

THE CONTEMPORARY RACIALIZATION OF THE IRISH IN BRITAIN

**an investigation into media representations and
the everyday experience of being Irish in Britain**

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Abstract

The research undertaken for this thesis incorporated two strands of investigation. The first involved an interrogation of the representations of Irish people and Ireland in the mass media. This assumes that the mass media can be viewed as a *de facto* ideological state apparatus (Hall, 1982) in which racist messages and meanings are embedded (Hall, 1981). For the second strand of this research, in-depth face-to-face interviews were undertaken with twenty five first generation Irish people living in Britain, contacted through the snowballing technique. They were asked about their views on representations of Irish people and Ireland in the British media products which they used. Interviewees were also asked about aspects of their everyday lives as Irish people in Britain. The interviews were informed by the assumption that, as audiences and Irish people, interviewees would have special knowledge (*pace* hooks, 1992) about the meanings and messages associated with 'Irishness' (cf. Cohen, 1988) in British cultural discourses.

An extensive survey of the press and a pilot survey of television programmes were undertaken, using a "deconstruction, interpretation, reconstruction" approach (Ericson et al., 1991: 55). This demonstrated that Irish people were portrayed in newspaper reports and television programmes through trait-laden and symbolic stereotypes (Haddock et al., 1994) and that Irish people were essentialized as an *Other* to English people: 'Irish' was signified as innately inferior to 'English'. Ireland was a distorted mirror image of England (Eagleton, 1995; Kiberd, 1995) becoming both a rural utopia and an illiberal dystopia. The stereotypes of 'Irishness' and the unproblematic binary (Brah, 1996) of Irish/English in British media discourses demonstrate that the media legitimises and reinforces racialized understandings of Irish people and Ireland.

The knowledge which interviewees displayed regarding media representations, discrimination and prejudice against Irish people demonstrates that they possess "double consciousness" (du Bois, 1986[1953]), which they used to monitor and inform their behaviours. Interviewees were aware of how the mass media racialized Irish people in their representations and believed that this racialization affected their everyday lives, specifically their interactions and relationships with English people. A double silence strategy was employed by interviewees to avoid or reduce the "everyday racism" (Essed, 1991) which they experienced, or expected to experience as Irish people living in Britain. This involved actual silence, thereby avoiding identification as Irish through accent, and not speaking about Irish issues which was assumed would cause trouble or difficulties. This strategy, of double silence, was not entirely successful as interviewees did experience racism, including anti-Irish jokes and verbal abuse, which they were unlikely to confront.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The Irish have long been, and remain, the dominant source of labour migration to Britain (Jackson, 1963; Hickman and Walter, 1997). The proximity of Ireland to Britain has encouraged the Irish to be a particularly flexible migrant group, responding to labour shortages in Britain, rather than unemployment in Ireland (Hickman and Walter, 1997). Labour migration from Ireland to Britain has been essential in the capitalist development of the British economy (Miles, 1982). This is implicitly recognised through the differential treatment of the Irish as migrants, since they are not subject to the immigration controls of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act or successive acts, unlike migrants from other (ex-)colonies and elsewhere (Hickman, 1995). The absence of such controls are additionally partly explained by the difficulties which policing the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland would occasion (Hickman, 1995; Connor, 1987). It is also explained by the need to ensure easy movement of Irish labour and good relations with the Republic of Ireland (Hickman, 1995). Britain and Ireland have a relationship mediated through colonisation, imperialism and migration, all of which are in turn mediated by the physical proximity of the two islands.

Absence of immigration controls between Britain and Ireland does not confer freedom of movement: Irish people from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are subject to the controls of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) which “means that Irish people in general have a more restrictive set of rights than other travellers” (Hillyard, 1993: 13). The PTA operates particularly at points of entry to Britain, but also places Irish people living in Britain under legitimate surveillance:

The evidence suggests that the use of the powers [of the PTA] is targeted at two particular groups: principally young men living in Ireland and Irish people living in Britain (Hickman, 1995: 211).

Discussing the Irish diaspora in England, Kiberd suggests that the Irish in Britain had to don the mask of the Paddy in order to be acceptable to the English (1996). The Irish in Britain, this suggests, possessed “double consciousness” (du Bois, 1986[1953]): inventing Ireland through their remembered reconstructions and imaginations (Anderson, 1983) while simultaneously being a Paddy, that is fulfilling the English imagination’s images of Irishness, in England. To be Irish in Britain, therefore, is to be not only an inventor of the imagined homeland of Ireland (ibid.), but to be an opposite to the British people, particularly the English. In other words, to be Irish in Britain is to be one half of the bipolar opposite English/Irish (Brah, 1996). Given the tendency to assume that such binaries are the outcomes of natural divisions,

then the position of the Irish in the English imagination as an inferior, uncivilized *Other* is consequently presumed to be unproblematic (ibid.).

Until recently, the dominant discourses of sociological thought have excluded the Irish from analyses of racism in Britain (Hickman, 1995). It has often been presumed that the skin colour of the Irish has protected them from the processes of racism. However, the very concept of 'white' has yet to be interrogated fully (Bonnett, 1996; Dyer, 1988; although see Dyer, 1997). The skin colour of the Irish is assumed to be a signal of ready assimilation (Hickman and Walter, 1997). The construction of the Irish as 'white' ignores black Irish and Asian Irish people (ibid.), ignoring their experiences as Irish *and* 'black' or 'Asian'. An example of this is the automatic aggregation of Irish monitoring statistics into a 'White' category (ibid.). In assuming that skin colour protects the Irish in Britain from the differentializing processes of racialization (Brah, 1996), both the specific experiences of Irish people in Britain and their culture as Irish people are ignored. Occasionally, this can be more convoluted: it may be recognised that the Irish experience disadvantages, discrimination and prejudices but, because they are 'white', the Irish in Britain are seen as being outside of the disadvantages, discrimination and prejudices of racism. An example of this is an editorial which uses the Irish to illustrate the 'real' racism experienced by migrants from the Caribbean (1968, Political Quarterly); more recently Modood (1997) has limited his discussion of ethnic minorities in Britain to black and Asian groups. The black/white dichotomy of much theorising about racism in Britain excludes all non-black/Asian ethnic minorities, incorporating them into the majority through the label 'white'; ethnicity and victimhood (of racism) become the property of certain groups.

The historical constructions of 'Irish'

Kiberd (1996) posits the question 'who invented Ireland?', to which he provides three answers: the Irish in Ireland; the English colonisers; the Irish diaspora. The question 'who invented Ireland?' interrogates not only the constructions of the landscape and geography of Ireland but of the culture and the idea of 'the people' in the imaginations of those who invent(ed) Ireland. For Kiberd, Ireland and its people, whether in Ireland or England, act as loci for the unconscious of Englishness (ibid., see also Eagleton, 1995). Stereotypes of 'Irishness', therefore, are not only evidence of the power differentials between Irish and English, but also a window to the hidden unconscious of being English. The stereotypes evidence the bipolar construction English/Irish, creating a binary of representation which has become an unproblematic *Other* (Brah, 1996) in the discourses of English/British culture.

The seeming unproblematic bipolarity of English/Irish (or black/white, male/female) inhibits its interrogation (ibid.). The failure to interrogate, or deconstruct, these binary oppositions in turn facilitates their 'natural' position. The very history of the binary opposition legitimates its existence; this is not to imply that the contents of difference are static but that the 'fact' of difference remains. Part of the construction of English/Irish as an unproblematic bipolarity lies in its long history. It is intimately related to the colonial project in Ireland. Depictions of the Irish as inferior to the English justified invasions and colonial exploitation (Curtis, 1984b; Hickman, 1995; Lebow, 1976; Kirkaldy, 1979). The mythic 'Wild Irish' had to be controlled through coercion and repression; the alternative depiction of the Irish as child-like and in need of guidance similarly justified colonial rule (Lebow, 1976). Such representations, present in popular and elite writings (Curtis, 1968 and 1971; Curtis 1984b; Lebow, 1976; see Foster, 1993 for a contrary view), not only justified English (mis)rule in Ireland, but provided a foil for the English imagination: "Ireland was soon patented as not-England, a place whose people were, in many ways, the very antithesis of their new rulers from overseas" (Kiberd, 1995: 9).

Migrations to Britain brought the Irish into close contact with people for whom they were previously mythic monsters. "Their arrival was interpreted as not only a threat to wages but also a threat to the British way of life" (Jackson, 1963: 153). The Irish in Britain were associated with the worst of slums and their 'Irishness' blamed for the existence of these slums or 'little Irelands' (Ó Tuathaigh, 1985), demonstrating how the supposed characteristics of the pig, a trope for Irish (Curtis, 1971) were translated into the dirt and squalor of the slums. The Irish became the symbol of the crises and fears associated with the rural-urban shift in living (Davis, 1991). It has been argued that such anti-Irish prejudice, being levelled at the poorest Irish migrants, owed more to class than ethnicity (Foster, 1993; see also Davis, 1991). Such an approach ignores the interactions of class and ethnicity; it also assumes "ethnic fade" (Foster, 1993: 289) or assimilation of the Irish in Britain as an unproblematic given. Jackson, however, succinctly characterises the position of the Irish in Britain when he terms them "marginal men" (1963: 159), ironically emphasising the greater invisibility of Irish women in Britain, despite the greater number of women migrants to Britain (Hickman and Walter, 1995; Walter, 1995).

Although it may be the case that the poor working class Irish in Britain were (and are) the most visible of Irish migrants and thus readily the targets of prejudice and discrimination, this does not necessarily imply that the more successful Irish were unproblematically invisible. Invisibility for the Irish in Britain was (and is) a way of avoiding or ameliorating anti-Irish racism. The strategy of invisibility is not unique to

the Irish, nor is it a route only open to 'white' ethnic groups, as demonstrated by the derogatory terms 'coconut' or 'Oreo' for blacks who attempt to assimilate to majority culture, in Britain and the USA respectively. Skin colour is not a protection against assimilation for black and Asian peoples (Cohen, 1988).

By the mid-nineteenth century, the stereotypes of the Irish as indolent, superstitious, dishonest, and prone to violence had been sustained in British culture for some six hundred years (Lebow, 1976). The obsession with "codes of breeding" (Cohen, 1988: 64) of the Victorian era transformed these stereotypes into eugenic formulations (Lebow, 1976), further cementing the binary construction of English/Irish. Stereotypes of the Irish provided explanatory frameworks for poverty and violence in Ireland (ibid.); it is apparent that such explanations were also applied to the Irish in Britain (Hickman, 1995; Jackson, 1963). British press representations of the Irish utilised these stereotypes to explain violence in Ireland, and thus dismiss its causes, and the poverty of the Irish in Ireland and Britain (see Curtis, 1968 and 1971; also Curtis, 1984b). It should be noted that violence in Ireland and the stereotypes which racialized its origins were particularly attributed to the Catholic Irish: "the real trouble with the Irish was that they were not Anglo-Saxon, upper class or Protestant" (Curtis, 1968: 19). The stereotypes of the Irish not only justified and legitimised colonial intervention in Ireland, but inferiorized the Irish *vis-à-vis* the English. If the English were civilised, mannered, educated, then the Irish were uncivilized, wild and stupid.

Irish migrants to Britain found themselves disadvantaged not simply because of their position as migrants but because they were racialized outsiders. Expectations of their behaviour and capabilities, based on anti-Irish stereotypes (often interacting with anti-Catholic prejudice (Hickman, 1995), mediated the everyday experiences of the Irish in Britain. They were more likely to be in poor accommodation and unskilled, underpaid labour than the majority population (Jackson, 1963; Ó Tuathaigh, 1985). The stereotypes of the Irish in Ireland were readily adapted and transformed to justify the discrimination and disadvantages experienced by Irish migrants in Britain by attributing the outcomes (for example poverty and slums) to their ethnicity.

The contemporary position of the Irish in Britain

It has often been assumed that the migrations from Britain's other (ex)colonies post-1945 ended hostilities and prejudices directed at the Irish, or at least reduced them to an indiscernible level (Hickman, 1995). Migration from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent was assumed to be of more social import, despite the continuing high migration from Ireland (Fielding, 1993). This assumption illustrates the black-white dichotomy inherent in much theorising about racism in Britain; it re-signifies skin colour

as a signal of either victimhood ('black', 'Asian') or oppressor ('white'). These issues are examined at greater length in chapter 2; here it will suffice to mention recent work which clearly illustrates that Irish migrants in Britain have not simply been incorporated into the majority population.

The most in-depth and wide-ranging of these studies is the recent report to the Commission for Racial Equality on the Irish in Britain (Hickman and Walter, 1997). This amply demonstrates that the Irish-born in Britain, according to the 1991 census, are over-represented in social class V: from this index stem other disadvantages such as high unemployment, over-reliance on private sector accommodation, limiting long-term illnesses. Often the position of the Irish-born on these and other indices of disadvantage are comparable to the position of the enumerated ethnic minorities, rather than the 'white' group (ibid.). In addition to the statistical evidence, the report contained testimonies from both representatives of community groups and first generation Irish people: it was clear that one of the main inhibitions on the work of Irish and other community groups was the non-recognition of the Irish in Britain as an ethnic minority which experiences racism (ibid.). It appears, from this evidence, that the unproblematic attribution of the disadvantages experienced by the Irish in Britain to their ethnicity has implicitly continued. The explanatory frameworks used for Irish disadvantage specifically exclude racism. This arises because the racialization of the Irish is unproblematic: "As a consequence, a binary that should properly be an object of deconstruction may gain acceptance as an unproblematic given" (Brah, 1996: 184)

Despite this lack of recognition, it has been clear for some time that the contemporary experience of Irish migrants in Britain is still characterised by discrimination and disadvantage. In addition to the CRE report (Hickman and Walter, 1997), there is substantial evidence from earlier reports, often focusing on particular issues. Irish people in Britain are discriminated against in many aspects of life in Britain, including: housing (Bennett, 1990; Cara, 1991, 1994 and 1995a); healthcare provision (Greenslade, 1994; Williams, 1992) including mental health (Pearson et al., 1991; Farrell, 1996) and HIV care (Connolly, 1996; O'Brien, 1993; PIAA, 1990; Riordan, 1994); the criminal justice system (AGIY, 1997; Borland et al., 1995; GLC, 1984b; Hillyard, 1993 and 1994; Murphy, 1994 and 1995); and employment (Hazelkorn, 1990). It is clear that the service needs of the Irish in Britain are often unrecognised and frequently unmet (see Kowarzik, c. 1994; Williams et al., 1996). The outcomes detailed in works such as those listed here and the CRE report, amongst others, illustrate that the Irish in Britain inhabit a specific location in racialized patterns of differentiation (*pace* Brah, 1996). Explanations for the positions of disadvantage experienced by the Irish refer to 'Irishness' rather than discrimination and prejudice. For example, the

disproportionate number of Irish people presenting with alcohol problems (Cochrane and Bal, cited in Harrison and Carr-Hill, 1992) may be interpreted through the stereotype of the Irish as prone to drunkenness: Irish people with alcohol problems expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of cultural sensitivity from non-Irish organisations which they had approached (ibid.). Irish people with alcohol and mental health problems (ibid., Kowarzik, c. 1992; Pearson et al., 1991) are fitted into an heuristic which racializes these problems: Irish people are drunks or mad because they are Irish. The consequences of migration to a strange culture, the alienation from the self which that entails (Kristeva, 1991; Fanon, 1986) and the positions of disadvantage in housing and labour markets are not accounted for in such formulations.

The catalogue of disadvantage presented here may appear to highlight the differences between the visible and the invisible Irish in Britain. The lack of culturally sensitive services for the Irish in Britain (Kowarzik, c. 1992), however, suggests that visibility *per se* does not invite recognition of discrimination and disadvantage. For those Irish in Britain who are invisible, the question of disadvantage is not obviated by their lack of visibility. The testimonies of interviewees in Hickman's and Walter's research (1997) illustrate the acceptability of verbal hostility towards Irish people in public spaces and in the workplace; these hostilities derive not only from the war in Northern Ireland but assumptions about what 'Irish' means or signifies. The non-recognition of Irish disadvantage reifies its visibility, as it becomes subsumed into the perceptions of what it is to be 'Irish'. The invisibility of the Irish in Britain may be considered a strategy for avoiding racism (Walter, 1995), but also an enforced condition emanating from denial of recognition. Thus Kiberd's suggestion (1996) that Irish people may adopt the Paddy stereotype to be acceptably Irish may misinterpret the (re)generation of the stereotypes of 'Irishness'. Disadvantage is not accepted but imposed: the power of ascription is not *given* to the English as Kiberd suggests but certainly rests with them.

The parameters of the research

The aim of this research is to establish whether the Irish are a racialized ethnic minority in contemporary Britain. It will attempt to achieve this through an examination of the representations of Irish people, Irish culture and Ireland in the British mass media. Stereotyped representations of 'Irishness' in the mass media would be indicative of the existence of commonsense, or inferential, anti-Irish racism in British cultural discourses: as Hall stipulates, commonsense racist formulations such as those in the popular media "enable racist statements to be formulated without ever bringing into awareness the racist predicates on which the statements are grounded" (1981: 36). In other words, commonsense racist formulations are the acceptable face of racism because by being commonsense they do not appear to be racist. An examination of media

representations of Irish people and culture will illustrate what ‘commonsense’ or acceptable racialized assumptions, if any, are made about the meaning of being ‘Irish’ in British cultural discourses.

In addition to investigating whether racialized stereotypes of Irish people and ‘Irishness’ exist in the contemporary British media, this research will investigate the specific position of Irish people living in Britain. This approach will incorporate Irish people’s knowledge of and response to the commonsense formulations of ‘Irish’ in the discourses of the media. The meaning of being ‘Irish’ in interactions with British people will also be examined through investigating Irish people’s experiences of everyday life in Britain. In this way, this research will investigate Irish people’s ‘double consciousness’; that is, it will provide an insight into how Irish people’s knowledge of the meanings and messages associated with ‘Irish’ in British cultural discourses affect both their interaction with such discourses in the mass media and with British people with whom they have contact. It will examine the racist behaviours and attitudes with which Irish people are familiar and deal with on an everyday basis, through their interactions with British people and their knowledge of media representations of themselves, and the strategies and explanations which Irish people living in Britain use to understand and avoid anti-Irish racism.

The structure and layout of the thesis

This thesis examines the contemporary racialization of the Irish in Britain. It argues that the black/white dichotomy of much theorising about racism in Britain makes invisible the experiences of racism of Irish people in Britain. Theoretical issues surrounding the construction of the black/white dichotomy and an argument for the inclusion of Irish people in understanding of and examinations of racist ideologies are presented in chapter 2. In addition, chapter 2 examines the role of the mass media in communicating and maintaining hegemonic beliefs in a manner which is accessible and amenable to consumers. It proposes that the reproduction of mythologies of inferiority and superiority in the mass media also applies to the representations of Irish people in the British mass media.

Chapter 3 presents the methodologies used in the research undertaken for this thesis. It presents the “deconstruction, interrogation, reconstruction” framework (Ericson et al., 1991: 55) as a suitable tool for examining representations of Irish people in the British mass media, and describes the method used for identifying interviewees and the construction of the questionnaire used.

The results of the media analyses are presented in chapters 4-7. Three of these chapters present findings from the interrogation of representations in the national, daily press. Chapter 4 details how Catholics in Northern Ireland are presented as the cause of all the violence associated with the conflict there, regardless of the actual instigators of the violence being reported. It shows how Northern Ireland is constructed in newspaper reports as being solely characterised by violence. The stereotypes associated with Irish people (outside of Northern Ireland), and with Ireland, are discussed and analysed in chapter 5. Chapter 6 examines the construction of Irish people as opposite to English, and thus the reaffirmation of the English/Irish binary in the press. The last chapter which deals with media representations, chapter 7, presents findings from a pilot study of fictional, television representations. It demonstrates that the symbolic stereotype of 'Irish = IRA' is the most frequently used, but that other stereotypes and the binary opposition of English/Irish are also invoked in the television programmes reviewed.

Chapters 8 and 9 present the results of interviews with twenty five first generation Irish people living in London. Chapter 8 details their responses to, and rejection of, the representations of Irish people and Irish issues which interviewees perceive in the media products which they use. The everyday racism experienced by interviewees is examined in chapter 9; this shows how Irish people use silence as a strategy to avoid racism levelled at them for being Irish.

The final chapter aims to bring the findings of the previous chapters together and provide an overview. It demonstrates that, in looking at the outcomes of this research, the Irish in Britain are a racialized minority who experience racism in their everyday lives, a racism which is supported and legitimised by the representations of Ireland, Irish people and Irish culture in the mass media.

Chapter 2 Putting Paddy into the framework.

2.1 Introduction

The continuing histories of migration and colonisation (see chapter 1) place the Irish in a specific position as a 'white' ethnic minority in Britain. However, many commentators on racism in Britain (and elsewhere) exclude 'white' ethnic minorities from their discussions and analyses of racism. This is based on the belief that racism is experienced exclusively by 'non-white' or 'black' groups. The assumption which underpins this belief is that 'white' is an homogeneous entity, and signifies a shared culture, history and biology. In this way, 'white' is both reified and privileged as a real, discreet racial category which can be referred to unproblematically (Bonnett, 1996). The term 'race' is not overtly linked to 'white' but 'white' becomes reified as such. 'White' people are assumed to have a shared culture and identity through the virtue of their skin colour, that they are all the same. The use of phenotype to identify and describe any group, real or imaginary, ignores the specificity of, and simplifies, the various and diverse experiences of peoples with that phenotypic characteristic.

The focus on 'non-white' groups as victims of racism, and 'white' people as perpetrators, has resulted in the exclusion of groups such as the Irish from analyses of racialization processes and racism (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). While there are accounts which examine the specific position of the Irish in Britain within analytical discourses, these tend to focus on the historical rather than the contemporary (see, for example Curtis, 1968 and 1971; Miles, 1988 and 1991; Holmes, 1988 and 1991). Contemporary accounts have begun to include the Irish in their discourses (for example, Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992) but the specificities of Irish experiences are not examined.

For the purposes of this thesis, *race* is defined as a pseudo-biological entity. The presumption it contains is that there are definable sub-species of the global population, and that these sub-populations are genetically distinct. Most racist ideologies endorse the belief that both certain phenotypic characteristics (such as skin colour, height) and cultural characteristics (such as traditions, religious beliefs, intelligence) are indicative of 'racial' difference(s) (Balibar, 1991). Both phenotypic and cultural signifiers are perceived as resistant or impermeable to change, and as indicative of superiority or inferiority. *Race* has no scientific basis (Jones, 1991); the choice of signifiers is completely arbitrary, and can change with time and place.

The term *racism* is treated here as having two levels: attitudinal (or psychological) and behavioural. This is partially to circumvent the debate about whether a thought can

be labelled “prejudice” rather than “racist”, or whether an action is really only “discrimination” as opposed to “racist”, a debate which has been deliberately used to eliminate ‘white’ minorities from discussions of racism. The attitudinal level of racism infers the acceptance of, or belief in, racist ideologies. This does not necessarily result in overt racist behaviours, but rather implies an acceptance of racist hierarchies of inferiority/superiority. The attitudinal level of racism allows the racialization of behaviours and beliefs of the *Other(s)*. The behavioural level of racism incorporates actions directed at people(s) because of their origin (perceived or real), regardless of intent. This distinction between attitudinal and behavioural racism draws upon Hall’s (1981) formulation of overt and inferential racism; it defines racism as a type of prejudice, as opposed to a discreet construct, which may or may not lead to observable or overt racial discrimination.

‘Racialization’ is the process between the concept ‘race’ and racism (at either level): it is the means through which a group (real or imaginary) is identified as *Other* through the arbitrary selection of characteristics to serve as signifiers of difference. What matters here is not that the group is overtly named a race, but that these characteristics are used as indicators of difference in a systematic way, although the signifiers can change over time. Indeed, the logic here suggests that racialization is not inevitable: if another group is seen as presenting a greater element of difference or ‘danger’, another group’s perceived differences can be ignored or reduced in their importance as signifiers. Indeed, they may be favourably perceived as a positive addition to the host population. As Miles illustrates, certain European immigrants were viewed favourably as “vigorous stock”, while British subjects were negatively portrayed (1993: 165-6).

2.2 The myth of shared colour, shared experience

In examining racism, it is necessary to address the terminologies utilised both within and without its discourses. As already suggested above, the term ‘white’ tends to be used unproblematically. ‘White’ is constructed as a ‘race’ and the myth of ‘white’ homogeneity (both biological and cultural) endorsed. As Barthes stipulates: “myth has in fact a double function: it points out and it notifies, it makes us understand something and it imposes it on us” (1993[1957]: 117). The language of racism uses these constructs to signify difference: “we carelessly use language in such a way as to will this sense of natural difference into our formulations” (Gates, 1986: 5). ‘White’ (or ‘black’) is both meaningful and meaningless: as a category it signifies a supposedly homogeneous dominant group and hides intra-group differences. In the same manner that ‘black’ cannot explain the specificities of racist ideologies and their discourses (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992) because of its inherent restrictions (Brah, 1992), ‘white’ cannot adequately explain the source of these ideologies and discourses. The

badge of 'whiteness' may place particular ethnicities in positions of dominance *vis-à-vis* other groups, but it does not serve as a protection from racism.

While 'black' has been reclaimed as a political category (Hall, 1992), albeit not entirely with success (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992), 'white' remains an unchallenged, homogeneous trope. 'White' is assumed to represent normality (Dyer, 1988 and 1997), hence to be 'black' is to be abnormal. The failure of anti-racist discourses to reject this trope allows the continued presumption that 'white' is unproblematic and self-explanatory. The argument over the usage of the term 'black', i.e. its application to all 'non-white' peoples, both obscures this while simultaneously destroying the political reclaiming of 'black' and re-introducing the old categories of scientific racism. In scientific racism, skin colour has long been used to identify supposedly discreet biological categories of human peoples. The older terms which once signified these categories (Caucasoid, Mongoloid and Negroid), have since been superseded in the literature of scientific racism by the terms utilised by anti-racism: 'black', 'white' and 'Asian' (Kohn, 1995).

This trichotomy, or dichotomy ('black'/'white'), serves to hide the biological and cultural realities of differences of greater magnitude within the sub-groups created by this arbitrary division. As Jones re-iterates, there is greater biological diversity than the theory of 'race' permits:

Individuals - not nations and not races - are the main repository of human variation for functional genes. A race, as defined by skin colour, is no more a biological entity than is a nation, whose identity depends only on a brief shared history. (Jones, 1991: 257)

Indeed, inheritance in itself is not an adequate predictor for the serious geneticist (*ibid.*, 244), as it illustrates nothing regarding the interaction of environment with biological make-up: a belief in the inevitability of inheritance is akin to resigning oneself to fate and acknowledging that we are all victims of our genes: "A belief in heredity, rather like a belief in predestination, is a good excuse for doing nothing" (*ibid.*, 241). But demonstrating that 'race' is not an acceptable scientific concept does not necessarily impact upon its social or political meanings (*ibid.*, 247), or its use in mainstream discourses.

Signifiers involved in racialization can be phenotypic or cultural, or both. Recognition of the opportunism of racism in the use of signifiers (Banton, 1987; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992) moves the debate away from the issue of skin colour, into more complex areas of debate. Racism is an everyday phenomenon (*pace* Essed, 1991), which has specific meanings for specific groups of peoples. Recognition of racism's opportunism destroys the myth that racism is solely experienced by 'non-

whites', and that 'whites' are solely capable of racial oppression (Bonnett, 1996; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992) thereby opening the wider question of racism within and among these groupings ('white', 'black', 'Asian').

Skin colour has never protected 'blacks' from policies of assimilation (Cohen, 1988): the same is true of 'white' minorities whether of indigenous or migratory origin. Indeed, it is argued here that skin colour has prevented the recognition of systematic discrimination and institutionalised racism against 'white' minorities because of the common assumption that the 'white' population is a homogeneous group that profits as a whole from racism. However, while a group of people may be victims of racism, this does not exclude them from also being perpetrators. This observation does not endorse a hierarchical view of racism, rather, it accepts that racism is specific, divisionary and opportunistic.

Other commentators (for example Fitzgerald, 1991; van Dijk, 1991) deny the experiences of 'non-black' peoples by proposing the existence of a hierarchy of difference. In these discourses, to be a victim of *real* racism ("racism in the strict sense" van Dijk, 1991: 26), one has to be 'black'. Certain categories of other groups may be considered 'black': "specific, such as Mediterranean or Arabic, peoples or immigrants from the 'borders' of Europe, or...Hispanics in the US." (ibid., 27). In other words, peoples such as Turks, Arabs, Latinos, who are popularly considered 'non-white'. Van Dijk extends this by introducing the concept "regionalism":

Finally, in order to distinguish racism, as a general term, from various forms of intra-European ethnicism, such as the case of the British dominance over the Irish, or of what is presently sometimes called the razzismo of North Italians against South Italians, the latter forms of ethnicism may also be called 'regionalisms'. These are not merely socio-culturally based (for instance on language and religion), but also politically and economically grounded. Although the ideological basis of these different forms of ethnicism may differ as to the set of criteria by which 'difference' is socially constructed, the structural consequences for the position of the respective dominated groups may be very similar. Note, however, that for historical reasons (slavery, colonialism), and in particular contexts, racism against Third World peoples, notably against peoples of African origin, may well have substantially different implications from the various forms of ethnicism among different western peoples. This is particularly the case in the United States, where blacks continue to be subjected to forms of racism that cannot simply be compared to the ethnicism of Anglos against, for instance, Irish and Italians. (van Dijk, 1991: 27)

Here, van Dijk argues that the specific histories and contexts of African-Americans and Third World peoples determine their experiences and understandings of racism. His counter-argument, that therefore 'white' people cannot experience *real* racism (as opposed to ethnicism or regionalism), however, is not valid. It fails to recognise the specificities of experience(s) and context(s) of 'white' ethnic minorities in, in this

instance, Europe. Yet it is the specificities of experience(s) and context(s) which are invoked to evidence racism against 'black' peoples; this includes histories of colonisation, slavery, cultural imperialism and the experience of migration. Interestingly, although van Dijk refers here to "British dominance over the Irish", he does not appear to consider this colonialism, one of the specific historical contexts invoked to distinguish racism from 'ethnicism' or 'regionalism'. Thus it is that the skin colour of one group (in this case the Irish) can serve to make invisible their position as a racialized minority. If it is then accepted that "regionalisms" are not "merely socio-culturally based...but also politically and economically grounded" (ibid.), then the only remaining distinguishing characteristic between those who experience real racism and those who experience "regionalism" is skin colour, or 'race'. Such a distinction uses the black/white dichotomy as its fulcrum, hence justifying it.

In van Dijk's analysis, 'white' ethnic minorities cannot experience racism because the privileges which possession of 'white' skin bestows overrides other signifiers; in other words, being 'white' is a protection against racism. The heterogeneity of 'black' and 'Asian' peoples is readily accepted under this rubric, while the homogeneity of 'white' peoples is insisted upon (such a formulation was exemplified by the 'ethnic' categories of the 1991 Census). Accepting 'white' as an unproblematic category reifies it as a racial category. This approach to racism fails to recognise its social qualities and its place within the systems of dominance and power in societies. Racism is a tool through which hegemony can be achieved and maintained (Cohen, 1988: 23). In this way, it is not necessarily the case that racism is always solely focused upon 'black' peoples in the western world, as the distinction between 'ethnicism' and racism suggests. Inter-group tensions and frictions which use signifiers other than skin colour exist.

'Ethnization' is racialization by a new name: neither "ethnicism" nor "regionalisms" identify new mechanisms of prejudice and discrimination specific to 'non-black' peoples, as van Dijk suggests (1991). Rather they serve to mask the experiences of racism of 'white' minority groups, excluding all but 'black'/'Asian' peoples from analyses of and action on racism. The use of such terms infers that there is a *real* difference between 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'regional group', thereby (unintentionally) endorsing the term 'race'. Given the debate over what constitutes an 'ethnic group', such distinctions hardly serve to clarify. Nor does van Dijk (1991) in any way manage to demonstrate definable features distinguishing 'racism' from 'ethnicism' (or 'regionalisms', for that matter) at either the attitudinal or behavioural levels.

These distinctions, and the ignoring of the specific ethnic disjunctures between groups of shared skin colour reduces the debate about racism to a 'black' versus 'white' issue. It denies the experience of racism by those who do not have the appropriate

characteristic ('black' skin colour), thereby excluding such groups from analysis and action. Hence, the creation of the constructs "ethnicism" and "regionalisms" masks the reality of the forces which are at work in such "ethnicisms" or "regionalisms". It ignores the long history of cultural differences being reified as natural elements of the *Other* (Balibar, 1991), while racists define themselves as actors within culture (as opposed to culture within actors, i.e. innate).

'White' minorities can and should be included in studies of racialization and racism. Racialization is not the sole property of the racism of an homogeneous 'white' population. The recognition that racism has an attitudinal (or psychological) component as well as a behavioural one, implies that 'black' and 'Asian' peoples are not the only victims of racialization and racism, although it recognises power differentials. This analysis has wide implications for the study of racism and for approaches to anti-racism. The focus here is not skin colour, but rather the question of whether prejudice is based on the belief that certain characteristics or signifiers are inherent characteristics of group members. Such signifiers are not restricted to the phenotypic or visible physical characteristics. As a social phenomenon, racism does not exclude cultural characteristics from its list of signifiers (Balibar, 1991; Miles, 1993), although it may depict these cultural characteristics as biologically determined. In this way, particular actions and behaviours can be identified as, for example typically "Jewish" or "Irish".

2.3 The Role of Ethnicity in the Creation of the Other

The conflation of ethnicity with 'race' leads to truisms such as the constructs "Irishness", "Jewishness" (Cohen, 1988: 24), and other similar terms, which refer to actions or characteristics as uniquely distinguishing or characterising a particular ethnic group. This is racism: Balibar (1991) uses the example of anti-Semitism to illustrate the long history of the use of cultural differences as stigmata of difference or *Otherness* (de Beauvoir, 1949: 65). This practice is not simply restricted to the case of anti-Semitism: it is essential to racist ideologies, regardless of whether or not the objects of racism are also identified through phenotypic characteristics. The shared badge of skin colour is not necessarily a protection against racism: it may increase racist hostility because the skin colour which may assist assimilation or make one less readily identifiable may be seen as creating in these groups a more hidden, less identifiable and therefore more dangerous threat (Cohen, 1988; Miles, 1991). Ethnic minorities are victims of the mechanism labelled racism. Using a term such as 'ethnic minority' signals a move away from the language of 'race' and the racialized myths which underpin it.

This is not to say that such terms in themselves do not present any difficulties: an acceptable definition of ethnicity or minority is highly elusive (Capotorti, 1991) yet, to

an extent, it is this which makes them attractive in that they fail to incorporate the dangerous symbolic representations that a term such as 'race' implies. Their fluidity in terms of meaning and group membership makes them preferable. One of the main problems with finding adequate terminology is that difference, real or perceived, is often problematised. As a result, even a seemingly neutral term such as 'minority' has no one recognisable definition (ibid.), and this is further complicated through the use of descriptives such as 'national', 'ethnic', 'cultural', 'religious' and 'racial' with the term which themselves defy adequate explanation.

Because of its history of receiving emigrants, Britain has long considered itself a tolerant country, ignoring the economic factors that have frequently been the motivation of this tolerance. Indeed, the very notion of tolerance is itself based on racism as it presumes that there is some element(s) about migrants that has to be tolerated (Holmes, 1991: 15). The change in migration patterns has seen a mass movement to the imperial heartland (although, as Skellington (1992) points out, Britain is traditionally a net exporter of people). This, together with the loss of empire, has left the British nation/people seeking a new identity now that that associated with possession of 40% of the world's land surface has gone (Goulbourne, 1991: 14). Britain is confronted by the once-colonised in its heartland rather than as subjects of wondrous tales from the far-reaches of empire. Racism, it is postulated, has found a new source of experiences on which to found its mythologies.

This is at the heart of the concept of a 'new' racism. That in the face of migration to the old colonial heartlands, racism has morphed into a new form, distinct from classical racism: symbolic racism (Hagendoorn, 1993: 28). However, as argued above, racism has always incorporated elements of the cultural in its discourse, and this is not only demonstrated by the experiences of the Jews and the Irish (who were long known in the imperial heartlands), but also through the fantastic tales of tribalism.

Because racialization is defined here as a system of prejudice directed at minorities by the majority, the skin colour issue is circumvented: racialization can and is directed at 'white' minority groups, although it is probable that an "ethnic hierarchy" exists (Hagendoorn, 1993: 32), whereby certain signifiers can be depicted as evidence of greater difference from, or greater inferiority to, the majority group. Hence a signifier such as skin colour may be elevated to greater importance than, say, national or ethnic origin. However, skin colour may be reduced as a signifier of the *Other* at specific times, such as in the wake of IRA activity in Britain, when the possession of an Irish accent identifies the alien threat. At other times, signifiers such as national origin and ethnicity may be perceived as more indicative of *Otherness*: "anti-Irish sentiment evident in Britain today is not solely the product of the situation in Northern Ireland" (Hickman,

1995: 206), but part of a long history of hostility and racism. 'Black' and 'Asian' peoples are neither the sole recipients of racism nor the sole owners of 'ethnicity'. The accepted attributes of ethnicity preclude such an assumption (see Capotorti, 1991; Taylor, 1993).

2.4 Racism and the construction of Other

At the heart of the process of racialization, and other systems of division, is the belief that the outgroup is the *Other* (de Beauvoir, 1949: p65). 'Race' is a social categorisation not a biological construct, although it is depicted as inherent and heritable, regardless of whether phenotypic or cultural characteristics are the main focus of racialization. The representation of the outgroup as *Other* emphasises the similarities shared by the ingroup and problematises the differences (real or imaginary) of the outgroup. Through the process of racialization ethnic outgroups are depicted as inferior, or unequal, to the majority and as meriting less favourable treatment. In consequence, discrimination denies access to political, social and economic goods or power.

The *Other* is perceived as differing in fundamental and unalterable ways. In the case of racialization, certain characteristics are taken to signify difference between groups, and these differences are seen as inherent and inevitable because of a person's, or group's, perceived genetic origin or 'race'. Such constructs compose racialized stereotypes. These racialized stereotypes are social phenomena, intrinsically bound up with racism. Racialized stereotypes are not restricted to the physical (Balibar, 1991): they may prescribe certain cultural practices and/or behaviours as 'natural' to a particular group, thereby biologizing culture and behaviour in attributing them to internal and natural causes. This may not even be overtly articulated, but reproduced at the level of simple expectation of certain behaviour or cultural beliefs to be displayed by group members. The role of myths is to naturalise (Barthes, 1993[1957]); beliefs, cultural practices and behaviours displayed by racialized minorities are signified as 'natural' and innate.

The *Other* is a mythical representation: stereotypes in their racialized forms are the monsters which represent the opposite, and are perceived as threatening, a given society's cultural and social belief systems (Cohen, 1987; Lévi-Strauss, 1958). The myth of the *Other* acts as a sublimator of a dominant or majority group's fears and forbidden desires:

Because of its hybrid form, the monster also articulates fears and fantasies about miscegenation; it can become an 'heraldic device' for popular racism, and the direct embodiment of negative stereotypes. (Cohen, 1987: 13)

Hence, the desire for the racialized *Other* is a cultural and social phenomenon, the particular articulation of which is culturally specific. As a cultural phenomenon, it can be found in cultural expressions, where its articulation may range from the blatant to the subtle. Racialized stereotypes are not necessarily obvious, even to members of the racialized group. They are designed to appear as commonsense (Hall, 1981), so that the restrictions they place on the racialized group appear ‘natural’ and to emanate from that group’s own characteristics.

2.4.1 Stereotyping and the Construction of the Other

Stereotyping and the construction of the *Other* have been depicted as a purely psychological phenomenon, and one that minority groups *themselves* utilise knowledge of in order to construct their own identity (Tajfel, 1987: 220). While stereotypes are a cognitive construct, they also have a role at the social level, where the functioning of the stereotype in interaction is based. In other words, stereotypes have an important role in the construction of *Other*. In the functioning of stereotypes as a social and cognitive concept, it is possible to distinguish between two mechanisms in the construction and reconstruction of stereotypes: categorisation and particularisation (Billig, 1985). This distinction recognises that stereotypes may be altered or renegotiated due to social contact with a member of the stereotyped group, or that certain individual outgroup members may be viewed as exceptions to the stereotype through the process of particularisation.

Stereotyping is the system by which certain characteristics of a group of persons are taken to be indicators of identity. Stereotypes are, therefore, a particular type of schema, or cognitive encoding structure (Haddock et al., 1994). They are distinguished from other schema because of their role in determining social relationships in a hegemonic manner; that is, the traits that are thought to be typical of a group’s characteristics can determine their position in society, and how members of other groups relate to them, both interactively and in terms of status in society. Stereotypes can therefore relate to any of the categories or signifiers considered relevant in the determining of status and power. These categories include class, gender and ‘race’. Stereotyping is not just an individual, cognitive phenomenon, but has strong societal implications in the role it can play in determining societal relationships.

Perceptual cues such as skin or hair colour are not unique signifiers for racialization. Stereotypes imbue signifiers with racist meaning(s). Brewer proposes that stereotypical cues take precedence in the application of sectarianism in Northern Ireland: “religion involves stereotypical not perceptual cues” (1992: 360). While he accedes that perceived

physical differences may play a role, Brewer proposes that this is not the same as the role that “the accurate perception of real physical differences” (ibid.) has in racism.

But racism is not simply about the recognition and signification of visual differences *per se*, but their linking with other characteristics which relegate the *Other* to the category of inferior, be that culturally or biologically determined. This leads to the conclusion that, if skin colour is not a unique predictor for the victims of racism, that the stereotype(s), or the cognitive listing of signified characteristics, phenotypic and/or cultural (Balibar, 1991:17), real or imaginary, is at the core of racialization. The example of anti-Semitism (Balibar, 1991; Poliakov, 1974) demonstrates how imagined physical differences can be added to cultural signifiers to enhance the process of racialization.

Agreeing that perceived and real phenotypic differences may act as more salient cues for racism or racialization does not further the understanding of the mechanism, nor of its rationale and consequences. Racists do not target their victims simply because of their skin colour: there is a racist logic behind acts of racism which justifies the attack or discrimination. The concept of ‘blackness’ has a meaning for the racist as well as the anti-racist: ‘blackness’, or ‘non-white’ skin colour acts as a cue to the racist for the behaviours or cultural values to be expected, based on stereotypic prescripts of what ‘black’ indicates. In other words, skin colour acts as a signifier of certain racialized characteristics which the racialized stereotype indicates are matched with skin colour. Therefore, racism is not about skin colour *per se*.

In their study of prejudice and attitude, Haddock et al. attempt to examine the “potential independence of stereotypic beliefs from symbolic beliefs and affective associates” (1994: 85), although they accept the likelihood of a positive correlation among their three suggested components of attitude. While Haddock et al. fail to indicate clearly why they would hypothesise that trait-laden rather than symbolic beliefs would be better predictors for racist attitudes or why they do not consider symbolic beliefs to be part of stereotypic cognition, their approach is useful in the deconstruction of racism. To illustrate, drawing on their example of antipathy towards French Canadians: someone with a negative attitude towards the Irish may feel hatred towards Irish people (affective), may believe that they are drunkards and liars (stereotypic) and believe that all Irish people support the IRA and therefore the subversion of the UK (symbolic).

Haddock et al. demonstrate that trait-laden beliefs on their own are not unique predictors for racist attitude, although they are the best predictor (ibid., 101). This suggests that racialized stereotypes, as cognitive phenomena, are not uniquely

interlinked with observable behaviour: people have a great capacity for dissimulation and hypocrisy. Significantly, they also found that for people with low-contact with the racialized group (Native Indians), it was probable that “media-based past experiences of low-contact individuals led symbolic beliefs to play an important role in uniquely predicting the attitudes of these individuals” (ibid.). Interestingly, they found that political disputes (in this case members of the “Mohawk Warriors” erecting a barricade against the development of a golf course in Oka) which were widely reported in the media led to an increase in the importance of symbolic beliefs as predictors of racist attitudes (ibid., 93), even though the content of the three components they examined changed little. The Warriors were labelled ‘criminals’ and ‘terrorists’ by politicians and it appears that the media did little to contradict this and may even have exacerbated this type of representation (ibid., 92). This highlights the close interaction between media representations and racism.

Although stereotypes have a cognitive function in the reduction of information and in the processes of forming and affirming group identity (Hagendoorn, 1993: 36), their social function lies in the negative evaluation of the *Other*. This function affirms the ingroup’s self-evaluation as superior (ibid., 34) which leads to the conclusion that stereotyping (and, hence, racialization) has a pivotal role in the formation and maintenance of hegemony. This presents an avenue for the inclusion of ‘white’ minorities in examinations of racism. The creation of a cognitive representation which homogenises and summarises the supposed shared characteristics is necessary for the building of the profile of the *Other* which is readily communicable. The selection of those characteristics is generally arbitrary and opportunist (Banton, 1987).

2.5 Ideology and Consent

The power of the state, in Britain, to introduce censorship and control the flow of information is sufficient to ensure media loyalty, without the introduction of censorship itself (Schlesinger, 1989). This is offset by the public adherence to the values of autonomy and impartiality, which are actually “the necessary conditions for the production of dominant ideological meanings” (Hartley, 1982: 55), thereby placing a double pressure on the mass media to *appear* independent. This is not without difficulties for the marketing of mass media products, which are subject to the whims of market forces and, therefore, need to put sales before the reproduction of any ideology which may be unpopular and damage profits. Hence, the mass media is not a reliable source of support for the state, nor is it a simple mouthpiece for state endorsed ideology (Hall, 1981: 35). But the threat of censorship ensures that the media will avoid it by exercising self-censorship and ‘responsibility’ in accordance with the demands of the dominant group or the state (Schlesinger, 1988; Henderson et al., 1990). In Britain this

compromise is illustrated by the existence of the Press Complaints Council, a body which oversees the national and regional press in Britain, but which is funded and staffed by the press and its workers.

As an ideology, popular racism individuates class society by creating racialized groupings within the hegemony, enabling individuals to particularise and categorise one another (Billig, 1985), thus creating a hierarchy of identification. This hierarchy of identification is essential to the continuance of the *status quo* :

The very identity of the actors depends upon the process of formation and maintenance of hegemony (Balibar, 1991: 4)

implying that racialized stereotypes require dissemination to ensure the dominance of the dominant group. Racism is a mechanism which coheres with the retention of economic, social and political power by the dominant or majority group. It is a complex phenomenon which intertwines with other systems and ideologies of inequality to create hegemony (Hagendoorn, 1993). As a fundamental element of the mechanisms underpinning hegemony, racialized stereotypes require widespread and shared comprehension: this enables the signification of difference, and of the *Other* to appear both rational and natural. The shared, and culturally favoured, characteristics which typify the majority group and which serve as a rationale for their dominance provide vested interests in maintaining the systems of racialized inequality. (Similarly, stereotypes based on gender and class create rationales for maintaining patriarchy and class-based inequality).

As cognitive constructs (or schema), stereotypes are not simply equivalent to racism (attitude and/or behaviour); stereotypes need to be translatable to the populace, including racialized minorities. While the theoretical concepts justifying racism (and, hence, the perpetuation of racist inequality in society) are elitist, there has always been a need for racist ideology to be popularised (Balibar, 1991: 19) in order to ensure the perpetuation of the mechanism in society. The preservation of hegemony is not about the imposition of ideology, but the creation of “rule by consent” (Tetzlaff, 1991: 30).

As a part of the systems of inequality, racism is an ideological construct which needs to be reproduced in order to maintain the hegemony of which it is a part (Hall et al., 1977: 48-9). The dominant ideology is reproduced and reinforced through the functions of what Althusser terms “Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses” (1971). However, this does not result in a simple imprinting of the dominant ideology on the masses: alternative ideologies or “common sense ideas” (Hall, 1981: 28) which are contradictory or complementary to the “dominant” ideology exist and may be seen as preferable to the ideas of the ruling elite or class (Abercrombie and Turner, 1984). In

other words, the ruling elite needs another mode through which to communicate their ideology of inequality, and one that is accessible and not necessarily associated with the state in the way that education or social services are perceived. Indeed, it may be that the functions of some of these “ideological apparatuses” are not necessarily the reproduction of the dominant ideology *per se*, but the preparation of “the population for ideological control” (Tetzlaff, 1991: 15).

The mass media has an integral role to play in the reproduction and transmission of ideologies. This role is less that of instigator/creator than of informer and maintainer of continuity. If stereotypes are essential in the communication of racialization myths, through producing a readily-accessible profile of or data on the *Other*, then it follows that the mass media are an important area for the reproduction, communication and manipulation of stereotypes.

With the task of popularising and disseminating the dominant ideology, or commonsense ideas (Hall, 1981), the mass media needs to retain an aura of autonomy from the state (Schlesinger, 1987). Otherwise, its credibility as an independent source of information is jeopardised. According to Schlesinger (1989: 30), “the subordination of the media within the wider structures of power ensures that the system works perfectly well without any need for open intervention or censorship”. While acting as an ideological state apparatus (Hall, 1982 *pace* Althusser, 1971) the mass media is itself subordinate within the structures of power, and is unlikely to subvert the *status quo* (Schlesinger, 1989).

The role of the mass media in popularising the dominant ideology, and hence racism, is one of importance: “The power of the media is thus portrayed as that of renewing, amplifying and extending the existing predispositions that constitute the dominant culture, not in creating them” (Curran, Gurevitch and Woolacott, 1982: 14). Neither the state nor a dominant group alone can popularise any ideology. In general, the media tends to espouse the dominant ideology, or “commonsense ideas” (Hall, 1981: 28). This should be particularly true of issues judged to be of great importance to national security or cultural values. Hall et al. (1978), for example, trace the creation, via the mass media, of the mugging crisis through which black youths were criminalized, while the extensive coverage given to Enoch Powell similarly created an immigration crisis (Gordon and Rosenberg, 1989).

Popularisation is not restricted to certain elements of these cultural productions, but is an integral part of the production of mass media products. The production of “news” may appear a neutral action of reportage, but “news” is itself a cultural product (Berry,

1990: 237), bound in by cultural constraints. This includes racialized stereotypes and the ideology of racism.

As interpretations of events and situations, news reports (whether written or televisual) are subject to ideological assumptions. The audience or readers of news reports can bring their own interpretations to what they read or hear (Hartmann and Husband, 1973: 270), but the decision of what is newsworthy and how events will be interpreted is invested in the producers of news (Curran and Sparks, 1991: 222). Indeed, the ability of the reader/viewer to critically assess what is presented to them as “news” may not be invoked, except where manipulation of the “truth” appears visible to the reader/viewer. This suggests that consumers of news select those “preferred readings” which match their personal interpretations or versions of the dominant ideology. In other words, consumers of news are unlikely to purchase or endorse productions of news which do not, to them, appear to adequately reflect ‘reality’.

Although all news media make reports in accordance with their “preferred reading” of an event (ibid., 215) the reproduction of ideology is at its most effective when the statements made are seemingly “natural” or ‘real’, as opposed to overtly ideological (Hall, 1981: 32; Barthes, 1993[1957]). In this sense, news is at its most acceptable to readers when it appears to be the correct version or interpretation of events. As selectors of their own news consumption, consumers of news become “spontaneously able to interpret the world at large in terms of the codes [they] have learnt from the news” (Hartley, 1982: 5). This suggests an overlapping in the preference of the consumer for certain production(s) of news and the way in which news is conceptualised. Even those involved in the production of news may not be consciously aware of their role in this reproduction of ideology (Hall, 1973: 181). Hence, the production of news and the ideology or ideologies it promotes contains both a top-down and a bottom-up component (van Dijk, 1991: 34), in a pattern of negotiation between the readers’/viewers’ demands and the news values of journalists and editors (Hall, 1973: 181).

The communication of information such as “news”, particularly continuous or interlinked stories, depends in part on the use of shared assumptions held by owners, media workers and consumers. Communication, to be effective, requires shared understanding (Hartmann and Husband, 1973). Such cognitive congruity enables the omission of background details, assumptions and blatant stereotypes. Shared understanding between consumer and media product is, however, a process of negotiation, so that changes in ideological and/or political stance may result in changes in market receptivity.

Mass media such as the daily newspapers and television can therefore be thought of as an ideological battleground (Schlesinger, 1991b), in which the demands of profit, the dominant ideology and the ideological consumption demands of the audience are potentially in conflict. A successful media product is one which combines these demands with the appearance of neutrality. A media product relies on its popularity for economic reasons: therefore the popularity of its ideological stance will determine its market success. If “hegemony is rule by consent” (Tetzlaff, 1991: 30), then consumers of media products do not just contribute financially to that hegemony, but give tacit approval to the ideology espoused through the continued consumption of that media product.

Media products, and particularly those which produce “news”, therefore form an important element in the way individuals comprehend and perceive the world about them. Haddock et al. (1994) found that the media was an important source of knowledge about ethnic minorities. This has important implications, especially since the media are such an important source of information, and (in the context of this research) as “Britain is very much a newspaper-reading society....second only to Japan” (Gordon and Rosenberg, 1989: 1). The public demand for news, already prepared by the education system (Tetzlaff, 1991; Althusser, 1971), shapes the selection of newsworthy articles: Curran and Sparks (1991) claim that this has led to a move towards more entertaining reports, as typified by the daily tabloid press in Britain: this, however, does not imply that beneath the style of reporting that the tabloids identify important stories any differently from the broadsheets and middle-market papers (i.e. *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*).

As an inherent part of the British “cultural tradition” (Hartmann and Husband, 1973: 274), racism is an essential part of cultural products such as news reports. “Racism and the media’ touches directly the problem of ideology, since the media’s main sphere of operations is the production and transformation of ideologies” (Hall, 1981: 31). The study of representations of ‘blacks’ and ‘Asians’ in the news media, especially the press, has illustrated how the media have perpetuated racialized stereotypes of these minority groups (see, for example, Husband, 1985; van Dijk, 1991). The concentration on the racist tri- or dichotomy has resulted in a failure to analyse how ‘white’ ethnic minorities such as the Irish have been represented in the media. In the case of the Irish, however, analyses of historical press depictions have demonstrated that there were identifiable, and often quite blatant, stereotypical representations (Curtis, 1968 & 1971).

Studies of racism in the mass media have highlighted how the choice and selection of key phrases and, more importantly, images, have perpetuated the racialized stereotypes

of 'blacks' and 'Asians'. This ranges from clearly racist reports, where the ethnic minority involved is presented to the audience or readership as problematic, to careful selection of linguistic patterns to imply that the group is a problem, without necessarily utilising recognisably racist terms (Gordon and Rosenberg, 1989: 24; van Dijk, 1991: 181):

the semantics of race reporting is a rich field of analysis, allowing us to examine how the Press describes events, actions, and people involved in race relations. We have found that there are many structures and strategies that are used to deny, mitigate, excuse, or otherwise conceal prejudice, discrimination, or racism, to blame the victims, and to accuse the left, anti-racists, or other opponents. (van Dijk, 1991: 198)

The use of stereotypical representations is not dependent on the use of overtly racist language: "language is not neutral, but a highly constructive mediator" (Fowler, 1991: 1). As a system of signs, language is a reflection of social values which thus conveys particular, shared meanings (Hartley, 1982: 18-9). Communication is not dependent on language alone but also on shared understanding (Hartmann and Husband, 1973: 270) as to what language itself signifies. The shared understanding between the consumers and producers of news renders the overt statement of stereotypes and ideologies unnecessary. While the news media and researchers define 'race' in terms of 'non-white' skin colour, this does not imply that 'white' ethnic minorities are not racialized in the way they are represented in news reports.

By following the discourse-based approach to the production and reproduction of ideology in the news media "it is easier to discover stereotypes and racism hidden behind tolerant appearances" (Hagendoorn, 1993: 34). It is not necessary for the news media to utilise the overt language of racism in order to racialize ethnic minorities which may not be popularly thought of as a distinct 'race'. Language is not simply equal to discourse (Eagleton, 1991).

In "the daily reporting of news with a 'race dimension' longstanding assumptions, myths and stereotypes are regularly reproduced" (Gordon and Rosenberg, 1989: 24). Indeed, the media plays an important role in the revaluation and maintenance of stereotypes through the selective information it offers the reader/viewer (Hagendoorn, 1993: 35). This research will examine the "assumptions, myths and stereotypes" about the Irish, which are reproduced and reformulated in the processes of the mass media in contemporary Britain.

2.5.1 Media and Ideology: the specific case of 'terrorism'

When the state depicts itself, or the ideological *status quo*, as threatened, the media will defend it and the cultural values that it espouses (Schlesinger, 1987). This is negotiable:

“in undeclared wars or partial engagements different rules apply, for there is scope to dispute what the national interest may be” (ibid.: 286). The media is an invaluable tool in the creation of “moral panics” (Hall et al., 1978), not only in the case of civil unrest, but also in the way that terrorism is covered (Gerbner, 1988; Miller, 1994a).

While questioning the exact location of the origin of ideology espoused in the media may be futile (Balibar, 1991), elites have a vested interest in utilising the media to legitimise and maintain their power (van Dijk, 1991). The demands of the audience have an impact on what is portrayed and how, but the state has the ultimate leverage over the production of media products in the threat of legislation (Miller, 1994a). The recognition of this by British media institutions, coupled with the desire to claim legitimacy and credibility has resulted in the sacrifice of independence for responsibility (Schlesinger, 1988; Henderson et al., 1990; Miller, 1994a). This has particular implications for the reporting of anti-state violence, which is frequently labelled ‘terrorism’ by both the media and the state:

The labelling of one organisation or action as ‘terrorist’ is intimately related to questions of power and influence....Defining opponents as ‘terrorists’ represents an active pursuit of legitimacy [on the part of the other force or opponent to those defined as ‘terrorist’] (Miller, 1994a: 7)

Television is subject to more overt controls than the print media (ibid.), and even direct intervention by the government, particularly in the case of the BBC (Henderson et al., 1990; Miller, 1994a); however, the print media is not unfettered by the demands of the state. (See Miller (1994a) for a discussion of the successful strategy of threatening to use the government veto over BBC programmes about the war in Northern Ireland in preference to actually applying that veto.) Indeed, it could be argued that the lesser regulation of the print media behoves it to act in an even more responsible manner than the broadcast media. As Miller points out (ibid.), the consumer is not king (sic) where media representations are concerned, otherwise the print media, in particular, would have for many years now have been arguing, *en masse*, for the withdrawal of troops from Northern Ireland.

Reports of ‘terrorism’ are not simply reports of violence (Gerbner, 1988). The control of the representation of ‘terrorism’ is an important area of conflict between the media and the state (ibid.), one which it seems that the state usually wins (ibid.; Miller, 1994a). However, this is not a clear cut conclusion:

...symbolic uses of violence tend to benefit those who control them, usually states and media establishments. (Gerbner, 1991: 3)

Although audiences’ responses to events are influenced by their social context, the lack of direct experience of acts of violence labelled as ‘terrorism’ and the ideological

impetus behind them, leaves the majority of the audience dependent on the media for information and knowledge (Miller, 1994a). If broadcasters and print media accept without qualification the state definition and application of 'terrorism' (ibid.), this affects the public's perception of such events (Gerbner, 1988; Paletz et al., 1982). The disparity between experience and perception of 'terrorism' may explain Miller's (1994b) finding that people from Northern Ireland believe that Belfast is a safe place to be abroad at night whereas British respondents had the converse view.

The analysis the media lends to acts defined as 'terrorism' is an area where the state can be seen, at times, to be in direct conflict with the media. The state demands that the media is not neutral, but that it follows the ideological route offered by the state's analysis. Indeed, this extends beyond violence defined as 'terrorism' to violence *per se*, whether real or fictional. Thus the portrayal of violence is:

constrained not only by the different kinds of programme forms available but also by the complex modes of control and pressure which the state and the wider political establishment can bring to bear on broadcasting. This exercise of power is usually discreet, but where it is judged worth having a row, it may take a highly public form. (Schlesinger et al., 1982: cited in Gerbner, 1988: 12)

Since, it has been argued, the desire to be 'responsible' is also a facet of the print media's reporting of 'terrorism', this "constraint" applies here also. That this responsibility is expected and demanded of the media as a whole was made evident by Margaret Thatcher's plea to the media "to starve the terrorist and the hijacker of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend" (cited in Gerbner, 1988; Miller, 1994a). The media are required to accept the definition of organised anti-state violence, such as that of the IRA, as 'terrorism', and are expected to do so without qualification. Thus violence labelled as 'terrorism' is reported without context or explanation: it just 'is':

Coverage of 'terrorism' is notable for the frequent omission of causal explanation for terrorist acts, and the attribution of mental instability to terrorists and their leaders. (Gerbner, 1988: 19)

The failure to include background details or analysis enables the legitimisation of state repression (ibid.; Miller, 1994a). In the case of Northern Ireland, this has permitted the introduction of draconian legislation in the U.K., in the form of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). It suspends the civil liberties of those held under its terms (Gerbner, 1988; Hillyard, 1993) and its repression is specifically directed at one ethnic minority, the Irish (Hillyard, 1993). While British audiences may indeed favour the withdrawal of troops from Northern Ireland, it is argued that this is due to a very different dynamic than the lack of public resistance to the PTA. The successful portrayal of the war in Northern Ireland as an inter-ethnic conflict which Britain is benevolently attempting to contain or negotiate an end to, rather than its presentation as a dispute over

the very legitimacy of the state (Miller, 1994a), reduces the perceived legitimacy of the sending of 'our boys' to Northern Ireland. This is rather different than the bombing in Britain which resulted in the introduction of the PTA. Indeed, research has shown that the British public are in favour of the direct surveillance and harassment of those suspected of terrorist activity by agents of the state, even if this would impact on everyone's civil liberties (de Boer, 1979; Miller, 1994a).

2.6 Conclusion

The aim of this research is to investigate whether the Irish are 'racialized' in contemporary Britain. 'Racialization' is recognised here as an ideological process through which a group is "signified as either biologically or culturally distinct, or both" (Miles, 1993: 51). The research is informed by several theoretical assumptions:

1. Racism is "a true 'total social phenomenon'" (Balibar, 1991: 17);
2. Representations in the mass media emanate not from a cultural vacuum, but from an understanding (tacit or otherwise) of what is culturally acceptable, expected or both. Thus the mass media can be viewed as 'ideological state apparatuses' (Hall, 1982; Althusser, 1971), although ideological messages, including racist discourses, contained within the mass media may be embedded and inferential (Hall, 1981);
3. Ethnic minorities are themselves invaluable sources of information regarding the nature of racism and prejudice directed against them: this assumption is based on the concepts of 'double consciousness' (du Bois, 1986[1953]) and 'everyday racism' (Essed, 1991);
4. The mass media does not simply disseminate ideology: the audience is active in de/re-constructing meanings and messages from the media it uses (Ang, 1991). Utilising the concepts of the 'active audience' and 'double consciousness', it can be asserted that ethnic minority members have a privileged understanding of mass media representations of their own group and culture.

These theoretical assumptions led to the development of a framework within which the contemporary racialization of the Irish in Britain could be investigated. This takes the form of a two-pronged analysis: a deconstruction of contemporary mass media representations of Irish people and 'Irishness'; an analysis of Irish people's reactions to the representations in the media they use and accounts of their own experiences. This thesis will examine the British mass media for symbolic and trait-laden stereotypes of 'Irishness'. The presence of such stereotypes would demonstrate a continuance with older, racialized stereotypes documented elsewhere (Curtis, 1968, 1971; Curtis, 1984b; Holmes, 1988; Lebow, 1976; Kirkaldy, 1979; Miles, 1982, 1993a). The examination of the mass media will uncover the attitudinal or inferential anti-Irish racism which is expressed in the commonsense discourses of the mass media (Hall, 1981).

The concepts of 'double consciousness' and 'everyday racism' infer that Irish people living in Britain are expert sources of knowledge regarding both representations of 'Irishness' in the British media and racism directed against them as Irish people. The analysis of their reactions to media representations will provide both validity and substance to the media analyses. This research assumes that Irish people have special knowledge (*pace* hooks, 1992: 165) which is used in the everyday negotiations which have to be made to live in Britain. This knowledge is gained through Irish people's interpretations of the representations of themselves in the British mass media and through their interactions with British people. Through this framework, this research will examine the contemporary racialization of the Irish in Britain, examining both the inferential racism of the discourses of the mass media and the overt racism experienced by Irish people living in Britain. In this way, the specificity of what it means to be Irish in Britain can be examined.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Representations in the Mass Media

It has already been argued that the mass media contain embedded, ideological messages (Hall, 1982). With regard to racist ideologies, there is a wealth of evidence demonstrating continued racism against black peoples in the press and television (for example: Gordon and Rosenberg, 1989; Hall et al., 1978; Hall, 1981 and 1982; Hartmann and Husband, 1974; Searle, 1987; van Dijk, 1991). By undertaking an examination of representations of Irish people and 'Irishness' (cf. Cohen, 1988) in the British press and television, it is possible to establish whether the Irish are subject to racialization in the media. This will be achieved through both a newspaper survey and a survey of television programmes. The former is designed to be wide-ranging and thorough, while the latter, because of a number of constraints detailed below, constitutes a preliminary investigation.

3.1.1 Newspaper survey

This research aims to examine the contemporary racialization of the Irish in Britain. Therefore, it was decided to gather newspaper data from the most recent sample frame available. This was the chronological year 1992, all of which was available (or soon would be) in the British Newspaper Library, Colindale, at the time of collection (autumn/winter, 1993). Initially, it was intended to gather data from the whole year. However, this proved too ambitious so the time-frame was reduced: documents were selected from every second month (beginning with January and concluding with November). In this way, most of the span of the sample frame originally chosen was covered; additionally, by sampling every second month of the year, the seemingly natural, continuous narrative of news was broken (Berry, 1991). By disrupting the narrative, parallels and continuities in representations would be highlighted, rather than being obscured as 'naturalised' (Hall, 1982) elements of the stories.

Four, national, daily newspapers (of eleven) were selected to form a representative sample of British, national dailies. Sunday newspapers were excluded since they are, in essence, a separate product from the dailies and follow different modes of story production. (However, the increasing phenomenon of 'sister' papers suggests that findings from the dailies are, to an extent, generalisable to the Sundays). The selection of the four newspapers rested on three criteria:

1. ABC circulation figures for 1991/2 (see Table 3.1, below);
2. Newspaper format (broadsheet/'quality' or tabloid);

3. Political allegiance of the newspapers (right or left of centre).

On this basis, the four selected were: the *Daily Mirror* (tabloid, left of centre); the *Daily Telegraph* (broadsheet, right of centre); *The Guardian* (broadsheet, left of centre); *The Sun* (tabloid, right of centre). While this sample neglects the middle market (comprised, in 1992, of the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail* and *Today*), these papers share many features with those selected, particularly the two downmarket newspapers (*Daily Mirror*, *The Sun*), such as the focus on human interest stories and entertainment (Tunstall, 1996), as well as format. Such shared features indicates that exclusion of the middle market sector is not necessarily problematic.

Table 3.1: Audit Bureau of Circulation figures for June-Nov. 1991/2

Title	1991	1992
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	1,059,546	1,038,792
<i>Financial Times</i>	287,423	288,495
<i>The Guardian</i>	411,324	411,509
<i>The Independent</i>	375,110	372,243
<i>The Times</i>	388,819	381,854
<i>Daily Express</i>	1,540,357	1,529,273
<i>Daily Mail</i>	1,681,879	1,753,737
<i>Today</i>	467,407	539,284
<i>Daily Mirror/Record</i>	3,656,549	3,558,753
<i>Daily Star</i>	849,814	805,571
<i>The Sun</i>	3, 687, 455	3, 554, 833

Source: The Independent, 13-01-1993, Media p.11

Any article which contained a reference to Irish people, themes or events was collected: no attempt was made to be discriminate. All these articles were subjected to a three-stage qualitative content analysis of deconstruction, interpretation and reconstruction, detailed below, to elicit representations of Irish people and 'Irishness'. In total, 2,194 articles were collected: 240 in the *Daily Mirror*; 597 in the *Daily Telegraph*; 1,118 in *The Guardian* and 239 in *The Sun*. Articles were of varying length, ranging from less than twenty words to lengthy review or commentary pieces.

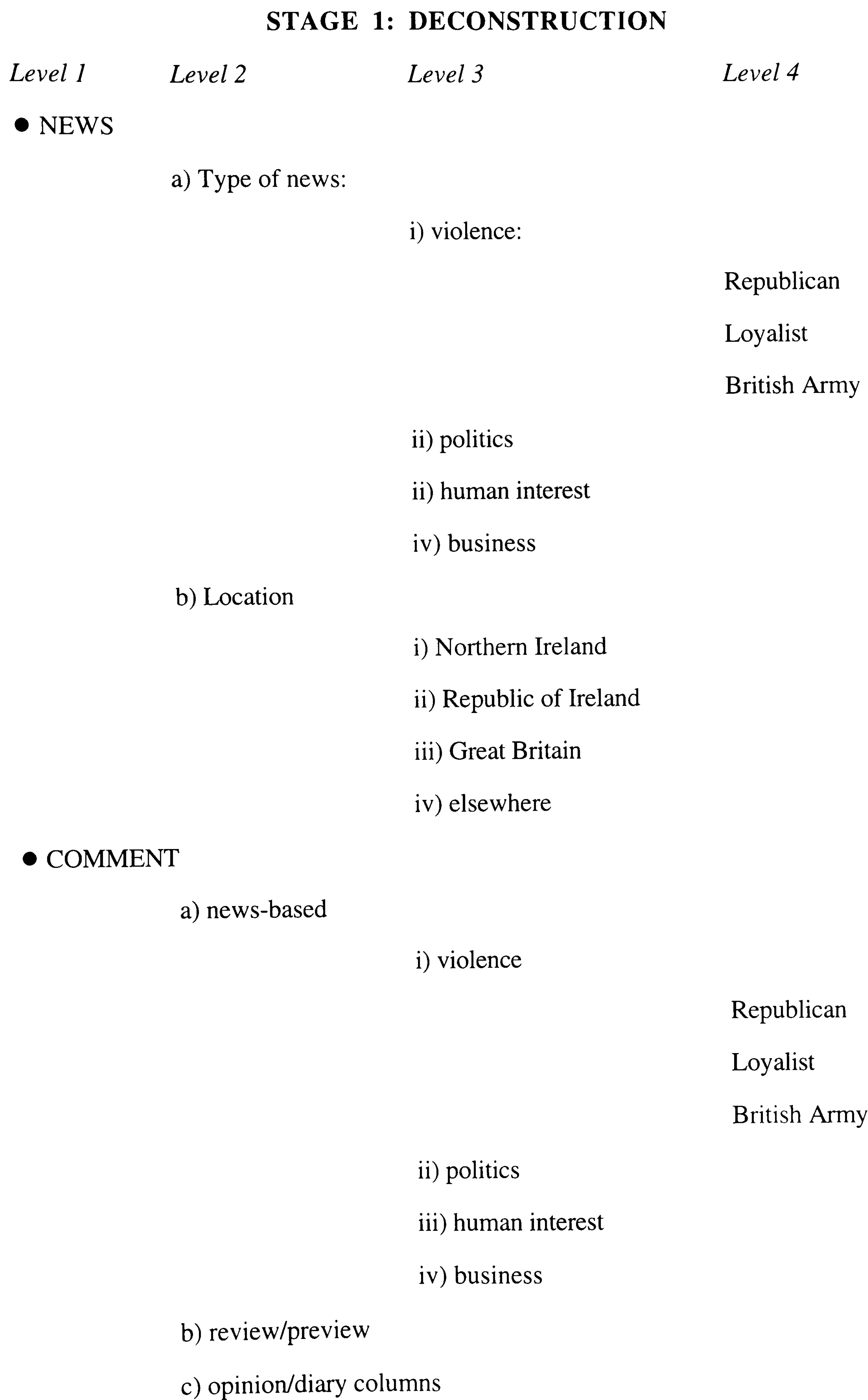
Once collected, the articles were analysed and their representations of Irish people and 'Irishness' examined. Quantitative content analysis of the articles was rejected. As

Tuchman (1991: 80) highlights, this sort of simple categorisation is often an exercise in reductionism: such an exercise would not usefully provide any understanding of press representations of the Irish. Nor was any systematic comparison made among the four newspapers from which the data was gathered, since the research aims to examine general representation, rather than investigate which newspaper is most or least favourable in its depictions of Irish people and 'Irishness'. Instead, qualitative content analysis was selected, since the research aims to uncover any processes of racialization of the Irish: while quantitative content analysis uncovers readily manifest content, 'discourse analytical' approaches (van Dijk, 1991) recognise that "language is not neutral, but a highly constructive mediator" (Fowler, 1991: 1).

Platt suggests that documentary research "can hardly be regarded as constituting a method, since to say that one will use documents is to say nothing about *how* one will use them" (1981a, 31: original emphasis). While it may appear that qualitative analyses of documents are indeed 'a-methodical' and over-reliant on assumptions of the researcher's expertise and authority (ibid.), this does not imply that there can be no method to the qualitative examination of documentary data. The qualitative content analysis undertaken here was directly informed both by the concept of 'myth' (Barthes, 1993[1957]), which provides a theoretical understanding of the embeddedness of ideological constructs, and the "deconstruction, interpretation, and reconstruction" framework utilised by Ericson et al. (1991: 55). Unlike quantitative content analysis, such an approach enables 'engagement' (May, 1993: 138) with the text. The development of categories of deconstruction and the explicit formulation of an interpretative framework (an unusual step in providing accounts of discourse analytical approaches) is aimed at clarifying the research process, thus reducing the risk of overinterpretation (see Eco in Collini, 1992).

The deconstruction of the articles followed a simple categorisation of articles into four, broad categories: News, Comment, Sport and Personality. These were then further categorised, as the framework below (fig. 3.1) illustrates. The four main categories, however, very much follow the newspapers themselves in terms of layout, where pages are dedicated to 'hard' news; commentary; review and gossip, this last being particularly, but not exclusively, associated with tabloid newspapers. Both Tunstall (1996) and Seymour-Ure (1996) comment on the increasing acceptance of entertainment values (as opposed to more traditional 'news values') in the 'quality' broadsheet market. The category of "News" was the most complex, as it contains two sub-categories (type of news and location) which can themselves be further broken down.

Figure 3.1: Newspaper analysis framework



- **SPORT**

- a) international
- b) individual/personality
- c) human interest

- **PERSONALITY**

- a) gossip/scandal
- b) promotional

STAGE 2: INTERPRETATION

Key questions:

- How are Irish people and Irish culture portrayed?
- What is the relevance of Irish presence in story
- Are there underlying assumptions regarding 'Irishness'?
- What role does 'Irishness' have in the story?
- Terminology: is it relevant and accurately employed?

STAGE 3: RECONSTRUCTION

- **NORTHERN IRELAND**

- presentation of violence as normative
- location of blame within Catholic community
- conflation of terms

- **IRISH IN BRITAIN**

- behavioural stereotypes
- subversive presence

- **IRISH AS OTHER**

- romanticization
- creation of bipolarity (English versus Irish)

Having classified the articles through deconstruction, it was then necessary to examine the representations they contained. The second stage of analysis, interpretation, involves the application of particular questions regarding the content of the articles gathered. These questions were aimed at uncovering any pattern or schema in the use of Irish themes and content:

How are Irish people and Irish culture portrayed?

What is the relevance of Irish presence in story

Are there underlying assumptions regarding 'Irishness'?

What role does 'Irishness' have in the story?

Terminology: is it relevant and accurately employed?

Obviously, questions such as these are designed to examine text beyond its surface structure, thereby enabling an understanding of any deeper meanings to be disembedded from the texts being analysed. It is unusual for the interpretative, analytical process to be thus delineated or clarified (Schlesinger et al., 1992; May, 1993): it is hoped that this, however, will facilitate understanding of how the reconstructive processes outlined in chapters four, five and six were achieved.

3.1.2 Television survey

In conjunction with the newspaper survey, a preliminary investigation into depictions of Irish people and 'Irishness' on British terrestrial television was undertaken. Originally, three months of videoing was undertaken. Since this was done at the same time as the newspaper data was collected, the programmes were videoed in the period mid-September to mid-December 1993. This included one week's news bulletins, chosen at random.

Programmes were selected in the same manner as the newspaper articles: those with an ostensibly Irish theme or content were chosen for videoing. The descriptions of programmes were taken from the relevant issue of *Radio Times*, a listings magazine produced by the BBC.

This yielded a total collection of 104 programmes; however, it was decided to reduce the sample for analysis to fictional programmes. There are several reasons for this decision. Firstly, there is a large body of research available on broadcast news and its treatment of news from Northern Ireland (for example: Curtis, 1984a and 1986; Henderson et al., 1990; Miller, 1994a and 1994b; Rolston, 1991; Rolston and Miller, 1996; Schlesinger, 1987a), and an analysis of the news programmes collected would not have added any new insights to this corpus, given the concentration on Northern

Ireland in the bulletins recorded. Other non-fiction programmes were also excluded. This meant that a potentially interesting programme such as “Sunday” (ITV, 14-11-1993), broadcast from Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, was excluded. However, non-fiction was excluded because, in general, deconstructing such programmes would be time-consuming and readily open to overinterpretation. Non-fiction programmes tend to use representations of Irish people and ‘Irishness’ which are overtly neutral and factual: analysis of such representations could readily be too subjective. Frequently, the only manifest Irish content in non-fiction programmes was the nationality of a participant, as in the episode of “One Man and His Dog”.

The subsequent analysis of the fiction programmes utilised the same framework of deconstruction, interpretation and reconstruction as the newspaper survey. The broad narrative structure of the programmes was concentrated on: deconstruction consisted of synopsising the programme plot, as well as locating it in terms of genre; interpretation of identifying and questioning the role of the Irish characters and/or theme in the programme; reconstruction of identifying modes of representation (see chapter 7).

Table 3.2: programmes analysed

Programme	Channel	Date shown	Genre
Circle of Deceit	ITV	16-10-1993	IRA/spy thriller
Hear My Song	Channel 4	21-10-1993	Romantic comedy
Michael Winner’s True Crimes	ITV	30-10-1993	Drama documentary
The Magician	ITV	27-11-1993	Crime thriller
Between The Lines: “Big Boys’ Rules”, parts 1 & 2	BBC1	14-12-1993 & 21-12-1993	Crime series

3.2 The interviews

It has already been argued (chapter 2) that exclusively attributing experiences of racism to African, Caribbean and Asian peoples over-emphasises the importance of skin colour as the sole signifier for racism in Britain. Positioned as a ‘white’ ethnic minority, the Irish in Britain have generally been excluded from mainstream academic examinations of racialization and racism in contemporary Britain. Notable exceptions are the work of Miles (1993, 1990) and Holmes (1988, 1990): however, these tend to concentrate on the historical. Until the publication of the recent CRE report (Hickman and Walter, 1997), there has been a lack of well-documented data within mainstream academic discourses detailing the range of discrimination and disadvantage of the Irish in Britain, or arguing for the inclusion of the Irish within considerations of and understandings of racism in Britain.

In examining “everyday racism”, Essed (1991: 62) concluded: “Interviews are useful because the beliefs, knowledge, and expectations that influence Black women’s experiences of the situation and direct them in detecting subtle and non-racially expressed indications of racism cannot be observed by a researcher”. It is argued that this is especially applicable to this research; racialization of the Irish is not a popularly-recognised phenomenon, and, as argued previously, is based on the utilisation of cognitive-behavioural rather than perceptual cues. Hence, the reasons for the racialization of the Irish are hidden phenomena, in comparison with, say, anti-black racism; the best way to elicit them is to investigate and examine the real-life experiences of members of the Irish ethnic minority to see whether any experiences of being an Irish person in Britain could be labelled racism. It also gives the researcher an opportunity to examine whether the label “racism” is utilised by or acceptable to interviewees themselves.

Combining the concept of ‘everyday racism’ (Essed, 1991), along with that of the ‘active audience’ (Schlesinger et al., 1992), it was decided to interview members of the Irish minority in Britain, with a view to investigating a) their perceptions of and responses to representations of Irish people and ‘Irishness’ in the media they used themselves, and b) their own experiences as an Irish person in Britain. This strategy overcomes the methodological problems associated with investigating majority group members’ racism and prejudices, given the awareness of the non-acceptability of racist ideologies (ibid: 59). Meanwhile, the investigation into the mass media (outlined above), provides an insight into culturally acceptable ideas, in Britain, about Irish people and culture.

Because of the lack of recognition of the Irish as an ethnic minority, it is argued that Essed’s approach is particularly valuable in this instance. She argues that the often covert nature of racism can only be investigated through eliciting the experiences of the racialized group (ibid.). This strategy circumvents the need of the majority to represent itself as non-prejudiced and allows for the expression of the minority’s intimate knowledge through experience of the strategies used by the majority. As Essed points out:

Because everyday racism involves the integration of racism into everyday situations throughout the system, experiences of everyday racism include racism originally practised in one situation (e.g. racist news reporting) that is mediated and subsequently experienced in another situation (being confronted with racist views when reading the newspaper). (1991: 58)

This research makes the supposition that Irish people in Britain, through their interactions with British people and use of British mass media products will have an understanding of the behaviour and attitudes towards themselves and other Irish people.

In other words, the interviews will aim to uncover the mental models, or ‘scripts’ (Shank and Abelson, cited in Greene, 1986), interviewees have of such behaviours and attitudes. Such an approach “pay[s] attention to how real people actually make sense of viewing, listening or reading” (Schlesinger et al., 1992: 6).

These concerns indicate a need for “focused interviews” (Arber, 1993a: 43), and, hence, some form of interview schedule. Face-to-face interviews were therefore selected as the most suitable method for gathering information relevant to this research. It was decided to use a structured interview schedule, with open-ended questions, since this allows interviewees to expand on their experiences and opinions while retaining inter-interviewee comparability. In addition, a structured interview schedule helps to maintain a focused interview (Arber, 1993a).

3.2.1 Designing the interview schedule

It was decided to utilise a structured schedule for the interviews, for two reasons: firstly, because of the breadth of issues being covered by the interviews; secondly, to increase comparability between interviewees’ responses. The schedule was piloted, and questions subsequently refined (see below).

In designing the interview schedule (see Appendix 1), it was decided to take a dual approach to the interviews: to gather information regarding the media habits of Irish people in Britain and their responses to the representations they perceived and to ask interviewees about aspects of ‘everyday life’ as an Irish person in Britain. The first section thus recognises not only the concept of the ‘active audience’ (Schlesinger et al., 1992), but combines it with a perceived need to provide a balance to the media analyses: since the media are part of the ‘everyday’, they constitute an important element in the construction of everyday ideologies such as racism and prejudice. Given the importance given to the concept of ‘everyday racism’ in this research and the understanding of the importance of investigating the racialized group, it appears necessary to investigate the group’s perceptions of representations in the mass media and their views on the accuracy and meaning of such representations.

The pilot schedule was designed with these issues in mind, and attempted to cover both uses and interpretations of the media by an Irish audience and their experiences of being Irish in Britain. It was used with five interviewees, three women and two men (see Table 3.3, below). The interview schedule was subsequently altered to alleviate problems which arose in these interviews. Many of the questions in the pilot schedule only elicited affirmative/negative answers. In response to this problem the interview schedule was divided into clear sections, with ‘health warnings’ so interviewees could

adjust to the change in question theme and ‘double barrelled questions’ (Newell, 1993: 105) were eliminated. Some questions were rephrased to encourage more detailed responses. Overall, this resulted in an expansion of the interview schedule.

Table 3.3: profile of pilot interviewees

Pilot number	Sex	Age range	Occupation	Earnings
1	female	20-29	secretary	£10-20K
2	female	50-59	care assistant	less £10K
3	female	20-29	receptionist	£10-20K
4	male	40-49	finance officer	£20-30K
5	male	30-39	solicitor	£10-20K

Interviews began with a self-completed questionnaire, which gathered certain demographic details about the interviewees. Two changes were made after the pilot: it was decided that the request for marital status and whether the interviewee practised their religion were irrelevant and intrusive. All interviewees were read an explanatory note intended to give reassurance about the interview: after the pilot interviews, this was amended to include a guarantee that no-one other than the researcher would listen to the recording of the interview:

I have some questions which I would like to ask you about aspects of living in England. Part of my research looks at the media, and some of the questions will ask you for your opinions on newspapers and television programmes. You are free to answer them in as much or as little detail as you think appropriate. You do not have to answer a question if you don't want to. Your anonymity is guaranteed, and nobody else will be allowed to listen to the tape.

In addition to these reassurances, all interviewees were afforded the option to refuse to be recorded. Two interviewees (S3 and S13) took up this option. Because of the guarantee of anonymity, it was decided to refer to interviewees in code, rather than by first names, where P signifies a pilot interviewee and S an interviewee from the main sample. The number indicates where in the sequence of interviews the particular interviewee is, i.e. P1 was the first pilot interview.

The significant changes to the interview schedule can be outlined as follows:

1. many of the questions used in the pilot interview schedule were too ‘closed’, prompting short answers. This necessitated follow-up questions, in order to elicit further information from pilot interviewees. For the main sample, it was decided to ‘unpack’ such questions, so that comparability between interviews would be enhanced by reducing the number of spontaneous follow-up questions;

2. Changes in question themes were clearly indicated to interviewees through introductions to a new section of questions, indicating the theme of that section;

3. The introductory section of the interview schedule was expanded and altered. This involved moving the last question of the pilot schedule (“do you consider that you have settled in England?”) to the beginning of the interview, so that it followed the opening question, where it was felt it would appear more ‘natural’ to interviewees;

4. Questions on the media, both newspapers and television, were altered and expanded. This resulted in the inclusion of ‘filter’ questions designed to ascertain whether interviewees read particular sections of their newspaper(s) or watched particular types of programmes. In addition, a series of like/dislike questions were added to questions about the media, intended to elicit both positive and negative information about representations of Irish people and to encourage interviewees to expand on their views on the representations they perceived in the media they used.

5. The questions on sport on television were further added to, by moving the question on the 1994 World Cup to that section, and adding questions about the violence at the England-Ireland soccer match at Landsdowne Road, Dublin in February 1994.

6. A section on radio was added, subsequent to the sections on newspapers and television. While this was intended to explore a further area of media representation, it should be recognised that investigating listener response to radio is particularly problematic because of radio’s position as a ‘structuring device’ for listeners and the wide range of stations and programmes available to the listener (Crisell, 1994);

7. Questions on Northern Ireland in the media were altered and some deleted: it was decided that to question interviewees about their opinion on the cease-fires/peace process, while interesting, was beyond the remit of the research. Instead, interviewees were asked about their responses to media coverage of Northern Ireland, both before and after the cease-fires.

8. The questions on friendships and other relationships (with colleagues and neighbours) were re-worded and expanded, so that they specifically explored topics of conversation, with especial reference to Ireland and Irish issues. Some of the questions in the pilot schedule had lacked in focus. For example, question 40 “Have you ever had any difficulty with your neighbours?” was changed to a series of questions on conversations with neighbours, which mirrored those on friendships and colleagues (questions 44, 44a, and 44b; Appendix 1).

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The changes to the interview schedule made it significantly longer, enabling in-depth information to be elicited from interviewees. While one of the interviews in the main study was only forty five minutes in length, this was exceptionally short: no other interview was less than an hour in length, and two were over four hours in duration. Average length of interviews in the main sample was an hour and thirty minutes, compared with an average of forty five minutes for the pilot interviews. Because of the length of the interviews, these were recorded, freeing the interviewer to engage with subjects.

3.2.2 Selecting the sample

According to Hedges (1979: 247) the “two main approaches to sampling minorities are the use of lists and screening” (*italics omitted*). However, it was decided to reject both of these sampling strategies for this research: screening was impractical, given the lack of time and the ghettoisation of a large element of the Irish ethnic minority in London; while lists are available, these too were judged impractical given the focus of the research. Quota sampling, for example on the basis of the electoral register, would have been too time-consuming while other lists (such as membership lists) would introduce bias into the research. Members of Irish organisations, both social and campaigning are more likely to be aware of the current debate surrounding the concept of anti-Irish racism and of initiatives such as the recent Commission for Racial Equality research (Hickman and Walter, 1997). A further consideration is that the use of such lists would result in the introduction of ‘gatekeepers’ to the sample. (For a discussion of the other problems attendant to using lists as a sampling frame, see Hedges, 1979, or Kish, 1965.)

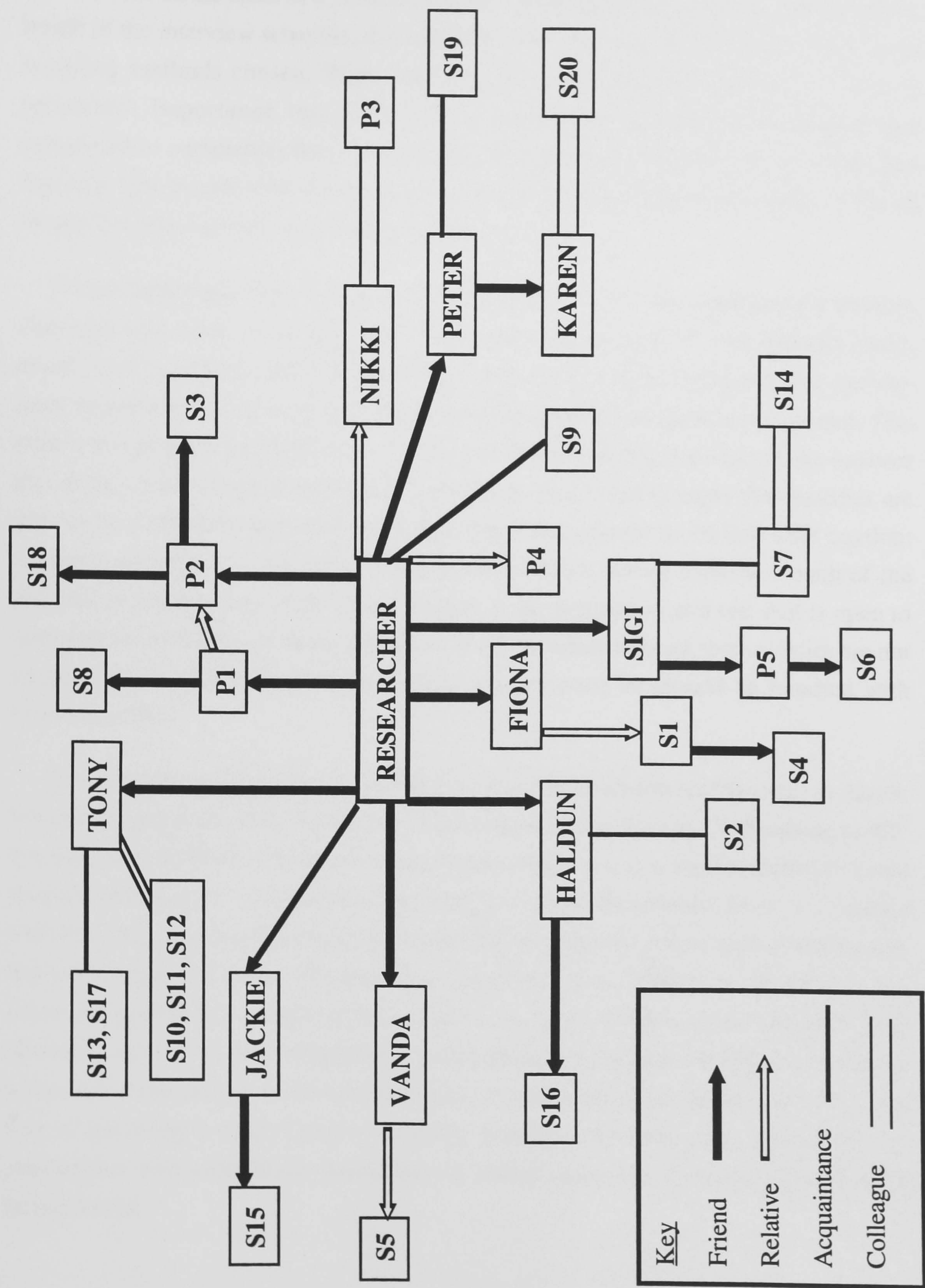
Another way in which membership of Irish organisations could be used is through a “volunteer sample” (Calder, 1979: 12). Again, this introduces the problem of gatekeepers and additionally, would probably bias the research cohort in favour of those Irish people who are interested in the topic. While a certain level of dissemblance could be employed, the researcher would be reliant on the gatekeeper to inform and encourage potential interviewees, a process over which the researcher would have little control.

These sort of approaches, using Irish organisations to obtain a sample framework and therefore, to work towards the acquisition of a probability sample, are more suitable for a larger project, with a larger number of participants and which employs questionnaires rather than face-to-face interviews, than would be realistic given the time frame and resources of this research.

A purposive method of sampling, snowballing, was selected. While subjectivity is essentially incorporated into this method, this does not necessarily imply that the subsequent subject pool will be unrepresentative: “Judgmental sampling aims at the elimination of anticipated sources of distortion; but there will always remain the risk of distortion due to personal prejudices or lack of knowledge of certain crucial features in the structure of the population” (Barnett, 1991: 13). Purposive sampling can be seen as a challenge to the tests of validity and reliability, because of the seeming lack of control over the selection of subjects on the part of the researcher. However, as May (1993: 70) points out, the rigours of probability sampling are often over-demanding and unrealistic, resulting in recourse to more purposive sampling methods. Given that this research aims to contribute to theoretical understandings of racialization and racism, achieving a probability sample is of less importance, although this does not release the researcher from attempting to ensure representativeness in the achieved sample: “Where the researcher’s aim is to generate theory and a wider understanding of social processes or social actions, the representativeness of the sample may be of less importance” (Arber, 1993b: 71).

Snowballing is most often employed when there is no readily available or acceptable sampling frame, and is especially favoured in research on ethnic minorities and deviance (ibid.; Caldon, 1979; 12). Therefore, it appears well-suited to the research in hand, although the drawbacks are recognised: as with all purposive sampling, it is often difficult to ensure representativeness of the sample; one is reliant on the goodwill of minority group members to make introductions to other members; this can not only be time-consuming but it is also difficult to control for communication about the research between potential interviewees. While snowballing inevitably introduces a network of people into the research (see fig. 3.2, below), this is not essentially problematic, except that all those outside the network of contacts have a zero probability of selection. While not problematic if the network yields a representative sample, the researcher must decide if the research requires this. It is argued that this research, which explores whether the Irish in Britain are a racialized ethnic minority does not require a representative sample because the research aims to elicit interviewees’ knowledge of the processes of anti-Irish racialization in the mass media and everyday interactions. There is no reason why a sample which emulates the demographic and economic characteristics of the Irish ethnic minority in Britain would necessarily prove a better source of information than a sample which does not. The resources available preclude an exhaustive search for representativeness, although this does not prevent the researcher from attempting to achieve some element of balance in the subject pool. While representativeness of the sample may be absent or partial, this does not preclude the findings of the research from being valid, or from contributing to theoretical debate.

Figure 3.2: snowballing network



However, snowballing does have the advantage of recommendation: since contact with potential subjects is made through others, the researcher is introduced to potential interviewees on the basis of a personal referral. Given the nature of this research and the length of the interview schedule, this had to be considered an important advantage to the sampling methods chosen. With such a lengthy and in-depth interview, it was of paramount importance that interviewees considered themselves motivated and committed to completing the interview. Evidence that this was the case lies in the fact that only four people who were contacted refused to participate in the study, while all twenty five interviewees completed the interview.

Within sociology, there is still a strong bias in favour of the experimental method, although this term is rarely used. The reasoning is that if one follows strict, scientifically-oriented methods, then one's research can a) be replicated and, perhaps more importantly, b) be seemingly defended more readily than qualitative research. This results in a pressure to produce data in numeric form, reducing the often subtle nuances that make up sociological research into statistics. This is not to argue that statistics are not useful, but rather that they have their place and should be treated with caution: statistics are artefacts, not facts. The normative curve, which underlies much of the theoretical assumptions underlying statistics, is an assumption and one that is open to question. Its assumptions about the nature of a population indicate that statistics are not appropriate in research based on a small subject pool, or should be handled with extreme caution.

The difficulty with qualitative research is that it appears too readily open to attack, because the presence of the researcher in the data is all too obvious. As Manning (1982: 6) points out, qualitative research is invaluable when there is a commitment to: "close detailed observation"; microsociology; and "low-level abstraction" (*ibid.*, 6-7; italics omitted). This research is more suited to qualitative methods and the type of abstraction that such results will allow. The time scale and resources available to the research do not allow for probability sampling: in addition, the type of information sought is best elicited in more open-ended interviews, which necessarily reduces the number of people a researcher can include in the cohort. Hence, snowballing is, for this research, the best way of achieving a subject pool of minority members that avoids the intervention of gatekeepers who most likely would have a vested interest in showing that anti-Irish racism exists.

Chapter 4 Reporting Northern Ireland

Representing Catholics as the locus of violence

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines representations of Northern Ireland in the British, national, daily press. Any analysis of the Irish in the British press must necessarily deal with Northern Ireland, given its prominence in the news. Although this has been a topic of analysis elsewhere (for example, Curtis, 1984a; Henderson et al., 1990; Miller, 1994a; Schlesinger, 1988), this analysis concentrates on representations rather than focusing on issues of propaganda, censorship or terrorism.

‘Terrorism’ has been reified, retaining little value as either a definition or analytical term (Gerbner, 1991; Miller, 1994a). Rather, it is an emotive word which invokes fear and loathing (Bassiouni, 1982). While concerns are often expressed by politicians regarding the media’s legitimisation of terrorist causes through the “oxygen of publicity” (Thatcher, cited in Gerbner, 1988: 12), research has demonstrated that violence characterised as ‘terrorist’ is typically reported without contextualizing background information (Paletz et al., 1982). Lacking in context, “those labelled “terrorists” symbolise a menace beyond the reach of the rational, humane and democratic means” (Gerbner, 1991: 6). That this is the case with news from Northern Ireland has been established elsewhere (Curtis, 1984a; Miller, 1994a).

The reporting of terrorism is an ideological battlefield, where cultural norms and values are reinforced (Chomsky, 1989; Gerbner, 1988 and 1991). There is ample evidence to suggest that in the reporting of Northern Ireland, the collusion of the mass media with the forces of the state is recognised, by the forces of the state, as crucial (Curtis, 1984a; Taylor, 1977) and, in the case of the BBC in particular, demanded (Schlesinger, 1988; Miller, 1994a). Bassiouni warns of the inherent dangers of the media failing to act as a neutral force when reporting terrorism:

the media’s absence from the scene will force their reliance on hearsay, with law enforcement personnel their only source. The public would hence lose its ability to check on law enforcement’s conduct (1982: 131).

In the case of Northern Ireland, the reliance on official sources for news of violence labelled terrorist is well-documented (Hoggart, 1973; Foot, 1990; Miller, 1993 and 1994a). The British news media acts neither as check nor balance, but is an essential element of the propaganda war in which the “role of the British Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)...is seen as being to counter the terrorist threat and keep the peace between the warring factions” (Miller, 1993: 75). An important element of this is

the portrayal of the IRA as the culpable party in the cause and continuance of violence related to Northern Ireland (Curtis, 1984a; Miller, 1994a).

This chapter will examine press reports of events in Northern Ireland from four national dailies: the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Sun*. It compares and contrasts the representations of different types of violence, by using reports of particular events as illustrative examples. Violence is classified according to the identified source of violence within the reports: in other words, violence is categorised as Loyalist, Republican or Army in origin (sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 respectively). A further section (4.4) will examine representations of everyday life in Northern Ireland. Firstly, however, a discussion on coverage.

4.2 Coverage of Northern Ireland

Reports on Northern Ireland, and events related to Northern Irish issues, constitute a large part of the newspaper data collected for this research. Over fifty per cent of all news reports deal with violent events related to Northern Ireland. Miller (1994a) suggests that the very news values of the British media are the cause of this concentration on violence, a concentration which has led to Northern Ireland becoming a synonym for violence. Its prominence in the British media is not surprising given current news values: “violence is news” (Paletz et al., 1982: 169).

In her research, Curtis found that media reports of violence related to Northern Ireland were selective in their coverage:

Attacks taking place in Britain, killings of prominent people - especially if they are British, and bombings that result in civilian deaths, generate the most publicity. (Curtis, 1984a: 110)

The majority of news reports of violence related to Northern Ireland collected for this research similarly deal with IRA-instigated violence and events arising out of that violence (for example, court trials). This research also found that IRA-instigated violence located in Britain attracts far more newspaper coverage than any other violent event, in terms of both on the day coverage and subsequent follow-up. The news values of the British media are more focused than the assertion that “violence is news; spectacular violence is big news” (Paletz et al., 1982: 169) suggests. Violence in Northern Ireland is not news: only spectacular violence in Northern Ireland merits the type of coverage accorded to violence in Britain related to the conflict.

This suggests that readers’ knowledge of Northern Ireland, the people who reside there and the complex reasons for the conflict there is necessarily curtailed. Their knowledge of the conflict, if limited to newspaper sources is likely, therefore, to be

lacking in contextualizing details (see Miller, 1994a and 1994b). Readers' knowledge of Irish people living in Northern Ireland, and their level of involvement in the conflict would similarly be curtailed (see below). This is part of the overall strategy of the Northern Ireland Office, which is aimed at making the violence appear contained (Miller, 1993a). The non-reporting of violence in Northern Ireland in the British press enforces the belief that the British Army is essential in maintaining peaceful relations between the "two warring factions" (ibid., 75). The focus on violence in Britain serves to exaggerate the role of the IRA in the conflict.

Bombings and shootings in Northern Ireland generally receive no coverage in the *Daily Mirror* or *The Sun*, whereas reports of IRA violence in Britain receive front-page prominence, with all the hyperbole characteristic of such papers. While the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* report more news from Northern Ireland, it is usually relegated to the 'news in brief' columns. They too give more prominence, and space, to the reporting of violence in Britain. Only two violent events in Northern Ireland, over the time period covered by the research (every second month, January to November, 1992) receive in-depth coverage plus follow-up: the Teebane bombing (January 1992) and; the Coalisland riots (July 1992). The killing of three alleged IRA informers is given some in-depth coverage, but does not attract follow-up reports (September, 1992). These are discussed in greater detail below.

4.3 Reporting Violence

In the six, alternate months of reports collected for analysis, there were 44 deaths related to the Northern Ireland conflict (Sutton, 1994); all of these killings were committed in Northern Ireland. Of these, 19 were attributed to Loyalist groups and 3 to unknown Loyalists, bringing a total of 22; 20 to Republican groups (of which 2 were attributed to the IPLO and the remainder to the IRA); and 2 to the security forces (ibid.). Most of these deaths were reported in *The Guardian*, suggesting that, for the period covered by the research, its readers had access to better information regarding Northern Ireland than readers of the other three newspapers surveyed.

Overall, using killings as an index, violence in Northern Ireland is not reported, especially in the two tabloids (see Table 4.1, below). Elliott (1977) has noted that killings are more likely than any other type of violence in Northern Ireland to be reported. IRA violence in Britain, as noted above, attracts more press attention than other violent incidents, which suggests that the dominant news values view violence in Northern Ireland as inherently less newsworthy, and even unnewsworthy. Selective reporting of violence related to Northern Ireland gives the impression that Republican groups, especially the IRA, are solely responsible: "violence, reported in a non-

explanatory manner, dominate[s] the coverage: it is also presented as if it were the almost exclusive preserve of republicans” (Curtis, 1984a: 107). Yet, in the time frame of the newspaper data, Loyalists killed more people than the IRA. In the period 1991-1993, Loyalist groups steadily increased their annual killing rate (Sutton, 1994: 206.); this was not reflected in reports from Northern Ireland. The findings below demonstrate that the result is a privileging of the IRA as a direct and indirect causative factor in all killings in Northern Ireland for the period of the research.

Table 4.1: Killings during the six alternate months of the press data.

Agency	Deaths	Number reported			
		<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Telegraph</i>	<i>Mirror</i>	<i>Sun</i>
Loyalists	22	19	7	4	1
Republicans	20	19	13	12	12
Security Forces	2	2	2	0	0
Total	44	40	22	16	13

(Source: Sutton, 1994.)

It should be noted that one of the deaths (Harry Black, killed by the IRA) occurred on the last day of the month (30 September), and would not have been in the data collected, since any reports on it would appear in the following month. Figures for reporting deaths attributable to Republican groups are, in part, high because all four papers report the Teebane bombings, which resulted in eight deaths, seven of which were reported by all four newspapers surveyed.

4.3.1 Loyalist violence

As table 4.1 demonstrates, Loyalist violence, using killings as an index, tended to be unreported by the *Daily Telegraph* and the two tabloid newspapers. Reports of Loyalist violence (i.e. violence committed by the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Ulster Freedom Fighters) tended to be brief. *The Guardian* had the most reports (thirty one); the other three newspapers many less (*Daily Mirror*, six; *Daily Telegraph* ten; *The Sun*, four). This suggests that *The Guardian*’s readers are the best informed regarding Loyalist violence, violence which resulted in more deaths during the whole of 1992 and the six, alternate months covered by this research (Sutton, 1994).

On January 3, 1992, Kevin and Jack McKearney were shot by a member of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) while they worked at a butcher’s shop in Moy, Co. Tyrone (Sutton, 1994: 182). Kevin McKearney died at the scene: his uncle subsequently died of his injuries (ibid.). The attack was reported by the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* (see Appendix 4, example 1): neither report mentioned the UVF, but

both referred to Loyalists. However, both reports devoted substantial space to Kevin McKearney's siblings who were, or were alleged to have been, involved in the IRA. The report in the *Daily Telegraph* is almost wholly taken up with this: *The Guardian* repeats the claims, but at less length and does not name the IRA.

The opening paragraph of the report in the *Daily Telegraph* concentrates on the victim and the allegations surrounding his family ¹:

A MASKED Loyalist gunman killed a member of *a family steeped in IRA terrorism* in an attack on the family's butcher shop in County Tyrone yesterday. The dead man, Kevin McKearney, 32, is the third of four brothers to have had a violent death. (emphasis mine)

Throughout the article, the McKearney family and the IRA are designated the label 'terrorist': the UVF is not named, and the attack thus becomes the action of "a masked Loyalist gunman". In contrast, the article mentions the IRA five times, thereby lending emphasis to the reading that the IRA is a causative factor in the killing. The main theme of the report is the assertion that the McKearney family is "steeped in IRA terrorism". This infers a genealogical or familial aspect to IRA membership. Twice the article refers to the circumstances in which Kevin McKearney's brothers were killed. It also mentions his sister Margaret, who, according to the report, "was named by Scotland Yard in 1975 as their most wanted woman terrorist".

Through his family's activities, real and alleged, Kevin McKearney is linked to the IRA, although the article is careful not to actually claim that he is a member. Rather it is implied through the concentration of the article on his brothers and sister. The article focuses not on the killing of civilian Kevin McKearney by the UVF (Sutton, 1994: 182), but on the killing by a lone gunman of Kevin McKearney, the man who was probably an IRA member.

The Guardian's report on the killing of Kevin McKearney attributed the killing to "terrorists" and initially concentrated on the shooting ². The killing was not attributed to any particular group:

There was speculation that the shooting was loyalist retaliation for the murder just before Christmas of Robin Farmer, a student of nineteen who saved his father's living [sic] by diving across him. A man, understood to have links with a republican splinter group, was detained by customers at the scene.

This article also mentions the deaths of relatives of Kevin McKearney:

¹ Daily Telegraph, 04-01-92, p1: **Third family member killed**; Chris Ryder, Irish Correspondent.

² The Guardian, 04-01-92, Home News, News in Brief, p4: **Terrorist victim first of 1992**; John Mullin.

An uncle and an aunt of the man killed yesterday were shot dead at their house near Moy in October, 1975, and two of his brothers, Sean and Padhraic, have died in violent circumstances. The first was killed in a bomb blast in the early 1970s and the other was shot in an SAS operation in Loughgall, County Armagh, in May 1987.

Neither brother is linked to the IRA, nor are they called victims: the emphasis on the “violent circumstances” of their deaths suggests that they were active participants in those circumstances. The article further refers to a brother who is in prison “for the murder of an Ulster Defence Regiment officer” and to “a sister, Margaret, [who] is wanted for questioning by the Royal Ulster Constabulary over alleged terrorist offences”. While *The Guardian*’s article clearly calls Kevin McKearney a “victim”, the significance given to his family members’ activities and deaths again suggests that Kevin McKearney was not an innocent victim.

This is not the first time that the McKearney family had come into contact with the Ulster Volunteer Force. On 4 September, 1975, Margaret McKearney was named as ‘the most dangerous and active women (sic) terrorist operating here’ in a Scotland Yard press statement (Curtis, 1984a: 123). The effects of this allegation, widely publicised in the press, included UVF threats to ‘get your [Margaret’s] family - each and every one of you’ (ibid.). A couple with the same surname were murdered in October, 1975 - they may have been the aunt and uncle of Kevin McKearney mentioned in the reports discussed above. According to Curtis, elements of the press statement were refuted by the Republic of Ireland’s own Special Branch: the McKearney family were given protection by the security forces, because of the UVF threat. Curtis alleges that Scotland Yard’s intention in naming Margaret McKearney as a dangerous IRA operative was to deflect attention from their failure to apprehend those responsible for a number of devices in London, and/or to affect policy-making with regard to security in both the Republic of Ireland and the UK (ibid.).

It appears that the overall effect of the original allegation against Margaret McKearney was the labelling of her entire family as IRA terrorists. This label is resurrected seventeen years later without reference to the contradictory claims of Special Branch Gardaí, the UVF threats or the protection afforded to the McKearneys as a consequence. Instead, the concentration of both articles is on family members who are or were IRA members, and the allegations against Margaret McKearney. The killing of Kevin McKearney becomes part of his family’s history and a consequence of their association with the IRA. Through his family, Kevin McKearney becomes an IRA member and target, rather than a civilian.

The killings, also by the UVF, of Charles and Theresa Fox (September, 1992) are covered by three of the newspapers: the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* (see Appendix 4, example 2). Although these victims were dealt with more sympathetically than Kevin McKearney, the recent jailing of their son Patrick for IRA activities, was given prominence in the reports. Both the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mirror* incorporate this into their headlines:

IRA parents slaughtered (*Daily Mirror*)

Loyalists kill parents of IRA bomber (*Daily Telegraph*)

It has been noted elsewhere that the British national press has a tendency to write the IRA into headlines concerning violence related to Northern Ireland, even when the IRA is not involved in or responsible for the event being reported (Curtis, 1984a; Elliott, 1977). By placing 'IRA' in the headlines, the newspapers establish a framework whereby the IRA becomes part of the reading of the event being reported. This helps to emphasise the causative role assigned to the IRA in the deaths of the Foxes.

The *Daily Mirror* article on the murder of the Foxes is very brief (60 words)³. It begins and ends with the bombing activities of Patrick Fox, thereby maintaining the emphasis on the IRA established by the headline. He is referred to as "Paddy", whereas both broadsheets use Patrick. The UVF is not named in the article; the killers are called "Loyalist terrorists", the only example from the data collected from the *Daily Mirror* of 'terrorist' being applied to Loyalists.

The articles in the broadsheets are lengthier. Both mention the Foxes' religion in their opening paragraphs:

THE OUTLAWED Ulster Volunteer Force admitted responsibility last night for the murders of a Roman Catholic and his wife who were shot dead at their home less than two weeks after their son was jailed as an IRA bomber. (*Daily Telegraph*)

AN ELDERLY Catholic couple were found shot dead in their isolated Co Tyrone farmhouse yesterday in the latest atrocity in what has become *a blood feud by loyalists against a family with republican connections*. (*The Guardian*) (emphasis mine)

The Guardian's opening paragraph suggests that the deaths of the Foxes are the latest in a vendetta against their family⁴. It is not until the eleventh paragraph (of sixteen) that the reader is informed that the other members of the family are their son-in-law, Kevin McKearney and his uncle. The textual distance between these two pieces of information

³ *Daily Mirror*, 08-09-92, p6: **IRA parents slaughtered**.

⁴ *The Guardian*, 08-09-92, p20: **Loyalist terror group admits killing couple**; Owen Bowcott.

is, therefore, large. It is left to the reader to make the conclusion that the family referred to in the opening paragraph is thus the McKearney family.

The emphasis of *The Guardian*'s report is on the IRA: it is named three times in the article, which concludes by reporting on IRA activities in Co. Tyrone. Although the headline refers to a "Loyalist terror group", the article concentrates on the Foxes' IRA connections through their son Patrick and son-in-law, Kevin McKearney. Given the lack of contextualizing information regarding Kevin McKearney, he becomes an IRA member, rather than a civilian victim of the UVF (Sutton, 1994: 182). Again, the connections of the victims with the IRA are familial; the IRA becomes an indirect causative factor in their deaths, and Loyalist violence is presented as reactive.

The report in the *Daily Telegraph* quotes several times from the statement issued by the UVF to justify the murders of Charles and Theresa Fox ⁵:

In a statement sent to Ulster Television, the UVF said an "active service unit" had cut all communications at the couple's home with the intent of killing a number of IRA personnel. Mrs Fox had been shot "in the confusion". Responsibility for the shootings lay with the IRA and its "continuing campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing" against the Protestant community, the UVF statement added. This was a reference to suggestions in Loyalist circles that the IRA is trying to drive Protestants from their houses.

Through the use of these excerpts, the focus of the article becomes IRA activities, and credibility is lent to the justifications of the UVF. This is added to by its reporting of the activities of Patrick Fox and a recent IRA bombing attack. The article concludes by reporting the IRA's admission of responsibility for the recent attack on the London Hilton Hotel.

However, the article also quotes Ken Maginnis, a local Ulster Unionist MP, calling the murder an "unforgivable crime", and states that "Security sources in Northern Ireland confirmed that Mr Fox senior had no criminal record". This article offers two competing explanations for the killings: the Foxes' IRA connections (through their son and the UVF's claim that they intended to kill a "number of IRA personnel") or; the killings lack a rationale and are, in effect, inexplicable.

The labelling of the Foxes as "Catholic" is a typical descriptor for victims of Loyalist violence in Northern Ireland for the period of this research. When not applied to victims of Loyalist violence, then the area in which the victims live is described as 'Catholic', or 'predominantly Catholic'. An example of this is the reporting of the killing of Gerard O'Hara, who was shot dead at his home by members of the Ulster Freedom Fighters (Sutton, 1994). He is described as "A ROMAN Catholic man" in the *Daily Telegraph*'s

⁵ Daily Telegraph, 08-09-92, News, p2: **Loyalists kill parents of IRA bomber**; Colin Randall.

report, and a “Catholic” in the *Daily Mirror*’s ⁶. However, the article in *The Guardian* refers to the area in which he resided as “the predominantly Catholic New Lodge district”, and identifies it as an area notorious for its production of Republican paramilitaries ⁷.

Another example is the reporting of the death of Kieran Abrams in the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*. He was found beaten to death: his death is attributed to Loyalists (Sutton, 1994) rather than a particular group. Again, the *Daily Telegraph* uses the religious signifier to open its report: “A ROMAN Catholic man was beaten to death during a sectarian clash near the Belfast “peaceline” yesterday” ⁸. This clearly echoes the headline **‘Peaceline’ Catholic murdered**, and in each case the querying of the existence of a peaceline (suggested by the quotation marks) adds emphasis to the linking of Catholics with violence. *The Guardian*’s article on the death of Kieran Abrams, as with that on Gerard O’Hara, does not apply the religious signifier to the victim but to the geographical area, reporting that the killing took place during “clashes between loyalist and republican gangs” when “fighting developed in North Howard Street, one of the few roads that still run between the Catholic Falls area and the Protestant Shankill” ⁹. Kieran Abrams is identified, in the second paragraph of the article as coming “from the Lower Falls area”: readers are therefore aware of his likely religious affiliation.

The final example of Loyalist violence in the period of the research which will be discussed here is the attack on James Murray’s bookmakers shop by the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) (Sutton, 1994). Three Catholic men were killed in the gun and grenade attack (ibid.). This was reported by *The Guardian*, but went unreported by the other three newspapers included in this survey. As with other reports of Loyalist violence, this report presents the attack as reactive, with the subheadline declaring “IRA blast in Coleraine leads to grenade and gun attack on Catholic bookies and threat to escalate action” ¹⁰. Most victims of this attack are described as Catholic (it is noted that some “may have been Protestants”) and it is suggested, through geographical association, that they may have been IRA supporters:

⁶ Daily Telegraph, 28-09-92, News, p7: **Killers ignore mother’s plea to save son**; Richard Savill

Daily Mirror, 28-09-92, p17: **SHOOT ME INSTEAD OF MY BOY, PLEADS MUM**; Joe Gorrod.

⁷ The Guardian, 28-09-92, Home News, p22: **Killers scorn mother’s plea**; Owen Bowcott.

⁸ Daily Telegraph, 06-07-92, News, p5: **‘Peaceline’ Catholic murdered**; Chris Ryder.

⁹ The Guardian, 06-07-92, Home News, p6: **Belfast man clubbed to death**; Owen Bowcott.

¹⁰ The Guardian, 16-11-92, Home News, p3: **Three killed in UFF reprisal for bombs**; Owen Bowcott.

Most of the victims were Catholics from an area called Bone, on the edge of the Ardoyne, an IRA stronghold in north Belfast and infamous for the number of sectarian attacks it has suffered down the years.

The reporting of this Loyalist attack in *The Guardian* is unusual amongst the reports collected for this research in that it is accompanied by two other reports which provide some context to the attack. The first of these, **Warped logic of onslaught**, attempts to explain the violence in Northern Ireland for its readership, acknowledging that from “the vantage point of Britain, much of the violence appears indiscriminate but there is a pattern and reasoning behind it, however warped its logic may seem”¹¹. This echoes Kirkaldy’s assertion that the conflict in Northern Ireland is often assumed to be inexplicable because it does not readily cohere with British liberal conceptions (1979). Interestingly, this article is one of the few examples where *Loyalist* is conflated with *Protestant*. However, its main theme is the explanation of Loyalist violence as reactionary: “The loyalist community is angered at the extent of the IRA’s bombing campaign”. The second contextualizing article provides readers with background information on the recent banning of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) for which the UFF is widely understood to be a covername, and the reasons for its banning: “The ban on the UDA followed the massacre of five Catholics in February in a South Belfast bookmakers”¹². This attack is not linked in anyway to the attack on James Murray’s bookmakers; the UDA is not described as terrorist but as “the outlawed loyalist paramilitary grouping”.

It appears that these killings by the UFF may have gone unreported by the other three newspapers because it was overshadowed by the attempted IRA bombing of Canary Wharf, which was reported on extensively by all four newspapers. No-one was injured in the failed IRA attack: this underlines the earlier observation that IRA instigated violence in Britain is more likely to attract British newspaper coverage than violence in Northern Ireland. This substantiates an earlier finding that incidents in Britain connected to the Northern Ireland conflict were more likely to receive in-depth, as opposed to brief, reports plus follow-up coverage (Elliott, 1977: 296).

In these examples, neither the members of the UVF nor the UFF are referred to as ‘terrorists’. Typically the descriptors used are ‘killers’, ‘gunmen’ and ‘loyalist gunmen’. This is in direct contrast to the reporting of the activities of Republican groups (usually the IRA in the data collected), where the terms ‘terrorist’ or ‘terrorism’ are always used. The exception to this finding is *The Sun* which referred to Loyalists as

¹¹ The Guardian, 16-11-93, Home News, p3: **Warped logic of onslaught**; Owen Bowcott.

¹² The Guardian, 16-11-93, Home News, p3: **Cover-name tactics still pursued by banned group**; Owen Bowcott.

terrorists ¹³: however, there were only four reports on Loyalist violence in *The Sun* during the period of the research, so such a finding has to be treated with caution.

These findings support Elliott's finding that the British press tends to use religious signifiers to identify victims of Loyalist violence (Elliott, 1977) and the observation that the press tends to include the IRA in most reports of violence connected to Northern Ireland (Curtis, 1984a). This was true of all four of the newspapers surveyed, although the *Daily Telegraph* tended to use "Roman Catholic" in preference to "Catholic".

Loyalist violence, when reported, tended to be presented as reactionary and motivated by Loyalist anger at IRA activity; it appears that this has been the typical presentation of Loyalist violence during the Northern Ireland conflict in the British media (see Elliott, 1977; Curtis, 1984a). Although these killings and attacks are often termed 'sectarian', the main explanation offered for Loyalist violence is that it is a reaction to IRA violence. The IRA is often mentioned in reports of Loyalist violence, through its own activities plus suggestions that victims of Loyalist violence were connected to the IRA. The IRA's activities become an explanatory backdrop to the violence of Loyalists: this violence becomes reactionary. The populist perspective on terrorism - "people are entitled to fight back themselves, by force if necessary" (Schlesinger et al., 1983, cited in Rolston and Miller, 1996: 306) - is justified in this manner, and applied to the Loyalist groups. This is heightened by the use of descriptives such as 'gunmen' and 'loyalists' in marked preference to 'terrorists' for Loyalists. In this manner, the IRA and Catholics become responsible for Loyalist violence: if there were no IRA 'terrorism', there would be no need for Loyalist retaliation.

By presenting Loyalist violence as reactionary, its Catholic victims become associated with the IRA: "The consensus was that 'Catholics' were both the main perpetrators and one of the main victims of violence" (Elliott, 1977: 292). Catholics in Northern Ireland come to signify the IRA through familial connections and religious signifiers: in this way, the IRA becomes at least an indirect cause of the killing of Catholics by Loyalists.

4.3.2 *Army violence*

This strategy of contextualizing violence in Northern Ireland through introducing the IRA (retaliatory motive), and describing victims as *Catholics* is also used in reports of army-instigated violence. The security forces in Northern Ireland are rarely the focus of news reporting (Elliott, 1977). The underlying assumption which informs news reporting of the British Army in Northern Ireland is that the army is no more than a

¹³ examples include: *The Sun*, 10-01-92, p4: **Burger horror** and *The Sun*, 29-07-92, p13: **Terrorists miss kids by inches**.

neutral arbiter and a peacekeeping force (Curtis, 1984a; Elliott, 1977; Kirkaldy, 1979). Such reporting incorporates a continued failure by the British press to recognise the “special place of the British army in Irish history” (Kirkaldy, 1979: 474).

Twice in May 1992 members of the 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment were involved in fights with members of the civilian population of Coalisland while on duty in the town. These are described as ‘clashes’ by the newspapers, a term which plays down the seriousness of members of the security forces fighting with civilians while on patrol duty. These ‘clashes’ are given extensive coverage in the four newspapers (*Daily Mirror*; *Daily Telegraph*; *The Guardian*; *The Sun*).

In reporting what are described as ‘clashes’ between members of the public and British Army soldiers in Coalisland, May 1992, the civilian population of Coalisland is labelled ‘Catholic’ or ‘Republican’. The religious and political affiliation of these civilians becomes significant in the reports: both the broadsheets refer to Coalisland as a *Republican stronghold*, while the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph* and *The Sun* use the term *Catholic* to identify the town. While the first ‘clash’ hardly receives approval, it is contextualized by the explanation that a colleague lost his legs a few hours previously in an IRA landmine attack. This not only provides the reactionary motive to explain the soldiers’ actions, suggesting that the residents of Coalisland are culpable, but emphasises an emotional, rather than professional, bond between the soldiers involved in the Coalisland incident. This is furthered by the reports in the tabloids which refer to the injured soldier as the Paratroopers’ “mate”. In addition, the main emphasis of the reports is on official interpretations of the events.

The *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Telegraph* both claim that civilians began the first clash with troops; *The Guardian* and *The Sun* are more circumspect (see Appendix 4, example 3) ¹⁴:

AVENGING Paras out for blood rampaged through an Ulster town after a mate was maimed in a bomb blast....

Mayhem broke out at Coalisland, Co Tyrone, after a Para lost both legs in a landmine blast and a patrol was attacked by a bottle-throwing mob (*Daily Mirror*)

AN OFFICER of the Parachute Regiment’s 3rd Battalion has been suspended from duty following complaints to the Army and police that paratroopers allegedly went on a revenge patrol in Ulster after a Para lost both legs in a mine explosion and another was hit on the head with a missile.

¹⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 15-05-92, pp1&2: ‘Crazy’ Paras storm town in revenge rampage; John Hicks, *Daily Telegraph*, 15-05-92, News, p3: Officer suspended after Paras go on ‘revenge patrol’; Wendy Holden, *The Guardian*, 15-05-92, pp1&2: Paras officer suspended after Ulster rampage, and Ulster MPs unite against ‘macho’ Paras; Owen Bowcott, *The Sun*, 15-05-92, p2: PARA REVENGE BLITZ; Ian Hepburn.

...members of the 3rd Bn on a joint foot patrol with RUC officers seven miles away [from the site of the bombing in Cappagh] in Coalisland came under attack from locals.

Bottles and stones were thrown and one soldier needed stitches after being hit on the head. (*Daily Telegraph*)

A JUNIOR Parachute Regiment officer has been suspended following allegations of a violent rampage by soldiers through bars in Coalisland, County Tyrone....

Police said bottles were thrown at a patrol from a crowd. Eyewitnesses denied there had been any provocation and reported that soldiers from the Third Battalion, the Parachute Regiment carrying batons assaulted bar customers and dragged them into the street.

A member of the regiment had lost his legs when an IRA land mine exploded three hours earlier at nearby Cappagh. (*The Guardian*)

PARAS blacked up their faces and terrorised an Ulster town after a mate had his legs blown off by an IRA bomb, it was claimed yesterday.

They burst into bars, wrecked furniture and dragged off staff and customers for systematic beatings, it was alleged. (*The Sun*)

The reports in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mirror* emphasise the civilians' violence, and suggest that the incident was instigated by Coalisland residents: *The Guardian* presents a more balanced report, including a lengthy eyewitness account, but also suggests that the residents were involved in the violence. In addition, *The Guardian* refers to "Republican Coalisland". Only *The Sun* does not make allegations regarding the behaviour of Coalisland civilians in this report: however, as with reports in the other three newspapers, it makes extensive use of qualifiers such as "it was alleged".

The initial reports on this first 'clash' emphasise the reason behind the Paratroopers' actions: one of their comrades was injured in a mine blast (caused by the IRA) two days previously, and had to have his legs amputated. None of the newspapers query this reason, nor do they question the soldiers' assumption that the civilians of Coalisland are responsible. No paper questions how the members of the Third Battalion, the Parachute Regiment knew that residents of Coalisland were responsible or had information regarding the bombing. The *Daily Mirror* uses the phrase "innocent victims", but this is prefaced by a qualifier: the troops "*are said to have* cordoned off the town, smashed up pubs and beaten innocent civilians" (emphasis mine). It is the only report which labels the residents *Catholic*.

All four newspapers preface statements about Army-instigated violence in Coalisland with qualifiers such as "allegedly" and "it was claimed": these qualifiers are absent for the Army's counter-claims of civilian violence, a finding noted elsewhere (Curtis, 1984a; Miller, 1994a). Both the broadsheets lead not with the violence but with the suspension of a junior officer (see extracts, above), again emphasising the Army and its point of view rather than the violence. This indicates continued reliance on official sources for information (see Miller, 1993a and 1994; Elliott, 1977). Qualifiers do not

preface counter-claims made by the Army; this lends them credibility not available to the version given by Coalisland residents.

The reports accept the explanation that the soldiers' actions were a reaction to the booby-trap bombing of a colleague, referred to as a "mate" by reports in both tabloids, emphasising an emotional, rather than professional bond. This lends legitimacy to the soldiers' actions and the explanation that it was a reaction to IRA violence. This is further emphasised through the descriptions of the civilians and Coalisland as 'Catholic' and, in one case, 'Republican' (*The Guardian*).

A few days later, a second 'clash' between civilians and Paratroop soldiers occurred in Coalisland. Three civilians were shot. A machinegun was taken from a soldier: Hoggart notes that loss of a weapon is such a serious offence and Army discipline so "draconian", that soldiers "must inevitably present their side of the case as forcefully as possible" (1973: 155), which suggests that soldiers' accounts of such events are likely to be circumspect. Reports of this second 'clash', reported in the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*, also foregrounded the Army's version of events (see Appendix 4, example 4) ¹⁵:

A MOB of 1,000 people battled with British soldiers last night in an Ulster town still reeling from a rampage by Paras.

A four-man infantry patrol was ambushed and robbed of a heavy machinegun. And as violence flared in the town for the second time in a week, Paras stormed in and opened fire. (*Daily Mirror*, original emphasis)

A PARATROOPER shot and injured three civilians last night in Coalisland, Co Tyrone, where last week members of the Third Battalion, Parachute Regiment, allegedly attacked townspeople with clubs and batons.

The shootings happened when a unit from the regiment was attacked after being called in by the RUC to help a King's Own Scottish Borderers' patrol who had been set upon by 30 or 40 young local men at about 7pm. A rifle and a machinegun were stolen from them. (*Daily Telegraph*)

THREE civilians were in hospital last night after members of the Parachute Regiment opened fire as trouble flared again in Coalisland, Northern Ireland. The Paras had been withdrawn from the town after clashes with the public hours after a soldier lost his legs in a mine blast on Wednesday. They returned last night to deal with trouble when a 30-strong crowd wrested a heavy general-purpose machine gun from a patrol of the King's Own Scottish Borderers... (*The Guardian*)

Reports of this second 'clash' distance the soldiers from the violence: for example, civilians "were hit by ricochet shots". By using the passive voice to describe the

¹⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 18-05-92, p2: **THREE SHOT AS MOB OF 1,000 ATTACK SOLDIERS**; Joe Gorrod,
Daily Telegraph, 18-05-92, p1: **Three civilians hurt in shooting by Para**; Richard Savill and Ben Fenton,
The Guardian, 18-05-92, p1: **Three hurt as Paras open fire in new Coalisland trouble**; Alan Murray and John Mullin.

violence against civilians, the reports distance the soldiers from involvement in and blame for this second ‘clash’. Conversely, the involvement of civilians in the violence is clearly presented. The Paratroopers involved are depicted as rescuing other soldiers from a “crowd” or “mob”.

In follow-up reports on the second ‘clash’ in three of the papers (*The Sun*, *The Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*) the IRA is directly connected with the violence in Coalisland (see Appendix 4, example 5). These reports refer to Fergal O’Donnell and his alleged role in the second ‘clash’¹⁶. All of these give details regarding his brother Kevin, who was shot dead by the SAS¹⁷. The implication is that Fergal O’Donnell is not an innocent civilian. Fergal O’Donnell is connected by the reports to the IRA through his brother: this is similar to the linking of Kevin McKearney and Charles and Theresa Fox to the IRA through their families (see section 4.3.1).

The *Daily Telegraph* states that “Sinn Fein representatives yesterday claimed that Mr O’Donnell’s brother, Fergal, was harassed by paratroopers and struck with a baton on Saturday night”, failing to mention that Fergal O’Donnell needed hospital treatment. *The Guardian* does not even consider Fergal O’Donnell a civilian: the report mentions his injuries, then adds that three civilians were stable in hospital. Meanwhile, *The Sun* blames Fergal O’Donnell alone for instigating the riot in its report on the second clash, both in the headline, **SAS VICTIM’S BROTHER BEGAN RAID ON PARAS**, and in the article itself: he “sparked a mob attack on Paras in which three people were shot, it was claimed last night”.

Further articles on the outcomes of the two ‘clashes’ between civilians and soldiers in Coalisland in May 1992 concentrate on the removal of Brigadier Longland, the senior officer responsible, from his command post in Northern Ireland¹⁸ and, later, the

¹⁶ The Sun, 19-05-92, p2: **SAS VICTIM’S BROTHER BEGAN RAID ON PARAS**; David Wooding, Daily Telegraph, 19-05-92, pp1&2: **Para fired ‘in self-defence’, and Distrusted Paras redeployed too soon**; Richard Savill, The Guardian, 19-05-92, pp1&2: **Paras taken off streets after Coalisland clashes, and Hunt for gun as town licks its wounds**; Owen Bowcott and David Fairhall.

¹⁷ Kevin Barry O’Donnell was cleared at the Old Bailey in May 1990 of intent to cause explosions, and possession of unlicensed firearms with intent to kill. He was found guilty of possession of unlicensed firearms, but was released because of the amount of time he had spent on remand. O’Donnell was re-arrested on the steps of the Old Bailey, and subsequently excluded under the terms of the PTA to Northern Ireland. He was later shot dead in Coalisland, while on active IRA service, by members of the SAS, in February 1992. (*The Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph*, 19-05-’92; Sutton, 1994).

¹⁸ Daily Telegraph, 25-05-92, p1-2: **Brigadier is relieved of Ulster post**; Robert Fox; Daily Telegraph, 26-05-92, News p2: **Commander in Guards tradition takes Ulster role**; Robert Fox; The Guardian, 25-05-92, p1: **Brigadier replaced in Ulster**; David Sharrock and Owen Bowcott in Belfast; The Guardian, 26-05-92, p1: **Rifkind seeks to defuse row over brigadier relieved of Ulster post**; Owen Bowcott in Belfast;

seizure of the machinegun taken in the second ‘clash’¹⁹. There is no information regarding the aftermath of the ‘clashes’ in Coalisland, all the extensive follow-up is concerned with the effect on the British Army of the ‘clashes’. The effect(s) on Coalisland and its residents are not covered.

Three newspapers (*Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Sun*) reported on the charging of Paratroop soldiers for their involvement in the Coalisland clashes. *The Guardian* refers to Coalisland as a “republican stronghold”, where the majority of residents supported the bombing of the troops’ colleague, the incident which apparently caused the troops’ behaviour²⁰. The *Daily Telegraph* clearly blames the residents for instigating the violence: “Customers clashed with soldiers at a public house and running fights started outside” and calls Coalisland a town with “strong Republican sympathies”²¹. Similarly *The Sun* transfers all the blame for this attack to the residents of Coalisland stating in one article that “Drinkers in the Republican stronghold of Coalisland, East Tyrone, said troops battered them last May after a Para’s legs were blown off by a mine”; a second article is headlined **Paras on riot rap**, which suggests that the soldiers are taking ‘the rap’, that they are innocent²².

In all of these reports, the implications are that the residents of Coalisland instigated both ‘clashes’, that all the residents of Coalisland are Catholics and Republicans, that the IRA bombing of a member of the Parachute Regiment justifies the ‘revenge patrol’. The conflation of these two events - the bombing and the first Coalisland ‘clash’ - suggests the residents’ direct support, if not collusion with, the IRA bombing at Cappagh. The reports distance the soldiers from the violence, through implying that Coalisland residents were responsible and using qualifiers such as ‘alleged’. The newspapers invoke the retaliatory motive provided by the IRA’s bombing of another soldier and linking Coalisland to the attack by labelling it as ‘Republican’ and ‘Catholic’. Reports in the *Daily Telegraph*²³ and the *Daily Mirror*²⁴ do provide readers

The Guardian, 26-05-92, Home News p2: **Switch reveals Ulster dilemma and Ousted brigadier ‘too much as soldier’**; Owen Bowcott;

The Sun, 26-05-92, p2: **WHY WAS PARAS BRIGADIER FIRED?**; John Kay and Trevor Kavanagh.

¹⁹ Daily Mirror, 29-05-92, p7: **Troops get back gun in swoop**;

Daily Telegraph, 29-05-92, p1: **Paras recover machine gun**;

The Guardian, 29-05-92, Home News p2: **Paratroopers help to recover gun stolen in Coalisland clash**;

The Sun, 30-05-92, p2: **Gun set to hit copter**.

²⁰ The Guardian, 11-11-92, Home News, p5: **Paras face trial over Ulster ‘rampage**; Owen Bowcott.

²¹ Daily Telegraph, 14-11-92, News, p3: **Paras to be charged over Ulster fight**; Chris Ryder

²² The Sun, 24-09-92, p11: **Paras accused over beatings**,

The Sun, 11-11-92, p7: **Paras on riot rap**.

²³ Daily Telegraph, 15-05-92: **Officer suspended after Paras go on ‘revenge patrol’** and 19-05-92: **Distrusted Paras redeployed too soon**; op cit.

²⁴ Daily Mirror, 15-05-92: **‘Crazy’ Paras storm town in revenge rampage**; op. cit.

with information regarding previous Paratrooper involvement in violence in Northern Ireland: in each case, the references are to Bloody Sunday, 1972. It should be noted that in both of its reports which make this reference, the *Daily Telegraph* uses the same wording, even though these articles have different by-lines:

On so-called “Bloody Sunday”, Jan. 30 1972, soldiers of the 1st Bn shot dead 13 Roman Catholics at the end of a banned civil rights march in Londonderry. That incident was one of the watersheds in Northern Ireland’s modern history and was seen as the decisive factor in imposing direct rule from Westminster.

The use of Bloody Sunday to contextualize Army violence emphasises the understanding that Army involvement in violence is unusual and rare. In contrast, reports in *The Guardian* refer to “repeated calls for the Paras to be withdrawn from Northern Ireland for the past 20 years” and recent complaints made by both Ken Maginnis and Seamus Mallon regarding the behaviour of the Paratroopers ²⁵.

In September 1992, Peter McBride was shot dead by members of an army patrol (Sutton, 1994). This death was reported by the two broadsheets. Both use an eyewitness account of the shooting from a local woman. However, the shooting is primarily explained by two factors: the death of another soldier, Damien Shackleton, shot by an IRA sniper (ibid.); the area in which Peter McBride was shot, described as “the Catholic New Lodge Road” and as a “Republican area” in the *Daily Telegraph* ²⁶; *The Guardian* describes the New Lodge area as “strongly republican” ²⁷.

Another example, from the data collected for this research, of the use of terminology to plant suspicion is provided by the reporting of a fatal and accidental helicopter collision at an Army base in Northern Ireland ²⁸. Both of the broadsheets have reports on the incident, and while these make it clear that there was no terrorist involvement in the crash, they both locate the area of the crash in Bessbrook:

Bessbrook, which is not far from the Irish border is at the heart of the perilous South Armagh “bandit country” and has the busiest heliport in the province because of the threat to vehicles from landmines placed by IRA terrorists. (*Daily Telegraph*)

Bessbrook is a strongly Republican area where there have been terrorist attacks on helicopters in the past. (*The Guardian*)

²⁵ The Guardian, 15-05-92: **Paras officer suspended after Ulster rampage, and Ulster MPs unite against ‘macho’ Paras**; and 19-05-92: **Paras taken off streets after Coalisland clashes**; op. cit.

²⁶ Daily Telegraph, 05-09-92, pp.1&2: **RUC inquiry after troops kill runaway**; Chris Ryder.

²⁷ The Guardian, 05-09-92, p1: **Soldiers accused in Belfast killing**; Owen Bowcott.

²⁸ Daily Telegraph, 27-11-92, p1: **‘4 soldiers die’ as helicopters crash**; Francis Harris, The Guardian, 27-11-92, p1: **Army helicopter crash kills four**; Alan Murray.

Both these articles effectively locate the crash in ‘enemy’ territory, even though this has no relevance to the circumstances of the accident. This is reminiscent of Curtis’ comment that the press had developed a habit of “writing the IRA into the headlines on the slightest excuse” (1984a: 110; see also Elliott, 1977).

Reports of violence involving members of the security forces tend to endorse the official view, which is evidenced through the reporting of (unarmed) civilians attacking (armed) soldiers as fact. In contrast, claims that soldiers attacked civilians are preceded by qualifiers such as “allegedly” and “it was claimed”. The use of qualifiers suggests that there is doubt regarding the validity of the account: no such doubts pertain to Army claims of civilian instigated violence. Areas in which army violence occur are called ‘Republican’ and ‘Catholic’: these terms are used interchangeably, which suggests that, within the parameters of press discourse, they are equivalent terms.

Reporting of the British army’s involvement in violence in Northern Ireland, during the period of the research, demonstrated the continued failure of the British press to recognise or understand the specific, historical, role of the British army in Ireland, as already noted by Kirlkaldy (1979). By failing to adequately contextualize the role of the British army, army violence is interpreted through the view that Northern Ireland places unique demands on the army. Although their violence is not necessarily condoned, it becomes comprehensible, especially because of the reactionary motive provided by IRA activities. The involvement of British soldiers in violence in Northern Ireland is presented as a rare but explainable event: this echoes an earlier finding by Elliott that when the security forces were reported as being directly involved in violence that “their members were involved in incidents but invariably as targets though occasionally they returned fire” (1977: 293).

4.3.3 *Republican violence*

In contrast to victims of Loyalist or Army violence, victims of IRA violence in Northern Ireland were never referred to with political signifiers (such as *Unionist* or *Loyalist*) in the data collected for this research. The religious signifier *Protestant*, however, was used. Hence, unlike *Catholic* which is interchangeable with *Republican*, *Protestant* generally remains a religious label without political associations. Similarly, areas and locations which are identified as *Protestant* are identified solely through the religious signifier, whereas areas where Catholics reside are more likely to be identified through the political terms *Nationalist* and *Republican*. Through the avoidance of political terms to describe Protestant victims and areas, the innocence of Protestant civilian victims of the IRA was emphasised in a way that other civilian victims’ innocence was not.

The only occurrence of IRA violence in Northern Ireland to receive extensive coverage, and follow-up coverage in all four newspapers was the Teebane bombing ²⁹. Seven construction workers were killed when a roadside landmine was detonated as their van passed it, and an eighth died some days later (Sutton, 1994: 183). The IRA justified the bombing thus: the men were working on a contract for the security forces, which made them ‘legitimate targets’. This was the largest number of people killed in one act of violence in the whole of the research data collected, which may indicate one reason why this particular event attracts such coverage. “Violence is news; spectacular violence is big news” (Paletz et al., 1982; 169).

In all the initial reports of the bombing, the construction workers were described as *Protestant*. There were no references to any possible political or paramilitary connections which they or their families may have had. The victims were presented to the reader as wholly innocent, unlike the victims of Loyalist or Army violence.

The Teebane bombing also had a political impact, which further adds to the reasons for such extensive coverage. On the evening of the bombing, Peter Brooke, then Northern Ireland Secretary, appeared on a television chat show in the Republic of Ireland on which he was interviewed, and sang a verse of “Oh My Darling Clementine”. As a consequence of Unionist reaction to this appearance, the ‘Brooke talks’ process broke down. It was highly unusual for reports of violence in Northern Ireland collected for the research to receive in-depth coverage or extensive follow-up: they were usually restricted to the “news in brief” sections (also noted by Elliott, 1977) or to the last paragraph of a different report, albeit usually one with an Irish theme. The *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun*, in the data collected, have no follow-up reports on IRA violence in Northern Ireland except in this instance. All follow-up reports on the actual bombing are either incorporated into reports on the political fall-out from Mr Brooke’s appearance on RTÉ (the two tabloids follow this pattern), or accompany these reports: this suggests that the political implications of Mr. Brooke’s gaffe are as important as the scale of the violence in influencing the extensive follow-up reporting (see chapter 6 for a discussion of the representations of the political aftermath) ³⁰.

²⁹ Daily Mirror, 18-01-92, p1&2: **MASSACRE**; John Hicks;
Daily Telegraph, 18-01-92, p1: **Seven die as IRA blows up minibus**; Chris Ryder and Robert Shrimpsley,
The Guardian, 18-01-92, pp1&3: **Seven die in Omagh blast, How civilians have been put in terrorists’ sights**, and **Night, fog and an impromptu oration**; Owen Bowcott, Maev Kennedy, Alan Murray.
The Sun, 18-01-92, p2: **SEVEN KILLED AS IRA BLASTS A BUILDER’S VAN**; John Murphy.

³⁰ Daily Mirror, 20-01-92, p5: **Singer Brooke to say sorry**; David Bradshaw,
Daily Telegraph, 20-01-92, p1: **Pressure for more Ulster troops grows**; Chris Ryder,
The Guardian, 20-01-92, pp1&2: **Unionists urge Brooke to quit, Bleak community riven by feuds and ferocity, Familiar security options that offer no quick fixes**, and **Families count cost as widow says ‘I would hang them’**; Owen Bowcott, David Sharrock.

The Guardian, in its reporting of the Teebane bombing, explicitly blamed a local Catholic community, explaining that ³¹:

The area has played host to a bitter and bloody struggle between the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries.
...Feuds between family clans on each side of the religious divide stretch back for centuries.

A statement such as this draws on three assumptions: there is a genealogical element to the violence (“families”); the violence is geographically bound (“the area”); the religious and historical contexts inevitably influence and contextualize the violence (references to the “religious divide” and “centuries”). This suggests an inevitability about this violent incident in Northern Ireland, if not others, which is attributable to the nature and history of the local people. This statement invokes the stereotype Irish people as congenitally violent.

While quoting the complaints of Cardinal Daly that despite newspaper reports “there was no evidence that the killers lived locally, even though some reports had spoken of a staunchly republican “pocket” nearby”, this particular report states that the “Teebane crossroad lies near the *nationalist* village of Pomeroy” (emphasis mine). The report quotes residents from “the nationalist village of Pomeroy”, who display little sympathy for the dead: these are contrasted with comments from a resident of “the Protestant village New Mills” who voices the anger of that community at the bombing. This locates blame for violence within the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland: Catholics are to blame for both IRA violence and the (Loyalist or Army) ‘retaliation’ of which they are victims (see above). This modifies Elliott’s finding that Catholics are presented as both victims and perpetrators of violence in Northern Ireland (1977): in addition to this, Catholics are represented as makers of their own fate in, through their support of IRA violence, which is then presented as an explanation for Loyalist and Army violence against Catholic civilians.

In contrast, the article in the *Daily Telegraph* concentrates on the security operation resulting from the bombing ³²:

Daily Mirror, 21-01-92, pp1&2: **Major stands by his babbling Brooke**; Sheree Doods and John Hicks,
Daily Telegraph, 21-01-92, News, p2: **We’ll hunt you down, Major tells terrorists**; Chris Ryder,
The Guardian, 21-01-92, Home News, p2: **Barrackers spoil warm welcome for Major’s visit, & Silent town mourns ‘harmless fellows’**; Owen Bowcott, David Sharrock;
The Sun, 21-01-92, p2: **PM vows to ‘hunt and hunt’ IRA**.
Daily Mirror, 22-01-92, p6: **TV host ‘sorry’**; John Hicks.

³¹ The Guardian, 20-01-92. Home News, p2: **Bleak community riven by feuds and ferocity**; David Sharrock.

³² Daily Telegraph, 20-01-92, p1: **Pressure for more Ulster troops grows**; Chris Ryder.

Over the weekend security barriers dividing Catholics and Protestants were closed amid intensified checkpoint operations.

This echoes the assertion in *The Guardian* that the two religious communities in the Teebane area, if not Northern Ireland, comprise two warring factions which need to be kept apart by the British Army. Thus the British Army becomes both a neutral and necessary peacekeeping force in the Northern Ireland conflict.

Additionally, the report details the Reverend Ian Paisley's reaction to the bombing: one of his demands was that all Catholic areas in Northern Ireland were curfewed and cordoned off. By presenting his argument uncritically, the *Daily Telegraph* lends further credibility to the belief that all Catholics are supporters and members of the IRA.

On July 1 1992, three men were found shot dead: according to the IRA, they were informers (Sutton, 1994). All of the newspapers surveyed for this research had reports on these killings (see Appendix 4, example 7). The reports in the broadsheet papers provide descriptions of the bodies, and the manner in which they were found, as well as details of the allegations that the three men were informers ³³. In contrast, the two tabloids report the killings in a sensationalist manner, and use phrases such as "they were horrifically beaten and tortured", "a grisly show of savagery" (*Daily Mirror*) ³⁴ and "THREE IRA men were executed by their terror bosses" (*The Sun*) ³⁵. The reports in the broadsheets both provide readers with the information that the IRA has alleged that, as well as being informers, the three men were responsible for the death of a woman. The reports in the tabloids use this to refer to "IRA justice", which infers, in this context, that the deaths were not *real* justice, as understood by British people. In addition to its news report, *The Sun* printed an editorial comment on the deaths which underlines the view that the deaths of the three men should not be mourned because "they were victims of a feud inside that loathsome gang of criminals" ³⁶. The interpretation that these deaths were not 'real' justice, that they should be condemned, that they can be understood as normative within a Northern Irish context, is also present in the reports in the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*, but this is much less overt than in the tabloids reports.

The reporting of the deaths of the three IRA members is markedly different from the reports of the Teebane bombing. The victims of the Teebane bombing are clearly

³³ Daily Telegraph, 03-07-92, News, p4: **IRA claims three men it murdered were informers**; Sean O'Neill;
The Guardian, 03-07-92, Home News, p2: **'Informers' shot by IRA linked to killing**; Owen Bowcott.

³⁴ Daily Mirror, 03-07-92, p2: **The IRA call this justice.**

³⁵ The Sun, 03-07-92, p2: **PROVOS EXECUTE 3 FOR GIRL'S MURDER**; Simon Hughes.

³⁶ The Sun, 03-07-92, p6: **No tears.**

presented as innocent victims of incomprehensible violence. The deaths of the three men in the later incident are reported with the contextualizing information that all three were IRA members, informers and (suspected) murderers. There is a clear delineation between innocent and guilty victims of IRA violence. All the reports on these deaths repeat the allegations of the IRA: the *Daily Telegraph* in particular, although it does not use any direct quotations from the IRA statement, a contrast with the use of quotations from the UVF statement justifying the killings of Charles and Theresa Fox (see above).

According to Elliott “the tendency of the British media was to report violent events as simply irrational and horrid” (1977: 295). This is clearly the interpretation which the press brings to the two events discussed in this section. They are reported as being outside of British understanding, and the irrationality and horror of IRA violence in Northern Ireland becomes uniquely Irish. In this way, the violence of Northern Ireland continues to be constructed in the press as an Irish, rather than British, problem (see Kirkaldy, 1979).

4.4 Perceptions of Northern Irish society

Reports from Northern Ireland, in the data collected for this research, which do not focus on the conflict are few. Local politics are absent from the national papers; political reports concerning Northern Ireland in this period concentrated on the ‘Brooke talks’, and Peter Brooke’s damaged career (see chapter 6). The articles which had a human interest slant tended to use the conflict in Northern Ireland as an explanatory backdrop or framework, suggesting that all life in Northern Ireland is affected by violence. In particular, the two tabloids rarely cover Northern Ireland from a human interest slant; *The Guardian* has the most human interest articles. This again suggests that readers of *The Guardian* are the best informed regarding Northern Ireland, while readers of the tabloids have almost no access to knowledge of Northern Ireland *per se* other than that of violence and conflict. This is only reported when it is ‘sensational’.

It is unusual for the four newspapers to cover the same human interest story. However, all four cover the increase in sentence for Susan Christie, who was convicted of murdering her lover’s wife ³⁷. Penny McAllister, an Englishwoman, was married to a soldier with whom, as a member of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), Susan Christie worked. These reports cover the increase in her sentence. All four newspapers

³⁷ Daily Mirror, 12-11-92, p 23: **MY PENNY’S KILLER SHOULD HAVE GOT LIFE**; Tom Merrin;
Daily Telegraph, 12-11-92, News p.8: **Lover who cut Army wife’s throat given 4 more years**; Chris Ryder;
The Guardian, 12-11-92, Home News p.7: **UDR woman gets longer in jail for killing**; Owen Bowcott;
The Sun, p.15: **ARMY LOVE KILLER GETS 4 MORE YEARS JAIL**.

focus on the human interest element of the story, by concentrating on Penny McAllister's parents, who provide interviews for the *Daily Mirror*. Susan Christie is represented as cold and psychotic: it is interesting that while other human interest reports use the conflict in Northern Ireland that these reports do not. Ostensibly then, despite living in Northern Ireland, Susan Christie has no explanatory excuse for her violence.

The Sun carries a report on a visit to troops in Northern Ireland by Prince Andrew, who is represented as heroic in his bravery at visiting troops on the "front line"³⁸. The *Daily Mirror* has an article on the fifth anniversary of the Enniskillen bombing (see below for discussion). Otherwise, the tabloids provide no image or vision of Northern Ireland for their readers other than that inferred by the reports of violence.

Although the broadsheet reader has more access to reports on Northern Ireland, human interest stories usually highlight violence and sectarianism so that these factors appear to be part of everyday life in Northern Ireland. The result of this reporting is that the broadsheet reader gains little on the tabloid reader in terms of information about Northern Irish life *per se*. Indeed, the effect of these articles could be to reinforce the view that Northern Irish society and the lives of the people who live there are wholly framed by the conflict and sectarianism. This ignores the existence of middle class areas in Northern Ireland which are not usually directly affected by violence (for example, south Belfast).

Both the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* have reports in January 1992 on soccer in Northern Ireland³⁹. Both of these emphasise the sectarian nature of the game in Northern Ireland. While this is to an extent true, neither article questions that sectarian politics divide the populace in terms of sporting affiliation: it is accepted as normal social behaviour in Northern Ireland:

And, of course, sport mixes with the political situation in which it finds itself. But it can surely sometimes be a force for good.

Amid the greyness mirrored by the day and the potential for problems, at least Glentoran's motto had prevailed, *Le Jeu Avant Tout*: the game above all. (*Daily Telegraph*)

Tomorrow Derry are away to Dundalk, the League of Ireland champions, in the 12-team Premier Division, and a win there will have the Brandywell supporters more convinced than ever that Coyle is one of them.

At least for the time being. (*The Guardian*)

³⁸ The Sun, 01-11-92, p.2: **IT'S FRONT LINE ANDY.**

³⁹ Daily Telegraph, 20-01-92, Sport, p40: **Soccer keeping peace across the big divide**; Ian Ridley;

The Guardian, 11-01-92, Sports News, p20: **Coyle charges Derry's forward drive**; John Mullin.

While the headline of the *Daily Telegraph* article proclaims **Soccer keeping peace across the big divide**, the emphasis is on the security arrangements made by the clubs and the RUC to prevent sectarian violence: this (possible) violence is not equated with violence that occurs between supporters of English soccer teams; instead, it is solely linked to the war in Northern Ireland and not considered part of soccer hooliganism as displayed by soccer fans elsewhere in the UK. Indeed, even the obvious analogy of the Celtic/Rangers antipathy is avoided: the sole backdrop to the report is the war and sectarianism in Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile, *The Guardian*'s article emphasises the Protestant/Unionist background of the manager of Derry F.C: like the article in the *Daily Telegraph*, the war and sectarianism in Northern Ireland provide the sole explanatory framework for the article. This article even predicts that Coyle will not retain the loyalty of the Derry F.C. fans because of his personal background (see quote, above).

The depiction of Northern Ireland as a society characterised by violence is repeated elsewhere: in articles on the fifth anniversary of the Enniskillen bombing, both the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mirror* evoke violence and the bleak prospects for peace ⁴⁰. As such, these articles are more closely related to reports of contemporary violence rather than human interest reports. While the *Daily Mirror*'s article claims that

Enniskillen was, in the eyes of the world, a watershed.

The last, best hope for peace. Where the armalite and the Bible had failed, could a tiny community split equally between well-heeled Catholics and better-heeled Protestants cull some good from terrorists' hatred?

the *Daily Telegraph*'s report states that

But while the Enniskillen bombing is one of the most terrible milestones of massacre in Northern Ireland, it is also the one that has come to inspire the most hope of reconciliation and peace.

However, both articles concentrate on the negative aspects of the bombing, despite their proclaimed interest in the peace initiative that arose from its aftermath. The article in the *Daily Telegraph*, which makes a long list of the individual outcomes for survivors of the bombing (half the report), is somewhat more upbeat than the *Daily Mirror*'s article, ending with Gordon Wilson's aspirations for the success of the Enniskillen Bursaries: these are grants from a fund administered by survivors of the Enniskillen bombing for cross-community projects.

⁴⁰ *Daily Mirror*, 04-11-92, pp20-1&26: **Whatever happened to the last, best chance for PEACE?**; Mary Riddell, *Daily Telegraph*, 09-11-92, News, p2: **Enniskillen inspires hope five years on**; Chris Ryder.

The *Daily Mirror* concentrates instead on the callousness of all people in Northern Ireland:

But who, in the horror that is Ulster, would ponder too long the future of a 12-year-old child, plagued by nightmares, wracked by depression, forced to face up to a grief she could barely understand?

The phrase “in the horror that is Ulster” clearly depicts Northern Ireland as a nightmarish place. This is further emphasised by a reference to Belfast as a “wilderness”. Northern Ireland is constructed as being devoid of all normality, characterised by sectarianism and violence.

The Guardian’s articles on aspects of Northern Irish society also employ the backdrop of violence. The best example of this is an article headlined “A troubled upbringing”, which ostensibly examines the experience of childhood in Northern Ireland (see appendix 4, example 8) ⁴¹. The headline indicates the bias of the article: the children featured are mostly from areas in Belfast associated with the war in Northern Ireland. This is emphasised by a billing for the article in the news section of the paper: “Stuart throws petrol bombs, Danny sells jokes, Lee thinks joyriding beats sex. Have the Troubles made kids reckless, asks Candida Crewe.”

The article looks at very few individual children, and the majority of those featured are from the Protestant community in Belfast. This is in direct contrast to the expert opinions aired in the piece which provide an analysis of the problems faced by Catholic boys. All the main child interviewees are male Protestants whose lives are, according to the article, completely influenced by the “Troubles”. The example of four Protestant youths, all on the same youth training scheme, who spend their spare time joyriding, fails to make the obvious analogy with the bored teenage joyriders of Britain, for example, in Blackbird Leys housing estate, Oxford. It fails to investigate the dangers of joyriding in Belfast: it mentions that joyriders may get shot if they drive through a security barrier, but does not mention the policing activities of the paramilitary organisations.

The report ignores girls and middle class children, concentrating almost wholly on a few young Protestant males, whose experiences can hardly be said to typify those of all children in Northern Ireland, yet this is the analogy that it is clearly makes, by interweaving examples of damaged children (Catholic boys) with expert commentary. The focus on children as inevitably damaged by the backdrop of the “Troubles” adds to the understanding, present in reports of violence (see above), that violence in Northern Ireland is generational and, therefore, inevitable.

⁴¹ The Guardian, 02-05-92, Weekend supplement, p4: **A troubled upbringing**; Candida Crewe.

Reporting of the ‘everyday’, or human interest stories, from Northern Ireland is contextualized by the theme of violence. In particular, such reports are grounded by the assumption that Northern Ireland is both tragic and horrific. The emphasis is on the intractable differences between the communities and the generational aspect to violence, suggesting an inevitability to the violence. This emphasises the understanding of Northern Ireland as being outside of British frameworks of understanding (Kirkaldy, 1979).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that reports of violence from Northern Ireland are not neutral; dominant news values consider Catholics in Northern Ireland to be the locus of conflict in Northern Ireland. Catholics are depicted as unquestioning supporters of IRA violence. Loyalist and Army violence against Catholics is explained by the ‘retaliatory motive’, which identifies Catholics as makers of their own fate. The retaliatory motive places Loyalist and Army violence into a context of focused violence: it is revenge. In contrast, reporting of IRA violence, as illustrated by the reports of the Teebane bombing, is depicted as senseless and unfocused: its victims are innocent. The reporting of the ‘clashes’ between soldiers and civilians in Coalisland demonstrates the dominance of official discourses in press reports. The propensity of the British press to give greater credence to official versions of events in Northern Ireland has been noted before (Curtis, 1984a; Elliott, 1977; Miller, 1994a).

The reporting of Northern Ireland covers two differing political arenas, nationalist and unionist. These disparate outlooks have generated a parallel lexicon for matters within and pertaining to Northern Ireland, and it is instructive to note how the newspapers deploy these terms, since the “words journalists use when covering Ireland are chosen with care and are scrutinised by their superiors and by politicians” (Curtis, 1984a: 133). Reports of violence attract differing terms, dependent upon the agents of the incidents.

With the exception of *The Sun*, which always describes Loyalists as *terrorists*, the papers refer to *Loyalists*, *Loyalist gunmen*, *gunmen* and *paramilitaries*. While it appears that *The Sun* views Loyalist-inspired violence with equal opprobrium to that of Republican violence, this is mitigated by the much greater concentration on IRA violence in Britain (see chapter 5). Reports frequently do not attribute Loyalist violence to any particular group, and the use of terms such as *gunman* or *gunmen* makes such violence appear to be the actions of individuals rather than organisations.

In contrast, the IRA is named in reports of both Loyalist and Republican violence. Thus the IRA becomes the most identifiable paramilitary organisation for readers of the British press. Its members are always referred to as *terrorists*, and their actions as *terrorism*. This difference in application of terms suggests that the papers, with the qualified exception of *The Sun*, consider Loyalist violence less harmful or less subversive than that of Republican groups. Loyalist violence is perceived to be less serious: it is seen as reactionary rather than subversive.

The differences in applications of terminology to Republicans and Loyalists are significant. While the terms used to describe Loyalists do not infer legitimacy, describing Republican violence as *terrorism* distances it from other forms of violence emanating from the conflict, and implies that it is more serious, subversive and state-threatening. In other words, this strategy de-legitimises Republican violence whilst playing down the effects of Loyalist violence. Members of the British Army and the RUC are generally described in terms which affirm their legitimacy: soldiers, police, Paratroopers. This differential labelling of the three groups involved in violence associated with Northern Ireland has been noted elsewhere (Miller, 1994a; Curtis, 1984a).

This differential handling of Loyalist and Republican-inspired violence is also reflected in the labelling of the victims of violence. Victims of Loyalist violence in Northern Ireland are referred to as *Catholics* (the *Daily Telegraph* prefers the term *Roman Catholics*). The effect of this type of labelling is to limit political inferences and emphasise the attacks and killings as sectarian. Indeed, this term is used only for Loyalist killings.

The style of reporting suggests that the papers have little sympathy for the victims of this type of violence; indeed, the usage of terms suggests that the victims of Loyalist violence are to blame in part through their political affiliation which is inferred through religious labels. In this context, the term *Catholic* or *Roman Catholic* ceases to be solely an identifier of religious affiliation: it also suggests that the person concerned is a *Republican*. While these terms are not usually directly applied to Catholics, the areas in which they live are described as either *Nationalist* or *Republican*. These terms are used interchangeably. This further affects the understanding of the reporting of Loyalist killings, usually described as *sectarian*. The term *Catholic* thereby becomes a political rather than a religious signifier.

Protestant civilian victims of IRA violence are never referred to by political terms such as *Loyalist* or *Unionist*. In this way, the innocence of IRA victims is emphasised in a manner that the innocence of other victims of violence in the Northern Ireland war

is not. The areas in which Protestants live, when referred to, are described as *Protestant*: political signifiers are generally not used. Loyalist violence is portrayed as retaliatory and sectarian. Army-instigated violence is similarly explained through the retaliatory motive. In this way, the violence of Republicans is characterised as more dangerous and more serious than other forms of violence in Northern Ireland: it engenders other forms of violence; it is irrational or without cause. The use of the retaliatory motive to explain Loyalist and Army violence leads to the inference that the true source of violence in Northern Ireland is Republican violence, and particularly that of the IRA. The association of Catholics with Nationalism and Republicanism infers that they are the source of Republican violence. Army and Loyalist violence tends to be directed against Catholics, who are frequently described in the press as living in Nationalist or Republican areas. Catholics are thus portrayed as the locus of violence in Northern Ireland: they cause violence through their support of the IRA; they are the target of the retaliatory violence of the Army and Loyalists. The use of genealogy to explain supposed IRA membership or violence directed against Catholics suggests that violence is an inherent trait for Catholics in Northern Ireland.

The application of the term *terrorism* to a group or action signifies ideological assumptions, assumptions which confer illegitimacy to that group and/or action, while emphasising the legitimacy of the state (Miller, 1994a; Gerbner, 1991). The effect of this differential labelling is that, according to Schlesinger, “liberal democracies are embodiments of rationality, while terrorists, being violent, are quintessentially irrational” (1991: 18). This labelling extends beyond the IRA to the Catholic population of Northern Ireland, and to perceptions of the Irish in Britain (see chapter 5).

Reporting from Northern Ireland is not neutral. It concentrates on what is apparently the most interesting aspect of Northern Ireland - sectarianism and violence (O’Dowd, 1989). The overall image of Northern Ireland is of a highly divided society, with the focus of reports on Catholics as the source of violence. This is achieved through two thematization devices which are additional to the focus on the IRA as the causative factor in all violence in Northern Ireland: genealogical explanations for (presumed) connections to the IRA, as in the cases of the McKearneys and the Foxes, all victims of Loyalist violence; the interchangeable use of Catholic and Republican. The violence in Northern Ireland is thus situated in an explanatory framework which defines it as Catholic and genetic. This is added to by the genealogical explanation offered for inter-community conflict (see, for example, the discussion on the Teebane bombing). In this way, the Northern Ireland population, Catholic and Protestant, is racialized because violence is presented as a consequence of their genetic make-up and heredity, and thus inevitable. Violence in Northern Ireland is situated within a framework of understanding

which situates it as 'tribal', and racial. Such explanations obviate any need to accept that Britain has a role in the violence in Northern Ireland and facilitates representations of British army-instigated violence as rare occurrences arising from provocation by Catholics/Republicans. It will be demonstrated below that in reporting IRA violence in Britain, the Irish in Britain are similarly portrayed as responsible (chapter 5). Violence emanating from and within Northern Ireland is explained in the British press as grounded in Irishness and thus such violence becomes part of the 'naturalised' traits of Irishness.

Chapter 5 Drunk and Incapable

Stereotypical characterisations of the Irish in the British national press

5.1 Introduction

Commonsense functions to naturalise ideology (Hall, 1982); this is exemplified by racism, which functions to make those codified as *Other* appear to be ‘naturally’ inferior and, therefore, by right subordinate. While ideologies specify meaning in so far as they are social and collective, it is the interpellation of the individual (Althusser, 1971) which acts to place that individual within hegemony. However, ideology does not equate with commonsense. Rather it is expressed through commonsense: commonsense is an essential explanatory and universalising framework in both the production of consent and the naturalisation of ideological propositions. Thus commonsense is central in myth-making (Barthes, 1957). The dispelling of commonsense myths demonstrates the falsity of universalising (or dominant) ideologies: however, this does not deny the universe-embracing nature (sic) of ideological propositions. The commonsense proposition that “all Paddies are thick” is a myth which sustains the commonsense world and, simultaneously, an ideological statement which, although demonstrably false, is valid within a given ideological conception of the universe. In this sense the medium (commonsense) is the message (ideology) (McLuhan, cited in Silverstone, 1994).

Stereotypes are essential and essentializing commonsense myths. They function to explain (away) the *Other* and nullify the *Other* of threat (hooks, 1992). While they are part of the imaginary realm of explanations (ibid.), their naturalising explanations of the behaviour and culture of the *Other*, which thus become essentialized, are deeply reassuring. It is this reassurance which makes stereotypes commonsense myths, at once transparent and deeply held. The reassurance of stereotypes is founded on their often oppositional imagery, that is, they are constructed in opposition to the depiction of the self as the ingroup. If ‘they’ are stupid, then ‘we’ are intelligent. Thus stereotypes can both defy (‘rational’) belief and explain the universe in terms or meanings which reassure.

As commonsense myths and, therefore, essentializing truths, stereotypes are not just operant at the collective level of understanding. They are also a convenient shorthand through which codified information can be conveyed. Therefore, they can be viewed as particular types of schema (Haddock et al., 1994), or memory structures, which operate at both the cognitive and social levels, having roles in both the storage of information and its codified conveyance. Therefore, stereotypes are implicated in both the collective

articulation of ideology and the interpellation of the individual; in other words, stereotypes are at once universally understood and individually mediated.

Conveyed through discourse(s), stereotypes impart a range of messages and meanings which belie their seemingly natural explanations of the universe. Thus stereotypes are not mere shorthand (Lippmann, 1922), but are part of the (re)production of ideologies. Stereotypes are essential in signification and codification because of their apparent shorthand, but their very naturalness renders the act of codification invisible (Hall, 1980) and thus seemingly beyond interrogation (hence they are commonsense).

As already argued (chapter 2), stereotypes are an essential element of racist meanings and ideology, and the media have a role in the reproduction, communication and manipulation of stereotypes. However, without social currency stereotypes lack meaning in everyday discourse, through which ideology is reproduced (Eagleton, 1991). The media, when it uses stereotypes, assists in the reinforcement and continuity of stereotypes as meaningful constructs. Thus stereotypes emerge as a facilitator in the interface between reader and article: they impart information and depth, which might otherwise be absent. Stereotypes are validated through use; their continuity is achieved through a renewing process of adding information and altering their emphatic composition.

In order to reconstruct the mythological *Other* which 'Irishness' signifies, a detailed deconstruction of the stereotypes present in the discourse of press reports is provided below. In this context, stereotypes justify the signification of the Irish as *Other*. Their appearance in the popular media continues and justifies their currency of meaning since they appear as normal or 'natural' (Hall, 1982) and reasonable. Commonsense is inherently 'reasonable' and 'apparent'. Thus the position of the racialized *Other*, through the continuance of stereotypes in everyday discourses, is affirmed and maintained. The trait-laden and symbolic stereotypes (*pace* Haddock et al., 1994) discussed below deconstruct the meaning(s) of 'Irishness' and the signifiers which contain those meanings.

5.1.1 The deconstructed/reconstructed stereotypes

Stereotypes of the Irish from a British perspective have a long history and are well-known by Irish people (see chapter 8). The typical figure associated with stereotypes of the Irish is Paddy, a drunken, brawling, stupid but cunning labourer (amongst other things: Curtis, 1968; Curtis, 1984b). This stereotyped Irishman provides the foundation of anti-Irish jokes (Kirkaldy, 1980, 1981; Kerrigan, 1981).

This chapter will provide an examination of stereotypes used in the data collected from the four newspapers (*Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Sun*). Section 5.2 provides an analysis of the behavioural (or trait-laden) stereotypes, which can be categorised as follows: stupidity or absurdity; drinking; madness; anger; accent. The symbolic stereotype, of Irish people in Britain as (potential) IRA members is discussed in section 5.3. The deconstruction of stereotypes into the categories behavioural and symbolic is based upon the categories suggested by Haddock et al. (1994: see chapter 2, section 2.4.1). It should be noted, however, that one of the stereotypes classified here as ‘behavioural’ - accent - is also a symbolic stereotype, given its role as an identifier of Irish people.

5.2 Behavioural stereotypes

5.2.1 The Paddy package: naming the stereotype ¹

Paddy, or Mick, is a specific stereotypic figure. He occupies a specific place in the popular lexicon, and the meanings he signifies are, therefore, readily accessible. Paddy can be understood to be an amalgam of the stereotypes discussed below, although, as a unitary stereotype he has a long history of popularity (Curtis, 1968, 1971; Curtis, 1984b). In particular, Paddy signified the stupid, drunken, brawling, feckless, dirty, short-trousered Irish labourer (ibid.; Foster, 1995). In addition, ‘Irish’ infers that an action or situation is somehow wrong and/or ludicrous (Curtis, 1968; Curtis, 1984b). In particular, this usage of the word ‘Irish’ refers to the supposition that Irish people have a knack for doing things the wrong way, to do something in a backwards manner, or to misinterpret situations and rules that everyone else understands. Often this is thought of as humorous, and this ‘logic’ forms the basis of many anti-Irish jokes (Curtis, 1984b; Kirkaldy, 1980, 1981; Kerrigan, 1981).

‘Paddy’, ‘Mick’ and ‘Irish’ were utilised in texts gathered for the research. Their use in headlines provided a framework of interpretation (van Dijk, 1991), which encouraged a preferred reading (Hall, 1980). They served as signals which could alert readers that a stupid action or behaviour was being reported. Each of these (‘Paddy’, ‘Mick’ and ‘Irish’) is discussed in a separate sub-section below.

5.2.1.i Paddy

Three articles which referred to ‘Paddy’ were found in the data collected; in each case the word ‘Paddy’ appeared in the headline of the article. While two (from *The Sun*) utilised the more typical meaning of Paddy, one article (*Daily Telegraph*) associated

¹ The phrase, ‘The Paddy package’ is taken from an editorial in *The Guardian*, 17-03-1992, which discusses the Liberal Democrats’ new manifesto. The Paddy in question is Mr. Ashdown.

Paddy with being Irish in general, and the symbolic stereotype of Irish signifying IRA in particular (see section 5.3).

The two articles from *The Sun* used 'Paddy' as a signifier of stupidity and inversion. It is perhaps unsurprising that *The Sun* used this 'traditional' stereotype (see Searle, 1987). The use of 'Paddy' in the headlines provided a clear indication of the preferred reading: that the events being reported were attributable to the ethnicity of the men concerned. Both headlines are typical of *The Sun* in their use of word-play: **PADDY DOES IRISH JOG ON M4** and **BIRTHDAY SHAM ROCKS A PADDY**².

The first article from *The Sun* details how an Irishman was arrested for jogging on the hard shoulder of the M4 (see example 1, appendix 5). It attributes his actions, interpreted as stupid, to this unnamed man's ethnicity. In other words, this 'Paddy' did something stupid - jogging on the M4 - because he is a 'Paddy' and 'Paddies' are naturally stupid. The anonymity of the man in question and thus his figurative absence from the article other than as a Paddy strengthens this interpretation. Alternative explanations for this man's behaviour, such as ignorance of the regulations governing motorways, or stupidity *per se* (rather than stupidity because of 'Irishness'), are not offered.

BIRTHDAY SHAM ROCKS A PADDY utilises the Paddy figure in a similar manner (see example 2, appendix 5). It reports how an Irishman - named as George Ellis - has discovered that he has been mistakenly celebrating his birthday in April and not November. He is quoted as commenting: "it could only happen to an Irishman", thereby echoing and justifying the use of 'Paddy' in the headline. It has been documented elsewhere that colonised and subordinated peoples accept negative portrayals of themselves and their culture (Fanon, 1986), and that minorities use stereotypes to explain their own behaviour (Tajfel, 1987). The comment from George Ellis lends the labelling of him as a 'Paddy' by *The Sun* a spurious accuracy and acceptability. As with the first article discussed in this section, it suggests that Irish people think of themselves as 'Paddies', thereby justifying its use.

The article in the *Daily Telegraph* which uses 'Paddy' in its headline uses 'Paddy' to refer to a different stereotype, that of the Irish person as IRA member. It also suggests that Irish people use the label 'Paddy' to describe themselves. In this case, the headline was taken from a Special Branch Royal Ulster Constabulary officer quoted in the article: **'At the end of the day, only Paddy will beat Paddy'**³. This both gives the

² *The Sun*, 05-05-92, p7: **PADDY DOES IRISH JOG ON M4**; Nick Parker.

The Sun, 04-11-92, p3: **BIRTHDAY SHAM ROCKS A PADDY**.

³ *Daily Telegraph*, 09-05-92, News, p2: **'At the end of the day, only Paddy will beat Paddy'**; Chris Ryder.

headline and its use of 'Paddy' validity, since the quote is from someone apparently Irish, and distances the newspaper from 'Paddy' (emphasised by the use of single quotation marks). When the Special Branch officer says that "At the end of the day, only Paddy will beat Paddy", it could be assumed that, as a member of the RUC involved in the state's struggle against the IRA, he is referring to himself. This interpretation is strengthened by the unnamed officer's dismissal of MI5's new "leading intelligence role against *Irish* terrorism" (my emphasis). The situation in Northern Ireland is constructed as an Irish problem through the use of 'Paddy' to describe both the RUC officer and the IRA, and the phrase "Irish terrorism". In tandem with this, the symbolic stereotype is invoked, dismissed and renewed:

In Britain, young Irish people arriving at ports dressed in denim or carrying rucksacks will invariably be singled out and stopped. The young man in the suit with a briefcase will not; nor will the attractive young woman. Yet the modern IRA is more likely to move its members in this guise rather than the scruffy stereotype.

Scruffy young Irish people are not necessarily IRA bombers, although this leaves a possibility that they are; sophisticated business-like Irish men and women, however, are just as suspect as the "scruffy stereotype" and thus more dangerous because of their respectability makes them invisible. All Irish people travelling to Britain are, therefore, suspects (see Hillyard, 1993).

5.2.1.ii Taking the Mick

The popular colloquialism 'taking the mick' was twice used as a headline for articles. In each case, the articles are entertainment/gossip pieces, and this headline at one level connotes levity. However, the phrase 'taking the mick' once had uniquely Irish connotations (Curtis, 1984b). It is therefore significant that both articles use the proper noun "Mick" in place of "mick". The headlines both infer a general sense of 'taking liberties' ('taking the mick') and infer an Irish connection ("taking the Mick": see Foster, 1995).

The first article details the decision of the Irish nominations committee for the European Film Awards to exclude films such as *Patriot Games* and *Hear My Song* from their definition of an Irish film, since they were neither Irish financed nor directed/produced ⁴. In other words, the committee decided that films about Ireland or Irish people could not simply be classified as Irish. The headline **Taking the Mick** is used in this context to signify stupidity. The stereotype of madness is associated with this when the committee are called "Barking mad" and their decision "daft".

⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 03-09-92, Mirror Xtra, Simon Bates' Xtravaganza, p4: **Taking the Mick**; Simon Bates.

The second report is a feature article on Mick Hucknall, who towards the end of the report refers to himself as an Englishman ⁵. However, throughout the report stereotypic traits popularly associated with ‘Irishness’ are used to describe Hucknall’s behaviour. Hucknall is referred to as having “carroty ropes of hair”, and frequent references are made to his bad temper: “An argument with Mick Hucknall? You go ahead, just give me five minutes to get clear”; “Today, he’s livid”; “But Hucknall has spontaneously raised a fulminating head of steam and he storms on regardless”. Additionally, his past drinking and sexual habits are also referred to:

The group’s [Simply Red] chief claim to fame was its drinking prowess, with Hucknall thinking nothing of upending a gallon of *Guinness* of an evening, perhaps modified with a beaker or two of gin. Sordid tales of “shagging” in unlikely locations also abound from this era... (*The Guardian*, 02-09-92: 12, emphasis mine)

Hucknall is caricatured as angry, temperamental and excessive in his appetites. The headline certainly infers that Mick Hucknall’s behaviour ‘took liberties’. However, it is through the explanations of his behaviour that stereotypic behaviours and features of ‘Irishness’ are introduced (red hair, anger, drunkenness). ‘Irishness’ becomes a metaphor for Hucknall’s behaviours: he is not ‘taking the mick’ but “taking the Mick”.

5.2.1.iii The absurdity of ‘Irish’

Reports which characterise Irish people and their actions as essentially absurd are based on the unspoken assumption, or commonsense understanding that ‘only the Irish’ could be implicated in ridiculous behaviours and situations, because of their innate knack for inversion of the natural order and stupidity. (This assumption was invoked to explain George Ellis’ mistaken birthday date, above.) In the examples discussed here, ‘Irish’ signifies absurdity and generally appears in either headlines or sub-headlines. An article headlined **BIG ‘ORROR** (a play on stage Irish brogue - begorrah) is accompanied by the sub-headline **‘Good luck’ shot at Irish wedding injures 4 guests** ⁶. The report is of a mishap at a wedding in Ireland where, following local tradition, a shotgun was fired after the ceremony. Several guests, however, were injured; the sub-headline is making a play on the concept of the ‘luck of the Irish’ which has been inverted in this case. The “upgrading” (van Dijk, 1991: 51) of the Irish angle in this report prioritises it as a contributing factor in the event.

The headline **Irish rules** similarly provides a framework of interpretation which suggests that the normal order has been inverted and is thus ‘Irish’ (see example 3,

⁵ *The Guardian*, 18-07-1992, Weekend supplement, p12: **Taking the Mick**; Adam Sweeting.

⁶ *Daily Mirror*, 13-07-92, p13: **BIG ‘ORROR**; Joe Gorrod.

appendix 5) ⁷. The article in question deliberately confuses two acronyms, suggesting that the declaration by IMRO that 1991 was a particularly good year defies logic, since this was the year in which it was discovered that Robert Maxwell had misappropriated pension funds. Hence, the rules which permit this statement are, apparently ‘Irish’ rules. It is not until the final sentence that the play on acronyms is revealed; the IMRO in question is the Irish Music Rights Organisation. The article relies on the reader knowing that IMRO is also the acronym for the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation. The existence of one acronym for two separate bodies is confusing, but the article privileges the British version, and thus the confusion becomes ‘Irish’. In this context, ‘Irish’ signifies inversion and confusion, but also signals humour since this article is clearly meant to be an amusing anecdote. Further examples of ‘Irish’ signifying humour and absurdity/inversion include ⁸:

Lack of diplomacy brings brickbats for chatty Irish ambassadors

Irish politicians find condom is a barrier to debate

Again, both these articles foreground ‘Irish’, and both utilise humour linked to an understanding of what ‘Irish’ signifies. Only Irish ambassadors could lack diplomacy, and only Irish politicians could be unable to debate condoms. The meaning of ‘Irish’ in these articles is grounded upon the commonsense understanding of ‘only the Irish’, which classifies the Irish as uniquely prone to absurdity and inversion.

Other articles foreground the ethnic angle without using ‘Irish’ in their headlines. For example, **Legless in Mayo cell with Garda arms** details how “THREE *Irishmen* arrested for being drunk and disorderly found themselves locked in a police cell which was also a small arsenal last month” (emphasis mine) (see example 4, appendix 5) ⁹. ‘Irish’ as a signifier of absurdity is used in conjunction with the stereotype of drunken Irishmen (see section on drink, below). Absurdity is also linked to other essentialized Irish traits such as the Irish propensity for craic: “the best crack is grounded in an absurd set of happenings or sly provocation” ¹⁰.

Further examples of ‘Irish’ signifying absurdity or inversion include a story about “OLD lag *Paddy Marshall*” (emphasis mine) reported as wanting to go back to jail

⁷ *The Guardian*, 09-07-1992, City, p. 14: **Irish rules**; edited by Alex Brummer

⁸ *The Guardian*, 30-03-92, p26: **Lack of diplomacy brings brickbats for chatty Irish ambassadors**; Joe Joyce;

The Guardian 09-07-92, Foreign News, p8: **Irish politicians find condom is a barrier to debate**; Joe Joyce.

⁹ *The Guardian*, 02-07-92, European News, p9: **Legless in Mayo cell with Garda arms**; Joe Joyce.

¹⁰ *The Guardian*, 25-01-92, Weekend, p10: **Irish Diary: The crack that counts**; Campbell Armstrong.

where he has his own cell (see example 5, appendix 5) ¹¹, and a report on farmers in Northern Ireland using cement as a feed additive ¹². Notably, this second article does not refer to Ulster, the usual term for reports from Northern Ireland (see chapter 4). Neither of these reports use the term ‘Irish’, but the locations (Dublin and Northern Ireland) make this unnecessary.

The final example provided here of ‘Irish’ signifying absurdity and/or stupidity involves its application to a missing greyhound ¹³. It escaped from a dog track and evaded capture for some days; much is made in the reports of the spectacle of dog handlers running after a greyhound. In all three reports of this story, the absurdity of the situation is linked to the dog’s ‘ethnicity’. This link is most evident in *The Sun*’s report:

A DOZY Irish greyhound overtook the hare on its track debut - and just kept on running.

The words ‘Irish’ and ‘Paddy’ are utilised in the press to signify inversion of ‘natural’ logic and absurdity or stupidity. There is often an assumption that not only is this inversion or absurdity caused by the Irishness of the person (or dog) concerned, but that the actions and behaviours reported are therefore humorous. However, the humour of these articles is often at the expense of the people concerned: they are being laughed at, because ‘only the Irish’ could be implicated in something so stupid or ridiculous. In the case of ‘taking the mick’, the phrase is used in its colloquial sense (taking liberties), but the use of ‘Mick’ highlights a link with Irishness - real or metaphorical - and the behaviours portrayed.

5.2.2 The drunken Irish

An example, from *The Guardian*, already discussed (in the previous section) refers to three Irishmen as being “legless”, and “drunk and disorderly”. However, more usual in the data collected was the assumption that Irishness is naturally associated with drinking alcohol, particularly Guinness. This understanding of Irishness is specifically applied to people in Ireland and becomes an essential element of the experience of Ireland.

¹¹ *Daily Mirror*, 02-09-92, p15: **Jail? Yes please.**

¹² *The Guardian*, 14-03-92, Home News, p3: **Northern Ireland farmers turn to cement to keep their cattle lean.**

¹³ *Daily Mirror*, 10-07-92, p5: **Hare we go, hare we go...**

Daily Telegraph, 29-07-92, News, p2: **Trainers led a merry dance by greyhound**; Colin Wright.

The Sun, 10-07-92, p3: **Galloping greyhound Jenny is on the run.**

Although drunkenness is not directly referred to, it is inferred: thus Dublin becomes **The home of black pints and polished prose** (see example 6, appendix 5) ¹⁴.

This *Daily Telegraph* article refers to Dublin as a “city of madmen” and mentions the asylum funded by Dean Swift as evidence for this portrayal. Additionally, Joyce and Beckett are referred to as “men possessed”, further emphasising the link between Irishness and madness (see section 5.2.3). However, the overriding metaphor which explains Dublin for the reader is that of Irishness linked to drinking and Guinness. Being in Dublin is “about what happens when you sit in pubs, wander the streets and parks and listen to music”. Guinness is “Dublin’s poetry and its science”, suggesting that learning and speech are both affected by drink in Ireland. It is not just the poor Irish who drink to excess, but also the “well-heeled”:

One well-heeled Dubliner, whom I happened upon as he supped a pint on a flight of steps in Merrion Square at 8am, told me: “Take care of life’s essentials and life takes care of itself”.

This image of the “well-heeled” drinker is reinforced by a story of late night drinking in an hotel’s residents’ bar where the drinkers’ “accent was so delicate that I almost ask the waitress to turn down the chandeliers”. The article ends on a humorous note, referring again to speech:

Dubliners’ locquaciousness and self-depreciating humour are legendary, but the city’s finest joke is the statue of Father Theobald Matthew in O’Connell St. Father Matthew founded the Temperance League. More than 1,000 pubs testify to his lack of success.

This turns the idea of a Temperance League in Ireland into an Irish joke, although it is dependent on the relocating of the statue in question from O’Connell Street, Cork to O’Connell Street, Dublin!

Drinking alcohol is depicted as an essential element of everyday life in Ireland. It is often associated with joviality and conviviality. The naturalised linking of Irish with Guinness is demonstrated by an article in the *Daily Mirror* (on St. Patrick’s Day) about an Irish cow’s birthday, which states that **“The Guinness flowed as a million radio listeners tuned into a party thrown for her by chat show host Gay Byrne”** (original emphasis) ¹⁵. It is assumed that Guinness is a natural characteristic of Irish celebrations even when, as in this case, the celebration in question is a feature about a cow on a mid-morning radio show. It is unclear as to who is drinking, but certain that plenty of Guinness is being drunk, ostensibly to celebrate a cow’s

¹⁴ *Daily Telegraph*, 05-09-92, Weekend, pxxiv: Focus on Dublin, **The home of black pints and prose**; Paul Gogarty.

¹⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 17-03-92, p7: **Bertha is 336 today !**

‘birthday’, demonstrating the ready willingness of Irish people to drink. Ireland and ‘Irishness’ become essentially connected to alcohol. This assumption enables the statement that “the Irish have long lived in tolerant knowledge of their whiskey priests”: a phrase which *The Guardian* uses to assert the normality of drinking/drunken priests in Ireland ¹⁶. A second reference to whiskey, also in *The Guardian*, is used as an opening gambit in a report on the 1992 Global Women’s Forum, held in Dublin. It contrasts a drunken, rural Irishman with an image of sophisticated, multicultural women ¹⁷:

THE WHISKEY-scented man from rural Ireland was surrounded. Women - short, tall, fat, thin, black, white and brown - flooded the foyer of the upmarket Dublin hotel, decorating it with the vivid colours of their Western suits, Indian saris, Fijian sulus and Nigerian boubous.

While this image of the drinking/drunken Irish generally signifies nameless Irish people in Ireland, there are exceptions. These include two personality profiles (in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mirror*, respectively) and an article which reports on research findings (*The Guardian*). Profiles of Paul McGrath and Brenda Fricker mention drink as a part of these personalities’ lives. The *Daily Mirror*’s profile of Paul McGrath reports rumours of alcoholism ¹⁸:

Yet allegations about problems with alcohol have made too many people perceive him as some kind of ogre. In fact, McGrath is an introvert and complex character, and if he has spent too long in too many bars, it must be said in his defence that any excesses have not prevented him from becoming a player of the highest class.

McGrath is compared to George Best: “McGrath, like Best 20 years before him, needs understanding”, reinforcing the suggestion that McGrath has a drinking problem, as did Best before him. The article at one level treats McGrath’s drinking problem as a rumour (“if he has”) while at another it supports the rumour (“any excesses have not prevented”).

The second personality linked with alcohol is Brenda Fricker, in a *Daily Mirror* report on her engagement. It refers to the couple being “as Irish as the Guinness they like to drink and the beaches of Connemara where they like to walk together” ¹⁹. ‘Irishness’ is synonymous with not just the landscape of Ireland, but with drinking and specifically Guinness.

¹⁶ *The Guardian*, 20-05-92, Comment, p21: **Blind faith and sins of the father**; Peter Lennon

¹⁷ *The Guardian*, 14-07-92, Women, p33: **Women of the world united**; Audrey Magee.

¹⁸ *Daily Telegraph*, 14-11-92, Sport, p38: **Irish gem whose actions speak louder than words**; Christopher Davies.

¹⁹ *Daily Mirror*, 16-03-92, p17: **He has been in great pain and never given in. Now there are two of us fighting**; Hilary Bonner.

The article reporting research findings, in *The Guardian*, presents two, separate pieces of research for the reader (see example 7, appendix 5) ²⁰. The first piece of research was conducted in Britain, and includes findings on the drinking habits of Scots and Welsh people, while the second was conducted in Ireland. In each case, the article presents the findings as validating the stereotype of the drunken ‘Celt’ or Irish person. The first piece of research was carried out at Northwick Park Hospital by a Dr. Carney. It includes the Scots and the Welsh, and groups them with the Irish under the label “celt”. The article’s headline asserts the truth of the stereotype: **Hospital study confirms stereotyped view of celts as hard drinkers**. This is underlined by the first sentence, which further foregrounds the preferred reading that ‘Celts’ are naturally drinkers: “RESEARCH has seemingly borne out one of the most resented cultural stereotypes: that the Scots, Welsh and Irish like a drink or three”.

Thus *The Guardian*’s article both acknowledges the image of the drunken Celt as a stereotype and asserts its essential truth, emphasising that “alcoholism is almost three times as common among people with Celtic names and more common still among those born in celtic countries”. The researcher is much more cautious about his research: Dr. Carney is quoted as saying that of his findings “All you can say is that it is possibly part genetic and possibly part environmental”. This statement is located at the end of the reporting of his research findings, which concentrates on the affirmation of the stereotype of the drinking Celt, and it is therefore overshadowed. Additionally, the impact of Dr. Carney’s assessment of his research is further weakened while the stereotype is further validated by the reporting of a second piece of research, which ends the article.

Figures for alcoholism rates do demonstrate that Irish people in Britain suffer from alcoholism more than the majority population. But, explicatory reasons other than ethnicity, such as the experience of migration, exist. For example, Harrison and Carr-Hill (1992) found in their study that while the Irish did have a higher rate of alcoholism than the British, that this could be attributed to various experiences of disadvantage plus the experience of migration, rather than ethnicity *per se*. Other reasons which may explain the seeming prevalence of Irish alcoholism are: Irish people are more likely to seek professional help; Irish people are more likely to drink in a social and public situation, rather than at home, thereby making incidences of drunkenness more visible.

The second piece of research reported on in *The Guardian* (“Hospital study confirms stereotyped view of celts as hard drinkers”) investigates the drinking behaviours of students at Trinity College, Dublin: “Another study outlined at the meeting suggests that

²⁰ The Guardian, 27-07-92, Home News, p4: **Hospital study confirms stereotyped view of celts as hard drinkers**.

the drinking celt is alive, though not always well, at Trinity College, Dublin". It is assumed, within the preferred reading which dominates this article, that the hangovers observed in the study are the result of ethnically-induced drinking, rather than behaviours linked to a student lifestyle (itself another stereotype!).

The articles discussed here particularly link 'Irishness' with drinking alcohol, if not actual drunkenness. Drinking alcohol, and particularly Guinness, is presented as an essential part of the meaning of what it is to be 'Irish'. Thus the idea of Irish teetotallers is a "fine joke". Drinking is depicted as a natural activity of the Irish in Ireland, and becomes an essential part of the experience of Ireland. Interestingly, drunkenness amongst the Irish in Britain (albeit in one article) is explained more obviously through a biological than cultural explanatory framework, although both essentialize and thus racialize. While it has to be acknowledged that the Irish in Britain are apparently more prone to alcoholism than the majority population (or the Irish in Ireland) (Harrison and Carr-Hill, 1992), explicatory reasons other than ethnicity *per se* exist. These include both migration and the disadvantaged position of the Irish in Britain (ibid.)

5.2.3 The crazy Irish

Identifying the *Other* as insane or pathological is one method which the coloniser utilises in the subjugation of the colonised (Fanon, 1986): part of this strategy is the naturalisation of this depiction (ibid.). In the research data there were many references linking Irish people to madness or craziness, as well as to a specific mental illness, depression. The link here is that in each case the presumed or actual mental illness was heuristically linked to the ethnicity of the person(s) concerned. The discussion of this behavioural stereotype is broken down into three sub-sections, each of which discusses a different aspect of this stereotype: madness and Irishwomen; madness and Irishmen; the equation of madness with Irishness.

5.2.3.i: Irish women

Representations of Irish people as mad or crazy include three Irish women who are personalities, who are characterised through references to mental instability. Given the general absence of women in the data collected, the characterisation of Irish women personalities as mad is an interesting finding. The epithet of madness for such Irish women was most likely to be employed by the tabloid papers (*Daily Mirror*, *The Sun*). This is partly due to the concentration on entertainment/gossip features in the downmarket papers (Seymour-Ure, 1996; Tunstall, 1996); it is also partly an interaction of gender with ethnicity. Madness has long been used as a social control for women (Szasz, 1961). Irish women, who rarely feature in the newspapers, are explained

through the imagery of madness. The three women concerned are Sinéad O'Connor (singer), Brenda Fricker (actress) and Josephine Hart (novelist).

This is especially the case with Sinéad O'Connor, who is well-known not only for her music but her political views. One mechanism of dismissing her political views is to label her controversial, another is to describe her as crazy and thereby diminish her speech as that of someone who is mad. In this manner, behaviour becomes an insight into the mental processes of Sinéad O'Connor; if her actions are 'crazy', so are her thoughts and any pronouncements which she might make. With the exception of one article, Sinéad O'Connor's ethnicity was not mentioned; however, this is likely to be well-known by readers, because of her fame/notoriety. It is also indicated by her name. All the articles which described Sinéad O'Connor as mad or crazy appeared in either the *Daily Mirror* or *The Sun*.

A report headlined **CRAZY SINEAD 'SMASHES UP TELLY SHOP'** foregrounds the image of Sinéad O'Connor as mad (see example 8, appendix 5) ²¹. Significantly, the allegation of violence is in quotation marks; that of craziness is not. The article concentrates on the damage which Sinéad O'Connor is alleged to have done in the shop "after her telly went on the blink". Although craziness is only referred to in the headline, which provides an interpretative framework for the reader, the article concludes with her controversial politics: "She has openly supported the IRA and branded the Gulf War allies "devils". Last month she was seen smoking a cannabis joint on the set of her latest video...".

Sinéad O'Connor's revelation that she was abused as a child was reported through the explicatory mechanism provided by an assumption of mental illness. In this way, her claims of abuse can be dismissed while her delay in admitting the abuse is simultaneously explained. Thus one article comments ²²:

SPIKY singer Sinead O'Connor is on the mend...well, that's what she'll tell you.

She's come through a tough year, finally accepting that she had been abused as a child.

This suggests that her claims of recovery are unbelievable, while suggesting that she has been divorced from reality ("finally accepting"). Another article advises her to "*Keep taking the pills, Sin*" (original emphasis), a phrase which intimates that Sinéad

²¹ *The Sun*, 08-09-1992, p.7: **CRAZY SINEAD 'SMASHES UP A TELLY SHOP'**; Mike Sullivan.

²² *Daily Mirror*, Mirror Xtra supplement, 24-09-1992, p.4: **Wonderful Peter, by Sinead**; Simon Bates.

O'Connor is still mentally ill and which plays on her name, suggesting perhaps innate badness or sin ²³.

Further evidence of Sinéad O'Connor's unorthodox views is provided by a report of her support for the Duchess of York and the Princess of Wales, which is accompanied by the 'revelation' that she has visited a psychiatrist ²⁴. While her abuse history is mentioned, it is presented as being just one of her problems: "The Irish star, who as a child was battered by her mother, revealed that she went to a psychiatrist to sort out her problems".

Unlike Sinéad O'Connor, both Brenda Fricker and Josephine Hart are clearly identified as Irish in the reports concerning them. In interviews, their depressions are causally linked to their 'Irishness' and their experiences of 'Irishness'.

Brenda Fricker's clinical depression is reported in profiles in both the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun*, but only in one example was it presented as a medical condition ²⁵. Otherwise, it is related to her ethnicity. She is described as "totally Irish...with all the charm, melancholy and confusion of her native land" ²⁶. This article additionally makes reference to "the mist [which] comes down over her mind", and describes her irrational behaviour: "One minute she is the complete party animal, the next she wants to shut herself away". Although this article acknowledges that Brenda Fricker suffers from "severe depression", the link between her mental illness and her ethnicity is foregrounded and becomes an explanatory model for her depression and behaviour. Another article suggests that Brenda Fricker is lonely and "constantly dreams about getting home to her dogs and the simple life back in Dublin" ²⁷.

The last of the three Irish women who are described through epithets of madness is Josephine Hart, a popular novelist. In contrast to articles on Brenda Fricker and Sinéad O'Connor, the article in question appears in a broadsheet, *The Guardian*. It describes Josephine Hart as a "true Celt". In the course of the feature, the effect of family deaths on Josephine Hart is surmised ²⁸:

On the surface, it would seem, Josephine Hart has come full circle. Whatever her demons might be, their grip on her soul seems to have slackened a great deal over the years, although a tranquil inner peace seems to remain beyond her grasp.

²³ *The Sun*, 30-09-1992, p.15: **Bizarre**; Piers Morgan.

²⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 30-09-1992, p.15: **GOOD FOR FERGIE**; Rick Sky.

²⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 16-03-1992, p.17, **He has been in great pain and never given in. Now there are two of us fighting**; Hilary Bonner.

²⁶ *Daily Mirror*, 30-01-92, p13: **Confessions of a convent girl**; Hilary Bonner.

²⁷ *The Sun*, TV guide supplement, 14-03-1992, p.9: **Brenda's so alone at home**.

²⁸ *The Guardian*, 15-07-1992, Public Lives, p. 19:, **Taking on the big themes**: Jan Moir.

As with Brenda Fricker, it is emphasised that, beneath the exterior which she presents to the world, Josephine Hart is still troubled by “her demons” and it is suggested that she will always be troubled. This is similar to comments made about Sinéad O’Connor, where her admission of past abuse and visits to a psychiatrist for this were seen as evidence of continued, unaddressed madness or insanity, rather than of someone dealing with particular psychological problems attributable to specific events. In the case of Brenda Fricker and Josephine Hart, there is an evident connection between their ethnicity and their mental illnesses: while this is not overtly the case with Sinéad O’Connor, it is more than likely that readers will be aware of her ethnicity. Given the general absence of Irish women from the data collected, and the general absence of a Biddy stereotype in Britain, such as exists in the USA (Walter, 1995), the application of this trait-laden stereotype to Irish women who have achieved fame is an interesting finding.

5.2.3.ii Irish men

There are only two examples, in the data collected, of named Irishmen being explained through the epithet of madness. The first is John Healy, a second generation Irishman, who after several years of homelessness wrote an autobiography “The Grass Arena” about his experiences. This was later made into a television film. Subsequently, Healy was involved in a dispute with his publisher, Faber & Faber, which is reported on in a series of reports in *The Guardian*. It appears that at the heart of the dispute is Healy’s dissatisfaction with not being treated in the same manner as more established writers.

Healy is referred to as failing to have kept a “balance sheet of reality”²⁹. Another article suggests that he is incapable of reason and has an addictive personality³⁰. These suggestions infer that Healy is irrational, out of touch with reality and suffering from a personality disorder. In this way, John Healy’s claims that he has been badly treated by Faber & Faber are dismissed through the explaining mechanism of madness: it is not that Faber & Faber have mistreated him, but rather that his lack of rationality makes John Healy incapable of being a good judge of the contracts he has made and which are on offer to him.

The other Irishman who is explained through madness is Terry Wogan: the *Daily Mirror* publishes an editorial, **Chat’s life, Tel**, lampooning him on the news of the demise of his thrice-weekly chat show³¹. This is achieved by having Wogan conducting an imaginary interview with himself. This suggests that he is self-infatuated,

²⁹ *The Guardian*, 28-01-92, Home News, p3: **Great expectations which run against the odds**; Joanna Coles.

³⁰ *The Guardian*, 30-01-92, Review/Arts p31: **When life is a real bummer**; Deborah Orr.

³¹ *Daily Mirror*, 03-07-1992, p.7: **Chat’s life, Tel**.

along with the implication that Wogan, too, has less than a firm grip on reality. While this is intended to be humorous, it is interesting to note that an editorial has been used to achieve this depiction, rather than a piece in the entertainment/gossip sections of the paper. This testifies both to the popularity of the programme and its host, but it also suggests the acceptability of describing an Irish entertainer as mad. However, in general, individual Irish men are not depicted as mad or crazy in any way.

5.2.3.iii 'Irishness' is madness

The signification of Irishness as madness is exemplified by a satirical piece in *The Guardian*, which lampoons the counselling professions (see example 9, Appendix 5)³². It details how an English woman, Caroline, who was somewhat mentally unstable ("Caroline was never a meticulously hinged person") becomes completely insane. This is achieved through a series of events, which are all subsequent to, and dependent on, Caroline's decision to become Irish.

Caroline's decision to become Irish is given as one of the "instances of what we call her 'idiosyncrasies'". Caroline's decision is seen as unreasonable: her friends try to explain to her that "You have to be born with the right sort of parents", which suggests that the claims of Irish heritage are, in the framework of this piece, strictly limited to those of Irish parents. It appears that the character Caroline is based on a real person: in the course of presenting *Breakaway*, David Stafford (the piece's author) refers to his partner Caroline "who is of Irish descent" (BBC radio 4, 28-03-1997, 18:30).

Caroline's behaviour subsequent to her conversion to being Irish is described as being unreasonable and irrational. An example is given of her response to the disallowing of "bhaintreabhthach" in a game of Scrabble:

Her Scrabble tactics became intolerable. Eventually I felt I had to take issue with her insistence that the word bhaintreabhthach was acceptable (it was a triple word score). In reply she spat the words "cultural imperialist" with such venom the glue came off her contact lenses, which flew across the room to bury themselves in the opposite wall. Then she burned the house down and went home.

This is followed by complete mental breakdown:

The next time I saw her she was eating a Kelim rug she'd just cooked for her tea and yapping like an optimistic corgi. I recognised her condition as that which trained students of the mind call, "barking, carpet-chewing mad."

It is decided that Caroline needs help, and after an unsuccessful consultation with a "charlatan", the narrator and other friends of Caroline organise a "psychiatrathon": this

³² *The Guardian*, 12-09-92, Weekend, p53: MIRACLES OF MODERN SCIENCE no 21, **Not so beautiful Pegeen**; David Stafford.

is a gathering of various counselling professionals from the different branches of psychiatry, with the aim of curing Caroline. The index of cure is that Caroline will have “stopped thinking she is Irish”, making clear the causal link between insanity and Irishness, and sanity and Englishness, in this piece. However, Caroline is not cured, but escapes to Ireland (“the Ballyhoura Hills”), signifying irretrievable breakdown. Caroline is last seen “scampering about, worrying the sheep”, testifying to her descent into the feral, and she is finally shot.

While at one level this piece is a mockery of the counselling profession, at another it also mocks Irish identity and the claiming of Irish identity by people of Irish descent. Caroline’s methods of reclaiming her Irish identity - changing her name to Pegeen Mike, reading Irish mythology (the Táin Bó Cuailgne) and learning Irish (“bhaintreabhthach”) - are dismissed as “sad peccadilloes”. (The use of Pegeen Mike may be ironic: Pegeen Mike is the doomed heroine of *The Playboy of the Western World*.) The narrator of the piece provides the framework of interpretation for Caroline’s behaviour, and is the (English) voice of reason and authority which dismisses both Caroline’s new Irish identity and the counselling professionals. The wish to be Irish, rather than English, and the mechanics of reclaiming an identity are seen as madness and irrationality in this article.

Other examples of ‘Irishness’ signifying madness are not so overt. Members of the IRA are occasionally referred to as mad (“mindless murderers of the IRA”; “maniac IRA killers”) ³³. However, in general, mental illness is presented as symptomatic of ‘Irishness’. Madness is used as an epithet or essentialized characteristic of ‘Irishness’. Such references include an Irish-American interviewee referring to “the Irish Alzheimer’s” ³⁴. Another report refers to Irish priests’ “soft, canonical brogues, which so often carry a hint of hysteria and repressed violence” thus linking madness with violence, as in the case of Sinéad O’Connor (above) ³⁵.

A further example is a review, in *The Sun*, for *Patriot Games* (reproduced in full, below) ³⁶:

HARRISON Ford’s Patriot Games (15) must have been an easy rip-off for Paramount Pictures. Take the plot of Die Hard. Substitute another ageing hero for Bruce Willis. Switch the terrorists to Irish crazies. And there it is...Pad-die Hard! All together: Diddly die die die... (original emphases)

³³ *The Sun*, 11-05-92, p9: **Little Jack’s living proof IRA will never win**; *Daily Mirror*, 07-03-92, p11: **That Was the Week That Was**; P. Thompson (reader’s letter).

³⁴ *The Guardian*, 30-03-92, Feature, p25: **American Diary**; Martin Walker.

³⁵ *The Guardian*, 20-05-92, Comment, p21: **Blind faith and sins of the fathers**; Peter Lennon.

³⁶ *The Sun*, 25-09-92, p21: **Film Bizarre**; Peter Cox.

‘Irishness’ is linked with craziness, and the Paddy stereotype is invoked through word-play. Although the summation of the film’s plot is primarily critical of the commercial cynicism involved in recycling the plot of *Die Hard* (although *Patriot Games* was based on a novel), its casual use of phrases such as “Irish crazies” and “Pad-die” is unquestioning and reinforces the attributional link between ‘Irishness’ and madness. Thus the review links Irishness with craziness and invokes the Paddy stereotype (“Pad-die”). It ends “*Diddly die die die*” (original emphases): a phrase which plays on an unflattering verbal representation of Irish traditional music, and the deaths of the Irish characters in the film.

Other references to ‘Irishness’ and madness were found in the data collected. However, they have already been discussed in the context of other stereotypes and shall only be mentioned here: a *Daily Telegraph* travel feature which refers to Dublin as a “city of madmen” (section 5.2.2) ³⁷; and an article on the Irish nominating committee for the European Film Awards which refers to the committee as “barking mad” and its decision to exclude certain films from nominations as “daft” (section 5.2.1.ii) ³⁸.

The use of madness to explain ‘Irishness’ is particularly used to explain the internal processes of well-known Irish women (Brenda Fricker, Josephine Hart) and their external behaviours, which are typified as irrational (Sinéad O’Connor). It is notable that, in general, the women to whom this stereotype is applied are successful women, who may thus be seen as having stepped outside of the acceptable boundaries of femininity, particularly Sinéad O’Connor. Wherever it is used, however, this stereotype is portrayed as an essential or natural trait of ‘Irishness’: thus the decision to be Irish (as in the case of Caroline), signifies madness, as does ‘Irishness’ *per se*.

5.2.4 The arguing Irish

Representations of the Irish as violent and prone to argument have a long history (Curtis, 1971; Curtis, 1984b): indeed a popular representation is of the English/British having to intervene between warring Irish factions (ibid.; Hickman, 1980; Lebow, 1976). However, most of the examples provided here are not about the fighting Irish *per se*, but a distillation of this stereotype: the argumentative Irish. For example, a *Guardian* report on the decision of the Church of Ireland to ordain women is reported as a typical example of the fighting Irish ³⁹:

³⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, 05-09-92, Weekend, pxxiv: Focus on Dublin, **The home of black pints and prose**; Paul Gogarty.

³⁸ *Daily Mirror*, 03-09-92, Mirror Xtra, Simon Bates’ Xtravaganza, p4: **Taking the Mick**; Simon Bates.

³⁹ *The Guardian*, 05-03-1992: Comment and Analysis, p19: **Ireland Diary**; Owen Bowcott.

IT IS SAID the first item on the agenda of any new political party in Ireland - North or South - is the split. That is becoming increasingly true of the island's religious organisations.

Physical violence is absent from the image utilised here, but this representation of Irishness is dependent upon a truism ("It is said"). The commentary places the ordination of women in the Church of Ireland into an Irish context, rather than that of the general debate on the issue in the Anglican Church worldwide. While the Church of Ireland is recognised as being "Way ahead of the Church of England" in this matter, the debate engendered in the Church of Ireland is seen as inevitable because of its 'Irishness': "Inevitably, some of the CoI [sic] community, *mainly in the North*, objected" (my emphasis). The localising of "the split" to Northern Ireland emphasises the commonsense understanding of Northern Ireland as a place of 'trouble' (see chapter 4).

This understanding of argument as a trait of 'Irishness' is apparent in a *Guardian* profile on Ken Livingstone, which follows him on a day's canvassing for re-election during the 1992 General Election ⁴⁰. Livingstone comes into contact with two Irish people, both of whom are described through phrases and adjectives which suggest violence. In the first instance, the behaviour of a Chair of a centre of homelessness, identified through accent (discussed below), is contrasted with that of Livingstone:

Livingstone sat *demurely* in a corner making church steeples with his fingers as Mary, the Irish-accented chair of the project commenced *mouth-to-mouth combat* with a Tory ward councillor. (emphases mine)

An encounter with a "whiskery Irishman" elicits the observation that he is showing Livingstone "a *murderous* three-pronged gardening tool" (emphasis mine). The adjective employed here underlines the violence inherent in a garden fork, when held by an Irish man (even if "affable").

In tabloid reports of Bob Geldof's involvement in a fracas on an aeroplane diverted to Stanstead airport he is presented as angry and rebellious ⁴¹. While it is clear that he was not the sole person involved in the confrontation with staff, Geldof's role is highlighted by both the reports and the police's action in arresting him. None specifically labels him as "violent". But references to his anger and fury, accompanied by phrases such as "chorus of protest" (*Daily Mirror*) and "revolt on fog jet" (*The Sun*), portray him as someone with an uncontrollable temper. The reports of his involvement

⁴⁰ *The Guardian*, 16-03-92, Home News, p18: **Steetwise: Squeaky clean Livingstone hopes to harvest a car boot vote**; Dave Hill.

⁴¹ *Daily Mirror*, 14-01-1992, p.7, **UN-ARRESTED**; Geoff Sutton;
The Sun, 14-01-1992, p.7, **GELDOF ARREST HALTS REVOLT ON FOG JET**; Kieron Saunders.

are probably attributable to his 'star' status, but the explanatory frameworks provided for his behaviour draw upon the image of the Irish as argumentative and hot-tempered.

References to the arrest are accompanied by reports that Geldof subsequently "cooled off" (*Daily Mirror*) and "calmed down" (*The Sun*), emphasising Geldof's inability to control his anger. None of the reports mention Geldof's ethnicity, but (as with Sinéad O'Connor) this is likely to be well-known. Meanwhile, both the tabloids report that the fracas ensued after an hour's wait on the aeroplane at Stanstead: according to the *Daily Mirror*'s report, this was the total duration of the delay, while "Some passengers were kept on board their planes for three hours". In contrast, *The Guardian* reported that "Bob Geldof, the rock star, was "arrested and de-arrested" at Stanstead airport after complaining that he and fellow passengers on a Royal Air Maroc flight had waited five hours before being allowed to disembark" ⁴².

These examples illustrate that Irish people are characterised as being hot-tempered, easy to anger and prone to disagreement. They are not associated with physical violence: rather that depiction is reserved for Irish people, such as Sinéad O'Connor, labelled as crazy (see above) and those reported as being involved with the IRA (see below). However, Irish people are represented as being unable to control their propensity for argument, whether the issue is the ordination of women priests, homelessness or flight delays. In this way, the tendency to argue becomes a naturalised characteristic of Irishness.

5.2.5 The Irish accent

There were many references to the speech of Irish people in the newspapers, over the period surveyed. Often the emphasis was on accent or talkativeness. References to accent are important since it is the most widely recognised signifier of 'Irishness'. By mentioning an interviewee's or subject's Irish accent, the ethnicity of the Irish person is verified for the reader. In other words, in newspaper reports accent is used as a signifier of genuine 'Irishness'.

The use of accent as an identifier of 'Irishness' is particularly associated with women. There are two, related reasons why this is the case. The invisibility of Irish women in Britain (Hickman and Walter, 1995; Walter, 1995), accompanied by the absence of a female counterpart to the Paddy/Mick figure in Britain means that there is an absence of signifiers which are perceived as pertinent to Irish women. This does not mean that Irish women are protected from stereotyping (see section on madness), but that there is no stereotype which is specific to them. Secondly, news is a masculine

⁴² *The Guardian*, 14-01-1992, Home News, p.3, Geldof 'de-arrested'.

discourse, in terms of those who feature in it and those who produce it. This is borne out by the few reports in the data collected for the research which have women as their focus, and the type of report in which they feature. The majority of these are interviews or gossip articles, usually involving a female personality. Hence, the invisibility of Irish women in Britain is reinforced by their absence from news, thereby creating a need for the use of a signifier such as accent in order to identify Irish women when they make a rare appearance.

Irish women whose accents are commented on are usually referred to as having an accent which is 'soft' or mild. Other connotations which can be drawn are that the women concerned speak quietly, or that they are seen to speak without power. An example of this is a reference (in *The Guardian*) to an anonymous receptionist at the London offices of Guinness Peat Aviation: "the soft brogue of the front-desk receptionist" ⁴³. Here the woman is entirely invisible, identified only by her accent. Noreen Hill ⁴⁴ is described in the *Daily Mirror* as speaking "quietly in her soft Irish accent": this signification of her accent as Irish is ironic as later in the article Noreen Hill identifies herself in the interview as British ⁴⁵. Other women are also identified as Irish through their accents: Josephine Hart is described as having a "warm Irish lilt" (*The Guardian*) and "a wonderful Irish voice full of dramatic possibilities" (*Daily Telegraph*) ⁴⁶; Brenda Fricker is called "the softly spoken Irish star" (*The Sun*) ⁴⁷.

A few men are also depicted as sharing this feature, usually men portrayed as non-threatening. For example, Anthony Clare has a "soothing Irish accent" (*Daily Telegraph*), while Gay Byrne has a "voice as gentle as a murmuring Irish stream" (*The Guardian*) ⁴⁸. This also suggests that he babbles. Brenda Fricker's fiancé is also attributed with an "Irish lilt", while "because he is an Irishman blessed with the gift of the blarney he frequently talks too much" ⁴⁹. However, a counter to this representation of men's accents as indicating lack of threat is found in a *Guardian* article on the Bishop Casey affair. A reference to accent introduces other stereotypes: violence and madness -

⁴³ *The Guardian*, 07-03-92, Finance and Economics, p35: **No flight of fancy in GPAs...**; Patrick Donovan.

⁴⁴ Noreen Hill's husband, Ronnie Hill, was a victim of the Enniskillen bombing (1987). He survived, but remained in a coma. At the time of the article, Ronnie Hill had been recently released from hospital into a residential care home bought by Noreen Hill with the specific intention of caring for her husband.

⁴⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 08-01-92, Mirror Woman, pp2-3: **VIGIL OF LOVE**; Lorraine Butler.

⁴⁶ *The Guardian*, 15-07-1992, Public Lives, p. 19: **Taking on the big themes**; Jan Moir. *Daily Telegraph*, 15-07-92, Magazine, pp24-8: **The pursuit of passion**.

⁴⁷ *The Sun*, 18-01-92, TV SUPER GUIDE, p9: **Playing sisters is becoming a habit!**

⁴⁸ *Daily Telegraph*, 26-09-92, Weekend, pxxx: **Now Clare's in the chair...**; *The Guardian*, 21-01-92, Arts, p32: **Television**; Hugh Herbert.

⁴⁹ *Daily Mirror*, 16-03-92, pp16-7: **He has been in great pain and never given in. Now there are two of us fighting**; Hilary Bonner.

the “soft, canonical brogues [of priests], which so often carry a hint of hysteria and repressed violence” ⁵⁰.

Otherwise, there are no allusions to men’s accents which suggest they are threatening, but there is a some indication that British people have a firm idea of what an Irish accent sounds like: an interviewee who took an IRA warning call distinguishes the accent as “educated” (*The Guardian*) and, therefore, sounding more Scottish than Irish ⁵¹. It is likely that the caller was from Northern Ireland: some of these accents are of Scots origin, although these are usually accents of Protestant people (Morgan, 1991). This is compounded by a comment, also in *The Guardian*, that there are two intriguing facts about the IRA activists who blew themselves up when a bomb they were planting in St. Alban’s exploded prematurely: “Patricia Black’s youth and Frankie Ryan’s Essex accent” ⁵². This underlines the important role that accent plays as an identifier of Irishness and the expectation that to be an IRA member means that one has to be, and has to be perceived as, Irish. When an accent appears to contradict this assumption, it causes confusion.

The association of the Irish accent with terrorism is further evidenced by a *Guardian* article headlined **Checkland to ask for Irish voices ban to be lifted** ⁵³. This is an overt equation of Irishness, as signified by accent, with terrorism. According to the headline, “Irish voices”, as opposed to IRA or Sinn Féin voices, are banned, linking Irish voices to the broadcasting ban, rather than what is said or by whom it is said, which is what the broadcasting ban actually covers.

Other allusions to speech refer to the talkativeness of the Irish. According to one report, “Talk is at the very heart of Irish life” (*The Guardian*) ⁵⁴, while others call the Irish “loquacious” (*Daily Telegraph*; *The Guardian*) ⁵⁵. There are references to “blarney” in film reviews of *Hear My Song* (*The Sun*; *Daily Telegraph*) ⁵⁶ while Terry

⁵⁰ *The Guardian*, 20-05-92, Comment, p21: **Blind faith and sins of the fathers**; Peter Lennon.

⁵¹ *The Guardian*, 11-01-92, p1: **IRA warns of more attacks**; Duncan Campbell and David Sharrock.

⁵² *The Guardian*, 28-01-92, Comment and Analysis, p19: **The making of a Provisional**; Owen Bowcott.

⁵³ *The Guardian*, 15-09-92, Home News, p4: **Checkland to ask for Irish voices ban to be lifted**.

⁵⁴ *The Guardian*, 25-01-92, Weekend, p10: **Irish Diary: The crack that counts**; Campbell Armstrong.

⁵⁵ *The Guardian*, 20-05-92, Comment, p21: **Blind faith and sins of the fathers**; Peter Lennon. *Daily Telegraph*, 05-09-92, Weekend, pxxiv: Focus on Dublin, **The home of black pints and prose**; Paul Gogarty.

⁵⁶ *The Sun*, 13-03-92, p13: **Film Bizarre**; Piers Morgan

Daily Telegraph, 12-03-92, The Arts, p14: **A jewel set in the Emerald Isle**; Hugo Davenport.

Wogan is called “the king of blarney”(*Daily Mirror*), a reference to his ethnicity as well as his chat show host role ⁵⁷.

The characterisations associated with an Irish accent - soft, lilting, brogue and blarney - may also signify attitude towards speakers with Irish accents. While the word ‘brogue’ occurs twice, there are also references to ‘blarney’. The former is familiarly used to refer to both dialect and accent. ‘Blarney’, when used to refer to the speech of an Irish person, also fulfils this function but additionally conveys a sense of speech of meaningless content. In this way, the accent of the Irish-accented speakers referred to is depicted as deviant. This is termed ‘brogue-speak’ (Croghan, 1986: 259); the characterisations of Irish speech discussed here draw upon this image of Irish speech. Indeed, there is even one example of ‘brogue-speak’ being reported, in *The Guardian*, and this illustrates that the use of speech to depict the Irish as deviant has resonances in the USA (where the anecdote is based), as well as Britain ⁵⁸:

“Tis on the tip of me tongue, “ responded Mr Hands, and smote his forehead like a man who had just lost a heavy bet. “Faith, I’m gettin’ the Irish Alzheimer’s. I can only remember the names of me enemies.”

Evidently, the Irish accent is portrayed as a primary signifier of ‘Irishness’ in British popular culture. Irish women are all referred to as having “soft” accents, a gendered stereotype which is at times extended to include particular men who are clearly identifiable as non-violent. This may also suggest that these men are in some way feminine and, therefore, also without power. The importance of the accent is underlined by the confusion which occurs when the accent does not appear to fit the expected image: each of these cases illustrates that IRA members are presumed to be Irish. This confusion additionally suggests that there is also a stereotypical Irish accent, which may be assumed to be the soft accent so frequently alluded to, although the surprise of an interviewee that an IRA member sounded “educated” may indicate that IRA members are expected to sound unintelligent.

5.3 The Symbolic Stereotype

Reports of IRA violence in Britain often mention the involvement of Irish people. Although the IRA is an Irish organisation, the manner in which Irish people in Britain are linked in reports with IRA violence suggests that all Irish people are suspect. In this manner, the Irish in Britain become a “suspect community” (Hillyard, 1993) in which subversion is located. The Irish community in Britain is shown as the locus of IRA

⁵⁷ *Daily Mirror*, 03-07-92, p13: **I am the man who killed off the chat show**; Tony Purnell.
Daily Mirror, 11-07-92, p16: **Gibb’s Gossip**.

Daily Mirror, 26-09-92, TV WEEKLY, p3: **Terry pulls the plugs**; Tony Purnell.

⁵⁸ *The Guardian*, 30-03-1992, Features, p. 25: **American Diary**; Martin Walker.

activity, in a similar way to the depiction of Catholics in Northern Ireland as the focus of violence (see chapter 4).

The image of the Irish in Britain as a suspect community tends to be an implicit one, and one which is presented as a commonsense assumption (*pace* Hall, 1981). This is achieved through ‘scare’ stories in the press. ‘Scare’ stories are reports of pseudo-events, such as the arrests of six people involved in a car crash near Aldermaston, or speculative stories, such as the naming of the Brixton prison escapees Nessian Quinlivan and Pearse McAuley in reports of suspected IRA activity in Britain (it later transpired that they had escaped to the Republic of Ireland). Additionally, there are occasions when all Irish people are labelled as suspect, such as in the aftermath of the Canary Wharf bombing (November 1992).

Hillyard argues that the media have an important role to play in the construction of the Irish in Britain as a suspect community, particularly in the reporting of Irish people as suspects under the terms of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts (PTA) (1993). He notes that there are specific key words which such articles share, particularly in the tabloid press, such as “bomb gang, IRA hunt, Irishman, terror plot” (*ibid.*, 141). In addition to this, reports “are prejudicial because they imply that the person arrested is in some way connected to the IRA” (*ibid.*, 142).

Examples in the data collected for this research uphold Hillyard’s observations regarding the representations of people arrested under the PTA. In one particular example, all four newspapers reported the arrest of six people following a car crash, in which one of the cars exploded, near the Aldermaston nuclear weapons base (see example 10, appendix 5)⁵⁹. Police arrested the people concerned under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. They were all later released, with some being charged for insurance fraud. All four newspapers reported the arrests and what is notable is the general failure to question the actions of the police in immediately suspecting Irish people involved in a car accident some miles from a military base of necessarily being IRA members, rather than ordinary tourists. The exception to this is *The Guardian*, which reports:

Answering suggestions that the incident might not be a serious one, a Thames Valley police spokesman said that the officers in charge of the case would not have invoked the anti-terrorism act if they had not believed it merited it at the time.

Both the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun* mention the IRA by name, while the broadsheets simply refer to a car registered in the Republic of Ireland, a reference also made by the

⁵⁹ Daily Mirror, 30-01-92, p5: **A-bases alert as ‘IRA’ six are held**; Sylvia Jones; Daily Telegraph, 30-01-92, News, p2: **Six held after car explosion**; Michael Fleet; The Guardian, 30-01-92, Home News, p3, News in Brief; **Six held under anti-terrorism act after suspected car blast**; The Sun, 30-01-92, p2: **6 HELD OVER ‘TERROR’ CRASH**.

tabloids. Although only the *Daily Mirror* explicitly refers to an Irish person being involved in the car crash (“An Irishman with facial burns”) all of the reports make apparent the Irish connection, and imply that this was the reason for the invoking of the PTA.

Of the four newspapers only the *Daily Telegraph* has a follow-up report on the six arrests (Hillyard comments on the lack of follow-up reporting of subsequent release of suspects, 1993: 146-7) ⁶⁰. This reports the release of the six and the lifting of the PTA provisions under which they were initially arrested (see example 11, appendix 5). However, the opening sentence to the article gives the impression that the six are still suspected under the terms of the PTA, and this is added to by naming all six as Irish: “Six Irish people held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act by Thames Valley police were feed yesterday on bail”, thereby emphasising the Irish connection with the Prevention of Terrorism Act in this case. The general lack of follow-up leaves readers with the impression of IRA activity in Britain being more widespread than is actually the case, and acts to validate police suspicion of the Irish community, as evidenced by the use of the PTA in this case and elsewhere (see Hillyard, 1993) by failing to question their use of the legislation in cases such as these. While *The Guardian*’s article does raise doubts regarding the validity of the PTA in this case, the police explanation that its use was merited is accepted.

There are other examples in the data which follow a similar pattern in the reporting of PTA arrests. Three people were arrested in July 1992, and again all four newspapers carried small reports of the arrests. However, in this instance, the suspects were not labelled Irish. Instead, key words such as ‘anti-terrorist’ (*The Guardian*) ‘bomb’ (*Daily Telegraph*), ‘IRA bombs’ (*Daily Mirror*) and ‘terror’ (*The Sun*) are utilised to alert the reader to the story ⁶¹. However, another report of PTA arrests which appears only in the *Daily Telegraph* again uses ethnicity as a hook for the reader ⁶²:

Three *Irishmen* were being questioned by police last night after staff at a filling station reported “suspicions” about them and they were stopped at a road-block near Devizes, Wilts, and arrested by armed officers. (emphasis mine)

These examples demonstrate that arrests under the PTA, when reported in the press, are assumed to involve Irish people: this is not wholly surprising given that the PTA was originally designed to police Irish people in Britain, in the same way that first

⁶⁰ *Daily Telegraph*, 31-01-92, News, p.2: **Six freed after car explosion.**

⁶¹ *Daily Mirror*, 24-07-92, p7: **Bombs swoop;**

Daily Telegraph, 24-07-92, p1: **Bomb suspects;**

The Guardian, 24-07-92, Home News, p2: **Anti-terrorist police hold 3;**

The Sun, 24-07-92, p2: **3 seized at gunpoint by terror cops**; Michael Fielder.

⁶² *Daily Telegraph*, 01-05-92, News, p4: **Armed arrests at roadblock.**

generation black and Asian peoples are policed by immigration laws (Hickman, 1995). Indeed, the last example presented demonstrates how this equation of Irish with IRA has filtered into the British public's consciousness: the staff at the filling station reported "suspicions" to the police. The reports discussed assume that PTA arrests imply IRA activity, and the lack of follow-up reports indicates the lack of information available to readers regarding the high number of release from custody without charge (Hillyard, 1993).

However, in addition to reports of PTA arrests, other scare stories also invoke the IRA. There are numerous 'scare' stories involving IRA plots, including the reports of activities involving Nesson Quinlivan and Pearse McAuley. The impact of these reports is twofold: they imply that IRA activity in Britain is more widespread than actual acts of violence would suggest; they re-emphasise the seeming ability of the Irish to assimilate and disappear into British society.

Quinlivan and McAuley appear as named suspects in the trial of another suspected IRA member, William McKane, on trial for conspiracy to murder Sir Charles Tidbury, among others ⁶³. But, in addition to this, in the same month (January), the *Daily Mirror* reports them as being involved in other IRA activities in Britain: in one report, they are named as members of a "gang of four hardened terrorists [which] are behind the IRA's latest attacks on mainland Britain" (*Daily Mirror*, 08-01-92: 6); in another they are linked to a briefcase bomb planted in Whitehall "Two jailbreakers are high on the list of suspects" (*Daily Mirror*, 11-01-92: 2) ⁶⁴.

A report on the Whitehall bombing (10 January, 1992), in *The Guardian*, which is headlined **Latest variation on an unpredictable theme** asserts ⁶⁵:

The number of [IRA] attacks at night, weekends or outside working hours has led to speculation that the IRA members have jobs on the mainland and have merged into British society.

⁶³ *Daily Mirror*, 23-01-92, P21: 'IRA jail pair in link to hit list'; Ted Oliver; *Daily Telegraph*, 23-01-92, News, p3: **IRA hit-list and arms found in car, jury told**; John Steele; *Daily Telegraph*, 25-01-92, News, p3: **The night Sir Charles awoke to find IRA gunmen at his home**; John Steele; *The Guardian*, 23-01-92, Home News, p2: **IRA hit list and arsenal 'in car'**; Duncan Campbell; *The Guardian*, 25-01-92, Home News, p6: **'Terrorists' fled as police cocked rifles**; *The Sun*, 23-01-92, p11: **IRA'S DEATH LADA**; Tony Snow.

⁶⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 08-01-92, p6: **ALERT ON IRA GANG OF FOUR**; *Daily Mirror*, 11-01-92, p2: **JAILBREAK LINK**.

⁶⁵ *The Guardian*, 11-01-92, Home News, p2: **Latest variation on an unpredictable theme**; Duncan Campbell.

Another article, in the *Daily Telegraph*, argues that the security measures used against the IRA are ineffective because the police utilise the wrong stereotype when seeking potential IRA suspects at ports of entry to Britain ⁶⁶:

In Britain, young Irish people arriving at ports dressed in denim or carrying rucksacks will invariably be singled out and stopped. The young man in the suit with a briefcase will not; nor will the attractive young woman. Yet the modern IRA is more likely to move its members in this guise rather than the scruffy stereotype.

This type of comment is reliant upon the understanding that Irish people - including well known IRA suspects such as Quinlivan and McAuley - can assimilate into British society, thereby 'disappearing' into the main population. Indeed, this is the main fear asserted through scare stories such as this: that the Irish are not, in this sense, readily identifiable and therefore pose a truly subversive threat.

Not only are the British public at risk, but so are the royal family: this particular type of scare story is unique, in the data collected, to *The Sun*, where it appears three times over the time surveyed: two of these specifically mention an IRA threat to the Queen ⁶⁷, while another uses the key word 'bomb' ⁶⁸. All of these are speculative stories: what is important about these in particular is the allegation that the first family of British society is under threat.

However, as will be demonstrated below, the representation of the Irish in Britain as invisible and thus potential IRA members is not always utilised in IRA stories. The Irish in Britain are also represented as an overt threat to British society. Accent, in these examples, becomes the prime signifier of both Irishness and potential IRA membership. Irish people in Britain become readily visible by virtue of accent, and are thus identified as potential IRA members. Thus the symbolic stereotype of the Irish as potential IRA members is paradoxical in content: it constructs the Irish as invisible because of their ability to assimilate into British society (as in the examples discussed above) and simultaneously identifies the Irish in Britain as visible by virtue of their Irish accent. This illustrates the ability of stereotypes to be paradoxical in content, without being self-contradictory: racism, and the stereotypes it utilises, is opportunistic in the signifiers which it employs (Banton, 1987; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992).

In March 1992 there was a series of small bombs and bomb scares in London, caused by the IRA. In response to this, *The Sun* printed an editorial which depicted the

⁶⁶ *Daily Telegraph*, 09-05-92, News, p2: 'At the end of the day, only Paddy will beat Paddy'; Chris Ryder.

⁶⁷ *The Sun*, 03-03-92, p1 & p3: NO-GO ZONE AT PALACE; John Kay;
The Sun, 30-11-92, p2: IRA 'plan bomb blitz on Royals'.

⁶⁸ *The Sun*, 15-01-92, p14: QUEEN BAN ON DANCES.

Irish in Britain as a suspect community (see example 12, appendix 5) ⁶⁹. It suggested that “*The few criminals of the IRA shelter among the mass of decent, responsible Irish people who have always been welcome here*” (original emphasis). Thus this editorial carefully avoids labelling all Irish people as potential IRA members, while suggesting that the very existence of an Irish community in Britain provides a cover for IRA activists in Britain. Hence it implies that the Irish community is, by ethnic default, a suspect community. It echoes the assertion in *The Guardian* (above), that the IRA is a hidden element in British society, by merging with the Irish minority here.

Additionally, this editorial asserts that Britain is “importing terror” from Ireland, and states that “We could, if we chose, treat southern Ireland just like any other foreign country and insist on passports and searches at airports and seaports”. This implies that the majority of IRA members are from the Republic of Ireland rather than Northern Ireland and that there are no searches at ports and airports for journeys between the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Thus the editorial ignores the fact that the majority of IRA members are believed to be from Northern Ireland (so “importing terror” is not accurate since Northern Ireland is in the UK) and the use of the PTA to monitor travellers between Britain and both parts of Ireland (Hillyard, 1993). It also ignores the decision of the British government that passport/immigration controls between the UK and the Republic of Ireland would be impractical (Connor, 1987; Hickman, 1995)

On November 15 1992, a bomb was discovered in a parked Transit van at Canary Wharf ⁷⁰. A controlled explosion was carried out, and production of some newspapers, the *Daily Telegraph* in particular, was disrupted. While all four papers reported this event, *The Sun*’s response is of particular interest. A cartoon (see example 13, appendix 5) deliberately inverts the understanding of the Irish in Britain as invisible, while simultaneously underlining this message ⁷¹. This is achieved through the depiction of an Englishman who uses gross signifiers of ‘Irishness’, such as a leprechaun, a pint of Guinness and shamrocks, in order to park illegally. The Englishman is explaining his strategy to a policeman, while the frightened traffic wardens peep around a corner: “**ACTUALLY OLD CHAP, I’M NOT IRISH AT ALL...BUT IT KEEPS AWAY THE TRAFFIC WARDENS!**”. The veracity of his claim that he is not Irish is evidenced through his speech, where the phrase “actually old chap” indicates a particular type of accent, a particular social class and the absence of ‘brogue speak’.

⁶⁹ The Sun, 02-03-92, p6: **High price of freedom.**

⁷⁰ *Daily Mirror*, 16-11-92, p2: **IRA BOMB PLOT TERROR ON THE ISLE OF DOGS**; Nic North;

Daily Telegraph, 16-11-92, p1, emergency edition;

The Guardian, 16-11-92, p1: **Terrorists leave bomb van at Canary Wharf;**

The Sun, 16-11-92, pp 1&4: **CANARY WHARF BOMB TERROR**; Mike Sullivan, Stephanie Scawern and Nick Parker.

⁷¹ *The Sun*, 17-11-92, p6: cartoon; Tom Johnston.

This cartoon uses the symbolic stereotype of the Irish in Britain as potential IRA members, but indicates ‘Irishness’ through the use of symbols, attached to the van, such as shamrocks and a pint of Guinness, rather than the ethnicity of the ‘bomber’. It assumes that the reader will be familiar with this construction of the Irish in Britain, on which its humour is based. These symbols of ‘Irishness’ have led the traffic wardens, who are pictured peeping around the corner, to believe that the van contains a bomb. The newspaper board in the cartoon, which reads “another bomb foiled”, makes the reference to the attempted bombing of Canary Wharf salient for the reader.

The cartoon both applauds the actions of the security guards (reflected in the policeman who has approached the ‘bomber’) who noticed the parked van at Canary Wharf, and reinforces the message that the Irish in Britain are IRA subversives (hence the ability of the protagonist to use the cover of Irishness in order to park illegally). The fear of the traffic wardens in the cartoon is therefore both justified and ridiculed through the use of these signifiers of ‘Irishness’, which through their visibility deliberately invert the understanding that the Irish are a hidden threat in Britain.

A second element of *The Sun*’s response to the attempted bombing of Canary Wharf reinforces the message that the Irish in Britain symbolise the IRA ⁷². This article appeals for information which can assist the subsequent police investigation (see example 14, appendix 5). It explicitly exhorts its readers to regard Irish people (identified by their accents) as suspicious. This type of reporting in particular identifies the Irish in Britain as a threat to the British state and British culture, through its subversive activities. It is unusual, however, in its overt labelling of Irish people as suspect, when it asks its readers to consider the following questions, among others:

- Did you rent a lock-up - possibly to someone with an Irish accent - who has not returned recently?...
 - Have you or a friend rented accommodation to someone Irish recently who has not returned in the past few days?
- Remember - no detail is too small. It might save lives. (original emphasis)*

This last question is one of two “*vital questions everyone must ask themselves*”, and is accompanied by a plea for readers to telephone New Scotland Yard with answers to these questions. The thrust of the piece is clear: Irish people are a suspect community in Britain (Hillyard, 1993), and it is a public duty to watch them. As the data presented shows, this representation of the Irish in Britain is not unique to *The Sun*. However, the overt labelling of the Irish as suspect, accompanied by the call for readers to be suspicious of Irish people was unique amongst the articles collected for this research. That some British people are suspicious of Irish people is demonstrated by the report of

⁷² *The Sun*, 18-11-92, p6: **HELP US NAIL IRA BOMBERS.**

the three Irishmen reported as suspicious to the police by staff at a petrol station (see above): however, to what extent this is attributable to such reports is debatable. The Irish as an invisible threat in Britain is thus a recurring motif in reports of IRA activity (real and scare) in Britain.

5.4 Conclusion

The historical form of the Irish stereotype in British culture is well-documented: Irish people have long been depicted as stupid, lazy, drunkards, violent, irrational, ingenuous, subversive Catholics, liars and charlatans (Curtis, 1971; Curtis, 1986a; Kirkaldy, 1980; Lebow, 1976). Some researchers argue that any contemporary anti-Irish stereotypes or racism emanate from the war in Northern Ireland (see, for example, Solomos, 1989). The data collected does include many reports which deal with the conflict in both Northern Ireland and its manifestations in Britain, but the analysis in this chapter has demonstrated that stereotypical representations of Ireland and Irish people in the newspapers involved in this analysis are far from dominated by the “Troubles”.

Most of the stereotypes deconstructed from press reports in this chapter are trait-laden, signifying certain behaviours which have meanings in the context of meanings of ‘Irishness’. While the stereotypes of ‘Irishness’ presented here have resonances with those of earlier incarnations of Irishness in the popular media (Curtis 1968, 1971), it is clear that the stereotypes have changed. In particular, Paddy/Mick is not as frequently used to signify stereotypic behaviours: rather these behaviours are subsumed into a more general sense of Irishness. This may infer that Paddy/Mick is recognised as being generally unacceptable, while many of the stereotypes he once represented still have meaning.

However, as shown above, Paddy/Mick is not entirely absent. Rather, this figure appears in relation to certain stories: those of behaviours which are considered stupid or absurd, when Irish people are involved. In addition, it is also used to signify ‘Irishness’ in general (‘At the end of the day, only Paddy can beat Paddy’) and behaviours which were traditionally associated with this figure (anger, insobriety: as in the case of Mick Hucknall, see section 5.2.1.ii) and is thus sometimes used symbolically. The stereotypic understanding of the Irish as prone to inversion or stupidity is more typically signified through the use of the word ‘Irish’, rather than Paddy/Mick. Thus to be ‘Irish’ means to be characterised by such behaviours.

Other significant changes in the stereotypic significations of ‘Irishness’ include the absence of the fighting or brawling Irishman and the emergence of stereotypes

associated with Irish women: mad and softly spoken. The fighting/brawling Irishman has been subsumed into the image of the argumentative Irish person, a configuration which is not unrelated to the stereotypes associated with the speech of the Irish, particularly the concept of 'blarney'. In the main, the stereotypes presented here are trait-laden, associating certain behaviours and characteristics (madness, drunkenness, argumentativeness, talkativeness, soft accents, propensity for absurdity) with being Irish.

The symbolic stereotype of the subversive Irish terrorist signifies all Irish people in Britain as potential, if not probable, IRA bombers. This representation includes connotations of invisibility, assuming that the Irish, as a mainly 'white' group, can assimilate into British society, and condemning this as suspicious because it renders them invisible. Through recognising the comparative invisibility of the Irish in Britain, and associating it with IRA activity, the Irish in Britain become legitimate targets of surveillance and suspicion on the part of the rest of the population: "It is this *hidden power of surveillance* which enables the state to institutionalise racism as a silent routine of commonsense classification and control." (Cohen, 1988: 12, original emphasis). Thus legislation such as the PTA and the actions of the police towards Irish people (as documented in Hillyard, 1993) become justifiable and reasonable: this symbolic signifier of 'Irishness' (the hidden bomber) thus prevents assimilation or integration, by warning against assimilation.

What can be concluded from this analysis is not just that anti-Irish stereotypes exist in the contemporary British press, but that the breadth of their use suggests that the traits which are used to characterise the Irish are seen as natural and therefore acceptable for use in press discourse. This constitutes what Hall refers to as commonsense notions of 'race', which justify and normalise racism (Hall, 1981: 28). In this manner, the stereotypes of 'Irishness' described in this chapter constitute racialization. That the stereotypes have wider currency, beyond the media representations discussed here, is evidenced in research findings elsewhere which show that the service needs of the Irish are not met, particularly in the case of alcohol dependency and mental health (Kowarzik, c.1994), as well as the reactions of the people interviewed for this research (see chapters 8 and 9).

The profile of Irish in Britain as likely to experience a combination of poverty, unemployment and live in sub-standard housing in comparison to the majority population (Taylor, 1995), suggests that they are also likely to experience general health and mental health problems as a consequence (Martin et al., 1992). This has been substantiated by research (for example, Harrison and Carr-Hill, 1992; BIAS, 1996). However, it is the case that service providers have failed to address the specific needs of

the Irish in Britain (BIAS, 1996; Kowarzick, c.1994). Stereotypic thought processes, bolstered by the use of stereotypes in the popular press, facilitate assumptions about Irish people who present with alcohol or mental health problems: Irish people are assumed to have alcohol and mental health problems because of their 'Irishness', and the disadvantages which may in fact be contributing to such problems (poverty, migration, poor housing conditions, racism: see Hickman and Walter, 1997) are not addressed.

Chapter 6 Gazing in the Looking Glass:

Distorted refractions in the press hall of mirrors

6.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates how Irish people are constructed as *Other* in the British, national, daily press, through stereotypical representations of ‘Irishness’ and Ireland which are accompanied by representations of British people or Britain in opposition to Irish people or Ireland. It examines the representations which, although drawing on stereotypes of ‘Irishness’, are different from those representations discussed in the previous chapter because, in these instances, ‘Irish’ is constructed in opposition to English. In other words, this chapter investigates the bipolar construction of English/Irish through examining how press representations create a binary of representation in which the Irish become an unproblematic *Other* (Brah, 1996).

The representation of the Irish in the British national press as a bipolar opposite to the English serves two purposes. Firstly, it depicts the Irish as ‘outside’ the dominant group, as *Other* through constructions of their ‘Irishness’ which are dependent on references to and knowledge of stereotypes. Secondly, the representations of Ireland, the country, as opposed to Irish society, re-emphasise the imperial past and its relevance to the present: Ireland is not a foreign country, although it is different to Britain. Such representations are referred to by Eagleton (1995) when he writes of the Lacanian relationship between England and Ireland, in which Ireland is seen as a reverse image of England/Britain. Through these representations “Irish ethnicity is formed in the context of colonialism” (Walter, 1995: 37).

Six particular representations of Irish people and Ireland will be examined for the purposes of this chapter. The response of the press to Peter Brooke’s appearance on an Irish television programme in the aftermath of the Teebane bombing (section 6.2) will demonstrate how the mythic English gentleman is constructed in opposition to a simian, bestial ‘Irishness’. The lionising of British people involved in IRA bomb threats and bombs in Britain demonstrates how a particular folk conception of the British, which is at least in part based on popular perceptions of the British people’s response to the Blitz, is reinvoked to create a sense of continuity of character since that time (section 6.3). Section 6.4 illustrates how the Irish people are viewed, in press discourses, as inferior to British people by virtue of their Catholicism. It also discusses the view of Ireland as a Catholic dystopia, a view which implicitly constructs Britain as a Protestant utopia of freedom. The use of a historical, racial type the ‘Celt’ is examined in section 6.5, while section 6.6 examines sports reporting, with particular reference to international events and the physical/genealogical assumptions which such reporting

utilises. Finally, the images of Ireland as a green, rural but backward utopia are dissected (section 6.7).

6.2 The English gentleman is a player, you see ¹

The contrast of the Irish with the English is at its most apparent in the reporting of a political gaffe by the then Northern Ireland Secretary, Peter Brooke, in the wake of the deaths of seven Protestant construction workers in an IRA bombing attack (the Teebane bombing). Brooke was a guest on a weekly television chat show on RTÉ (the Republic's national broadcasters for radio and television), the *Late, Late Show*, hosted by Gay Byrne. At the end of his appearance on the programme, Brooke was persuaded to sing. His actions outraged Unionist politicians from both parties, but especially the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). Unionist politicians called for Peter Brooke's resignation or his removal from the post of Northern Ireland Secretary. In the event he remained, but lost his cabinet post after the general election in April 1992.

Of the papers surveyed, only *The Sun*, in an editorial, demanded that Peter Brooke should be dismissed from his cabinet post ². The other newspapers tended to suggest that Brooke had made a 'gaffe' and that Unionist outrage was unreasonable and out of proportion. The labelling of Brooke's actions on *The Late, Late Show* as a 'gaffe' in itself suggests that his singing should be considered as an embarrassing *faux pas* rather than the demeaning insult which Unionists insisted it was. In general, the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* tended to depict Peter Brooke as a hapless but quintessentially English gentleman. Gay Byrne, in contrast, was presented through stereotypes and many commentators suggested that it was his political ineptitude, and not Brooke's, which was the causative factor. While all four papers concur that Brooke agreeing to sing on a chat show only hours after the Teebane bombing was ill-judged, Unionist outrage is depicted as out of proportion to the actual event. They too are shown through the use of imagery juxtaposed with the portrayal of Brooke as an English gentleman.

A "Commons Sketch" article in the *Daily Telegraph* utilises both of these strategies ³. It opens by contrasting Ian Paisley, leader of the DUP, with Peter Brooke, suggesting that Ian Paisley is inferior to Peter Brooke in terms of "taste" and "standards":

IF BAD taste were a reason for resigning in politics, the House of Commons would be deserted, with Mr Ian Paisley leading the rush to the Chiltern Hundreds. Mr Peter Brooke, Ulster Secretary, is nonetheless a man of standards.

¹ This is taken from a headline of an article discussed below (Daily Telegraph, 22-01-92, News, p18)

² The Sun, 20-01-92, p6: **Sack the singing minister.**

³ Daily Telegraph, 21-01-92, News, p2: **Commons Sketch: Brooke reduced to sorry state;** Godfrey Barker.

The portrayal of Gay Byrne in this article uses physical signifiers which are strongly reminiscent of the simian depictions of the Irish in nineteenth century “Punch” (see Curtis, 1971). These physical signifiers are used to suggest that they manifest Byrne’s essential baseness as an Irishman, and his devious nature:

Taking one look at his appalling light blue smoking jacket, his misshapen hair and unnaturally wide mouth, Mr Brooke should have suspected him from the start.

Brooke is constructed as the hapless victim of a “sophisticated, two-faced, scheming Irish interviewer”, who “of course, walked the Ulster Secretary onto the sharp end of a stick”. Brooke’s fault lay in his failure to recognise these physical markers and act accordingly. It is in this sense that he is “reduced to [the] sorry state” of the headline.

In direct contrast to this imagery of the cunning, ape-like Irishman, Brooke, in offering to resign his post, is eulogised as being “magnanimous about Byrne”. He is depicted as the very image of the honourable English gentleman, who follows the rules of good behaviour. Furthermore “he is civilised”. The physical and behavioural imagery used to depict Byrne implies a lack of civilisation and bestiality. Brooke’s actions are seen as mistaken: he is “the innocent politician”, Byrne is “sophisticated” and “scheming”.

A television review in *The Guardian* also uses stereotypical physical signifiers and behavioural characteristics to describe Gay Byrne ⁴. Although the simian imagery of the example above is absent, Byrne is characterised in two ways, both of which signify him as *Other*: he is seen as a pixie-like, and feminine in his speech and gestures (this reference is echoed in Robert Kilroy-Silk’s infamous article in which he referred to Ireland as a country inhabited by “priests, peasants and pixies” ⁵):

Byrne is the quietest of chat show hosts, pixie-faced, silver-haired, neat-suited, his voice as gentle as a murmuring Irish stream. His harshest gesture is reserved for the overarm throw with which he beckons commercial breaks.

Peter Brooke is characterised as unused to “the glitz and glare of showbiz television”, phraseology which suggests that Brooke is not only out of his depth, despite being a cabinet minister, but an innocent abroad. Again, Brooke is characterised as a gentleman (“his ineffable patience and courtesy”) and innocently hapless (“And perhaps the song was not the most tactful choice that night, not even for a man at his musical wits’ end”). This image of Peter Brooke as a hapless innocent is underlined by the presumption that the audience is ‘naturally’ a conservative, Catholic one and

⁴ The Guardian, 21-01-92, Arts, p32: **Television**; Hugh Herbert.

⁵ Daily Express, 10-11-92.

therefore hostile to Brooke. This is further consolidated by the reference to the hostility of Unionist politicians to the geographical setting of the programme:

Byrne has already enquired how his first wife died, just to reassure this Dublin audience that the man's no divorcé.

The offence to the political barons of the North was perhaps the time and the place, that *Other Place*. (emphasis mine)

It is not only Gay Byrne but Unionist politicians who are depicted in opposition to Peter Brooke, the English gentleman. In **The Englishman is a player, you see**, (*Daily Telegraph*) Brooke's responses to the anger of Unionist politicians are portrayed as typically English: "And so the correct, decent English response, the apotheosis of our wonderful gentlemanly humbug, is to offer to sacrifice yourself in the presence of a large number of other similar Englishmen" ⁶. Although Englishness itself is being lampooned, it is also given preference: the author claims that he is inevitably favours 'Englishness' because he too is English. Brooke is praised for his innate 'Englishness'. The article delineates the characteristics which render Brooke the quintessential English gentleman: this includes his classical education and "encyclopaedic" knowledge of cricket ("note that cricket is English, not British"), as well as genealogy:

He comes from an artistic but respectable family. His grandfather wrote the charming children's book *Johnny Crow's Garden*, and was also the man who first spotted the talent of Beatrix Potter. His father was Home Secretary.

These essential characteristics of the English gentleman incorporate both heredity and class: Brooke is a 'gentleman' in both senses. (Additionally, "*Johnny Crow's Garden*" becomes nothing more than a "charming children's book".) The thrust of the article is to not only assert the moral rightness of Brooke retaining his position but to create a shared understanding between reader and text of the superiority of Englishness:

...nothing brings out the fellow feeling more clearly than foreigners. For this purpose (I repeat that the phenomenon is *English*), Ulstermen are foreigners. Foreigners, you see, are incomprehensible, or at least not worth comprehending, and they persistently get excited about things that are not worth getting excited about. The way to deal with them is to be extremely calm and polite. (original emphasis)

Those who are not English are dismissed as "foreigners" who "are incomprehensible, or at least not worth comprehending". This includes "Ulstermen", which in this article refers specifically to the Unionist politicians who called for Brooke to resign.

The text in this article is constructed in the language of 'us' and 'them', directly addressing the reader ("you see") and offering advice on how to deal with "them". The

⁶ *Daily Telegraph*, 22-01-92, News, p18: **The English gentleman is a player, you see**; Charles Moore.

behavioural characteristics of foreigners are the opposite to those of the quintessential English gentleman: foreigners “persistently get excited about things that are not worth getting excited about”, while the correct way for the English gentleman to behave when such behaviour is exhibited is to “be extremely calm and polite”. This constructs “foreigners” as infantile and English people (or gentlemen) as aloof and mature. However, the article acknowledges that this response is unlikely to be welcomed by “foreigners”:

If I were an Ulsterman, this sort of character, and his attitudes towards me, would drive me to distraction. Being an Englishman, I usually succumb to the charm.

An “Ulsterman” cannot possibly understand Englishness, because he is a foreigner (sic). The “Ulsterman” is irrational and excitable, while the Englishman is cool, calm and polite. While Brooke is criticised for being the epitome of “that curious English phenomenon, the civilised man who is at once highly educated and inarticulate”, the article, in depicting the “Ulstermen” as foreigners and *Other* suggests that they are neither articulate (since they are “driven to distraction”) nor, by contrasting them with Brooke and the ‘English type’ described, are they civilised or highly educated. The article concedes the justice of the Unionists’ objections, but does so in a manner which inferiorises and dismisses them as “foreigners” whose views are “not worth comprehending” for an Englishman. It is assumed that the reader of the article will share this point of view, as does the author (“I usually succumb”).

This characterisation of Peter Brooke as the quintessential English gentleman is also used in *The Guardian* as a contrast to the Unionist politicians calling for his resignation. They are depicted as animalistic (“grudgingly grunted”/“spat the last word”) in their speech, and satanic and unnatural ⁷:

The Unionists, looking more than ever like a coachload of American TV evangelists bound for Hell, continued to radiate outrage. But even some of them grudgingly grunted out some respect for the Northern Ireland Secretary.

Unionists are contrasted to other MPs in their lack of magnanimity. Clifford Forsyth’s (“the Official Unionist [sic] for South Antrim”) comments are spiked “with acid” and “spat”, while Unionist response to Brooke’s behaviour on *The Late, Late Show* is dismissed as prejudice: “it was not so much the song and dance which outraged the Unionists *as the fact that it took place in Dublin*” (emphasis mine). Underlying this is the understanding that but for the Unionists, particularly the DUP, the political crisis would not have occurred. Unionists are portrayed in this article as small-minded bigots and charlatans whose sectarianism motivates their call for Brooke’s resignation.

⁷ The Guardian, 21-01-92, Parliament, p6: **Sketch**; Andrew Rawnsley.

The Guardian's editorial that day also delineates the characteristics of an English gentleman, although it does not use that phrase, to describe Peter Brooke: "His decency, honesty and diligence, and most of all the courteous tenacity which enabled him against the odds to get last year's all-party talks even briefly off the ground..."⁸. While his conduct is seen as "inexplicably silly" by "most *mainland* MPs" (emphasis mine), the Unionists are described as clamouring for his resignation ("the clamour of Unionist politicians to have him resign"). The use of "clamour" suggests that their demands are empty noise, hullabaloo: without rational meaning. Additionally, the Unionists are described as seeking vengeance for the all-party talks, seen as Brooke's great achievement as Northern Ireland Secretary:

a settling of old scores: revenge for the Anglo-Irish Agreement, revenge for a series of talks - Peter Brooke's own invention...revenge for his resistance to internment.

Unionists are backward-looking and vengeful, in contrast to the forward-looking "mainland" MPs. Unlike the Unionists, they are prepared to forget Brooke's "fatal collapse of his instincts of self-preservation", a phrase which suggests that Brooke is in a (political) jungle, where he needs his innate "instincts of self-preservation". Northern Ireland is depicted as the "Other Place", as somewhere which is (metaphorically) distant from Great Britain or the "mainland", and beyond the comprehension of 'mainlanders':

On the mainland, the war with the IRA is a usually distant nuisance, a distraction from more important and interesting matters, sometimes (as when stations shut or bombs are left in Whitehall) a gross inconvenience; but rarely very much more. In the province itself, it's a grievous, lowering presence in everyday life, which has left behind a trail of death, mutilation and suffering of a kind that the mainland can scarcely comprehend.

While the editorial acknowledges that Northern Irish Protestants have genuine concerns about a Northern Ireland Secretary who "persisted with his plans to appear on the Gay Byrne show" after the Teebane bombing, they are dismissed because Brooke's offer to resign is the "best refutation" of their concerns. Again, it is Brooke's 'gentlemanly' behaviour which is used to portray his difference from Irish people, be they Gay Byrne, Unionist politicians or Northern Ireland Protestants.

The tabloids devote much less column space to Peter Brooke's appearance on the *Late, Late Show* and the subsequent political fall-out. The response in the *Daily Mirror* is restricted to a small paragraph and one article. The paragraph (reproduced in full, below), although critical of Brooke's lack of political nous, uses sectarian imagery⁹:

⁸ The Guardian, 21-01-92, Leader Page, p18: **The singer and a deeper lament.**

⁹ Daily Mirror, 20-01-92, p12: **Joe Haines on Monday**; Joe Haines.

RELUCTANT though I am to criticise anyone attacked by Ian Paisley, I fear the Northern Irish Secretary, Peter Brooke, was extremely stupid to allow himself to be lured into singing Clementine on Catholic Ireland's TV a few hours after the murder of seven Protestant workers. (original in bold type)

Brooke is called "extremely stupid", but the overall emphasis is similar to that found in the broadsheets: the article suggests that Brooke was "lured" into singing, presumably by Gay Byrne, a parallel with *The Guardian's* editorial which suggested Brooke suffered a "fatal collapse in his instinct". Brooke again becomes a bumbling innocent abroad. This portrayal is echoed in the article in the *Daily Mirror*, which states that "A re-run of the Late Late Show on British TV last night revealed that he was cajoled into singing and looked embarrassed to be doing it". Peter Brooke is depicted as a "unique man of honour" and "an honourable man" who was caught between two opposing and implacable groups ¹⁰:

On any other night, it would have been an excellent way for an Ulster Secretary to present himself to an Irish audience suspicious of the British Government. But to Unionists suspicious of his desire to impress the Irish it was an astonishing display of insensitivity.

The Sun was the only paper not to support Peter Brooke: in an editorial it calls for his dismissal from the cabinet ¹¹. The editorial bases this on the observation that "Instead he [Brooke] was in the capital city of the country that, believing it has most to gain from terrorism, does least to prevent it...". *The Sun* raises the spectre of the *Other* with the accusation that the Republic of Ireland, as a state, supports terrorism: this is made on the understanding that the British (which here includes the unionists) abhor such a position, that it is beyond their comprehension.

What is notable about the commentaries on Peter Brooke's rendition of "Oh My Darling Clementine" on the *Late, Late Show*, is the consistency with which he is depicted through characteristics which are assumed to be those of a civilised, English gentleman, in direct contrast to the characteristics ascribed to the Irish people involved. This oppositional representation, where English politicians are concerned, has been noted elsewhere (see Kirkaldy, 1979). Such representations invoke the "code of breeding" which separates the English from other, inferior peoples (Cohen, 1988: 64), in this case the Irish. The civility and breeding inherent in Brooke is threatened, but not defeated, by the *Otherness* of the various Irish players in the story, Gay Byrne and Unionist politicians in particular. Thus the "code of breeding", while threatened, ultimately triumphs, giving the truth to the cliché that 'breeding will out' (ibid.). The

¹⁰ *Daily Mirror*, 21-01-92, p6: **OUT OF TUNE**; Alastair Campbell, Political Editor.

¹¹ *The Sun*, 20-01-92, p6: **Sack the singing minister**.

Irish are constructed as a wild and, at times, animalistic *Other* to Brooke's quintessential English gentleman.

6.3 British heroes

As discussed in chapter five, Irish people are persistently portrayed in the British press as members of a "suspect community" (Hillyard, 1993). Appeals in the press, particularly the tabloids, for the public to be alert include directions to suspect Irish people. The discussion here centres on representations of British people who are portrayed as heroes, refusing to give in to the IRA.

An example of this is a hoax bomb incident at White Hart Lane football ground, in March 1992. A bomb was found at the nearby train station, and was defused, but there was none at the football ground as claimed in the warning message. Play of the scheduled soccer match was delayed ¹².

All the newspapers in the research report the waiting of the fans outside the football ground as a refusal to give in to the IRA. The patience of the fans and their 'resistance' to the IRA draws on the idea of English tenacity in the face of adversity. This is linked to a conception of the (British) tenacity displayed during the Blitz of the Second World War. It appeals to a particular folk memory and understanding of the British character. The two broadsheets use direct and indirect quotes from Kenneth Baker, then Home Secretary, and George Churchill-Coleman, then commander of New Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad, emphasises the cowardliness of the IRA, in comparison with the bravery and stoicism of the (British) fans.

The tabloids are more direct in their approval of the fans' behaviour in the face of adversity: the *Daily Mirror* utilises Gary Lineker, who is quoted as condemning the bomb threat to fans. He is described in the report as "England hero", an obvious corollary to his reference (quoted in the article) to the IRA as cowards. Both the tabloids use a chant from the waiting crowd to depict the defiant atmosphere: *The Sun* uses as its headline "We shall not be moved", while the *Daily Mirror* uses "We hate the IRA" as the headline inside the paper. Both papers, and the *Daily Telegraph*, quote the chairman

¹² *Daily Mirror*, 02-03-92, pp. 1&5: **GARY BLASTS BOMBERS and WE HATE THE IRA WE HATE THE IRA**; Bill Akass and Gordon Hay, *Daily Mirror*, 02-02-92, p5: **MIRROR COMMENT**, *Daily Telegraph*, 02-03-92, p.1: **IRA threatens to disrupt run-up to election**; Wendy Holden and Tim Butcher, Jonathan Petre, *The Guardian*, 02-03-92 p.1: **Terrorists plan to blast Ulster onto election agenda**; David Sharrock and Owen Bowcott, *The Sun*, 02-03-92, pp. 1&4: **WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED and FANS DEFY THE IRA**; Mike Fielder, *The Sun*, 02-02-92, p6: **High price of freedom**, editorial.

of Nottingham Forest: “We must not surrender to these people”. This sums up the style of reporting used: the bombing is depicted as part of a war waged by the IRA on innocent English people.

This is further emphasised in an article in *The Sun* the following day, by Kenneth Baker (see Appendix 6, example 1) ¹³. He compares the IRA to Nazis, referring to British tenacity during the Blitz of London. Baker refers to “innocent people” and “ordinary men, women and children”. He states that neither the IRA nor the Nazis could comprehend the British people, and therefore their bombing campaigns have failed:

The mentality of the IRA bombers doesn't differ much from Hitler's bombers. They aimed to kill civilians but failed in their mission of murder.
The Nazis and the IRA totally failed to understand the British people.
We will never be intimidated into changing our policies through violence and terrorism.
In our society, decisions about change are made by millions of people using their right to vote, not by a handful of fanatics using bombs. (original emphasis)

Baker's comments in this piece also suggest another reason why the IRA cannot subdue British people into surrender: because in British society, “a handful of fanatics using bombs” is able to make decisions about change. He conveniently ignores the participation of the voters of Northern Ireland in the general election, as if they were not part of the state, emphasised by his comments on the Prevention of Terrorism Act: “I have used the Act to keep 90 suspected terrorists out of *our* country” (emphasis mine).

In this way, Baker uses language which suggests that the IRA are not a real threat to “our country” because they cannot understand “the British people”, or ‘us’. He uses the language of ‘them’ and ‘us’ to both justify the exclusion orders facilitated by the Prevention of Terrorism Act and to proclaim the inevitable failure of the IRA's strategy, and draws on history (World War Two) to enhance the sense that the British people are at war with the IRA. They are further depicted as *Other* through his suggestions that the IRA are “sick”, and “increasingly desperate”: “So they have resorted to the intimidation of defenceless people”.

A further example of tabloid response to IRA attacks in Britain is contained in follow-up reports to an attempted hi-jack bombing by the IRA in London ¹⁴. Neither of these reports are concerned with the event itself, but are human interest stories.

¹³ The Sun, 03-03-92, p6: **Nazis couldn't beat us...neither will the IRA**; Kenneth Baker.

¹⁴ At the end of October 1992 two members of the IRA hi-jacked a mini-cab. The driver, Malcolm Egerton, was forced to drive his cab, with a bomb in it, to the protective gates outside Downing Street. There the bomb exploded, wrecking the car, a few minutes after Mr Egerton had left the car and reported to a police officer. The two IRA members did not accompany Mr Egerton to Downing St., but assured him they would not be far away and would detonate the bomb by remote control should he attempt to abandon the car before he reached Whitehall.

The *Daily Mirror* scoops *The Sun*, getting an interview with Malcolm Egerton, the hi-jacked cab driver. While Egerton readily admits his terror, the *Mirror* concentrates instead on his heroism, beginning the article “HERO cabbie Malcolm Egerton...”, while the article’s sub-headline reads “HERO CABBIE SHOWS HIS FAMILY HELL-RUN TO DOWNING STREET”. Egerton’s bravery is further underlined by a heading within the article, which refers to Egerton asking about the fare ¹⁵:

Cool Mal asked
for the £18 fare

The preferred reading of the article is clearly one which emphasises Egerton’s bravery over his fear. The emphasis on heroism and calm in the face of adversity are typified as British responses to such situations. This is also the case in *The Sun*’s article, in which Joe Daly, a driver who alerted police to the bomb after Egerton shouted a warning to him while queuing in traffic. Again, the article emphasises the heroism of the protagonist, although in more sensationalist terms ¹⁶:

A HERO sports car driver foiled the IRA’s bid to bring bomb carnage to Downing Street, it was revealed last night.

Brave Joe Daly, 20, risked his life to race through central London at 70mph after a hijacked cabbie screamed to him: “I’ve been planted with a bomb!” (original emphasis)

This ignores Egerton’s version, in the *Daily Mirror*, that when he got to Downing Street the police knew nothing of his hi-jacking, and that there was not enough time for the police to deal with the bomb, which exploded as timed. But, according to *The Sun*, “His tip-off gave officerstime [sic] to clear the blast scene in Whitehall”. Whether either version is true is of no real consequence here: in both articles the main emphasis is on bravery in the face of IRA threat, as with the fans at the delayed soccer match (above).

The ‘native’ heroism of the British is contrasted with the cowardice of the IRA, in articles which address themselves to the reader either through the language of ‘us’ and ‘them’ language or through the focus on ‘ordinary’ individuals with whom the reader can identify. The heroes of these stories are lionised, while the IRA is constructed as cowardly and invisible. As with Peter Brooke, “codes of breeding” (Cohen, 1988: 64) come into play, as the disposition of the heroes of these stories becomes part of an assertion of ‘Britishness’: while this is quite different from Brooke’s bumbling gentleman, it does not contradict the “code of breeding”, which interpellates the different sections of the British population in specific ways (ibid.). It is significant too

¹⁵ *Daily Mirror*, 02-11-92, pp.4-5: **Just a bunch of keys, that’s all the IRA left me**; Don Mackay, Martin Phillips and Nic North.

¹⁶ *The Sun*, 02-11-92, p7: **REVEALED! HOW HERO FOILED No 10 BLITZ**; Nick Parker.

that the Blitz is invoked, thereby incorporating resistance to the IRA into a mythic (*pace* Barthes, 1993[1957]) conception of the British people, fighting on in the face of adversity. This, in turn, links in to the representations of Catholics in Northern Ireland, who are represented as instigators of the violence; thus in the popular press, the British resist, while the Irish support and encourage, the IRA.

6.4 Catholicism

One of the characteristics of Irish people which has historically aroused most suspicion and identified them as *Other* to British people is their Roman Catholicism (Gilley, 1993; Hickman, 1995). Anti-Catholicism has acted as a unifying element in the creation of a British national identity (Hickman, 1995): this strand of British identity has continued into the twentieth century, identifying Irish Catholics as *Other* and constructing Catholicism as an integral characteristic of ‘real’ Irish identity (*ibid.*). As chapter four demonstrated, Catholicism is a signifier for Republicanism in reports of violence in Northern Ireland. The examples below demonstrate that outside of reports from Northern Ireland, Irish Catholicism is viewed as a distinction which characterises the Irish as *Other*.

The revelation that Bishop Eamonn Casey, then bishop of Galway, had a seventeen year-old-son was the single news event (as opposed to a continuing news event like Northern Ireland) which generated the most coverage through the period of the research. The *Daily Mirror* had eleven articles; the *Daily Telegraph* twelve; *The Guardian* fourteen; and *The Sun* fourteen plus two cartoons (figures exclude readers’ letters: for a list of articles, see Appendix 6). Articles concentrate on Casey’s failure to keep his vows of chastity: thus the theme of illicit sex pervades all the reports. One commentator (Auberon Waugh, a Catholic) points out that Church of England priests also have affairs, but the general theme is the uniqueness to Catholic Ireland of this news. While the tabloids sensationalise and ridicule, the broadsheets use the affair as an avenue for exploring Irish society, presuming that such a news event must be a key to Irish society. Both these approaches assume that this scandal is somehow uniquely Irish, as well as Catholic.

The approach of the tabloids is exemplified by an editorial in the *Daily Mirror*, which likens the news to a ‘Carry On’ film, and the two cartoons in *The Sun*. The editorial in the *Daily Mirror*, concedes that such events happen “perhaps, not only in Ireland”, a phrase which suggests that the likelihood of such a happening occurring elsewhere is unlikely. By comparing the scandal with the script of a ‘Carry On’ film (a uniquely British institution) the editorial implies that it is the Irish angle to the story which makes

it “a scream” (see example 2, Appendix 6) ¹⁷. The coverage of the scandal in the *Daily Mirror* is highly sensational, and includes three reports of Irish women who have had children with Catholic priests. One of these speaks of “hundreds” of “Irish Catholic” priests who are having “secret affairs”, thereby suggesting that such behaviour is particular to Irish Catholic priests and completely normal in Ireland ¹⁸.

The cartoons in *The Sun*, while not having overt links to conceptions of ‘Irishness’, are a response to the Casey scandal and underscored by anti-Catholicism. One depicts a woman waiting to see the Pope, with his child alongside her, while another shows a bishop going to see “Basic Instinct” which is, according to the cartoon, a “film of erotic sex and passion” (see example 3, Appendix 6) ¹⁹. These interpretations of Catholicism rely not only on acceptance of anti-Catholic sentiment, given their offensive assumptions about all Catholic bishops and the Pope, but also on the assumptions that Catholic clergy are libidinous and that readers are aware of the Eamonn Casey story. This latter frees the cartoonists from making overt references to Irish Catholicism, but the ‘humour’ of the cartoons are dependent on readers’ knowledge of the story.

While being equally sensationalist in its coverage of Casey’s resignation and the reason behind it, *The Sun* takes a different angle from that of the *Daily Mirror*. Rather than concentrating on the normality of Irish women having affairs and children with Catholic priests, it examines Roman Catholicism. One article, by Dr. Denys Turner, calls for the end to celibacy for Catholic priests: while the by-line makes it clear that he is a theologian, no particular branch of Christianity is mentioned. Another article is by a former Catholic, Nina Myskow, who recounts the horrors of growing up a Catholic: “I went through a phase when I was terrified God would call me to be a nun” and “How glad I am I saw the light and left the Church years ago”. This latter phrase introduces the image of a Pauline conversion (“saw the light”) to Myskow’s decision to leave the Catholic church, inverting its usual use. In both these commentaries, Catholicism is depicted as a wholly negative religious outlook, and as alien to the (British) reader ²⁰.

¹⁷ Daily Mirror, 11-05-92, p2: **Sins of the fathers**; editorial.

¹⁸ Daily Mirror, 11-05-92, p7: **BISHOP No2 IN SECRET LOVE AFFAIR SHOCKER**; Jan Disley,

Daily Mirror, 14-05-92, p17: **CONFESS...OR WE’LL RAT ON OUR LOVER PRIESTS**; Stephen White,

Daily Mirror, 20-05-92, p5: **‘Priest’s lover in abortion’**.

¹⁹ The Sun, 11-05-92, p6: Franklin cartoon. Caption: **“THAT’S THE FOURTH BISHOP I’VE SEEN GO IN TODAY!”**,

The Sun, 14-05-92, p6: Johnston cartoon. Caption: **“YOUR HOLINESS!...THERE’S A WOMAN HERE TO SEE YOU!”**.

²⁰ The Sun, 13-05-92, Woman supplement, p.4: **OPINIONS**; Nina Myskow,

The Sun, 18-05-92, p6: **WHY WE MUST LET PRIESTS MARRY**; Dr. Denys Turner.

In contrast to the approach of the tabloids, the broadsheet papers (*Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*) use the Casey scandal to publish articles which profess to explain Ireland and Irish society. In all cases, not only is the Casey affair assumed to be indicative of the normal relationships between priests and parishioners, it is assumed that Ireland is uniquely subservient to the Catholic church, its mores and religious laws.

The first of these, in *The Guardian* (see example 4, Appendix 6), **Blind faith and sins of the fathers**, contains many prescriptive assertions about the Irish people ²¹. The article concentrates on the effect of the Casey affair on the Irish population. It assumes that the Irish people, as implied by the headline, are normally (i.e. prior to the revelation of Casey's affair) in a "state of sacerdotal gullibility", and that the Irish people are not only repressed by their Catholicism ("Sprinkled with obedience at birth, saturated to the roots of their imagination all their young learning life"), but that the Irish Republic is a theocracy: "the power of state within a state: the *Irish* Catholic, Apostolic, ironclad, reactionary Church" (emphasis mine). Not only is Ireland a theocracy, but its rulers, and by implication the ruled, are stupid:

The vast majority accept having their lives policed by people, often of low intelligence, wilfully rejecting normal relationships for themselves but imposing their bizarre and furtive understanding of sexual matters on others. (It must be said that the priest himself is also a victim of this conditioning).

Additionally, the *Other* is invoked through the medium of sexuality: the Irish are characterised as habitually unable to talk about sex, but sexually incontinent in practice, hence Eamonn Casey's fall from grace: "It is quite untrue that the Irish were inveterate virgins, they were spectacularly dissolute in damp erotic discomfort; experts in "safe sex". The myth of the sexually restrained Irish is dismissed, while at the same time the superiority of the British in matters of sex is asserted:

If the outsider is misled into overestimating the seriousness of Irish outrage in these matters, the Irish themselves have been overestimating for decades the intellectual and sexual freedom they have achieved.

The (British) reader, as an 'outsider' to Irish society, has, by implication, greater sexual and intellectual freedom. While the Irish are portrayed as sexually uncontrolled, and living under the dictat of the Catholic church, the (British) reader is assumed to possess greater intellectual and sexual freedom than would be within the purview of an Irish Catholic.

The article in the *Daily Telegraph*, **There never was a better time to go to confession**, was written by Stan Gebler Davies, who identifies himself as Irish (see

²¹ The Guardian, 20-05-92, Features p21 : **Blind faith and sins of the fathers**; Peter Lennon.

example 5, Appendix 6) ²². However, the article is clearly written for a British audience. The old stereotypes of the wild, hot-tempered and unmanageable Irish (Curtis, 1968 and 1971; Lebow, 1976) are invoked: “Irish people [are], I fear, notably volatile”; “I suspect this wild instinct is part of the true Irish instinct”. Gebler Davies, however, distances himself from such formations of ‘Irishness’ through phrases such as “I fear”, “I suspect” and “the Irish”, which distance him from the Irish people of whom he writes and place him in the position of ‘expert’.

This article also refers to the libidinousness of the Irish, using Edmund Spencer, known for his dislike of the Irish people (Curtis, 1968; Curtis, 1984b) as historical evidence of this:

Irish women are generally dubious about celibacy, knowing men too well to believe that vows make all that much difference to their subsequent behaviour. Nor do they relish their reputation for chastity, which is much exaggerated. It is in any case a relatively modern invention. Edmund Spenser (1552-99), who spent a great deal of time in this country, noted the propensity of Irish women to wrap themselves in cloaks rather than clothe themselves decently, like Englishwomen. What is wrapped can as easily be unwrapped.

Thus the image of the sexualised *Other* is invoked, using the image of the sexually available woman as its trope.

The final article in this trio is in *The Guardian* (see example 6, Appendix 6) and is headlined **Sex and the Single Gael** ²³. It aims to examine attitudes to sex in Irish society, using the Casey affair amongst other aspects and events within Irish society. Its extended subtitle frames the article for the reader:

Ireland is Europe’s only surviving theocracy. And as the Bishop Casey fiasco proved, the strain is showing. Contraception is heavily controlled (but widely available), homosexuality is illegal (but David Norris is an openly-gay senator). As for abortion, a recent issue of the Guardian with a Marie Stopes advertisement was impounded. Linda Grant examines a nation’s strange objections to desire.

Again, the Irish Republic is referred to as a theocracy, albeit one which is under threat. In “examining a nation’s strange objections to desire” the article represents Ireland as an alternative Britain, thereby clearly using the spectre of the *Other*. The framing of the subtitle is continued in the opening paragraph:

IN 1983 Margaret Thatcher gave an interview to the Daily Mail in which she attributed the social and economic ills of the Eighties to the permissiveness of the Sixties. She could see a causal connection between 1) abortion and the pill and 2) teenage pregnancy, illegitimacy and dole scrounging single mothers. She wanted an England where the sexual revolution had never taken place, where abortion and

²² Daily Telegraph, 12-05-92, p16: ‘**There never was a better time to go to confession**’; Stan Gebler Davies.

²³ The Guardian, 30-05-92, Weekend supplement, pp10-12: **Sex and the single Gael**; Linda Grant.

homosexuality were still illegal, divorce difficult and expensive to obtain and contraception only available to married couples or bona fide engaged sweethearts. Does this impossible country exist? Could it be part of Europe? Could the video generation live there? There is such a country. It is Ireland. This is a portrait of what we could have been.

The opening paragraph uses the language of ‘them’ and ‘us’, suggesting that “This is a portrait of what *we* could have been”, (emphasis mine). The article represents Ireland as an unreal or mythic place; this is achieved not only through the rhetorical questions of the opening paragraph, but is re-emphasised in the second:

It is Friday night on Leeson Street off St Stephen’s Green, a favourite loitering place of Joyce’s Stephen Daedalus. At midnight the Garda (the Irish police) have set up a prophylactic road block, a warning defence against drunk driving, paying lip-service to policing.

Presumably, the use of “prophylactic” to describe the road-block is meant to be a clever play on words. The ‘humour’ it implies both suggests that the Gardaí are buffoons and reminds the reader that this article is about Irish people and sex.

Having referred to Ireland as a place “where the sexual revolution had never taken place”, the result of a Friday night’s partying on Leeson Street is described:

At the weekend there are two sets of queues on Leeson Street: the Friday night queue to get into a disco and the Saturday morning queue for the morning-after-pill at the Well Woman Clinic.

This seems rather contradictory in the light of the subtitle’s framing of Irish society. According to the article though, “Ireland” has a “paradoxical sexual life”. It is only half-way through that it is revealed that legislation banning homosexuality is to be repealed and replaced, and that condoms are legal in Ireland. Indeed, Ireland had actually had a sexual revolution, although its populace were largely unaware of it: “Through the cases of Anne Lovett and Joanne Hayes, Ireland discovered that despite its laws, it had had a sexual revolution”. However, this sexual revolution in the alternative Britain was a warped one:

There’s not much rape in Ireland, it’s true. What there is, is child sex abuse. There’s no sex education beyond blasted bottled fetuses, imprisoned in formaldehyde, carted about schools by SPUC and other anti-abortion groups. So the girls barely know what daddy or brother is doing and they go to the priest who says, yes it is a sin but not for you. Now go home and keep out of your father’s way.

Ireland becomes a sexual dystopia, in which sex abuse goes unpunished, and where the Catholic church is powerless and/or unwilling to intervene. The queues in Leeson Street on Saturday mornings and the widespread abuse of girls in Ireland suggested by the article are testaments to the ignorance of Irish people regarding sex. Britain becomes

a sexual utopia where children are not abused, contraception is available and “blasted bottled fetuses” are not “carted about schools”. *The Guardian*’s article concludes:

Why are the Irish so hung up on sex when the French, the Italians and the Spanish, all Catholics, have managed to separate Church from State? The British never permitted in Ireland the non-conformist tradition which, from the 17th century, asserted the right of the individual to decide matters of his own conscience, the tradition that would in this century be instrumental in setting up family planning clinics and defeating the laws against homosexuality. Instead, the Irish proceeded by subterfuge and secrecy, saying one thing, doing another...

Irish Catholicism is constructed as unique and outside of the mainstream, European Catholic tradition. Stereotypes of other Catholic peoples (the French, Italians and Spanish) are invoked to justify this assertion. While some blame is laid at Britain’s door for preventing the development of non-conformism, it is the “subterfuge and secrecy” of “the Irish” which is blamed most. The phrase “the Irish” distances the reader from the subjects of the article, which returns to its opening theme, assuring readers that Britain could never be like Ireland:

Could Margaret Thatcher have put the clock back 30 years, forged a powerful alliance between Church and State and made Britain resemble Ireland? No, in the sense that our political, religious and cultural history is different. No, because Ireland has shown that countries cannot be isolated from global communications.

It is not that this article misinforms readers. Certainly, lack of availability of contraception, lack of sex education in schools, the illegality of homosexuality for men, and the many scandals around child sex abuse have all been issues in contemporary Ireland. However, the assertion that Ireland is how England/Britain would have been if Margaret Thatcher could have turned back time, along with the suggestion that Irish people are more sexually active yet less sexually aware, and that underlying this hypocrisy is an unusually high level of child abuse assures readers that Britain could never be like Ireland, because “our political, religious and cultural history is different”.

These articles demonstrate a fear of the Irish Catholic *Other*, which is transmuted into ridicule (especially in the tabloids’ coverage of the Eamonn Casey story) and which, in the last article discussed, provides a vision of an alternative, nightmarish Britain. Events other than the Casey scandal, but also in May 1992, serve to underline this viewpoint. Dr Carey’s (then Archbishop of Canterbury) call on the Pope to end the ban on contraception, which is tied in as relevant to the Casey story, and the withdrawal of an edition of *The Guardian* which had an advert for an abortion clinic by its Irish distributors (see section 6.7) both provide examples of the construction of the British viewpoint (i.e. that contraception is good; that Britain is a place of civil liberties) in opposition to the events and viewpoints of Irish society (i.e. the Catholic prohibition on

artificial contraception; the embargo on information about abortion). Here, assumptions about 'Irishness' and Catholicism provide bipolar opposites to 'Britishness'.

Such reporting assumes that what is British is correct, normative and good, while Irish/Catholic is uninformed, out-dated and silly. This is evident in an editorial in *The Guardian* on the issue of abortion and the X-Case ²⁴ in the Republic of Ireland (see example 7, Appendix 6) ²⁵. The editorial suggests that the decision by the Supreme Court to allow Miss X to travel to Britain is "by Dublin standards... momentous". Because of the presence of the Catholic church, Irish society is one "whose secular organisation is dominated by the rulings of the Catholic Church". This ruling, according to the editorial is typical of Irish society in that it deals with the immediate issue rather than reality:

[the judgement is] in line with the outstanding characteristic of Irish life in which people are content with formal prohibitions as long as they can conveniently ignore them.

The Guardian particularly welcomes this ruling, though, because it "marks an important step to maturity for Irish society", presumably indicating a move away from the domination of the Catholic church. The editorial emphasises the *Otherness* of Ireland, which explains how such an atrocity could happen there: "These reasons may seem small beer to Britain, where abortion operations are now a commonplace". This suggests that the British are more humane than the Irish, who are immature, capable of ignoring reality and guilty of "savage hypocrisy" (emphasis mine). Thus the editorial not only suggests that the original injunction preventing Miss X from travelling abroad was wrong, but that the Irish people are uncivilised, unlike the British.

The articles discussed demonstrate that Irish Catholicism is seen as both backward and alien to 'Britishness'. Catholic Ireland becomes a dystopian image of what Britain could have been like but for its Protestantism, an opposition never overtly identified in these articles but certainly assumed. Irish people are constructed as both libidinous and ignorant of the biological mechanisms and normative (British) mores concerning sex. The British, through their assumed Protestantism, are sexually mature and free from the

²⁴ In February 1992 a young girl was brought back to Ireland from Britain by her parents, where they had hoped to procure an abortion for her. They returned before this happened, having been informed that the Attorney-General had issued an injunction against the child, forbidding her to leave the Republic for the duration of the pregnancy. The injunction was contested in the High Court, where it was upheld. On appeal at the Supreme Court the injunction was quashed, not because a right to travel was established, but because in the Court's interpretation of the relevant clause of the Irish Constitution the mother had a right to an abortion because of the threat to her health (the girl had threatened to commit suicide). Since there was no abortion provision within the state, the child was, *de facto*, permitted to travel abroad for her abortion.

²⁵ *The Guardian*, 06-03-92, The Leader Page, p20: **Abortion: the reasons are a revolution;** editorial

restrictions of Catholicism. The construction of the Irish Republic as a theocracy, the assertions that there state and church are intertwined, infers that Britain is not a theocracy but, rather, a free society. The immaturity of the Irish people, evidenced through their subservience to the Catholic church, allegations of widespread child sex abuse and attitudes towards sex, is contrasted with the implied maturity of the British people. In this sense, the Irish are here constructed as being outside of the “code of breeding” (Cohen, 1988: 64) of civilised peoples, being unable to practice ‘Reason’ and temper their desires (ibid., 66-7).

6.5 The Celt

The construction of the Irish as ‘Celts’ is one of the historical racial stereotypes of the Irish. The ‘Celt’ was considered generally to be racially inferior to the Anglo-Saxon or the British: “The Irish were defined as a separate racial group as ‘Celts’ to be distinguished from the English ‘Anglo-Saxons’” (Gilley, 1993: 235-6; see also Curtis, 1968). The ‘Celts’ were not just Irish, but included the Scots and the Welsh; nor were attitudes towards them always hostile (Gilley, 1993). However, while the ‘Celt’ was often viewed favourably, being depicted as literate, friendly and generous amongst other things (ibid.; Curtis, 1968), the negative characteristics associated with ‘Celts’ were “arguably partly of Irish origin” (Gilley, 1993: 236).

The term ‘Celt’ was used exclusively, and only occasionally, by the broadsheet papers. ‘Celt’ was also applied to the Scots and the Welsh. In such cases, it was used to imply racial similarities among the Irish, Scots and Welsh which distinguished them from the English. An example of this is an article already discussed in the previous chapter: **Hospital study confirms stereotyped view of celts as hard drinkers** (section 5.2.2) ²⁶. This article suggested that ‘Celts’ were heavy drinkers or alcoholics. It implied that this was due to some intrinsic quality of being a ‘Celt’, in other words, that ‘Celts’ have a biological propensity to alcoholism.

Further insight to the ‘nature’ of the ‘Celt’ emerges in an editorial from the *Daily Telegraph*, which welcomes government reductions in budget allocations for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales ²⁷. This editorial argues that the recent recession has hit the South East (of England) far more than any other part of the UK; therefore, the budgetary arrangement can no longer be justified. Furthermore, the editorial is of the opinion that the arrangement is tantamount to bribing the “celtic fringes” to remain within the UK:

²⁶ The Guardian, 27-07-92, Home News, p4: **Hospital study confirms stereotyped view of celts as hard drinkers**.

²⁷ Daily Telegraph, 07-09-92, p16: **End of the Celtic binge**.

The Union should not depend on handouts and perks. More importantly, the practice perpetuates that culture of dependency which has so corroded life in cities like Belfast and continues to plague large tracts of Glasgow. Quite apart from the fiscal arguments, the Celts have travelled far enough down what Hayek called “the road to serfdom”. A return to their traditional frugality is long overdue.

‘Celts’ are attributed with a “culture of dependency”, unlike the hard-working English, working to provide ‘Celts’ with “handouts and perks”: hence the call for a return to “their traditional frugality”. Clearly, the construction of the English, which is implied rather than overt, is as hard-working but failing to enjoy the fruits of their labour, which are being appropriated by the dependent ‘Celts’. This is a parallel construction with that of Peter Brooke, above, in that it suggests that the English are too gentlemanly or nice, and are being taken advantage of by an unscrupulous *Other*.

A review of *Hostages*, in the *Daily Telegraph* (a programme which fictionalised the lives of the Beirut hostages Brian Keenan, John McCarthy and Terry Waite), raises objections to a particular scene. Brian Keenan, an Irishman, is depicted dancing in his cell, which is lighted only by candles ²⁸:

Had that scene appeared in a film about a fictitious Irish hostage in the Middle East, you might have merely winced at its pseudo-Celtic mawkishness...

Ironically, Keenan describes the scene in his own memoir of captivity in the Lebanon:

I took out one candle and lit it in the hope that light would dispel the music that filled the room, but it did not. With my mind only half conscious, I lit another and another candle until I had filled the cell with candlelight, bright, dazzling, soft, alluring light. But still the music played around me. Everywhere the bright burning of the small candles and me waiting and hoping that this imagined music would stop. And then I remembered again that you do not overcome by fighting, you only concede the victory to the madness within. You overcome by going beyond it.

Like a somnambulist, I got up from my mattress and in that tiny cell, naked and wet with sweat, I began to dance. Slowly, slowly at first then going with the music, faster I danced and faster until I went beyond, and beyond the music’s hold on me. (Keenan 1992: 79)

The objection, in the review, to the supposed “pseudo-Celtic mawkishness” implies that there is an understanding of what constitutes real ‘Celtic’ behaviour which the reader shares with the reviewer.

Other references in the data which allude to the Irish as ‘Celts’ were collected from *The Guardian*. One refers to artistic expressiveness: a music review, **Those Celtic conjuring tricks**, examines traditional music from Ireland, Scotland and Wales assuming that the musicality of the artists reviewed is due to the ‘Celticness’ of the

²⁸ Daily Telegraph, 24-09-92, The Arts, p17; **Wrong crisis to turn into a drama**; Douglas Kennedy.

artists ²⁹. An article on Adrian Maguire, the jockey, states that “like most Celts [he] can articulate on a far higher level than his Anglo contemporaries playing any sport one cares to mention” ³⁰.

It is clear that the term ‘Celt’ carries connotations of racial heredity, whether that be the likelihood of being an alcoholic, a malingerer, or musical and articulate. It is used to distinguish the English from other peoples who are indigenous to Ireland and Britain, drawing on assumptions about biology and genetics in the process of differentiation. It is assumed that it is natural for ‘Celts’ to be drunkards or musically-talented, and that these traits distinguish them from the English. These representations are clearly similar to the historical conceptions of the ‘Celt’ discussed above (Gilley, 1993; Curtis, 1968), in both content and their opposition to an conception of ‘Englishness’.

6.6 Sports reporting

The language of sports reporting frequently invokes shared identity, through the use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ (Boyle, 1992). In this way, sports reporting is an important medium through which national identity is reaffirmed for the readers and viewers of sporting events. This is particularly true when the sport concerned involves national pride, rather than the endeavour of an individual, and hence is directly implicated in national identity. Sports reporting in *The Guardian* in particular reflects this. An example is a pre-match report on the rugby match between Ireland and Wales in Dublin. It takes the form of a personal anecdote: the writer is flying to Dublin and assumes that one of his fellow passengers on the flight is Irish because “somehow he looked very Irish”: it transpires he is Welsh, thereby confounding the assumptions about the physical differences between the Welsh and the Irish ³¹.

This same piece assumes that the Irish team will lose because, as rugby players, they are neither used to success, nor the expectation of it. The stereotype of the uncivilised Irish justifies this assumption: “They are *wild, committed ambushers*, not the ambushed” (emphasis mine). The article ends with a reference to the Irish knack of absurdity: “It is a nice and very Irish occasion when the match for the wooden spoon kicks off the season”. This suggests both a lack of sporting prowess on the part of both the Welsh and the Irish teams, but also invokes the use of ‘Irish’ to signify a happening which is backwards or outside of reality. It ridicules both the Welsh and the Irish, but the emphasis is on the Irish, beginning with assumptions about the physical appearance

²⁹ The Guardian, 05-03-92, Feature, p30: **Folk/roots: those Celtic conjuring tricks**; Tony Rose.

³⁰ The Guardian, 28-03-92, Sports News, p18: **Maguire sets off like the real McCoy**; Frank Keating.

³¹ The Guardian, 18-01-92, Sports News, p19: **Welsh relish Irish ambush**; Frank Keating.

of an Irishman and the importance of the Irish/Welsh rugby matched being played: “very Irish”.

Further examples of this in *The Guardian*’s sport reporting include complaints about the so-called “Irish granny rule” in international sport ³². The use in the Irish international soccer team of players from the Irish diaspora rather than from Irish people in Ireland as characterised as unfair and cheating. One report states “The Irish Exiles [a rugby club based in Britain] have been added to the Inter-Provincial Championship in an attempt to garner any talent available in *English* club rugby” (emphasis mine) ³³. This attitude is reflected in the *Daily Telegraph* where the Irish Exiles are referred to as “Anglo-Irish” and “Anglos” ³⁴. In another report, the name Irish Exiles is called “the clumsiest of labels” and the etiquette where “Anglo-Irish is not permissible” is criticised ³⁵. These comments reflect the non-recognition by the *Daily Telegraph* of the usage of the term ‘Anglo-Irish’ to signify Irish Protestants of English descent.

Such attitudes are further apparent in complaints about a UEFA ruling, reported in *The Guardian*. This ruling means that club teams can only field a maximum of three non-national players, out of a total of five for any one match, in inter-Europe club matches. This means that English clubs can not field more than three of their Irish, Scots or Welsh players in any such match: *The Guardian* dismissively refers to them as “so-called assimilated players” implying that they are not different from the English ³⁶. This is a curious inversion of the characterisation of *Other*, but it is very much related to it: it displays a need to assimilate the Irish (and Scots and Welsh), to deny their separate ethnicity. An exception to this is a commentary piece by Alan Massie, reflecting on nationality in sport ³⁷:

The question of nationality, and more particularly of what constitutes a national qualification in different sports, is a shadowy area. This is obviously so within the British Isles, where different nations co-exist in the same state, or, as in Ireland, straddle the boundary between the states. But it is equally so in the southern hemisphere...

although this is far from a resolution of the issue. What this argument over nationality/ethnicity reflects is a fear of the *Other*, as represented, in this case, by the Irish or ‘Irishness’. The Irish in Britain must be assimilated because of the danger they symbolise. These articles refuse to recognise the possibility that there exists a second or

³² The Guardian 28-11-92, Sports News, p18: **Townsend lays claim to the middle ground**; Cynthia Bateman.

³³ The Guardian, 14-09-92, Sports News, p16: **Selectors find new clues**; Ian Malin.

³⁴ Daily Telegraph, 12-09-92, Sport5, p35: **Exiles give Irish stew a hefty stir**; John Mason.

³⁵ Daily Telegraph, 14-09-92, Sport8, p38: **New Zealand pair show the Irish how best to use skills**; John Mason.

³⁶ The Guardian, 18-09-92, Sports News, p18: **United can wipe egg from face**; Stephen Bierly.

³⁷ Daily Telegraph, 15-01-92, p19: **COMMENTARY**; Alan Massie.

third generation of Irish people in Britain. The use of parentage or grandparentage to claim a nationality is seen as cheating the realities of life in Britain. Such an attitude assumes that Irish ethnicity is available only to those born in Ireland, and hence implies that Irish culture and distinctiveness are illusory outside of the island of Ireland. Such assumptions directly reflect Hornsby-Smith's observation that "assimilation is regarded as a process in which both cultural and structural differences between the immigrant group and the indigenous population are progressively reduced over time" (1988: 521). These articles reflect the belief that Irish people in Britain, and particularly any children they may have, will become English/British. However, as will be demonstrated below, this assumption can be readily overturned. The Irish are denied their difference, yet are constructed as *Other*, enabling their definition as a "somewhat peculiar minority" (O Tuathaigh, 1985: 13).

6.7 Constructing Ireland as Other

In the previous chapter, one of the travel features referred to was for a city break to Dublin: as an urban landscape, Dublin became a metropolitan caricature of Irish stereotypes (see chapter 5, 5.2.2) ³⁸. Another example of describing the Irish urban landscape as abnormal was the description of Belfast as a "wilderness" (see chapter 4, 4.4) ³⁹. However, depictions of Ireland in travel features tend to concentrate on the rural landscape. Ireland is described as a green and rural utopia, where characteristics of Britain's rural past have been retained. In this sense, such depictions of Ireland are reverse images of the dystopian Ireland discussed in the section on Catholicism (section 6.4).

In such articles, all the newspapers surveyed used the term *mainland* to refer to Britain, echoing the terminology used in reports from Northern Ireland. The use of *mainland* is significant, because it denies the existence of international borders which separate the Republic of Ireland from the United Kingdom, as well as giving the land mass of Britain somewhat greater status than that of another island in the Atlantic. In this way, attitudes expressed towards Ireland, which frequently emphasise Irish society's inherent differences from British society, as discussed above, are somewhat paradoxical. The boundary between the two 'imagined nations' (Miles, 1993) is both recognised and denied: the political boundary is ignored through references to the mainland, while the cultural differences are emphasised.

³⁸ Daily Telegraph, 05-09-92, Weekend supplement, pxxiv: **The home of black pints and polished prose**; Paul Gogarty.

³⁹ Daily Mirror, 04-11-92, pp20-1 and p26: **Whatever happened to the last, best chance for PEACE?**; Mary Riddell.

An editorial in *The Guardian*, responding to the withdrawal of the previous day's edition by its Irish distributors is both pompous in its hopes to have assisted Irish people, and ignores the political border between the Republic of Ireland and the UK (see example 8, Appendix 6) ⁴⁰:

And here's the issue for us. The Guardian is a British newspaper, operating under British law. The advertisement in question offered help in Britain. It's an impossible Europe that imposes random midnight airport bans in such circumstances. The deed reveals the absurdity. And if that absurdity is of any help to Irish people pondering constitutional change, then those thousands of copies may not have gone to the warehouse in vain.

The assertion by the editorial that because *The Guardian* is a "British newspaper, operating under British law" rests on the assumption that British law has weight in another country, and, therefore it was wrong for the edition in question to be withheld. This ignores the differences in Irish law, which (at that time) banned the dissemination of information regarding the procurement of an abortion. While *The Guardian's* editorial staff may have disagreed with this position, along with many Irish people, this does not change the facts of Irish law as they were then, and the separate constitutional status of the Republic of Ireland (the ruling regarding the dissemination of information about abortion was based on an amendment to the constitution in 1983).

The lack of recognition of political boundaries is particularly evident in the text accompanying a travel offer in the *Daily Telegraph* ⁴¹. It seems to be peculiarly unaware of the political geography of the area. The article is headlined "BRITAIN IN BLOOM", although the itinerary includes stops in Waterford and Dublin. In addition, the application of term "British Isles" is somewhat unique:

Early summer in the West of the British Isles *and Ireland* is a spectacularly beautiful time....With so much beauty so close to hand it is surprising how few of us have explored Ireland, the Scottish West coast and their nearby islands. No doubt the complicated geography and the practical travel arrangements often get in the way, leading many to elect for an *overseas* visit. (emphases mine)

The writer promises the reader that "Ireland will also be at its best, offering a countryside *so intensely green that it is quite unlike anywhere else*" (emphasis mine). The confusion over Ireland's political status is added to by the *Daily Telegraph's* placing of news from the Republic of Ireland on its 'News' pages, which carry domestic news. A further example of this is another travel feature in the *Daily Telegraph*

⁴⁰ The Guardian 22-05-92, Leader Page, p24: **Missing in a mist**.

⁴¹ Daily Telegraph, 04-01-92, Telegraph Magazine, p19: **BRITAIN IN BLOOM**; Robert Pearson, gardening correspondent.

on the Republic of Ireland which appears under the page heading “TRAVEL: ON HOME GROUND”⁴².

A typical feature of articles on Ireland is the assumption that alcohol is ubiquitous. While in chapter five (section 5.2.2), the relationship of Irish people to alcohol was discussed, here alcohol appears as part of the tourist experience, and becomes a definitive element of the Irish holiday, along with other features such as traditional music and ‘the craic’⁴³:

There were fiddlers swapping tunes on the bridge over the Aille River as I walked into the village, accordion players twiddling away on the benches outside McGann’s pub. A glass of creamy-headed black stout stood at every elbow.

Ireland becomes unique for its retention of an older, more rural lifestyle. This includes a perception of Irish people in Ireland as particularly welcoming, jovial and tolerant: “In the Republic [of Ireland], nothing is treasured so much as the right to eccentricity”⁴⁴. A travel feature in the *Daily Mirror* similarly concentrates on alcohol, amongst other classic images of Ireland⁴⁵. Although the reader is assured that Ireland is not “set in some quaint emerald aspic”:

What endeared us most was the CRACK: convivial evenings of booze, banter and traditional music.

The skirls and laments still echoed in our heads as we rolled through the West’s brooding, lonely landscapes.

Ireland may not, indeed, be set in “emerald aspic”, but it is clear that the images of Ireland which these British newspapers use are of a green, rural idyll where Guinness is the usual drink and traditional music readily available. While the political separation of the Republic of Ireland is ignored, Ireland simultaneously becomes an imagined landscape upon which British readers and journalists can project their fantasies of a rural freedom no longer available in modern, urban Britain. The British visitor can readily become part of ‘the craic’, identified as an important element of Irish culture, thereby asserting the essential similarity of the Irish (their culture is easy to understand and mimic) and denying any real cultural difference, while simultaneously emphasising difference (‘the craic’ is unique to Ireland).

⁴² Daily Telegraph, 28-03-92, Weekend supplement, p xv: **Now Dublin is putting its houses in order**; Hugh Messingberd.

⁴³ Daily Telegraph, 02-03-92, Weekend supplement, p xvii: **Ruins that recall the glory days**; Christopher Somerville.

⁴⁴ The Guardian, 25-01-92, Weekend, p10: **Irish Diary: The crack that counts**; Campbell Armstrong.

⁴⁵ Daily Mirror, 26-09-92, pp28-9: **Booze, banter and brooding hills**; Neil Sowerby.

6.8 Conclusion

Chapter 5 provided a deconstruction of the behavioural and symbolic stereotypes of 'Irishness' apparent in the four newspapers surveyed for this research (*Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Sun*). These stereotypes, however, are but one aspect of the racialization of the Irish in the British press: this chapter has demonstrated how the Irish are portrayed in opposition to Englishness in particular and Britishness in general. Thus Irish and English come to signify equally mythic but bipolar opposites (Barthes, 1993[1957]; Brah, 1996). Hence Irish is constructed as *Other* (Beauvoir, 1949) to English. Such representations of Irish and English/British form commonsense understandings founded on bipolarity: Irish becomes a negation of British/English and is thus naturalised as inferior (Hall, 1982). At the same time British, and especially English, is naturalised as superior.

One of the ways in which this is achieved is through the signification of the Irish as an internal *Other*. While paradoxical, this is based on the assumption that Ireland is not really alien, in the way that Africa or the Caribbean are assumed to be, and rests on two issues: Ireland's peculiar colonial relationship with the imperial power, enacted through the 1801 Act of Union and the 1921 Government of Ireland Act, which created partition of the island; the recognition that while Irish people are 'white', their skin colour is not a badge of shared identity but a (sometimes) dangerous camouflage. Another strategy is through the description, not necessarily caricatured, of encounters between British/English people and Irish people. In such cases, the English person (as it usually is), signifies the essential elements of 'Englishness': characteristics such as fairness, honour and bravery, generally displayed in opposition to the Irish reverse ('Irish' equating with backward), and culminating in a moral, if not actual, victory for the English person, thereby re-emphasising the moral superiority of the English over the Irish.

These projections of Irish as the reverse image of British/English are predominantly found in particular types of articles in the press. The dominant themes of such articles are not simply the characterising of Irish people through stereotypes, although this is present and important, but the delineation of British/English people as displaying characteristics which are the converse of 'Irish characteristics'. The British/English are shown to be brave, heroic, and unwitting yet honourable in the face of Irish deviousness: characteristics which draw upon an understanding of what it is to be British/English. Part of this conception clearly emanates from not only the imperial past but the normative representations of the British people during the Blitz of the Second World War. What is of concern is that this version of British identity is pitted against an *Other* which is, in the examples here, provided by the stereotypical representations of

the Irish. In this way, these stereotypes move beyond short-hand scripts signifying not just what it means to be Irish (from a British perspective), but British superiority.

In fulfilling the mirror role of *Other*, 'Irishness' straddles the essential paradox of *Otherness*. However, racist taxonomies are opportunistic and often utilise paradoxical signifiers in their descriptions of the *Other* (Banton 1987; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). In the examples discussed here, 'Irish' is a negation of 'British/English'; Ireland is paradoxically both a Catholic dystopia and a rural idyll: "It is not, with Ireland, simply a question of some inscrutable Other" (Eagleton, 1995: 127). Similarly, Irish people are often represented as inferior to British people; but, on occasion, they are represented as musical, good conversationalists and friendly.

Chapter 7 British Television and the Irish

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines selected representations of ‘Irishness’ from British terrestrial television. It is neither an exhaustive nor thorough account regarding such representations, but a preliminary investigation which serves as an accompaniment to the three chapters on the national, daily press (chapters 4, 5 and 6). Constraints of time and resources dictated that a more detailed examination of representations of Irish people and ‘Irishness’ on British terrestrial television was not possible. As with the investigation into representations in the national, daily press, this chapter seeks to establish what, if any, ‘commonsense’ (Hall, 1981) stereotypical, racialized images of the Irish are used and if they can be said to construct the Irish as *Other*.

Due to its visual nature, television operates within different parameters from the press or broadcast radio. This is not to imply that the processes of signification it utilises are unique. As Hall (1982) asserts, it is the wide range of visual signifiers available to television which makes it a particularly good avenue for symbolisation. Televisual imagery appears “to reproduce the actual trace of reality in the images [transmitted]” (ibid.: 76; see also Jakubowicz et al., 1994). In this sense, television becomes the ideological messenger *par excellence*: the medium is thus the message.

Given the dictum ‘seeing is believing’, television attains a credibility which may elude other media formats. Hence, television becomes a prime site of the ‘struggle for meaning’ (Hall, 1982; O’Shaughnessy, 1990). As a visual metaphor of reality - a negotiated reality - popular representations transmitted on television provide an invaluable avenue for the exploration of dominant meanings and myths in society.

This does not infer that the given meanings provided by television are those necessarily adopted by its audience (Hall, 1982; Ang, 1991), although popular culture (including programming and television) is recognised as paradoxical in its functions: “it wins the support of the people while maintaining the power of the dominant groups and the oppression of the people” (O’Shaughnessy, 1990: 90). Therefore, the medium of television has particular ‘significance’ in that it appears to address the individual while being dependent for success on winning the attention of the masses. However, an ideology which seeks to address or ‘interpellate’ the individual (Althusser, 1971; see also Hall, 1981), may be ignored or subverted to generate a new set of alternative meanings (O’Shaughnessy, 1990). But the popular appeal of television in particular suggests that any ideological content is likely to be in a form which is readily available to and digestible by the audience (Ang, 1991).

Unlike the national, daily press, television news in Britain has a legal obligation to be politically neutral. This obligation suggests that any ideological content must, therefore, be deeply ‘embedded’, making television appear to be non-aligned and trustworthy (Hall, 1982). As an ‘ideological state apparatus’ in the wider, less functionalist sense (ibid.) television becomes the ideal channel through which to communicate and construct both a sense of national identity (Barbrook, 1992; Jacobowicz et al., 1994; Schlesinger, 1991) and an understanding of what constitutes *Otherness*. The everyday character of television (Silverstone, 1994) makes television a paragon of ideological dissemination.

Television acts as a unifier through addressing the individual as a member of the collective, normalising and “naturalising” (Hall, 1982) the accepted and expected characteristics of national identity, probably more successfully than any other mass medium. In this very process of naturalising the normative, television defines the unacceptable, the unexpected, the *Other*. Its visual format heightens the sense of a conveyance of reality, which, in turn, acts to “naturalise” its political and ideological messages:

The level of connotation of the visual sign, of its contextual reference and positioning in different discursive fields of meaning and association, is the point where *already coded* signs intersect with the deep semantic codes of a culture and take on additional, more active ideological dimensions (Hall, 1980: 133, original emphasis).

Here, Hall is utilising concepts developed by Chomsky (1965: cited in Greene, 1986) for the analysis of language and grammar rules. In so doing, he suggests that television, as a visual medium, is especially important in that it utilises signs which are already well-established and recognised in a manner which seems to resonate with the underlying essentials of a culture and thereby take on a new significance or become renewed as signifiers (“take on additional, more active ideological dimensions”). This recycling of “*already coded* signs” is at the core of television’s success as a messenger: messages are readily comprehensible through the use of well-known, popular and seemingly ‘natural’ codes and signs “ideological reproduction therefore takes place...inadvertently, unconsciously, ‘behind men’s backs’” (Hall, 1980: 137). The reproduction and re-presentation of preferred or dominant ideological meanings through easily assimilable visual imagery makes television not just a reflection of society and its (shared) understanding of itself, but a tool through which that very understanding can be subtly remodelled and reshaped. Such subtlety is absent in the national, daily press, which is expected to deliver an aligned stance and an overt message in terms of politics (and ideologies).

Within television studies, particular attention has already been accorded to newscasts. There is a wide range of analyses available on the presentation of what is termed as 'terrorism' on television news (see, for example: Alexander & Picard, 1991; Chomsky, 1989; Gerbner, 1991 & 1988; Bassiouni, 1982; Schlesinger, 1991), as well as on the specific representations of the conflict in Northern Ireland (Curtis, 1984a & 1986; Henderson et al., 1990; Miller, 1993 & 1994a; Schlesinger, 1987). It is neither within the scope nor interest of this investigation to add to this extensive body of work. Additionally, it is argued here that the very nature of newscasts, including news from Northern Ireland, serves to make the attainment of any critical purchase on the representations of 'Irishness' (as opposed to the representations of politics and the conflict in Northern Ireland) contained within broadcast news exceedingly difficult. As Berry points out, while "broadcast news reporting incorporates an ideological notion of some form of balance....audiences are in fact unlikely to perceive 'bias' if coverage of an issue rests on an underlying stance such as the need to defeat Hitler" (1990: 231). Or, in this case, the need to defeat the IRA and thereby bring peace to (Northern) Ireland. This suggests that any ideological, stereotyped and racist codes attached to 'Ireland' and 'Irishness', as distinct from ideological messages about 'terrorism' and/or politics in Northern Ireland, are so deeply 'embedded' (Hall, 1982) that a much broader and more in-depth analysis would be required than the primary interests of this research permits.

Instead, this chapter examines six fiction programmes selected from a body of data collected from the four terrestrial television channels over a three month period (mid-September to mid-December, 1993). Data collection was simultaneous with data collection for the newspaper survey; originally it was intended that the two media aspects would be contemporaneous, but this proved unrealisable, due to the different modes of collection (i.e. use of Colindale Newspaper Library versus videotaping). All programmes videoed, including these five, were advertised, prior to transmission, as containing an 'Irish' storyline, plot, sub-plot or theme. While a wide range of programmes was collected, it was eventually decided to concentrate on fictional pieces, because of the difficulties of detecting embedded codes in factual programmes (ranging in scope from *Panorama* to *One Man and His Dog*), which were more likely to appear neutral in the representation(s) of 'Irishness'. In other words, in such programmes, the "already coded" signs would be readily interacting with "the deep semantic codes" (Hall, 1982: 133) of the dominant, popular culture, but at a deep and difficult to deconstruct level. Eco (1992) has commented on the pitfalls of engaging in such analyses and the likely overinterpretation which would arise.

In total, eight works of fiction were included in the data collected. Two of these, *Love Lies Bleeding* (BBC2) and *The Miracle* (Channel 4), have been excluded from analysis because they are essentially Irish perceptions of Ireland and ‘Irishness’. The five remaining programmes are detailed in Table 7.1 below:

Table 7.1: channels and dates of transmission of programmes examined

Programme	Channel	Date shown
<i>Circle of Deceit</i>	ITV	16-10-1993
<i>Hear My Song</i>	Channel 4	21-10-1993
<i>Michael Winner’s True Crimes</i>	ITV	30-10-1993
<i>The Magician</i>	ITV	27-11-1993
<i>Between the Lines</i> , “Big Boys’ Rules”, parts 1 & 2	BBC1	14-12-1993, 21-12-1993

It should be noted that only one of these six selected for analysis does not contain a theme, plot or sub-plot involving the IRA. This dramatic device (inclusion of the IRA) provides the main theme for two programmes (*Circle of Deceit*; *Michael Winner’s True Crimes*) and is used to add dramatic tension to the other three (*The Magician*; two episodes of *Between the Lines*).

7.2 Circle of Deceit

This is essentially a thriller, produced for television by Yorkshire Television (1993), with a length of approximately two hours. It is similar to an earlier, serialised thriller, *Harry’s Game*, in that the main plot centres around an Englishman who is sent as a spy to Northern Ireland. He is ultimately betrayed by the British security forces and uncovered as a spy by the Republicans on whom he is spying. It should be noted that the title of the drama is underlined in sequential colours: green, white and orange, the colours of the flag of the Irish Republic, thereby associating the tricolour with the IRA (an association frequently sought by the IRA itself: the tricolour is laid on the coffins of dead IRA members).

7.2.1 Plot outline

John Neil (Denis Waterman) is an army member, possibly in the SAS. While based in Germany, his family are killed in an IRA bombing of a circus. The bomb explodes just as Neil arrives to join his family at the circus. This becomes a key event for the character: Neil has recurring ‘flashbacks’ (of events on the day of the bombing from which he was absent) and is thus defined as tragic, a loner trying to come to terms with

arriving too late to either save his family or die with them. This is the only background information on Neil with which the viewer is provided: there is no information regarding his actual work, although on the day of the bombing, he is seen telephoning his wife from an office. After the bombing, Neil spends two years in isolation in a cottage, seemingly without amenities, in a rural area, ostensibly England.

At the end of this two year period, Neil is called up to go undercover to Northern Ireland, using the identity of a dead Irishman, Jackie O'Connell. O'Connell was previously involved on the fringes of the IRA, and is from the Falls area of Belfast, which he left when sixteen. His long absence from Northern Ireland is partly used to justify sending Neil to Belfast as an impersonator, since it is presumed (wrongly) by Neil's army handlers that Neil's London accent will not pose a problem. Neil's aim as an undercover agent is to win the trust and confidence of Liam McAuley (Peter Vaughan), who is a leading member of the IRA, and thereby discover the date and place of a forthcoming and large arms shipment from Libya.

This Neil achieves in several ways: he gains the acceptance of Father Fergal (Ian McElhinney) as Jackie, Fergal's long-lost brother; he provides the IRA with bombs; he rescues Eilis McAuley (Clare Higgins) and her son from a loyalist attack on their home; he begins a relationship with Eilis. These last two are the keys to O'Connell/Neil gaining the trust of Liam McAuley, although not his confidence: information regarding the shipment is gained through eavesdropping and electronic surveillance.

Neil is finally unmasked to the McAuleys as a spy at the climax of the film: Eilis discovers him bugging her father's study, with the dead body of Dessie Gill (Colm Convey), an IRA member who was suspicious of 'Jackie O'Connell', on the floor; one of the McAuley sons discovers from O'Connell's London neighbour that the real Jackie O'Connell retained his Belfast accent; Liam McAuley, acting on information from his grandson Michael, discovers Dessie's body in a barn. However, Neil is airlifted to safety at the last moment, in the course of a sanctioned attack on the McAuley's summer house: Eilis is tragically shot dead by her father.

7.2.2 Analysis

The choice of Denis Waterman as the lead provides a figure with whom the audience can readily identify. Known in particular for his role as Terry in the long-running series *Minder*, the character Waterman plays here (John Neil) displays similar characteristics: working class, a bit of a lad (in the past), tough but emotionally 'open' to the viewer (but not to the other characters, from whom Neil's emotions are closed off). This last is achieved through the use of 'flashbacks', indicating Neil's continued anguish over the

deaths of his family. The flashbacks occur particularly at moments of pressure or emotional crisis, and are used to inform the viewer of both Neil's current emotional state as well as a continual reminder of this key event in his past. It is important that this was an IRA bombing, since it provides an element of revenge: this aspect of the drama is brought into further focus when Liam McAuley, confiding in Jackie O'Connell (Neil's assumed identity), reveals that he was responsible for that bombing.

While Neil too is a member of a military organisation and involved in subterfuge on its behalf, his character is constructed in direct contrast to the men of the McAuley family, all of whom are members of the IRA (with the exception of Michael, Eilis' young son). The McAuley men are depicted as emotionally cold, unquestioningly dedicated to the IRA and as middle class (the family house is large and there is a large family summer house, big enough to accommodate some twelve to fifteen people). This is particularly true of Liam McAuley (Peter Vaughan), who is portrayed as Neil's opposite: he celebrates the death of his son, Seán, who is shot dead by British soldiers, whereas Neil still grieves for his own son; he is blindly dedicated to the IRA cause, whereas Neil is seen to ultimately reject his handlers who, by failing to convey information about the attack on the McAuleys' holiday house, have betrayed him.

The McAuley men are thus portrayed as completely devoted to the IRA's 'cause', to the point where the death of Seán McAuley is seen by them and other mourners at his funeral as an heroic sacrifice in the name of the 'struggle'. Eilis is the only family member seen to mourn Seán's death. In contrast, her father (Liam) relishes the sacrifice made by Seán and suggests that Eilis' son, Michael, should be willing to make a similar sacrifice, when he is older. His oration at Seán's graveside, to the background noise of an overhead (Army) helicopter, concentrates on IRA rhetoric, rather than the loss of his son. It is a political speech, not a funeral oration: Seán appears to be absent from his father's thoughts, other than as an IRA 'volunteer'.

The portrayal of the male members of the McAuley family uses the stereotype of the cold, psychopathic IRA killer (Hill, 1987). This is particularly the case with Liam, who is the most developed character of the male McAuley family members. The McAuley family is depicted as existing solely for the 'cause' of the IRA: no family background is provided; a Mrs McAuley never appears, nor is she spoken of. Liam McAuley is depicted as a domineering patriot, devoted to the IRA, and determined that his children and grandchild shall be likewise involved.

This is not a complex drama: it draws on the same territory as "Harry's Game", but within a much shorter time frame. The morality of the plot is simple and clear: John Neil is obliged to agree to act as an IRA infiltrator not just because of his SAS/army

membership but because a) by preventing the armaments delivery lives will be saved and b) removing Liam McAuley from power within the IRA will secure Michael's future (Eilis' son who Liam wishes to indoctrinate: McAuley is depicted as a corrupting influence on his grandson, Michael, seeing him as a replacement for his own, dead son, Seán). However, there is a suggestion that he will get revenge for his family's deaths when Liam McAuley reveals that the last bombing in which he was personally involved occurred in Germany two years ago, the time when Neil's family died. Importantly, there is no suggestion from Neil himself that he is seeking revenge, contrasting him with the McAuley men who believe that they are entitled to carry out their campaign of violence. It is for the viewer to assume that Neil's infiltration of the McAuley family will result in the deaths of his family being avenged.

The film is constructed as a revenge drama (assisted by Neil's frequent 'flashbacks', regularly reminding viewers of the exact details of the bombing), but with a reluctant avenger as lead. In this way, Neil's reluctance demonstrates his superior morality to the McAuleys, including Eilis, who fails to accept his offer of another life away from her father, acceptance of which would pre-empt her fears about Michael's possible indoctrination by Liam McAuley. Throughout the film, the familial bond with the IRA is emphasised through the struggle between Liam and 'Jackie' to be a father figure to Michael, Liam's exhortations to Eilis to leave the housing estate where she lives and return to the family home, and Seán's funeral. The connection of the McAuley family to the IRA is constructed as familial and, therefore, genealogical.

It is important to note here that the role of Father Fergal is emphasised as central to Neil's success in being accepted by the community, including the McAuley family. Randal, Neil's prime handler, comments that using Jackie O'Connell as a cover is ideal because "the IRA aren't the most trusting chaps in the world. But the brother of a priest, their own parish priest, could go anywhere". This directly links Catholicism with the IRA, suggesting that Catholicism has a special place within the IRA, rather than the likelihood that IRA members are Catholics. It implies that being perceived as the brother of the parish priest will, in itself, give 'Jackie' access to which he would not otherwise have recourse.

The main female character in the drama, Eilis, serves as both romantic interest and to demonstrate the futility of the IRA cause. In the penultimate scene, she is accidentally shot through her left breast by her father as she watches Neil leave in a helicopter. Her death emphasises both her role as an Irish parallel to Neil's dead wife, also killed by Liam McAuley, and her role as "the mother of all sorrows", which Neil ironically calls her when she discovers him bugging her father's meeting room. That she is shot in the heart/breast emphasises her roles as mother (to Michael) and lover (to Neil) and her

failure in both these roles: the penultimate scene ends with suggestion that Michael will become an IRA member; Neil leaves her behind as he escapes from Northern Ireland. The shooting of Eilis is a strong visual metaphor, which signifies the futility of the IRA cause and its consumption of those who are involved in it, as well as her physical femaleness and its destruction by the IRA cause (symbolised by the shot through the breast). Unlike the death of Seán, this is a death for which Liam McAuley grieves: this could be because Eilis is particularly dear to him; or because it was accidental and therefore not a 'sacrifice' (for the cause) in his eyes; or because this is a death which he has personally witnessed.

John Neil is constructed for the viewer as an everyday, English hero (working class origins, membership of the SAS). Liam McAuley is, in contrast, a ruthless killer, ostensibly middle class and obviously Irish. While the McAuleys plant bombs, killing innocent people at a distance, Neil kills Dessie Gill, an IRA member, with one blow. His personal dilemmas (his relationship with Eilis; providing bombs for the IRA) and tragedy (loss of family in IRA bombing) appeal to the viewer to associate with him and invite empathy: conversely, Liam McAuley's character is repellent, inviting the viewer to reject him and welcome his destruction. Unlike Neil, he is willing to sacrifice his family to a cause, attempting to indoctrinate his grandson and celebrating, rather than mourning, his son's death.

7.3 Michael Winner's True Crimes

This programme is a series which is correctly defined as drama documentary (Kerr, 1990: although it arguably contains features of what Kerr defines as documentary drama), rather than as fiction *per se*. It is included in these analyses, however, because it uses reconstructions of events, at least some of which are partially, if not wholly, fictionalised. The series is presented by Michael Winner: the use of familiar presenters in programmes of this type is done "to authorise their fictions" (ibid: 86).

7.3.1 Plot outline

This episode of *Michael Winner's True Crimes* is a reconstruction of the events surrounding the Brighton Bombing and the subsequent police enquiry, which culminated in the arrest and conviction of Patrick Magee. Michael Winner serves as narrator for the programme: he is filmed sitting in an armchair reading from a large, red, leather-bound book. The reconstruction of events is chronological, beginning with the bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton and following the subsequent police investigation. Scenes of the police discussing the case or engaged in routine aspects of the investigation are intercut with fictionalised scenes of IRA activities, including the

planting of the Brighton Bomb and meetings in Belfast and Glasgow to plan other bombings in Britain. Throughout, Michael Winner provides a voice-over narrative which emphasises the efficiency and dedication of the police.

7.3.2 Analysis

The programme itself is sensationalist in its interests in the bombing and the following investigation, but relies on the knowledge (shared with the viewer, and ‘revealed’ in the introduction) that the police investigation was successful. There are three elements to the programme of particular interest to this research: the emphasis on Catholicism; the depiction of Patrick Magee and the IRA; dramatic tension created by the unravelling of the plot.

The emphasis on Catholicism is made by the framing device of Winner, reading as he ends and begins the programme in his role as narrator. He calls the Brighton bomber, in his introduction, “the latter-day Guy Fawkes”. Fawkes is also referred to in Winner’s conclusion: “The original Guy Fawkes was hung, drawn and quartered. The Brighton Bomber may one day walk the streets again, a free man. But he will celebrate his seventieth birthday before that happens”. Additionally, the parallel between Patrick Magee and Guy Fawkes is alluded to through Winner’s references to the IRA’s “plots”.

Patrick Magee and the IRA are depicted as cold, ruthless and uncaring: in reference to other planned bombings about which Magee is interrogated after capture, Winner states: “Thousands of lives were at risk, but Magee was totally indifferent”. Magee and his fellow IRA members are contrasted with the English policemen who are conducting the investigation into the Brighton bombing. The policemen are dedicated and methodical. In contrast, one of Magee’s fellow IRA members is referred to as “a manic depressive and possibly the most ineffective IRA man ever”; similarly, Magee is called “too clever for his own good” because “By choosing the name Roy Walsh [an IRA prisoner whose name Magee used to book in to the Grand Hotel], he had drawn attention to himself”. The culmination of the police investigation is depicted as inevitable: “But perhaps Magee had been a marked man, right from the start” (this refers to Magee’s amputated small finger).

The dramatic tension of the programme is created by the frisson between the certain knowledge that the police investigation is successful, and the revelations of the planned seaside bombings and the police attempts to prevent them. The police investigation is shown as masterful and all-knowing: the police are described as having a “Scotland Yard file containing twenty thousand fingerprints of known IRA suspects”; the police apparently have no great difficulty in discovering that Patrick Magee is the person

responsible for the Brighton bombing, and know the details of his background. This includes the details that he neither drinks nor has an Irish accent. Despite this, the Brighton bomber, Patrick Magee, is shown ordering a bottle each of vodka and coke from his hotel room just after planting the device; the scenes set in Northern Ireland both feature alcohol as central motifs. The first is a meeting attended by Peter Shelley, a senior IRA figure under RUC Special Branch surveillance: he is discussing Donald Craig who has become “a problem” and is shown drinking. The next scene is set in a public house, where a traditional music is being played.

Magee’s membership of the IRA, despite his English accent, is explained by his birth place of Northern Ireland and the fact that “when he was nineteen he returned to Northern Ireland and joined the IRA”. Unsurprisingly, there is no attempt in the programme to discuss or even dismiss IRA ideology. Instead, the programme makes a simple delineation between good (English/police) and evil (Irish/IRA), becoming a morality play in which good, as always, triumphs.

7.4 The Magician

This is another film made for television distribution. Here, the main focus of the story is on an alleged counterfeiting plot, but there is a sub-plot involving the IRA. This adds an element of danger and further suspense to the main storyline. As with *Circle of Deceit*, it is a thriller, of approximately two hours length.

7.4.1 Plot outline

The Magician is billed as being based on a true story about a police operation to stop a “flood of almost undetectable counterfeit currency”. An American businessman, David Katz (Jay Awacone), is offered, by chance, an opportunity to buy counterfeit sterling currency. He contacts the police and becomes deeply involved in the subsequent police investigation, to the extent that he is affecting decisions about the course of the investigation; as a result of his involvement, his marriage fails. However, Katz secures one million in counterfeit dollar notes from the master forger, whom the police do not capture.

The master forger, Leonard Cox (Walter Sparrow), is presumed by the police to have been killed by accident in an IRA bombing. This is revealed, early on in the film, to have been a staged death. While the police are trying to entrap the forgers, an unnamed Irishman (Seamus Newham) tries to contact The Magician (Jeremy Kemp). The Magician is the head of the distribution network, and has sole access to the forger, Cox. He kills Herbie (Peter Howitt), a member of the distribution network set up by The Magician, who refuses to co-operate with him. When he eventually meets The

Magician, just after the latter's escape from the police, the Irishman tells him "My brief is to bring you back". The Irishman is not aware that The Magician is not the forger.

In the final scene, David Katz leaves in a black cab (a visual link with the opening scene, in which he is first seen in a black cab): the written epilogue, superimposed over a still of Katz informs the viewer that : "Some months later counterfeit dollar bills began turning up in Europe. They were of such high quality that US Treasury officials admitted: "they made the hair on the back of our necks stand up".

7.4.2 Analysis

This drama uses the IRA to introduce excitement and tension. The involvement of the IRA is introduced in two ways: the prologue links the police investigation into the counterfeit money to "an IRA mainland bombing campaign" by suggesting that the police were more concerned by the former ("but the authorities were in no doubt as to which they considered the greater threat"); it is revealed, at the beginning of the film, that the death of Leonard Cox in an IRA bombing was faked, presumably with the co-operation of the IRA. Only later is his part in the counterfeiting ring revealed.

Despite the above two linkages with the IRA, no other direct connection with the IRA is mentioned. Instead, it is for the viewer to assume that the Irishman, identifiable as such through his accent alone, who appears in the latter part of the drama is a member of the IRA. His membership of the IRA is hinted at, rather than overtly stated. The scene before his first appearance in the film, shows Katz listening to the radio news in his car:

[*Fade-in*] "...after two devices exploded in a crowded shopping centre. A police spokesman said it was a miracle more people hadn't been hurt. In a statement this morning, the prime minister said by continuing their attacks on soft, civilian targets, the IRA would quickly lose what..." [*cut to shot of cable car*]

The next four scenes all directly or indirectly involve the Irishman (listed in the cast as "IRA man"), trying to make contact with the counterfeit currency distribution network. At no point is his membership of the IRA mentioned, but his Irishness is alluded to, in the second of these scenes:

Scene> *The Magician and Des Hibbert* [a member of the distribution network] *are meeting in an underground carpark, exchanging real for counterfeit money. They are sitting in The Magician's car.*

Magician: You had any, er, anyone sniffing around recently?
Des: Like who?
Magician: Like, anyone asking to speak to you?
Des: Like who?
Magician: Like, anyone with a big, thick, Irish accent?
Des: Oh, Paddies! What would they want to talk to me for?
Magician: I dunno. Couple of other operators said they might be sniffing around.

What is of interest here is the reference by the two men to “they”, suggesting an organised group. It is clear that “Irish” and “Paddies” refer to the IRA. This strategy is used again, later on in the film, by both the criminals and the police.

After a confrontational scene between Herbie (Peter Howitt), a member of the distribution network, and the Irishman, Des discovers Herbie's body. In the following scene, Des angrily informs The Magician that “It was the Paddies! Bloke was seen going out after him”. Towards the end of this scene, The Magician suggests that both he and Des are now in danger: “It's you they're after now. You, and me”. Again, the references to “Paddies” (plural) and “they” suggest the involvement of the IRA.

The police also make references to the IRA, although, like the criminals, they do not refer to the organisation directly: while briefing Katz on the possible suspects for producing the forgeries George Byrne (Clive Owen) has this to say about Leonard Cox: “He was the guv'nor in his day. If the Irish hadn't blown him up, we'd be knocking on his door”. In this programme, “the Irish” are equated with the IRA by both the police and the criminals.

In a later scene, Byrne meets his superior officer Gration (John Turner) to discuss Katz's background details. His superior decides to go ahead with the planned entrapment of the forgers because: “We need to get the negatives to shut this thing down before the Paddies get their fingers in it”. Until now, there has been no suggestion that the police were aware of any IRA involvement, so the viewer is left to suppose that either Gration is making a reasonable surmise or that he has further information which he does not reveal. However, the police make no further references to either “the Irish” or “Paddies”.

The involvement of the IRA in the storyline ends with the Irishman finally managing to meet The Magician, just after The Magician has escaped from the police. The viewer does not learn the fate of The Magician when the IRA discovers that he is not, after all,

the master forger they have presumed him to be (he does, however, know how Cox achieved his forgeries, and where to find Cox).

What is clear is that throughout this film, the assumption is made that being perceived as Irish, signified by an Irish accent, and aggressive is enough to suggest membership of the IRA. References to “the Irish” and “the Paddies” are made in such a way as to suggest that it is the IRA to which these terms refer. This is facilitated by the linkage made between the appearance of the counterfeit currency and an IRA bombing campaign, in the prologue and by the early revelation that the death of Leonard Cox in an IRA bombing was staged (the viewer sees The Magician viewing a suitable body for the bomb site in an undertaker’s). This is further added to by the newscast to which Katz is listening in the scene before the first appearance of the Irishman: the report, on an IRA bombing, serves as a reminder to the audience of the first linkage made in the prologue between the bombing campaign and the counterfeit currency. There is no direct mention of the IRA by either the Irishman or the criminals. The viewer is left to deduce that because he is Irish and threatening, and from the references to “the Irish” and “Paddies” that he is a member of the IRA. Being Irish, in this television film, is taken to signify membership of the IRA.

7.5 Between the Lines

This was a popular crime series, produced for the BBC. It follows the fortunes of an internal police investigation unit. These two episodes, “Big Boys’ Rules” parts one and two, are from the end of the third series of *Between the Lines*.

7.5.1 Plot outline

Tony Clarke (Neil Pearson) and Maureen Connell (Siobhán Redmond) are members of a special internal investigation unit, which investigates crime and corruption within the police. They are asked to investigate the murder of Declan Harris (Lalor Roddy), identified as a former IRA informant, and apparently killed by the IRA. Prior to his death, Harris had made allegations that he had been threatened by both the IRA and members of Special Branch.

Harry Naylor (Tom Georgeson), recently removed from Clarke’s investigation team, is simultaneously involved in a CID inquiry into the death of an octogenarian civil rights campaigner. It emerges that she was safe-keeping Ministry of Defence documents stolen by her nephew. Naylor compares the fingerprint evidence from the crime scene with Declan Harris’ fingerprints: Harris is revealed to be the murderer.

In investigating Harris' past as an IRA informer, Clarke discovers that a former RUC Special Branch officer, John Deakin (Tony Doyle), was Harris' handler. From this he concludes that Deakin blackmailed Harris into murdering the old woman, and that Harris believed that Deakin was still a member of Special Branch. Clarke views the investigation into Harris' death as a means of continuing a vendetta against Deakin. He persuades Harris' friend, Trevor Bull, who knows Deakin, to act as an informant against Deakin. However, Deakin blackmails Clarke by threatening to publicise the affair that Clarke has been conducting with a secret service operative, Mrs Berridge. In order to safeguard his lover's reputation, Clarke agrees to try to persuade Bull to assume a new identity and emigrate to Australia.

The second episode, and the end of the series, climaxes with a shoot out at Bull's house, in which Bull is killed and Clarke injured. Connell and Naylor are warned of the possible consequences of a confrontation between Clarke and Bull, but fail to arrive in time: Clarke's injuries prevent him from leaving the scene, and he persuades Naylor to give him the gun with which Naylor shot Bull. Clarke is arrested, but due to the intervention of Deakin and Mrs Berridge avoids prosecution.

7.5.2 Analysis

The opening scene of the first episode is of Declan Harris' (the IRA informant) execution: the viewer sees him, hooded, being led through a forest. He is crying and reciting the "Hail Mary", a prayer popularly associated with Roman Catholicism (although it is used in other versions of christianity, for example 'high' Anglican Catholicism). He has an evident Irish accent, which acts as a signifier of IRA involvement. The identity of the murdered man, and his past as an IRA informer are quickly revealed, although who is responsible for his death is not immediately made clear. This scene is used again to open the summary of what has previously happened in the second episode. The opening scene of the second episode similarly deals with Harris' death: it opens with a close up of a coffin draped in an Irish tricolour. This reiterates the relationship established in the opening scene of the first episode between the IRA and Catholicism. Each scene makes the relationship clear through association, rather than directly linking Catholicism with the IRA.

At the beginning of the investigation into Harris' death, Tony Clarke consults a Special Branch officer for background details on Declan Harris. The Special Branch officer attempts to discredit Harris' claims that he was being threatened by Special Branch members by calling him a "pathological liar and piss artist" and implying that he had a drink problem. However, it is important to note that Tony Clarke treats the information provided by the Special Branch officer with scepticism. Therefore, it

appears that while the Special Branch officer is using anti-Irish stereotypes to attempt to discredit Declan Harris, that they are not necessarily granted credibility by the main character (Clarke).

John Deakin is a regular character in the series, involved on the fringes of criminal activity, including crimes perpetrated by members of the police force. It is revealed in this episode that he was, when an RUC Special Branch officer, Harris' handler in Northern Ireland. Harry Naylor further reveals that they were both seconded to RUC Special Branch at the same time. It is thus unclear whether the character played by Tony Doyle (an Irish actor) is intended to be perceived as Irish or not. Deakin does not have a readily identifiable Irish accent; his secondment to RUC Special Branch at the same time as Naylor suggests that Deakin too was seconded from a British force. During the course of this revelation, Naylor warns his colleague, Clarke, to be wary of RUC Special Branch: "It's *another country* over there guv, *they do things different*, you know?" (emphasis mine).

Naylor's view of the Irish as different is re-emphasised during funeral scene (Harris' burial) in the second episode:

Scene> *Naylor looking on at funeral. Clarke leaves graveside, walks over to Naylor. They walk away from the funeral.*

Naylor:	Harris murdered an old woman, which my firm proved. [<i>glances at Clarke</i>] Now he's dead and there's bugger all chance of us pulling the Paddies who 'it 'im. So I'd say it's all square. [<i>Puts cigarette in mouth, lights it</i>]
Clarke:	Lucky you didn't think that way when you were on my firm, Harry.
Naylor:	Mmm, I did. [<i>Takes drag of cigarette, looks at Clarke with a smile</i>] Only I kept it quiet.

This exchange between Clarke and Naylor is interesting. Although it clearly indicates a difference of opinion between them, it is Naylor's view of justice ("So I'd say it's all square") with which Clarke disagrees, rather than his use of "Paddies" to describe the IRA. This is the view of justice to which Deakin, with whom Naylor worked as a Special Branch officer in Northern Ireland, subscribes. When he is blackmailing Clarke, Deakin says of Harris' death: "Harris killed somebody, now he's dead. The books balance, draw a line. It's what everybody wants". Deakin succeeds in blackmailing Clarke by invoking the threat the IRA would pose to Mrs Berridge if she was exposed:

Deakin: It may have already occurred to a shrewd man like yourself. A senior MI5 officer exposed very recognisably to the world would be a target for a spectacular hit by the provisional IRA or any number of terrorist organisations. She'd need protection to the end of her days. And if she'd caused embarrassment that protection might not be fully resourced.
A whole set of bleak prospects for the woman you love.

Analysis of these episodes of *Between the Lines* indicate that certain similarities with depictions of IRA members in two of the previous programmes analyses were present. Harris is identified as a Catholic and as weak, drawing parallels with characterisations in *Circle of Deceit* and *Michael Winner's True Crimes*. The IRA, in the execution scene, are threatening and aggressive, as with the sole IRA member in *The Magician*. Northern Ireland is constructed as another and different country, and Naylor's comment suggests that this case, because of this difference (i.e. the Irish/IRA connection), may be Clarke's downfall. The IRA are invoked as an invisible threat, persuading Clarke to undertake the course of action which culminates in the end of his police career: in the fourth series, Clarke and Naylor have both left the police force, apparently because of the outcome of their last case, i.e. the Declan Harris case.

7.6 Hear My Song

This is a cinema film, made by Vision Productions in 1991 and partly funded by Channel 4; it is a British production, produced for an international cinema audience. Unlike the four programmes discussed above, which involve the IRA, this film provides a completely different representation of Irishness. It is approximately two hours in length, and can be defined as a romantic comedy.

7.6.1 Plot outline

Mickey O'Neill (Adrian Dunbar), is a promoter at an Irish club (Hartley's) in Liverpool, who books singing acts such as Franc Sinatra (sic). This strategy leads to financial difficulties, and the owners of the club threaten to take the commission from Mickey. Mickey promises them that the next act will be popular with both them and the paying public: he reveals that he has booked Josef Locke, the once-famous Irish tenor and now infamous tax exile from Britain (Josef Locke is a real person and these details are factual). However, he will be unable to advertise him as Locke, but will have to refer to him as Mr. X. The opening night is a great success, although Mickey discovers that Mr. X (William Hootkins) is another impersonator. When this becomes known, Mickey loses his position, is bankrupted, and his relationship with his fiancée, Nancy Doyle (Tara Fitzgerald) is damaged.

Mickey returns to Ireland, on a quest to find the real Josef Locke (Ned Beatty), so he can persuade him to sing at Hartley's. In this way, Mickey intends to regain his credibility and his fiancée. The film follows Mickey to Ireland, where he eventually finds Locke in Tullamore (relocated to the coast). He persuades Locke to return, and the night is a great success. Locke successfully evades the police, who are waiting to arrest him on tax evasion charges, and Mickey resumes his romance with Nancy.

7.6.2 Analysis

As already mentioned, this programme is quite different from the four already discussed, in that it is a romantic comedy in which Irish people are the main characters. Indeed, the only non-Irish (English) characters to appear are Mickey's two henchmen and the police. It should be noted that the depiction of the Chief Superintendent from whom Locke originally escaped on tax evasion charges is not particularly favourable, although it is constructed in opposition to the Irish characters. Like Mickey, he is fixated on finding Josef Locke, but has allowed this to become a defining characteristic. He is outwitted by the cunning of Locke on the two occasions he attempts to arrest him for tax evasion. As such, this policeman is a comic foil and a type of 'Keystone Kop'.

The protagonist of the film, Mickey O'Neill, is depicted as a 'chancer'. His childhood self introduces Mickey by saying: "All of us had a difficult childhood, but I think I got away with it!" Throughout the film Mickey 'gets away with it', thereby demonstrating to the viewer that he is gifted with the mythical luck and charm of the Irish: despite many problems and difficulties, Mickey eventually returns to Hartley's triumphant and regains his love object (Nancy Doyle).

The characterisation of Mickey O'Neill is dependent on romanticised Irish stereotypes: his charm, cunning, gift of the gab (exercised in his persuasion of the Ryan women to give him one more chance) and disregard for propriety (his attempt to get Cathleen Doyle to resume her affair with Josef Locke/Mr X, when he knows Mr X is an impostor; his disregard for the law, shared by Josef Locke). However, it is these very characteristics which are responsible for his bankruptcy and downfall, and it is only when he abandons them and tells Josef Locke the real reason for wanting him to sing at Hartley's (albeit under duress) and about the deception of Cathleen Doyle that his quest is successful. Mickey only regains Nancy when, on his return, he tells her that he loves her (he had previously failed to make this commitment, replying "vice versa" when Nancy told him that she loved him, much to her anger).

The situation resulting from Mickey's deception (initially unwitting) of the Ryan women and Cathleen Doyle, Nancy's mother, serves as the framing device for his

journey to Ireland to seek out the real Josef Locke. There he enlists the help of a fellow orphan, Fintan O'Donnell, who is a theatrical agent. It is in the depiction of Ireland and Josef Locke that further Irish stereotypes are utilised.

While Mickey O'Neill is shown as a charming and scheming Irishman, Locke is depicted as irrationally jealous of his privacy, temperamental and aggressive. Such characteristics lead to him initially refusing to speak with Mickey, or to accept a drink from him. When Mickey arrives at his house, to give him a cow which he had bid against Locke for, Locke's housekeeper counsels them against seeing him: "I don't know what you two have done to him now, but he was that angry that he took himself upstairs for a lie-down".

Locke's violent nature is further expanded upon: he takes Mickey out, leaving Fintan to mend his father's clock, and takes him to a deserted tower on a cliff top, where he offers him *poitín*. They walk out into the night, and Jo threatens to push Mickey over the cliff, unless he reveals his real reason for seeking him out. Later, after successfully persuading Locke to travel to Liverpool, Locke says of Mr X "I'll have his bollocks" and further threatens Mickey:

Locke:	You think I trust you, Mickey? [<i>quietly</i>] There's a well in the field out there and no-one knows how deep it is. And if you're trying to pull one on me, like others have done in the past, you'll end up at the bottom of it.
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Locke never exacts any real violence in the course of the film - when he meets Mr X they come to an agreement - but he is depicted as a very aggressive character who has inflicted violence on others, particularly members of the British Inland Revenue (sic). (Incidentally, members of the British Inland Revenue would have no jurisdiction in the Republic of Ireland.)

Ireland is depicted as a rural, green mountainous country. Dublin is Mickey's first call, to meet up with Fintan O'Donnell, but the rest of the action takes place in this green, rural, mountainous countryside by the sea. For this purpose, Tullamore (where they go to seek Locke) is relocated from the central midlands to proximity with a rocky, cliff-bound coast. The visual imagery is thus very important to the overall feel of the film. Once outside of Dublin, the countryside appears mostly uninhabited: virtually the only dwellings shown are a public house and Locke's house; the only people Mickey and Fintan see, apart from those directly connected to Locke, are a man on a bicycle, farmers at a cattle mart, and girls dancing, which further emphasises the rural nature of Ireland; the only motorised vehicles apparent are those of Fintan and Locke.

Ireland is not only depicted as rural and green, but also mysterious or mystical: this is achieved through references to the fairies and an unfathomable well, plus through visual and musical metaphor. When they have missed a turning on the road, Fintan blames it on the fairies:

Scene> Mickey and Fintan sitting on car roof, under an umbrella

Mickey: How could we miss the Tower of Dunagore?
Fintan: There's only one explanation. Take your jacket off.
Mickey: What?
Fintan: Just do as I tell you. Take your jacket off, and turn it inside-out, put it back on again.
Mickey: You're wired to the moon, O'Donnell. What's that in aid of?
Fintan: The fairies. They get you lost on purpose.
Mickey: The fairies?
Fintan: They are bastards.

Cut to Mickey and Fintan travelling in car, wearing their jackets inside out

Mickey expresses incredulity at Fintan's reasoning, but follows his instructions. In the next scene, they successfully come across the Tower of Dunagore. This sense of a mysterious Ireland is added to by the night scenes during which Mickey finally persuades Locke to return with him to Hartley's: the night is luminescent, adding a visualised sense of wonder to the film. After successfully persuading Locke to agree to sing at Hartley's, they return to his home, where Fintan has repaired Locke's father's clock, although he knows nothing about clocks. The musical metaphor for mysteriousness is used in two incidents: the first is when Mickey wakes up on a hillside, and surveys the hilly, green landscape to the sound of soft, lilting music and declares to Fintan "This is the place we're looking for", correctly identifying the locale in which Locke can be found. The second is when Locke takes Mickey out, at the beginning of the night scenes: Locke takes him to look through a window at a scene of girls practising dancing, to the sound of more soft, lilting music. The scene is somehow unreal: the luminescence of Ireland at night and the music added to by the girls' unawareness of being watched.

Additional to the mystical framing of Ireland is a slapstick scene involving the cow Mickey bought for Locke: Locke has told them that there is a well in his field which has no known depth. Mickey, flushed with his success, throws a coin down the well, to hear it splash. This fails and he throws down a rock. Again, no sound is heard. He and Fintan then throw down a large piece of wood, attached to a chain. The chain is then discovered to be attached to the prize cow which Mickey gave to Locke, and they run around trying to save the cow, under the bright light of the moon, which they do at the last minute by breaking the chain with a rock.

This slapstick scene builds on the sense of Ireland as a place not just of mystical wonder, but as a place of the ridiculous. The scene of Mickey and Fintan wearing their jackets inside-out adds to this. But the biggest slap-stick scene occurs when they track down Locke to a public house. Here the viewer is treated to a display of old-fashioned cinematic slapstick as Jo and his 'Boys' effect the extraction of a friend's sore tooth, through the use of whiskey and string. This is also the scene where the Irish drunkard and the Irish brogue are introduced. The drunk is in the bar when Mickey and Fintan arrive, looking for Locke, although the bar is ostensibly closed; when the dental scene ensues, he steals and rapidly drinks from the bottle of whiskey employed as anaesthetic, reducing himself into a stupor. The Irish brogue is introduced by the man with the toothache, and used by the other characters, albeit in a milder version, involved in the scene. The extract below will illustrate:

Scene> Mickey and Fintan are waiting in the public house for Josef Locke. A man staggers in through the back entrance. His head is bandaged.

John James:	Oh would someone, for de love and honour of god get me to a dintist quick for this, this tooth has me driven to distraction!
Barman:	Would you hauld your whist John James, I have the wife asleep up above.
[<i>whispering</i>]	
John James:	Ah, to hell wid yare wife! I'd give two yo lambs and a hank of bacon to the man who could rid me o' this, this torture!

Josef Locke and his 'Boys' emerge from a trap door.

Locke:	What in the name of god and his holy mother's goin' on here? Can a man not have a quiet game of poker?
Barman:	John James needs a lift to the dentist
Locke:	Does he now? Come here John, let's have a look. Oh, it's a big job, John James.
'Boy':	It looks bad.
Locke:	I'll tell you what I'll do. Brendan here used to be a vet. Now, if a man could take the tooth out of a fiery stallion - he could do the same for yourself. Sure, we're all god's creatures.

This is an important scene, which not only adds to the depiction of Ireland as a place of the ridiculous, but which utilises Irish stereotypes such as the drunkard and the Irish brogue. It does not make any addition to the advancement of the plot, but rather serves as a comic interlude, which depends on stage Irishry, including slapstick, for its humour.

The Ireland and 'Irishness' depicted in *Hear My Song* are quite different from the representations featured in the other works of fiction examined here. Most notably, this is the only programme which features the Irish in Britain at all. While Locke is an

aggressive and threatening character, the 'Irishness' depicted is, overall, one that is mystical, ridiculous, and green. In this way, *Hear My Song* is reliant upon racialized stereotypes in its depictions of Irishness, from the dominant women of the Ryan family to the charmer Mickey O'Neill. In this manner, and because much of the plot is developed in Ireland, 'Irishness' is represented as a form of *Otherness*, while Ireland is shown as a mystical and *Other* place.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that the image of the violent, Irish Catholic, irrationally dedicated to the cause of the IRA has strong currency in British television drama. All of the five programmes which use the IRA as the 'Irish' element to their plots were produced for British consumption. Significantly, the one programme (*Hear My Song*) which utilises a different, though equally stereotyping, view of 'Irishness' was originally produced for cinema distribution (a Vision Productions production for Channel 4) and, hence, a wider, international audience.

The findings presented here suggest that the portrayal of the Irish as dangerous, subversive, Catholic terrorists (Catholicism is referred to in *Circle of Deceit*, *Michael Winner's True Crimes* and *Between the Lines*) is one which is assumed to be readily 'natural' (*pace* Hall 1982). While it could be argued that the situation in Northern Ireland has made these representations current and, therefore, acceptable for consumption, it is also argued here that the image of the Irish as IRA is essentially 'naturalised' (*ibid.*) through drama depictions of this kind, so that it has become a part of the landscape of British popular culture. It is this - rather than news events emanating from Northern Ireland *per se* - which permits the use of the IRA as a dramatic device in popular drama. This is particularly the case when this representation is used to add danger and excitement to a drama rather than as an integral element of the main plot (as in *The Magician* and *Between the Lines*). The threat provided by the IRA in these five programmes is essentially presented as the threat of the *Other* in its opposition to British culture and values. Importantly, its repeated use demonstrates that this is seen to be accepted as a credible threat, i.e. the perception that 'Irish equals IRA' is accepted as a truism in British popular culture.

The representation, 'Irish equals IRA', in the five programmes examined here strongly coincides with representations deconstructed from the survey of the national, daily press in chapters four and five, which examined news from Northern Ireland and representations of the Irish in Britain, respectively. This further emphasises the continued currency of the image of the Irish as a violent, subversive, Catholic *Other*. The character of Josef Locke in *Hear My Song* also fulfils this function. Again, such a

finding implies that these particular stereotypes of the Irish (violent, subversive, cunning, irrational, Catholic) are part of the already coded elements of British popular culture (ibid.), which can be readily remodelled and reshaped - hence the parallel drawn between Patrick Magee (the Brighton bomber) and Guy Fawkes, for example. In other words, the representation of 'Irish equals IRA' is an everyday image (Silverstone, 1994) of television, which is seen to be readily acceptable and available to its mass audience. While O'Shaughnessy (1990) states that there are always alternative interpretations to the preferred set of meanings presented in television, it is argued here that the framing of these four particular storylines is such that alternative readings of the role of the IRA are successfully discounted by the development of the plot. In other words, within the contexts provided by the programmes, the development of an alternative set of meanings would be very difficult indeed. The representations of Irish people in these five programmes strongly resonate with representations in British films:

what British films about Ireland maintain is not simply the traditional inclination to portray the Irish as violent but also the inability to provide a rational explanation for the occurrence of violence. Two main attitudes towards violence predominate. In the first case, violence is attributed to fate or destiny; in the second, to the deficiencies of the Irish character. (Hill, 1987:149)

The sixth programme - *Hear My Song* - provides a wholly different setting, being a romantic comedy. Its depictions of Irishness do contain certain positive elements - musicality, victory over adversity and the (English) law. While the image 'Irish equals IRA' is essentially grim and violent, the representations offered here are whimsical. They strongly overlap with the press representations discussed in chapters 5 and 6 (see especially sections 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 6.7). The English policeman appears as the comic relief, and is over-earnest and ridiculous, but this owes more to his role as a policeman (or 'Keystone Kop') than as an Englishman.

The general and popular image of Ireland as a mystical land where the ridiculous is the norm (the 'dentist' scene, for example), is fully applied in this film. This may be partly explained by the fact that this film was originally produced for cinema and, therefore, a wider, international audience. Harry Naylor's assertion (in *Between the Lines*) that "It's another country over there guv, they do things different, you know?" is brought to its full, anti-logical conclusion in this film, where the rural, green and coastal landscape of Ireland is emphasised and the pace and speed of English life contrasted with the mysticism and serenity of Ireland. Here, Ireland is portrayed as the rural and idealised utopian landscape of a lost Britain, while its people are shown to be suspicious, rural, ignorant, drunkards, violent and cunning. The film is light-hearted but it is this very light-heartedness which is used to introduce the stereotypical representations of Ireland and Irishness - again, within the context of the film, there is

little room available to develop an alternative reading. Much of the humour in the film is predicated not on laughing with the Irish characters, but at their ridiculous, frenzied and Irish antics. Antics take place, in the main, in Ireland and are thus dissociated from England and 'Englishness' by this dislocation. Much of the humour is visual and slapstick.

While it is impossible here to be in any way certain of audience reaction to the six programmes analysed above, it must be emphasised that the programmes provide very strong readings. It is argued that these six fulfil Hall's dictum that where visual signs are concerned, the point of contextual reference "is the point where *already coded* signs intersect with the deep semantic codes of a culture" (1982: 133, original emphasis). Indeed, the imagery utilised in these programmes lacks subtlety in its representations of the Irish, suggesting that the meanings being conveyed are acceptable at an overt rather than inferential (Hall, 1981) level to the (target) audience.

Although the number of programmes analysed is small, the strong overlap between these television representations of Ireland and 'Irishness' with those found in the national, daily press suggests that such imagery is indeed 'naturalised' (Hall, 1982) in British popular culture. The intersection of stereotypes buttresses the argument that racialized stereotypes are readily and popularly used in the British mass media which, in turn, suggests that the understanding of the Irish as *Other* has popular comprehension and currency.

Chapter 8 Seeking the Self

Irish people and the British media

8.1 Introduction

Through the acts of watching, listening and/or reading, 'the audience' participates in the production and reproduction of the messages and meanings within the media. The accessibility of the mass media makes it an ideal *de facto* ideological state apparatus (Hall, 1982). The consent necessary for hegemony (Hall et al., 1977; Tetzlaff, 1992) may be attained through the accessibility of ideological messages in the mass media and their "naturalisation" (Hall, 1982) by the media. However, consent is seeming rather than voluntary (ibid.); audiences are not automatically deprived of their critical abilities and simply interpellated (Althusser, 1971) by ideological messages. All audiences engage at some level with the media which they use (Brunsdon, cited in Ang, 1991). While on the one hand it can be said that the successful hegemony relies upon the threat, as opposed to the use, of force or violence (Easthope and McGowan, 1992), on the other, the success of the media as an ideological state apparatus (Hall, 1982) lies in its implication of 'the audience' in the production and the reproduction of commonsense myths.

It has been argued elsewhere that an effect of colonisation is the naturalisation of the coloniser's world view for the colonised (Fanon 1986), to an extent where ethnic minorities themselves may use commonsense myths about their group to explain intergroup practices and behaviours (Tajfel, 1987). Thus to interrogate the myths which comprise the *Other* (Barthes, 1993[1957]) through those labelled or perceived as *Other* is to engage in the dispelling of myths. Commonsense myths as ideologies specify meanings which are often unarticulated but, at the same time, expressed through the parameters of everyday life and lived social relations. This includes the mass media, which is an everyday component of modern society. To ask of those whose everyday realities include being codified as *Other* what they conceive of the representations of themselves which are (re)present in the mass media is to unmask the commonsense mythologies which perpetuate the condition of *Otherness*. The position of being codified as *Other* can provide a unique insight into one aspect of the (re)production processes of the mass media. The lack of distance between commonsense myths and those interpellated by them (when codified as *Other*), enables the interrogation of these myths (but especially the negative myths) by those codified as *Other*. Thus the views of 'the audience' presented here provide an essential counter-balance to the interpretations of the media and the representations of 'Irishness' which have preceded this chapter.

Therefore, the task here is to provide an insight into interviewees' perceptions of the media they watch and read, and their interpretations of the meanings and messages about themselves contained in the mass media products they regularly use. In this sense, their testimonies are neither 'real' nor 'accurate': "demographic tonnage is not the answer" (Davis, 1986: cited in Ang, 1991: 90). The strength of this approach is that it provides a grounded insight into the meanings and messages which have an impact on this Irish audience and which, therefore, they have recalled.

The range and scope of this survey means that the decoding practices and assumptions (Morley, 1986) of this particular audience cannot be examined here. Rather, the testimonies provided here concentrate on the 'what' rather than the 'how'. In other words, this chapter provides testimonies from Irish people regarding their opinions on the meaning(s) and signification(s) which 'Irishness' has in the mass media products which they utilise in their everyday life, rather than examining the processes of watching and the processes of taking up meanings. It is not an exhaustive survey: cinema and video were not discussed in detail, but were subsumed into a question about film in general, and the local press, magazines, theatre and literature were absent. Nonetheless, the scope and the range of issues covered makes this an invaluable insight into both the media uses of a particular ethnic minority, and the responses arising to representations of the group in the mass media. It does not explore the negotiation of identity within and without the group (*pace* Gillespie, 1995); rather it concentrates solely on the interpretation of messages and meanings for an ethnic minority codified as *Other*.

This chapter provides an overview of the responses of a sample of first generation Irish people living in London to the representations of Irish people and the presentation of Irish themes and issues in the mass media which they themselves regularly use. The approach recognises the expert knowledge which lay people (*sic*) may have regarding the accuracy of representations of their own culture(s) and people(s). The chapter provides in-depth detail of interviewees' perceptions of and responses to British, national, daily newspapers (section 8.2), and television (section 8.3), achieved through interrogating interviewees about their reading and viewing habits and their reactions to different sections of their regular newspaper and different programme types. Although interviewees were asked about radio, it was excluded because the interviewees did not 'listen' as such, but used it as a background 'noise', tuning in mostly to music stations, which is a typical, contemporary use of this medium (Crissell, 1991; Seymour-Ure, 1996). In addition, this chapter examines the specific reactions of interviewees to news reports from Northern Ireland (section 8.4), as well as to specific sports events such as

the 1994 World Cup and the Landsdowne riot (section 8.5). Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief discussion of interviewees' responses to film (section 8.6).

Throughout this chapter and the next, the two interview samples (the five pilot interviews and the twenty interviews of the main sample) are discussed together, resulting in a sample of 25, except where pilot interviewees were not asked comparable questions (in these cases, N=20). For the purposes of identification, pilot interviewees are indicated by 'P', plus the interviewee number (from one to five); interviewees from the main sample are similarly numbered (from one to twenty) but are identified by 'S' (see chapter 3, section 3.2.2 for a discussion of the selection of the samples).

8.2 Newspapers

8.2.1 Readership

The most popular paper amongst interviewees was *The Guardian*. In general, men were more likely to read upmarket papers (11) and women downmarket papers (10, including the *Evening Standard*) (see Table 8.1, below). Mid-market papers were the least popular among all interviewees; this is despite the recent success of mid-market newspapers, specifically the *Daily Mail* (Tunstall, 1996). This finding may suggest that Irish readers particularly reject this section of the market. British Sunday papers were not popular either (the most popular being *The Observer* with four regular readers). *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail* were the two papers which interviewees were most likely to specify as a newspaper which they would avoid reading (3 in each case). Four newspapers were not named by any interviewee (*Daily Express*, *Today*, *Daily Star*, *The Sport*). The rejection by interviewees of middle market newspapers and Sunday papers re-emphasises the assumption that the exclusion of these newspapers from the survey of press representations (see chapters 4, 5 and 6) is not disadvantageous to the research.

In general, interviewees had remained loyal to a particular newspaper: reported changes in readership were few. Three interviewees stated that they had stopped buying *The Guardian*, two *The Independent*:

I used to read the Independent, but I was put off it, that's the English Independent, I was put off it when the IRA ceasefire came about because, as much as people can't trust the IRA or any armed force or whatever, they called them Irish bastards in their opening paragraph on the front page. So I stopped reading that, straight away. (S1, male).

This was the only interviewee to provide a reason for changing his newspaper. Another interviewee had given up reading daily newspapers, in favour of Irish language weeklies: "the media which here, you know, gives a very biased opinion on things and is also very well censored, so therefore it is important that I read Irish newspapers,

when I have the time” (S17, female). In general, interviewees, especially men, asserted the importance of news from Ireland (question 4). Despite this, readership of Irish newspapers was low and tended to the irregular (see Tables A and B, Appendix 8).

Table 8.1: type of British newspaper read, by frequency and gender

Market sector	Title	Regularly		Once/ week		Occasion- ally		Never/ avoid	
		M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Upper	<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	1				1			1
	<i>Financial Times</i>	1							
	<i>The Guardian</i>	5	1	1		1	2		
	<i>The Independent</i>			2			1	1	
	<i>The Times</i>	4			1				
Middle	<i>Daily Express</i>								
	<i>Daily Mail</i>		1	1	1			2	1
	<i>Today</i>								
Down	<i>Daily Mirror</i>	1	4					1	
	<i>Daily Star</i>								
	<i>The Sport</i>								
	<i>The Sun</i>		3					2	1
	<i>Evening Standard</i>	1	3	1					

8.2.2 Reporting Irish news

Fifteen interviewees (60%; N=25) stated that reports of Irish news in the British newspapers which they read were neither in-depth nor wide-ranging. Interviewees generally felt that British newspapers tended to report particular types of news from Ireland, namely scandals or news concerning Northern Ireland:

No, not particularly, unless there’s something scandalous [laughs], you know what I mean? If there’s anything about priests, anything derogatory or anything like that. (S9, female)

Interviewees who expressed satisfaction with their regular paper’s reporting of Irish news (3), tended to stipulate that this was exceptional, rather than the norm: “The Guardian does so [reports Irish news] more than any other paper” (S1, male).

8.2.3 Preferred reading

Five interviewees said they did not have a preferred newspaper section: for those who did, there was no discernible pattern of preferred reading. Four interviewees mentioned a news section of some type (although this ranged from international news to news in general, to politics), three arts and two editorials or leaders. Interviewees were asked if they read particular sections of their newspaper(s) (see below and Appendix 1). Only one interviewee did not read the entertainment section of her paper, suggesting that it was the most read section of the newspaper. This finding endorses Seymour-Ure's (1996), observation that newspaper readers' preferences are complex and varied, and that 'hard news' has lost out to entertainment. It appears that the sample conforms to general readership patterns, although the self-perception of readers, in their responses to this question, does not acknowledge this. Such a finding suggests that not only is there a moral hierarchy of programme watching (Alasuutari, 1992), but there is a moral hierarchy which informs readers' self-perceptions of their newspaper reading habits.

8.2.4 Political news

Sixteen interviewees (64%; N=25) considered the newspapers they read to be biased in their coverage of political news from Ireland. News of this kind was thought to concentrate on Northern Ireland, and such reporting was usually considered biased:

it's hard to see any newspaper, English newspaper anyway, as neutral. I always think that they're coming from a, a British standpoint and they always have the government in favour. (S1, male)

Three interviewees stipulated that it was other newspapers, and not their regular read, which were biased; three commented on the absence of reports on Irish political news. Only three interviewees did not read the politics section of their newspaper.

8.2.5 Human interest news

Only one interviewee did not read human interest reports in her newspaper; however, three interviewees stipulated that, for them, the *Irish Post* (a weekly newspaper for the Irish in Britain) was the best source of this type of news. Interviewees who read human interest stories with an Irish angle in their regular paper (84%; N=25), commented on the selectivity of these reports and what interviewees considered to be a negative image of Ireland, dominated by Northern Ireland and the Catholic Church:

It's always mainly to do with what's happening in the North is what you'll read in the newspaper.... You might get something about what's happening in the rest of Ireland, in the Republic like, if there's, you know, about abortion, or about what would be the Kerry Babies cases, or if a priest has died in a brothel. (S7, female)

I think there's, em, they always like to maintain a kind of undercurrent of a holy catholic Ireland, do you know what I mean? It's always sitting there in the background, so to speak. (S15, female)

Interviewees expressed disappointment and frustration with the images of Ireland associated with human interest reports:

I normally find myself getting quite angry with it [the newspaper], throwing it down on the ground, or something like that, you know? (S1, male)

8.2.6 Comment articles

Two interviewees read neither the editorials nor the opinion columns in their newspapers. This offsets the perception that news reading is largely dominated by entertainment-oriented articles. However, six people never or rarely read either the editorials or the opinion columns. Of those who did read these types of articles (18 or 72% in each case), seven could not recall reading an editorial on Irish news or events, while nine could not recall reading an opinion column commenting on Irish news or events. In total, five interviewees could not recall reading either an editorial or an opinion column of Irish interest, suggesting an overlap between these categories in the perception of interviewees.

Five interviewees considered such articles to be politically biased, stating that they considered them to be biased in favour of the British:

Usually very right-wing and biased towards the English. (S2, male)

With particular reference to columnists, five interviewees specifically commented on what they perceived to be the anti-Irish nature of some of the opinion columns and articles which they had read.

At times they have been anti-Irish, totally anti-Irish....They've been offensive. (S7, female)

There's a number of feature writers who'd be almost anti-Irish. (S12, male)

This perception of anti-Irish bias in opinion columns rather than editorials may be in part because columnists tend to have well-established viewpoints and, as two interviewees pointed out (S6, S15), because they are paid to have controversial opinions, including expressing anti-Irish sentiment. A majority of interviewees who could recall commentary pieces on Irish issues rejected the attitudes and opinions expressed. Such articles were perceived as either anti-Irish or pro-British, which may be construed as anti-Irish, or at least not pro-Irish.

8.2.7 Sports reporting

Ten interviewees (40%; N=25) read the sports section of their newspaper of which two were women. Of these, seven said that their newspaper reported Irish international soccer events, including participation in the 1994 World Cup: “Well, the World Cup basically. And, basically, Irish international football” (S6, male). The only other type of sport mentioned was horse-racing, by one interviewee: “Yeah, they do a lot of stuff about the Irish jockeys as well, the big races and stuff” (P3, female). These perceptions may in part reflect the sporting interests of interviewees, but the results suggest that the reporting of Irish sports events is very limited, even at the international level. No interviewee mentioned either rugby union or any particular Irish sports personality.

Four interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the reporting of Irish international soccer. The general consensus was that the British newspapers did not consider second generation Irish players to be *bona fide* Irish: “the British media still call the Irish football team English” (S1, male). This perception of interviewees reinforces the finding in chapter 6 (section 6.6) that British newspapers, and *The Guardian* in particular, did not recognise the ethnicity of second generation Irish soccer players. Two of these interviewees considered that this type of reporting was motivated by anti-Irish feeling:

By the same token, you can detect what all this is about. You know, he goes to certain pubs, he’s a drunkard....There’s a taint of regret in there, you know, ‘load of Paddy bastards coming over and beating us. (S13, male)

The other interviewee who considered that there was an anti-Irish bias in sports reporting was particularly angered by the reporting of the cancellation of the 1994 Grand National because of two false starts: “You can get references to, say, the Grand National - ‘it could only happen in Ireland’ - when in fact it didn’t” (S12, male).

8.2.8 Entertainment

Interviewees were asked whether they read reports about personalities and travel features in the newspaper(s) they read (questions 14-15a). (‘Entertainment’ includes the arts/review sections of the upmarket newspapers (*pace* Tunstall, 1996).) One interviewee did not read entertainment/gossip travel articles: nineteen interviewees (76%; N=25) could recall reading articles which featured Irish personalities or artists. Ten interviewees specifically referred to musicians and Irish music, four to articles connected with television.

Three interviewees complained that successful Irish personalities were apt to be considered or claimed as British: “Well, I suppose the first thing is that they claim Irish

personalities as British” (S14, female). This echoes the perceptions of sports reporting, where Irish ethnicity was not felt to be recognised. Twelve interviewees considered that Irish personalities were not represented in the same manner as their English/British equivalents. In general, this was not seen as a positive differential. Even the five interviewees who initially responded that Irish personalities were not treated any differently from English/British personalities, did perceive differences in representation, but did not consider these as significant:

By and large, yes, [but] probably more affectionately. But that just reflects the general British thing of that, where, where Irish culture’s currently popular, is in vogue at the moment. (S6, male)

In contrast, ten interviewees (40%) said they had never seen a travel article on Ireland in the newspapers they read, although two of these specifically expressed a desire to read this kind of article. Nine of the fifteen interviewees (60%) who had read travel articles about Ireland thought that Ireland tended to be shown in a very positive light: “Oh, I think they always give Ireland a lovely write-up, you know?” (P2, female). But the other six interviewees considered that the image of Ireland tended to be very out-dated and romantic: “It’s probably a very false picture of Ireland, you know?” (S11, female). Bord Fáilte (the Irish Tourist Board) was included in the criticism of representations of Ireland: “They’re trying to sell a leprechaun image of Ireland” (S12, male).

8.3 Television

8.3.1 Viewing habits

Six interviewees admitted to watching a lot of television; the remaining interviewees considered that they watched very little or only a couple of hours television a night. Such levels of self-reported viewing are in line with observations of three plus hours watching a night (reported in Seymour-Ure, 1996 and Tunstall, 1996). Interviewees had a wide range of viewing: those who claimed they watched “very little” television were just as likely to list a large number of programmes as other interviewees when asked what kinds of programmes were they likely to watch. Regular viewing of television does not imply everyday viewing: while interviewees might follow a particular series or soap, they did not necessarily watch every episode. This pattern of viewing has been noted elsewhere: “they did not worry about missing episodes of a serial or series” (Seymour-Ure, 1996: 173).

The most named type of programme was news-based programmes (documentaries, current affairs, politics); this is underlined by the popularity of news amongst interviewees (see Table 8.2, below). However, entertainment programmes (chat shows,

morning television, comedy, light entertainment) were as popular as news-based programmes. This diverges from observations of other audiences, where news dominates, followed by film (Seymour-Ure, 1996).

Table 8.2: Programmes interviewees most likely to watch, by gender

Programme type	Men	Women	Totals
News-based	7	7	14
Entertainment	7	7	14
News	7	6	13
Soaps	4	8	12
Film	4	6	10
Drama serials	2	6	8
Information	4	2	6
Sport	3	3	6

8.3.2 General Perceptions

Irish people were not considered to be represented accurately on television in general (60%; N=25). Six interviewees stipulated that there was nothing which they liked about representations of Irish people on British television. Interviewees referred to stereotypical characteristics: in particular Irish people were seen to be portrayed as violent (7 interviewees), uneducated or stupid (7), or drunk (5):

Well, I don't like it when they portray it that all Irish people are terrorists, we all want to kill and fight. There's some of us who don't believe in violence. It's mainly the stupidity of it, you know, making out we're all stupid and thick. (S2, male)

Six interviewees thought that Irish people were represented accurately: however, these interviewees gave reasons which indicated that they sought out television programmes which featured Irish people and that they considered representation *per se* to be positive:

If there's Irish people on, I always watch it, and I think it's good to see them. (S5, male)

Interviewees generally considered that the negative and inaccurate portrayals of Ireland and Irish people on television did affect the way in which Irish people in Britain were perceived by the majority population. While one interviewee specifically stated that he avoided any programme which was advertised as having an Irish theme or content (P4, male), all the other interviewees at one point or another during the course of the interview emphasised that they sought out such programmes in their viewing. This

suggests that, in general, the viewing of Irish people is very focused and that, despite the overwhelming rejection of representations of Irishness in drama, Irish people seek out such representations. This includes interviewees who considered that the characterisations of Irish people in television drama had a negative impact on themselves or other Irish people because of how these characterisations led to certain expectations among English people:

I mean, I find myself having to explain myself, why. They expect me to conform to a certain type of Irish person....So I have to give an explanation why I don't conform to what they think I should be. (S16, male)

...it may mean that Irish people are not taken seriously by the, by say the business community or something....I'd rather, you know, have the image we have than have a Germanic image. Which may mean they're taken more seriously in business, but socially they're seen as sober and boring and hard-working etcetera. (S6, male)

This last quote is interesting in that the interviewee contrasts the representations of Irishness with those of 'Germanness': Germans may be competent in business, but they are also "sober and boring and hard-working". The depiction of Germans provided by this interviewee is in opposition to images of the Irish as drunkards and feckless. Throughout the section of television, interviewees commented on the reliance of television representations on images of the Irish as signifying trouble, violence, drunkenness and stupidity. This led some interviewees to reject these representations.

8.3.3 News bulletins

Twenty one interviewees (84%; N=25) considered themselves regular viewers of television news. All tended to watch more than one bulletin a day, and watched bulletins on different channels. This matches patterns of viewing noted elsewhere (Seymour-Ure, 1996). Therefore, these interviewees have a wide-ranging knowledge of television news. Northern Ireland was considered to be the topic which was most likely to be covered (70%). Only two interviewees mentioned any other topic; both referred to scandals affecting the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland, a perception presumably related to the then current revelations regarding the sex lives and sexual predilections of some Roman Catholic priests in Ireland.

If anything, it's about the IRA or something like that. That's all they cover. (S9, female)

The perception that television news was most likely to cover Northern Ireland in preference to other news from Ireland suggests a strong coverage overlap between newspapers and television. Thirteen interviewees (52%) considered that Irish news was

not accurately covered. News coverage of Northern Ireland, as with the press, was criticised as biased and pro-British:

No, I think it's very biased. They still see Ireland from a colonial perspective. (S8, female)

It's one-sided. There's so much you don't see or never get exposed to. (S14, female)

For the five interviewees who perceived television news coverage as accurate, the reasons given were all specific to perceptions of television as a 'live' medium:

Well, if it's live, it's got to be, hasn't it? (S3, female)

Oh yeah, I've no doubt they give it accurate. They don't cut corners, if anything happens. There's no cutting in it, you know? (S5, male)

All but one of those who saw the television news as accurate were fifty or older. The interviewee under fifty who saw television news as accurate was a journalist by occupation, and, as a journalist, he was aware of the legal obligation on television news to be impartial and the constraints which arise from this obligation. This person also differed from the main body of opinion in that he did not consider Northern Ireland to be the most likely Irish news story reported on television.

Representations of Irish people in television news was perceived to be biased or unfair (65%; N=20). Interviewees considered that Irish people who featured in news bulletins were mediated by the topic in question; representations of Irish people in relation to Northern Ireland were particularly viewed as inaccurate. Responses also referred to Irish people in the news being portrayed as violent, drunk or stupid:

I don't really see too many or hear too many reports on Irish personalities other than people concerned with Northern Ireland and maybe Dick Spring and John Bruton. Other than that, I don't really hear of any other Irish personalities in the news, so I guess they're represented by trouble and that's basically it. I can't, unless there's some feature at the end where there's, you know, an Irish match or St. Patrick's Day or something like this, and there's always like this 'oh the pints will be pouring, Guinness will be out and people will be dancing on the streets, win or lose', you know? (S1, male)

Well, most of the news is either about the Troubles, so they're portrayed as troublemakers or terrorists, or comical. They sometimes portray the Irish as the village idiots. (S2, male)

Only three interviewees considered that Irish people in the news were positively portrayed, and this perception was based on the inference that representation depended on the individuals concerned: "If they're good, they get a good send off" (S5, male). Three interviewees said that Irish people were completely absent from television news.

In general, perceptions of television news strongly correspond to the perceptions of coverage in the national, daily press. Coverage is seen as being dominated by Northern Ireland; what other news is reported tends to be scandalous and church-related. Irish people in the news are perceived by interviewees as signifying trouble, violence, drunkenness and stupidity.

8.3.4 Documentaries

The overwhelming majority of interviewees (96%, N=25) had seen an documentary on Ireland on British television. Ten (40%) said that the documentaries were about the 'Troubles'. Three interviewees mentioned travel programmes in this category, and these were especially seen as favourable in their portrayal of Ireland and the Irish: "Yeah, they're good, any of the holiday programmes" (P3, female). Initially, there was a strong, positive evaluation of the documentaries which interviewees had seen as either good or accurate:

Well, it gave a bird's eye view, and was reasonably factual. Enough for a starter. (S10, female)

Some interviewees were angry or suspicious of documentaries about Ireland, questioning their contextual veracity: these interviewees also considered documentaries to be dominated by Northern Ireland. Their views fall in line with the general perception of interviewees that reporting about Northern Ireland is biased:

It was, it was almost like watching one of those old documentaries about the Bader Meinhof, you know, like they're all deranged sickos.... You know, they didn't fully go into the actual people involved, their background and what they've done. It was just these mug shots of them, looking like terrorists, the amount of people they thought they had killed. It was just so biased. (S4, male)

They didn't show it when the soldiers went into the houses, the continual harassment. You more or less just saw bad things about the Catholic community, the Republicans. I often felt up in arms about it, and really upset about it. (S9, female)

When interviewees were specifically asked how documentaries represented Ireland and Irish people, even those who had stated that they were happy with the documentaries they had seen were aware that programmes were limited in their portrayals, and that there were other documentaries which showed Ireland in an unfavourable light:

They haven't made it out to be a good place, have they? Especially to English people that haven't been over there before. Like, over here, everybody just thinks Ireland's just, you know, a bad place to be, like, when it's actually one of the most beautiful places, isn't it? (S8, female)

Fifteen interviewees wanted to see more documentaries on Ireland on British television (75%; N=20). However, the responses were qualified. Concerns were expressed regarding the role of documentaries in informing English people about Ireland, the absence of recognition by programmers of the largest ethnic minority in Britain (the Irish) and, in particular, that more documentaries could result in an increase in the inaccurate representations of Ireland and Irish people. Those who rejected more documentaries shared these concerns:

No, not at all, no. Because they tend to show it in a certain light. They want to show the hills and the fellow trotting down the road on the ass. (S13, male)

In general, documentaries were seen as one-sided or failing to portray Ireland and the Irish in an even-handed manner; this was despite positive recollections of documentaries about Ireland. There was a general concern that the lack of balance in documentaries needed to be addressed so that the ignorance of the English about Ireland, contemporary and historical, could be redressed. It appears that the positive responses to documentaries about Ireland were motivated by the existence of these programmes, rather than actual content or representations. This was further evidenced by the three interviewees who mentioned *The Hanging Gale* (an historical drama) as a documentary which they were planning to watch:

This Hanging Gale that's going to be on, that's going to be in four parts, isn't it? I'll watch that. I think that'll be good, I think that'll be really good. (S5, male)

This particular programme was mentioned by other interviewees at various points throughout the interview, and, in general, the sense of anticipation voiced by the interviewee quoted above was echoed by other interviewees. This and the perceptions presented here of documentaries on Ireland and Irish issues indicates that interviewees not only seek out programmes with Irish themes and content, but that they do so with a sense of anticipation. Although documentary coverage of Ireland was welcomed, interviewees had qualified responses to documentaries which they had seen, and to the possibility of more documentaries. The documentaries which interviewees had seen were considered insufficient and concentrating overmuch on either Northern Ireland or (to a lesser extent) an idealised image of a rural, traditional Ireland. Representations of people in Northern Ireland were particularly rejected as both inaccurate and biased.

8.3.5 Sport

Twelve interviewees (48%, N=25) watched Irish sporting events on television. This viewing tended to be focused on international sporting events (soccer and rugby union) broadcast on terrestrial television, and/or on Setanta, a satellite channel specialising in broadcasting Irish sporting events, with particular reference to Gaelic Athletic

Association (GAA) games. Seven of those who watched Irish sporting events on television considered it to be good: “It’s first class” (S5, male). Of the remaining five, the majority of negative remarks concerned the perceived lack of coverage or the time of broadcast. Two interviewees had more particular complaints: one said that the coverage of the last GAA All-Ireland Final she had watched had made her “very angry” (S10, female), while the other was unhappy at what he perceived to be the persistent habit of British commentators in claiming Irish sporting successes as British (S1, male). The generally favourable reception of televised Irish sporting events contrasts with the rejection of the attitudes of the British press towards the international Irish soccer team. However, this has to be qualified by the finding that most of the interviewees who did watch Irish sporting events on television tended to watch international events on Setanta, which specialises in such broadcasting. It is unclear whether the interviewee who expressed dissatisfaction with coverage of the GAA All-Ireland Final had seen it on Setanta or Channel 4.

8.3.6 Entertainment: drama and soaps

8.3.6.i Drama

When asked about the representation of Irish people in television drama, nine interviewees initially responded by saying that they considered Irish people to be negatively portrayed. (None of these nine came from the pilot sample, which was asked about the accuracy of representation.) Their responses highlighted, and rejected, characteristics of Irish characters in drama which are typically associated with stereotypes of Irishness:

Well, if they have a play or anything, I don’t know, there’s a lot of plays on there [points to set], they’re nearly always drunk or illiterate. (S3, female)

Another interviewee responded with a spontaneous list of characteristics which he considered to be typical of Irish characters in television drama:

Fiery, fierce-tempered, drinkers, boiling, with history, terrorists, angry, humorous, drinkers, all these characterisations that add up to the general view of the Irish from a British point [of view]. (S1, male)

Seven interviewees stated that there was nothing about the representations of Irish people in television drama which they liked. However, across the whole sample, interviewees consistently rejected what they perceived to be frequently negative portrayals of Irish people in television drama. This is a very strong finding, and one which is independent of initial responses to questions about this category of programme. Again and again, interviewees specified traits associated with stereotypes of Irishness as objectionable but typical in the representations they had seen: in

particular, interviewees pointed out how the Irish were often portrayed as drunks, stupid and violent. One interviewee who said initially that the portrayal of the Irish was “as diverse as English people”, modified this by saying he disliked the way in which Irish people were portrayed “as thick and violent” (S2, male). In total, fourteen interviewees (56%) mentioned at least two of these traits (drunkenness, stupidity, violence) as being typical in characterisations of Irish people.

This is a very strong finding, emphasised by the wide range of drama serials watched by interviewees. It indicates that representations of Irish people in drama productions shown on British television are perceived by Irish viewers as reliant on traits typically associated with the ‘Paddy’ stereotype.

8.3.6.ii Soaps

Soap-watching is a stigmatised activity, and one to which men in particular are reluctant to admit (Alasuutari, 1992). Those who admit to watching soaps are likely to provide justification for their watching habits (*ibid.*). The six male interviewees who said they watched soaps tended to qualify this by claiming that their soap viewing was occasional or occurred when there was nothing else to watch. In contrast, eleven women said that they watched soaps regularly, and all of these watched two or more. However, it has been noted elsewhere that soaps are seen as having a particular affinity for women in their storylines and characterisations (Morley, 1986). Interviewees in the younger age categories were the most likely to watch more soaps. The most popular soap was *Brookside* (BS), with fourteen interviewees who watched it, while thirteen interviewees watched *Coronation Street* (CS) and twelve *EastEnders* (EE), respectively.

The three main British soaps were those most likely to be named by interviewees. As Table 8.3 demonstrates, interviewees who did watch soaps were likely to watch a combination of the main British soaps. All eleven women interviewees followed at least two of the main soaps. Women interviewees (five) were also more likely to name other soaps as part of their regular viewing; only one man named other soaps. All of these interviewees regularly watched more than three soaps.

Table 8.3: viewing of main British soaps, by age and gender

Soap	Age												Totals	
	20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+		not stated			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Brookside	2	4	1	1	0	1	0	4	1	0	0	-	4	10
Coronation St.	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	1	1	-	5	8
EastEnders	2	3	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	-	3	9
BS only														
CS only											1		1	
EE only											1		1	
BS and CS		1	1					1	1				2	2
BS and EE		2		1				1					0	4
CS and EE				1										1
All three	2	1				1		2					2	4
Total number of soap watchers	2	4	1	2	0	1	0	4	1	0	2	0	6	11

At the time of the interviews, each of the three main soaps had had Irish characters appearing in recent storylines ¹. Of the seventeen interviewees who watched soaps, six initially said that they could not recall them ever having had an Irish character, four of whom subsequently recalled Irish characters. Three interviewees stated that there was nothing which they liked about the Irish characters in the soaps they watched; conversely, three stated that there was nothing which they disliked. The remaining interviewees (eleven) expressed dissatisfaction with the representations of Irish people in the soaps which they watched. The character Aidan (EE) received the most positive comments: notably, interviewees tended to use the actor's rather than the character's name, which may be explained by the high profile of Seán Maguire. The character's status as a recent emigrant from Ireland who failed to succeed in London was praised by interviewees for its reality: "it was actually, kind of, in keeping with I suppose, like

¹ Only one, Coronation Street, has a regular Irish character, Jim McDonald. Some months earlier, an Irish nanny, Carmel, had featured, leaving after unsuccessfully trying to seduce the father of her charges. In Brookside, there had been a recent storyline about child and domestic abuse involving the Jordache family: Trevor Jordache was played by an Irish actor and had an identifiably Irish accent. After he had been murdered by his family and buried under the patio, his wife and daughter travelled to Ireland to escape arrest; subsequently his sister travelled from Ireland to attend the murder trial. EastEnders had had one Irish character, Aidan, who had emigrated to London to 'try out' as a professional soccer player. He subsequently became homeless and a drug addict before being aided by a regular character, Albert Fowler and finally returning to Ireland. Most of the interviewees who recalled this character named the actor, Seán Maguire, who has had a successful career as a pop singer, rather than the character.

emigration to here” (S15, female). However, the majority of EastEnders viewers did not recall this character (seven of twelve).

The response to Trevor Jordache (BS) was more ambivalent. One interviewee particularly objected to the use of the first identifiably Irish character to introduce the issues of child and domestic abuse: “I think it’s totally insensitive given that all the main characters are English....The one time they got an Irishman” (S7, female). However, other interviewees (four) considered Jordache’s Irishness irrelevant. Again, the majority of Brookside viewers did not recall this character (nine of fourteen).

This pattern of non-recollection also included the only regular Irish character, Jim McDonald (CS) with seven (of thirteen) interviewees not recalling him. Opinions of the remaining six interviewees who were Coronation Street viewers were evenly split among ambivalence, dislike and liking. Those who disliked McDonald referred to his drinking and temper, while those who liked him considered him friendly. Coronation Street had had another Irish character, Carmel: eleven of thirteen interviewees did not remember her. Interestingly, the two who did, did not mention Jim McDonald.

From the responses of interviewees, it is clear that Irish characters were generally not remembered at the time of the interview. This may be because interviewees did not perceive the characters as Irish; alternatively, it may be because the characters were not central to the general storyline. This latter explanation is particularly unlikely in the case of Trevor Jordache, given the publicity and press reporting around the Jordache storyline. It is possible that interviewees selectively forgot these characters because they rejected these representations of Irishness as inaccurate or unreal, or because these characters were not memorable per se. This suggests that despite the number of interviewees who watched British soaps that interviewees felt no commonality with the Irish characters in the different soaps.

8.4 Northern Ireland

In addition to investigating interviewees’ responses to the media they used, interviewees were asked about their specific responses to the news reporting of Northern Ireland (questions 34-36). This did not focus on a specific medium, but on reporting in general. Only one interviewee did not perceive reporting of news from Northern Ireland as biased, but this interviewee had stipulated elsewhere that she was not interested in political news from Ireland. She was the least critical of the interviewees in her perceptions of the media and its representations of Irishness (S18, female). This interviewee stated that she had to believe media news reports because “otherwise, I

don't know if it's true". She was the only interviewee to adopt a wholly uncritical attitude towards the British media.

The other twenty four interviewees (96%; N=25) all perceived news reports from Northern Ireland as biased, one-sided and pro-British. Comments from interviewees were overwhelmingly negative. Some expressed anger and disappointment at the manner in which news from Northern Ireland was reported:

The bias. The one-sidedness, the lack of understanding really of the issues. [pause] The, I don't know if this is actually a word, depersonalisation almost of, you know, the Northern Ireland people. It's like they're all seen as, like, loony, reactionaries even. Say, if civilians got killed in a bombing or in a pub or something in Northern Ireland, it was almost, over here, as if 'oh well, they're all mad, they deserve it'. (S4, male).

Interviewees considered the reporting to be not only biased and propagandist, but to be informed by a particular viewpoint: "From a British colonialist perspective" (S8, female). The reporting was also considered to directly affect relationships with English people:

I think, I think the reporting of the situation in Northern Ireland has created a, an attitude over here in Britain of the English. It's polarised Irish people into being either from the North or the South....if the Irish person says they're from the South, then they feel like 'oh well, we know you, we can characterise you'. (S1, male)

It's designed to keep the English public in ignorance. It's unrepresentative of the actual reality, and positively anti-Irish. (S10, female)

Interviewees considered Irish people in these reports to be characterised as both violent and unstable. This confirms findings elsewhere that "the media coverage of Northern Ireland is a prime source of the constant regeneration of the stereotype of the Irish as violent" (Hickman, 1990: 440). Interviewees' concerns about the effect of reporting of Northern Ireland in the British news media are well-founded: in his research, Miller found that "The clearest reason why people accepted that life in Northern Ireland was mostly violent was because of media (especially television) coverage of the conflict" (1994a: 242).

8.5 International soccer

Interviewees in the main sample were asked about two specific events: the 1994 World Cup, for which the Republic of Ireland qualified, and the England-Ireland friendly in February 1995 which was abandoned because of crowd violence. One pilot interviewee also spoke of her reactions to these events. Thus, in this instance, N=21.

8.5.1 1994 World Cup

Although interviewees had previously been asked about sports coverage in the press and on television (see above), specific questioning about the 1994 World Cup elicited strong responses. Twelve interviewees (57.14%) considered the coverage of the Republic of Ireland team in the 1994 World Cup to be strongly affected by the failure of UK teams, but especially England, to qualify. This was not interpreted as positive, but viewed with suspicion:

Of course, England wasn't in it, was it? So they did a good cover of Ireland. (S3, female)

I was surprised at the amount of English people that suddenly wanted Ireland to win, but that was only because they weren't in it. (S4, male)

Despite wariness regarding English people's support of the Irish team, coverage was considered to be good. However, interviewees stipulated that this was also influenced by the absence of the four UK soccer teams. Three interviewees considered British interest in Ireland's World Cup campaign to be essentially antagonistic:

They were delighted when we were knocked out. (S11, female)

The perception by interviewees that the coverage of Irish participation in the 1994 World Cup was essentially motivated by the lack of UK teams to cover has a resonance with earlier comments (8.2.7 and 8.3.5) that sports coverage of Irish sporting events was unsatisfactory.

8.5.2 The Landsdowne Riot

In February 1995, the England international soccer team was scheduled to play a 'friendly' against the Republic of Ireland. It was abandoned soon after kick-off when some England supporters tore up their seating and hurled the debris onto Republic of Ireland supporters below. Some newspaper reports implicated the fascist groups, including Combat 18². The main sample was asked about their responses to this event; one pilot interviewee spontaneously talked about her reactions. Of the nineteen people who commented, sixteen (84.21%; N=21) were angry and upset, and used words such as 'disgusting', 'disgraceful', 'unfortunate' and 'sad' to describe the riot and their reactions. Four of these interviewees considered the events at least partially predictable given the reputation of English soccer supporters: "It's [hooliganism] certainly

² Daily Mirror, 17-02-95, pp6-7: **FOOTBALL FUHRERS**; Patrick Mulchrone, Adrian Shaw, Harry Arnold, Mike Towers, Bill Daniels and Sydney Young;

Daily Telegraph, 17-02-95, p4: **Right-wing thugs targeted Dublin for exercise in job violence**; Robert Harman and Ben Fenton;

The Independent, 17-02-95, p1: **Far right linked to Dublin riot**; Jason Bennetto, Alan Murdoch, Leonard Doyle and James Cusick

following the English football, because they've got a name in Europe, as well as in Ireland" (S13, male).

Interviewees emphasised their feelings of disbelief as they watched and/or heard about the events at Landsdowne Road (subsequently reported on television and in the press):

Disbelief really that [pause] What I'm trying to say, how will I put it? In another country, that something like that could happen that, I dunno, people are not even on their own territory. (P1, female)

This strongly suggests that the assertion that the riot was predictable was not generally shared by interviewees, although in hindsight the riot was attributed to the hooligan element following English soccer. Coverage in this case, however, was particularly praised: eleven interviewees (57.89%; N=21) thought the reporting was either good or accurate. This was the only aspect of the media, and particularly of news reporting, which elicited general, unconditional praise from interviewees. However, this is modified by the seven interviewees who considered the reports on this incident to be biased, particularly in what they perceived as under-reporting of the violence and unfair criticism of the Garda Síochána (Irish police force).

8.6 Film representations

Twenty three (92%; N=25) interviewees recalled seeing a film with an Irish character(s). In general, interviewees perceived film representations of Irish people as positive. However, this is because, as with television, interviewees sought out films which they believed would offer a positive portrayal. Eight interviewees mentioned *In The Name of the Father*; other films which were mentioned here were *My Left Foot*, *Circle of Friends*, *The Commitments*, and *The Snapper*. It is noticeable that the most mentioned films are all 'Irish' films, that is, based on autobiographies of, and novels by, Irish people. Thus they may be seen as more authentic in the representations of Irishness which they provide.

The two films which attracted negative comments were, by contrast, Hollywood films. These were *Far and Away*, characterised as "a crock of shite" by one interviewee (S4, male), and *Patriot Games*:

Well, the Patriot Game [sic] was just a complete let-down.... I mean, one thing I've never quite fully understood about anything, whether it's about Irish terrorists or any others, is why they're always so bloody stupid, you know what I mean? Their stupidity always rankles me. (P4, male)

Eleven interviewees found the characterisations of Irish people in the films they recalled to be positive, although eight people expressed ambivalence, usually by

comparing the positive characterisation of one film with the negative or inaccurate depiction of another. In response to questions about what they liked and disliked about the films they had seen, sixteen interviewees spoke again of the specific film or films which they liked, while three people spoke of Irish actors rather than characters. Six interviewees said that there was nothing they disliked about the films they had seen. In contrast, five people stated that they disliked the romanticism associated with images of Ireland, and four people disliked the stereotypical depiction of Irish people in film.

Interviewees' responses to questions about film indicate that, as with television viewing, interviewees actively sought out films which they thought would provide a positive portrayal of Irish people. The high number of positive recollections of film portrayals may be due to the differential nature of selection of films to watch: viewers can gain prior information about a film through reviews and word-of-mouth. Through these films, Irish people can access "ethnically specific 'mediascapes' of 'invented homelands'" (Gillespie, 1995: 21). The responses here again demonstrate that interviewees did not simply recall a catalogue of negative portrayals of Ireland and Irish people, but that they were willing to recall positive images and depictions.

8.7 Conclusion

Irish news and Irish people were considered to be absent from the newspapers which interviewees read. When coverage did occur, it tended to be narrow and lacking in depth. Northern Ireland was considered to be covered almost to the exclusion of any other news from Ireland. News from Ireland which did not involve violence in Northern Ireland was seen to be restricted to church-related scandals. Reporting was criticised as biased, propagandist, pro-British and anti-Irish.

Newspaper articles recalled by interviewees tended to be those which contained negative portrayals. Recollections of positive articles were characterised by vague assertions of general happiness with the portrayal, rather than specific details regarding what made them positive. In contrast, negative portrayals of Irish people in newspapers were perceived as utilising specific stereotypical traits such as trouble, violence, drunkenness, and stupidity. Even positive portrayals were criticised for their representations of Irish people and Ireland, which were generally seen as unrealistic, particularly in the case of travel features.

Interviewees were particularly critical of representations of Irish people in television news, and of its almost exclusive focus on Northern Ireland. This may partly explain the high incidence of viewing of other news-based programmes, specifically documentaries. Their longer programme time allows them to give greater depth and

coverage to an issue. Despite reservations regarding the representations provided by documentaries, generally seen as negative and inaccurate, interviewees generally endorsed the idea of a greater number of documentaries about Ireland. This came from a desire to watch more documentaries and specifically non-biased documentaries, but also from a perceived need to re-educate English people about Ireland and Irish people.

Irish people were generally perceived as being absent from fictional television programmes. This was particularly evident in the response of interviewees to questions about soaps. Although there was a relatively high number of regular soap watchers, the Irish characters in the main British soaps (Brookside, Coronation Street, EastEnders) were not recalled by interviewees. Those interviewees who did recall Irish characters in British soaps tended to reject the representation of 'Irishness' offered. Such representations, when recalled, were perceived as stereotypical and inadequate. Irish characters in other fictional programmes were similarly rejected by interviewees. The non-recall of Irish characters in British soaps suggests that Irish characters may appear in television programmes more frequently than the response of interviewees would indicate: it may be that the portrayal of Irish characters is such that interviewees' non-recall is a strategy for the avoidance of cognitive dissonance. That is, by not remembering what they consider to be negative portrayals of the Irish character, interviewees are avoiding conflict with their positive appraisal(s) of being Irish.

As already mentioned, one programme in particular, *The Hanging Gale*, received positive comments from interviewees. Importantly, these comments come from interviewees who participated in the research prior to transmission of the first episode. This emphasises both the willingness of interviewees to be positive in their anticipation of television programmes about Ireland, and their seeking out of programmes about Ireland and Irish people. This last point is particularly important, given the overall impression of interviewees that Irish issues and Irish people are generally absent from British television, as they are absent from the press. It also ties in with the finding that interviewees generally reacted positively to film portrayals of the Irish; however, interviewees tended to name films which had an Irish theme or storyline, and which were perceived as being 'Irish' films.

The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate both how the media 'interpellates' the individual (Hall, 1981; Althusser, 1971), and how the individual may also be simultaneously aware of that interpellation. From this awareness, media consumers may decide to accept or reject certain elements of the media's message: elements which they feel they know more or which they feel personally expert on. In this way, the audience chooses what to accept and what to reject of the media's message. The stereotypes of 'Irishness' perceived by interviewees strongly overlap with those deconstructed from

the press and television (chapters 4-7). In particular, interviewees expressed anger and dissatisfaction at media portrayals of Irish people as violent, stupid and drunk. They were also unhappy at the reporting of Northern Ireland, believing that it signified Irish people as sources of trouble. The overlapping of the findings from the press and television surveys with the perceptions of interviewees validates and lends strength to the analyses of representations of 'Irishness' presented in this thesis. These findings suggest that interviewees, although they tended not to call them racialized, also considered representations of Irish people in the British media to be racialized.

The struggle for ideological terrain (Hall, 1981) between media and audience may not be active *per se*, but what the findings in this chapter suggest is that the audience is far from passive in its reading of the message, and, in this case study, is seen to actively reject elements of those messages which it knows to be false or chooses to disbelieve. The audience is actually using the media in a rather perverse manner: by choosing to reject the distorted Lacanian images of themselves and Ireland, the audience reinforces their own beliefs and knowledge about their ethnic group, culture and the imagined community (Anderson, 1991) of 'back home'. Here, the mass media is not so much inspiring an alternative reading (Tuchman, 1991), but, as a negative alternative to personal images and beliefs, prompts the audience to re-invest in their own cognitive schemata (Morley, 1986). The belief of interviewees that representations of 'Irishness' in the British media did affect British people's expectations of, and assumptions about, Irish people reinforces the self-preservation inherent in Irish people's rejections of the often stereotypical representations of 'Irishness' in the mass media. It will be demonstrated in the next chapter that interviewees used their knowledge of these stereotypes, and the expectations of English people about them as Irish people, to monitor their own behaviour in the company of English people. In other words, Irish people possess 'double consciousness' (du Bois, 1986[1953]), which they use in their everyday lives.

Chapter 9 Typically Irish

The everyday experience of being Irish in Britain

9.1 Introduction

The second strand of the interviews with the twenty five first generation Irish people who participated covered issues arising from everyday aspects of life in Britain (see Appendix 1). This chapter details the specificity of being Irish in contemporary Britain. It examines the meaning of the mythic concept 'Irishness' (cf. Barthes, 1993[1957] and Cohen, 1988) from the point of view of Irish informants. The gathering of personal testimonies regarding everyday life as an Irish person in Britain was considered necessary to the research, as it provides a backdrop to the commentaries (both mine and the interviewees') on the mass media provided in this thesis (chapters 4-8). This approach recognises that "everyday racism transcends the traditional distinctions between institutional and individual racism" (Essed, 1991 37): interviewees were asked about both their personal relationships and their experiences in the workplace, as well as a limited question about their interaction with authority.

Asking Irish people about their everyday experiences of being Irish in Britain and how this, in their view, translates into their relationships with the British and the English in particular is essential to research of this kind, not only because it adds depth to the investigation of the media presented here. It is a common assumption that because they are white, Irish people do not experience racism. This argument is often modified by the assertion that any racism which the Irish experienced is strictly confined to history. The assumption is that with the advent of emigration from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan post-1945 British racists had other fish to fry (see, for example, an editorial in the *Political Science Quarterly*, 1968).

The exclusion of the Irish from understandings of racism in Britain produces an approach based on two proposals: firstly that the Irish have, at least since the advent of large-scale emigration from the NCP countries, been incorporated into the 'white' majority (Hickman, 1995; see also Hornsby-Smith and Dale, 1988 for a discussion of Irish assimilation); secondly, it suggests that anti-black and anti-Asian racism was initially located in the fact of their emigration. Such an approach both ensures the invisibility of the Irish in research into racism, and advocates the commonsense view that if there were no 'black' or 'Asian' people in Britain, that there would not be any real 'race relations' problem. Post-1945 migration from NCP countries is contextualized as unique, an approach which ignores the migration to Britain of African and Asian peoples before 1945 and the migrations of European, including Irish, people to Britain (Miles, 1993a). The result is a "close articulation between the public and the academic"

which results in a reification of 'race' and a legitimation of commonsense approaches (both institutional and lay) to 'race' (ibid., 129: for further discussion of this, see chapters 1 and 2).

Research such as that presented here is part of the overall process of re-incorporating the Irish minority in Britain into academic discourses. Although this has already begun (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Brah, 1992; Cohen, 1988; Miles, 1982 and 1993a), little academic research into the Irish in Britain and their contemporary experiences of racialization has been undertaken (exceptions include Hickman, 1995; Hickman and Walter, 1997). This is the real importance of asking Irish people about their everyday experiences: to give an invisible minority (Hickman and Walter, 1995) a voice.

In asking about everyday experiences of life as an Irish person in Britain, this chapter seeks to establish what, if any, are the scripts (Shank and Abelson cited in Greene, 1990) for anti-Irish racism, discrimination and prejudice. In other words, it utilizes the concept of 'double consciousness' (du Bois, 1986[1953]) in seeking to elicit knowledge regarding typical and expected behaviours towards Irish people which Irish people use to monitor their own behaviours and expectations. This draws on the conceptual framework of "everyday racism" (Essed, 1991), which recognises that victims have invaluable insights to and knowledge of the racism, discrimination and prejudice which they have experienced. This approach also recognises that victims of racism may or may not use the term 'racism' to describe specific behaviours and attitudes. By eliciting these common scripts, or shared knowledge, of expected behaviours and attitudes, it is possible to delineate the everyday reality of being Irish in Britain.

This chapter presents findings from the twenty five interviews conducted for this research. It examines specific aspects of life in Britain for an Irish person: friendships and other interactions with English people (sections 9.2 and 9.4); the ease which respondents felt in discussing Ireland and Irish issues (section 9.3). In addition, interviewees were asked a range of questions dealing with discrimination and prejudice, providing an insight both into interviewees' own experiences and their knowledge of the general experiences of an Irish person in Britain (section 9.5). As with the previous chapter, pilot interviewees are identified by 'P' and their interviewee number, interviewees from the main sample by 'S' and their interviewee number.

9.2 Friendships

Interviewees were asked about their relationships and/or friendships with British/English people (in general, the term English shall be used in preference to British) (questions 38-41). The purpose was to establish interviewees' perceptions and insights into English peoples' attitudes towards them as Irish people.

Of the twenty five interviewees, only one stated that they had no English friends (female, 30-39): eleven had both English and Irish friends. However, while most interviewees emphasised the strength of their relationships with English people - twenty one (84%; N=25) stated that these friendships were either good or very good - these statements tended to be qualified. Friendships with English people were often accompanied by the sense that certain subjects, especially Northern Ireland, were taboo. Friendships with English people were held to be qualitatively different to those with Irish people. The most common reason given for this difference was that shared background and culture made friendships with Irish people easier to forge:

...you'd have more in common with Irish music and things like that. (S3, female)

...I think attitude and outlook on life and expectations of friends are very different among Irish people and English people. (S15, female)

The importance of shared culture and identity in friendships was underlined by responses to question 41: eighteen interviewees (72%) thought that their English friends could not understand what it is to be Irish in Britain. No interviewee considered that their English friends did comprehend the position of being Irish in Britain. Rather, there was a general feeling that for English people the status of being Irish in Britain was incomprehensible:

They just wouldn't know what it's like, you know? (S8, female)

Thus, while a majority of interviewees considered they had good relationships with their English friends, their friendships with Irish people were considered to be close and based on a sense of shared identity, making friendships with Irish people easier to both make and maintain. The shared perception that English people generally have no conception of what it is to be Irish in Britain suggests an underlying tension between even very good friends which is perceived as ultimately resting on cultural differences and English people's lack of knowledge about the Irish:

I suppose you never get as close to English people. There always seems to be some barrier. (S11, female)

This feeling of distance and difference from English people, based on perceptions of greater cultural and background similarities with Irish people, complements Kells'

finding that “most informants had some concept of strong difference between Irish/Northern Irish and English” (1995: 28). It also complements the finding from the Irish Post survey in which respondents stated they preferred the company of Irish people (O’Connell, 1992a).

9.3 Talking about Ireland

Interviewees were asked whether events reported in the media were discussed with the following groups of English people: friends, work-mates and neighbours (questions 42-44). The aim was to verify to what extent Irish people feel comfortable in talking about Ireland, and with whom. (Pilot interviewees were not asked these questions, therefore N=20.)

Six women did not discuss Ireland at all with their English friends and acquaintances. This tended to be a conscious avoidance, specifically because these respondents did not wish to discuss Northern Ireland. This re-emphasises the finding from chapter 8 that Irish news in the British media is dominated by Northern Ireland. A strong reason for this avoidance was fear of identification with the IRA:

A lot of them think we’re all in the IRA or Sinn Féin. (S9, female)

This avoidance of Ireland as a topic of conversation among women who participated in the interviews in order to avoid discussing Northern Ireland reflects, albeit not as strongly, Hickman’s (1990) finding that all of the young women she interviewed avoided discussing Northern Ireland at school, although it was a topic of conversation outside of school. Their fears are validated by the finding that for those twelve interviewees who did talk about Ireland with their English friends, Northern Ireland was most likely to be the topic of conversation. Additionally, these interviewees agreed that the friends with whom they discussed Irish issues tended to make assumptions about the Irish:

...most of them, you know, make it [the ‘Troubles’] out [pause] yeah, they make it out, well, yeah, they do, they make out that the Irish are scum really, you know? (S8, female)

Even when the English person concerned was well known to the interviewee, perceptions of Northern Ireland, and allocation of blame, could cause problems in the relationship. An interviewee related an incident involving a close family friend, whom the interviewee called by the honorific ‘uncle’:

he grabbed me by the elbow, and started shaking me and shouted ‘I don’t know what we’re doing in your bloody country’, you know? And of course I said, ‘I don’t know what you’re doing there either’, which I probably shouldn’t have said, and he was very upset. and of course his wife came down, and we had to be

separated and calmed down. But a lot of people said to me afterwards ‘listen, you know, he was a bit over the top, but he’s very upset about V_____ [his son], who’s in hospital at the moment’. But I think he was just raging against what had happened and logic wasn’t going to come into it, you know? (S6, male)

This is a particularly interesting example of how an Irish person, who was well-known to the person involved, came to symbolise the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland. The son in question had been injured while on tour with the British Army in Northern Ireland. The reaction of this person was seen as excusable by both other people at the dinner party (“he’s very upset about V_____”) and the interviewee (“logic wasn’t going to come into it”). This suggests that even in long-standing relationships between English and Irish people there may be an ambivalence which can be translated into viewing the Irish person as *Other*.

The pattern of avoidance of Irish news and issues was repeated in conversations with work-mates and colleagues. Seven interviewees (35%; N=20) did not talk about Ireland in the work place: five were women. Of these, two women avoided Ireland as a topic of conversation specifically to avoid talking about Northern Ireland. This strategy was not always successful:

I used to be known as the IRA bomber at work. It was a joke, but that, that was, you know?

...I’d be asked, you know, was I part of it like last night, or you know, were my cronies out late last night or whatever, but I’d never rise to the bait and get angry or anything like that, you know? (S11, female)

One interpretation of the non-response of this interviewee to her colleagues’ labelling of her as an IRA terrorist, presumably because she was Irish, is the lack of power which Irish people, and Irish women in particular, appear to feel when English people - friends and colleagues - make assumptions about Irish people’s political affiliations *vis-à-vis* Northern Ireland. In this case, the label of IRA terrorist was presented as a ‘joke’, this resulted in this respondent’s inability to address it (“I’d never rise to the bait”) (see 9.5.3 for a more detailed discussion of jokes in the workplace). The use of the joke excuse also suggest another reason why interviewees are reluctant to challenge the label of IRA terrorist: the label identifies their position outside of the ingroup, as an Irish person, and to challenge the joke would serve to emphasise their position as an outsider. The two strategies used in the workplace by interviewees who did not wish to discuss Ireland and Irish issues were, again, non-response and avoidance of Ireland as a topic.

For those interviewees (thirteen) who did discuss Irish topics and events in the workplace, Northern Ireland was the main topic of conversation (nine, of whom seven

were men). These interviewees experienced similar responses to the woman quoted above:

You would take a ribbing over an incident... 'your lot have been at it again'. (S6, male)

The reference to “ribbing” again indicates that the labelling of an Irish person as an IRA member is conceived of as acceptable workplace humour by those who make such equations. This validates the fears of the women who avoided Ireland as a topic of conversation because they did not wish to discuss Northern Ireland with their colleagues. Men were more likely to discuss Northern Ireland with their colleagues demonstrating a gender difference which may be related to perceptions of power accorded men and women in both conversations and the workplace (Crawford, 1995). Women feel themselves to be more vulnerable and thus avoid Ireland as a topic of conversation, an only partially successful strategy to avoid being labelled an IRA terrorist or Sinn Féin supporter.

This sense of vulnerability came out more strongly, and across gender, when interviewees were asked about neighbours. The majority (65%; N=20) either did not know or did not talk to their neighbours. Of the remaining seven interviewees, three discussed Ireland only with their Irish neighbours, and three discussed Ireland in passing. One interviewee, a Northern Irish man, said that while he could not recall such a conversation, it was likely:

I'm sure there has, I mean I can't remember specifically which one, but I, you know, whenever there was some horrendous piece of news on the, you know a neighbour or even a stranger on the street might, might comment about it, you know?

Do they get angry with me? Yes, I've had loads of those experiences in England, you know, somebody will be having a conversation with me....I remember, there was this Londoner when I was out in Spain, but he picked on everybody, he came up to me and said “You fucking thick Paddy”. He was just a normal yobbo. I mean, anyone who's halfway intelligent...they might think it but they wouldn't say it!

There was this guy who was getting annoyed with me...you know, “get your bloody passport and go back to your own country!” It really shocked him when I said “Well, actually, I have a British passport”: he didn't think anyone from Ireland could have a British passport. But then, he didn't know what was going on in Ireland at all. (S2, male)

In this quote, the interviewee (S2) highlights the inevitability of conversations about Northern Ireland. The fact that he was Northern Irish may have contributed to the perception that it is acceptable to assume that he wants to talk about the ‘Troubles’, or be talked at about the war in Northern Ireland. But he interpreted this as normal behaviour (“Cos, it's gone on for 25 years, I mean, someone's bound to say something!”), rather than behaviour based on a questionable assumption (“Do they get

angry with me? Yes, I've had loads of those experiences in England"), i.e. that he must be involved at some level - in terms of attitude or actual commitment - in the violence. Other interviewees also recalled incidents where strangers made comments to them, but they did not necessarily respond, for fear of being identified as Irish: "Often down the Tube, my god, people would turn to you and say 'bloody Irish again!' and I'd say 'hmmm'. I wouldn't dare open my mouth, stuck down there" (S10, female, 40-49). This woman also recounted a story of how her neighbour was prejudiced against an Irish man who lived next door and which, by talking through the events concerned, brought her to the realisation that it was prejudice, rather than a reasonable complaint:

In fact, there's huge prejudice because there's a Paddy next door, he's actually called Paddy, poor auld Paddy, and he's your classic stereotype. And, she said to me the other day M____, it's got nothing to do with you if you don't mind, I'm getting a fence put up on both sides. And I said, that's grand J____, do whatever you like. And she said, 'well, you know, it's that Paddy, he came in roaring drunk last night and he fell into my tree and knocked it over', and she said 'oh, I've been living here for the last fifteen years and it's only last two since he came but I've been having such terrible trouble'. He doesn't make a sound! I have never heard a peep out of him, and that's a fact.

It would be more than my life is worth to say a word to her...it certainly would....And that's really interesting, I hadn't been aware of that until we started talking about it. (S10, female)

Actually talking about this incident led this particular interviewee to come to the realisation that her neighbour's prejudices could very easily be levelled at her, should she challenge this neighbour's views. She also linked her neighbour's anti-Irish feelings with another prejudice: "She's also very anti-black".

What this section clearly demonstrates is that memories of conversations with English people in particular about Ireland were mainly remembrances of talking about Northern Ireland. This, then, appears to be the typical everyday script for conversations about Ireland with English people. Also demonstrated here is the hesitancy of Irish people in discussing Irish political events, especially events associated with Northern Ireland. While one interviewee felt it was easier to discuss Northern Ireland with his English friends (S1, male), the other interviewees disliked discussing Northern Ireland with friends, colleagues and neighbours, and some actively avoided talking about Ireland at all, because they believed it would cause them problems. What emerges is the sense that Northern Ireland is a taboo topic for Irish people, and a topic which they believe could cause trouble for them, should they involve themselves (too deeply) in such a conversation. This strongly contradicts the finding of the *Irish Post* survey where 41% of respondents said that they were never reluctant to discuss Northern Ireland in British company (O'Connell, 1992a). Interviewees were not only often unwilling to discuss Northern Ireland with even English friends, but often did not discuss other Irish issues with them either. This was particularly the case for women.

Safe topics of conversation included Ireland as a holiday venue, but even this was difficult as often interviewees felt that English people had a romanticised or even stereotyped vision of Ireland as green and flowing with Guinness (S13, male). This supports the finding that British people expected Ireland to be a beautiful, friendly and similar to Great Britain (O'Connell, 1994c) but adds an important qualifier in that the interviewees for this research very much rejected English people's view of Ireland. It also adds to the findings presented in chapter 6 regarding the presentation of Ireland as a rural utopia.

When conversations about Ireland or Irish issues occurred, interviewees were not only uncomfortable with English people's points of view but, in the main, felt unable to confront or address these views. This demonstrates that even with a fairly anodyne topic, Irish people feel that overtly identifying as Irish and as proud to be Irish is an action to be avoided. One interviewee summed up her reluctance to speak to English people about Ireland thus:

I just don't believe they're worth talking to; some people they're not worth talking to about certain issues because they, they're not big enough to be flexible and look at things from different angles, and maybe it's because they don't have the information in the first place....they tend to stick by what they've read and seen [in the mass media]. (S15, female)

This comment very much reflects the opinion of other interviewees when asked about conversations about Ireland. Ireland as a topic of conversation was generally about Northern Ireland, and resulted in tension or hostility. English friends, colleagues and neighbours were perceived as being overly influenced by the mass media which, as chapter 8 demonstrates, was seen by interviewees as being propagandist and inaccurate in its portrayal of Northern Ireland. Ireland was, therefore, a taboo topic, because of the inevitability of the Northern Ireland connection, and the wish to avoid being labelled an IRA terrorist or Sinn Féin supporter. This reflects the findings that, in the media (chapter 5) and in interviewees' readings of media representations (chapter 8), Irish people *per se* symbolically represent the IRA, and suggests that this representation has currency beyond the media.

9.4 Strangers' reactions to Irishness

Interviewees (N=25) were specifically asked about conversations with authority figures, strangers and the experiences of their friends with such people (questions 45-48). These questions were aimed at exploring interactions between Irish people and people they did not know, and their knowledge of other people's experiences.

9.4.1 Authority figures

The majority of interviewees said that they had never had any difficulties with an authority figure which could be attributed to their ethnicity (56%; N=25). Of the remaining eleven, seven had had problems with the police. One of these refused to discuss what he claimed was police harassment arising from previous political affiliations: “They make their appearance just to see what I look like now” (S13, male, over 60). Of the remaining six, however, the problems with the police arose because of specific incidents and encounters. The reactions of police to these Irish people suggests the existence of anti-Irish racism as a commonsense ideology (Hall, 1981) amongst police officers.

Two male interviewees who were stopped in routine road checks by the police both felt that they were treated as probable IRA members:

I’ve been pulled over in the car, I remember this once and they asked me to pull over to the side please and there were two of them, and the female one was really suspicious of me when she saw the A to Z in the car. It had got things marked out in it, you know, just places I needed to get to, and they must have thought it was important people, planning to bomb them or whatever. They went through everything...they gave me the full interrogation, you know, “Is this your car?”, “Where are you going?”. Just obviously...they thought I was a terrorist. My attitude to that is to lick their boots...if you irritate them, they just get more uptight with you. (S2, male)

Both of these men asserted that the reactions of the police, given their Irishness, were to be expected. This suggests a knowledge regarding expected reactions towards and perceptions of Irish people by the police. It should also be noted that previous research has demonstrated that Irish and other ethnic minorities are more likely to be searched by the police after being stopped in a vehicle (cited in AGIY, 1997).

The use of accent as the main identifier of Irishness by the police was further attested to by the experiences of three other interviewees, all of whom perceived changes in behaviour once their accent was noted. One of these was a black Irish woman who commented that her Irish accent was a source of confusion for the police in her encounters with them (S15, female). Another interviewee told of his son who was arrested for shop-lifting: in this instance, the father of the child had knowledge of the juvenile justice system from previous employment. However, the case did go to court, despite his protestations:

...they decided to charge him with the offence, for twelve quid! That’s unheard of for a first time offence, and they [the police] thought he’d just accept a caution and I wasn’t having it....It came up to court and eventually [pause] the prosecution said ‘we’re withdrawing it because of lack of evidence’. (S12, male)

This interviewee attributed the decision of the police to press charges to his Irish accent: “Because they heard my accent, they decided on a certain course of treatment”. This suggests that, in the interviewee’s opinion, his Irish accent actually made things worse for his son, that his son received prejudicial treatment because of his father’s ethnicity. It has been found elsewhere that Irish people who appear in court are more likely to receive custodial sentences where non-custodial sentences are considered the norm (Murphy, 1994; AGIY, 1997). More pertinent to this case, was the finding that Irish people under the age of twenty one had a higher rate of incarceration than did other groups (AGIY, 1997).

The third interviewee who mentioned the effect of an Irish accent on the police, a gay man, was on his way home with his partner from a nightclub when the police stopped them. It appears that the initial reason for the police stopping the couple was the interviewee’s attire; however, the interviewee perceived a change in attitude once the police heard his accent:

But as soon as they pulled up they thought I looked suspicious for some reason and they pulled the both of us over and as soon as they heard me accent, it changed. It was like, maybe they were questioning me [initially] thinking I was up to something seedy and then once they heard my accent they thought ‘oh, could he be’, you know [pause] ‘gun runner or’ - with false eyelashes! (S4, male)

In each of these cases, it was the interviewees’ interpretation or perception that their ethnicity, signified by accent, resulted in a particular response from the police, resulting in differential treatment or, in the case of the black Irish woman, confusion. This suggests, to an extent, that the responses of the police were not wholly unexpected and that their responses were, to an extent, inferred. The final interviewee who experienced problems with the police, on the other hand, stated quite clearly that the incident in question changed her attitude towards the police: “I really hate them now, I do” (S8, female). In this case, the anti-Irish attitude of the police was particularly overt.

This young woman related a story about a fracas at her mother’s wedding reception: significantly, her mother had married an Englishman, yet it was the presence of Irish accents which, in her opinion, led to the inappropriate police response. During the course of the wedding reception, a youth was found “injecting himself in the toilets”. Members of the wedding party took the youth outside and an argument ensued. As the argument began to end, the police arrived and reacted negatively to what they perceived to be a “typical Irish wedding”, although there were only three people with identifiably Irish accents present:

It was me mum’s wedding, she got married in April, and when, some, I don’t know who the fella was, a seventeen year old was caught injecting himself in the

toilets and he was told to get out and he hit my step-father in the face, split his eye. *Your new step-father?*

Yeah. This was on his wedding day, and he split his eye and caused a bit of a row outside and the police came and made things ten times worse. All they kept saying was 'typical Irish wedding, it's to be expected', when they were the ones that made things worse by, like for instance, four of them held me brother down and one of them was standing on his head, you know, and I got arrested too for standing up and I was covered, completely covered in bruises, and I was threw in a cell for four hours on my own. But I got let out. I wasn't charged with anything because I didn't do anything.

And you think that was just because

Oh god yeah, they [the police] were there to start trouble it was obvious, you know. Everybody had everything under control, more or less under control and then they came along, came along with dogs and everything, they set a dog, a police dog on my step-father, he got arrested on his wedding night, you know, you just really [pause]. (S8, female)

Obviously, this was a very upsetting event for the interviewee. However, one of her main reactions was one of relief; if she had been charged, this would have had serious repercussions on her career as a child-carer. She was particularly angry that the youth, with whom she placed the blame for the incident, was not arrested but allowed to give free rein to his prejudices:

He stood there and he was like 'all Irish people are scum'. He was standing by a policeman as he said this: 'I'm going to get a knife and I'm going to kill all the bastards, they're scum' and he got off with it. (S8, female)

It is clear that the interviewees concerned believe that the police have negative stereotypes of the Irish. Their behaviours towards the Irish people concerned were seen as contingent upon the police perceptions of Irish people and the specific meanings associated with them: violence, terrorism, trouble. This reflects earlier research which has examined the power of the police to label certain groups as deviant and to use particular signifiers to identify certain people as probable offenders (Hall et al., 1977). In the last case discussed here, the reaction of the police was believed by the interviewee to be both inappropriate and unexpected. However, other interviewees expressed the opinion that the behaviour and response of the police to their ethnicity was not unexpected.

Although interviewees were most likely to identify the police as the authority with which they had experienced difficulties because of their ethnicity, other problems were recounted, such as difficulties at work (three), with a landlord (one) and with schoolteachers (one). These problems were all recounted by women, and may be related to the specific position of Irish women in Britain. One of these interviewees, however, does not fit into this interpretation, since she is a black Irish woman (see also above). She attributed her harassment at work to being Irish *and* black: "I think it was a combination of blackness and Irishness together" (S15, female). This harassment led to

the interviewee moving out of a nurses' residential home into private accommodation; however, the harassment continued to the point where she felt she had to "send solicitors' letters just to relieve the heat". Coupled with her earlier comments on the confusion her accent caused the police, the experiences of this interviewee serve to highlight the specific experiences of black Irish people in Britain.

9.4.2 Chance encounters

Fifteen interviewees (60%; N=25) had experienced problems with "an acquaintance, a neighbour or someone [they] had just met" (question 46). Thirteen interviewees recounted being called names by strangers or neighbours: it is thus not surprising that the majority of interviewees did not know or speak to their neighbours (section 9.3). All of the interviewees reported feeling upset or hurt by these incidents, but in general none had felt able to challenge such prejudice. One woman who challenged football supporters who abused her said "I learnt a lesson from that to keep my mouth shut" (S7, female).

In particular, women interviewees recounted feeling threatened by verbal abuse. All their stories tell of abuse from English men, and their lack of confrontation of this abuse is explained by their perceptions of a threat of violence underlying the abuse:

One night, myself and a friend who's also Irish went to a nightclub and we were in a queue and we were actually going to a nightclub where we didn't know, we were in a new town where we didn't know. There were two night clubs and we didn't know which one to go to. And we were generally speaking among ourselves whether we should go to this one or go to the other one and a group of English fellas behind us obviously overheard us talking and said to us "well, we're going in here, so why don't yes [you] f-off down to the other one yes [you] Irish"

What did they call you?

Bitches, basically, yeah. And well, naturally, being two girls on our own we didn't push it. (P1, female)

Such abuse was seen as part of the everyday experience of being Irish in Britain. One interviewee commented that his response to one woman's verbal abuse "about the Irish" was to think "Well, bugger it, I'm in England, I'm used to it now" (S2, male).

The older interviewees who mentioned abuse from strangers (S3, S5, S9) all believed that it was a thing of the past, and that the Irish had become much more accepted than previously, partly because of their contributions: "This country has a lot to be satisfied for" (S5, male). However, it appears from the younger interviewees that Irish people experience abuse from strangers and that, in general, it is an abuse which they feel unable to confront. For Irish people who feel vulnerable in the face of British hostility, the strategy of 'keeping the head down' is a rational one which, however,

“ensures that their voices are muffled” (Walter, 1995: 42). Irish people, and Irish women in particular, are at once invisible and vulnerable. That Irish women in particular perceive such abuse to be underwritten by threats of violence can be explained by the greater exposure their working lives and domestic responsibilities gives them to British hostility (ibid.). It can also be attributed to the power differentials between men and women which are reflected in the ways in which men and women talk (Crawford, 1995).

9.4.3 Friends’ experiences

Fifteen interviewees (60%; N=25), said that an Irish friend or acquaintance had experienced problems which could be explained by negative reactions to their ethnicity. The majority of interviewees did not mention specific incidents, but said that they had heard of many such events: “Oh yeah. I can’t remember specific experiences but yeah, yeah. You’re always being told about that” (S2, male). Most of the incidents involved verbal abuse levelled at someone for being Irish:

Well, M_____, she does cleaning for various people, and one woman she works for, she tells me she just tolerates her and treats her, she’s a Telegraph reader, of course. I mean, she says quite racist things from time to time [to M_____]. (S10, female)

The specific experiences mentioned by interviewees were: a friend stopped and questioned by the police; two cases where friends were treated with suspicion by customs officers, attributed to perceptions of their ethnicity; an aunt who was detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Even among interviewees who could not recall friends relating specific instances of anti-Irish hostility, there was a general recognition of the likelihood of their friends having had such experiences. Most interviewees attributed verbal abuse levied at Irish people to anti-Irish prejudice in general, although one interviewee mentioned Northern Ireland as a causative factor in some anti-Irish abuse: “Northern Ireland can be used as an excuse sometimes” (P1, female).

The testimonies of interviewees regarding Irish friends’ and acquaintances’ experiences demonstrated a knowledge of issues of anti-Irish racism which extended beyond personal knowledge. Essed (1991) has discussed how general knowledge of racism affects both expectations of majority behaviour, and minority behaviour: it is probable that the general knowledge which interviewees in this research have similarly affected them.

9.4.4 Overheard comments

Twelve interviewees (48%; N=25) said they had either seen or heard behaviour directed against Irish people which they found objectionable. Again, following the pattern established above, the majority of these incidents involved verbal abuse: hearing someone called a “thick Paddy” (S7, female) or being told “Irish scum, go back where you came from” (S8, female). Irish jokes were considered hurtful and made some interviewees angry: “you hear them in pubs and cafes and you’d like to walk up to them with a baseball bat and hit them across the forehead and say ‘yeah, and I’m Irish too’” (S12, male). One interviewee commented on the remarks of an organiser of International Day in Islington, who used the stereotype of the heavy-drinker:

I said: ‘it’s been a great success. Look, all the wine’s gone’ and he said ‘oh, we must have had a good few Irish in today, so’. He said that to me! (S10, female)

Again, the expectation among interviewees was that verbal abuse was common and everyday. It is attributed to perceptions of ‘Irishness’ and what ‘Irishness’ signifies for those who make derogatory comments. In both general conversation and the media, ‘Irish’ is a negatively valued term:

I’ve often heard our name, ‘Irish’, it wouldn’t be the actual words, but the tone of the voice, you know, about the Irish, you know, the Irish this, and the Irish that. Or ‘you’re Irish’, as if you crawled from under a stone. (S9, female)

There was an article in The Sun that really annoyed me, about an Irishman going into a hairdressers, I can’t remember. I was so angry at it, it was such a blatant, racist statement. I can’t remember the details, something about an Irish, navvy he was described as, going into the hairdressers and they refused to cut his hair or some woman refused to sit beside him because he was Irish. And it was phrased as blatant as that, you know, because he was Irish. (S2, male)

As with the verbal abuse and derogatory comments discussed above, the general strategy of interviewees was one of non-intervention and maintaining a low profile. It can be assumed that this was for the same reason given before: avoidance of trouble, and fear of violence.

9.5 Exploring discrimination and prejudice

This section of the interview was designed to examine interviewees’ perceptions of the position of the Irish in Britain. It began by asking which term would they choose to describe the Irish in Britain, the most popular of which was “a different race (from the English)” (see Table 9.1, below).

Apart from the two interviewees who classified the Irish as being the same as the English, all the interviewees emphasised cultural differences as the reason behind their

selection. This reinforces the finding that perceptions of difference are an important factor in relationships between Irish and English people. However, it also suggests that it may have been the suggestion of ‘difference’, rather than that of ‘race’ which prompted selection of this category:

Because fundamentally we’re a different people. We have different roots. (S10, female: chose different ‘race’)

Table 9.1: terms chosen as most accurately describing the Irish in Britain (N=25)

Category chosen	Men	Women	Totals
<i>A different ‘race’</i>	3	5	8
<i>Ethnic minority</i>	1	4	5
<i>Ethnic group</i>	4	0	4
<i>Same as Scots/Welsh</i>	2	1	3
<i>Minority group</i>	1	1	2
<i>Same as English</i>	0	2	2
<i>None of these</i>	1	0	1

9.5.1 Discrimination

Interviewees were asked a range of questions to establish their attitudes towards and knowledge of discrimination against Irish people in Britain (questions 51-52b). One of the strongest findings was that twenty four interviewees (96%; N=25) agreed that Irish people did, or had, experience discrimination to some extent.

Table 9.2 Responses to Q51:

“Would you consider that the Irish in Britain experience discrimination?”

Yes	Some Irish	In the past	No
17	4	3	1
68%	16%	12%	4%

The most common form of contemporary discrimination was cited as being social (eight; 32%), such as in public houses or on the street. This included references to verbal abuse, being refused service and the behaviour of the police towards the Irish:

Nightlife, when they’re [Irish people] coming out of the pubs, the police vans are all over the place. If there’s an Irish match or anything, you know, any Irish marches or anything like that. (P3, female)

Interestingly, this interviewee’s comments, unlike other examples of discrimination, pinpointed discrimination at events when the Irish were not invisible but, in fact, highly visible, coming out of public houses and nightclubs *en masse*, or being involved in

Irish marches. Again, this perception underlines the rationality of maintaining a low profile, since it maintains invisibility and thus can be seen as a partially effective strategy in avoiding discrimination, such as that instigated by the police. Social discrimination was not considered to be a problem of the past by any interviewee, perhaps reflecting a greater likelihood of Irish people keeping a low profile (Walter, 1995) because of discrimination.

The second most common area of discrimination mentioned by interviewees was housing. Housing has been widely recognised as an area in which the Irish in Britain are particularly likely to experience discrimination and disadvantage (AGIY, 1995; Bennett, 1991; Cara, 1994; Kowarzik, c1994). Housing was seen as particularly problematic by interviewees because of the position of the Irish in Britain as a 'white' minority:

It's easy to be racist towards or against the Irish because we're white. (S1, male)

...it's hard enough for someone to prove racial discrimination on the grounds of colour. (S4, male)

A substantial minority of interviewees said that they had experienced discrimination themselves (44%), all of whom attributed it to perceptions of their ethnicity. When asked why they considered perceptions of their ethnicity contributed to discrimination, the typical response was that this was obvious:

"Oh, you're Irish". You know, like, "oh, you're stupid, you're Irish", usually that's the comment. Or "what do you know, you're Irish?", that's the usual one you get. (S2, male)

They'd almost tell you to your face. (S5, male)

Most of the interviewees who said they had personally experienced discrimination said that it was either at work or in seeking work (nine of eleven). This is a significant finding: while evidence of anti-Irish harassment in the workplace is emerging, there is little evidence regarding access to employment. However, the Irish in Britain, like other ethnic minorities, do experience unemployment levels higher than average (Kowarzik, c1994). While this may be in part due to a lack of qualifications, there is increasing evidence that Irish people emigrating to Britain are well-educated (Hazelkorn, 1990; MacLaughlin, 1994). This suggests that there are other barriers to labour market entry for Irish people. One interviewee stated that while prospective employers would not accept references from (Northern) Ireland, this was compounded by the case of the abduction by an Irish nanny of Farah Kuli, a baby in her care:

I would say looking for work. Especially say, nannying jobs, definitely. Around the time of that bogus nanny, that Irish girl, I definitely think it was her making it

more difficult. Plus my references. I've got nanny references from Ireland and they're no good over here. They wanted English ones. (S8, female)

The responses to these questions clearly demonstrate an awareness amongst interviewees, including those who said they had not experienced discrimination themselves, of discrimination against Irish people, coupled with an awareness of in what areas of life this was likely to happen. Discrimination against Irish people was very much seen as motivated by perceptions of 'Irishness'.

9.5.2 Trevor McAuley ¹

A majority of interviewees considered that Trevor McAuley's success in winning his case against his employers was a good outcome for Irish people in general (thirteen; 52%; N=25):

It was great. As far as he was concerned, he done a lot for the Irish community. (S1, male)

While four interviewees thought that McAuley should not have taken the case, a more likely response was being unable to recall the case (eight). Three interviewees rejected the media's response to McAuley's success: "It annoyed me the way the press tried to make it a humorous issue" (S4, male).

9.5.3 Prejudice and Jokes

Interviewees were asked whether they considered the Irish in Britain experienced prejudice (question 54) (N=25): this was followed by a series of questions about jokes (55-58b) (N=20). Only one interviewee did not consider that the Irish in Britain experienced prejudice, although seven qualified their view by stating that anti-Irish prejudice was targeted at particular elements of the Irish community. The questions exploring incidents of Irish jokes were designed to examine one aspect of prejudice levelled against the Irish. It is informed by the understanding that the "net effect of prejudice...is to place the object of prejudice at some disadvantage not merited by his[/her] own conduct" (Allport, 1954: 9).

Responses to anti-Irish jokes fell into three categories: ambivalence (7; 35%), acceptance (6; 30%) and rejection (7; 35%). This split in response reflects findings elsewhere: 46% of respondents to the *Irish Post* survey were angry or resentful of Irish jokes (O'Connell, 1993a; see also Hickman, 1990). Importantly, those who were ambivalent towards anti-Irish jokes considered that both the context and teller of the

¹ Trevor McAuley won his case at an industrial tribunal, which agreed that he had been a victim of racial harassment when the company for which he worked refused to address his complaints regarding his work-mates' incessant use of anti-Irish jokes.

jokes were important: “Well, it depends on who tells them....It clearly depends on the context” (S6, male). However, those who rejected anti-Irish jokes were clear in their dislike: “I find them very racist, very offensive, they’re not an Irish joke, they’re an anti-Irish joke really” (S12, male).

Thirteen interviewees (65%; N=20) had experienced anti-Irish jokes being told in their current or a previous place of work. (It is likely that, since there was no specific question regarding previous workplaces, that the experience of joke-telling was higher than reported here.) In a significant gender difference, all seven interviewees who said they had never experienced anti-Irish jokes being told at a place of work were women. Those women (three) who had experienced anti-Irish jokes at work, all stipulated that this was in a previous workplace. This contrasts with the six men who said anti-Irish jokes were told at their current place of work. Thus, at the time of the interviews, it appears that men were more likely to experience prejudice in the form of joke-telling.

Four of the interviewees who had experienced joke-telling explained it by colleagues’ need to establish difference or superiority:

Well, every country has a race they run down, isn’t it like? So the English always run down the Irish. (S2, male).

an English person thinks it’s very witty to attribute a mistake to the Irishness, rather than the fallibility of the human being. (S4, male)

However, the remaining nine interviewees who had experienced anti-Irish jokes in the work place agreed that there were no particular circumstances to which such joke-telling was related. This emphasises the social acceptability of anti-Irish jokes. Four interviewees who had experienced anti-Irish jokes at work said that it was clients who had told them jokes: in three of these the clients were children. All of these interviewees agreed that for the children it was “part of their vocabulary” (S12, male).

Ethnic jokes in the workplace are both a form of social control and an avenue for the joke-teller to confirm their superiority relative to the ethnic minority group member (Davies, 1988). As such, they indicate anxiety about both the ethnic minority group’s *Otherness* (Oldani, 1988) and the position of the joke-teller in the culture of the workplace (Davies, 1988). An important element of ethnic joke-telling is the assumption that they are harmless and indicative of tolerance for the ethnic minority group: this commonsense understanding of the nature of ethnic jokes “makes unassailable the position of the ethnic joke-teller” (Husband, 1988: 69). Of those who had experienced joke-telling, only one interviewee (S5, male) reported confronting colleagues about it. This stopped colleagues telling such jokes in his presence: “Don’t say them when T__’s here, he doesn’t like it”. The interviewee reported that in his view this was an action of

exclusion on the part of his colleagues and can thus be seen as a punishment for his 'failure' to be 'tolerant'. It may be that the other interviewees who reported experiencing jokes in the workplace were unwilling to challenge the situation because they implicitly recognised their powerlessness.

Another interviewee related an incident at a previous place of work which clearly illustrates how commonsense understandings of the meaning of 'Irishness' can be used to assert superiority over the Irish. This does not involve joke telling, but was told by the interviewee to illustrate how people who tell anti-Irish jokes do so to assert their superiority:

I was working on this factory floor once, packing cassettes. And one of the managers told this bunch of girls, you know, to box up these cassettes, faulty cassettes, and none of them could spell 'faulty', you know, or was it 'cassettes'? Or one of those words, they couldn't spell it. Anyway, they were all pretty thick these girls. So they'd write the word, and then they'd stroke it out: "no, no, you spell it like this", and she'd stroke it out. So then they turned to me: "well, P____, what do you think, how do you spell it?", and I went da-da-da, and I knew it was right, I knew how to spell cassettes, and they looked at it, and then they all looked at me. And you could see them all thinking, and then they said, "no, that can't be right, because you're Irish", and they stroked it out, and the wrote the one that was wrong! (S2, male)

Jokes and humour at work assist in defining the organisational culture (Linstead, 1988). Challenging this aspect of the organisational culture is, therefore, to put oneself in a position of greater vulnerability by being outside of the group both in terms of ethnicity and work culture. Furthermore, objecting to ethnic joke-telling is to question the superiority which the joke-teller seeks to confirm in themselves (Davies, 1988). Thus the situation becomes one of confrontation and may lead to greater negative consequences such as further exclusion from the work culture.

Six interviewees (30%; N=20) reported that their friends told Irish jokes, of which two specified that it was their Irish friends who told the jokes. All interviewees whose friends told Irish jokes said that it was because such jokes were seen as funny and part of normal social behaviour. However, there was some sense of ambiguity or anxiety regarding the telling of anti-Irish jokes by non-Irish people:

It's part of people's conversation, and I believe it should be....If we can't tell a joke, we're not recognised as being part of the human race. (S12, male)

An English friend might tell them to annoy me....[or] if they're taking the piss. (S16, male)

Thus, as with ethnic joke-telling in the workplace, there is a sense of vulnerability in the face of anti-Irish jokes which may be considered an implicit recognition of the risks of challenging ethnic jokes. Because they are seen as normative behaviour, to reject

ethnic jokes is to place oneself further outside of normality and to risk the label of being intolerant. Despite this, Irish people strongly reject the imagery of Irish jokes and the jokes themselves (O'Connell, 1993a).

Ethnic joke telling is part of the 'everyday', particularly in the workplace where relationships are generally not based on choice and may be based on hierarchy and power, unlike friendships. In addition, jokes in the workplace assert superiority in a situation where the joke-teller may be unsure of their place and power in the hierarchy (Davies, 1988). This helps explain the almost reverse findings regarding joke telling in the workplace, experienced by thirteen interviewees, with joke-telling among friends where fourteen interviewees (70%) reported that their friends did not tell such jokes. In Britain, Irish jokes are considered to be part of the social and cultural fabric (Curtis, 1984b; Kirkaldy, 1980 and 1981): this both enhances their general acceptability and makes it more difficult for Irish people to challenge them.

9.6 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed aspects of everyday life as an Irish person in Britain for twenty five first generation Irish people living in London. Everyday racism is a pervasive form of social control: it is therefore significant that respondents named 'social discrimination' as the form of anti-Irish racism which they considered most prevalent. It was an expected behaviour, and thus forms one of the perceptions of the meaning of 'Irishness' in contemporary Britain which serves to inhibit or shape the behaviours of Irish people. 'Social discrimination' relates to the everyday fabric of Irish life in Britain: verbal abuse from strangers, interactions with the police. Awareness of what 'Irishness' signifies has led Irish people to institute protective behaviours and responses: the most likely strategy is that of silence. It is important to note that this strategy of silence is 'expressed' in two ways: 1) non-speaking, which avoids identification as Irish *per se*; 2) not speaking about Ireland or Irish issues to non-Irish (English) people.

The first expression of this strategy implicitly recognises the importance of the Irish accent as a signifier, it was particularly used with neighbours and strangers. A majority of interviewees either did not know or did not speak to their neighbours, while a majority of interviewees also reported not challenging (not speaking) anti-Irish behaviour which they had witnessed. The second expression of silence was used in interactions with (English) friends and colleagues. Ireland, and especially Northern Ireland, was seen as a taboo topic in such relationships; unease was expressed by interviewees regarding even seemingly 'safe' topics such as Ireland as a holiday destination. Interviewees possessed 'double consciousness' (du Bois, 1986[1953]) in that they were aware of the meaning of 'Irishness' and the responses and behaviours

which this mythic concept invited. They curtailed their own behaviour through mechanisms of silence, strategies designed to avoid anti-Irish racism. The low profile adopted by interviewees - avoidance of conversations about Ireland, not knowing or talking to neighbours, not challenging anti-Irish behaviours and attitudes including anti-Irish jokes - demonstrates the “processes of marginalisation, problematization and containment” (Essed, 1991: 185) which are an everyday reality for Irish people.

One of the most striking findings of this chapter, however, is that seventy per cent of interviewees (N=25) had experienced verbal abuse because of their ethnicity in a chance encounter. Added to this is the cumulative evidence which demonstrates interviewees’ conception of the meanings of ‘Irish’ in everyday situations, which permitted the telling of ethnic jokes, and through which encounters with authorities (such as the police), neighbours and strangers were both negotiated and expected to be negotiated. Thus the majority of interviewees avoided discussing Ireland with English friends, with colleagues at work and with neighbours as part of a strategy of avoiding trouble. Notably, a majority of interviewees neither knew nor spoke to their neighbours. While this, to an extent, is explained by the alienation of living in a large city, those interviewees who did speak to their neighbours tended to have Irish neighbours.

In addition, interviewees spoke of specific arenas of discrimination against the Irish, including employment and housing. Interviewees who said they had personally experienced discrimination were most likely to have experienced it in the employment sector. However, the perception that ‘social discrimination’ was widespread, when added to the evidence regarding anti-Irish jokes, underlines the social experience of being Irish in Britain as one where identification as Irish leaves one vulnerable to overt expressions of prejudice. Women respondents in particular were cognisant of the threat of violence which accompanied hostile interactions with strangers. This, clearly, is related to both gender and ethnicity: while the women were clearly relating events which had arisen due to perceptions of their ethnicity, the perception and/or presence of the threat of violence may have been in part due to sex discrimination.

The overt prejudice experienced by interviewees was often related to perceptions that they were typically Irish: in other words, this prejudice was related to perceptions of interviewees which identified them with particular behavioural stereotypes associated with ‘Irishness’. These perceptions particularly involved the beliefs that interviewees, in being typically Irish, were stupid, violent and prone to drunkenness. In addition, a number of interviewees recounted experiences of being called names by strangers because they were Irish. These interactions with English people, in which interviewees have experienced prejudice and discrimination, demonstrate a relationship between the stereotypes used in the media in representations of Irish people and culture (see chapter

5, sections 5.2 and 5.3; chapter 7), and the beliefs which interviewees attributed to English people (that Irish people are stupid, violent, prone to drunkenness and likely IRA supporters). Interviewees' accounts of such interactions also suggest that not only did the English people involved invest in stereotypes of 'Irishness' but that belief in the superiority of 'Englishness' also informed such interactions. This is at its most evident in incidences of ethnic joke-telling in the workplace (see section 9.5.3 and below).

A major finding of this section of the research is that although Northern Ireland was a particular topic which respondents wished to avoid discussing with English people, that this was not the sole cause of anti-Irish racism in the view of interviewees. Indeed, when asked why they thought Irish people experienced discrimination or prejudice, only one interviewee mentioned Northern Ireland. Although it is apparent that Northern Ireland did have a deleterious effect on relations with English people, then, it was neither the sole cause nor prime motivation of such behaviours, in the view of interviewees. The avoidance of Northern Ireland in particular as a topic of conversation with English people may be in part influenced by interviewees' perceptions of the reporting of violence from Northern Ireland by the news media in Britain. Interviewees saw this as biased and pro-British: they also considered that it affected their relationships and interactions with English people (see chapter 8, section 8.4). Given the representation of the Irish in Britain as a suspect community in newspaper reports (see chapter 5, section 5.3) and the typical use of the IRA to add drama to television programmes (see chapter 7), it is perhaps not surprising that interviewees perceived discussion of Northern Ireland with English people as inadvisable and likely to cause argument.

This research demonstrates that in the workplace there are two distinct types of anti-Irish jokes: the first (discussed in section 9.3) is the labelling of Irish people as IRA activists after an incident has occurred in Britain; the second is the use of more general ethnic jokes. These are probably differentially motivated: labelling an Irish colleague as an IRA member may be due to feelings of helplessness and anger in the face of an IRA threat. It may also be influenced by the equation of 'Irish equals IRA', although from the testimonies provided here this only surfaces in the aftermath of IRA activity which has been reported in the media. So, although the people using this labelling may not use it on a regular basis, its use has a clear link to media reporting because, obviously, only IRA activities which are reported in the mass media are within the public purview. The use of this type of anti-Irish joke, that is the labelling of Irish people as IRA activists, typically in a work situation, is both directly and indirectly related to media reporting. Such jokes occur when IRA activity in Britain is reported in the media; the labelling of

Irish work colleagues as IRA members, even in fun, is related to and justified by the media's representation of the Irish in Britain as a suspect community.

As already discussed (section 9.5.3), ethnic jokes in the workplace serve to assert the superiority of the joke teller (Davies, 1988) and are indicative of anxiety about a person's perceived (on the part of the joke teller) *Otherness* (Oldani, 1988). This is an important adjunct to Kirkaldy's assertion that the renewed popularity of the anti-Irish joke was due to the Northern Irish conflict and a British desire to ignore their role in it (1979; 1980; 1981). This may be true of the media, about which Kirkaldy was writing, but the evidence here suggests that in everyday contexts, there are other motivations behind anti-Irish jokes, primarily the assertion of superiority as when an anti-Irish joke is told to further highlight an error. Such assumptions of superiority rely on the construction of 'Irish' as an Other to 'English'; such views can only be reinforced by the portrayals in the media which represent 'Irish' and 'English' as bipolar opposites (see chapter 6 and chapter 7, especially section 7.2).

Irish people in Britain constitute an invisible minority (Hickman and Walter, 1995), hidden by the assumption that their 'whiteness' is a protection against prejudice and discrimination. The evidence presented in this chapter contradicts this assumption, but also explains the strategy of 'keeping the head down' or maintaining a low profile. This strategy ensures that the voice of Irish people is muted or unheard (Walter, 1995); thus they are unidentifiable as 'Irish'. This does not mean unidentifiable because their accent has not been heard. While this is the case with neighbours and strangers, clearly English friends and colleagues will be aware of a person's ethnicity. Rather, by maintaining a low profile, one can avoid the perception that one is 'Irish' in the everyday sense of 'Irish' and thus avoid the stereotypic response. In other words, interviewees tried to avoid being seen as a 'typical' Irish person and thus avoid racism.

It is clear from the testimonies of interviewees that the double silence strategy (not speaking; avoiding discussing Ireland and Irish issues) was not a wholly successful strategy. It ultimately had a limiting affect on the way the interviewees lived their lives, although it is doubtful that this effect is something which all the interviewees perceived. It is significant that of the restrictions which interviewees placed upon themselves speech was particularly prevalent, given the signification of accent as an identifier of Irish ethnicity. Nevertheless, it was not accent but speech content which interviewees restricted. Interviewees, particularly women respondents, were reluctant to be identified as Irish by strangers, and avoided speaking to people they did not know: this meant that they could not challenge anti-Irish behaviour or opinions. This was underlined by the reluctance of interviewees, and again this finding is stronger in the case of women respondents, to discuss Ireland or Irish issues with English people, including English

friends. The evidence of this research adds weight to the finding of the *Irish Post* survey that “a considerable number of Irish persons in Britain feel uneasy about their relations with the English as well as suspicious that the English look on them unfavourably” (O’Connell, 1993a: 7). An important addition, however, is that the experiences and knowledge of interviewees amply demonstrate why Irish people are wary in their interactions with English people.

The double silence strategy (not speaking; avoiding discussing Ireland and Irish issues) is thus a form of social control which, however, is produced by the group being controlled, since it is a form of internal regulation. It confirms that the Irish in Britain have ‘double consciousness’ (du Bois, 1986[1953]): the meaning of ‘Irish’ in the ‘everyday’ is known by Irish people in Britain and is used to monitor their own behaviour. This monitoring of the meaning of ‘Irish’ takes place in the use of British mass media products and in interactions with English people. The racialized stereotypes of ‘Irishness’ which interviewees perceive in the media, and which they believe English people to invest in, inform interviewees’ decisions in interactions with English people. In particular, this leads to the double silence strategy, where interviewees either avoid interaction altogether, to avoid being identified as Irish, or avoid particular topics of conversation and confronting anti-Irish jokes. In this manner, interviewees use their double consciousness (their own perceptions of the meanings of being Irish plus their perceptions of what English people expect from them as Irish people) to inform and monitor their own behaviour in an attempt to reduce and avoid the racism they expect from both the English people they meet and know and from the mass media.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

This thesis examines the contemporary racialization of the Irish in Britain by interrogating representations of Ireland, Irish people and Irish culture in the mass media in Britain. Testimonies from first generation Irish people living in London provide insights into their everyday lives as Irish people in Britain; their reactions and responses to the representations they perceive in the media they use are recorded. The thesis provides an insight into the specific racialized discourses which differentiate Irish people in Britain. It demonstrates the role of the mass media in Britain in providing and legitimising the language of stereotypes with which to particularise and categorise prejudice towards Irish people (Billig, 1985).

The analyses of the representations of Ireland, Irish people and Irish culture in the national daily press and television dramatisations (chapters 4-7, inclusive) used a “deconstruction, interpretation, and reconstruction” framework (Ericson et al. 1991: 55). This yielded in-depth and specific insights into the positioning of the Irish in British discourses of popular culture. In particular, the meanings associated with being Irish from a British perspective are identified. Stereotypes of the Irish and Ireland which were identified were both symbolic (‘Irish = IRA’) and trait-laden (Haddock et al., 1994), and were both overtly and implicitly constructed in opposition to understandings of Britain/‘Britishness’ and, more specifically, England/‘Englishness’.

Irish people in Britain, and Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland, symbolically represent the IRA in the newspaper and television data collected for this research. In newspaper reports of IRA activities in Britain, Irish people in Britain are constructed as a subversive and “suspect community” (Hillyard, 1993), reminiscent of the “disloyal Irish” (Foster, 1993: 184) of earlier representations. The main signifier used to identify Irish people in this context was accent. Catholics in Northern Ireland are constructed as the cause of violence in Northern Ireland. The religious label ‘Catholic’ acts as a signifier of support for violent Republicanism, specifically that of the IRA. IRA violence was portrayed as the causative factor of the war in Northern Ireland: Loyalist and British army violence were depicted as reactionary and therefore explicable. Thus Catholics are identified as responsible for violence in Northern Ireland, either through their assumed support for the IRA or because IRA violence causes Loyalist and British army violence.

It is striking that of the six television programmes reviewed for the research, five used the IRA as dramatic devices, suggesting that the conflict in Northern Ireland is seen as the most interesting and dramatic aspect of Ireland (all six programmes were British productions; none were produced in Northern Ireland). In two programmes, the

IRA provided a main theme for the plot (Circle of Deceit, Michael Winner's True Crimes); the other three used the IRA to add dramatic tension (two episodes of Between the Lines and The Magician). In these programmes, IRA members are specifically constructed as Northern Irish, rather than Irish *per se*: this is signified through use of accent and/or location (which may actually feature or which may be mentioned). It is a matter of speculation whether British viewers can distinguish between accents from Northern Ireland and accents from the Republic of Ireland. However, in all of these programmes, a member of the police or other security force refers to the IRA as either "the Paddies" and/or "the Irish", thereby conjuring up the symbolic stereotype 'Irish = IRA'. The use of security force and police personnel to identify the IRA as "Paddies" or the "Irish" lends authority to the equation. As the plots in these five programmes involve threats to the British state, the IRA, and thus Irish people, is depicted as a subversive threat to the state.

Trait-laden stereotypes of 'Irishness' consisted of expected behaviours such as madness, drinking to excess, stupidity evidenced through actions and aggression. These stereotypes particularly applied to Irish men. Trait-laden stereotypes were also used as signifiers of 'Irishness', in the case of people who were not recognisably Irish (John Healy; second generation Irish) and those who were not Irish (Mick Hucknall). Some changes from the older stereotypes of Irish people can be identified: drinking to excess, rather than drunkards; acting in a manner which apparently inverts normalcy, often characterised as stupid behaviour, rather than being unintelligent; being aggressive, particularly verbally aggressive, rather than physically violent; speaking in 'brogue' (Croghan, 1986). The contemporary stereotypes, therefore, demonstrate both a continuity with and a change from earlier incarnations (see Curtis, 1968 and 1971; Curtis, 1984b; Kirkaldy, 1979; Lebow, 1976). Trait-laden stereotypes were also apparent in the sixth television programme, *Hear My Song*, including the association of Irish men with alcohol but also cunning (evasion of the police in the final scene).

The composite version of the stereotypes, 'Paddy', was invoked in three newspaper articles. In two of these (in *The Sun*), 'Paddy' was used to identify stupid or irrational behaviours (jogging on the M4; celebrating a birthday on the wrong day). In the third (*Daily Telegraph*), the use of 'Paddy' was attributed to an RUC policeman, who was inferring that only Irish Catholics could end the IRA campaign: this is the same usage of 'Paddy' as noted in the television programmes which featured an IRA (sub-)plot.

The alternative to 'Paddy', 'Mick', was also used only occasionally, in the colloquial phrase 'taking the mick', which has Irish origins (Curtis, 1984b): the examples focused on in this research both used 'Mick' rather than 'mick' in their headlines, and utilised trait-laden stereotypes of 'Irishness' (madness, aggression, drinking). Thus the Irish

aspect of 'taking the Mick' was emphasised (as opposed to 'taking the piss'/'extracting the michael'/'taking the mickey'). However, more than Paddy or Mick, the word 'Irish' acted as a signifier in the newspaper reports surveyed, often of inversion, stupid behaviour or madness. The use of 'Irish' to signify stupidity and madness was not restricted to Irish people or stories, but was applied to behaviours or situations. This usage resonates with anti-Irish jokes which rely for their humour on depictions of Irish inversions of 'normal', or 'English', behaviour and conceptions of the world (Curtis, 1984b; Kerrigan, 1981; Kirkaldy, 1980, 1981).

Irish women were generally absent from the newspaper reports collected for this research. When portrayed, the trait-laden stereotypes particularly associated with Irish women were madness and the possession of a 'soft' accent. This finding suggests that although a Biddy stereotype is absent from the British/English imagination (Walter, 1995), Irish women are not protected by gender from the processes of stereotyping. Irish women were also generally absent from the television programmes reviewed for this research. When they were present, it was typically as love interests for the protagonists in the programmes involved (Eilis in *Circle of Deceit*; Cathleen and Nancy Doyle in *Hear My Song*). The only exception to this was the depiction of the Ryan women as formidable women in *Hear My Song*: all the speaking Ryan women had strong (as opposed to soft?) Irish accents.

This film was the only representation on television of the Irish community in Britain; similarly, newspaper representations of the Irish community in Britain were rare. Other than as IRA subversives, the Irish in Britain constitute an invisible minority which is otherwise presumed to be incorporated into the majority population; the ethnicity of second generation Irish people, for example in reports on second generation Irish players in the Republic of Ireland's soccer team, is denied as real.

The depiction of Ireland in the media takes two, distinct forms. In each, Ireland is constructed as a foil to England (Kiberd, 1995; Eagleton, 1995). The Republic of Ireland, particularly in travel articles in the press, is portrayed as a green, rural place where the consumption of alcohol, particularly Guinness and whiskey, often in large amounts, is considered normal. Ireland becomes a place to visit for excessive drinking. Ireland is also portrayed as mystical, a place where beliefs dismissed as superstition in Britain are still valid. The representation of Ireland as a place of alcohol consumption, green, rural and mystical is evident in *Hear My Song*. In these portrayals, Ireland becomes a rural utopia which retains a way of life lost in industrial, urban Britain. However, a related image of the Republic of Ireland is of a country which is less modern and liberal than Britain. This depiction of the Republic is particularly used in articles which examine sex and sexuality, and related issues such as abortion, in the

Republic of Ireland. This image of Ireland as less liberal and modern than urban, industrial Britain, also extends to Northern Ireland, where sectarianism and the conflict are specifically seen as historical artefacts which the populace of Northern Ireland have failed to abandon in the modern era. Ireland, in the English imagination, represents both a rural utopia and dystopia.

It is evident that there are many cross-overs in the depictions of Irish people and Ireland in the newspapers and television programmes surveyed for this research, which over-ride the different parameters of these media. Irish people symbolically represent the IRA; they are also characterised through behavioural characteristics which comprise trait-laden stereotypes. These stereotypes are often implicitly constructed in opposition to 'Britishness' and especially 'Englishness'. However, the opposition is sometimes overt, as in the depiction of Peter Brooke as an English gentleman to Gay Byrne's Irish ape, or the heroism of English people in the face of anonymous IRA threats, or the adherence to family values of John Neil compared to the sacrifice of family by Liam McAuley (*Circle of Deceit*). Because the binary English/Irish is unproblematic (Brah, 1996) it is only in closely interrogating the mass media that these stereotypes can be reconstructed.

The Irish people interviewed for this research were aware of, and rejected, the symbolic and trait-laden representations of Irish people in the British mass media. In particular, the interviewees considered that the British media represented Irish people as terrorists, violent, drunks, stupid and mad. However, interviewees considered that Ireland, Irish issues and Irish people were generally absent from newspapers and television. The only news event which was perceived to receive regular coverage was that of Northern Ireland, coverage of which interviewees considered to be propagandist in its pro-British stance and unsatisfactory in its concentration on IRA bombings in Britain. Otherwise, interviewees considered that news from Ireland which was covered tended to be scandalous or sensational. It is important to note, however, that despite the general rejection of the British mass media's representations of Irish people, interviewees tended to seek out television programmes which were advertised as having an Irish theme or content. This suggests a strong desire on the part of interviewees to have access to representations which provide a realistic portrait of Irish people, reflected in the strength of anticipation in *The Hanging Gale* present in the comments of participants in the research who were interviewed prior to its screening. It is evident that Irish people particularly rejected negative portrayals of Irish people, to the extent that such portrayals were literally put out of mind: for example, despite a high number of regular soap watchers, the majority of interviewees could not recall Irish characters in British soaps.

Interviewees attributed to the effect theory of media impact. That is, they strongly believed that the representations of Irish people in the British mass media informed British, but especially English, people's expectations of their behaviour, attitudes and beliefs. This may explain the general consensus that more documentaries on Ireland would be welcomed on British television, a consensus which was informed by the belief that only documentaries which contained accurate versions of Irish history and accurate portrayals of Irish people would serve to re-educate the British/English people.

This perception of the expectations of British/English people regarding Irish people may in part explain the low profile kept by interviewees. Interviewees tended to make friends with other Irish people: the reason for this being that interviewees felt it easier to communicate and socialise with other Irish people. Ireland, and Irish news, were generally not considered to be appropriate issues for conversation with English people; interviewees tended to consider that such conversations caused trouble and difficulties in their relationships with English people and were best avoided. In addition to this, interviewees felt unable to confront verbal prejudice directed at them by English people; women interviewees in particular cited fear of violent reprisal which prevented them from confrontation. Interviewees who had been stopped or arrested by the police, while few, similarly did not challenge the assumptions used by the police about them as Irish people. Again, to have done so would have, in the opinion of interviewees, caused (more) trouble.

Verbal harassment extended to the workplace, and particularly included anti-Irish jokes. These 'jokes' took two forms. The first was the ethnic joke, which draws upon trait-laden stereotypes of Irish behaviour, particularly stupidity; this included attributions of mistakes made in work to ethnicity ('Irishness'). The second was the IRA joke, which invoked the symbolic stereotype: typically, this type of joke-telling occurred after a bombing or attempted bombing by the IRA in Britain which was covered in the British news media. Generally, this 'joke' would take the form of "well, we know what you (and your friends) were up to last night". Typically, interviewees, and especially women interviewees, felt unable to confront either type of joke-telling. However, women interviewees were less likely than men to report that anti-Irish jokes were told in their workplace. Some of the men who experienced anti-Irish joke-telling at work adopted a strategy of telling the jokes first: they interpreted this as a way of taking the power of ascription from their colleagues. It is possible that such a strategy serves to affirm the apparent acceptability of anti-Irish jokes to Irish people and the Irish reputation for good humour.

It appears then that interviewees who partook in this research tended to use a double strategy of silence to avoid racism. The first type of silence involves the avoidance of

discussing issues of an Irish interest with English people, including friends, neighbours and colleagues. This is characterised by interviewees as avoiding trouble or problems in their relationships with English people. The second type of silence is that of non-confrontation when English people voice anti-Irish views, including jokes. Again, this is seen as a strategy for avoiding trouble or problems. In the case of ethnic and IRA jokes in the workplace, confrontation would serve to re-affirm the outsider position of the Irish person which such jokes assert (see Davies, 1988; Oldani, 1988; Husband, 1988).

The strategy of non-confrontation, for example when faced with ethnic and IRA jokes, may be explained by a tactic of cognitive dissonance. By not confronting the joke-teller, the Irish person concerned is avoiding being labelled as confrontational and perhaps argumentative, labelling which may reinforce the perception that the Irish person concerned is not a member of the ingroup. In other words, cognitive dissonance enables the Irish person to avoid (further) negative appraisals of them as an Irish person. In addition, a strategy of non-confrontation of jokes may reinforce the perception that the Irish have a good sense of humour and are 'able to take a joke', views of 'Irishness' which some Irish people may find self-affirming.

It is not that the Irish in Britain don the mask of Paddy, as Kiberd suggests (1995), but that, in the face of racist jokes and comments, Irish people do not find themselves capable of addressing racism. 'Double consciousness' acts as a protective mechanism in that it supplies an awareness, or consciousness, of what to expect in interactions with English people. Irish people in Britain try to avoid everyday racism or to at least minimise its impact, by using their knowledge of the significations of 'Irishness'. One strategy employed is the double silence strategy discussed above: by not speaking or discussing Irish topics, the Irish person may avoid categorisation, and perhaps even achieve particularisation (Billig, 1985), that is to be seen as an exception to the racialized images of Irish people. Another related strategy is to confine friendships and socialising to other Irish people and places, thereby avoiding contact with English people.

From these findings, it is clear that Irish people in Britain possess "double consciousness" (du Bois, 1986[1953]: 3), and that this informs their relationships and interactions with English people. Irish people in Britain experience "everyday racism" (Essed, 1991), in their interactions with English people in particular; they generally feel unable to confront or challenge racist assumptions to which they believe, and perceive, English people attribute. Irish people are aware of the stereotypical representations of Irish people present in the British mass media, symbolic and trait-laden, and believe that these representations have a negative impact on their interactions with English people.

Despite this, most of the interviewees in this research rejected the application of the term racism to their and other Irish people's experiences, believing that this term applied only to black people; this illustrates the strength of the black/white dichotomy outside of academic theorising on racism. It denies Irish people a specific discourse through which they can describe their experiences of prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage which they experience because they are Irish.

Occupying a specific position as an ethnic minority in contemporary Britain (rather than constituting a "somewhat peculiar minority"; Ó Tuathaigh, 1985: 13), Irish people become both invisible as a 'white' ethnic minority and subject to the controls and restrictions of a racist ideology which connotes the Irish as inferior to the English. The Irish in Britain do not have access to all the privileges that being 'white' in Britain might be presumed to confer. As Dyer notes "some people are whiter than others" (1997: 12). The position which the Irish occupy in English cultural discourses is one which identifies 'Irish' as an *Other* to 'English'.

It is from their specific position, as a racialized ethnic minority, that Irish people living in Britain possess "double consciousness" (du Bois, 1986[1953]: 3). That is, they are burdened by the knowledge of what 'Irish' signifies in English cultural and popular discourses. This knowledge informs and shapes interactions with the majority: du Bois, writing about the position of African Americans in the U.S.A., referred to living with double consciousness as living with "the veil" (1986[1953]: 3). 'Double consciousness', living within "the veil", means that one is not free to just be, but must constantly take account of how one is viewed or expected to behave as an *Other* or racialized subject. Irish people living in Britain use the knowledge which their 'double consciousness' confers, that is the knowledge of what 'Irish' signifies in an English cultural context, to both predict the behaviour of English people towards them as Irish people and to inform their own behaviour in the company of English people. In this way, Irish people veil or mask themselves in their interactions with English people. This veiling is specific to interactions between English and Irish people in Britain: the people interviewed for this research consistently spoke of 'the English' rather than 'the British' when asked about interactions with friends, neighbours, and other people.

The stereotypes of 'Irishness', symbolic and trait-laden, are hidden as part of everyday, normative discourse; they are not recognised as racialized constructions of the Irish because these stereotypes are firmly positioned within the commonsense ideologies present in the mass media in Britain. In this sense, the racialized representations of the Irish are invisible because they are part of everyday discourses, part of the commonsense view of the world which apparently defies interrogation because it proposes to simply describe the world as it is. In this manner, stereotypes of

'Irishness', and their signification of an *Other* to 'Englishness', are presented as unproblematic givens (Brah, 1996). The trait-laden and symbolic stereotypes associated with Irish people in the British mass media are presented as if related to the intrinsic Irish nature of the people, situations and places concerned. Irish people support the IRA *because* they are Irish; Irish people are mad, or drink to excess, or do stupid things *because* they are Irish. The use of ethnicity in this manner not only reduces 'Irish', or 'Irishness' (cf. Cohen, 1988), to a trope, but racializes it.

Through its use of trait-laden and symbolic stereotypes associated with 'Irishness', the mass media in Britain is complicit in the 'naturalising' of these racialized stereotypes. The mythological Irish associated with such stereotypes are incorporated into commonsense ideologies (Hall, 1981), becoming unquestionable because they seemingly explain 'reality'. The incorporation of racialized stereotypes of 'Irishness' into the cultural fabric of the everyday places them firmly within normative, pedestrian reality. As such, they become unproblematic givens (Brah, 1996); they are invisible because they are normative and 'natural' (Hall, 1981). The racialized stereotypes of 'Irishness' in the British mass media form part of everyday discourse, reaffirming the mythologies of Irish inferiority and English superiority (Barthes, 1993[1957]). The use of trait-laden stereotypes, plus the symbolic stereotype ('Irish = IRA'), rather than visual differences, to create an Irish *Other* validates and reinforces the argument that racism has never been exclusively about phenotypic characteristics such as skin colour (Balibar, 1991).

Irish people are aware of the representations of 'Irishness' which the British media use. In possessing 'double consciousness', Irish people in Britain are both interpellated by and actively reject the representations of 'Irishness' which are present in the British mass media. In so doing, they employ cognitive dissonance: that is, while Irish people in Britain are aware of the negative representations which the British mass media uses to describe them, they do not accept these as applying to themselves. This is evident in the non-recall of Irish soap characters, even when soaps were viewed on a regular basis. It is also apparent in the avoidance of confrontation, when subjected to racist comments or jokes; non-confrontation is seen as preferable to confrontation which may result in confirmation or exacerbation of the negative perception of 'Irishness' already present. In such instances, cognitive dissonance works with 'double consciousness': Irish people are cognisant of racialized stereotypes of their ethnicity, and reject the stereotypes as a strategy of maintaining self-esteem, but lack the resources (power, confidence) to confront racism.

The invention of the Irish by the English as a bipolar opposite to 'English' is carried out in part in the mass media, where the stereotypes of 'Irishness', both symbolic and

trait-laden, are widely used. Whereas Haddock et al. (1994) proposed that trait-laden beliefs would be the best predictors of racism, the specificity of anti-Irish racism in Britain includes the symbolic belief that all Irish people support the IRA, summed up by the equation 'Irish = IRA'. This symbolic stereotype of 'Irishness' is widely used in the mass media. Furthermore, it is used to justify prejudiced comments and jokes, and differential treatment of Irish people by the police, particularly after IRA activity in Britain has been reported in the media, demonstrating an interaction between media representations and the everyday racism which Irish people living in Britain experience.

Similarly, trait-laden stereotypes associated with 'Irishness' which are used in the mass media are apparent, to Irish people, in the behaviour and beliefs which English people expect of them as Irish people. When an Irish person makes a mistake at work, for example, the mistake is attributed to their stupidity as an Irish person, rather than being viewed as a mistake. The conception of 'Irish' as a binary opposite to 'English' operates in commonsense ideologies which justify the symbolic and trait-laden stereotypes associated with the Irish because they are conceived as 'natural' aspects of being Irish. English people are imbued with superiority, typified as civilised, heroic, Protestant, in contrast to the wild, cowardly and Catholic Irish. The commonsense ideologies, or myths, which naturalise the stereotypes of 'Irishness', in both the mass media and the everyday, racialize the Irish by locating the beliefs and behaviours which constitute the stereotypes within innate structures of 'Irishness'.

The evidence presented here clearly demonstrates that symbolic and trait-laden stereotypes are present in British media representations of the Irish, and that Irish people believe that these stereotypes affect their interactions and relationships with English people in particular. Yet according to O'Connell "the British do not any longer cherish...stereotypes of the Irish - except the drinking description" (1994c: 7: it should be noted that in a later article O'Connell discusses "anti-Irish sentiment" amongst a subsection of the survey sample (1995a: 7). Clearly more specific interrogations of the role of stereotypes in English people's knowledge of and understanding of the Irish is needed.

The examination provided here of the racialization of the Irish in Britain provides little insight into the impact which media portrayals of Irish people and Ireland have on British, and especially English people. Although it has been demonstrated that English people are interpellated by the media as superior to the Irish, this does not provide any insight into how, if at all, English people use the mass media to inform their understanding(s) of Irish people and Ireland. Miller (1994a and 1994b) has already shown that media reports of the conflict in Northern Ireland affected the perceptions of Northern Ireland of British people who had not visited the six counties and who were

thus reliant on the media as a source of information. Similarly, O'Connell found that "those who have visited the island of Ireland are better disposed towards the Republic [of Ireland] than those who have not", although visiting Ireland did not have a positive impact on perceptions of Northern Ireland (1994c: 7). An analysis of the assessment by British, and especially English, people of the accuracy of media portrayals of the Irish may provide an insight into the impact which media representations of 'Irishness' have on English understandings of what it is to be Irish and what Ireland signifies for them. In addition, investigation of English people's understandings of 'Irish' and Ireland in relation to 'English' and England would provide an insight into the assertion that Ireland is not-England (Kiberd, 1995), and 'Irish' a binary opposite to 'English' (Brah, 1996).

First generation Irish people living in Britain are clearly racialized through the application of symbolic and trait-laden stereotypes which mediate expectations of their behaviour and attitudes; these stereotypes and their acceptability in everyday discourse are reinforced by their use by the British mass media. Although the findings of the research indicate that often second generation Irish people were not recognised by the media as being 'real' Irish people, the effect of anti-Irish racism, in the media as well as the everyday, on second generation Irish people in Britain has yet to be investigated (although see Hickman 1990 and 1995).

In detailing some of the specific ways in which the binary English/Irish is maintained as unproblematic, through the use of stereotypes of Irish people and Ireland in the British mass media, this research has particularly concentrated on press representations. It is clear from the preliminary work done on television representations, and from the comments of interviewees, that more work needs to be done on unpacking the specific stereotypes which are used by television to represent Ireland, Irish people and Irish culture. Radio has been entirely neglected by this research, while filmic representations were given only a cursory examination.

One intention of this research was to examine the contemporary racialization of the Irish in Britain, another was to unpack the black/white dichotomy which dominates much of the theoretical writings on racism. The invisibility of the Irish in Britain as a 'white' ethnic minority has been interpreted as evidence of easy assimilation. Demonstrating that the 'whiteness' of the Irish is neither a protection from racialization nor an automatic badge of privilege identifies racism as specific, divisionary and opportunistic in its use of signifiers, be they phenotypic, cultural or behavioural. It shows how behaviours can be perceived as attributable to innate qualities. Behaviours such as drinking and being angry can become signifiers of an essentialized ethnicity; that is, such behaviours are racialized. The specificities of the position of the Irish in Britain as a racialized ethnic minority illustrates the inadequacy of the black/white

dichotomy in describing and analysing the specific ways in which racist ideologies differentiate and interpellate racialized groups.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

(Interviewees were asked to complete this section as fully as possible before the interview commenced.)

SEX (please circle): male female

AGE (please circle):

16-19 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 or over

OCCUPATION (please specify).....

EARNINGS (please tick)

less than £10,000

more than £10,000 but less than £20,000

more than £20,000 but less than £30,000

more than £30,000 but less than £40,000

more than £40,000 but less than £50,000

£50,000 or over

RELIGION.....

AREA OF RESIDENCE.....

(please specify London Borough)

YEAR EMIGRATED.....

TOTAL NO. YEARS IN BRITAIN/ENGLAND.....

I have some questions which I would like to ask you about aspects of living in England. Part of my research looks at the media, and some of the questions will ask you for your opinions on newspapers and television programmes. You are free to answer them in as much or as little detail as you think appropriate. You do not have to answer a question if you don't want to. Your anonymity is guaranteed, and nobody else will be allowed to listen to the tape.

First of all, I'd like to ask you for a few details about yourself. These are just to help me make comparisons between people I interview.

1 How would you compare living here with life in Ireland?

1a Do you consider that you have settled in Britain/England?

2 Is it important to you to keep in touch with

a news concerning your family

b local news

c political news

3 How do you keep in touch with:

a news concerning your family

b local news

c political news

4 How important are newspapers and TV as sources of information for news from Ireland?

5 What newspaper(s) would you usually read?

6 Does this paper report Irish news or events?

7 Are there any sections of the paper which you would read in preference to other sections?

8 Would this particular section normally report events of Irish interest?

If yes:

8a What does it cover?

8b What do you think of the type of reporting?

9 Do you read the politics section of the newspaper(s)?

If yes:

9a What is your opinion of the way the politics section of the paper reports Irish events or news?

10 Do you read stories or short articles about Ireland or Irish people in the newspaper?

If yes:

10a What is your opinion of the way these stories are reported?

11 Do you read the sports pages?

If yes:

11a Do you recall any reports of Irish sporting events?

If yes:

11b What do you think of the way they are reported?

12 Do you read the editorial in the newspaper(s) you buy?

If yes:

12a Can you recall any editorials on Irish news events?

If yes:

12b What did you think of the views expressed?

13 Do you read the opinion columns in the paper(s) you buy?

If yes:

13a Can you recall any stories on Irish news in these columns?

If yes:

13b What did you think of the opinions expressed?

14 Do you read the music or TV pages in the newspaper(s) you buy?

If yes:

14a Do you remember any articles on Irish personalities or artists and musicians?

If yes:

14b How do you think they are presented?

14c Do you think such people are presented in the same manner as personalities from England and other countries?

15 Do you read feature or travel articles on Ireland in your newspaper(s)?

If yes:

15a What is your opinion of the way Ireland is represented?

16 How much television you would normally watch in a week?

17 Which programmes do you mostly watch?

18 Do you watch television news regularly?

If yes:

18a Which news bulletin(s) would you usually watch?

18b What type of reports does the TV news have on Ireland?

19 Do you think Irish issues are represented accurately on television news?

19a Why?

20 How do you think Irish people are represented in television news?

21 Is the way in which Irish people are represented on the television in general accurate?

21a What do you like about the way in which Irish people are represented?

21b What do you dislike?

22 How are Irish people represented in television drama?

22a What do you like about the way in which Irish people are characterized in television drama?

22b What do you dislike?

23 Which television soaps, if any, would you normally watch?

and/or

23 Do the soaps you usually watch have an Irish character?

If yes:

23a what is your opinion of the characterization?

23b What do you like about the characterization of these/this character(s)?

23c What do you dislike?

24 Can you recall watching a documentary on Ireland on British television?

If yes:

24a What did you think of it/them?

24b What did you think of their portrayal of Ireland and Irish people ?

25 Do you think there should be more television documentaries on Ireland?

26 Do you watch Irish sporting events on television?

If yes:

26a What do you think of the sports coverage?

27 What was your opinion of the television and newspaper coverage of the 1994 World Cup in Britain/England?

28 What did you think of the riot at the England/Ireland match (Lansdowne Rd., February)?

29 What did you think of the way it was reported?

30 Would you consider that the different television channels are different in the way they represent Irish people?

30a What makes this channel different from the others?

31 Have you seen any films, on TV, or video or in a cinema in which there were Irish characters?

If yes:

31a How convincing did you find the characterization?

31b What did you like about the characterizarion?

31c What did you dislike?

32 Do you listen to the radio?

If yes:

32a What kinds of programmes would you be most likely to listen to?

32b Do these programmes cover news or events of Irish interest?

32c Do you think Irish issues are reported accurately on the radio?

32d How are Irish people represented on the radio?

33 Do you recall the presenter(s) saying anything about Ireland or Irish people?

If yes:

33a What would a typical comment be?

33b What is your response to that?

Now, I just want to ask you a few questions specifically about Northern Ireland

34 What is your opinion of the media reporting of Northern Ireland over the last 20/25 (few) years?

34a What specifically did you like about the reporting?

34b What did you dislike?

35 What do you think of the reporting since the ceasefire?

36 Has the reporting changed in any way since the ceasefire was called?

If yes:

36a In what ways has it changed?

OK. I want to move on now and ask you some questions about aspects of life in England

38 Would you say that most of you friends are:

English Irish a mixture of both something else?

39 What type of a relationship would you consider you have with your British/English friends and acquaintances:

very good good average poor don't have any British/English friends

40 Are your friendships with Irish people different in any way from those with British/English people?

If yes:

40a In what ways are they different?

41 Would you consider that your English friends understand what it is to be Irish in Britain?

42. Has any news topic or topic about Ireland that has been reported in the media been mentioned in conversation between you and your friends?

[If yes:

42a Can you recall a typical conversation of this kind?

42b What do you think of your friends' opinion on that topic?]

43 Has any news topic or topic about Ireland that has been reported in the media been mentioned in conversation between you and your work-mates?

[If yes:

43a Can you recall a typical conversation of this kind?

43b What do you think of your friends' opinion on that topic?]

44 Has any news topic or topic about Ireland that has been reported in the media been mentioned in conversation between you and a neighbour?

If yes:

44a Can you recall a typical conversation of this kind?

44b What do you think of your friends' opinion on that topic?]

45 Have you ever had any problems with someone in authority, like the police or a social security officer, which afterwards you thought might have been because you are Irish?

If yes:

45a Can you tell me about it?

46. Have you ever had any problems with an acquaintance, a neighbour, or even someone you have just met, which afterwards you thought might have been because you are Irish?

If yes:

46a Can you tell me about it?

47 Have any of your friends and acquaintances told you of such an experience?

48 Have you ever seen or heard anything directed against someone Irish which you objected to?

If yes:

48a What did you find objectionable about it?

49 Which term, if any, would you say best describes the Irish in Britain:

an ethnic minority

an ethnic group

a minority group

a different 'race' (from the English)

the same as the English

the same as the Scots and Welsh

none of these

other - specify.

50 Why do you think that the description you've chosen is the best?

51 Would you consider that the Irish in Britain experience discrimination?

If yes:

51a In what areas of life would you say that Irish people are most likely to experience discrimination?

52 Have you experienced discrimination yourself?

If yes:

52a Do you think that this discrimination partly resulted because you are Irish?

If yes:

52b Can you explain why you think that?

53 What did you think of the Trevor McAuley case? (He was the man who won an employment discrimination case in the labour court because his fellow workers had been telling Irish jokes and calling him Paddy or Mick)

54 Do you consider that the Irish in Britain experience prejudice?

55 What do you think of Irish jokes?

56 Comedians tell Irish jokes on television, but they wouldn't tell jokes about black people. What do you think of that?

57 Are Irish jokes told at your workplace?

If yes:

57a Why do your colleagues tell Irish jokes?

57b In what circumstances would they tell them?

58 Do your friends tell Irish jokes?

If yes:

58a Why do your friends tell Irish jokes?

58b On what sort of occasions would they tell them?

59 This is a cartoon from a British national newspaper in November 1992. What do you think of it?

60 Are you aware of how the word “Irish” is used to mean stupid in the media?

If yes:

60a Can you recall any other examples?]

60b In my research I found these stories: what do you think of them?

60c What do you think of this type of reporting?

61 Do you think that Irish people are represented in the British/English media in a stereotyped way?

If yes:

61a What would you say the stereotype consists of?

62 Do you think that racism is different from discrimination or prejudice?

62a Why do you say that?

Appendix 2: examples from newspaper database used in interviews

09-07-1992

Irish rules

WHILE on the subject of regulation, a triumphalist news release has just crossed this desk, opening with the startling statement: “1991 was a particularly successful year for Imro.” What would constitute an unsuccessful year? It was, after all, during that annus mirabilis that Imro’s finest singularly failed to scoop a 21-stone individual from helping himself to millions of pounds. But before being bowled over by Imro’s stunning self-confidence, it is time to unscramble the acronym. The release is issued by the Irish Music Rights Organisation.

02-09-1992

Jail? Yes please

OLD lag Paddy Marshall broke a window to get “home” to jail, a court heard yesterday. Paddy, 72, has almost lived in “his special cell” in Mountjoy prison, Dublin since the 1950s. The judge asked if he’d like 12 months. Paddy said: “Please. It would be very nice.”

04-11-1992

BIRTHDAY SHAM

ROCKS A PADDY

BAFFLED George Ellis felt a right April fool last night when told he had celebrated the wrong birthday for 56 years.

Irish-born George thought he was born on April 9 - but has just discovered his real birthday is November 11. The error was revealed when father-of-five George applied for benefit in Burnley, Lancs. His records in Ireland showed he was 56 - not 57 as he thought.

Machine operator George will throw a special party to celebrate next week.

But he doesn’t know how the mix-up happened. He said yesterday: “It could only happen to an Irishman.”

Appendix 3: Profile of interviewees

In total, there were 25 interviewees (including 5 pilot interviews), of which 13 were women and 12 men. Interviews lasted for an average of about 1½ hours, with a range of between 45 minutes and 4½ hours. Four of the interviewees (2 male and 2 female) were Northern Irish Catholics; the remainder were from the Republic of Ireland and were mostly Catholics (17 of 21), with 2 not stating any religion, 1 atheist and 1 agnostic. One interviewee (male) was half British; another was half African-Caribbean (female): they were included in the study as their formative years had been spent in Ireland and they considered themselves first generation Irish people.

The majority of interviewees ticked the “less than £10,000” category for earnings (8 women and 5 men) (Table A). In addition, 3 people did not give any figure for earnings: of these, two were retired and one was unemployed, so it is safe to presume that their income was likely to be under £10,000 *per annum* also, bringing the figures to 9 women and 7 men respectively. Of the remainder, 4 women and 2 men were in the £10-20,000 category, while 3 men were earning between £20,000 and £30,000 a year. Of the last group, two of these men work for local authorities (administration) and one is a journalist.

Table A: stated earnings of interviewees, by gender.

Earnings	Men	Women	Total
less £10,000	7	9	16
£10-20,000	2	4	6
£20-30,000	3	0	3
Total	12	13	25

The age ranges of the cohort are spread evenly over the sample (Table B). Two male interviewees refused to give their ages. Both of these men emigrated in 1975, so it is likely that they are aged somewhere in the range of 35 to 45. A small majority, fifteen of twenty five, are below the age of fifty, but the age spread is fairly even, with eleven interviewees below the age of forty. Eight men in the sample are below the age of fifty, whereas the women are more evenly spread across the age range.

Table B: stated ages of interviewees, by gender

Age range	Men	Women	Total
20-29	2	4	6
30-39	3	2	5
40-49	3	1	4
50-59	0	4	4
over 60	2	2	4
not stated	2	0	2
Total	12	13	25

The majority of interviewees, sixteen, emigrated to Britain in the last thirty years (table C). This reflects the age ranges of the sample. The decade with the highest representation is the 1980s, which is recognised as the decade of second wave twentieth century emigration to Britain from Ireland. The women from the sample are spread more evenly across the time scale, reflecting the greater balance in ages than with the men in the sample, who, in the main, emigrated in the 1970s and 1980s (nine of twelve).

Table C: decade of emigration of interviewees, by gender

Decade emigrated	Men	Women	Total
1940-9	1	0	1
1950-9	1	3	4
1960-9	1	3	4
1970-9	4	1	5
1980-9	5	4	9
1990-	0	2	2
Total	12	13	25

Brent is the borough where the highest number of interviewees (eight) resided: this reflects the characteristic settlement pattern of Irish emigrants to Britain, with Islington and Camden having the next highest concentrations (five and four respectively) (Table D). The majority of women (ten) lived in one of these three boroughs, as did a majority of men (seven).

Table D: boroughs of residence of interviewees, by gender.

<i>Borough</i>	Men	Women	Total
Brent	4	4	8
Camden	1	3	4
Ealing	1	1	2
Hackney	2	0	2
Harrow	0	1	1
Haringey	2	0	2
Islington	2	3	5
Tower Hamlets	0	1	1
Total	12	13	25

Appendix 4: examples of articles used for chapter 4

Example 1: Kevin McKearney

Article 1: Daily Telegraph, 04-01-92, front page.

Third family member killed

By Chris Ryder, Irish Correspondent

A MASKED Loyalist gunman killed a member of a family steeped in IRA terrorism in an attack on the family's butcher shop in County Tyrone yesterday. The dead man, Kevin McKearney, 32, is the third of four brothers to have had a violent death.

One blew himself up while planting a bomb and the other was shot dead by the SAS while he was taking part in an IRA attack on a police station. The fourth, Thomas, who is serving a life sentence for the murder of a UDR soldier, returned to prison last Monday after being out on Christmas parole.

Margaret McKearney, a sister, was named by Scotland Yard in 1975 as their most wanted woman terrorist for the part they believe she played in IRA bomb attacks on the British mainland in the early 1970s. She lives in the Irish Republic.

Yesterday's attack in the village of Moy happened at about 5pm when the gunman entered the McKearney's shop in The Square and opened fire, killing Kevin McKearney and hitting his 70-year-old uncle Jack, who was serving behind the counter. He was critically wounded and was fighting for his life in a Belfast hospital after being transferred from the local hospital at Dungannon.

As the gunman left the shop he continued firing and a 10-year-old girl sitting in a car was grazed on the leg by a bullet.

The McKearney family live in the Tyrone countryside close to the mixed Catholic and Protestant village, with it population of 2,100.

In May 1974 Sean McKearney, 19, and Owen Martin, 18, were killed in an accidental explosion in their car while on "active service" for the IRA.

In May 1987, Patrick McKearney was one of seven heavily-armed IRA terrorists shot dead by the SAS who intercepted them while they were setting up a bomb and gun on the RUC station at Loughgall, Co Armagh.

He was on the run from the Maze Prison where he had been serving 14 years for having a loaded firearm.

Terrorist victim first of 1992

Terrorists claimed their first victim of 1992 last night when they shot dead 32-year-old Kevin McKearney in a butcher's shop in Moy, County Tyrone, writes John Mullin.

His uncle, Jack McKearney, in his 70s, was wounded and a girl of ten sitting in her mother's car was grazed by a bullet, although a sister of the dead man in the shop at the time escaped unhurt. Mr McKearney was later transferred to a hospital in Belfast, where he was in a critical condition last night.

There was speculation that the shooting was loyalist retaliation for the murder just before Christmas of Robin Farmer, a student of nineteen who saved his father's living by diving across him. A man, understood to have links with a republican splinter group, was detained by customers at the scene.

An uncle and aunt of the man killed yesterday were shot dead at their house near Moy in October, 1975, and two of his brothers, Sean and Padhraic, have died in violent circumstances. The first was killed in a bomb blast in the early 1970s and the other was shot in an SAS operation in Loughgall, County Armagh, in May 1987.

A third brother, Tommy, is serving a life sentence at the Maze for the murder of an Ulster Defence Regiment officer, while a sister, Margaret, is wanted for questioning by the Royal Ulster Constabulary over alleged terrorist offences.

In Belfast, a mother and her daughter of 19 months escaped serious injury yesterday when only the detonator of a 2lb Semtex booby-trap device exploded under their car as they left their home in protestant east Belfast. Both were treated for shock. It is understood the intended target was the woman's husband, who is a member of the security forces.

Example 2: Charles and Theresa Fox.

Article 1: Daily Mirror, 08-09-92, p6

IRA parents slaughtered

THE parents of a top IRA bomber were found murdered by Loyalist terrorists yesterday.

Their daughters found Charlie Fox, 63, and wife Tess, 53, shot at their home in Co Tyrone after they failed to answer the phone.

Police think the killers targeted them after their son Paddy, 23, was jailed for 12 years recently for possessing a 1,200lb bomb.

Loyalists kill parents of IRA bomber

By Colin Randall in Belfast

THE OUTLAWED Ulster Volunteer Force admitted responsibility last night for the murders of a Roman Catholic and his wife who were shot dead at their home less than two weeks after their son was jailed as an IRA bomber.

The bodies of Mr Charles Fox, 63, and his wife Theresa, 53, were found yesterday morning by two of their daughters at their cottage on the outskirts of Moy, Co Tyrone.

The UVF, the Loyalist paramilitary group behind numerous sectarian killings, claimed Mrs Fox was not an intended target.

In a statement sent to Ulster Television, the UVF said an “active service unit” had cut all communications at the couple’s home with the intent of killing a number of IRA personnel. Mrs Fox had been shot “in the confusion”. Responsibility for the shootings lay with the IRA and its “continuing campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing” against the Protestant community, the UVF statement added. This was a reference to suggestions in Loyalist circles that the IRA is trying to drive Protestants from their houses.

Mrs Fox was found fully-clothed beside the cooker in the kitchen. Her husband, who was wearing pyjamas, was found in the living room.

A bronze Vauxhall Chevette believed to have been used by the killers had been found burned out about a mile away late on Sunday night, leading police to believe that the couple had been murdered shortly before.

Detectives first thought that the car, which was bought legitimately in Lisburn on Saturday, was abandoned by IRA bombers who had planted three devices, causing little damage and no injuries, on Sunday in the nearby town of Dungannon.

The murders provoked widespread revulsion on both sides of the community. Mr Kenneth Maginnis, Ulster Unionist security spokesman and MP for the area said: “so-called Loyalists” seemed to have committed what he called “a totally unforgivable” crime.

Mr Fox, who was retired, normally drove his wife and one of his daughters, Theresa, to work at a local factory. When they failed to appear yesterday morning, Theresa went to the cottage with a sister, Bernadette. They found their parents’ bodies after going in with a neighbour.

A police spokesman said: “This was vicious. Whoever went into that house showed no mercy.”

Last month, the couple’s 23-year-old son, Patrick, was jailed for 12 years after an explosion in which the bomb went off prematurely, injuring one of his hands.

In January, the outlawed Ulster Volunteer Force shot dead Mr Kevin McKearney, 32, Bernadette's husband, in a butcher's shop in Moy. His uncle, Jack, was wounded in the attack and later died.

Security sources in Northern Ireland confirmed that Mr Fox senior had no criminal record. Father Denis Faul, a Roman Catholic priest in Dungannon, who knows the family well, said the murdered couple were "decent people".

A priest demanded yesterday that there should be no whitewash in the case of two Scots Guardsmen charged with the murder of an unarmed teenager in Belfast on Friday.

Father Martin Kelly accused the Army of harassment and bullying in the New Lodge area when he spoke at the funeral of Peter McBride, 18, who was shot dead by troops after allegedly running away from a street patrol.

The Provisional IRA admitted responsibility yesterday for the incendiary which exploded at London's Hilton Hotel on Sunday night, causing minor damage and no injuries.

Loyalist terror group admits killing couple

OWEN BOWCOTT IN BELFAST

AN ELDERLY Catholic couple were found shot dead in their isolated Co Tyrone farmhouse yesterday in the latest atrocity in what has become a blood feud by loyalists against a family with republican connections.

The bodies of Charles and Theresa Fox were discovered by two of their daughters, one of whom, Bernadette, lost her husband in another loyalist paramilitary attack in January.

Mr Fox, aged 63, was already dressed for bed when the gunmen struck just before 11pm on Sunday. Mrs Fox, aged 53, was still in the kitchen of their home one mile east of Moy, County Tyrone.

Ten days ago their son, Patrick, aged 23, was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment for being in charge of a 1,000lb IRA bomb in Dungannon two years ago. Belfast Crown Court heard his hand was severely damaged when the device's detonator exploded prematurely.

Last night the outlawed Ulster Volunteer Force claimed responsibility for the murders.

The local MP, Ken Maginnis of the Ulster Unionist Party, declared: "This is a dreadful double murder which is totally unforgivable. It is a blasphemy before God and a tragedy for our entire community. I fear that those responsible have imposed their hatred and violence from outside this immediate area."

A bronze-coloured Vauxhall Chevette, bought in Lisburn, was found burnt out a mile away from the couple's home at about 11.10pm on Sunday. Such an attempt to destroy forensic evidence suggests paramilitary involvement.

A local nurse, Ann McKrilly, who was with the daughters when they found the bodies described the scene: "The mother was lying beside the cooker and I knew she was dead. She had been shot.

"The father was lying in the living area. He was in his night clothes and she was in her outdoor clothes. They appeared to have been dead for some time."

The daughters, Theresa and Bernadette, had become suspicious yesterday morning after Mr Fox failed to turn up to drive them to work according to his regular routine.

The Fox family had already lost their son-in-law, Kevin McKearney, aged 32, in January when loyalist gunmen opened fire inside his butcher's shop in Moy.

Mr McKearney's uncle, John McKearney, died four months later from injuries sustained in the same attack, which was also carried out by the Protestant UVF. The

organisation claimed the shooting was in revenge for the killing of a Protestant student by the Irish National Liberation Army in the town a month earlier.

There were fears yesterday that the latest deaths will prompt further retaliations around Moy. The town is centred on a neat rectangle of unspoilt Georgian buildings. A first world war memorial stands in the main square. Its head is missing after it was decapitated by the IRA in the early 1970s.

Relations between the two communities have been relatively good in recent years with bars patronised by both Catholics and Protestants.

In recent weeks the RUC had been investigating letters sent by the IRA to local Protestant businessmen containing bullets and calling on them to stop serving the security forces. There were also threats made against Catholic families.

The killings were discovered on the first full day of an international conference in Londonderry entitled "Beyond Hate: Living with our Deepest Differences", Among the speakers was released hostage Terry Waite who denied he had been offered any formal role in reconciling the two communities in Northern Ireland.

Example 3: First Coalisland Army/civilian ‘clash’

Article 1: Daily Mirror, 15-05-92, front page

‘Crazy’ Paras storm town in revenge rampage

By JOHN HICKS

AVENGING Paras out for blood rampaged through an Ulster town after a mate was maimed in a bomb blast.

The “crazy” troops - who could be court martialled - are said to have cordoned off the town, smashed up two pubs and beaten innocent victims.

Yesterday a lieutenant was suspended and the RUC launched a probe.

And community leaders called for the Paras to be withdrawn amid claims they had been “terrorising” Catholics for weeks.

Mayhem broke out at Coalisland, Co Tyrone, after a Para lost both legs in a landmine blast and a patrol was attacked by a bottle-throwing mob.

Amok

About 12 soldiers from the 3rd Parachute Regiment - motto Ready For Anything - are said to have sealed off the town on Tuesday night.

Then, armed with batons, they ran amok.

Conor O’Neill, barman in the Venue Pub, said: “They burst in, roaring ‘Fenian bastards’.

“They went crazy. They were all psyched up and ran riot, wrecking tables and smashing glasses.

“Customers were hit with batons and one young lad was dragged outside and head-butted.”

The troops are then said to have smashed up Coalisland’s Central Bar, attacked another man and damaged two cars

Army and police chiefs

● Turn to Page 2

Revenge of Paras

● From Page One

were flooded with complaints.

And protesters said the Paras had been on the warpath since they arrived on emergency tour two weeks ago.

Local priest Father Denis Faul declared: “They are out of control. No one wants them.

“I warned authorities from the start about their terrible behaviour.

“They have been assaulting innocent Catholics all over the area.

“All the peace work built up in the area has been destroyed.”

Local councillor Jim Cavanagh said: “The regiment should be replaced.

Aggressive

“They are too aggressive to deal with the general public.”

And MP Seamus Mallon said Army chiefs had stood idly by as soldiers “quite literally ran amok.”

The Army said “swift and direct action” had been taken.

A spokesman said: “We will not condone unnecessary behaviour.”

But there were no plans to withdraw the Paras.

The Paras became the most feared regiment in Ulster after shooting dead 14 Catholics on Bloody Sunday in Londonderry in 1972. They are in the province to combat an upsurge in IRA violence.

Officer suspended after Paras go on ‘revenge patrol’

By Wendy Holden

AN OFFICER of the Parachute Regiment’s 3rd Battalion has been suspended from duty following complaints to the Army and police that paratroopers allegedly went on a revenge patrol in Ulster after a Para lost both legs in a mine explosion and another was hit on the head with a missile.

An Army inquiry was under way into a series of clashes between Paras and civilians in bars in Coalisland, Co Tyrone, on Tuesday night.

The trouble came within hours of a young soldier losing both his legs when he stepped on an IRA anti-personnel mine in a rural area near the village of Cappagh, Co Tyrone, at 7pm. He also suffered back injuries and was said to be in a “very serious” condition.

Soon after the explosion, members of the 3rd Bn on a joint foot patrol with RUC officers seven miles away in Coalisland came under attack from locals.

Bottles and stones were thrown and one soldier needed stitches after being hit on the head.

At 10pm, a group of Paras allegedly went looking for the culprits.

Local witnesses claimed that 15 Paras emerged from Coalisland police station armed with long batons and sealed off part of the town with a fake warning of a suspect device in the road. Father Denis Faul, principal of St Patrick’s Academy in nearby Dungannon, said: “They put a white tape and spikes across the Dungannon road and the attacked the Venue and Central bars, beating up people.

“At the Venue bar, there are even marks of their batons on the counter. This was clearly retaliation for the awful incident at Cappagh,” he said.

“After about 10 minutes, the police got them back inside the barracks and we have been reassured by the head of the RUC in Dungannon that the Paras won’t patrol Coalisland again.”

Neither the RUC nor the Army would confirm Fr. Faul’s claim. In an unusual move, Army headquarters confirmed that an officer, believed to be a young lieutenant, had been suspended pending an RUC investigation.

The admission was seen in some sections of the Belfast press as an acknowledgement by the GOC, Gen Sir John Wiley, “that his troops have been guilty of serious misconduct in this incident”.

An Army spokesman said later: “We are conscious of the soldiers’ position in Northern Ireland society and will not condone unnecessary behaviour.

“We expect them to be professional and to react professionally to a whole range of circumstances.”

Sir Patrick Mayhew, Northern Ireland Secretary, was urged to withdraw the Parachute Regiment from Northern Ireland.

Mr Seamus Mallon, SDLP deputy leader and MP for Newry and Armagh, said there had been several incidents between soldiers and the public in Co Tyrone.

“I am aware of a number of complaints of destructive and abusive behaviour by Army patrols in the vicinity of Cappagh and on the shores of Lough Neagh,” he said.

He said the police had surrendered all primacy to the regiment and that the Northern Ireland Office and senior military commanders had stood idly by “as soldiers have quite literally run amok within the local community.”

Mr Connor O'Neill, a barman in one of the pubs, said: “Soldiers came bursting through the door. They were roaring and shouting. They started wrecking tables and smashing around them. They were crazy.”

Allegations, involving Paratroopers in Coalisland have again focused attention on the regiment's role in the Province. On so-called “Bloody Sunday”, Jan. 30 1972, soldiers of the 1st Bn shot dead 13 Roman Catholics at the end of a banned civil rights march in Londonderry.

That incident was one of the watersheds in Northern Ireland's modern history and was seen as the decisive factor in imposing direct rule from Westminster.

After Bloody Sunday, 1 Para did not serve in Ulster for several years although there were tours by 2nd and 3rd battalions.

An editorial in yesterday's Irish news, the Nationalist morning newspaper, called for the withdrawal of the Paratroopers.

Paras officer suspended after Ulster ‘rampage’

OWEN BOWCOTT IN BELFAST

A JUNIOR Parachute Regiment officer has been suspended following allegations of a violent rampage by soldiers through bars in Coalisland, County Tyrone.

Four civilians and one paratrooper were injured in disturbances on Tuesday evening. Police said bottles were thrown at a patrol from a crowd.

Eyewitnesses denied there had been any provocation and reported that soldiers from the Third Battalion, the Parachute Regiment carrying batons assaulted bar customers and dragged them into the street.

A member of the regiment had lost his legs when an IRA land mine exploded three hours earlier at nearby Cappagh. There were claims that some of the soldiers had shouted: “What do you know about Cappagh?” to those they assaulted.

Local councillor Jim Kavanagh of the Social Democratic and Labour Party claimed the disturbance was a planned revenge by the soldiers on Republican Coalisland.

He said a checkpoint was set up outside the town centre and motorists were told that a suspect vehicle was being investigated.

“I would suggest that the security tape was put across the road and that there was premeditation,” he said. “The troops then went on a rampage behind the tape.”

The RUC said yesterday they had no record of a suspect vehicle. “A joint army and police patrol was attacked by a number of people throwing stones and bottles,” the RUC said.

“One soldier was injured in the face. A number of civilians have alleged they were assaulted by members of the patrol. No arrests were made at the time and no baton rounds fired.”

Coalisland residents yesterday denied there had been any trouble before that started by the soldiers. In the Venue Bar, near the police station, Conor O’Neil, aged 24, was serving at about 10pm. “I heard a banging,” he said. “Then the door burst open and three or four Paras came running into the room carrying white cudgels.

“They started kicking the tables and wrecking the drinks and using their sticks. The landlord, Terry Macnally, asked them what it was all about, so one of them grabbed him. They were kicking and beating him all the way onto the street.

“I ran into the back bar but there were more Paras in there and one hit me in the face with his fist.” (Mr O’Neil had a black eye yesterday).

“We have had other regiments here but never anything like this. These boys were psychos.”

Paratroopers also entered the Central Bar in the town. John Dorman, the son of the proprietor, was not in the bar at the time but arrived shortly afterwards.

“There were three customers. They went up to the youngest guy, started hitting him over the head and dragged him outside.

“The barmaid had run into the rear of the building but they pulled her back. I think the soldiers were quite panicky. It was blatant thuggery.”

Troops normally only enter buildings with the police. It is thought the junior officer, believed to be a second lieutenant, may have lost control.

Father Denis Faul, a leading civil rights campaigner and local headmaster, yesterday called for the withdrawal of the Parachute Regiment and said the junior officer was a scapegoat.

“There has been a chorus of complaints about the Regiment’s behaviour for the last seven weeks,” he said. Such incidents helped the IRA recruit more members, he added.

A special meeting of the Dungannon district council has been called to discuss the problem. One of its members, the Ulster Unionist MP Ken Maginnis, said yesterday that he believed the army should deal harshly with any discipline problems.

The army’s only official statement was that “swift and direct action has been taken.”

Ulster MPs unite, page 2

Article 4: The Guardian, 15-05-92, Home News, p2.

**EVENTS IN COALISLAND HAVE SPARKED A ROW
OVER SECURITY TACTICS WRITES OWEN BOWCOTT**

Ulster MPs unite against ‘macho’ Paras
OWEN BOWCOTT

THE alleged rampage by members of the Parachute Regiment through bars in Coalisland, Co Tyrone, was yesterday condemned by nationalist and unionist politicians.

Ken Maginnis, the Ulster Unionist MP and party security spokesman said: “Even if there was exaggeration about what we have heard in Coalisland, and I don’t think there was, then this sort of activity can only harm and alienate the local community.”

Mr Maginnis said he had raised concerns about the Paras’ activities in Co Tyrone with army headquarters in recent weeks, and warned of “conflict between the two arms of the law” if steps were not taken to ensure that police primacy over the army continued.

Seamus Mallon MP, the Social Democratic and Labour Party’s security spokesman, said he had complained to the Northern Ireland Office and the inter-governmental conference three weeks ago about the Parachute Regiment.

“This has been brewing a long time. To put them in Coalisland in the first place was a grave mistake. The regiment should be removed from the area.

“The police locally have no control over the way these people are acting. It is important that the Chief Constable of the RUC insists that primacy must rest with the police.”

There have been repeated calls for the Paras to be withdrawn from Northern Ireland for the past 20 years.

Last autumn six members of the Third Battalion appeared in a Belfast court charged in connection with the killing of two joyriders in the west of the city in 1990. It was alleged that, after shooting the youngsters, the soldiers attempted to bruise a leg of one of their men to back up their claim that they had fired in self-defence when the car hit them.

The platoon at the centre of this week’s row is understood to have been removed from Coalisland, and replaced by a platoon from the Ulster Defence Regiment.

But the Paras’ Third Battalion will remain in neighbouring areas, and may return to Coalisland in the near future.

The army, concerned about the shortage of infantry battalions following government cuts, has no intention of withdrawing the Paras from the province. The removal of another three units would add greatly to the burden of line regiments.

The army points out that Paras have been patrolling West Belfast in recent months without serious complaints or incidents. In private, however, some officers in line regiments concede that the Paras' record of aggressive, macho behaviour does not make their men's role on the streets of Northern Ireland any easier.

- The Chief Constable of the RUC, Sir Hugh Annesley, yesterday told the General Board of the Presbyterian Church in Belfast that he would be prepared to see the establishment of an independent police complaints body "if there were a significant groundswell of opinion" favouring it.

- Two firebombs exploded in Rosses auction house in the centre of Belfast yesterday. A 15-minute warning was given and the premises were being evacuated. No-one was injured.

PARA REVENGE BLITZ

By IAN HEPBURN

PARAS blacked up their faces and terrorised an Ulster town after a mate had his legs blown off by an IRA bomb, it was claimed yesterday.

They burst into bars, wrecked furniture and dragged off staff and customers for systematic beatings, it was alleged.

Sealed

Connor O'Neill, a barman in the Venus Bar in the Catholic town of Coalisland said: "They went beserk.

"They were roaring and shouting and smashing up everything around them."

The attacks were said to be by the Third Battalion of the Parachute Regiment after a para was blown up by a mine seven miles away at Cappagh.

Eye witnesses claimed 25 paras sealed off part of the town with tape to launch an attack.

Last night the Army confirmed a lieutenant had been suspended and "swift action" was being taken in response to complaints.

Example 4: Second Coalisland Army/civilian ‘clash’

Article 1: Daily Mirror, 18-05-92, p2

THREE SHOT AS MOB OF 1,000 ATTACK SOLDIERS

Paras clash in rampage town

By JOE GORROD

A MOB of 1,000 people battled with British soldiers last night in an Ulster town still reeling from a rampage by Paras.

A four-man infantry patrol was ambushed and robbed of a heavy machinegun. And as violence flared in the town for the second time in a week, Paras stormed in and opened fire.

Three people were rushed to hospital with bullet wounds to the legs after the clashes with troops in Coalisland, County Tyrone.

The trouble started when more than two dozen people taunted, then attacked, the four-man foot patrol of the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

Rifle

The soldiers fought a fierce hand-to-hand battle with the crowd, which quickly swelled.

A belt-fed GMPG machinegun, usually operated by two men, was snatched by the mob.

All four soldiers needed hospital treatment.

As Para reinforcements arrived they fired into the air and at the ground.

An eye witness said: "It seemed to be ricochets that hit the civilians and there didn't appear to be any firing at the troops."

Fermanagh and South Tyrone MP Ken Maginnis believed the troops had acted responsibly.

"The patrol was set upon by a group of hooligans and badly beaten up," he said.

"If troops come under that sort of attack when their lives are in danger they are entitled to use minimum force to ensure their own safety.

Less than a week ago the Paras were pulled out of the town.

A lieutenant was suspended after troops reportedly smashed up two pubs and attacked civilians.

Witnesses said squaddies ran amok after a comrade lost both legs in an IRA bombing.

Three civilians hurt in shooting by Para

**By Richard Savill
in Belfast
and Ben Fenton**

A PARATROOPER shot and injured three civilians last night in Coalisland, Co Tyrone, where last week members of the Third Battalion, Parachute Regiment, allegedly attacked townspeople with clubs and batons.

The shootings happened when a unit from the regiment was attacked after being called in by the RUC to help a King's Own Scottish Borderers' patrol who had been set upon by 30 or 40 local young men at about 7pm. A rifle and a machinegun were stolen from them.

At about 8.30pm the RUC called in members of 3Para as reinforcements and ringed the town to restore order and recover the weapons. A local councillor bought the rifle to the RUC station.

The general purpose 7.62mm machinegun was still missing late last night.

Military sources said the shooting injuries happened after a 3Para patrol was attacked. A soldier was separated from his colleagues and was being kicked on the ground when he fired.

Father Denis Faul, a local priest who called last week for paratroopers to be removed from Coalisland, said 30 or 40 young men, egged on by the IRA, had provoked the confrontation with the soldiers.

Fr. Faul, principal of St Patrick's Academy in Dungannon, said: "It was a lunatic action and a very dangerous thing to take the guns from the soldiers."

Three civilians were treated for gunshot wounds to the legs at South Tyrone Hospital in Dungannon, where they were said to be stable.

In the first incident involving the KOSB, four soldiers were hurt and taken to the South Tyrone hospital in Dungannon. Three left after treatment and the fourth was treated at Musgrave Park hospital for head, neck and arm injuries and a suspected collapsed lung.

About an hour later, the reinforcing troops were also attacked and reports said they fired into the air. During the incident. the paratrooper's gun was fired.

Late last night a car burst through a checkpoint in Ballynakelly Road on the outskirts of the town, knocking down a soldier. A number of shots were fired by the Army and one person was arrested.

The town, a republican stronghold, has been tense for several days after complaints from residents that paratroopers rampaged through bars and assaulted customers last Tuesday.

The incident, allegedly a revenge patrol after a member of the regiment lost his legs when an IRA land mine exploded, led to an officer being suspended from duty.

Three hurt as Paras open fire in new Coalisland trouble

ALAN MURRAY IN BELFAST

AND JOHN MULLIN

THREE civilians were in hospital last night after members of the Parachute Regiment opened fire as trouble flared again in Coalisland, Northern Ireland.

The Paras had been withdrawn from the town after clashes with the public hours after a soldier lost his legs in a mine blast on Wednesday.

They returned last night to deal with trouble when a 30-strong crowd wrested a heavy general-purpose machine gun from a patrol of the King's Own Scottish Borderers, which had been drafted in to replace the Paras.

The three men are all understood to have been hit in the legs, and a spokesman for South Tyrone Hospital in nearby Dungannon said all were in a stable condition.

One is understood to be the proprietor of McGirr's Bar in Coalisland. Another had made a complaint about the Paras a fortnight ago, alleging he was assaulted at a roadblock. One soldier was also retained yesterday with head injuries, while another three were released after treatment, the army said.

One drinker in the Venue Bar, where the Paras were accused of assaulting customers on Wednesday, said: "It's gone mad down here, and anybody with any sense is just trying to keep out of the way."

The 30-strong crowd who took the machine gun in the first clash yesterday also made off with an SA80 standard issue rifle, later recovered, but a radio, which could reveal army codes, is still believed to be missing. It is thought that this is the first time in almost 20 years an army patrol has lost equipment in such a fashion.

The King's Own Scottish Borderers were removed for interviewing. All four injured soldiers were hurt in this confrontation in the Lineside area.

An army spokesman suggested the attack on the soldiers was a set-up, with a cameraman recording the incident for propaganda, but the claims were denied locally.

As the Paras were sent back in, the town was sealed off and the hunt for the missing machine gun began.

More trouble, again involving a crowd of about 30 people, flared in The Square. According to the army, the Paras fired warning shots into the air and then on the ground as they tried to restore order.

There were suggestions that the injured men were hit by ricochet shots or by a soldier who had become separated from his colleagues, and was being kicked as he lay on the ground.

Sinn Fein councillor Frankie Molloy appealed for people to attend a mass protest at Coalisland barracks today to protest at the shootings.

Later last night a car travelling towards Coalisland smashed through two military vehicle checkpoints, knocking down a soldier who suffered a leg injury. Troops fired a number of shots and one person was arrested.

Example 5: Follow-up reports on second Coalisland Army/civilian 'clash

Article 1: Daily Telegraph, 19-05-92, front page

Para 'fired in self defence'

By Richard Savill in Coalisland

A PARATROOPER who fired the shots that hit three civilians in Coalisland, Co Tyrone, on Sunday night, squeezed the trigger because he was being dragged away by a mob, the Government said last night.

Mr Michael Mates, Northern Ireland Law and Order Minister, said the soldier was justified in shooting because he thought his life was in danger.

"The patrol, as I understand it - and this is obviously subject to inquiry - was set upon by thugs," he said.

"They didn't have any riot-control baton rounds. The soldier concerned who fired the shots did it in self-defence. He was one of those being dragged away by the crowd. It seems to me his action...was entirely justified."

Coalisland was sealed off yesterday as troops and police searched for a machinegun stolen from soldiers during the clashes. Some roads into the town were closed and police searched departing vehicles.

With feelings running high after the shootings there were no soldiers in the town centre, but members of the 3rd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, which has been accused of harassment by the local community, were manning checkpoints.

Police searched houses for the machinegun stolen from the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

The three civilians were treated in hospital for gunshot wounds after the clashes. None of their injuries is life threatening. Four KOSB soldiers were taken to hospital after police said they were "viciously attacked by a crowd of 30 as they patrolled the Lineside area of the town at 7pm on Sunday.

One of the soldiers is being treated in the military wing of Musgrave Park hospital, Belfast, for head, neck and arm injuries and a suspected collapsed lung.

Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, claimed that the machinegun was stolen when KOSB soldiers fled after losing a fist fight they had started with local men.

Mr Francie Molloy, a Sinn Fein councillor, said at a news conference in a town centre pub that the soldiers had lain down their weapons for the fight and had fled without the machinegun and SA80 assault rifle, which was later recovered.

The Army claimed that 90 minutes after the attack on the KOSB, a crowd attacked the Paras when they arrived as reinforcements.

One soldier was said to have become separated from the patrol. An Army spokesman said the patrol commander fired into the air to control the crowd. As the cut-off soldier was kicked in the ground, he fired three rounds.

Sinn Fein displayed seven spent cartridges, allegedly recovered from the scene, which they said indicated that two soldiers had fired. Mr Molloy claimed that some were from a rifle and others from a machinegun.

He said a bullet that injured one of the civilians entered above the knee and exited below it. This indicated that the soldier was not firing from the ground.

Distrusted Paras ‘redeployed too soon’

By Richard Savill in Coalisland

COALISLAND - scene of Sunday night’s shootings by a paratrooper - is a small town with a population of 3,800, 95 per cent of whom are Roman Catholics. The town has 40 per cent male unemployment and is dominated by a security force watch tower, close to the heavily fortified RUC station.

The police station has been attacked on numerous occasions. Three months ago, undercover soldiers shot dead four men after they fired on the building.

The dead included Kevin O’Donnell, 21, who was cleared at the Old Bailey last year of possessing with intent two AK-47 rifles in May 1990.

Sinn Fein representatives yesterday claimed that Mr O’Donnell’s brother, Fergal, was harassed by paratroopers and struck with a baton on Sunday night. People left a bar to see what was going on and a melee ensued, Sinn Fein added.

Mr James Canning, an independent nationalist councillor, said it was a mistake to have redeployed the paratroopers in Coalisland so soon after their alleged rampage through two pubs last week. That incident, which occurred hours after a paratrooper lost both his legs in an IRA explosion in nearby Cappagh, led to an officer being suspended.

Mr Canning, who has been behind attempts to regenerate Coalisland, has again focused attention on the role of the regiment in the province.

They will always be open to criticism in Northern Ireland because they are trained to be aggressive.

On so-called “Bloody Sunday”, Jan. 30 1972, soldiers of the 1st Battalion, the Paratroop Regiment, shot dead 13 Roman Catholics at the end of a banned civil rights march in Londonderry.

That incident was one of the watersheds in Northern Ireland’s modern history and was seen as the decisive factor in the decision to impose direct rule from Westminster.

Paras taken off streets after Coalisland clashes

Owen Bowcott in Belfast

THE army yesterday took the unprecedented decision to withdraw the Parachute Regiment from the embattled town of Coalisland, County Tyrone, as a bitter row blew up over military tactics in Northern Ireland. The town remained sealed off throughout the day by checkpoints while the search continued for the general purpose machine-gun snatched from a King's Own Scottish Borderers patrol early on Sunday evening. Frogmen were brought in to dredge a local canal for the weapon, capable of firing 750 rounds a minute. There were no paratroopers visible on the streets and RUC officers alone conducted house-to-house searches. Last night several hundred demonstrators held a peaceful protest rally in the town centre, calling for the withdrawal of the Parachute Regiment from Northern Ireland.

The four civilians injured in clashes with paratroopers were still in hospital in Dungannon yesterday, all in a stable condition. Three had bullet wounds to their lower bodies and one had a badly cut face. Two of the soldiers injured in the disturbances were still receiving medical treatment. One was said to have suffered a crushed lung.

In future, soldiers from the Third Battalion of the regiment, stationed elsewhere in Tyrone, will be used in the town only as a force of last resort, security sources indicated last night.

Michael Mates, the new Security Minister at Stormont, insisted that the army's dispositions would not be dictated by gangs of Republican youths. He maintained that the army commander would continue to have a free hand to make any deployments necessary.

The Irish government has requested details of the confused train of events which led to the shootings. Vincent Currie, a Social Democratic and Labour Party councillor, said the paratroopers' behaviour had set community relationships back 20 years.

Some local politicians, including Bernadette McAliskey, the former MP for Mid-Ulster, blamed the soldiers for starting a fist fight which led to them losing the machine-gun.

The army maintains that the four-man KOSB foot patrol was set upon by a large crowd of 20 or 30 people who overwhelmed the troops. The soldiers had been sent in to replace the local Parachute Regiment platoon after disturbances last week, following which a junior officer was suspended. The only reinforcement on hand on Sunday was another company of the Third Battalion, the Parachute Regiment. An hour-and-a-half after the first incident a second clash occurred in the centre of Coalisland, outside McGarr's bar.

Locals again alleged that the soldiers began the confrontations, which ended with at least one soldier firing from his hip into the crowd. They claim paratroopers taunted them.

Desmond Symington, an eyewitness, said: “The soldier fired straight from his hip at peoples’ legs. It was that scary. “The next thing the fellow beside me said: ‘I’m shot, I’m shot.’”

But Mr Mates gave a very different description of the events leading up to the shooting. “The patrol was set upon by thugs,” he said. “We had a soldier set upon by a mob who was being dragged away. He acted in self-defence. His action was entirely justified.”

Mr Mates implied that had troops not opened fire soldiers might have been killed. He insisted troops had to “uphold and operate within the law”.

Ken Maginnis, the Official Unionist MP, while defending the soldiers’ decision to open fire, was critical of the Parachute Regiment. “Over the past six weeks there has been a tendency for the regiment to treat the whole community as hostile...we don't want that sort of patrolling in this area.”

● *Town licks its wounds, page 2*

Hunt for gun as town licks its wounds

**Owen Bowcott on the catalogue of confrontation
in Coalisland that led to Sunday's fighting and shooting.**

MEMBERS of the Parachute Regiment were noticeable by their almost total absence from the streets of the fiercely republican town of Coalisland yesterday, as RUC units and other troops searched for the machine gun lost by Scottish soldiers in a fight with local youths on Sunday night in the east Tyrone town. "They searched the cupboards and the attic but they didn't lift under the carpets," said Cyril Shields, standing outside a neighbour's house in Washing Bay Lane. "They behaved themselves in my house but they said that if any home wasn't open they would cut the glass to get in."

The walls of Coalisland are marked with pro-IRA graffiti. Sunday night's fighting and last week's alleged rampage through two local bars by soldiers from the Third Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, after a soldier lost his legs in an IRA land mine explosion has emphasised the current level of tension in the town between locals and the security forces. Earlier this year the SAS ambushed an IRA unit as it was taking apart a heavy machine gun which it had just used against the police station at Coalisland.

Four youths were killed in the late night gunfight in a churchyard, including Kevin Barry O'Donnell, the student who had been acquitted the previous year by an Old Bailey jury of possessing firearms.

The funerals that followed nearly flared up into a fight in the graveyard. RUC officers jostled with mourners and army patrols watched from nearby lanes and hillsides.

One of those injured in the disturbances at the weekend was Mr O'Donnell's brother, Fergal, who was cut across his cheek. Locals said that he had been hit by a paratrooper with a baton.

Among those gathering statements about Sunday night's confusing sequence of events was the former MP for mid-Ulster, Bernadette McAliskey, who lives on the edge of Coalisland. "The population of this town has always been beaten around by troops," she said. "For the first time now it is well-to-do people and people from the Social Democratic and Labour Party who are being duffed up."

Ms McAliskey said that witnesses to the fight with Scottish soldiers from the King's Own Scottish Borderers were too frightened to give their accounts in public for fear of being charged with the theft of weapons. She claimed, however, that a group of local youths had been drinking in the sunshine when a patrol approached and one soldier allegedly hit a youth, starting a confrontation.

A soldier then challenged one of the youths to a fist fight, she said, and put down his rifle. In the brawl that followed there was more hand to hand fighting and other soldiers abandoned their weapons.

There were witnesses prepared to talk about the second and more serious incident which occurred about an hour and a half later, at 8.30pm, in the centre of town outside The Rossmore bar.

Dessie Symington said he had been drinking in the pub when he heard shouts outside. In the tense atmosphere following last week's alleged attack by paratroopers everyone had been expecting further trouble.

There was a fist fight between a youth and two paratroopers, he said. "More paratroopers got involved, some of them wrestling or fighting with their fists in a melee.

"One paratrooper, his hands shaking, held his rifle up to someone's head. He shouted: 'Watch out or I'll blow your fucking brains out'.

"Another one held his gun out, taunting 'Go on, grab this gun'. It was provocation. The next thing one of the soldiers started shooting into the air and everyone jumped back and I saw the same paratrooper lower his gun and fired from the hip at people's legs".

Three civilians, Paul McGirr, a bar owner, Seamus Quinn and Philip Morgan who were hit in the legs were yesterday said to be "stable" in South Tyrone hospital, Dungannon.

Four paratroopers and four members of the Kings' Own Scottish Borders were injured. One of the soldiers hurt was in hospital with head and neck injuries and a collapsed lung.

In McGirr's drapery store Frank McGirr said his brother had been closing the door of his bar when a soldier shot him. "Paul was just in the doorway when he was hit in the knee." Jim Canning, an Independent councillor who runs a butcher's shop in the town said "the Paras should not be deployed in the town again." He added that "the number of incidents of assault and aggravation that have taken place in the last six weeks have set us back 20 years."

●THE general purpose machine gun (above) is a belt-fed weapon which fires up to 750 rounds a minute, *writes David Fairhall.*

Its theft represents a considerable humiliation for the army patrol which lost it in Sunday night's fight. Such a weapon would be much prized by the IRA. The GPMG is a heavy weapon, which only one member of a patrol would normally carry. It weighs about 24lbs, is fired resting on a tripod, and has a range of about 1,000 yards.

Only a small amount of ammunition is likely to have been stolen. But finding more will be relatively easy, because the GPMG fires standard Nato 7.62mm rounds. Every

soldier is strictly responsible for the security of his weapons. However, any disciplinary action will take account of the circumstances of Sunday's clashes.

Article 5: The Guardian, 19-05-92, Home News, p2

Paras 'just went in a bit hard'

Ian Katz

KEVIN, a 33-year-old former Para, could not help feeling a sense of satisfaction when he heard that soldiers of his former battalion had rampaged through bars in Coalisland, Co Tyrone last week.

"They [Republicans] are downright bastards. You are constantly jeered at and spat at. The blokes have just said enough is enough and gone in a bit hard."

The Falklands veteran left the army in 1984 after serving six years in the unit at the centre of the recent Coalisland troubles - the Third Battalion, the Parachute Regiment - including one six-month tour in Armagh. He said Paras were subjected to particularly intense abuse because of their regiment's role in the 1972 Bloody Sunday shootings which killed 13 civilians.

"You can say sticks and stones can break my bones and that, but they can go really low. If there's an incident gone down and there's three seriously injured and one dead they'll go 'four-nil'. They'll go to any lengths to get to you and they do, because we're not robots."

Friends currently serving in Coalisland told him the rampage was triggered when local Republicans boasted that a soldier whose legs were blown off by a bomb on Wednesday had also lost his genitals in the blast.

He said soldiers in the battalion, on its 10th tour of duty in Northern Ireland, were already "fed up" because they had ended a two-year tour there only a year ago. Trained as a rapid reaction force - "go in and smack 'em on the nose and get out quick" - they found it hard to adapt to the tight guidelines.

"I've had a big greeny in the face after four nights on the border. If I did that to you you'd punch me in the face, but we're meant to just brush it off."

The system to compensate victims of police and army brutality was also widely resented. "You hit one and you go to court for assault and he'll walk away with £10,000."

He said soldiers frequently resorted to imposing arbitrary VCPs (vehicle check points) to vent their frustration.

"If you see a known face you can mess him about a bit. You can haul him out of the car and do a thorough search and hope it's raining so you can take a long time over it. It's the only way to let out the aggression."

SAS VICTIM'S BROTHER BEGAN RAID ON PARAS

Hunt for machinegun

By DAVID WOODING

THE brother of an IRA chief killed by the SAS sparked a mob attack on Paras in which three people were shot, it was claimed last night.

Fergal O'Donnell was involved in a fierce row with squaddies seconds before they opened fire in Coalisland, Co Tyrone.

The argument developed into a scuffle and a watching crowd of 30 joined in. Three civilians were wounded in the legs when the red beret Paras fired warning shots.

O'Donnell, who is in his 20s, was treated in hospital for head injuries.

He is the older brother of Coalisland's IRA commander, Kevin Barry O'Donnell, 21, who was shot dead in a SAS ambush in the town three months ago.

Last year an Old Bailey jury cleared Kevin of gun running for the IRA after two rifles were found in his car.

He was given nine months for having the guns but walked free because of the time he served before the trial.

He was revealed as the IRA commander in Coalisland when he and three others were killed by the SAS after a police station raid.

Yesterday the Paras were checking cars leaving the area to stop an Army machine gun, stolen during the fights, from reaching the IRA.

And Army top brass rejected suggestions that they would be pulled out of Tyrone before their tour of duty ends because they have become so hated by local people.

Example 6: Follow-up to the Teebane bombing

Article 1: Daily Telegraph, 20-01-92, front page

Brooke faces worst crisis as IRA threatens further civilian attacks

Pressure for more Ulster troops grows

By Chris Ryder, Irish Correspondent

With the Government coming under increasing pressure from its advisors and local politicians for more troops and RUC officers, Mr. Brooke, Northern Ireland Secretary, will make a statement to the House of Commons this afternoon on security in the province in the aftermath of the Teebane Cross massacre. He will face close questioning on he he proposes to deal with the spiralling violence.

Bleak community riven by feuds and ferocity

David Sharrock in Teebane

“It’s dangerous being a construction worker in the North.” The comment wasn’t delivered in the hushed, grieving tones provoked by the latest atrocity.

It was being sung as a refrain in a bar full of drunken men less than a mile from the scene of the blast at Teebane Cross, less than 24 hours after seven Protestant workers had been killed in the explosion.

At about the same time in another bar, in the village where some of the victims had lived, a journalist working for a Dublin newspaper had to leave after being branded a “Papist”.

The Teebane killings go down as the worst civilian atrocity since the Enniskillen Remembrance Day massacre in 1987, after which Gordon Wolson forgave his daughter’s killers within hours of her death in his arms. But there was little evidence of a similar mood of reconciliation in rural Co Tyrone over the weekend.

The area has played host to a bitter and bloody struggle between the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries, which has led more than 30 people dead since March 1989 within a 20-mile radius of Cookstown, near the scene of Friday’s slaughter.

The ferocity of the violence is heightened by the isolation of the district, a bleak community of scattered farms.

Feuds between family clans on each side of the religious divide stretch back centuries. This personalising of the conflict extends to the IRA’s campaign against construction companies which serve the security forces.

Friday’s victims worked for Karl Construction. Its managing director, Cedric Blackbourne, lost his 19-year-old son six years ago when he was one of three Royal Ulster Constabulary officers shot dead by the IRA in Newry. Mr Blackbourne then named the company after his son.

In its first statement claiming responsibility for Friday’s attack, the IRA said the workmen were employed by Henry Brothers, a building firm in Magherafelt.

Since 1987, two years after the campaign against individuals or companies which carry out work for the security forces was launched in Tyrone, the IRA has relentlessly pursued the Henry firm.

In that year, the IRA murdered Harry Henry, a founder of the company, and manager Kenneth Johnston. A year later its Magherafelt plant was mortar bombed. Then in 1989 Harry Henry’s son, Robert, was charged with the murder of a Sinn Fein councillor, John Darvey, and in connection with an Ulster Volunteer Force arms-buying attempt.

Jim Henry, the surviving brother, now runs the company. Last year he told the Financial Times: “The IRA always comes for us. Unlike other companies we see no reason to hide what we do. We have lost family members and employees but we are also in the business of saving lives.”

This weekend, Mr Henry issued a terse statement: “We will go on, you don’t ever bow down to the IRA.” The IRA has killed 26 people since 1985 for working on security forces contracts.

At another mid-Ulster construction firm yesterday, the boss was preparing to go home when two soldiers appeared beyond the sturdy metal fencing of his plant. The man said that despite the dangers involved, his workforce was very loyal. “We’ve had times when one of the employees had been killed on the Friday and the entire staff is back in on Monday morning. You wouldn’t get that across the water.”

He warned each prospective employee of the risks. The vehicles they use are changed regularly and are unmarked, as is the company’s headquarters.

The man sped off in a powerful, armour plated car. A few minutes later the soldiers crouched in the roadside had gone too.

The Catholic primate Dr Cahal Daly, who visited the scene of the bomb and comforted some of its victims, yesterday said it was unfair to blame the local Catholic community. He said there was no evidence that the killers lived locally, even though some reports had spoken of a staunchly republican “pocket” nearby.

The Teebane crossroad lies near the nationalist village of Pomeroy. “It’s desperate what’s happened and I’d say that most people here would agree with me,” said a shopkeeper. “I don’t know if that would go for those living in the countryside though. And you never know. I mean, even I have to be careful what I say to people who come in. Everyone just keeps their thoughts to themselves. It’s dreadful to think the killers live among us.”

Another villager said: “There’d be people who think it would have been better if they’d got all of them. The police and army have got a lot to answer for round here, and they were working for them. They knew the risks using that road.”

Five miles away the Protestant village of New Mills looked as if it was mourning, its streets deserted. “It’s sick, we’re all very angry,” said a woman. “It might be getting worse, but after a while you end up feeling nothing, it goes on so much.”

Example 7: Killing of IRA members

Article 1: Daily Mirror, 03-07-92, p2

T h e I R A c a l l t h i s j u s t i c e

A MAN'S naked body lies wrapped in dustbin bags and weighted down with a crate of milk bottles - shot dead in what the IRA calls "justice".

The victim was one of three Provo men murdered by their own side and dumped by roadsides in Northern Ireland yesterday.

But first they were horrifically beaten and tortured for five days into confessing to a kangaroo court that they were informers, extortioners - and murderers.

The IRA admitted killing Gregory Burns, 33, Aidan Starrs, 29, and John Dignam, 32. And they issued a lengthy statement trying to justify shooting them.

The Provos claimed one, Gregory Burns, set up the killing of his own brother by security forces.

It said Burns also planned the murder of his girlfriend Margaret Perry who vanished from her Co Armagh home a year ago.

It said the three feared she would expose their Mafia-style extortion racket against Catholic businessmen.

Within 24 hours of Margaret's body being found in a wood on Tuesday, the men were stripped naked, hooded and shot in the back of the head.

In a grisly show of savagery the Provos dumped their bodies in a ten mile radius across Co Armagh.

The barbaric killings sent a wave of revulsion across Ireland.

Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the SDLP, said: "It's an act of obscene horror".

Police said the IRA's claims were "rubbish - no one is fooled".

IRA claims three men it murdered were informers

By Sean O'Neill

THE IRA said yesterday it had murdered the three men who were found in South Armagh and claimed they had been informers for MI5 and the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

The three, shot and dumped near the border in roadside ditches, were naked or partially clothed and hooded with black plastic bags.

Police said the names of the dead men would not be released until they had been formally identified. But the IRA identified them as Gregory Burns, 35, John Dignam, 32, and Aidan Starr, 29, and said they were IRA members who had been tried and executed.

In a statement issued in Dublin, the IRA said Burns had been an agent for British military intelligence since 1979 and Dignam and Starrs were informers for the RUC Special Branch. The men had been suspected of involvement in "corruption and extortion" since 1990.

The three, it said, admitted working for the security forces - Burns for MI5, the others for the police.

According to the IRA, Burns admitted he had been recruited as an informer in Enniskillen, in 1979. In 1982 he was sent to Portadown and spy on IRA members including his own brother Sean and to pass on information. Later that year, Sean Burns and two other unarmed IRA men were shot dead by the RUC.

In the mid-80s, Burns was sent to Amsterdam to spy on the Irish community there and returned to Ulster to spy on the IRA's North Brigade through Starrs, it said. The terrorists said he was so good at creating innovative hides and dumps for weapons he was known as the quarter master for Portadown.

By 1989 Starrs and Dignam, said the IRA became aware Burns was an MI5 agent.

The IRA also said the three had kidnapped and murdered a woman who was about to expose them to the IRA. The decomposed body of Margaret Perry, 26, a civil servant, was found on Tuesday in a shallow grave at Mullaghmore, Co Sligo, after Irish police were tipped off. She disappeared on June 21 last year after leaving her Portadown home to go to work.

RUC sources said the three men named by the IRA were terrorist suspects but declined to comment on allegations they were informers.

Dignam and Starrs, of Ballyoran Park, Portadown, have been jailed for terrorist offences. Dignam was sentenced to 12 years in 1980 for wounding with intent,

causing an explosion and carrying firearms. Starrs was sentenced to eight years in 1983 for possessing explosives.

The bodies were found within 10 miles of each other on Wednesday night. Two were close to the border, near Crossmaglen and near the village of Newtownhamilton. The first recovered was further from the border at Mountain Road, Lislea.

Mr Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the SDLP, said: "This is a barbarous type of murder carried out in a most obscene way...to offer the greatest degree of offence and obscenity to the community there and to offer a threat to them as well.

Miss Perry's body was formally identified yesterday after her mother, Mary, went to the Irish Republic.

There were suggestions Miss Perry had been Burns's girlfriend. Fr. Denis Faul of Dungannon, who kept in touch with Mrs Perry after her daughter went missing, said yesterday: "She was keeping some undesirable company for a year before she disappeared and she was in a state of some agitation on the day she went away."

● **Phillip Johnston**, Political Correspondent, writes: The IRA were condemned by the Prime Minister yesterday in the Commons.

‘Informers’ shot by IRA linked to killing

Owen Bowcott

Three men whose bodies were dumped in south Armagh may have murdered woman to maintain cover

THE IRA said last night that one of three men it had killed as informers had worked for MI5 for 13 years while rising to the rank of quartermaster within the IRA.

Gregory Burns, aged 33, had set up the murder of his girlfriend when he feared she would blow his cover, and had supplied information to security forces in his own brother who was shot dead by police, the Provisionals claimed.

The naked, hooded and mutilated bodies of Mr Burns and two other men - named by the IRA as Aidan Starrs, aged 29, and John Dignam, 32 - were dumped at the side of isolated roads within 10 miles of each other in south Armagh close to the border late on Wednesday night.

The first body was discovered near Newtownhamilton. The other two men were found near Crossmaglen and Bessbrook. One was partly covered by a milk crate. All three had been shot in the back of the head.

They had been taken from their Portadown homes late last week and had been executed after being questioned by fellow IRA members for several days.

The IRA said last night all three had admitted working for the security services - Mr Burns for MI5 and the others for the police. It added that they were responsible for the murder of Margaret Perry, a 26 year-old civil servant who was Mr Burns's girlfriend and who disappeared from her home a year ago. She was found buried in a shallow grave across the border in County Sligo two days ago, after an IRA tip-off.

According to the IRA, Mr Burns admitted to them he had been recruited by the intelligence service as an informer in Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, in 1979.

In 1982 he was ordered to move to Portadown and spy on IRA members including his own brother Sean and to pass on information. Later that year Sean Burns and two other unarmed IRA men were shot dead by the RUC. The deaths were investigated by John Stalker as part of allegations that the RUC was operating a shoot-to-kill policy.

At the time of the Stalker inquiry it was alleged that the RUC was declining to help the investigation because it feared that the identity of some of its local informers would be compromised if subject to outside scrutiny.

The IRA said that in the mid-1980s Mr Burns was sent to Amsterdam to spy on the Irish community there. When he returned to Northern Ireland he was made IRA quartermaster for the Portadown area.

By 1989 Aidan Starrs and John Dignam, according to the IRA, became aware Mr Burns was an MI5 agent. They, it was claimed, were working for the police. In the same year Mr Burns struck up a friendship with Margaret Perry and by last summer the men drew up a plan to murder her when they feared she was going to expose them.

None of the IRA's claims was confirmed by the RUC last night, except that the three men had been killed.

Few questioned by IRA interrogators have survived to recount their experiences. A priest who read the last rites over one of the bodies found yesterday said it had a black hood over its head "which looked like a bin-liner. It appeared to be badly bruised. There were marks on the back and blood on the hands and around the neck."

Mr Burns had recently been attending the resumed inquest into the killing of his brother and had been prominent in the long-running legal battle to challenge the inquest system in Northern Ireland.

The other two victims had long republican records. Mr Starrs had been jailed in 1983 for possessing hand grenades. Mr Dignam had been jailed for 12 years in 1980 after admitting that he had carried out a kneecapping and caused explosions. The IRA claimed the three had been under suspicion for corruption and extortion since late 1990.

The murders were the first in Northern Ireland in eight weeks and brought the terrorist death toll for this year to 50.

Seamus Mallon, the SDLP deputy leader and MP for Newry and Armagh, said: "This is a barbarous type of murder carried out in a most obscene way. It is a perversion of justice because these people have decided they're going to act as judge, jury and executioner and have done it in a way that has shocked anyone with any sense of humanity left in them."

PROVOS EXECUTE 3 FOR GIRL'S MURDER

**IRA justice - a
bullet in the head**

By SIMON HUGHES

THREE IRA MEN were executed by their terror bosses for murdering a girl who was about to expose them as traitors, police revealed yesterday.

Their naked bodies, hooded and bound, were found separately beside roads in the heart of bandit country near Ulster's border with the Irish Republic.

Each had been shot in the back of the head - the hallmark of a Provo execution.

The IRA named them as Gregory Burns, Aidan Starrs and John Dignham.

It accused them of being spies for British intelligence and said they were behind the kidnap and murder of civil servant Margaret Perry.

Terror chiefs say Margaret - Burn's girlfriend - was clubbed to death because she was about to expose the trio as traitors.

Margaret disappeared from her home in Portadown a year ago.

Her body was found in a woodland grave in Co Sligo this week following a tip off to police after the three men were kidnapped.

Detectives believe IRA torturers beat the truth out of their captives, who were then "court marshalled" and sentenced to death.

Burns's treachery is a heavy blow to the IRA.

He had a high profile as the brother of Sean Burns - a victim of the RUC's so-called "shoot-to-kill" policy in the 1980s.

Only two months ago he stormed out of the resumed inquest into his brother's death declaring he had been murdered.

A security source said last night: "This must have created big problems for the IRA and caused them acute embarrassment.

"Burns was regarded as the brother of a great patriot murdered by the British. Now here they are having to do the same thing to him because he has apparently been double crossing them."

One of the dead was spotted near Crossmaglen by a woman out walking. He lay under black plastic sheets with a milk crate on top.

A massive security operation was mounted to retrieve the bodies.

● *The Sun Says - Page Six*

THE SUN SAYS

No tears

**THE bodies of three men are found in
South Armagh, near Ulster's border.**

They are hooded and naked. They have been
tortured, then shot through the head.

A horrific sight that outrages decency.

But the three were members of the IRA

They were victims of a feud inside that
loathsome gang of criminals.

**When murderers destroy their own, there is
no place for tears.**

A troubled upbringing

Danny sells jokes and wants to be a footballer. Stuart enjoys throwing petrol bombs. Lee thinks joyriding is a wee bit better than sex. Could it be the workless rejects of Brixton or Birmingham talking or have the Troubles given the kids of Belfast a terrible recklessness?

CANDIDA CREWE

WHAT'VE Ian Paisley and a zebra crossing got in common? They've both got big orange balls. What's the difference between a condom and a coffin? You come in one and go in another.

If you visit the famous Crown pub in Belfast you can buy five such jokes for a pound. They are sold by Danny, a small boy who looks eight but is in fact 13, and who has a pale, grubby face, open and full of wicked charm, and long black eyelashes. He's been hanging around the place, six evenings a week, for five years, and makes about a tenner a night which he spends on sweets and buying lunches for his friends. Although he's famous in the area, his father, who works in a bar, and his mother, who works in a food store, apparently think he's out with his friends.

Danny started by selling the local evening paper on the streets when he was seven. If you go to the city centre in the late afternoon you can see any number of young boys thus employed. I've never witnessed the like in any English city.

Danny graduated to joke telling because it's more lucrative, if more dangerous. He's been set upon by Protestant "hoods" in the past but he's not frightened. Although he's been in the juvenile court a few times for "beaking off" from school, he doesn't "mess around with hoods" if he can help it.

"My mate's big brothers steal cars," he told me, yawning (he doesn't stop "work" until 10, gets to bed at 11.30pm, and is up for school at eight). "My big brother used to joyride, but now he's wised up and settled down and is just a raver. Joyriding's a load of crap."

He has no intention of getting involved in it. He wants to tell jokes for another two years, leave school, and become a footballer, preferably for the Donegal Celtic Boys. Who knows what might happen to him? Danny is streetwise, enterprising, sharp. And, above all, he has hope - a rare commodity amongst the children in Belfast.

Stuart, 17, clicked his four front teeth out from behind his upper lip and secured them between his thumb and forefinger. He then pushed a lighted cigarette end into his grotesque imitation of a mouth and his mates fell about laughing. "I'm a reject," he said replacing his teeth. Stuart is from the Woodvale area of Belfast. What his father

does is “confidential”; his mother is a home-help. He hated school, was very bored “writing on bits of paper”. Sacked from his first YTS programme for throwing a hammer at a supervisor - “He was a bastard” - he is now doing mechanics at Shankill Community Projects (for £29.50 a week). “The place is all rejects”.

Stuart and a few of his friends were sitting in the “committee room” of the SCP, which is housed in a run-down school on a bleak Protestant estate. Some had heavy boots, which they put up on the table, and baseball caps. They all had detailed complexions and a deep loathing of Catholics who, they said, “live in filth”.

In his spare time Stuart sniffs glue, “but only in the summer because you can go into a big field and you get better dreams that way”; he nicks about two cars a week to go joyriding; and he beats up and throws petrol bombs at Catholics, “because its a good laugh fighting people you don’t like”. As a result, he occasionally gets shot at “with plastic bullets and the odd battery by the police”.

“I don’t go joyriding - I’m just a car thief - but I will the minute I can drive,” said his friend, Mark, 16.

“Joyriding’s brilliant,” Lee 17, from Springmartin said. “Nothing’s better. It’s even a wee bit better than sex. I nick motorbikes but prefer cars because you can crash them, then burn and strip them. You don’t think about killing yourself when you’re in them, you just think about going faster.”

Recently Lee had to give up his favourite sport. “I got beaten with baseball bats by the UDA,” he explained. The experience has put him off but has not deterred his friend Dexter.

“I’m from a broken home, but not sexually abused, and am as smart as fuck,” Dexter said laughing. “I got six GCSEs.” In this, and the fact he is starting as an apprentice painter, Dexter is unique among his friends. Even so, he has no plans to give up joyriding despite the risks.

“I beat up this fellah on the estate the other day,” he said, “because he’s looped and threatened my Ma with a baseball bat. Someone squealed on me - some neighbour, not him, he’d fucked off to Bangor - so five members of the UFF came round my house with balaclavas on and beat me up with truncheons. I had to go to hospital.”

Stuart, whose preferred car is the Ford Escort XR3i (in which he gets up to 110mph on the motorway), is equally unbothered by the consequences of his “anti-social” behaviour in the close-knit community where he lives, even the thought of being shot at by the police or the paramilitaries. “If they jump out to shoot at me,” he says, “I’ll run them over. The risk’s worth it. I’ve got nothing better to do.”

“He’s cuckoo,” Lee told me. “He’s Mad Max III.”

There are studies to show that the likes of “Mad Max III” and his “reject” friends, and their Catholic counterparts, suffer no more psychological damage than do children in the inner cities of mainland Britain. They encounter the same problems of extreme

poverty and deprivation which in turn leads to crime, alcohol and solvent abuse. (Hard drugs are less rife for the obvious reason that they are harder to smuggle into the province). In West Belfast there is 90 per cent unemployment; 17 per cent of the Northern Ireland total of young unemployed are in the north and west areas of the city.

“**THEIR** fathers don’t have jobs,” said Jim McCorry who works for Extern, an organisation campaigning to prevent crime, “and the kids themselves’ll never have a bloody job. Crime’s the only option, and it’s a good one. I had a 15-year-old lad who’d been in institutions all his life. He’d progressed from hijacking cigarette lorries to holding up post offices, then banks. He phoned me from Greece the other day, said he had £3,000 in the bank.”

John Growcott, assistant principal social worker in childcare, is a gentle and enlightened man who himself grew up in West Belfast in the height of the Troubles in the ‘60s and ‘70s. He puts it down to luck that he didn’t “slip through the net”, and says had he ever been in the wrong place at the wrong time, caught up in a riot, seen a family member murdered - who knows? - he might have ended up like those he now tries to help.

Even so, his contemporaries who dropped out of school and got into theft and so forth have, for the most part, settled down with children of their own. In those days, according to Growcott’s friend, Robert McLiam Wilson, who is from Turf Lodge, the very west of West Belfast, misbehaving was “a working class thing you did, acting the hard man, but it was basically only temporary.” That, he says, has changed in the past five or six years because of increased economic pressures and the resulting breakdown of families.

“The issues here are, at one level, no different than those in any other inner city,” Growcott said. Children’s needs remain the same. “Research studies never evidenced a direct link between the Troubles and a propensity to social dysfunction and violence. They are mainly working-class, but there’s no special make-up which makes a child go joyriding or join the paramilitaries.”

He cited the example of the young IRA member, an undergraduate in Wales, who was killed recently. After the event, all his fellow students expressed amazement that this shy, quiet, unassuming fellow could have been part of such [a] violent organisation.

“For some who join a paramilitary group,” said Growcott, “it’s the ultimate expression of their ideology, and that level of commitment shapes their justification for violence. Some people see a pathological violence within these individuals which is not always the case.”

Certainly, as one child psychiatrist at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children pointed out, there aren’t thousands of children passing through the department

because of the Troubles. "We see about 600 children a year," he said, "and the majority aren't greatly affected by them."

"How do you assess the impact of the Troubles on the children?" Growcott mused. "What would be the things to make you believe it was the Troubles in particular which resulted in their anti-social behaviour, over and above other contributing factors? Yet you have to measure that against the common sense response - how could they not be affected? Clearly there are a group of youngsters here who face one different reality: their behaviour places them in direct risk." All children, even if their intentions aren't remotely anti-social, risk being beaten up if they stray into the "wrong" area.

"It's a bit different for girls," a teenage girl told me. "There aren't many who go about hitting wee girls but, on the whole, strangers will be done. It's like what happens to animals when they go into another's territory." Random sectarian attacks are commonplace. "I think religion's an excuse to beat people up," the girl added. "People like fighting in Belfast, they just do."

Doing ordinary things, such as walking home from the disco, holds special dangers. But perhaps this is no difference from the fighting, caused by racism, between their contemporaries in London, say, or Birmingham. In Belfast, though, a heightened sense of geography is necessarily drummed into every child from birth, and they all have a singular awareness of the movements of a car, the step of a stranger, the tenseness of an atmosphere, which astounds outsiders. (Once in a pub in Scotland, Growcott was able to predict a fight brewing hours before others had any idea). It is no coincidence that, though there is a problem of homelessness in Belfast, just as anywhere else, it is rare to see teenagers sleeping rough. They tend to stay with family and friends rather than risk being targeted in tit-for-tat killings.

Still, it is those who misbehave who risk most, and so much more than those who do so elsewhere in Britain. "It has the power to destroy peoples' lives long-term - by ending them," said McLiam Wilson. For the crux of the matter is, if you nick a video or a car in Belfast, you are likely or not as to get shot. "Catholics are shot by Republican organisations," said Jim McCorry, "Protestants get shot by loyalist ones."

The RUC's attentions are deflected away from petty crime. (It rates low on their agenda of priorities in the face of greater concerns: terrorism and their own self-protection. Probation officer Tim Chapman says that the average age of the first offenders with whom he comes into contact is 17-19, as opposed to 15 or 16 in England. This is because those in Belfast aren't being picked up by the police until they graduate to more serious crimes. And, having fallen through the net at 12 or 13, they are, by the time they reach their late teens, well set in to a grotesque form of self-reliance and determination. Their confidence is ultimate, even if their self-esteem is rock-bottom because, like the children of Sao Paulo, they have nothing to lose.

There is a complete lack of effective or legitimate policing in the working-class areas. "Many people feel that the police have abandoned them," Chapman said, "and are allowing the locals to stew. The only way a beleaguered, angry, or frightened resident can get protection is to turn to the paramilitaries - Sinn Fein for example - whether he or she supports them or not."

Those children who go in for housebreaking, vandalism, and joyriding, who both exhaust the goodwill of the community and elude the RUC, are dealt with in a number of ways by the paramilitaries. They are (supposedly) given four warnings before being beaten in the street or in their house, or - sometimes along with the whole family - they are "excluded" from the area, which means they literally have to move out. Otherwise they are simply "knee-capped", a euphemism for being shot in the legs.

"The paramilitaries are prepared to do this for two reasons," Growcott said, "First, they don't want the police involved in the communities in a high-profile or successful way. Second, they want to establish their own authority in the area and demonstrate they can address law and order issues."

"They don't want to shoot the children - it's a waste of bullets," said McCorry, "but they have to maintain their own credibility and support. And shooting kids does have the advantage of blooding the young volunteer. As a form of initiation it's less dangerous than murder, and a lot easier than shooting sheep."

Nobody can deny this has an adverse effect on the children in Belfast, even if they themselves don't necessarily see it that way. One boy told me it's better to be shot than beaten because being beaten up with baseball bats, for example, is far more indiscriminate. The knee-cappers normally go for the fleshy part of the leg, he said, and that's less painful than "a complete doing over."

Besides, a shot wound constitutes just the kind of badge of honour which is important amongst a group for whom machismo is all. Whether it is "cooler" to have been shot by the paramilitaries or by the Army and police, is unclear.

Dr Joe Hendron, who defeated Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president, in the election and is the new SDLP MP in West Belfast, believes the "constant harassment" of young people in the area, particularly by the Army and police, "is still the most potent factor driving (them) into the IRA." "An ambivalence towards authority is normal in adolescence," said Chapman, "but the Troubles reinforce that." The young people see a kind of lawlessness prevailing. Because the RUC have guns, and those who effectively police their areas are criminals, their ideas of prohibition or inhibition can be very hazy.

"Their attitudes are affected," Chapman went on. "Those I work with place less value on life - their own and other people's." This results in a real recklessness.

So what is being done to counteract this? I came into contact with a number of groups and projects which have been set up to target those who are most vulnerable.

Fortunately, both communities see child protection as a neutral zone. Workforces are mixed on the whole and not threatened by the paramilitaries. But resources are sorely limited because, apparently, the Government fears funding might fall into the “wrong” hands. And the real need is work, and education.

Because in Northern Ireland working-class Catholics were denied the opportunities available to their Protestant counterparts - namely apprenticeships and jobs in the Protestant-dominated manufacturing industries - the Catholic Church set up an education system geared towards the professions.

“But now that those are crumbling,” McLiam Wilson said, “working-class Protestants don’t have the guarantee of work so education is becoming more important for them, without actually improving.”

The present system will continue to perpetuate the sectarian prejudices. The Department of Education is, at least, trying in a small way to counter this. It has set up a project called Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) which brings together children from the Protestant and Catholic primary schools. The national curriculum has been adapted. There is a common history programme, for example. And there are now four integrated schools in Belfast, which is a start.

Tim Rowley is the headmaster of one, Hazelwood, a grant maintained school established seven years ago, in North Belfast. It is on the border of White City (a renowned UDA area) and Longlands (a hardline Catholic neighbourhood). He says 80 per cent of his 450 pupils are working-class. Certainly those I saw had been touched by troubles not commonly associated with Malone Road (Belfast’s Millionaire’s Row). David, 16, had a cousin who’d been shot dead “by the Brits” in 1982. He was a known joyrider (since the beginning of the Nineties, 18 young people have been killed joyriding either from crashing, or being shot by the security forces). “They got away with it ‘cos they said they thought he was a terrorist,” David said. “If people see a friend or a relation shot and nothing’s done, it makes them bitter, starts another generation of hoods.”

A girl whose uncle was killed by the paramilitaries said that the other extreme was actively to strive “for something better”, to start attending peace rallies, for example. She was not alone in wishing to stress the positive aspects of living in Belfast. Many mentioned the great importance of “the extended family” in the communities. McLiam Wilson is sceptical about this romantic notion of the Irish: “Just look at the things they allow to happen to their children. The knee-capping logic’s like that of South American death squads. So the idea of warm, close-knit communities is a bogus for me.”

But there are a substantial number of people who attest to the value of the protectiveness these offer. Rowland’s counterpart at the primary school, Jill Houston, is a warm and imaginative woman. Her office is crowded with five 11-year-olds. One

girl told of another, who didn't believe she was also a Catholic, had thrown a bike at her. Her Protestant friend, told of how her brother had been beaten up by some teenagers from Longlands and had four stitches in the head. Although she had Catholic friends in school, she admitted she was "a wee bit frightened" of Catholics outside. One boy, aged 10, said his family had moved from a Protestant area to a mixed one, "because Protestants keep fighting between themselves. I lived in the middle of it, the throwing stones and things. I heard shootings sometimes."

After they had left the room, Houston told me the truth, and the full enormity of this child's dignity became apparent. His mother had been murdered by fellow Protestants - she had a breeze block dropped on her head at a drinking club - when he was six. His father vanished when he was very young; he and his little brother live with their grandparents.

Children like them, orphaned by the Troubles, are very vulnerable. "Unless they're kept on the straight and narrow," said Houston, "they can be sucked into any group. They're real fodder for the paramilitaries. Academically they're under-achievers and they've no educational, emotional or financial back-up at home. We're as supportive as we can be, but it's not enough.

"He's bright, he's got those eyes, but he enjoys aggravating for attention - he's a massive discipline problem. At the very least he'll become a glue-sniffer and a joyrider if we don't do something. But, I wonder, how are we to get this right..."

Just then the boy himself appeared in Houston's study. His mouth was devoid of front teeth, and he had a long red scar, like a tape-worm, across his pale cheek. He accepted the invitation to sit on Houston's lap willingly. It was his friend who had wounded him, he said, because he'd refused to "be bad" with him.

"I was trying to be good to get an Easter egg or a sticker," he said, "but he wanted to make me hit people."

How long can the thoughtful Houston's innocent incentives hold out? How long can they act as adequate ploys against the alluring but fatal frisson which Belfast, alone of all British cities will, in a matter of years be offering this unhappy, disaffected boy as its dubious reward for "being bad"?

-The names of the teenagers and children have been changed.

Appendix 5: Examples of articles used for chapter 5

Example 1

The Sun, 05-05-92, p7

PADDY DOES IRISH JOG ON THE M4

AN Irish visitor was pulled in after just a mile on the M4 - because he was JOGGING.

The 45-year-old fitness fan from County Cork had no idea he shouldn't be mixing it with the motorway traffic in his T-shirt, shorts and trainers.

Motorists spotted him as he pounded through Newport, Gwent, while visiting Britain for a friend's wedding.

They called police on mobile phones, fearing he was about to cause an accident.

Stunned police said yesterday: "We picked him up on our video cameras and could scarcely believe our eyes.

Danger

"He went through tunnels where there isn't even a hard shoulder and didn't seem to realise he was in danger."

The man, who has not been named, was given a warning but not charged.

The officer added: "We told him of the traffic laws of this country and advised him to go back to the wedding in one piece.

"I don't know what the law is in Ireland but I wouldn't advise doing this there either."

Example 2

The Sun, 04-11-1992, p3

BIRTHDAY SHAM ROCKS A PADDY

BAFFLED George Ellis felt a right April fool last night when told he had celebrated the wrong birthday for 56 years.

Irish-born George thought he was born on April 9 - but has just discovered his real birthday is November 11. The error was revealed when father-of-five George applied for benefit in Burnley, Lancs. His records in Ireland showed he was 56 - not 57 as he thought.

Machine operator George will throw a special party to celebrate next week.

But he doesn't know how the mix-up happened. He said yesterday: "It could only happen to an Irishman."

Example 3

The Guardian, 9 July 1992, City, p. 14

Notebook

EDITED BY ALEX BRUMMER

Irish rules

WHILE on the subject of regulation, a triumphalist news release has just crossed this desk, opening with the startling statement: “1991 was a particularly successful year for Imro.” What would constitute an unsuccessful year? It was, after all, during that annus mirabilis that Imro’s finest singularly failed to stop a certain 21-stone individual from helping himself to millions of pounds. But before being bowled over by Imro’s stunning self-confidence, it is time to unscramble the acronym. The release is issued by the Irish Music Rights Organisation.

Example 4

The Guardian, 2 July 1992, Foreign News, p. 9

Legless in Mayo cell with Garda arms

JOE JOYCE IN DUBLIN

THREE Irishmen arrested for being drunk and disorderly found themselves locked in a police cell which was also a small arsenal last month. But they made no attempt to stage a Wild West-style breakout with the Uzi sub-machine gun, three Smith and Wesson revolvers and 20,000 rounds of ammunition with which they shared a cell. The three drunks were held after a late-night fracas in Casltebar, County Mayo. Banging noises in the cell alerted their jailers. The men had scattered the bullets and were banging the guns on the walls. The Uzi had to be sent to Dublin for repair, according to a police source.

The weapons had been stored temporarily in the cell for use in a two-week firearms training course. But policemen on the night shift were unaware of this.

A spokesman said the matter was being investigated.

Example 5

Daily Mirror, 2 September, 1992, p.15

Jail? Yes please

OLD lag Paddy Marshall broke a window to get “home” to jail, a court heard yesterday. Paddy, 72, has almost lived in “his special cell” in Mountjoy prison, Dublin, since the 1950s. The judge asked if he’d like 12 months. Paddy said: “Please. It would be very nice.”

Example 6

Daily Telegraph, 5 September 1992, *Weekend Telegraph*, p.xxiv

TRAVEL: CITY BREAKS

The home of black pints and polished prose

Paul Gogarty continues our series of city guides with a trip to Dublin, a city that hates showing off.

DUBLIN is settling down after the fanfares of 1991, when it wore the title European City of Culture like a crown of thorns. Diadems do not sit comfortably on a pugilists head. The gap-toothed riverfront has done too many rounds with developers. In O'Connell Street itinerant beggars thrust out hands like kidney blows and Dickensian child pickpockets duck and weave, while Grafton Street jingles with new promoters' money: all testifying to Dublin's tough pragmatism.

True, the city has fine Georgian squares, a couple of memorable museums and Trinity College's Long Room - possibly the handsomest library in the world; but showing off is culturally anathema here. On the first of January this year, Dublin no doubt let out a huge sigh of relief as the mantle of European City of Culture passed to Madrid, a capital that feels far more comfortable fanning its peacock feathers. Dublin, meanwhile, has returned to its rough and tumble existence.

Culturally, Dublin is not about its buildings. For the most part its more grandiose architectural projects are instantly forgettable, rather as if their builders were ashamed of the ostentation. Dublin is much better at the small things: parlours, a good drink, good conversation. In Dublin you'll find poetry to equal Yeats in the obituaries and park by-laws.

This town of less than a million people has been responsible for a ridiculously disproportionate chunk of what is passed off as major English literature: from Dean Swift and Goldsmith to Bram Stoker, Wilde, Shaw, Joyce, Yeats, Beckett, Behan, Synge and O'Casey. Many of them left as soon as they could and I can understand why; nevertheless, the place spawned them and their art.

A weekend break in Dublin is about what happens when you sit in pubs, wander the streets and parks, and at night listen to music that will excite you as music did when you were a teenager. The epics of Dublin's pubs are the modern-day equivalents of the legends of Fionn Mac Cumhaill. As the writer Ulick O'Connor remarked: "Dublin to an alcoholic is like a girls' gymnasium to a sex maniac." On my first visit a few years ago I mentioned to a barman in Mulligan's that I'd been told some of Dublin's pubs had safety belts on their barstools. The barman snorted. "Dubliners stand on their own two feet." He paused a moment, thoughtfully. "Anyway, for sure there's no barstools in proper pubs."

Guinness is Dublin's poetry and its science. Black as the pearls of the Liffey, with a head pulled a regulation finger thick, the pint should be consumed in 18 gulps, leaving frothy concentric rings around the glass. One well-heeled Dubliner, whom I happened upon as he supped a pint on a flight of steps in Merrion Square at 8am told me: "Take care of life's essentials and life takes care of itself."

In the foyer of the Shelbourne Hotel, beaver coats are gliding. The Horseshoe Bar stops serving on the stroke of 11pm and we adjourn to the large residents' lounge. Syllables are polished like cricket balls before delivery; a language stroked and cherished. The conversation is robust but the accent so delicate that I almost ask the waitress to turn down the chandeliers.

Outside in St. Stephen's Square, Georgian fanlights like blooms of flowers stand above flights of elegant steps in one of Europe's truly beautiful squares. It was here that Buck Whaley left on a bet to walk to Jerusalem and play handball against its walls.

It's a city of madmen (Jonathan Swift, tellingly, left money to build a lunatic asylum here), men possessed, men like Joyce and Beckett who felt compelled to leave but could never stop writing about the place.

Dubliners' locquaciousness and self-depreciating humour are legendary, but the city's finest joke is the statue of Father Theobald Matthew in O'Connell St. Father Matthew founded the Temperance League. More than 1,000 pubs testify to his lack of success.

Example 7

The Guardian, 27-07-'92, Home News, p4

Hospital study confirms stereotyped view of celts as hard drinkers

RESEARCH has seemingly borne out one of the most resented cultural stereotypes: that the Scots, Welsh, and Irish like a drink or three.

A study of more than 1,000 psychiatric patients at Northwick Park hospital in Harrow, north London, shows that alcoholism is almost three times as common among people with celtic names and more common still among those born in celtic countries.

Dr Michael Carney, who yesterday presented the findings at the Dublin meeting [the annual meeting of the Royal College of Psychiatrists], said: "There is no doubt a highly significant excess of celtic alcoholics."

The study is claimed to be the first of its kind, despite a popular prejudice against "drunken" celts dating back to Julius Ceasar, who described them as being notably prone to intoxication.

Dr Carney was at Northwick Park but is now a consultant psychiatrist at the Royal Masonic hospital, west London. He analysed 3,000 patient admissions to Northwick Park for three years to June 1990, made up of 1,048 individual patients.

Dividing the patients by whether they had Welsh, Irish or Highland Scots name he found the incidence of alcoholism among celts was 35 per cent, compared with less than 13 per cent among others.

Where place of birth was known, the incidence of alcoholism among celts born in celtic countries was 54 per cent, compared with 23 per cent among those with celtic names but born outside.

Dr Carney, who is half-Irish and admits to taking an occasional drink himself, said it was remarkable that there was apparently above-average alcoholism among people born in England but with celtic names.

"These people may have been removed from their original celtic homelands for generations.

"All you can say is that it is possibly part genetic and part environmental," he said.

Another study outlined at the meeting suggests that the drinking celt is alive, though not always well, at Trinity College, Dublin.

A survey of 407 undergraduates, 59 per cent of them women, found that 35 per cent of men and 26 per cent of women drank more alcohol than is officially deemed safe.

The safe limit is set at 21 units a week for men and 14 for women. One unit is half a pint of beer or a glass of wine.

Example 8

The Sun, 08-09-92, p7

CRAZY SINEAD 'SMASHES UP TELLY SHOP'

EXCLUSIVE

By MIKE SULLIVAN

OUTRAGEOUS pop star Sinead O'Connor smashed up a satellite TV shop after her telly went on the blink, it was claimed last night.

The skinhead singer is said to have turned the air blue as she caused damage worth hundreds.

She is alleged to have broken marble floor tiles when she kicked over a fire extinguisher with her Doctor Marten boots. Sinead, 25, also swiped a desk top, spilling a drink on a satellite dish and damaging it.

Her alleged tantrum happened after she phoned CBSatellites in Central London, where she rents a dish, asking for an engineer to fix her faulty BBC2 channel.

Staff told her the problem was nothing to do with the dish but she still demanded an engineer to go straight round.

Ugly

When no one was sent she marched into the shop and went wild.

Police were called after Sinead left. One officer said: "She certainly had good use for her extremely ugly Doctor Martens that day."

Detectives visited the star's home in Maida Vale, West London, several times without finding her.

A friend at the star's house said Sinead was in America.

It is understood she has now made contact with Scotland Yard.

The shop's owner Mike Lyons has agreed to drop any action if Sinead apologises and pays for the damage.

He was still waiting to hear from the singer last night.

A police spokesman said: "We are still investigating but are happy to let the matter drop if the two parties can reach a settlement."

Sinead, who had a No1 hit with Nothing Compares 2 U, is famous for being a rebel.

She has openly supported the IRA and branded the Gulf War allies "devils".

Last month she was pictured smoking a cannabis joint on the set of her latest video, *Success Has Made a Failure of Our Home*.

Example 9

The Guardian, 12-09-92, Weekend p53: David Stafford

MIRACLES OF MODERN SCIENCE, no.21

Not so beautiful Pegeen.

CAROLINE was never a meticulously hinged person. Many are the instances of what we call her “idiosyncrasies”.

She bought contact lenses from an Oxfam shop and, when she discovered they hurt her eyes, glued them instead to the tip of her tongue. Every time she licked her lips it looked like a Morris Minor emerging from a car wash. Then she decided she wanted to be Irish. “You can’t just become Irish,” we remonstrated. “You have to be born with the right sort of parents - like getting promotion at the BBC.” But she would not be gainsayed, bought a turf-effect fire and changed her name to Pegeen Mike. She would sit for hours reading the *Tain Bo Cuailgne*, her head tilted to one side, listening intently for the soft splash of Ainnie’s curagh (sic) rowing through the great wind from the Bay of Gregory, musing that if the oaks and the stars could die for sorrow its a dark sky and naked earth we’d have this night, as the Pogues played on her Walkman.

Her Scrabble tactics became intolerable. Eventually I felt I had to take issue with her insistence that the word *bhaintreabhthach* was acceptable (it was a triple word score). In reply she spat the words “cultural imperialist” with such venom the glue came off her contact lenses, which flew across the room to bury themselves in the opposite wall. Then she burned the house down and went home.

The next time I saw her she was eating a Kelim rug she’d just cooked for her tea and yapping like an optimistic corgi. I recognised her condition as that which trained students of the mind call, “barking, carpet-chewing mad.”

She clearly needed the best help available. I rang a media psychiatrist, often called upon by TV-am to comment on the ways in which transactional analysis could help the stars of Eldorado. He rushed over and secured a four-figure fee, and forced her to describe her dreams. She told of a recurring nightmare in which her only friends were vacuum cleaners for which bags were no longer available. The psychiatrist was lost in thought for several minutes and then said: “You know what Freud would say about you, don’t you?” “What?” asked Pegeen, eager for understanding. “Henry loves his minced morsels,” replied the shrink, “that’s what he’d say.”

We sent the charlatan away with a flea in his ear and a cheque in his pocket. The small group of semi-disinterested people Pegeen calls her “friends” gathered to discuss the next move. An intensive programme of research to find the most suitable kind of therapy revealed that the choice available is more bewildering than underwear in Knickerbox. The only solution seemed to be to try them all.

We hired a church hall and took space in various professional journals to advertise a Psychiatrathon - a convention at which representatives from all the major schools could try to cure Pegeen of her sad peccadilloes.

The turn-out was gratifying and the hall was filled with men with interesting beards and women with big handbags. The Freudians were the largest group: there were Classic-Freudians, Post-Freudians, Crypto-Freudians, Freudian Special Brews, Rock Against Freudians, and Brighthouse and Rastrick Brass Freudians. In one corner an unconscious collective of Jungians were juggling their animi. At their side a splinter group, the Jimmy Jungians, were listening to Radio Two. In another corner advocates of Adler were playing Rhapsody in Blue on mouth organs.

WHILE THE Behaviourists misbehaved, just as the Determinists said they would, the controversial twins Dr Nature and Prof Nurture fired pistols at each other. The Cognitive Therapists tried ineptly to conceal their negative perceptions of the Phenomenologists, who weren't sure whether they'd turned up. The EST mob nailed the toilet doors shut. Helped by a couple of Gestalt boot boys, I imposed order and explained the rules. Each therapist would have 10 minutes on stage with Pegeen. The first to stop her from thinking she was Irish would win a fruit cake, a bag of balloons and a certificate they could keep for always saying they were the best. The Adlerians played a dramatic fanfare. The curtains drew back to reveal...an empty stage. Pegeen had legged it.

They found her weeks later, in the Ballyhoura Hills, scampering about worrying the sheep. They shot her, of course. It's the way she would have wanted to go. **G**

Example 10 PTA arrests near Aldermaston

Daily Mirror, 30-01-1992, p.5

A-bases alert as 'IRA' six are held

by SYLVIA JONES

Two nuclear weapons depots were on full security alert last night after a gang of suspected IRA terrorists were arrested nearby.

Other top military bases and a police training school in the area were also warned to be on their guard.

The drama began when a brand new Nissan 200 SX car, registered in the Irish Republic, crashed with a Saab on Tuesday night.

Minutes later, the red Saab exploded into flames in a quiet country lane near the top secret Aldermaston nuclear weapons research establishment and the nuclear base at Burghfield, Berks.

Swoop

An Irishman with slight facial burns was taken to hospital with another man and woman. They later discharged themselves.

Thames Valley police swooped on addresses in Slough, Berks and arrested six people.

They were held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

One report claimed that after the crash, someone came back and 'torched' a car.

Thames Valley police last night confirmed that the incident was being investigated as possible terrorism.

Daily Telegraph, 30-01-1992, News p.2.

Six held after car explosion

by Michael Fleet

Six people were being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act yesterday after a car was deliberately set alight and exploded in a country lane close to a police training college in Berkshire.

Minutes earlier, the vehicle had been in an accident with another car bearing Irish number plates. Three people, who were slightly injured in the explosion, were later arrested, along with three other people picked up subsequently in Slough.

The six are now being held at various Berkshire police stations.

The explosion happened at Green Lane, Ufton Nervet, near Reading, at about 10pm on Tuesday. The area is close to Thames Valley Police Training College.

News in Brief

Six held under anti-terrorism act after suspected car blast

Six people were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in Berkshire yesterday following a suspected car explosion, *writes Duncan Campbell*.

Thames Valley police said an explosion occurred shortly after two cars - a Nissan registered in the Republic of Ireland and a British registered Saab - collided at the village of Upton, near Reading, on Tuesday night.

Afterwards one man discharged himself from Reading hospital where he had been treated for injuries and another man and a woman went to Basingstoke hospital for treatment.

An investigation was launched under Detective Superintendent Mick Cox, of Thames Valley police.

The six were subsequently arrested and then questioned at different police stations in the county.

Answering suggestions that the incident might not be a serious one, a Thames Valley police spokesman said that the officers in charge of the case would not have invoked the anti-terrorism act if they had not believed it merited it at the time.

Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch had been informed, he said.

The Sun, 30-01-1992, p.2

6 HELD OVER 'TERROR' CRASH

SIX people were being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act last night after a car involved in a crash was set alight.

Special branch detectives were called to Reading, Berks, after a Nissan with Dublin plates was found beside a blazing Saab turbo.

Police believe the Saab was torched, possibly to hide something. Bomb officers combed the area yesterday.

The crash was a mile from a former IRA den where explosives were found in 1982.

There are nuclear weapons bases at nearby Aldermaston and Burghfield.

Three people were treated in hospital but left just before police arrived.

The six were arrested in raids at

Basingstoke, Hants, and Slough, Berks.

Police confirmed the six were suspected terrorists.

Example 11

Daily Telegraph, 31-01-1992, News, p.2

Six freed after car explosion

Six Irish people held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act by Thames Valley police were freed yesterday on bail. They were arrested on Tuesday when one of two cars in an accident at Ufton Nervet, near Reading, Berks, was damaged by an explosion.

Police said the terrorism act provision had been lifted against the three men and three women. Two had been charged with vehicle fraud offences, two had been reported for similar offences and inquiries were continuing over the other two.

Example 12

The Sun, 02-03-1992, p.6

THE SUN SAYS

High price of freedom

BRITAIN is a free and open society. This weekend the country paid a high price for it.

On Friday, a bomb exploded at London Bridge station.

On Saturday, another device went off in central London.

Thankfully, the injuries were few but the lives of millions of people were affected one way or another.

Yesterday, because of another terror alert, a football match was disrupted to the frustration of fans at the ground and the vaster audience waiting to watch on TV.

All this was the handiwork of a small number of twisted, evil individuals.

The few criminals of the IRA shelter among the mass of decent, responsible Irish people who have always been welcome here.

They treacherously exploit the absence of checks and controls between this country and Ireland to plot mischief, violence and murder.

Entitled

We could, if we chose, treat southern Ireland just like any other foreign country and insist on passports and searches at airports and seaports.

But first, we are entitled to look to the new government in Dublin for better co-operation on security.

This means a greater willingness to arrest suspects and a greater readiness of the Irish courts to punish the guilty.

If all else fails, we could also insist on the internment of members of all paramilitary organisations, on both sides of the border.

This much is sure.

We cannot go on forever importing terror.

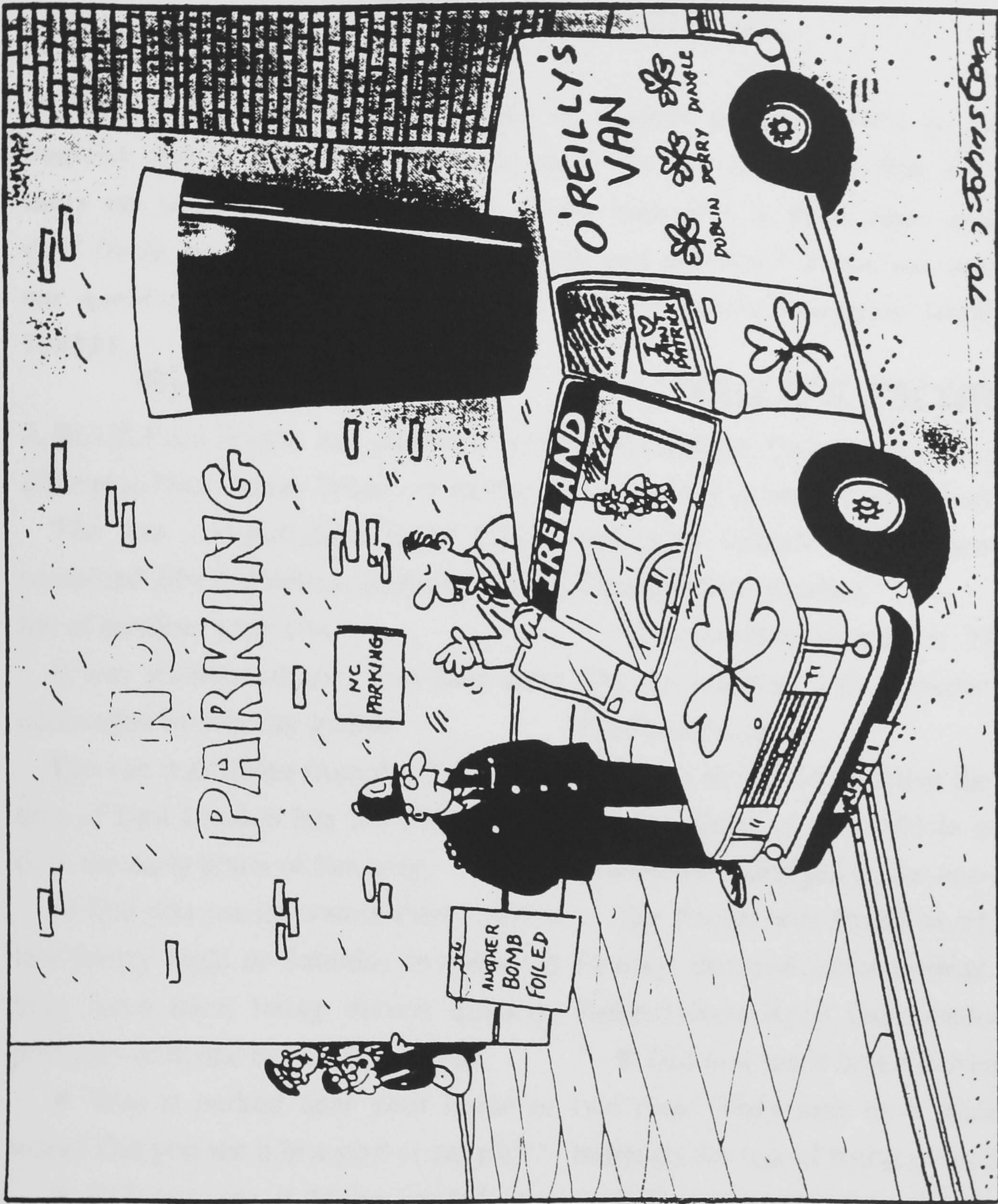
The British people are long suffering.

But this time they have had enough.

Example 13

The Sun, 17-11-92, p6: Tom Johnston cartoon

6 THE SUN, Tuesday, November 17, 1992



"ACTUALLY, OLD CHAP, I'M NOT IRISH AT ALL... BUT IT KEEPS AWAY THE TRAFFIC WARDENS!"
Tom Johnston' cartoon book (Blake Publishing, £3.99) is now on sale at all good bookshops

Example 14

The Sun, 18-11-92, p.6

HELP US NAIL IRA BOMBERS

● THE IRA failed in their attempt to explode massive bombs in London last weekend. But the message is suddenly clear: We are all targets. Now YOU can help snare the terrorists who transported deadly explosives in three vans. Scotland Yard chief David Tucker says: "You are our eyes and our ears." If you can answer any of our questions about these vehicles, call Scotland Yard's Freephone hotline on 0800 789321.

BLUE TRANSIT

A BLUE Ford Transit van was used in the attempt to blitz Canary Wharf on Sunday.

The van - registration B442 CTG - contained 2lbs of Semtex, surrounded by a ton of fertiliser explosive.

It was abandoned after two men were challenged by security guards.

The van was stolen from the Brick Lane area of East London late last Friday night or in the early hours of Saturday.

● Did you see the van in East London last Friday night or Saturday morning? It may have been being driven quickly, probably with one or two men inside.

● Was it parked near your home or work? Did you see it in a yard or car park?

● Did you see it being loaded at a suspiciously late time - maybe on Friday or Saturday nights?

● The fertiliser bomb inside may have been bought in blue, white or yellow 1-cwt bags. The terrorists needed 20 of these to make a ton. Have you seen men carrying or loading bags like these?

● Did you notice 20 coloured bags stored in a lock-up garage near you?

YELLOW ESCORT

THIS yellow Escort van - the same size and colour as an AA van - was used as a

get-away vehicle for terrorists in the Canary Wharf incident.

Its registration number is YCH 461Y.

The van was bought three weeks ago in the East London area.

Police do not believe that the colour or number plates of this vehicle or the blue Transit were changed by the terrorists.

The Escort was found at 11.58pm on Sunday, dumped under railway arches at Bethnal Green Road, East London.

● Did you see it being driven there by two men? They may have walked away hurriedly for fear of being spotted.

● Have you seen this yellow Escort in the past three weeks?

● Did you sell this van, possibly for cash, in the past months? Do you know someone who did?

● Was it hidden in a side road near you or did you glimpse it in a lock-up garage?

● Did you rent a lock-up - possibly to someone with an Irish accent - who has not returned recently?

VOLVO TRUCK

PC RAY Hall was shot after challenging two men driving a five-ton Volvo box van in Stoke Newington, North London, just before 1am last Saturday. A ton of fertiliser explosive was found in the back.

- Did you see a badly resprayed dark blue van - model F616 - parked near you? Police have not released the registration number.

- Did you notice the distinctive numbers 1241 - possibly identifying it as a fleet vehicle - on the back of each wing mirror and near the rear lights?

- Did you see that the final O of Volvo was missing from the radiator badge?

- Did you or someone you know own a vehicle like it?

Here are other vital questions everyone must ask themselves:

- Do you work in an agricultural supplies firm and did you sell bags of fertiliser to someone who isn't a regular customer?

- Have you or a friend rented accommodation to someone Irish recently who has not returned in the past few days?

Remember - no detail is too small. It might save lives.

Appendix 6: Examples of articles used for chapter 6

Example 1

The Sun, 03-03-1992, p6

Nazis couldn't beat us...neither will the IRA

by KENNETH BAKER

HOME SECRETARY

THE recent IRA bomb attacks show that despite high-minded words about “causes” and “struggles”, IRA murderers don't give a damn how many innocent people they kill or injure.

Bombs in streets, railway stations and football crowds won't hit “military and political targets”, as the IRA like to call their assassinations.

They are aimed at ordinary men, women and children on their way to work or enjoying their leisure time.

Now the IRA have announced their latest sick idea - to disrupt the general election campaign.

They want to bomb their way back on to the political agenda.

Threat

But I have a message for the IRA. The same clear signal that came from the thousands who went to the Tottenham match on Sunday despite the threats.

The message to the IRA is simple.

Democracy cannot afford to let you win.

The IRA are increasingly desperate. They lost the political argument because no one would vote for them.

So they have resorted to the intimidation of defenceless people.

All political parties agree on words of condemnation. But action is more important.

Last week, Parliament voted to renew the Prevention of Terrorism Act which gives the Home Secretary power to expel from Britain people who are a threat to the public.

This act allowed me to expel Kevin O'Donnell, the man arrested with Kalashnikov rifles in the boot of his car. He was tried for possession of firearms but acquitted.

Despite this, I knew O'Donnell was a threat to the public and expelled him from Britain.

Three weeks ago he was shot dead by security forces during an IRA raid on a police station in Northern Ireland.

I have used the Act to keep 90 suspected terrorists out of our country.

But one of the greatest weapons we have is the vigilance of the public.

On Sunday, the man who spotted the bomb at White Hart Lane station alerted the police and the bomb was defused.

The mentality of the IRA bombers doesn't differ much from Hitler's bombers. They aimed to kill civilians but failed in their mission of murder.

The Nazis and the IRA totally failed to understand the British people.

We will never be intimidated into changing our policies through violence and terrorism.

In our society, decisions about change are made by millions of people using their right to vote, not by a handful of fanatics using bombs.

List of articles on Bishop Casey's dénouement.

Daily Mirror

Friday 8 May 1992:

p5: **BISHOP QUILTS IN 'LOVE CHILD' SCANDAL**; by John Hicks.

Saturday 9 May 1992:

p7: **MY HEAVEN AND HELL WITH THE BISHOP**; from Stewart Dickson in New York and John Hicks in Dublin.

Monday 11 May 1992:

p2: **Sins of the fathers**; editorial,

p7: **BISHOP No2 IN SECRET LOVE AFFAIR SHOCKER**; by Jan Disley.

Wednesday 13 May 1992:

p9: **Learning to love all God's children**; Anne Robinson,

p15: **I'M SO PROUD SAYS BISHOP'S LOVE CHILD**; by Stephen White.

Thursday 14 May 1992:

p17: **CONFESS...OR WE'LL RAT ON OUR LOVER PRIESTS**; by Stephen White.

Friday 15 May 1992:

p 5: **Priests in blackout.**

Saturday 16 May 1992:

Letters p11: **Bishop's cruel move**; F. Matthews, P. Clarke.

Monday 18 May 1992:

p13: **Bishop's sin - the movie!**

Wednesday 20 May 1992:

p5: **'Priest's lover in abortion'**,

p13: **LAST LINE**; Anne Robinson.

Daily Telegraph

Friday May 8 1992:

News p4: **Irish bishop quits over payments to mother of boy**; by Chris Ryder in Dublin and Ben Fenton,

News, p4: **Champion of homeless out in the cold**; Chris Ryder.

Saturday 9 May 1992:

Front Page and p2: **Woman tells of passionate affair with bishop that produced a child**; by Charles Laurence in Ridgefield, Connecticut.

Monday 11 May 1992:

News p3: **Church distances itself from Casey**; by Robert Bedlow.

Tuesday 12 May 1992:

Front Page, In Brief: **Bishop admits to being a father**,

News p3: **'Secret film' of Casey kissing in hotel lobby**; by Charles Laurence in New York,

News, p3: **He's my son, admits love affair bishop**,

p16: **'There never was a better time to go to confession'**; Stan Gebler Davis.

Wednesday 13 May 1992:

News p3: **'I still have love for the bishop'** by Charles Laurence in New York and Robert Shrimmsley,

p23: **Dr Carey or Dr Casey?**; Auberon Waugh.

Friday 15 May 1992:

Letters p20: **Cardinal sins**; Lt-Col Anthony Messenger,

You and Your Family supplement p4: **'It was not God's will that I remain celibate'**; Richard Lloyd Parry.

The Guardian

Friday 8 May 1992:

Front Page: **Bishop quits over woman**; Joe Joyce in Dublin,

Features p21: **The bishop's bombshell. Joe Joyce reports from Dublin on the shock waves following Eamonn Casey's resignation.**

Saturday 9 May 1992:

Front Page: **Bishop's mistress tells of their magical affair**; Joe Joyce in Dublin,

Home News p8: **Church takes father's sins in its stride**; David Sharrock.

Monday 11 May 1992:

Foreign News, p6: **Irish cardinal says bishop scandal causing 'great pain to all of us'**; Joe Joyce in Dublin.

Tuesday 12 May 1992:

Back Page: **Bishop says son is his**; Joe Joyce in Dublin.

Wednesday 13 May 1992:

Foreign News p8: **Church hopes admission by bishop will end controversy**; Joe Joyce in Dublin,

Letters p18: **Celibacy and the church**; Lorraine M. Harding, Adrian Randall,
Comment and Analysis p19: **The shaky pillars of church and state**; Joe Joyce.

Friday 15 May 1992:

Letters p18: **One law for the priesthood**; name and address supplied, Fr. John Abberton,
Comment and Analysis p19: **Diary**; Andrew Moncur.

Saturday 23 May 1992:

Home News p9: **Rebel priest aids mothers**; Owen Bowcott in Belfast,
Outlook section p24: **Smallweed**,
Letters p26: **Church and state across the Irish Sea**; C. Conboy, Dr. Andrew Pinsett, Glyn Ford (MEP).

Monday 25 May 1992:

Foreign News p6: **Irish trust in Church falls**; Joe Joyce in Dublin.

Wednesday 27 May 1992:

Features p34: **Infected by civilisation**; Hugh Herbert.

Saturday 30 May 1992:

Weekend supplement pp10-12: **Sex and the single Gael**; Linda Grant.

The Sun

Friday 8 May 1992:

p18: **BISHOP QUILTS IN LOVE KID RIDDLE**; by Paddy Clancy.

Saturday 9 May 1992:

p7: **MY MAGICAL LOVE FOR THE BISHOP**; by Paddy Clancy and Wayne Francis.

Monday 11 May 1992:

p6: Franklin cartoon.

Tuesday 12 May 1992:

p11: **DRINK HELL OF BISHOP LOVEKID MOTHER.**

Wednesday 13 May 1992:

Front Page and p3: **The Pope demands probe on love son bishop**; by David Wooding,

p3: **Bless you, Dad**; by Paddy Clancy,

Woman supplement p4: Nina Myskow.

Thursday 14 May 1992:

p2: **Randy Bishop in £228,000 war over will**; by David Wooding,

p6: Johnston cartoon.

Friday 15 May 1992:

p7: **WEAR A CONDOM JUST IN CASEY**; by David Wooding.

Saturday 16 May 1992:

p4: **DEATH THREAT CALLS SHAKE EX-MISTRESS**; by Sun Reporter,

pp4-5: **I TAUGHT VIRGIN BISHOP HOW TO LOVE**; from Andrew Parker in New York,

p5: **SHUNNED SON WAS SO UPSET,**

p9: **LET PRIESTS BE FATHERS**; Judge Pickles.

Monday 18 May 1992:

p6: **WHY WE MUST LET PRIESTS MARRY**; by Dr. Denys Turner.

Saturday 23 May 1992:

p9: Judge Pickles.

Saturday 30 May 1992:

p7: **Our priests seduced us say women.**

Sins of the fathers

MIRROR COMMENT

OOOH, AAAH, what a carry on! If only Frankie Howard, Kenneth Williams and Sid James could have lived to see it.

The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland - and, perhaps, not only Ireland - has produced a script more daring, more outrageous and a good deal more farcical than anything the writers of the revived Carry On films could dream up.

Exposed

Not just one, or two, but **THREE** bishops are said to have laid hands on members of their flocks in a manner which goes beyond the spiritual.

Scores of priests are fathers in more than the religious sense.

It's a Carry On Up The Font, Carry On In The Presbytery, and Carry On Confessing as every nook and cranny of the church is exposed. But although it's a scream it isn't all funny.

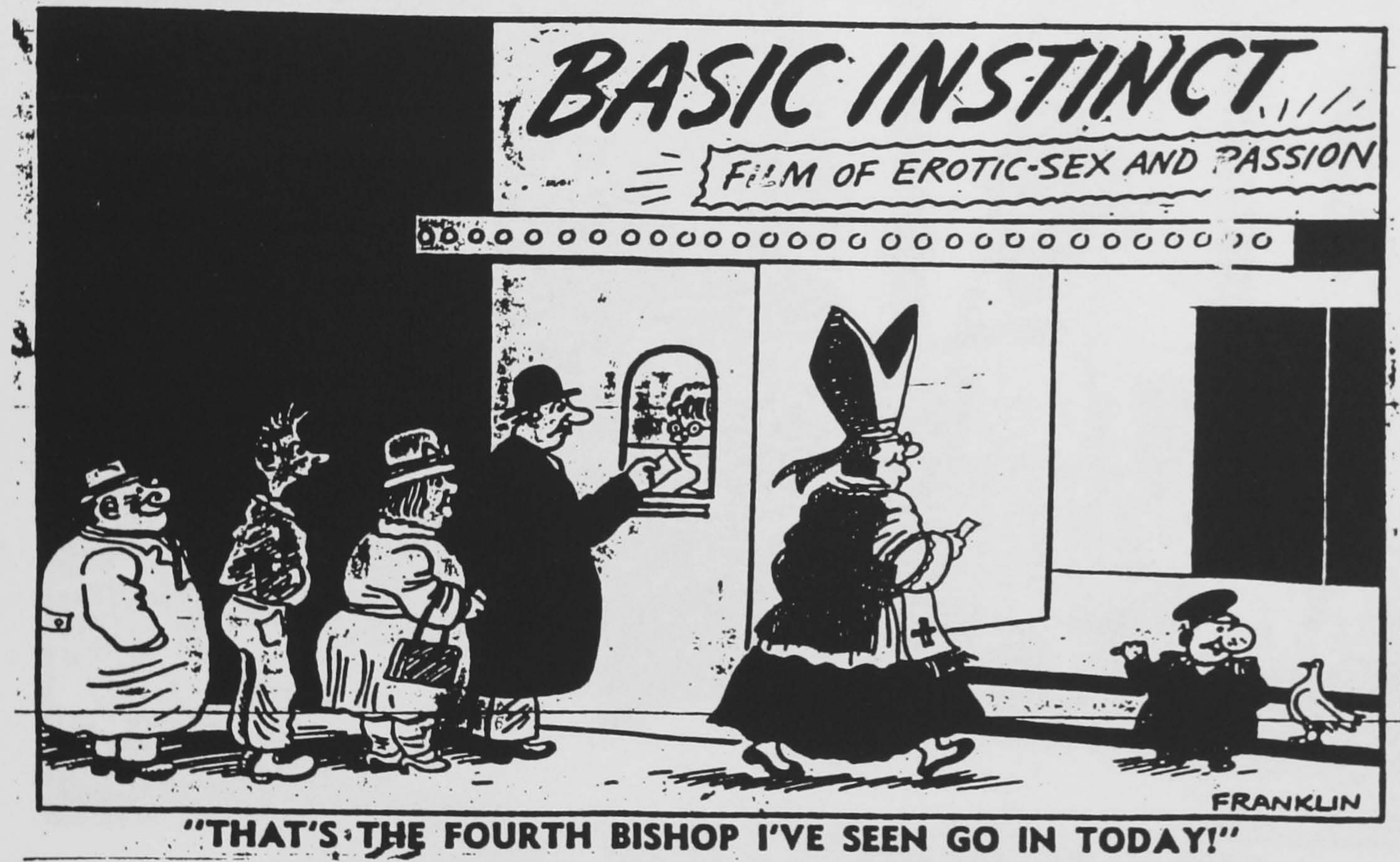
The serious side is the way the Roman Catholic Church regards and treats women.

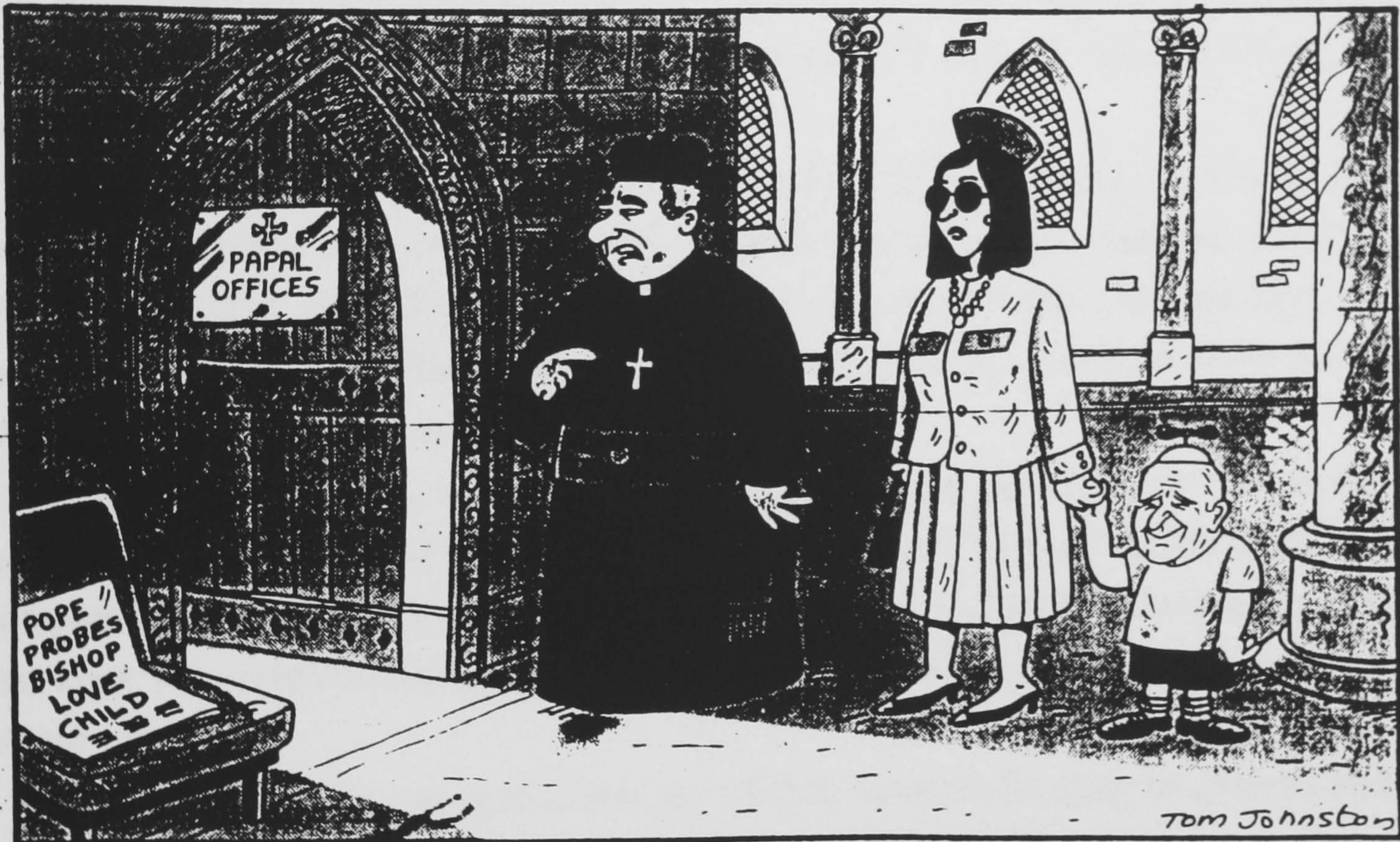
It denies them the right to abortion and contraception and millions of devout Catholic women who practise birth control and might consider abortion are made to feel guilty. More guilty, perhaps, than the priests.

But as the comedian Dave Allen said to the Pope: If you donta playa da gama, donta maka da rules.

Example 3 Cartoons referring to Eamonn Casey

1. The Sun, 11-05-92, p6





"YOUR HOLINESS!... THERE'S A WOMAN HERE 'TO SEE YOU!'"

Example 4

The Guardian, 20 May 1992, FEATURES PAGE 21

Blind faith and sins of the fathers

The Irish Catholic Church is a powerful state within a state but has it been brought to its knees by the shock waves of scandal? *Peter Lennon investigates.*

WHEN the news came over the radio that the Bishop of Galway and Kilmacduagh, Apostolic Administrator of Kilfenora, had fathered a child by an American woman, a man stopped his car on an Irish motorway and burst into tears. "What will I tell my son now?" he wailed. On a radio talk-in a woman demanded crossly: "How can I explain this to my mother?"

First there was bewilderment. Then as the days unchastely unveiled stories of love nests on the Kerry coast and kissing in the back seat of a car, while the chauffeur (Monsignor John O'Keeffe) kept his eyes off the rear mirror, the airways and roadways, tea shops and church yards, the very ether of sunny windy Southern Ireland was vibrant with distress calls.

The priests, as is their wont, were on hand to minister on air and in the press: a tactful presence, restrained as always in the early excesses of grief; an understanding companion holding out hope of healing and forgiveness. For long hallucinatory hours last week you were convinced that it was the laity who had done something awful and not the clergy.

What the clergy were engaged in was one of their most challenging missionary tasks in its history: reconverting, in a hurry, the Irish population back to its normal state of sacerdotal gullibility. Those soft, canonical brogues, which so often carry a hint of hysteria and repressed violence, were reasserting the power of a state within a state: the Irish Catholic, Apostolic, ironclad, reactionary Church.

It is a body accountable to nobody in Ireland, in practice also immune from civil law, as we saw last week when laymen and churchmen tacitly agreed to make light of the bishop's "borrowing" IR£ 70,000 from church funds. (The bishop had "made amends", was the general judgement, although Eamonn Casey, in fact, had not returned any money; it was returned for him by anonymous "friends".)

The Irish Catholic Church was finally being brought down, was the judgement of outsiders as the Church reeled before this uncontrollable cacophony of outrage and distress. But a closer scrutiny of what went on demonstrated that - failing the intervention of as yet unidentified outside elements - the Church will neither be immediately brought down nor substantially lose its moral authority over this affair.

However, Annie Murphy has produced a Peter over which the Irish hierarchy stumbles badly and which inevitably will be one of the rocks which will destroy the power of the Church in Ireland. But it could be some time - a decade perhaps.

For the hierarchy the Casey affair is a matter not of substance but of volume. Despite the public babble of astonishment, the Irish have long lived in tolerant knowledge of their whiskey priests, and the furtive erotic collisions of lusty countrymen in reversed collars with girls in search of super solace were normally a matter of pity and tact. Since this was a vintage catastrophe, the Irish, who like to give good value, were suitably loquacious about it. In fact it was no huge step to accept the misdemeanours of a bishop, particularly one already known for reckless ways with the bottle and motor car. It was the sound being turned up for the neighbours to hear, to a degree that no pretence could be maintained, which was the problem.

THE IRISH Catholic Church has two powerful foundations: the practical one of being socially and politically an autonomous structure and the more significant one of being woven into the heart and psyche of the people. No one in Southern Ireland, no matter how apparently complete his or her personal rupture with the Church, is unaffected by Catholic thinking. An Irish Times columnist, John Waters, aged 36, told me that it is common to find the new generation of radical lay critics of the Church using the Church's own vocabulary in attacking it: they use terms such as "sin". A non-practising Catholic, he would never, he said, describe himself as "non-Catholic".

Sprinkled with obedience at birth, saturated to the roots of their imagination all their young learning life (from the birth of the Republic the State readily relinquished education to the Church), in moments of crisis the critics are essentially thinking within an Irish Catholic framework. In the end most accept with varying degrees of restlessness and rebellion the most grotesque relationships and most pitiless edicts of the hierarchy. The vast majority accept having their lives policed by people, often of low intelligence, wilfully rejecting normal relationships for themselves but imposing their bizarre and furtive understanding of sexual matters on others. (It must be said that the priest himself is also a victim of this conditioning.)

This relationship between priest and people was one which originated in Penal times when the priest hid in the ditches with the peasants and brought them outlawed education. So the priest in Ireland is not just a reticent pastor: he is your brother and father; your, often amusing, uncle; your family doctor on mental problems; your sometimes drinking and always sporting companion, particularly for games such as hurling, so long wedded to bigoted nationalism.

To betray the priest, to abandon him to dispassionate outside judgement is as great a trauma as betraying one of your own family; indeed, more difficult, since there is also a subtle distance in the intimacy which protects the priest from an accumulation of those

luscious fermenting family detestations which often lead households to the most exuberant kind of internecine betrayals.

The nature of this relationship means that it is the lay victims who will, for the moment, prevent disintegration. Women, who so elaborately suffer from the Church's edicts, were last week often the most uncharitable about Annie Murphy; the most forgiving of the bishop's lapse. If the outsider is misled into overestimating the seriousness of Irish outrage in these matters, the Irish themselves have been overestimating for decades the intellectual and sexual freedom they have achieved. At one point in the sixties, Ireland was taken by the wave of anti-authoritarian, liberal thinking that swamped the Western world. The Irish learned to talk openly about condoms instead of sniggering about "French letters"; young people asserted their freedom of conscience and right to express their sexuality without guilt.

The chief result of this was that it reduced the incidence of knee-wobbling in lanes; young people could have sex in comfort. (It is quite untrue that the Irish were inveterate virgins; they were spectacularly dissolute in damp erotic discomfort; experts in "safe" sex.) The social stigma on a woman having sex before marriage has largely gone. A women's movement, concerned with better pay and better provision for deserted wives, developed from 1969, at first representing no threat to Catholic values.

A whole new generation of sexually at ease young people appeared to have arrived. But when these young people settled into marriage, traditionally early, they immediately reverted to the old ways and ensured that their children were sent through the process of Catholic education, even the most radical hedging their bets "for the child's sake". The children were sent to Mass and expected then to go to confession. Contraception clinics were opened in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway, although 63 per cent of the population was still opposed to the sale of contraceptives. The Church, bending a little before the liberal forces, assumed a position described by Professor J H Whyte in *Church And State In Modern Ireland* as "disclaiming any suggestion that the State was obliged to defend by legislation the moral teaching of the Catholic Church".

Then, in 1972, Ireland appeared to take another leap into the 20th century when, following a referendum, Article 44 of the constitution was repealed: Ireland no longer recognised the "special position" of the Catholic Church.

The stated purpose was to reassure the Protestants of Northern Ireland. The Unionists were not fooled; they totally discounted the importance of this step. They were right. In the following decade a series of referenda established that the country was solid behind the Church's rejection of not only abortion and contraception but also divorce. True, in the latter case the Church could not rely simply on reminders of the inviolability of the sacrament of marriage; it had to adulterate its spiritual message with a whisper across the country that if divorce came in the women would run off with half of the farms of Ireland.

Both the Primate of Ireland, Cahal Daly, and Bishop Casey are known outside Ireland as liberal clerics. Daly for his outspoken stand against the para-military, IRA or Loyalist; Casey, former chairman of Shelter in Britain, for his undisputed splendid work for the homeless in Britain and the poor of his diocese in Connaught. Eamonn Casey also took a sensational public stand against American policy in El Salvador when he refused to meet President Reagan on a visit to Ireland.

This apparent liberality makes them all the more effective. Undoubtedly sincere as these stands are, both Daly and Casey are inflexible theological conservatives. (Indeed one priest in Ireland publicly made the point in Casey's favour that at least he did not consider using contraceptives.)

By the 1990s the Irish Church had built a dam against some very turbulent waters. The fall in vocations and incidence of priests abandoning their vows reached critical proportions. The distress of these ex-priests became increasingly public as counselling centres were set up. But up until last week there was no such service for the women who often form the other half of these tragic relationships.

At one point last week when the full tragedy of a liberal bishop disgraced by a sexual indiscretion became known, it seemed impossible that the hierarchy could duck a debate on the issue of celibacy. Indeed the president of the Conference of Priests declared on radio: "There is a lot of debate already among priests themselves. A debate must be good because if we have values we believe the Church must not be afraid to come out and defend those values."

He must have missed the reaction of the Primate of Ireland a few hours before to a journalist who suggested that "the Church was having a particular problem at the moment with priests who are having difficulty in remaining celibate". "It is grossly irresponsible to create absolutely unsubstantiated rumours of that kind," fumed his Eminence. (Cognoscenti got the impression that the Primate was actually responding to rumours that there was another bishop, as yet unmasked, in the same plight.)

The spokesman for the Irish hierarchy in Dublin made a fine Jesuitical distinction when I put the issue to him. "Regardless of celibacy or not," he said, "the woman was divorced, that is married, and she wasn't free really to do what they did. Celibacy is not an issue in this particular case."

BUT despite Cardinal Daly, ecclesiastical celibacy and its associated painful dilemmas became a hot issue the next day. Fr. Pat Buckley, a priest who had been relieved of his functions because of his stand on celibacy and now practises independently in Northern Ireland - "The nearest thing you'll get to a freelance priest in Ireland," he remarked - took up the challenge. He offered to help set up a counselling group for Irish women who have had relationships with priests. When I rang him that night he said he had already had contact from seven women. "All seven have had

relationships with ordinary priests,” he said, “ and two have had children by priests. One of the ladies from Cork wanted to set up such a group and asked five priests in Cork to assist her, but they all refused.

“ The cardinal yesterday foolishly said that it was all only rumour-mongering and that annoyed one of the ladies. There are women who have been involved for up to 20 years with priests and then been dumped.”

Fr. Buckley, 42, once worked in the notorious Divis flats in Belfast and now performs the marriage ceremony for ex-priests (the Church refuses to perform such ceremonies.) “ They won't let anyone out of the priesthood now unless the priest gets a certificate saying he is insane or a pervert.”

How does Fr. Buckley escape pressure from the Church? “ I've had my problems but I am protected by a million Protestants who are watching up here; the good old Protestant ethos of the North. So for PR reasons they are not doing too much to me. I was offered a parish in America but refused.”

How will it all end? John Waters of the Irish Times made a comparison with the endless scandals which beset the Charles Haughey regime and finally brought him down: “ There were all those things which really stretched the credulity and tolerance of the people and yet Haughey went on for another decade. But he was finally brought down by the same events.” Haughey, Waters claims, survived because he created a scapegoat in Sean Doherty, the minister involved in a phone-tapping affair which finally also brought down Haughey. Waters believes the same thing will happen with the Church, Bishop Casey being, for the moment, the convenient scapegoat. “ The church will bandage up the wounds and go on,” he said. There is no one else to bandage the wounds. From its inception the Republic explicitly handed over the moral leadership of the country to the clergy. Thirteen years ago Professor Liam Ryan defined the Church role as “ the conscience of society”. Now there is not a single political leader that one could imagine capable of taking a lead or any kind of moral initiative in this crisis.

If you looked in rural areas last week you could see the process of “ bandaging” - recuperation - well under way, a proof that whatever liberality there is in Ireland is confined to the urban areas. The classical image of the laity and churchmen working in tandem was evident.

FOR the Western People, serving Bishop Casey's diocese, the lead story of the week was “ Archbishop dedicates Knock apparition chapel”, with a picture of a happy Archbishop of Tuam. Inside, a five-paragraph leader grappled with the Casey affair, emphasising that the clergy's “ goodness outweighs their frailties” and reminding, if not actually warning, readers that the Almighty was “ the only one to judge”. A columnist relegated the affair to his third item, pointing out that Bishop Casey's really grievous sin was to entertain the Pope so well on his visit to Ireland that he came late to the Knock shrine and “ deprived many thousands of expectant pilgrims of the opportunity of

seeing him close up”. So with solemnity and flippancy the faithful were directed to let the matter drop.

The safety valve for pent-up feelings was provided by local radio, in a programme, Faith Alive, fronted by priests. “ There was great support for Bishop Casey,” presenter Fr. Brendan Hoban told me. “ The older men and women blamed the woman. And it came through strongly that he didn't get any money out of it. It wasn't for his own personal gain.” But it was to solve his personal problem ? “ Well, I suppose so.”

Did Fr. Hoban actually discuss the issues with the listeners? “ No, we allow people to make statements. Or we would reply on a point of information.” Such as what? “ Is it a sin to do this, or wrong to do that. That sort of thing.”

Shortly after, a lusty voice spoke up in support of Bishop Casey. The secretary of Galway Gaelic Athletic Association Hurling Board, Phelim Murphy. “We made the statement because the Bishop was getting a lot of flak and we are thanking him for the support he gave to Galway,” he said.

Support? “He was a great hurling supporter and was always at our functions in victory or defeat.”

Would the fact that the Bishop had “borrowed” from the parish funds not make them hesitate? “Oh, we wouldn't get involved in that aspect of it. He was always at our functions, win or lose, victory or defeat.”

Example 5

Daily Telegraph, 12-05-1992, p16: Stan Gebler Davies

‘ There never was a better time to go to confession ’

**The Irish are taking a characteristically
irreverant view of Dr Casey’s dalliance with
Annie Murphy, says STAN GEBLER DAVIES
- and they’re quite right to do so**

WELL, was she the sort of broad who would make a bishop kick a hole in a stained glass window? Apparently yes, although by her own admission they were an unlikely couple, she a mousy creature crediting herself only with a sense of humour, he, in public at least, a stern moralist and no oil painting himself. The Irish people, I fear, are naotably volatile and tend to judge great questions of state and morality entirely in terms of personality and appearance. No doubt this is very wicked of them, but it is a fact.

“At least he observed one law of the Church,” the wits were saying over the weekend. “He didn’t use a condom.”

It is our practice here not to unfrock priests who have been caught with their sacerdotal garb in disarray, but merely to exile them to Chile, say, or Peru or Zambia. Ample opportunity is provided there for repentance, consultation with one’s conscience and the rediscovery of vocation. The guilty priest’s doxy, or, if you prefer, unfortunate victim, is meanwhile provided with a competence from a fund set up for the purpose and told to shut up about it on paun of being cut off without a penny.

This we have on the authority of Father Pat Buckley, an Antrim priest who has previoully incurred the diapleasure of Cardinal Daly and once inhabited a priest’s house that had been passed on from father to son for the space of 200 years. Father Pat claims to be acquainted with another Irish bishop who commits indiscretions with a lady. Very sensibly, however, that bishop insists on contraception. But the priest’s housekeeper has been traditionally, at least in legend, a source of solace. I hear of one housekeeper in the bishop’s diocese whose child is known as cailin beag an tSagart - “the priest’s little”.

Numerous priests get caught, or own up, get out and marry. There is consequently a severe shortage of clergy. The churches, however, are still packed and were so this weekend, possibly out of prurient interest in what the priests would have to say. Those who mentioned the affair at all seem to have confined themselves to expressions of sympathy for the bishop and requests for prayers for him.

“There never was a better tie to go to confession,” said my friend. “You could get a load off your chest this week.” As well as ecclesiastical guilt, there is a faint ring of hypocrisy to all this. Denunciations of sin are still not uncommon (by sin is meant fornication) and I know of a priest here who has reduced eight-year-old children to tears. (This fellow cannot get himself a house keeper, by the way, and wonders why).

No expressions of sympathy were forthcoming for Annie Murphy, although I suspect she will become a heroine to the women of Ireland, who are getting uppity and turned the tables on the menfolk 18 months ago by electing a woman President. Irish women are generally dubious about celibacy, knowing men too well to believe that vows make all that much difference to their subsequent behaviour. Nor do they relish their reputation for chastity, which is much exaggerated. It is in any case a relatively modern invention. Edmund Spenser (1552-99), who spent a great deal of time in this country, noted the propensity of Irish women to wrap themselves in cloaks rather than clothe themselves decently, like Englishwomen. What is wrapped can as easily be unwrapped.

It is a fact of some interest that our bishoprics and abbacies were largely hereditary until the Normans arrived here. Divorce was common among the Celtic upper classes who were principally interested in cattle. I suspect that this wild instinct is the true Irish instinct and was absorbed by the Normans and those who came after them. Not, unfortunately by the priests, or the politicians who speak for them.

HERE is Bishop Casey himself, only two years ago on the subject of celibacy. He believed that the solution to the problem lay in prayer. “Vocations to the religious life, and the priesthood, depend on a specific call from God. and Our Lord made that clear when he asked us to pray for them.” Marriage for priests was out. “I don’t think that is acceptable at this moment in time, in view of the way the Church has seen the whole role of the priesthood and celibacy.” This pronouncement came shortly before the handover of \$115,000 to Miss Murphy.

Under the circumstance, I fear that the Church’s authority on what it calls moral matters is now entirely evaporated. For this we have to thank Bishop Casey, but the Church should have seen him coming. He drove a Lancia, left his diocese littered with broken BMWs and was required to tearfully plead guilty to a charge of drunken driving. In his defence now, it can be said that 17 years ago it was quite difficult to get hold of condoms in Ireland - but surely a bishop could have managed it? I know I did.

Other mysteries surround him. He was bishop of Kerry (he is a Kerryman) When he had his fling, but was translated to the Diocese of Galway two years later. Ecclesiastical commentators find this fishy, for Galway was no promotion. Did Pope Paul want to get him out of harms way? Were tongues wagging in Kerry? And where did that quarter of a million dollars come from? Was it a legacy, or a gift, or did the Vatican think it cheap at the price? The consensus of opinion is that there is scope here for an Irish Thornbirds saga. Miss Murphy, apparently, has nearly finished her own book. It is only a matter of speculation whom they will cast as herself and the bishop when they make the mini-series.

Usually the victims of our prurience are of the small or middling sort - a young girl who creeps out into the freezing snow to have an illegitimate child and freezes to death, or a schoolteacher fired for having a dalliance. The last great man (allegedly great, that is) to fall was Charles Stewart Parnell, almost exactly 100 years ago: but recently there was a tremendous furore when one of our ambassadors declared at a diplomatic entertainment that half the cabinet were adulterers. There was some threat of demoting him, but I expect he is safely in the clear now thanks to Eamonn Casey.

It was always the bishops who did the pulling down in the past. Now a bishop who has been pulled down. The nation os engrossed. Is this *schaden-freude*? Very well, it is *schadenfreude*.

Example 6

The Guardian, 30 May 1992, Weekend supplement, pp10-12.

INSIDE STORY

Sex and the single Gael

Ireland is Europe's only surviving theocracy. And, as the Bishop Casey fiasco proved, the strain is showing. Contraception is heavily controlled (but widely available), homosexuality is illegal (but David Norris is an openly-gay senator). As for abortion, a recent issue of the Guardian with a Marie Stopes advertisement was impounded. **Linda Grant** examines a nation's strange objections to desire.

IN 1983 Margaret Thatcher gave an interview to the Daily Mail in which she attributed the social and economic ills of the Eighties to the permissiveness of the Sixties. She could see a causal connection between 1) abortion and the pill and 2) teenage pregnancy, illegitimacy and dole scrounging single mothers. She wanted an England where the sexual revolution had never taken place, where abortion and homosexuality were still illegal, divorce difficult and expensive to obtain and contraception only available to married couples or bona fide engaged sweethearts. Does this impossible country exist? Could it be part of Europe? Could the video generation live there? There is such a country. It is Ireland. This a portrait of what we could have been.

It is Friday night on Leeson Street off St Stephen's Green, a favourite loitering place of Joyce's Stephen Daedalus. At midnight the Garda (the Irish police) have set up a prophylactic road block, a warning defence against drunk driving, paying lip-service to policing, for at midnight Leeson Street is still relatively deserted. But by 1.30 am taxis are double parked the length of the street on both sides. There goes Prime Minister Albert Reynolds's daughter, out clubbing. Dublin's raves are underground. Leeson Street is a row of Georgian terraces punctuated by the brass plates of the Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers; Dr E.A. Moore, Dental Surgeon; Sacred Heart Messenger; Apostleship of Prayer; the Jesuit Communication Centre; Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. In the basement of these establishments are a dozen or so clubs: Screwy Lui, Bang Bangs, Chaos, Monkey Business. At the weekend there are two sets of queues on Leeson Street: the Friday night queue to get into a disco and the Saturday morning queue for the morning-after pill at the Well Woman Clinic.

The clubs open when everything else is shut. There's no cover charge, but a bottle of supermarket wine - which is all the clubs are licensed to sell - costs pounds 24. Orange juice is pounds 2 a glass. Who comes to Leeson Street? Everyone, eventually. On the dance floor are scrubbed couples in matching jeans and T-shirts; 60-year-olds in

Crimplene slacks sedately boogying; the last chuck-outs from a function - the men in their dickie-bows, the wives in Oscar acceptance dresses, lavishly spangled. And predatory middle-aged men, probably married, dancing with reluctant partners the age of their daughters who won't meet their eye, trying on pick-up lines they learned at country dances: "Are you well?" a ruddy stranger in his fifties asked me. "And the family all well?"

By 3.30am some couples on the dance floor have their tongues down each other's throats and hands are slipping into erogenous zones. Have they come prepared? They'd better. Condom-vending machines are illegal in Ireland. If they'd thought of it, earlier in the day they could have paid a visit to the condom girl at the condom counter in the Virgin megastore across the Liffey from O'Connell Street. The condom counter is also illegal, but there's no secret made of it: on the second floor past the videos, at the back of the computer games section there's a big sign hanging from the ceiling along with Soul, Classical, Rock - CONDOM COUNTER. Spotty lads intent on Atari can casually swerve, as if they'd forgotten something and say, "Oh, aye, and while I'm here I'll take a packet of johnnies." Are they over 18? You can marry in Ireland at 16 but you can't get contraception until two years later.

The counter keeps intermittent hours, staffed by volunteers from the Irish Family Planning Association youth group, and was opened on Valentine's Day 1988. The Guards sent in plainclothes men to buy a packet of three and a year later a summons was served on the IFPA alleging that it had unlawfully sold a contraceptive on unlicensed premises. The band U2 paid the £500 fine. The IFPA argued that it was selling condoms as prophylactics rather than birth control, part of an Aids awareness campaign.

A year ago an organisation called the Children's Protection Society published a booklet called "Sixty-Seven Reasons Why Condoms Spread Aids", a tract of mazy Jesuitical logic which claimed that "the Aids virus can also utilise smaller invisible defects in a condom, because the virus is 25 times smaller than a spermatozoon". The only 100 per cent effective preventive measure is abstinence and self-control.

"Are you going to paint us as a bunch of shillelagh-toting, shamrock-waving sexual illiterates?" demanded Senator David Norris, Ireland's only openly gay elected politician in a country where homosexuality is still illegal. Certainly not. In Dublin last week, men had appeared wearing T-shirts saying, "Use a condom. Just in Casey."

The key to understanding Ireland's paradoxical sexual life is in the relationship between the public and the private, of things acknowledged but not spoken of. But this two-way mirror was shattered earlier this month with the revelations about the Bishop of Galway's relationship with a woman and his illegitimate child: "Everyone in the country knew this kind of thing was going on," says Colm Toibin, novelist and columnist for the Irish Sunday Independent. "But it was accepted as an 'isolated

tragedy' in each case, with no connections made. Now we have a public enactment of what has gone on privately. It's all over the place; there has been an extraordinary openness. My uncle, who has been decorated by the Pope and wanted the TV turned off during the case of the 14-year-old girl, said that it was the funniest thing he ever heard."

For a decade Ireland has staggered between crises of this kind, each time the Church losing a little authority. Toibin believes that the Bishop Casey incident will buy a little time. "We have their silence now for about a year," he says. The government seems to have seized the advantage. It has just announced that it would legalise homosexuality within the year. Ah, but what will be the age of consent? asks David Norris, who does not want Ireland brought into line with Britain. Here, gays can only have sex with each other if they are over 21. They can be arrested for kissing in public. So much for our liberal sophistication.

Norris, bearded and bullish, in a Trinity tie, is a worthy successor to Ireland's last great homosexual, Oscar Wilde: "Oliver Flannagan said there was no sex in Ireland until the BBC came. He's our ex-minister of defence. That made me feel very safe; Ireland can't be in any danger of imminent attack if they put him in charge of defending us."

IRELAND'S position on homosexuality is ambiguous. The first overt acknowledgment of its existence came during the the televised funeral of the actor Michael MacLiammoir when the President crossed the grave to shake hands with Hilton Edwards, MacLiammoir's lover, and said, "I'm sorry for your trouble, Hilton" which everyone knew was the traditional greeting to the widow.

Norris had three things going for him when he decided to come out, according to the novelist Colm Toibin: "First, he was a Protestant, second he was a professor at Trinity and a Joyce scholar, and third he's an orphan with no family to offend." In 1974, Norris decided to take Ireland to court on the grounds that its ban on homosexuality infringed his civil liberties. In 1980, the case reached the High Court where the judge ultimately accepted the evidence, but said that because of the Christian nature of the Irish state he had to find against Norris.

Mary Robinson, a feminist lawyer and now President of Ireland, took the case to Strasbourg and won. The Irish government has still not acted to reverse the law, arguing that since it never enforces it, it might as well stay on the books. Meanwhile, a gay culture has flourished in Dublin. Gays initiated the urban renewal project in Temple Bar, now the hippest part of the city, when a club was opened there in the Seventies which got record pressings straight from American record companies through contacts on the airlines.

Suddenly Dublin had releases before Studio 54 in New York and its one gay venue was hot with a mardi gras atmosphere while straight Ireland still had to make do with

the ballrooms of romance, where the men edged nervously round the entrance to the urinals and the ladies hung about their handbags.

The students at Trinity and University College, the gays, and the inhabitants of a country which an Irish Times columnist calls Dublin 4 - the politicians, the civil rights lawyers, the activists, the writers - are they constrained by Ireland's laws? Only to an extent. Information about where to get an abortion is illegal. The page in Cosmopolitan of small ads for pregnancy advisory services is blanked out. And last week the Guardian was banned in Ireland because it carried a full-page advertisement from Marie Stopes for its abortion clinic. But there is a single graffito on the walls of the ladies' toilet at Doheny and Nesbitt's, a pub popular with journalists, television producers, politicians and economists. It says ABORTION, followed by a London phone number.

Can you buy condoms in chemists' shops in Dublin? At O'Sullivan's Pharmacy on Westmoreland Street, next door to Bewleys Cafe, a splendid lady with grey dressed hair, wearing a sort of Irish Tourist Board uniform of emerald jersey and a lump of polished green stone on a chain round her neck, presided behind a colourful collection of French letters. Was it true you could only buy condoms on prescription in Ireland? "Sure that was years past," she said. "The condoms are what we make our money on. Though we wouldn't be selling them to little fellers. I mean 12-year-olds who come in here saying gimme a packet of johnnies, because they can't reach up to get them." But then there is Croom in County Limerick where there are three chemists and none of them sells condoms. Or Cappamore where there is one chemist who opens when she likes and doesn't sell condoms either. Or the villages where condoms are kept in a drawer in a back room of the chemist's shop, and the pharmacist and the village postmistress who handles parcels from abroad, act as the moral police.

In 1984, Ireland discovered its own underworld, a secret country that underlay the sentimental vision of rural Eire for which Eammon De Valera had written the legal constitution. He saw it as a place of athletic young men playing Gaelic sports, uncontaminated by heathen soccer, tended by comely maidens, like commercials for Irish creamery butter. In the other Ireland lived 15-year-old Anne Lovett who was found dead in a grotto by the statue of the Virgin Mary near her home town of Granard, County Longford, her new-born baby beside her also dead, still attached by the umbilical cord.

The same year, in Kerry, Joanne Hayes was arrested for committing infanticide, charged with stabbing her new-born baby 22 times and throwing it off the cliffs at Sleah Head, Ireland's last landfall before the Atlantic reaches America. Joanne, who had been having an affair with a married man, had become pregnant by him three times in 22 months. Her defence was that she had indeed borne a child which had died immediately and she had buried it on the family farm.

During her trial she was consigned to a mental hospital in Limerick. In the same ward was a woman who had sat down on the toilet to relieve her pressured kidneys and had delivered herself of a baby which lay dead in the bowl, its head smashed on the porcelain.

Through the cases of Anne Lovett and Joanne Hayes, Ireland discovered that despite its laws, it had had a sexual revolution. "We live in a promiscuous society," said a detective who worked on Hayes's prosecution. "There have been umpteen cases of neighbours getting pregnant by their next-door neighbour. It is happening, has happened, and continues to happen." Rape, illegitimacy, child sex abuse, adultery happened in Ireland all right. It was just that no one talked about them. Every day or so there's a little story in the paper of a rape here and there. A 35-year-old man charged with raping a nine-year-old. A man who broke into the house of a woman with Alzheimer's disease and raped her. Last month six Donegal men were given suspended sentences after being tried for having "carnal knowledge" of a 13-year-old. The judge was lenient because although the girl had had a baby as a result of the rape, two of the men had volunteered to give her £1,000 each to bring up her child. A woman went on the radio to say that she had been sexually abused by her step-father since the age of six, had become pregnant as soon as she reached puberty and would have had an abortion if she'd heard of it.

This was more than some people could get to grips with, according to Olive Braden of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre: "People shouldn't be seeking help, they shouldn't be making a show of their families and if it's in the family then you deal with it quietly and don't go to a place like us where we go on radio and television and talk about disgusting practices and point fingers at members of society."

There's not much rape in Ireland, it's true. What there is, is child sex abuse. There's no sex education beyond blasted bottled fetuses, imprisoned in formaldehyde, carted about schools by SPUC and other anti-abortion groups. So the girls barely know what daddy or brother is doing and they go to the priest who says, yes it is a sin but not for you. Now go home and keep out of your father's way. "When I was growing up there were women who had had many, many children and seemed to be pregnant all the time," Olive Braden says. "And it was only afterwards that you discovered that the daughters had had babies by the father and the mothers took on the child."

Ireland's most famous rape victim is anonymous. She is 14 and she has paralysed the constitution and jeopardised the Maastricht treaty. She has traumatised a country that thought it had been through the wringer on the subject of abortion after the 1983 Amendment which enshrined in the constitution the unborn child's equal right to life with that of its mother.

The child grew up in Tallagh, Ireland's future - a dormitory new town on the outskirts of Dublin, a mushroom development of 100,000 people around a two-street

village. Tallagh swallowed up the country and the people that lived there and sent to be their neighbours the population of Dublin slum clearances. There were no buses, pubs, shops or cinemas. Recreation was joy-riding.

The girl was quite innocent but she had been menstruating since the age of 11 and her mother noticed that she had missed two periods. It came out that the girl had been sexually molested by the father of a friend and penetrated twice. She was pregnant. The girl's parents talked to the Guards, before they took their daughter to England for an abortion, who suggested they should get a sample of tissue for DNA testing to help in the prosecution case against the rapist. When the DPP ordered her back to Ireland to prevent her from terminating the pregnancy, rumours went round that there had been no rapist, that she was pregnant by a boyfriend, an Iraqi student. A television priest said that the case was a set-up, designed to challenge the constitution.

WHILE the girl's abuse went on, Tallagh was changing. In the middle, like a castle surrounded by its subjects, was built the Square, a mall on a hill with a multiplex cinema, McDonalds, a late-night, condom-selling chemist, all the English chain stores - everything you could want. Underneath the multiplex sign advertising Hook or Bugsy is another attraction, now showing, the family planning clinic which opened in January. You'd think it would be packed. Inside 31-year-old Dr Sheila Quirke is having a quiet afternoon. "We thought it would be an ideal location, but now we're not so sure. People are afraid that Mrs So-and-So will see them coming into the family planning centre. They're afraid Mrs So-and-So's little boy will ask, what's that place beside the pictures? What's family planning?"

Nonetheless, some women come in. They come with menopausal symptoms. "Nobody expects to have these massive Irish families any more, but there's a bit of an Irish solution to it - they don't allow their husbands to have sex with them. I say, 'you're still fertile, what's the story with contraception?' And they say, 'Oh no, I don't let him near me.' And you say, this isn't normal, this isn't right. There was a girl came in who was 30 or so, she came looking for the morning-after pill because she'd got carried away the night before and let her husband go all the way. I said, 'What do you do normally?' She said, 'We don't do anything.' What do the men do? I've no idea, probably running around getting the young ones pregnant.

"I'm sitting here talking to you and I've reasoned all these things out for myself and still I'm thinking, well maybe there is a point to the self-control. I come from a Catholic background, brought up in Dublin. My mum won't tell anyone I'm a family planning doctor. Bill, my fiance, told his mother I work in a women's clinic. The idea with the Catholic church is that it gives you a set of rules and you have to take all the rules or you're not part of it. You can't just take the bits that suit you. It's the shepherd and his sheep and the shepherd makes the decisions. Sex is a sin outside marriage. You don't

get to interpret. You're constantly six years old. I wouldn't have a problem about abortions being performed in Ireland but I couldn't see me doing them. If I'm not going to do them who will?"

Why are the Irish so hung up on sex when the French, the Italians and the Spanish, all Catholics, have managed to separate Church from State? The British never permitted in Ireland the non-conformist tradition which, from the 17th century, asserted the right of the individual to decide matters of his own conscience, the tradition that would in this century be instrumental in setting up family planning clinics and defeating the laws against homosexuality. Instead, the Irish proceeded by subterfuge and secrecy, saying one thing, doing another: "We have a history of the vast majority of Irish people being alienated from a legislative system designed to oppress them," says David Norris. "This is recorded in our literature, for example the way Somerville and Ross in *The Irish RM* showed the cleverness of the Irish in evading the English legal system and how idiotic that system is when it comes up against the Irish imaginative way of life."

There has just been another scandal in Ireland. Rory O'Hanlon, a high court judge, president of the law reform commission and member of Opus Dei, went on the record to say that Irish membership of the EC was not worth the price of legalising abortion. The fever that surrounds the debate on abortion, the national trauma that the case of the 14-year-old engendered, have become metaphors for Ireland's anxiety about its future and about its statehood. If it allows Euro-morality to prevail, will it not be abandoning its most cherished notions of independence?

Could Margaret Thatcher have put the clock back 30 years, forged a powerful alliance between Church and State and made Britain resemble Ireland? No, in the sense that our political, religious and cultural history is different. No, because Ireland has shown that countries cannot be isolated from global communications. And no, because the ideology of Thatcherism was to privatise choice. Much as she wished to institutionalise morality through limiting gay freedom or abortion rights, the mood of the country, a mood she created, was against her. The counter-reformation failed.

A third of the population of Ireland now has satellite and cable TV. "The sexual revolution has happened in Ireland despite the laws," says Dr Quirke. "We're not an island, we're part of Europe. I don't feel less sophisticated than anyone else. We're the same, we're just an awful lot quieter about it. We watch *Dallas* too, you know." G

Example 7

The Guardian, 06-03-92, Leader Page, p20.

Abortion: the reasons are a revolution

IT WAS very good news when Dublin's Supreme Court overturned a High Court decision forbidding a 14-year-old Irish rape victim from travelling to Britain for an abortion. Now that Chief Justice Thomas Finlay has given its reasons, something rather significant has taken place. Only an abortion, he said, could avoid the real and substantial risk to the life of the mother, who had threatened to kill herself. A balance had to be struck between the right to life of the mother and her unborn child. The Irish constitution, which bans abortion, had to be interpreted with "prudence, justice and charity".

These reasons may seem small beer to Britain, where abortion operations are now commonplace. By Dublin's standards, however, the court's reasoning seems momentous. Irish abortion law epitomises a society whose secular organisation is dominated by the rulings of the Catholic Church.

On abortion, that ruling is absolute. It is forbidden in any circumstances, even where the life of the mother is threatened by the birth, because nothing must be done to destroy the unborn child, whose claim on life ultimately takes precedence. The significance of yesterday's judgement is that this absolute dam has now been breached. Never mind that its the most limited category of breach possible, the life of the mother; never again will abortion be a totally black and white issue in Ireland.

It is tempting to conclude that the judgement represents an escape from the stranglehold of the Catholic Church over secular Irish life. Something a little more subtle, however, seems to have taken place. When the storm broke over this tragic, raped child and the cruelty of the constitutional response, the Church tipped the courts the wink that it would not publicly oppose the girl's abortion. Of course, it would not say so openly, in line with the outstanding characteristic of Irish life in which people are content with formal prohibitions as long as they can conveniently ignore them. But the case of the raped child exposed this mismatch between appearance and reality for the savage hypocrisy that it is; and created a true crisis. The power of the Church in Ireland is anyway somewhat exaggerated. It is often quite content to turn a blind eye so long as no-one embarrasses it by pointing this out. However, its formal position as moral policeman has been exploited over the years by political backwoodsmen to a powerful effect. Mary Robinson's stunning election as President was effected, at least in part, by a popular revulsion against the No vote in the abortion referendum, a reaction by an electorate which felt it had been duped by unscrupulous politicians into voting the wrong way. The Supreme Court judgement, which appears to obviate the need for

another referendum, starts at last to match reality to appearances. It marks an important step to maturity for Irish society.

Example 8

The Guardian, 22 May 1992, Leader Page, p24

Missing in a mist

WELCOME back, we hope, to those thousands of Guardian readers in the Irish Republic who failed to get their newspaper yesterday. What happened was simple, and regrettable. All copies of the Guardian produced in England contained a substantial advertisement for Marie Stopes Health Clinics, offering abortion counselling on a variety of English telephone numbers.

But when that paper arrived by air in Dublin for distribution in Ireland it was met by policemen and, as a result of conversations between them and the distributing company, all copies went to a warehouse rather than on to Irish news stands. Regrettable is the word.

A few words of background may be offered. It is not unusual for the Guardian, or other British papers, to carry advertisements for the Marie Stopes Clinics. On the contrary, it is utterly routine. Week after week, over months and years, those advertisements have arrived in Ireland and been distributed without problem. Seemingly only the size of the advertisement involved made yesterday different. The Guardian was not involved in any orchestration of this incident with Marie Stopes Clinics. We merely received and processed their advertisement in the normal way.

In such matters, of course, we observe both British law and the guidelines for the industry laid down by the Advertising Standards Authority. We are, like many others at the moment, somewhat uncertain about the state of Irish law in these matters: and indeed uncertain about the precision of the advice that the Irish police may have offered on the airport tarmac on Wednesday night. But there was no imprecision about the result: no Guardians on sale in Ireland.

Two distinct platforms for comment exist here. One, the platform of a newspaper company going about its business and, according to all precedent, offering advertising space to legal clients presenting arguments and services (both for and against abortion, as it happens) is simple. Aggrieved - and counting the financial loss. The other platform is an editorial one, assessing what happened after it had happened. And there incredulity takes over. Irish law and Irish opinion is in rare ferment over abortion: the coming Maastricht referendum will probably sort it out.

That ferment arose because of the refusal of the Attorney-General to let a teenage girl who had been raped travel to Britain to seek an abortion. Two possible arguments arose before the highest court which overturned this ban. One (the one the judges chose) was the risk to the girl's own life raised by her predicament. The other (in an ever closer

European union from which Ireland enjoys huge benefits) was the bizarre impossibility of any restraint on the right of EC citizens to move between EC countries. And here's the issue for us. The Guardian is a British newspaper, operating under British law. The advertisement in question offered help in Britain. It's an impossible Europe that imposes random midnight airport bans in such circumstances. The deed reveals the absurdity. And if that absurdity is of any help to Irish people pondering constitutional change, then those thousands of copies may not have gone unread to their warehouse in vain.

Appendix 7: Programmes used in pilot study

The descriptions of the programmes are all from the Radio Times, and were used to identify programmes which might be of interest to the research. The cast lists provided below are partial, including only characters who are integral to the plot. No cast list was available for the episode of *Michael Winner's True Crimes*, except that provided by the Radio Times.

Programme 1: Circle of Deceit

ITV, 21:00, 16 October, 1993.

This is labelled as a 'Choice' in the Radio Times, which provides the following information:

Dennis Waterman hopes that the role he plays in this thriller and love story set in Belfast will break the mould in which he's almost always been cast.

His character is a maverick SAS operative forced out of retirement and sent on an undercover mission to Belfast two years after his wife and child were killed by a terrorist bomb in Germany. "Don't get me wrong, I've enjoyed everything that I've done," comments the star of The Sweeney, Minder, Stay Lucky and On The Up, "but this one's different. Neil is a loner, a man people don't take to. He's a million miles from your cockney charmer. It's a heavier, more serious role, and I like that."

John Neil, still haunted by his tragic past, is ordered back into action by his superiors. His mission is to infiltrate the IRA in Belfast, posing as Jackie O'Connell - an Irishman who has been recently killed in a car crash, having lived in London since boyhood.

The cast includes Derek Jacobi as an SAS chief and Peter Vaughan as an IRA leader. (original emphasis)

Cast

Character	Role	Actor
<i>John Neil</i> <i>(Jackie O'Connell)</i>	SAS operative/mole	Denis Waterman
<i>Randal</i>	Neil's primary handler	Derek Jacobi
<i>Liam McAuley</i>	IRA member	Peter Vaughan
<i>Eilish</i>	Liam's daughter	Clare Higgins
<i>Father Fergal</i>	O'Connell's brother, local parish priest	Ian McElhinney
<i>Graham</i>	Handler: briefs Neil on Belfast	Tony Doyle
<i>Dessie Gill</i>	IRA member	Colm Convey
<i>Colum McAuley</i>	Liam's son; IRA member	Gerrard Crossan
<i>Dermot McAuley</i>	Liam's son; IRA member	Andrew Connolly
<i>Michael</i>	Eilis' son; Liam's grandson	Sean O'Neill
<i>Julie Neil</i>	Neil's wife	Cindy O'Callaghan
<i>Tommy Neil</i>	Neil's son	Barnaby Meredith
<i>Clowns</i>	performing in circus when bombed; appear in Neil's flashbacks	Fizzie Lizzie, Rhubarb, Albert the Idiot

Screenplay: Wesley Burroughs (based on an original story by Jill Arlon)

Director: Geoffrey Sax

Producer: Andrew Benson

Programme 2: Michael Winner’s True Crimes

The Brighton Bomber

ITV, 20:10, 30 October, 1993

According to the Radio Times, this is the first episode in a new series of Michael Winner’s True Crimes. It also lists some of his interests:

Film director Michael Winner, who is also the founder and chairman of the Police Memorial Trust, returns with more stories where actors re-create the intricate work of bringing criminals to justice. It was October 1984 when the Grand Hotel in Brighton was bombed during the Tory party conference. The IRA claimed responsibility. In their investigations, the police painstakingly searched the debris, which led them to the bomber and also revealed a mainland bombing campaign.

Cast

Character	Role	Actor
<i>Det. Ch. Supt. Jack Reece</i>	Investigating police officer	Derek Newark
<i>Peter Sherry</i>	IRA member	John O’Toole
<i>Patrick Magee</i>	The Brighton bomber	Eamonn Geoghegan
Director:	Nigel Miller	
Series producer:	Jeremy Phillips	

Programme 3: The Magician

ITV, 21:30, 27 November, 1993

As with *Circle of Deceit*, *The Magician* is labelled by the Radio Times as a ‘Choice’:

In the early 1980s, while Scotland Yard masterminded the response to one of the IRA’s biggest mainland bombing campaigns, it was also engaged in a covert operation against an even greater threat to British society - the flow of the most perfect counterfeit currency ever produced. This feature-length drama, based on a true story, follows visiting American businessman David Katz and policeman George Byrne, who stumble on the trail of master forger the Magician. It is produced by the team who made *Fools’ Gold*, the dramatised story of the Brink’s-Mat robbery. (original emphases)

Cast

Character	Role	Actor
<i>David Katz</i>	American businessman who accidentally makes contact with the forgers	Jay Avacone
<i>George Byrne</i>	Leading officer in investigation.	Clive Owen
<i>The Magician</i>	Ostensibly the forger; runs the counterfeiting distribution network	Jeremy Kemp
<i>Herbie</i>	Member of distribution network	Peter Howitt
<i>Des Hibbert</i>	Owner of taxi business, member of distribution network who has direct contact with The Magician	Philip McGough
<i>Tony Palmer</i>	Taxi dirver through whom Katz makes initial contact with distribution network	Peter Jonfield
<i>Leonard Cox</i>	The master forger, assumed killed in an IRA bombing	Walter Sparrow
<i>IRA man</i>	IRA member seeking master forger	Seamus Newham
<i>Det. Ch. Supt. Gration</i>	George Byrne’s superior officer	John Turner

Screenplay: Jeff Pope and Terry Windsor

Director: Terry Windsor

Producer: Jeff Pope

Programme 4 and 5: Between The Lines

Episode 11: Big Boys' Rules, parts 1 and 2

BBC1, 21:30, 14 December, 1993

Listed as a 'Choice' by the Radio Times, the listing provides background information on the series, as well as setting the scene for the last two episodes:

A familiar if not particularly friendly face returns in this week's episode of the police drama, which has been getting excellent notices from the press. It's the first of a two-part story written by series creator J.C. Wilsher. It provides Complaints Investigation Bureau's Tony Clark with a chance to settle old scores with his former boss, Chief Superintendent John Deakin, who is now working with Special Branch. In the first episode of this series Deakin was acquitted by a jury of criminal charges brought against him by Clark. They are involved in the suspected execution by the IRA of a police informer, who it is said, was under pressure from Special Branch. The Home Office's Angela Berridge adds her own mystique and Harry Naylor, now CID not CIB, is also called on to lend a hand. The story, and the series, conclude next week. (original emphasis)

Cast

Character	Role	Actor
<i>Tony Clarke</i>	Head of special investigation unit	Neil Pearson
<i>Harry Naylor</i>	Ex-member of special investigation unit, currently in CID	Tom Georgeson
<i>Maureen Connell</i>	Member of special investigation unit	Siobhán Redmond
<i>John Deakin</i>	Ex-member of RUC Special Branch, involved on the fringes of criminal activity, occasional adviser to Tony Clarke	Tony Doyle
<i>Mrs. Berridge</i>	Tony Clarke's lover, senior officer in MI4	Francesca Annis
<i>Declan Harris</i>	Ex-informer on the IRA	Lalor Roddy
<i>Trevor Bull</i>	Friend to Declan Harris	Frank Harper

Screenplay: J.C. Wilsher

Director: Richard Standeven

Producer: Peter Norris

Programme 6: Hear My Song

Channel 4, 22:00, 21 October, 1993

This is listed in the Radio Times as a “Film on Four Premiere”:

Comedy drama starring **Ned Beatty** and **Adrian Dunbar**. Mickey O’Neill is the manager of a struggling Liverpool nightclub whose job is on the line because of falling attendances. To save his skin, he announces that the famous Irish tenor Josef Locke - who vanished 25 years earlier with the taxman on his tail - will be coming out of retirement for a show at the club. But is the stage set for an imposter? (original emphasis)

Cast

Character	Role	Actor
<i>Mickey O’Neill</i>	Protagonist: promoter at Hartley’s	Adrian Dunbar
<i>Nancy Doyle</i>	Romantic interest: Mickey’s fiancée	Tara Fitzgerald
<i>Derek</i>	Mickey’s henchman	John Dair
<i>Gordon</i>	Mickey’s henchman	Stephen Marcus
<i>Franc Sinatra</i>	Singer	Joe Cuddy
<i>Kitty Ryan</i>	member of the Ryan family, which owns Hartley’s	Britta Smith
<i>Grandma Ryan</i>	member of the Ryan family, which owns Hartley’s	Gladys Sheehan
<i>Brenda Ryan</i>	member of the Ryan family, which owns Hartley’s	Gina Moxley
<i>Cathleen Doyle</i>	Nancy’s mother, ex-lover of Josef Locke	Shirley Anne Field
<i>Mr X</i>	Josef Locke impersonator	William Hootkins
<i>Fintan O’Donnell</i>	Mickey’s childhood friend who helps him look for Josef Locke	James Nesbitt
<i>Josef Locke</i>	Notorious Irish tenor	Ned Beatty

<i>Jo's Boys</i>	Josef Locke's henchmen	Jimmy Keogh Liam O'Callaghan Paddy Cole Maurice Blake Tony Morando
<i>Mrs McGlincy</i>	Locke's housekeeper	Anna Manahan
<i>Benny Rose</i>	Conductor	Harold Berens
	The voice of Josef Locke	Vernon Midgley
	The voice of Mr X	Brian Hoey
Screenplay:	Adrian Dunbar and Peter Chelsom (based on an original story by Peter Chelsom)	
Director:	Peter Chelsom	
Producer:	Alison Owen	

Appendix 8: newspapers read by interviewees

Table A: Newspapers read regularly, by age range and gender

Newspaper title	Age Ranges														Total readers	
	20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		over 60		not stated					
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Financial Times													1		1	0
The Times	1		1						1				1		4	0
Daily Telegraph			1												1	0
The Guardian	2	1	2		1										5	1
Independent															0	0
Daily Express															0	0
Daily Mail				1											0	1
Today															0	0
Daily Mirror		1						3	1						4	1
The Sun		2						1							3	0
The Sport															0	0
Eve. Standard		2					1			1					0	4
Irish Times													1		1	0
Irish Indep.		1													0	1
Irish Press															0	0
Observer			2				1			1					3	1
Indep. on Sun.			1												1	0
Sun. Telegraph															0	0
Mail on Sunday															0	0
Sunday Express															0	0
Sunday Mirror								1							0	1
The People								1							0	1
Sun. Indep.			1												1	0
Sunday Press															0	0
Sunday World		1													0	1
Irish Post		1			1				2	1					3	2
Irish weeklies								1		1					0	2
Total	2	4	3	2	3	1	0	4	2	2	2	0			12	13

Table B: Irish papers read, by frequency and gender

Title	Regularly		Once/week		Occasionally	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<i>Irish Times</i>	1		1			
<i>Irish Indep.</i>		1			1	
<i>Irish Press</i>						1
<i>Irish weeklies</i>				2		
<i>Sunday Indep.</i>	1					
<i>Sunday World</i>		1				