium, manifest in confusion, anger, self-contradiction, discomfort and difficulties of sustaining a narrative'.[39] While valuable as a diagnostic tool, however, this concept is too blunt an instrument to analyse the complex temporal and spatial dynamics in oral interviews and the varied ways in which migrant interviewees grapple with the afterlife of feelings generated in spaces of conflict, that are our concern here.[40]

In striving to compose 'a version of the self that can be lived with in relative psychic comfort', our interviewees are seeking ways of integrating their memories of the Troubles experienced in Northern Ireland within a life story centred on their migration journey and the diasporic subjectivity that it engenders in this context. Yet, disturbing currents within conflict memory can prove resistant to any such integration. In their efforts during their oral history interview to shape emotionally and represent meaningfully felt disjunctions in experience and memory of the Troubles, our interviewees are confronted by unsettling affective dynamics that manifest in associative diffraction and disturb the narration of their migration-centred life stories. These dynamics may be intensified by dissonant experiences of the conflict in Britain together with a dearth of shared narratives, leading to a lack of informed and empathic understanding in host communities (particularly in England) of conflict experiences in Northern Ireland, and a tendency towards misrecognition of Northern Irish identities.

In what follows, our close reading of a single interview is informed by this theoretical work on composure in relation to the dynamic flow of states of feeling and the associative diffraction of conflict memory across and between the contrasting time-spaces of Northern Ireland and England. Focusing in depth on one interview enables us to experiment with a methodology for listening, interpretation and writing that is sufficiently sensitive to the rich detail and individual specificity of an individual's memory work shaped by these transnational, temporal and emotional dynamics. The recorded interview and its transcript are considered as a contingent moment in time and space, situated within a longer temporal process of experience, memory, reflection and making sense within the individual migrant's life course. The analysis follows and explores the sequential flow of relatively settled memories grounded on temporally enduring states of feeling that contribute to composure of an integrated life story, and those more unsettled feeling-states that arise in the course of remembering and narrating conflict experience. Through this mode of close analysis we aim to demonstrate the value of our temporal and transnational framework and approach to oral history for understanding the diasporic subjectivities of migrants from Northern Ireland in Britain and the distinctive perspectives they afford on the history and memory of the Troubles.

The afterlife of feelings, diffraction and composure in Siobhán O'Neill's interview

Siobhán O'Neill was born in 1962 into a Catholic family on the nationalist and republican Falls Road in West Belfast, one of the areas where conflict violence reached its 'greatest intensity'.[41] She was six years old when the Troubles erupted in Belfast in 1969 and grew up during what she terms 'the height of the most extreme violence' of the conflict.[42] On leaving school in 1981, aged 18, she 'went straight into a job' as personal secretary to a hospital director and moved out of the family home into accommodation on Donegall Road. In 1983 she moved to Cork in the Irish Republic and travelled to London in 1986 where she lived until 1999 working first as a secretary and subsequently as a social worker and counsellor, before relocating to a job in northern England where she was interviewed by Barry Hazley in November 2019. Siobhán's life story is shaped by multiple pressures and disturbances in younger life and conveys emotional intensities stemming from her experience of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Her interview both tells of, and enacts, a striving

for composure through coming to terms with the emotional afterlife of her conflict experience and negotiating its reverberations in her social relationships in England.

Asked at the start of the interview about why she was interested in taking part, Siobhán replies: 'What an opportunity to talk about yourself [both laugh], and also I think it's really important that this gets recorded because we've got such a story to tell and it's very different now I think for people coming here from home to what it was when I came in 1986'. Both her enjoyment in talking and her desire to record an important story, that is at once personal and seen as collective and generationally specific, echo throughout the interview. The migrant subjectivity she speaks from, and the 'we' she hopes to speak for, is a complexly intersectional amalgam of Belfast Catholic, working class[43] and queer. The centrality of her lesbian sexuality as a vital affective current in her life story is asserted 10 minutes into the interview when she challenges Barry that the information sent to her about our project 'never mentioned sexuality' as a topic for discussion.

Siobhán's memories of her early life during the Troubles and the circumstances of her departure from Northern Ireland are narrated from the position of a considerably older self and shaped by her life and experience in England over more than 30 years. She remembers with a keen awareness of distance between the time-space of her younger experience in the 1970s and the '80s and that of her interview in 2019,[44] with moments of explicit reflection on the contrasts between then and now, here and there, that play a vital role in the life story she wants to tell. Siobhán talks animatedly about the conditions of her life and significant relationships that have shaped her subjective experience; about her understanding—and lack of understanding—of her own feelings and actions 'at the time'; and about the sense she has been able to make afterwards. In this narration much of her affective experience is settled and presented as such, the outcome of the composure she has fashioned over the course of her life in England. However, throughout the interview Siobhán also encounters unsettled and sometimes still unsettling feelings emanating from her experiences of growing up in Belfast during the Troubles, reflects on them, and works towards their integration within her life story of migration. This emotionally open and self-reflective quality of Siobhán's memory work on her conflict-formed subjectivity makes her interview a particularly apposite and compelling case study for understanding the process of associative diffraction. In the analysis that follows we track the discontinuous temporal flow of her memories, tease out how her narration is continually interrupted as memories and feelings from one time-space intrude into the other, and trace the composure she works for in response to emotionally complex and unsettling moments that arise in the course of the interview.

Growing up in the Belfast conflict zone, 1962–83

Siobhán's intense interest in speaking about her Belfast upbringing occupies the first 45 minutes of an interview lasting 1 hour and 50 minutes. Prompted initially by Barry's opening questions about her family background, education and relationship to the church, she talks in detail about her childhood and early adulthood prior to leaving Belfast for Cork, in which her memories of a turbulent home life, teenage sexuality and love of nature are closely interwoven with her memories of the Troubles. In contrast to her father, who 'never really featured in our growing

up' or 'in my life, really', her mother figures as the dominant influence on her early experience.

In a considered evaluation made some 40–50 years afterwards from her location in the north of England, Siobhán composes a reparative account of her emotionally ambivalent relationship as a girl and young woman with her mother, whose multi-faceted and contradictory presence emerges in contrasting memories that are threaded through this first part of the interview. Siobhán presents her mother as 'a proud Irish woman' who 'pushed' her five children in educational achievement, gave them a 'strong' Irish identity, and grounded them in 'a very acute sense of what is fair and doing the right thing, and that's never left me, you know, that's even how I do my work and stuff like that, I'm obsessed about doing the right thing and being fair and I think that's part of growing up in Northern Ireland 'cause it wasn't fair'. As well as acknowledging this lasting moral influence, Siobhán also expresses a deep appreciation of the way her mother 'tolerated' and supported her independent-mindedness as a girl—'I was quietly rebellious, I had my own mind [...] when I look back on it, you know, I was really encouraged to kind of, I suppose be my own person'.[45] Yet towards the end of this Belfast-based sequence of memories, her mother is also revealed to have been 'very violent' herself to Siobhán in punishment for those same traits:

> SO'N: 'cause I also grew up in a very violent house. My mother was very violent to me, even though I was, like, the one that she leant on most, but because I was the second eldest, the most rebellious, a quiet rebellious person, you know, like, first one to swear in the house, first one to not go to mass, you know, first one to come home pissed at 18, soon as I turned 18 I was like, right, drink, I waited until I was legal, so they couldn't say anything, you know, so I was kind of the first, the first, the first in my family to do stuff, so I got the shite knocked out of me for lots of stuff, like, badly.
>
> BH: By your mum?
>
> SO'N: By my mother, yeah, yeah, yeah.
>
> BH: I find that difficult to reconcile with the image of her doing the –
>
> SO'N: I know, exactly, this is, imagine how my head was.

Here Barry's surprise and request for clarification underlines the sharply split emotional character of the relationship, and enables Siobhán to point out its psychic impact in terms of her own turn to alcohol, 'because it sort of sorted all that mess out in my head, well, it numbed it, you know'.

This account of domestic violence emerges in Siobhán's explanation of how she came to leave the family home—'so I was desperate to leave home, 'cause they were just doing my head in'. But first she emphasises the later-achieved reparative composure of these dark memories through her representation of the good mother who 'was also really loving and caring'. This is the vehicle for conveying an emotionally integrated understanding 'that, I think it was all, you know, hindsight's wonderful, isn't it?, the pressure she was under like a bloody boiling melting pot to keep five kids safe'; an understanding that generates the reparative settlement, 'so I can forgive her and I have forgiven her for her nastiness 'cause, well, why wouldn't I?'

Siobhán does not dwell on this domestic violence, but it is entwined with the 'affective atmosphere'[46] she conveys of everyday life growing up in an environment saturated by multiple, intersecting forms of violence, where the home was not straightforwardly a 'space of comfort and familiarity' but an ambivalent site of 'estrangement' and danger.[47] She and her siblings were profoundly affected by their mother's forthright anti-IRA stance in an area of the city where republican politics of armed resistance to the British military occupation was the communal norm. Siobhán remembers her mother defying 'a big call on the Falls [. . .] for families not to send their children during the hunger strikes to school, of course my mother sent us'; so 'we stood out as a family [. . .] because we weren't involved, my mother made sure we didn't join up'. Standing out in this way exposed the family to the threat of retributive violence. On one occasion, after 'she wouldn't let the IRA come into the youth club' attached to a local church on the Falls Road that she ran with friends, to prevent them trying to recruit there, the 'IRA sent an ambulance to our house [. . .] and I was at home and I remember the ambulance saying we've come because we've been told that Cathy O'Neill, that was my mother, has been shot so that was a veiled threat to my mother, if she carried on [. . .] but they did carry on'.[48] In telling this anecdote[49] Siobhán provides a vivid example of family life in the 'boiling melting pot' of the Falls. Her narration also conveys a reparative admiration for her mother's moral courage in standing up for her principles as a care-giver and refusing to be cowed, that works to contain a more ambivalent, disturbing implication that her mother had put her children at risk by this same stance.

Siobhán remembers her experience of the conflict largely through such anecdotes conveying this affective atmosphere of danger and fear. These less settled memories of disturbing, frightening and emotionally contradictory experiences are recounted in achronological sequences according to the temporal rhythms of what Alessandro Portelli (quoting one of his own interviewees) calls 'shuttlework' – whereby '"I go back and forth [in time] like a shuttle".'[50] However, shuttlework is too mechanistic a metaphor for the fluid diffractive associations that make a conflux between conflict memories and remembered feelings from ordinary, everyday life. So, Siobhán's first reference to the conflict arises through an associative link from her account of schooling at a large comprehensive school for girls on the Falls. This opens into the memory of 'some horrific times at school', a 'generalizing of multiple experiences'[51] that quickly settles on one particular moment; an occasion during the republican hunger strikes of 1981 when 'the IRA came into [our school], they got up on the stage with guns and told the school they had to close, you know, and we were all sitting having our lunch and the next thing the 'RA[52] are in and you think "ooh"'. A further memory linked in the temporality of "that summer of the hunger strikes", is of the girls' regular afternoon journey home through the rioting:

> so we had to dodge, you know, plastic bullets, petrol bombs, and stuff like that [. . .] and I always remember, like, well Bobby Sands was the first one to die and how severe that was, you know, and I always remember coming, trying to get home from school when he had died and there was a shopkeeper, [his] shop was a sweet shop and he let a whole load of us into the shop and shut the door to keep us safe 'cause the soldiers were shooting and we couldn't get home safely, you know, even though I was only two streets away.

This passage of memory about confrontations with disturbing or dangerous conflict violence stems from a story about her education, which Siobhán then resumes—'going back to what we were saying' – with her leaving school that summer and her decision to go to work rather than university.

Siobhán's next reference to what she calls the 'war' occurs several minutes later when, instead of responding to a question from Barry about how she experienced its emotional impact as a teenager, she 'loops back'[53] to 'one of my earliest memories' as a six-year-old child. Living on the interface between the Falls Road and Protestant Donegall Road, in a time identified as 'before the paratroopers arrived' when 'loyalists were coming up and burning Catholics out of their houses', she remembers her father joining the vigilantes to build barricades and being 'on sentry duty', and her mother buying her 'a pair of blue shorts': 'I was a right tomboy as you can imagine, and [. . .] I loved these shorts [. . .] and I remember to this day, sliding down, you know, the sheet of corrugated iron on the barricade? And I ripped the arse out of these new shorts, and my mother nearly killed me'. This memory then flows seamlessly into a later time—'young, less than ten [. . .] very early '70s, maybe even been still the late, you know, '60s' – when 'it got so serious [. . .] I remember watching, you know, when you talk about refugees, people talk about it and I'm like, Jesus that was me, years ago! And I remember seeing, like, convoys of people, Catholics, you know, with vans packed up and with all their belongings that they could possibly take'. In this diffractive association, Siobhán momentarily recognises an aspect of her own past experience in current images and conversations about the refugee crises of the 2010s, before returning to the flow of her own childhood memories. Her family were evacuated for a few weeks by her father's company to a 'really posh hotel' in Malahide, an affluent suburb of Dublin; and 'what I always remember is [. . .] there's somebody playing a grand piano, there was horses in a paddock and I always remember us lot thinking, Jesus we can have rice crispies every day'. What 'sticks in the mind' from these two childhood experiences some fifty years earlier, are the sensory traces of everyday objects—the blue shorts, the horses, the rice crispies—that attach flows of remembered affect (fear, shame, joy) rooted in family relationships to happenings of the unfolding conflict barely understood at the time;[54] 'so that's, like, my memories of the Troubles'.

These anecdotes prompt Barry to ask Siobhán, 'were your parents political?' Having explained that 'they weren't political by any means', Siobhán immediately follows with a sequence of reflections about the inescapability of the British military occupation in the nationalist Falls. Here, she again loops back to the beginning of the conflict with the common local memory of 'when the paratroopers came in and everybody was, like, out on the street walking with the soldiers [. . .] and, like, women making them sandwiches and tea'.[55] Her observation, 'that obviously rapidly changed', segues into her memory of soldiers coming into the house to conduct a census of occupants on the Falls:[56]

> so they're saying to [my ma] like, what are the name of your children? So she goes Niamh, Áine, Cathal, Maeve, Oonagh and the guy had, I remember I was there at the time, he didn't believe her, and he thought they, she was making these names up and never, and they certainly couldn't spell them, but he hadn't a clue and, you know, and of course that set us out because Irish names to them and to most of the soldiers and the RUC, like when we used to go through the checkpoints in Belfast, soon as I'd say my name, oh shite, Siobhán, it was republican, she couldn't just be a human being so, you know, as much as my mother gave us

> that real pride in our culture and stuff it also was a real hindrance at the time living in the Troubles because we were singled out all the time, for having Irish names, and we were stopped.

Here, Siobhán's conflict memory of being misrecognised as republican by British soldiers who 'hadn't a clue' is associated through diffraction with an ambivalent sense of her mother's responsibility for her children being 'singled out' for police and military harassment as a paradoxical consequence of her pride in their Irishness.

Siobhán returns a little later in the interview to reveal further deep ambivalence in her feelings towards British soldiers, that also stems from her mother's moral influence. This emerges in Siobhán's next explicit reflection on her conflict memories in a sequence of associative connections that begin with a 'place memory'.[57] Happy recollections of star-gazing with her mother and rural holidays beside the sea and the Mourne Mountains at Newcastle shift abruptly to an anecdote about an occasion when the family narrowly escaped a bomb explosion there:

> we were all really young, in the middle of the night the army and the RUC came and they got us out of the house because they'd had a bomb warning for the post office in Newcastle and we were staying near there, in this really nice house and they came and they were just getting us out of the house and the bomb went off, yeah and I always remember 'cause we're all in our night clothes, like pyjamas and stuff, we were only young, and, like, I always remember a soldier taking off his jacket, 'cause we were freezing, you know, we literally ran out of the house in our pyjamas, a fecking bomb went off and I always remember the soldier wrapping his jacket, some of the soldiers putting their, taking their coats off, the big army, like, jackets and putting them round us.

Later, 'we heard it was a huge bomb and the house was fucking wrecked, you know, the windows were in, the doors were all off, they literally saved our lives'. Here the hated and feared oppressors that figure in Northern Irish nationalist and republican memory are transformed into carers and saviours, prompting Barry's surprised question, 'That soldier putting the coat around you, was that a strange thing to happen?' In her affirmation, 'God yeah, absolutely', Siobhán locates the incongruity not only in the care and protection expressed through the soldiers' action but also in her family's emotional capacity to receive it:

> this was why we stood out I think, 'cause my mother didn't tell us to hate the soldiers, and she just didn't, and so when they did that they looked after us, you know, and you could feel it, so we did stand out because we didn't hate them, but I knew I was meant to hate them but I couldn't 'cause I wasn't brought up like that.

Here, we can witness the ambivalent tension between the hate she and her siblings were 'meant' to feel according to the 'emotional community'[58] of the Falls, and what they had been brought up to feel through the moral teaching and example of her mother—a tension remembered as continually exposing the O'Neill family as suspiciously different.

This reflection on her transgressive feelings about British soldiers prompts a further, more intimately personal memory, of a forbidden empathy felt by Siobhán in her early teens on encountering a young Black soldier a few years older than herself on armed patrol,

> and I remember this guy coming up the street and he crouched down in our, where the garden gate was and I remember holding his stare and seeing the fear in that young fella's face and I can still see his face now totally, I can see what he looked like and the fear, and that was the first time I'd ever seen a Black person, you know, in real life [...] to actually see a young Black man in an army outfit, in his uniform and looking so scared and I always remember that, it was a fleeting thing of moments where we just held each other and [...] I remember thinking I just want you to know I'm not like everybody else, and I remember thinking that at that age.

In this anecdote of a fleeting but long-remembered moment, the affective power of the memory stems from that unguarded mutual gaze allowing Siobhán to glimpse and recognise the young man's fear. The persistence and affective potency of this remembered moment perhaps stems from its capacity to function as a figure for Siobhán's rejection of conventional political feeling in the pervasive atmosphere of conflict violence, and over time to become 'a personal memory encompassing general principles about self, values, and beliefs'.[59] While 'I remember thinking that at that age', the snagging of this childhood experience in memory can also be understood in terms of associative diffraction, the significance of Siobhán's empathic reaction to 'the first time I'd ever seen a Black person' being infused with her awareness of the similarities in historical experience she remembers sharing with people of African and Caribbean origin as an older woman in multicultural England (discussed below). In seeing past the difference signalled by his Blackness, his British Army uniform and his gun, she extends to this soldier acknowledgement of his humanity. The recognition is associated in memory with an impossible desire to disavow her own positioning in the socio-political relations of the conflict, through a wish to communicate to him her own difference from 'everybody else' in feeling no hatred towards him. Remembered through the anti-racist but also queer perspectives acquired afterwards, that transient moment of 'holding his stare' may also encapsulate something unrecognisable at the time: namely, the transgressive alterity that Siobhán as a girl or young woman shared with this soldier, through an identification of his conspicuous Blackness with her concealed queer sexuality.

Life transitions: love, sexuality and the family

A second central thread in Siobhán's life story, that 'interweave[s], communicate[s] and influence[s]' her remembering of the war in Northern Ireland,[60] is the memory of her active, forbidden sexuality discovered in her 'secret relationship at 15 with a girl from school', a love affair that lasted for three years and 'kept me sane I think through the Troubles'. She begins to speak of it in response to a question of Barry's about the importance of the church in her early life:

> The church was tortuous [...] so from, like, the age of 15 I knew I liked girls and I had a relationship [...]'til I was 18 with a girl at school and so religion really was tormenting us because we were brought up very strict Catholics, you know, we were all marched out as a family, seven of us would go to mass on a Sunday when we were young [...] we all did it, we made your first communion, did your first confirmation and, you know, all that crap, and so it was only when I got to about the age of probably 15, 16, one day I thought, do you know what, I can't listen to you anymore.

Siobhán presents this as a key transitional moment in her life course,[61] a moment of self-assertion and struggle to become her own person freed of the controlling authority of church and family religion. Precipitated by the hypocrisy of a priest preaching at mass, who 'the night before had been in my family home pissed' (and, she reveals later, had been abusing her brother), 'I walked out during the sermon and I never went back, and my mother couldn't do anything about it 'cause she knew how stubborn I was and [. . .] I think she knew she was losing her grip'.

This transgressive self-assertion is associated in memory with her blossoming queer sexuality: 'My mother knew, she must have seen something in me, she knew I was attracted to girls 'cause she always tried to, you know, she was always watching me'. However, 'because we were brought up Catholic nobody ever said anything about it'. Siobhán recalls how breaking the grip of religious morality was not easily accomplished:

> it was all just related to sex so I knew I was having sex and I shouldn't have been, I was 16, 15, so I was definitely condemned to hell, so like we really struggled with what we were doing even at that age, thinking, feeling so guilty, you know, we'll be punished and blah blah blah blah blah and because of the church, the Catholic church and its, you know, God, Jesus, what it was like in the '70s listening to the bloody prie–, you know the fire and brimstone type stuff so.

Here, evaluating this pivotal moment in her life from a settled perspective on religion and sexuality that she achieved long afterwards, Siobhán remembers a 'past' feeling of guilt contingent on 'what it was like in the '70s', before evoking a quite different current of feeling that pervades her recollection and narration of this vital, loving relationship:

> I love looking back at that in terms of sexuality but [pause] that kind of, it was a, it's like it kept me sane I think through the Troubles because it was at the height of the riots and, but we, the thing that I find fascinating is, about this now, and I've thought about this long and hard for years, is that at that time we had no language. You imagine, we were like brought up working class, middle of west Belfast, in the height of the Troubles, strict Catholic families, nobody had any language around sexuality then, I didn't know I was a lesbian, I didn't know that 'til I went to London, you know, I didn't know anything around sexuality and it was fascinating so we just knew that we loved each other.

These memories of the relationship hinge on what was known and not known 'at that time' and what became knowable only later 'when I went to London', both diffracted through what Siobhán knows now. They also evoke feelings present in the interview: she tells Barry that 'I love looking back at', and 'find fascinating [. . .] now', the loving qualities of the girls' intimacy, despite or perhaps because of it flourishing without the language to name and understand the experience and the transgression, that was only acquired subsequently, in adult diasporic life. The acquisition of that language ushers in a continuing temporal process of reflection on these experiences of her younger self and their significance as the origin of her journey of self-discovery, about which 'I've thought [. . .] long and hard for years'.

That the girls did have their own language becomes apparent in a deeply intimate memory awakened by the interview itself:

> SO'N: 'cause I knew I was coming to see you, something came back into my head recently and this might, yeah, I'll say it anyway, so I never knew the word orgasm, didn't know what that was, so we used to say, we used to say that we exploded.
>
> BH: Right, exploded.
>
> SO'N: Yeah, 'cause I remember saying to each other, and I don't know if that's too intimate a thing to say, but I think about that even now and I'm 57 and that happened when I was 15 but the word that we used to experience an orgasm and sexual pleasure was like an explosion, like a bomb because you got that euphoric feeling but it also fitted with the context of the way we were growing up, and [. . .] I find it fascinating that that's how we saw that.

As Siobhán thinks 'long and hard for years' about the unrecoverable excitement of her first, secret, sexual relationship, then, she is also remembering and making sense of the Troubles, 'the context of the way we were growing up', and how this love 'kept me sane' through the violence – an association so important that she repeats it twice.

Although in school the two girls 'got bullied because people were kind of thinking that we might be having a relationship together', Siobhán remembers her sexual relationship as affording an antidote to the pervasive violence in her home, school and community life in the conflict zone of West Belfast. The memory of her lover is associated with two affectively significant places of escape from this. In one,

> all we were doing was having sex and everybody thought we were studying [laughs], 'cause I used to go down to her house and she, you know, had this, they had this sort of four storey house and her bedroom was right at the top so we took full advantage, her parents were on the ground floor and all we ever did was, you know, we did a wee bit of work but we'd get distracted by each other so, but it kept me sane.

Even more resonant for Siobhán as a working-class teenager than this bedroom on the fourth floor of her lover's family's extensive house, 'her parents had a little cottage up in the Glens of Antrim, one of my most favourite places up in Glenariff':

> they had this old cottage, you know, my idea of heaven and still is but there was, like, no running water or anything and, but we used to go there and spend a lot of time, you know, get away out of Belfast and go walking up the Glens, you know, in the Cushendall, Cushendun, up the back roads and spend time there in the summer or weekends and that was just like heaven to me and I can still remember, you know, smelling the gorse bushes up around Cushendun in the summer and that smell of, that sort of, like, honey coconut aroma of that gorse and I still love that to this day, and that kind of kept us sane.

The long durational temporality of these feelings attached to the place where 'we used to go' and 'get away out of Belfast' is conveyed in the warm tone of Siobhán's voice here, her languid dwelling on the names and on the scent of the gorse that snags in memory, and her repetitive emphasis on how she 'still' loves and remembers this idyll and its associations.

The lasting affective potency of Siobhán's love of the natural world in Northern Ireland is also expressed in the interview by her expression of profound emotional attachment to the Mourne Mountains, 'my absolute love affair'. She explains her love as rooted in formative experiences of walking in the mountains, that became 'a place of sanctuary for me' and 'absolutely an escape', valued for their 'peacefulness'. This is encapsulated in

a memory of 'one of the times walking up there, you know, I'd just, I remember lying on a huge boulder in the middle of one of the rivers up on near Donard and just lying there and the sun shining on me, just thinking, you know, Belfast was a million miles away, and that bliss'. An enduring memory that is threaded through her life, it connects her diasporic subjectivity with her younger self through a consistency of feeling sustained and revisited over time since: 'every time I go home, you know in a couple of days you'll find me up in the Mournes [. . .] and now I've got a dog, and, you know, I remember the first time taking my dog, I cried my eyes out because it was just, like' – here Siobhán begins to weep in the interview—' 'cause it's one of my, like, most favourite places in the world, still'. If the welling up of feeling at this point in the interview stems partly from the powerfully reparative reconnection with the younger self who first experienced this peacefulness in its contrast with the pressures of conflict-laden Belfast, a reconnection made 'every time I go home', it seems also to be an expression of Siobhán's continuing capacity to feel that peace as an older migrant returning to 'a space where she can feel at home'.[62]

Siobhán's departure from the North and the beginning of her migration journey are closely associated with her sexuality. First, the relationship with her lover 'helped me move out' once school had ended. 'Desperate to leave home' and 'get away from my family', she moved into a place of her own in Belfast and organised her new life around hard work, sex and drinking 'really heavily' – alcohol being 'the best medicine ever', that 'sorted all that mess out in my head, well it numbed it'. A few years later, 'I met a girl from Cork and I just fell head over heels in love with [her . . .] and I went to Cork'. Away from Belfast and her family, feeling the 'normality' and peacefulness of Co. Cork 'but then knowing what was happening, like, less than two hundred miles up the road' brought the realisation 'that it wasn't OK, where I'd been brought up'. For Siobhán, this was 'where I lost the plot, in Cork, that's where it started to hit me that actually all of my upbringing to that point was not normal'; and 'it all fell apart' and 'started to unravel'. While Siobhán doesn't offer an account of this unravelling of the independent, hard-drinking and sexually subversive self that she had fashioned in rejection of her upbringing, it is clear that she regards her early-twenties self, who 'didn't know anything about the world really', as not equipped to make coherent sense of the conflicting feelings and pull of identifications she was experiencing at that time. In this context, and having split up with her girlfriend, 'somebody I know just said, "Do you want to go to London?" I thought, fuck it why not?' This apparently spontaneous decision to go to England in 1986 brought her into emotional conflict with her mother and siblings, but 'I just thought, I've got to get out of here, I feel like I'm going mad and I need to leave'. But 'it was only later when I went to London [. . . that I] started to really understand it more, 'cause I went into therapy'.

Diasporic subjectivity and conflict memory

The new social spaces Siobhán occupied in late '80s London—feminist, queer, multi-cultural, therapeutic—gave her the language that she lacked in Belfast to name her experiences and identities and 'sort my head out'. Eschewing the 'institutional Irishness' of London's Irish centres, she embraced the Women's Movement, got involved in the first Irish women's centre in Stoke Newington, volunteered at a lesbian and gay centre, took part in HIV support work and the campaign against the homophobic Clause 28, and revelled in the abundance of 'women-only bars, women-only clubs'. The queer scene

provided her with 'all these new labels, like, people would say to me, "You're a lesbian", I'm like, "What!" And I didn't know'; and 'suddenly I could discover [my sexual identity], I could express it, I could dress truly how I wanted'. She remembers how multicultural London brought her into contact with African and Caribbean people who 'have got very interesting similar histories to us, one of migration, one of violent families, sexual abuse, incest, God in some respect or other'. In London, 'I knocked my drinking on the head [. . .] and I haven't drank since my twenties'. And through her women's group, realising that she was 'miserable at times or really deeply unhappy, but I couldn't work it out by myself', she began therapy:

> I felt that I needed somebody to help me mirror back to me who I was and how I got to be where I was 'cause I couldn't make sense of it [. . . and who] would help me make sense and heal some of the wounds and feel better, about me and being Northern Irish and living in England and my sexuality.

These newly acquired languages, forms of knowledge, and empowering community belongings in her new environment afforded resources for Siobhán not only to work through barely understood emotions arising in the context of her new life and reimagining of 'who I was', but also to make sense of 'how I got to be where I was'; to begin her reassessment of what Fortier calls the 'culture of normality'[63] that shaped the experiences of her younger self, opening up the possibility that her Belfast childhood home in the midst of the Troubles might 'be lived differently in its re-membering'.[64]

From this new positionality afforded by her queer diasporic subjectivity, Siobhán has engaged in a process of re-membering and reinterpretation across the three decades of her life in England, to compose a life story about the time and place of then and there in its relation to here and now. This process is by no means completed by the time of her interview with Barry, but is carried into it and continued throughout their conversation. While she speaks cogently and confidently out of the composure of now-settled feelings and understandings in many of the anecdotes analysed so far, the interview affords her a space for further reflection, discovery and reassessment, to think again about her history, to name emotions felt at the time and understand their dynamics, to feel again affect that continues to move her, and to confront less settled feelings that arise to trouble her composure in recounting her conflict memories during the interview.

Some memories of Belfast return her to the sensibilities of her younger self, signalled when she says, for example, 'I remember thinking that at that age'. However, Siobhán's account of episodes in her life 'at that time' is largely framed and reinterpreted on the basis of what Nicola King (following Freud and Laplanche) calls 'afterwardsness': a structure whereby new namings and interpretations of an experience are produced belatedly, with retrospective knowledge that exposes the limitations of what could be known and felt whilst undergoing that experience.[65] Afterwardness as a mode of associative diffraction has already been identified in Siobhán's memory work on her childhood experiences in a number of instances considered above. As a dynamic produced in and by the interview itself, it is perhaps made most explicit in a passage responding to Barry's question, 'So there were, it sounds like there's an intense pressure to conform?', when Siobhán says:

> Oh Jesus, not half, absolutely. And you had to kind of, I think, you know, when I look back through, like, secondary school, I was really quiet and it's just now actually dawned on me,

> that's why I was quiet, because partly I knew I was having a fling with a girl and that made me stand out and then also I knew that because we didn't go along with what was happening, so we had to be quiet. 'Cause I remember getting hit one time by a boy and I think I must have been about 11 and he was saying something about the army and I didn't agree with what he was saying about the army, but I was only about ten or eleven then and I remember him thumping me really hard.

'Looking back' on the multiple pressures in childhood that gave rise to her powerful sense of 'being different', Siobhán arrives at an insight during the interview conversation about how this 'standing out' was doubly determined, by her and her family's nonconformity to the local, collective republican ethos and by her queer sexuality; and the necessity to 'be quiet' about both, in self-protection against violent communal policing of attitudes and behaviours. Both were enveloped in silences: remembering her lack of hatred for British soldiers, she says: 'I would know absolutely not to talk about those sorts of things'; while her secret lesbian love affair was unspeakable at the time—and indeed, she mentions that forty years later her family still don't know about it. Siobhán's insight here is into the formation of her conflict subjectivity: how at school 'I was really quiet and it's just now actually dawned on me, that's why I was quiet'. But silence, it transpires, is also a defensive strategy she has utilised during her life in England.

The Troubles in England

While Siobhán's memories of the Troubles in Belfast are diffracted through her queer diasporic subjectivity in London and the north of England, so, too, her memories of the Troubles encountered in England are diffracted through structures of feeling and embodied affects rooted in her younger experiences of the Troubles in Belfast. Recalling the aftermath of IRA bomb attacks in England whilst she was living in London, Siobhán remembers 'being on the tube thinking, I better not open me gob here,

> cause you could just feel the atmosphere, people were fearful and I knew I just was not safe, I didn't feel safe to be able to open my mouth and people hear my accent [...] or to say my name.

Keeping silent in this new situation of danger re-enacts a mode of self-defence evolved during childhood. These feelings of being unsafe are diffractively associated with vulnerabilities from her life in Belfast, when she and her siblings would be 'singled out [...] for having Irish names' by British soldiers on checkpoint duty, and hostile attention due to 'standing out' could be navigated by keeping quiet. In an echo of the soldiers' assumption that 'Siobhán, it was republican, she couldn't just be a human being', she finds English people 'see Irish people as all being the same from Northern Ireland, so people didn't differentiate between whether, like, we were just good folk who [...] weren't involved in the Troubles, they just assumed you were [...] There was no differentiation between whether you're paramilitary or not, Catholic, Protestant, republican, loyalist, it was just your accent',[66] and 'everybody was tarred with the same brush. You're all as bad as each other, I remember somebody saying that to me years ago in London'.

In the new time-space of late '80s and early '90s London, then, Siobhán's feelings of vulnerability and fear, resonant of Belfast in the 1970s and early '80s, are exacerbated by

her experiences of being misrecognised as a threatening other and treated as the object of active hostility at times of heightened tension. The afterlife of feelings originating in childhood experiences of the Troubles and their uncanny return as visceral affect is compounded by a perceived lack of understanding and concern in the emotional community—including loved friends—encountered in England. On one occasion, in response to Barry's question, 'Was it difficult to explain to people, English people?', Siobhán recounts an illuminating anecdote:

> I remember [. . .], first time I heard fireworks I hit the deck, and this was on Canary Wharf, and [my partner] was like, 'What's wrong with you?' I said 'That's shooting', she's going, 'No it's not it's the fireworks', I said 'But that sounds like shooting', 'cause a lot of people wouldn't know what shooting sound like funnily enough, but I do know what shooting sounds like, I can tell you the difference between a pistol, a fecking, you know, Armalite as you used to say, your semi-automatic weapons, a machine gun, I've heard a rocket being launched up the middle of the street 'cause they've tried to shoot a helicopter down the Falls Road, so fireworks went off and I hit the deck because I thought they were shooting outside and I was shit-, I was, like, it took me back, it was almost like post-traumatic stress, shaking, really scared, you know, obviously triggered memories in me and so it was very hard to understand.

While Siobhán can now place and understand the traumatic effect of this sensory 'trigger' that 'took me back', using the therapeutic language of PTSD, the unsettling effects of both her visceral fear and her partner's response to it manifest and can be felt in the telling, registered in the shift to the present tense: 'I do know', 'I can tell'. Unsettlement here may, perhaps, stem from a sense that her distress went unrecognised by a loved one who didn't 'get' how these experiences of hearing multiple kinds of shooting in a war zone might not yet be 'past', could not immediately understand the embodied fear that made these sounds more than just fireworks, and wondered what is 'wrong with you'.

Reflecting on this and other discordant memories of encountering English people's attitudes to the conflict and the 'horrendous' difficulties of trying to explain it to them, Siobhán reaffirms a structure of feeling acquired in Belfast:

> you'd always hear, like, when you grew up in Northern Ireland people going on about the English and how they view the Irish and the Northern Ireland problem and, and I'd say English people couldn't give a shite about Northern Ireland, that was my experience actually, of when you star–, I started talking to them and, like, 'I don't know what you're talking about', [. . .]and they really didn't give a shit about where you were from, in terms of the issues or, they just didn't care.

She returns repeatedly to this issue as an unsettlement that resurfaces throughout the second half of her interview, evidently intent on making sense of emotions that she had not had much opportunity to discuss in the context of everyday social life. In another exchange with Barry, struck by the incommensurability of the contrasting time-spaces, she remarks:

> people can't understand it because if they haven't lived in that war, 'cause it was a war, let's face it, you know, Saracens on the street, jeeps, soldiers, shooting, getting shot at, you know, dodging petrol bombs, you know, it's all the stuff that people watch, you know I look at Hong Kong at the minute and think that's what it used to be like in Northern Ireland, fecking tear gas, rubber bullets, live rounds of ammunition being shot at people, so I think people just don't understand it, they can't understand it because they cannot imagine that four hundred miles away, this was going on, that over three thousand people died.

Here, Siobhán evokes the difference between her memory of lived experience of violence and the limited understanding gained by those who merely watch it on the news, through an association between Northern Ireland and another space of conflict current at the time of her interview: 'Hong Kong at the minute'.

The interaction of these unconformable temporal spaces produce perhaps the most emotionally complex and intense moments in the interview when Siobhán remembers 'when the bomb went off in Canary Wharf'. On 9 February 1996 the Provisional IRA ended its ceasefire, in the context of what it termed the 'bad faith' of the Prime Minister and unionist leaders in 'squandering this unprecedented opportunity to resolve the conflict', [67] by planting a 3,000 lb bomb in the London Docklands, causing two fatalities, 40 injuries, and £150 millions of damage.[68] Siobhán, then living nearby, remembers watching the new developments being built with an awareness of danger honed in Belfast and saying to her partner '"that's going to be a target [. . .] there's no security, this is seen as the pinnacle of the redevelopment of the East End, it's a big government initiative, that's a legitimate IRA target"'. Luckily she wasn't in her flat when the explosion blew in all her windows, but a friend of hers was killed together with his co-worker in the news kiosk where they both worked. Later, going to buy a *Guardian* newspaper, she was accosted by another newsagent who described the IRA as 'your lot' who had blown up the *Guardian's* Docklands printing works; and when Siobhán protested that 'it wasn't my lot, and I said to him, I said "the guy that died in that [news kiosk] I knew him really well"', this newsagent 'got into this whole bloody heated thing and I thought [. . .] you bastard I'm going to have you':

> cause I just thought you've no idea mate, who I am, plus I was so upset about the man who's lost his life, you know, and I've come here from Ireland to try and get away from this shit and yet here I am caught up in another bloody bomb, so I thought right, I'll have you [laughs].

A number of emotional currents swirl together in this complex compound of feelings: angry resistance to being misrecognised as a republican through the dominant British discourse equating 'Irish' with 'terrorist', together with immediate grief for the man killed, melded with contradictory emotions rooted in the longer temporality of Siobhán's migration experience—on one hand the frustration of her attempt to escape and distance herself from the violence of the Troubles located back there, then, and on the other her desire to have her conflict-formed subjectivity understood and recognised here and now in London. Some of this unsettling complexity and disturbance is released in the laughter accompanying the memory of her revenge on the aggressive newsagent responsible for it, a revenge achieved through the agency of a contact at the *Guardian* who cut off his supply of the paper.

Later in the interview, when discussing her transnational life and diasporic identity, Siobhán muses that

> how I live in England is formed definitely of how I grew up in Northern Ireland [. . .] but I think you can't talk about it, even now at 57 people still don't understand it, it's like my colleague today joking, you know, they hadn't a clue what I'm talking about, people don't understand that you've lived through a war.

This reflection on a conversation earlier that same day flows immediately back into a conflict memory of Belfast, and of her mother:

> I've heard men being shot, I've been shot at, fucking, you know, soldier shot over the top of my head one day when I was walking home and my mother went down to the barracks, banged on the door, 'I want to see the commander' and, you know, and there's my mother, this is what I mean, it was so conflictual, then she'd come and beat the shite out of you but if anybody tried to harm you, you know, she had insisted on seeing the commander and they took her into the fort on Broadway Road, you know, and I can imagine this small woman just disappearing behind these huge, you know, the security doors in the front of the forts, and in she went and told 'em off, I'm like [laughing], oh my God, I can't cope, it was just unbelievable.

This associative diffraction of memory, connecting 'today' at work in northern England to her schooldays in the North of Ireland, carries Siobhán first to a feeling of indignation at having been shot at by a soldier whilst walking home (a significant incident that only emerges quite late in the interview), and then to her pride and astonishment at her mother's combative reaction in going to the fort and confronting the army commander, interwoven with the earlier thread of her recollections about her 'conflictual' relationship with her mother. This complex other time-space is what her colleague, and other English acquaintances, 'hadn't a clue' about—an expression that, echoing her earlier use referring to the ignorance of British soldiers in Belfast, suggests a feeling of being misrecognised. On this occasion, though, her laughter accompanying the anecdote hints at a reparative composure of these feelings from her life in Belfast in the memory work of the interview, grounded on her forgiving love for the 'good mother'. This enables the absence of understanding by her colleague to be handled with a resigned acceptance that is also extended to the lack of interest in the conflict expressed by Siobhán's current English girlfriend: 'She hasn't a bloody clue [laughs] [...] and we just don't talk about it because she's not interested, she doesn't understand it, I can't be arsed to try and help her understand it, 'cause in some ways it's also incredibly boring [...] so we just don't go there'.

Reparative composure

Throughout her interview, but most explicitly towards the end, Siobhán works towards reparative composure of the memories that arise during her conversation with Barry. According to Dawson's Kleinian psychoanalytic model of psychic dynamics, remembering guided by the impulse of reparation seeks to undo 'defensive composure'.[69] The latter is founded on splitting of the self and a disavowal of fearful and painful memories and unsettling emotions, and affords a means of 'dealing with [these] unresolved conflicts by "putting them behind us", placing them *in* the past'.[70] Composure stemming from 'reparative remembering'[71] becomes possible through 'a more difficult and painful process of working through internal conflict and coming to terms with its consequences'.[72] This enables 'a more integrated self, open to its own contradictions and more tolerant of painful experience', with a willingness to confront and try to understand its 'conflicting imagos' – that is, the affect-laden mental images of people, places and situations within the internal world[73] – and a capacity for 'repairing and restoring' its relationships with those imagos felt to be bad, negative, threatening.[74] Building on Klein, Dawson argues that 'the struggle for inner peace and composure is linked [...] with the struggle to recognise otherness and one's own social relatedness to others'.[75] By 'allowing something new to happen' within psychic reality,[76] reparation can be seen as a condition of how, in

Anne-Marie Fortier's terms, the childhood home might 'be lived differently in its re-membering'; a counter to 'leaving behind' youthful experiences in a compartmentalising of phases in a life trajectory.

In the memory work conducted over many years from the position of her queer diasporic subjectivity, Siobhán has been able to work through, make sense of, reassess and in some measure come to terms with the interwoven childhood memories of family, sexuality and the Troubles that she talks about with Barry. Central to this has been the emotional empathy and forgiveness extended towards her mother, in which the 'hostile and threatening imago'[77] stemming from her mother's violence is contained and ameliorated by the benign 'helper imago'[78] derived from her mother's love and care. Reparation has brought with it a degree of transnational rapprochement furthered by her mother's eventual visit to Siobhán in London and evolving love affair with the city that she had originally disapproved of as a 'den of iniquity'. A similar working-through of ambivalence can be sensed in Siobhán's mobilising of memories of being 'looked after' by soldiers in the wake of the Newcastle bombing, and of her compassion for the frightened young Black soldier. Towards the end of the interview she speaks explicitly of how moving to England 'resolved something, about the Brits':

> SO'N: Because well, we grew up with just soldiers and people telling us how bad the English were [. . .]
>
> BH: [. . . Y]our only perception of Brits I suppose, that you say, was basically soldiers who were, you know, kitted up, stand on your street.
>
> SO'N: Absolutely
>
> BH: Coming to England, dissolved that myth around them, is that right, like?
>
> SO'N: Yeah without a doubt, without a doubt because you could see just people as human beings, you know, with the same kind of struggles and stuff.

In the final minutes of the interview, responding to Barry's invitation to reflect on the impact of the Troubles on her life, Siobhán asserts an integrated continuity with her younger self when she talks again about her 'quiet rebellion' as a girl who 'wanted something different'; and returns to her memories of the Mourne Mountains to figure the transformative journey she has been on since:

> SO'N: [. . .] knowing there has to be more but I didn't know what the more was, and maybe now I do know a bit more, but I was always seeking that, I was seeking answers all the time, and that's what that quiet rebellion was about, I wanted answers, I wanted to understand, the thing, that's what drives me still, I need to understand, and that's what drove me I think, of that quiet rebellion.
>
> BH: And do you think over the course of your life you've found some of those answers?
>
> SO'N: Yeah, I think I have 'cause I can be at peace now. I always remember that was part of the thing of being in the Mournes, when I was young, of trying to find peace and I always felt it in the Mournes like lying on that big boulder in the middle of the river, up Slieve Donard, and falling asleep in the sunshine, in the peace, it was about finding that, driven for peace in my head, yeah and there is still torment in there and there's still times when, you know, it takes over but I understand it now whereas before I didn't. [. . .] I can be at peace with me,

> I understand me and my position in life and where I've come from and, you know, where I am [. . .] I can just be now, sitting here and I know who I am, and that's a good thing.

While Siobhán's interview with Barry evokes unsettled emotions, then, these arise and are contained through her memory work in the interview, that builds on and re-enacts the finding of composure through reparation in the telling of her life story of conflict and migration. The treasured moment of peacefulness on a boulder in a mountain river in the sunshine becomes something that was 'always felt' in the Mournes and, being 'always remembered', underpins the capacity to be at peace 'just now, sitting here'. Fittingly, this concluding sense of a reparative composure now achievable in the north of England—of being at peace from internal conflicts stemming from her childhood during the Troubles in Belfast—is grounded upon an enduring memory of a still loved place in the North of Ireland. Reparation, however, is never fully achieved or permanently sustained. Beyond the boundaries of what is shareable in this conversation, Siobhán alludes to 'torment' that 'is still [. . .] in there', and 'times when [. . .] it takes over'. Even within the bounded time and space of the interview, memory-traces—like that of her absent father—briefly appear but are left unexplored. These are reminders of the contingency of any life-story narration in its representation of the complex temporalities of subjectivity.

Conclusion

In this article we have proposed an innovative theoretical framework for understanding the memory work of people who experienced the Troubles in Northern Ireland before moving to Britain, and explored how this framework can inform a method for critical interpretation of oral history interviews collected in our *Conflict, Memory and Migration* project. Through close, detailed engagement with a single interview, that of Siobhán O'Neill, we have been able to trace the diffraction of conflict memory across diverse temporal moments in a life course spanning over 50 years and encompassing a transnational relocation from Ireland to England. Far from leaving behind the experiences of conflict that impacted her younger selfhood in Belfast, Siobhán's interview demonstrates the long, mobile afterlife of feelings attached to the memories of these experiences, and the ways in which these have travelled with her throughout her journey of migration and settlement first in London and later in northern England, where they continue to unsettle the composure of her life story, and arouse renewed reflection and reassessment during the interview. Our understanding of remembering as a diffractive process governed by psychic associations rather than chronological sequences of cause and effect enables analysis of the affective links in a flow of discontinuous episodes and moments; and of Siobhán's memory work as she endeavours to make sense of their significance and integrate them into a narrative communicable to her interviewer, Barry, in the course of their conversation.

The life story that emerges in Siobhán's interview is a fascinating, richly textured account. She evokes the pressures and disturbances she experienced as a girl and young woman growing up Catholic, working-class and queer in nationalist and republican West Belfast amid the multiple violences of the Troubles; explores the new languages acquired in the course of her migrant life in England, and the perspectives they afforded on the upbringing she realised 'wasn't so normal after all'; and reflects on her struggle to

make sense of 'who I was and how I got to be where I was [...] and heal some of the wounds and feel better, about me and being Northern Irish and living in England and my sexuality'. Siobhán frames her story as one about a generational 'we', and her interview vividly conveys an 'affective atmosphere' of threat, fear and a struggle for agency within a collective experience of British Army occupation and republican resistance on the Falls. In telling of the difficulties arising for her in England, where she is troubled by the re-emergence of conflict-generated affect and frustrated by the perceived inability or unwillingness of English people to engage with the experience of conflict in Northern Ireland, she implies that these also are part of this same generational experience, that is not shared by more recent migrants from the North.

However, what is most striking and valuable about Siobhán's life story is the insight it affords into the specificity of her individual subjectivity and her particular way of inhabiting these common conditions of experience. Central to this story are the travelling memories she brings with her from Belfast, of being different, 'standing out', and a 'quiet rebel' in her transgression of communal norms, due to the anti-republican stance of her family, and to her queer sexuality. Neither of these two strands of conflict experience, both central to Siobhán's life story, find much resonance in the historiography of the Troubles[79]; nor is Siobhán's experience of domestic violence at the hands of her mother reflected in the wider literature concerned with violence against women and children during the conflict.[80] In her account of settling as a migrant in England, too, Siobhán asserts her difference from established narratives about the collective experience of 'the Irish in London', telling of her avoidance of Irish community organisations and of the alternative identifications she makes through discovering feminist and queer affiliations and in social relationships with Black migrants. At the core of her interview is the profoundly intimate story of her continuing search for what Alistair Thomson has called 'a past that we can live by'.[81] This is centred on the reparative composure of her relationship with her mother and the feeling of being 'at peace with me', an internal capacity that is associated with her love of the Mourne Mountains. Together these form the ground of a longed-for integration of her Northern Ireland memories into her present-day life in England, making possible an ongoing process of psychic reparation that works to contain the 'torment' that is still 'in my head' and still at times 'takes over'. Intimations of this ongoing struggle within Siobhán's diasporic subjectivity emerge in the interview, through the unsettling but contained memories of conflict-related violence and her ambivalent relationship with her mother that she chooses to tell and explore with Barry.

Our concentration in this article on a single interview from our project's archive has enabled detailed investigation of the diffractive dynamics of conflict memory within a migration-centred life story. This approach has afforded a means of exploring the methodological efficacy of our theoretical propositions, while grounding critical analysis in close engagement with the specificities of Siobhán's historical and psychic experience and the texture of meaning conveyed in her own words through the interview dialogue. Oral historians have developed a range of writing strategies to represent the voices that speak in interviews,[82] but as Fearghus Roulston has argued, a presentational mode that gives 'a small number of interviews [...] a relatively large amount of space' and retains the integrity of 'the interview as an encounter, or as a moment in time [...] keep[s] the interviewees' voices a little louder in the mix'.[83] As we have demonstrated here, the

further advantage of a single-interview analysis is the additional scope it affords to ensure vitality, depth, particularity and nuance in critical understanding by fully utilising oral history's capacity for what Portelli calls 'self-reflexive thick dialogue'.[84] While oral history has not commonly embraced analytical focus on the single interview as textual representation of a life story—perhaps due to a continuing preoccupation with questions of 'representativeness' and the social range of any sample[85] – this kind of detailed micro-approach to the texture of particular forms of cultural expression is standard practice in ethnographic studies conducted using principles of 'thick description'[86] and in the textual analysis of life-writing where close readings supported by extensive textual quotation are commonplace.[87] Cross-disciplinary fertilisation of methods would enhance the practice of such an approach in critical oral history.

Siobhán O'Neill is, of course, only one among the 200,000 or so people who migrated from Northern Ireland to Britain during the Troubles, and one of the 52 first-generation interviewees who contributed to our *Conflict, Memory and Migration* project. Each of these individuals will have brought with them on their migration journeys travelling memories of their own particular kinds of exposure to conflict violence in the various locations of their everyday lives in Northern Ireland, and experienced in different ways the challenge of understanding, containing and integrating into their diasporic lives in Britain the afterlife of feelings from those times. Our contention in this article is, firstly, that the specificities of these many subjectivities, experiences and memories resist straightforward generalisation and call for further systematic research; and secondly, that the approach to the temporal and transnational dynamics of diasporic remembering developed in our analysis of Siobhán's interview offers a new analytical framework for such an enquiry. As we have demonstrated in the case of Siobhán's memory work, the concept of associative diffraction opens up for investigation the fluidity of memory in its fluctuation back and forth between Britain and Ireland, here and there, now and then. This brings into focus the close interweaving of memories of conflict violence and quotidian experience within families and communities, and illuminates the cultural silences stemming from taboos, fears, psychic defences, or the absence of enabling language. As a framework for understanding the telling of life stories about subjectivities formed in conditions of conflict and refashioned elsewhere, afterwards, it reveals the contingent, vulnerable and mutable achievement of composure, whether defensive or reparative.

These issues merit further enquiry, and analysis of other interviews in these terms would provide the basis for wider, comparative investigation. The travelling memory of migrants from Northern Ireland and its complex emotional afterlife is largely unexplored in the historiographies of the Troubles and the Irish diaspora in Britain, and unknown and unrecognised in British—or perhaps specifically English—popular memory. The approach to oral history we have developed in this article may also be transposable to other contexts where experiences of conflict and migration intersect. Engaging in the activities of remembering, reflection on and narration about such experiences through participation in oral history interviews, together with the work of listening, reflecting on and writing about what emerges from them, has the potential to generate new knowledges capable of unlocking what have, until now, been untold and 'unhearable' histories.[88]

Notes

1. We have derived this figure from the available statistics on total net migration summarised in Trew, *Leaving the North*, 48–54. Actual emigration numbers may be greater. From the 1960s to the end of the 1980s emigration 'in some years amounted to over 10,000 individuals, with the conflict evidently having a significant impact' (51), particularly during the 1970s and in 1981, the year of the republican hunger strikes in Maze/Long Kesh prison. Trew estimates that 70% of all emigration since the 1960s was to Great Britain. See also Russell, *Migration in Northern Ireland*, 8–10.
2. Trew, "Negotiating Identity and Belonging," 28.
3. Trew, *Leaving the North*, 51, 52. See also Trew, "Reluctant Diasporas of Northern Ireland."
4. Dawson and Hopkins, "Introduction," 2.
5. Ibid., 5.
6. Ibid., 9.
7. Ibid. For migration from the ROI and the Irish community in Britain, see Hazley, *Life History and the Irish Migrant.*
8. The project was a collaboration between the Universities of Manchester, Brighton and Liverpool, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), grant reference AH/R008426/1. Ethical approval for the project was granted by the Proportionate University Research Ethics Committee at the University of Manchester, Ref: 2019–7831–12001. Informed written consent from all participants was acquired in accordance with the University of Manchester's research ethics policy.
9. The interviews were conducted by Jack Crangle, Barry Hazley and Fearghus Roulston and will be archived at Manchester Central Library.
10. For analyses of the "migration journey" see, for example, Hazley, *Life History and the Irish Migrant;* Damousi, *Memory and Migration;* BenEzer, *The Ethiopian Jewish Exodus.*
11. See, for example, Portelli, *Death of Luigi Trastulli*; Abrams, *Oral History Theory.*
12. See McGladdery, *Provisional IRA in England*; Hillyard, *Suspect Community*; Dawson et al, eds., *Northern Ireland Troubles in Britain*; Hazley, "Re/negotiating 'Suspicion'"; Nasar and Schaffer, "Poetics of Narrativity"; and Sorohan, *Irish London during the Troubles.*
13. de Saint-Laurent, "Personal Trajectories, Collective Memories."
14. Erll, "Travelling Memory," 65. See also Roberts, 'Travelling Memories.'
15. See, for example, Ahmed et al, "Introduction", 4–10; Cwerner, "Times of Migration"; Collins, "Desire as a Theory for Migration Studies".
16. Fortier, "Making Home," 125. See Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 181, 194, 208–10; Hickman, "Diasporic Space and National (Re)formations"; Ní Laoire, "Discourses of Nation."
17. Fortier, "Making Home," 115.
18. Ibid., 116.
19. Ibid., 118 (original emphasis).
20. Ibid., 122.
21. Ibid., p.121, quoting Bob Cant, 1997.
22. Ibid., 121.
23. Ibid., 130.
24. Ibid., 121.
25. As in other civil conflicts, "political violence in Northern Ireland has been distributed unevenly across space and time." See Fay et al., *Northern Ireland's Troubles*, 133.
26. Smyth and Fay, *Personal Accounts;* Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past?;* Lelourec and O'Keefe-Vigneron, *Ireland and Victims;* Dawson, "Memory, 'Post-conflict' Temporalities and the Afterlife of Emotion."
27. Dawson, "Memory, 'Post-conflict' Temporalities and the Afterlife of Emotion," 274.
28. Fortier, "Making Home," 124.
29. Dawson, *Afterlives of the Troubles.*
30. Ibid.,

31. See, for example, Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, 174–8; Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 134–42, 328.
32. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, 378, 736n.
33. See May and Thrift, *Timespace: Geographies of Temporality;* Erll, "Travelling Memory," 77; Reavey, "Scenic Memory: Experience through Time-space"; Zittoun and Gillespie, *Imagination*, 50.
34. Popular Memory Group, "Popular Memory"; Dawson, *Soldier Heroes;* Summerfield, "Culture and Composure." See also the use of the concept in Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, and Hazley, *Life History and the Irish Migrant.*
35. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, 23.
36. Summerfield, "Oral History", 13.
37. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, 36–43; Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past?*, 63–66, 77. On the concept of containment in psychic life see Garland, *Understanding Trauma*: 98, 109–10.
38. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, 23.
39. Summerfield, "Culture and Composure," 69–70.
40. Sean Field identifies a more widely applicable "'dissonance' at the heart of researcher/researched dialogues" resulting from "intersubjective experiences of alterity," such that '[h]ow [interviewees] 'see' themselves and their histories and how we 'see' them is neither completely reconciled nor perfectly matched." Field, "Critical Empathy through Oral Histories," 667, 664, 667. See also Newby, "(De)Constructing Narratives of Youth Experience," 7.
41. Fay et al, *Northern Ireland's Troubles*, 143.
42. Siobhán O'Neill (pseudonym by participant's request) interviewed by Barry Hazley, 26 November 2019. In what follows all quotations are from this interview, unless otherwise referenced. The names of Siobhán's mother and siblings have also been pseudonymised.
43. She describes herself as "brought up working class," and neither "prosperous nor poor."
44. This temporal disjunction in life history work was first noted in Portelli, "Peculiarities of Oral History," 101.
45. Lynda Egerton, writing in the mid-1980s, noted that "[t[he concept of women as individuals in their own right holds little sway in this society"; while "in working-class areas [where] violence has become part of daily living [. . .] it is often the woman, in her role as wife and mother, who has the heavy responsibility of trying to bring up a family in a situation similar to a war environment." Egerton, "Public protest, domestic acquiescence," 63, 77.
46. Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres." For the use of this concept in oral history see Harding, "Affect, Emotion and Power."
47. Fortier, "Making Home," 116, 127.
48. For the 'relatively invisible' active agency of women like Siobhán's mother in narratives of the conflict, see Miren Mohrenweiser, "The Limitations of 'Maternal' Activism in Troubles Narratives," *Writing the "Toubles"* blog. Accessed October 3, 2023. https://writingthetroublesweb.wordpress.com/2021/04/19/the-limitations-of-maternal-activism-in-troubles-narratives.
49. On the anecdote as an analytical concept in oral history, see Roulston, *Belfast Punk and the Troubles*, 76–8, 108.
50. Portelli, "Functions of Time in Oral History," 65.
51. de Saint Laurent and Zittoun, "Memory in Life Transitions," 225.
52. The 'RA (pronounced rah) was a colloquial name for the IRA in nationalist and republican communities.
53. de Saint Laurent and Zittoun, "Memory in Life Transitions," 222, and see also 216, 218. The concept draws from Zittoun and Gillespie on 'the loop of imagination' in temporal subjectivity and memory, *Imagination*, 38–55.
54. These ideas about the attachment of affect to everyday objects, and how this "sticks in memory," are inspired by Dodd, "Thinking Affect (Back) into Oral History." See also Dodd, *Feeling Memory*.
55. For the initial welcome of British soldiers by nationalist communities, see Taylor, *Provos: The IRA and Sinn Féin*, 56–59.

56. For British Army surveillance of nationalist communities, see Cobain, "Life during Wartime."
57. For this concept and the wider relationship between memory and geographical imagination in oral history practice, see Riley and Harvey "Talking Geography", 348–349; Jones, "Ecology of Emotion, Memory, Self and Landscape;" High, "Oral History, Memoryscapes, and Mobile Methodologies."
58. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," 842.
59. de Saint Laurent and Zittoun, "Memory in Life Transitions," 210.
60. Portelli, "Functions of Time in Oral History," 70.
61. de Saint Laurent and Zittoun, "Memory in Life Transitions."
62. Fortier, "Making Home," 121.
63. See note 21.
64. Fortier, "Making Home," 121.
65. King, *Memory, Narrative, Identity*, 11–12. For Jean Laplanche's translation of Freud's German concept of *Nachträglichkeit* as "afterwardsness," see also Fletcher and Stanton, *Jean Laplanche.*
66. See Roulston, et al. "Keeping the Accent? Voice, Alterity and Memory in Oral History."
67. McKittrick et al., *Lost Lives*, 1389.
68. Harrison, "Remembering the Docklands Bomb."
69. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, 34–43 (36).
70. Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past?*, 77.
71. Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past?*, 77, 315–16.
72. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, 40.
73. Ibid., 33–34.
74. Ibid., 40.
75. Ibid., 37.
76. Greenberg and Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, 134.
77. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, 37.
78. Ibid., 39.
79. The limited literature on women's agency in the Troubles tends to focus on women in the Republican Movement, as in Mohrenweiser, "The Mobilization of Republican Motherhood." The comparably limited historiography on queer life in Northern Ireland 'flattens and minimises the multifaceted experiences of gay men and lesbians during the Troubles.' Wallace, "Oral Histories of Finding a Gay Community Amid the Troubles," 71.
80. See, for example, Smyth, *Impact of the Troubles on Children and Young People*: Green, "Impact of Conflict on Violence Against Women."
81. Thomson, "Oral History and Migration Studies," 35.
82. See Portelli, "Oral History as Genre," 34–37; Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 29–31.
83. Roulston, *Belfast Punk and the Troubles*, 7.
84. Portelli, "Oral History as Genre," 31. See, for example, Roulston's own interview readings; Thomson, *Moving Stories: Intimate History of Four Women*; Newby, "Oral History of Youth Experience of the Conflict."
85. See Perks and Thomson, "Critical Developments: Introduction," 3; Lummis, "Structure and Validity in Oral Evidence," 255–260; Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 100–37.
86. Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures.*
87. See, for example, Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom;* Olney, *Memory and Narrative*; Culley, *British Women's Life Writing.*
88. Newby, "(De)Constructing Narratives of Youth Experience," 7.

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