

# **The Variety of Written Text**

Literary Mediations of the Northern Irish Troubles

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BA Thesis English Literature

Margu rite Corporaal

15-06-2018

ENGELSE TAAL EN CULTUUR

Teacher who will receive this document: Margu rite Corporaal

Title of document: The Variety of Written Text: Literary Mediations of the  
Northern Irish Troubles

Name of course: BA Thesis English Literature

Date of submission: 15-06-2018

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## **Abstract**

This thesis will analyse two texts concerning the Northern Irish Troubles, *Hidden Symptoms* by Deirdre Madden and “Naming the Names” by Anne Devlin, that have a similar context and background, and use similar themes throughout the story. Generally, conflicts are often represented as two contesting memory cultures. This research will demonstrate a greater complexity: a variety of perspectives within one of the sides of conflict, specifically the Northern Irish Troubles, and show how gender, trauma, memory, and narrative strategies operate in literary legacies.

*Keywords: Northern Irish Troubles, conflict, trauma, memory, perspective, gender, Deirdre Madden, Anne Devlin.*

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## Introduction

In Robert Merrihew Adams' article about how to confine conflict he states that he believes "that a society totally lacking in internal disagreement and conflict would be gravely at risk of insensitive and unwise neglect of some of the competing values – just as a human individual with no internal conflicts of feeling and impulse would be in danger of blindness to important values" (119). Conflict has been and always will be present in the world. Every conflict consists of at least two sides that oppose each other, and therefore divide societies across lines of ethnicity, religion, class and politics. Conflicts are usually described or seen as black and white but quite often it is not that simple.

The complexity of these conflicts often generates contesting and traumatic memories. A primary example of such a conflict are the Troubles. The Troubles can be seen as a "Memory crux" (2) as Oona Frawley describes it. According to her, memory cruxes "center around perceived traumatic historical spaces that pose questions and offer conflicting, oppositional, and sometimes intensely problematic answers about the way that a culture considers its past, and that are crucial in the shaping of social identities" (2). The Troubles are an interesting conflict to analyse when looking at memory and trauma because the conflict lies in the past but is still very much present in today's society, 20 years after the Good Friday Agreement. On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement the Ulster museum opened its new exhibit called *the Troubles and Beyond*. "The new gallery seeks to move beyond a conventional political narrative and the Good Friday Agreement itself, and includes a section on 'post conflict' Northern Ireland" as is stated in the article "Ulster Museum opens new Troubles gallery". This shows that the Troubles still play a large role in the Northern Irish society because post-conflict Northern Ireland is used in an effort to interpret the Troubles themselves. In the murals that can be found throughout Belfast a change becomes visible as time moves away from the Troubles. "In recent times the face of 'conflict art' in Northern Ireland has evolved and softened – evidence of healing communities and a firming peace process" (Poole and Thompson). Some of the murals, which can be found throughout Belfast, have been changed into more neutral images. However, these changes are not unchallenged. The old images that have been replaced are still visible as they are framed and placed next to the new, neutral images. According to Poole and Thompson this can be considered "a stubborn grip on old ideas and values, a reminder that sectarianism is not dead and that peace may not be forever". As Graham Dawson noticed, "for those bereaved, injured or otherwise

harmed by political violence in the Troubles, the conflicted past does not need to be ‘raked up’, as they live with its painful aftermath every day” (“Memory” 262), especially with Brexit ahead, and with that the possible reintroduction of a hard border, memories of the Troubles might become more relevant.

The Troubles is a term used for a period of violent conflict in Northern Ireland that occurred from 1968-1998. The basis of this conflict was territorial, between the unionists, who wanted to remain part of the United Kingdom, and the nationalists, who wanted to undo the partitioning of Ireland through the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1921, and become part of the Republic of Ireland. The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1921 “established a partitioned 26-county Irish Free State” (Hennessey 21). However, articles were included in this agreement that “allowed Northern Ireland to contract out of the Free State and resume its status as an integral part of the United Kingdom” (Hennessey 21) and thereby created a partitioned Ireland. However, since the unionists were predominantly Protestant and the nationalists were predominantly Catholic, religion ended up becoming a factor in this conflict as well. As McGratten states: “The ethno-national narrative is a superficially persuasive and easily comprehensible rendering of the ‘Irish question’. Fundamentally, it reiterates the story of Protestants vs. Catholics; unionists vs. nationalists; British vs. Irish” (10). It was a conflict in which people’s background and culture were important and a lot of literature has been written during, after, and about this conflict, ranging from short stories and novels to academic research.

This thesis will look at two texts that were written during the Troubles: *Hidden Symptoms* by Deirdre Madden and the short story “Naming the Names” by Anne Devlin, which were both published in 1986. Both of these texts have a similar background and context. They are both written from the Catholic perspective during the Troubles in Belfast. However, they have a drastically different approach to the Troubles, which problematizes the idea that within a conflict only two conflicting perspectives exist, which is why these two texts were chosen for this thesis. Due to their similarity in background and context the analysis can truly focus on the written texts themselves to discover how the differences were created and because they represent the same side within the conflict they form a representative corpus for this thesis. The question this thesis will focus on is: how are similar themes used *Hidden Symptoms* by Deirdre Madden and “Naming the Names” by Anne Devlin to evoke contesting memories on the basis of a similar context within a conflict?

Both texts will be analysed separately based on three themes; gender, family and media, after which they will be compared. These texts present two different and conflicting

memories of the same side of the Troubles. Multiple theories will be used to analyse the use of these themes in the texts; gender theory, memory theory, and trauma theory. Regarding trauma theory this thesis will look at the effect trauma has on people, cultures, and memories. The memory theories this thesis will apply are living and prosthetic memories and contesting memories. Concerning gender this thesis will discuss gender identity in light of performance theory. This thesis will start with a chapter that will provide the context and background of the texts by looking at the Troubles, both of the authors, and the methodology after which each theme will have its own chapter.

By looking at two texts that have a similar background, context, and use similar themes this thesis will attempt to show the varieties one can find in shared cultural legacies of traumatic events. This will shed light on issues of contesting memories and the complexities of how memories and trauma work. It will also reveal that the Troubles did not just consist of two contesting memory cultures but contained a multitude of contesting memory cultures, which is a relatively new point of view as most of the research which has been written about the Troubles concerns the two sides that everyone knows. This is also what makes this research different from previous research because it focuses on written text and how it can represent contesting memories within one side of a conflict. On top of that it concerns texts which were written by women and have a female protagonist. This research will attempt to show how written text can be used to visualize different perspectives which are easily overlooked within a conflict, which has rarely be looked at this specifically, especially concerning the Troubles. As Hopkins argues: “in a movement bound up with physical force and violent conflict, these memories are marked by sacrifice, victimhood, and suffering of wounds endured, on the one hand; but also by questions of legitimacy, responsibility and recognition of hurts inflicted, on the other” (152). Even within one side or movement of the conflict there are different views and interpretations.

# 1. Theoretical Framework and Historical Context

## 1.1 The Troubles

The conflict known as the Troubles was a violent period in Northern Ireland of about thirty years (1968-1998). It is a conflict that is still very much felt today and still plays a large role in Northern Ireland. It has only been twenty years since it ended, which means that many emotions and past memories are still present, and with the current Brexit situation they will not be forgotten any time soon. Brexit creates a problematic situation because the United Kingdom is leaving the European Union. Ireland is not part of the United Kingdom but Northern Ireland is. The premise of hard borders creates a similar situation as the one the Troubles was based on and might therefore cause these memories, emotions, and traumas to resurface.

According to Gerald Dawe, the divide that was at the base of the Troubles was already present for a longer period of time but it was concealed. He states that “under the surface of this civic society there was a serious and unreconciled divisiveness that spread throughout Northern Irish society – a political and social division that had its own very bloody past and inbred sectarian bitterness” (217). He argues that underneath a society that appeared stable with “local radio and television” (217), “advanced transport infrastructure” (217), “state-funded education and welfare system” (217), and “new manufacturing technologies” (217), which appeared to be integrated, “a deep schism” (217) was concealed. However, the constant mistreatment of Catholics eventually broke this illusion open and brought about the Troubles (218). The Catholics were a minority in Northern Ireland and, according to Dawe, would not stand the mistreatments anymore and decided to take matters into their own hands. They were inspired by the global civil rights movements which were taking place all over the world in the 1960s, where different minority groups were fighting for their rights. It was not purely based on the division that was already there but that division was deepened “because specific decisions encouraged political entrenchment and communal polarisation” (McGrattan 8).

The conflict that arose went on for thirty years and claimed many lives. In 1975 there was a ceasefire and there were peace talks between both sides. This ceasefire was reluctantly ended by the Provisionals (205) according to Niall Ó Dochartaigh. He argues “that the Republican leadership attached high priority at that stage to achieving a peaceful settlement of the conflict and were willing to make major compromises to that end” (204). Many believe that the Republican movement was fooled into calling the ceasefire but Niall argues that they

knew what they were doing and wanted to make these peace talks a success. However, the negotiations of the 1975 ceasefire had shown “the Provisionals that they did not provide a sufficiently serious threat to the British state to achieve a negotiated compromise settlement” (205), which created the need for a strategy that would increase the threat they posed for the British government.

This was the starting point for the long war strategy of the Provisionals, which “was a strategic plan but it was also a bargaining position aimed at pressuring the British government to return to substantive engagement despite the relative military weakness of the Provisionals” (Dochartaigh 205). The goal of this strategy was to prove the Provisionals provided a sufficient threat to the British government and would be able to return to peace talks with an improved position for negotiation. There were multiple factors that prevented an early return to the peace talks, causing this strategy to be in play longer than the Provisionals had originally planned. However, they also knew that if they were to withdraw they would return to the same bargaining situation as in the 1975 ceasefire of which they knew, from experience, that it would be an undesirable situation. The experience in the 1975 cease fire showed the Provisionals “that ending their campaign removed pressure for movement towards the republican position by the British government while unionist and loyalist pressure against compromise was not only maintained but intensified” (Dochartaigh 207). The Provisionals found themselves in a position where they were forced to continue with their strategy in order to be able to achieve anything at all. This strategy had consequences and effects in the British government policies and the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary). The British government tried to combat this violence by “criminalising those perpetrating it” (Hennessey 250). The British government created a “security policy” (Hennessey 250) which contained objectives which should bring an end to the political violence of the Provisionals. This did not only “result in a further remilitarisation of the RUC but the continuing Provisional IRA campaign inevitably led to significant increase in the size of the RUC and the UDR” (Hennessey 251). The British government answered violence with violence creating a long conflict claiming many lives.

The peace process of the Northern Irish Troubles was a long and intense process. Many steps were made that brought peace closer. It started with the Anglo-Irish Agreement which “set the context for an emerging pan-nationalist approach to the Northern Ireland conflict” (McGrattan 124). This agreement assured a role in Northern Ireland for Dublin. However, in the eyes of the Irish nationalists “the implication of the Anglo-Irish Agreement was closer North-South relations rather than the possibility of restoring power to Belfast”

(McGrattan 124). In the eyes of the nationalists this was the British government throwing them a bone in the hopes that it would be enough to end the violence rather than really working with them towards a solution. In 1994 the Downing Street Declaration was written, which still did not meet the demands of the Republican movement but “the declaration did increase the pressure on the Provisional IRA to declare an end to hostilities and to explore the possibilities for peace through dialogue” (Hennessey 288) resulting in the 1994 ceasefire. However, the 1994 ceasefire ended in 1996 “with the detonation of a massive bomb in an underground car park near Canary Wharf in London” (Hennessey 298). “The Provisional IRA blamed the British government for the ending of its cease-fire” (Hennessey 298) but “for the Unionists the bombing merely confirmed what they had believed all along: that the IRA cease-fire was merely a tactic”(Hennessey 298). Eventually the end of the conflict and the peace process was reached through the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 after which a long process of healing society and dealing with the trauma and the memories began, which is still ongoing.

## 1.2 Deirdre Madden

Among the people who have written about the Troubles, Deirdre Madden is, according to Tamara Benito de la Iglesia, “one of these significant voices in contemporary Northern Irish writing” (40). She was born in Belfast and studied at Trinity College in Dublin, and at the University of East Anglia (Iglesia 40). She was raised in a Catholic family and grew up during the Troubles attempting to live a normal life in a contested city. The first novel she wrote was *Hidden Symptoms*, which was released in 1986 during the Troubles. This novel “neither seems to focus on history nor does it attempt to offer any explanation of why violent Northern Irish society” (Iglesia 41) but it focuses on family life and how the Troubles affect families.

Her novel *Hidden Symptoms* tells the stories of Theresa and Robert. Theresa’s twin brother has been murdered and tortured, and she has to learn how to live with that loss and the memories that come with it. The reader sees the story through Theresa’s eyes and sees how she interprets and deals with the world around her. It shows how she tries to deal with the loss of her twin brother and tries to keep her faith through it all. Through her the reader sees how a traumatic event caused by the Troubles can affect a person and a family. A part of the novel is told from the perspective of Robert. He has lost his mother but through illness, not through violence caused by the Troubles. His girlfriend Kathy is Theresa’s best friend, which is how he gets to know Theresa. His family is working-class, sectarian and Catholic;

facts he wants to distance himself from. He has no religious beliefs even though he was raised a Catholic, and he wants to remain impartial within the Troubles. He provides the reader with a different view upon the Troubles and how the traumatic loss of his mother affected him.

### **1.3 Anne Devlin**

Anne Devlin is a writer who wrote plays and stories concerning the Troubles. She “was born in Belfast” and became an adult when the conflict began (Fadem 63). She had a strong link to the Troubles as her father was a “well-known political figure in Belfast” (Fadem 63). He was part of an Irish nationalist party, the SDLP, so Devlin grew up on the Republican side of the Troubles. Her short story “Naming the Names” was released in 1986, during the Troubles, in *The Way-Paver*.

The short story “Naming the Names” revolves around Fionnula, who is mostly called Finn. Finn is a young woman of Catholic descent. Because of the loss of her grandmother she becomes increasingly involved in the Republican movement. Eventually she becomes an active member and an accomplice to the murder of a man she has grown to love. Through this story the reader sees how traumatic events from the Troubles can influence someone’s life and how trauma and memory can shape the decisions they make.

### **1.4 Methodology**

Both *Hidden Symptoms* by Deirdre Madden and “Naming the Names” by Anne Devlin will be subjected to multiple close readings. The first reading is to create an understanding of the stories and their content. The next three readings will each focus on one of the three themes that will be used in this thesis; the three themes are gender, family and media.

This chapter creates a context for the research in this thesis, by providing through a history of the Troubles, information about the authors and short summaries of the texts, and the methodology which will be applied. This will illustrate the similar context and background these texts were built on, which allows this thesis to fully focus on the three themes and how they are utilized.

Each chapter will focus on one of the three themes. The texts will first be analysed on their own and then compared to each other to show the similarities and differences in how they utilize the different themes for the creation of contesting memories.

These analyses will be done through a theoretical framework consisting of memory, trauma and gender theory. Gender theory cannot be ignored in this thesis as both texts are

written by women and the protagonists in these texts are also women. According to Maureen Fadem it is through “the underprivileged female perspective that permits recognition of the cold hard facts of Northern Irishness” (70-71). The gender theory that will be applied in this thesis is the gender performativity theory because, as Judith Butler states:, “gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences” (178).

Trauma and memory theory are important aspects when analysing these texts. Both texts show how trauma and memory are closely related and coexist together and are, especially related to the Troubles, important, even today. The effect of the Troubles is still thoroughly felt and is shaped through trauma and memory. Contesting memory theory is one of the memory theories this thesis will apply, as Hopkins argues: “in a movement bound up with physical force and violent conflict, these memories are marked by sacrifice, victimhood, and suffering of wounds endured, on the one hand; but also by questions of legitimacy, responsibility and recognition of hurts inflicted, on the other” (152). Memories come in many shapes and forms and can be a source of great emotion, which can create contesting memories. The other memory theory this thesis will apply is the theory of lived memory, which concerns “memories of events through which we actually lived” (Landsberg 143), which is the opposite of prosthetic memory. “Prosthetic memories are those not strictly derived from a person’s lived experience” (Landsberg 25). In the past trauma was seen as physical, but, as Oona Frawley argues, “over time, we have shifted from a consideration of trauma as *bodily* and *physical* to the now more common sense of *psychological* trauma” (5). Trauma is therefore easily connected to memory because psychological trauma often stems from memories. They have an undeniable effect on each other and therefore, one rarely occurs without the other, which is why they will both be used in the analyses of these texts.

## 2. Gender

### 2.1 Hidden Symptoms

Deirdre Madden's stories explore "women's deepest sorrows and pains, caused by the loss of people, and their emotional and spiritual struggles to cope with them" (Iglesia 40). This is very visible in her novel *Hidden Symptoms*. This novel is written from a dual-focus narrative which means that "the narrator follows no single character throughout but instead alternates regularly" (Altman 55). The two main protagonists in this novel are Theresa and Robert. Theresa has lost her twin brother and Robert has lost his mother. The loss of Theresa's twin brother was caused by the violence of the Troubles and Robert's mother died because she was ill. They both struggle with their loss and deal with the situation in different ways. In *Hidden Symptoms* the reader is provided with both the male and the female perspective but the female perspective is more prominent than the male perspective. This means that Deirdre Madden's novel shows the reader a side of the Troubles that has not been given a lot of attention so far: the female point of view in a patriarchal society ravaged by conflict, which she does by focalizing a significant part of the novel through Theresa.

Within the novel *Hidden Symptoms* gender is visible throughout the story and is often used to create an image of how gender roles were seen and used. One of these instances is when Robert showered to get rid of the smell of his sister's house. It is specifically mentioned that he used "lots of male toiletries which smelt bitter, sexy and expensive" (18). He wants to get rid of any signs or smells of the working class and religious environment, but apparently it is important that he specifically uses male toiletries because it is specifically mentioned. There are many instances where Robert's view on women is shown. He sees women as something he does not or cannot understand. He is mesmerized by them but also does not want to know too much, like "the private life of girls in the morning" (89). He finds them fascinating because they are very different from him but still human (56). Therefore, he does see them as human but does appear to view men as better or more powerful than women.

This is also a reflection of his attitude towards the Troubles and violence. He knows it is there and that it is happening but he wants to distance himself from it. He does not want to choose a side and have to endure the trauma and problems that come with such a choice. This is mirrored in the space he tries to create for himself in his apartment. He attempts to turn his apartment into an empty, aesthetic place where the trauma and emotions of the events and people around him do not exist. This becomes evident in the novel when Robert sees the reflection of his apartment and himself in the window at night. "The solution to the Irish

crisis is for everyone to live by night, to put strong lights in their rooms and draw back the curtains and so make a whole new world population identical to the one here now in all things but reality” (88). Here, he paints a world where conflict and feelings do not exist, which is an ideal world in his eyes. This is also how he feels about women. He does not want to know too much about them because it takes away from their charm and thinks they should conform to the norms he feels they should have; that they should not be involved in the conflict and keep a distance, as he chooses to do. This is also why he clashes so often with Theresa. Theresa does not conform to these norms. She is involved in the conflict because of the death of her twin brother and therefore brings the trauma with her, and she is able to voice a strong opinion. This is something Robert finds very difficult to deal with, and he even calls her a fanatic because of it. However, no matter how hard he tries, he cannot keep the violence at the distance he wants it to be. He was sitting in a bus when it was passed by a meat van, which he compares to a news report after a bombing where the remains of people were scattered in a similar way as the meat in the van. He could deal with that as long as it did not affect him personally, which was not the case. However, it now started to because he “found himself wondering how he would feel if it was Kathy whose flesh was hanging from barbed wire in thin, irregular strips and shifting in the wind like surreal party streamers” (30). It becomes something personal through the women in his life no matter how hard he tries to remain neutral.

Theresa displays a similar view on gender roles; as men being more powerful, in charge and having more agency. This is shown when the murder of her twin brother is discussed. The police never discovered who had murdered him. When talking about the murderer, she claims that the person who did it had lost his humanity (44). She contradicts herself about the murderer because on the one hand she thinks “everyone is guilty” (44) but on the other hand she has decided for herself, consciously or unconsciously, that the murderer is a man. When she enters a pub “the thought of the man who had killed her brother crept back into her mind” (44). She clearly thinks a man killed her brother even though it was never discovered who killed him. She created that image for herself, which suggests that she thinks only men take part in the violence of the Troubles; that it is only men who can take on active roles during this conflict and that women are therefore the passive victims of the situation.

Theresa herself even challenges the gender roles. She is seen as androgynous by Robert. “Never before had he met anyone so angular and androgynous; indeed, never before had he known anyone so long and so little considered their sex” (64). When her twin brother

died, she became both Francis and herself. This changed her gender performance. She is seen as an androgynous, sexless person by Robert.

## **2.2 Naming the Names**

Anne Devlin's works reflect "her history and the social and political life of her homeland" (Fadem 65). Her stories and plays are told from a female protagonist's point of view, which in "Naming the Names" is Finn. This in itself makes "Naming the Names" and other works by Anne Devlin different from many works about the Troubles. The female perspective might tell a different story or show different experiences about a conflict such as the Troubles which are important to know. As Maureen Fadem states; "male privilege can blur the lens through which we view social issues. Therefore, it is precisely the underprivileged female perspective that permits recognition of the cold hard facts of Northern Irishness" (70-71). "Naming the Names" is a single-focus narrative which is "built around retrospective moments which, by their ability to measure change, lend meaning to the text" (Altman 160).

Within the story gender is sometimes specifically named but it is also often indirectly indicated. Throughout the text Finn is seemingly androgenised through her name. Her name is Fionnula but she is rarely called by her full name. Almost everyone calls her Finn, which is a man's name. During the interrogations Finn uses standard gender roles to deny her involvement. At first she makes fun of the idea that there even is an organisation and then she continues by stating that "the women's section had been disbanded during the previous year because there was nothing for them to do but run around after the men and make tea for the céilis" (115). She basically says to them that women have no place in such an organisation, so how could I have been involved? She consciously uses the gender roles to try and convince them that she is innocent. At another point in the story she has a dream about her grandmother. In the dream her grandmother grabs her and tries to pull her off the bed. She tries to free herself but is unable to do so, and describes her grandmother's hands as feeling "like a man's" (119). This implicates that women have a hidden masculine potential of sectarian power and violence. Once she realises it is her grandmother she does not struggle anymore and allows herself to become part of it, and therefore claims that power. Another moment when gender is specifically mentioned is when Jack discovered what Finn had done and confronts her. He wonders what kind of woman she is because apparently this changed everything he thought she was. The fact that she lured a man to his death is not something he thinks a woman should be capable of doing. He exclaims: "I ask myself over and over what kind of woman you are, and I have to remind myself that I knew you, or thought I knew you

and that I loved you once” (121). He feels like he does not know her anymore and he does not understand how he could have fallen for her. He is even happy that he did not marry her yet.

Finn also consciously uses gender performance. Not only through the use of gender roles in her interrogation but also in her active role in the Republican movement. She is a *femme fatale* who used her femininity to lure the target to his death. In a way, she lures him into a web of which she only sees a small part. “I could only glimpse what fatal visions stir that web’s dark pattern, I do not know their names. I only know for certain what my part was, that even on the eve, on such a day, I took him there” (122). She lured him into her web where he was caught and murdered but she is caught in a web too, the web of the Republican movement of which she only knows her role but none of the others. Even though she is defying the traditional gender roles and even uses them consciously she is as much a fly in a web as her target was.

There are some implicit gender remarks throughout the story as well. An example of this is when Finn stands in the crowd during the fires. Most of the time when the people in the crowd are mentioned they are mentioned as ‘the crowd’. However, on some occasions such as when some of them were breaking windows she refers to them as ‘men’ but she calls the few that run past her: “several of the crowd” (116). This creates the implication that she implicitly shows gender roles because she chose to use a gendered term at specific moments while at other moments she does not. Another example can be found at the start of the novel when a girl comes into the bookshop and says “I want three murders for my granny” (103). The girl is referring to crime novels but it can also be seen as foreshadowing Finn being an active member of the Republican movement. It is something that the reader has to look for to consciously realize, but it is there.

### 2.3 Comparison

In both Deirdre Madden’s *Hidden Symptoms* and Anne Devlin’s “Naming the Names” gender is shown and used quite often. There are many similarities concerning gender within these texts but there are also some differences.

The similarities are that both of the texts have a female protagonist and create an image of the gender roles that were at play during the Troubles. Both of the texts show that there was a strong patriarchy during the Troubles. When something happened it was assumed that men did it and that women would not resort to violence and were mostly victims, that men were stronger, and had more agency. Both of these texts are interesting in terms of agency because as Fadem states: “a gendered narrative often constitutes the strongest form of

representation because it is through the female figure that we arrive at the necessary impasse in terms of agency in the broken nation-state” (71). By using female protagonists these texts cast a light on male privilege and are able to look past it to show a more realistic and true representation of life during the Troubles. On top of this both of the female protagonists are portrayed in an androgynous way. Theresa because she internalizes the death of her twin brother and therefore becomes both herself and Francis, and Finn through the use of her name.

Even though both texts have a female protagonist they tell a different story. Theresa struggles to deal with the loss of her twin brother and Finn plays a crucial role in a murder. Theresa is shown in the traditional gender role of a passive female who is the victim and tries to deal with the trauma of losing her brother but Finn is shown as the active female who defies the traditional gender roles. Finn also seems to be aware of these gender roles and tries to use them to convince the police that she is innocent. In *Hidden Symptoms*, gender often makes an appearance but implicitly through the thoughts and feelings of the protagonists. In “Naming the Names” these implicit references are also present but gender is also actively used by the protagonist.

Therefore, it is evident that even though gender plays a large role in both of the texts the outcome is very different. They both have female protagonists and show the same gender roles that were present during the Troubles. However, *Hidden Symptoms* seems to comply to these gender roles whilst “Naming the Names” seems to challenge these gender roles. This creates two drastically different stories that stand opposite each other even though they are on the same side of the conflict during the Troubles, the Republican side.

### 3. Family

#### 3.1 Hidden Symptoms

In Deirdre Madden's *Hidden Symptoms* the theme of family plays a large role both in Theresa's and in Robert's story line. There are certain similarities between the two characters regarding family but there are also quite some differences. This chapter will first discuss family in relation to Theresa, then family regarding Robert and then in comparative perspective. Within Theresa's story line and "at the very core of the novel" (42), according to Tamara Benito de la Iglesia, is the death of Theresa's twin brother Francis. His death is something that Theresa does not want to confront and even tries to evade: "she put her hand on the door-handle of her brother's room and paused, but she did not go in" (15). It is still his room and she does not enter it, it is a reminder of how he was when he was alive. Another way she seems to avoid the confrontation is by hiding his death. She does not want people that do not know about Francis to learn about his death, and tries to hide how much it still affects her. The day before she is going to have dinner with Kathy and Robert she asks Kathy if she told Robert about Francis and tells her that she does not want her to do so (24-25). She does not want people to know because she does not like the looks of sympathy they give, which she is still getting from people that recognize her and know about Francis' death (19). She does not just try to hide the event itself but also the feelings she still has about it. She does not cry often but when she does she usually does it alone: "perched on the edge of the tin trunk she began to cry for him as she had not cried for a very long time" (33). She was sitting alone in that attic crying about the loss of Francis and the loneliness she feels as a result of it.

However, she is unable to keep it hidden all the time. When she goes to Robert and is too drunk to leave he drags her to his bedroom to put her to bed after she had broken down in tears. She keeps mistaking him for Francis; "three times she had called him 'Francis'" (108). This also shows that memory and trauma are uncontrollable. According to Dawson, "memory is experienced as excessive, uncontrollable, and overwhelming" ("Life-Stories 204) and it can create "unwanted return of those "flashbacks" ("Life-Stories" 204), which "is a typical feature of remembering marked by trauma" ("Life-Stories" 204). The death of her brother is a traumatic event for Theresa and, even though she tries to hide it the best she can it is impossible to have full control over it, as it resurfaces randomly.

According to Graham Dawson, there are four key aspects in the stories of families that lost someone in a violent and traumatic event: "receiving news of the death;

identification of the body; and participation in the wake and funeral” (“Life-Stories” 209). These four elements are present in Theresa’s story. After she started crying alone in the attic she remembers the first night after she learned about his death: “such absolute loneliness had come to her the first night after his death, when she went to bed. Lights out, she put her head down and then, too, she had started to cry automatically” (33). Crying alone in the attic unwillingly brings back the memory of the night after Francis’ death and how she felt then. She sees that moment as the moment she lost her innocence through the realisation that his death would always be there. The identification of the body is a difficult and painful point in the story, as is the wake. They are both not specifically discussed but the reason for this becomes clear when Theresa remembers Francis’ funeral with the approach of its anniversary: “they had not been permitted to see his poor dead face and cold forehead. She remembered tenderly stroking the wood of the coffin and trying to visualize his dear, broken body inside” (123). When Francis was murdered he was apparently tortured in such a way that they were not allowed to see his body because it “was too terrible for his own family to see” (52). In a way they have not been able to properly say goodbye to him as they were only seeing a coffin. The things she focuses on concerning the funeral are a few details but besides that she mostly focuses on what she felt. She wondered what it was about the memory of her brother’s death that distressed her because she knew it was not his death itself. She then realised that she wanted to be buried with him: “too late she wished that she had jumped in with him, so that the gravediggers could cover up the living and dead together: she longed for the soft, damp soil to muffle her ears and gag her mouth, to seal her eyes up in union and death” (124). It was therefore not his death itself that distressed her so much but the fact that they would no longer be together.

In an attempt to deal with Francis’ death Theresa looks to her faith but that only leaves her conflicted. She is angry with God that he has let her brother die. This caused a desire to deny the existence of God but that would create another problem. If God did not exist, Francis’ death would be absolute. However, if God was real there would be an afterlife for Francis but it would mean that her brother’s death would have been part of God’s plan. She realises that “this cruel, hated God was her only link with Francis and if she lost God she lost Francis; if she could stop believing in God, she would have to stop believing in her brother” (52). She could not stop believing in her brother so she has to keep believing in God. As Iglesia states: “Although religion should provide her with the calm she needs in order to cope with the terrible loss, she realises it does not” (42), which only creates more distress.

Francis' death did not only affect Theresa but also her mother. Graham Dawson argues "that the impact on close relatives could be as emotionally devastating as their own bereavement" ("Life-Stories" 208). Theresa sees how grief affects her mother differently than it affects herself and that her mother relates to Francis' death differently than she does, which she at times finds difficult to deal with. When a documentary airs on television about former terrorists, her mother wants to watch it but Theresa is reluctant. At some point during the documentary her mother breaks down crying: "her mother, her sweet, kind, thoughtful mother, who had made big scones, now lay wailing on her chintzy sofa" (73). She sees how the grief affected and changed her mother, and she feels it is unfair that they will never see him again. She does not think her sweet mother deserves this and they do not even know why it happened, or how. Her mother claims Francis is a martyr which Theresa does not agree with. She says: "martyrs usually have a choice; if they deny their religion they're allowed to live, and if they won't deny it, well, they martyr them" (42). She thinks that Francis was not given a choice but she does not truly know because they do not know what actually happened. Theresa and her mother create a narrative to try to satisfy their "need to try to account for what has happened" (Frawley 7). Theresa is convinced that he was killed for his religion, that he did not get a choice, and that he was killed by a man. These are all assumptions she makes because this information was never discovered. Theresa and her mother are never the same after the death of Francis. As Iglesia says: the consequences of Francis' death are "continuous distress, pain and confusion" (42). It will never leave them.

Within Robert's story line family is also very present. It is evident in how estranged he is from his sister and his family, even though he does visit them regularly, and in how he views his relationship with his mother and her death. The death of Robert's mother was not a traumatic event in the way that Francis' death was for Theresa. She was not murdered and tortured. She died in the hospital after being in a coma for three days. Robert did not have a close bond with his mother. As he describes it "she saw him as damned but not past redemption, and his lack of the desire to be redeemed was a real torment to her" (41). He feels a sense of guilt because his mother felt responsible for this but in his eyes she was not. In the story of his mother's death two of the four key elements, mentioned by Graham Dawson, can be distinguished. Robert is with his mother when she slips into the coma and he remembers the moment when he comes across his sister trying to sort their mother's belongings just after her death: "Robert had come across his sister sitting on a sheepskin rug in their mother's bedroom, sobbing into an old, torn sweater, which he gently removed from her hands" (110). His sister is very emotional after their mother's death and cannot seem to

let her mother's stuff go even if it is old and torn. After he takes the sweater and sends her away from the bedroom he starts to sort-out their mother's belongings. It does make him very sad but it does not seem to affect him emotionally as much as it does his sister. He also suddenly remembers his mother's funeral where "he had suddenly felt that he was the person in the coffin who was being lowered out of life" (105), which is triggered by his discussion with Theresa. This is another example of the unwanted flashbacks Graham Dawson mentions. It also resembles Theresa's memory of Francis' funeral. However, they have opposite feelings about it. Theresa wants to be buried with her brother but for Robert it felt like he was suffocating.

Robert has an estranged relationship with his sister Rose. Robert dislikes the place and the class he grew up in, but does return to visit his sister: "Robert also had a duty visit to make that evening, to his sister and her family" (15). He sees his sister's house as uniform and a representation of the class he is trying to distance himself from: "Was there a working-class parlour in Belfast that lacked these fittings?" (16). He dislikes the working-class, sectarian and religious appearance of the house because it represents everything he wants to escape from. He is therefore surprised by Theresa's response to it: "unlike Robert, however, Theresa did not react with perceptible revulsion to the vulgarity which came out to meet them at a front door bristling with knobs, knockers, brass numbers and bell-pulls. She did not start at the sheer ugliness of the living room" (35). Theresa responds very differently to Rose and her house than Robert does, which surprises and baffles him. In his mind he escaped that place and every visit back reminds him of where he came from, and he does not like that. He dislikes it so much that he has to shower when he comes home to wash off the "smell of poverty" (17). He is also quite materialistic because he sees his apartment and everything in it "as symbols of successful escape from the squalor that was home" (18). Whenever he visits his sister he is reminded of what he escaped, and he uses his apartment and possessions as a reminder for himself that he does not belong there anymore, that he did escape. However, "the remaking of his position and the attempt to introduce himself to the bourgeoisie world gradually estranges him from Rose, and from his family in general" (Iglesia 44). Robert often thinks about how much easier it would be if he would just cut his family out of his life, but they are too valuable for him to do so. So even though they represent everything he does not want to be, he cannot let them go. He sees his sister and her family as a "familia intacta" (90), which means that even though they have their problems they are truly happy.

Family is a theme that is very important in this novel. For Theresa family, is important but also carries a lot of trauma and for Robert the death of his mother carries some

trauma and he values his sister and her family but is closed off from them. However, there are also some similarities. Theresa and Robert both have to deal with the loss of a family member and even though they do this in different ways both of them are traumatised by it. Besides their actual families they also have surrogate families. Theresa and Kathy, even though they are an unlikely pair, remain close friends. Theresa also has a family like connection with Rose through a shared religious background to the point that she even visits Rose in the hospital despite the fact that she hates hospitals. Robert, on the other hand, tries to distance himself from family and does not create enough connection with people to create a surrogate family. Family plays a large role in both of their lives but a drastically different one.

### 3.2 Naming the Names

In Anne Devlin's story "Naming the Names" the theme of family is most apparent through Finn's grandmother. Her grandmother was the only family she had for most of her life. She lived with her grandmother and would sometimes see her father: "my father and grandmother didn't speak for years: because he married my mother. I used to go and visit him" (120). She lived with her grandmother and only visited her father until he died when she was eight or nine. After that her grandmother was all she had left.

The loss of her grandmother is the starting point for her change from "an innocent young woman to a 'murderer' and Volunteer" (Fadem 84). Her grandmother is her connection to life and with her death "she is witness to political violence with tragic personal consequences" (Fadem 84). First her grandmother was burned out of her house and Finn found her at the hospital: "the nurse said she was tired, suffering from shock and a few cuts from flying glass" (117). She survived the fire but she had a weak heart and "her heart gave up" (118). She lost the only family she had left as a result of a political attack.

Even after her death, her grandmother makes an important appearance in the story and in Finn's life. "I closed my eyes and the old woman came towards me again. It was my grandmother" (119). Her grandmother appears to her in a dream. The first time it happens she does not recognize her but the second time she does. In the dream her grandmother walks toward her, grabs her and tries to pull her off the bed. She had hands "like a man's" (119), which shows the reader and Finn that women can be powerful and in control too, that they can do the things men can do. On top of that it creates the image of the grandmother as a representation of the nation. As Fadem states: "this elderly woman has the oddly surreal strength of a man, that is, the resilient forceful hand of the nation, Since she died in political violence, Finn's grandmother is even more patently a figure for the nation" (87). The way in

which her grandmother is represented in this dream is comparable to a mythical Irish figure called Cathleen Ni Houlihan; an old woman who calls on men to fight for a free Ireland. This dream can be seen as her grandmother calling on Finn to fight for a free Ireland. Therefore in this dream sequence, through her grandmother, Finn's involvement with the nation and the Republican cause becomes apparent. At first, when she does not recognize her grandmother she tells her boyfriend to not let her go so the old woman would not be able to pull her off the bed. However, when she realises it is her grandmother she yells at her boyfriend that he has to let her go: "Here, Finn is consumed symbolically by the 'nation,' that is, by the Republican cause" (Fadem 87).

Family is a key theme in this story. Finn's relationship with her grandmother is used to show how she gradually became involved in the Republican cause and became an accomplice to a murder. On top of that, after her grandmother died, Finn becomes part of a surrogate family; the Republican movement, a family that collectively fights for a free Ireland.

### 3.3 Comparison

Family is an important theme in both *Hidden Symptoms* by Deirdre Madden and "Naming the Names" by Anne Devlin. However, in both stories the theme is used in quite different ways.

In *Hidden Symptoms* family forms the central theme of the novel. It is used to show how two people struggle with the loss of a family member and the relationship they have with their family. It is central to the narrative as the story is based on how they both try to cope with the loss and navigate through life in Belfast during the Troubles. They both deal with it and see it in a different way, which already shows within one novel how the theme family can be used to create two different viewpoints and ways of life within the same situation in the same city. On top of that it also shows that in a conflict like this, one cannot escape their roots. Robert wants to believe that he can but he will always be connected to his family, and through them to his roots, no matter how badly he wants to escape them.

In "Naming the Names" family is used as a tool to show the process of Finn's change from being innocent to being an accomplice to a murder. This is visualized through her bond with her grandmother and the events that lead to her grandmother's death. The dream with her grandmother is used to show that she has surrendered and joined the Republican cause. Therefore, in this story family is used as a tool to show the foundation of sectarianism.

The same theme, family, is used to create drastically different stories and viewpoints within the Republican side of the Troubles. In both stories family creates the same context.

All three of the protagonists lose a family member, Theresa loses her twin brother, Robert loses his mother, and Finn loses her grandmother. However, the outcome of the stories is drastically different. Theresa and Robert try to continue with their lives in their own ways, and the effect grief has on their lives is clearly shown. Theresa seems to avoid and reject violence because it functions as a trigger for the traumatic memories about the loss of her twin brother Francis. For Finn it kick-starts her process of becoming an active member for the Republican cause.

## 4. Media

### 4.1 Hidden Symptoms

The theme media makes multiple appearances throughout Deirdre Madden's *Hidden Symptoms* and plays a meaningful role in the text in multiple ways. At the beginning of the novel the local news is used to show the "political inclinations" (Iglesia 45) of multiple characters. On the local news on television a funeral of an RUC reservist is shown. RUC stands for Royal Ulster Constabulary, which means that it is a reservist from the unionist side of the Troubles. Both Theresa and Tom, Robert's brother in law, see this on the local news and display different responses to it. When the funeral item comes on Theresa change the channel "before the screen could show the flowers, the hearse, the coffin, the widow" (14). She does not show much interest in the event and does not want herself and her mother to see the funeral because it triggers trauma, so she changes the channel and even turns the sound off. This is an issue again when they are watching the documentary about the former terrorists and her mother breaks down crying, as is mentioned in the previous chapter. Tom shows a different response to the news item. When the news item comes on, whilst Robert is there, they watch it together and Tom says: "good sauce for the bastard" (16), "showing happiness and satisfaction with the event" (Iglesia 45). He feels that the officer deserved to die, showing a clear loyalty to the Republican cause.

Newspapers are also important throughout the novel. It is through newspapers that Robert discovers the murder of Francis, which then functions as a prosthetic memory for him because he did not live through the event. However, learning about it through the newspaper allows him to relate more to the people around him and what they might have gone through: "it shocked him to think of the evils and sorrows which might be in their minds and hearts: no one could see or guess the things which they might have done or endured" (133). For Theresa it is a living memory because she lived through the event of his death but for Robert it is a prosthetic memory. He is guided there by Kathy but he has to find out about it through the newspaper: "he quickly read the accompanying report, which dealt mainly with the funeral, but revealed to Robert that Francis has been murdered" (132). Nobody told him about it, he had to search for it and find out about it in the newspapers. The same newspaper is also the only source of information about why Francis was murdered that Theresa has. It was never discovered who murdered him or why and she shares the view the newspaper displays (Iglesia 41-42). The newspaper describes the murder "as 'particularly brutal' and the motive appeared to be purely sectarian" (132). This is an assumption made by the newspaper based

on Francis' religion since nothing was ever discovered about his murder. However, Theresa believes this, as is seen in a discussion she has with her mother when she says: "they just killed Francis because of his religion" (42). She agrees with the newspaper and does not have any doubts about it, which shows that either she needed something to hang on to about why he was killed or that she already had this suspicion and the newspaper merely confirmed it for her.

Even though Theresa appears to take the coverage about her brother's death in the newspaper at face value, she is also critical of the media, as is Robert. Theresa realises that "popular press and much television, are greatly dependent upon unoriginality and repetition for their ultimate success" (67). She is aware of the fact that the media represents events in a certain way to gain or keep their popularity and success, which also becomes apparent in a discussion she has with Robert about his background. He thinks he will not be seen or classified as a Catholic because he is not a practicing Catholic, but Theresa does not agree with him. He comes from a Catholic background and that is the first thing the newspapers would look at if he were to die that day. She says: "if you were found in the morning with a bullet in your head, what do you think the papers would call you? An agnostic? No, Robert, nobody, not even you, is naïve enough to think that" (46). She knows how the media would report such things without knowing the truth or by just ignoring the truth. However, she still believes the report about Francis even though it comes down to the same principles. This is also visible in what Fionna Barber states about the "media coverage of the Troubles" (238). She states that it is "significant not just for its *mis*representation of events but because of its insidious voyeurism, manipulating and exploiting the emotional experience of victims" (238). Especially the voyeurism is visible in Robert's description of the news reports: "he remembered television news reports, where the casual camera showed bits of human flesh hanging from barbed wire after a bombing. Firemen shovelled what was left of people into heavy plastic bags, and you could see all that remained: big burnt lumps like charred logs" (30). The event that transpired was terrible but the camera seems to show it casually as if it forgets that what is being filmed is the remains of actual human beings.

Media is also used as a source of hope: "once, while reading a terrorist court case in the paper, her mother had said, 'Maybe when they catch the person who killed our Francis, we'll find out more'" (43). Reading about the court case and therefore the fact that terrorists could be caught and sentenced provides her mother with hope that maybe Francis' killer will be brought to justice, and they would finally know what happened to Francis. This is something Theresa sees differently. She wants to avoid "the reality of Francis' murderer"

(43) because she finds those thoughts overwhelming. This is represented in what Graham Dawson argues. He argues that “the risk of hoping stems from uncertainty about what the future may bring” (“Memory” 281) and that “the forthcoming and anticipated inquest ‘gives us a measure of relief’, but also with the recognition that any such relief is contingent on others” (“Memory” 287). His argument is that not knowing what the future may bring allows hope to bloom, although it is a risk. There is no guarantee that the hope someone has will come true. The hope Theresa’s mother has is that Francis’ murderer is found and brought to justice, so they will finally know what happened. This would provide her with a sense of relief but this could only be achieved through others, if it is ever achieved. His murderer has to be found and the murderer also has to confess because if he does not confess they will still never know what happened. To have this hope is risky but because Theresa’s mother does not know what the future will bring she dares to have this hope.

Media plays multiple roles within *Hidden Symptoms*. It is used to show loyalties of some characters and it also creates an image of the role media plays in a society that is torn up by conflict, such as the Troubles. It is a reminder of the past which cannot be escaped as it will always exist in the media, and media is a biased informer.

#### **4.2 Naming the Names**

The theme media plays multiple roles in Anne Devlin’s “Naming the Names”. On top of that the story in itself can be seen as a critical message about the media. Newspapers are the most important form of media throughout “Naming the Names”. At the beginning of the story Finn talks about the dossers who “had already gone in to check the morning papers” (102). The newspapers apparently form an important source of information. Finn’s boyfriend, Jack McHenry, is a journalist for a newspaper, who regularly phones his editor to provide him with updates. On top of that the news about the Troubles is important and sensational enough that even newspapers in Greece report about it.

When Finn loses her grandmother she starts to lose her innocence and becomes more drawn to the Republican cause. Then when she goes on holiday to Greece with Jack she sees a headline in a newspaper which reads “The Army have introduced internment in Belfast” (118). This headline triggers something in her and when they come back she joins the cause straight away. The newspaper and what it reported on was the last push and the last bit of motivation she needed to join the Republican cause, which eventually led her to being an accomplice to a murder.

Finn boyfriend, Jack McHenry, is a journalist, which is an important aspect of the story. There is a moment in the story when, after a firing, people hear that he is a journalist and tell him about what had happened: “it had been going on all night, they said, and several people were dead, including a child in the flats. They took him to see the bullet holes in the walls. The child was in a cot at the time. And the walls were thin” (115). This moment in the story is an example of the “insidious voyeurism, manipulating and exploiting the emotional experience of victims” (238) that Fionna Barber talks about. He is told in short about the entire event but the focus goes to the child. Multiple people died but the child is used as example for the sake of empathy and shock effect. This can be seen as a form of manipulation because the focus on the innocent child will cause people to have more sympathy.

According to Finn, Jack “was a very good journalist” (108), which is why she “never talked to him about anything important” (108). Throughout the story you find out that he is in Belfast because the Troubles are very news worthy, he is there purely for his job. He meets Finn and they get into a relationship. During this relationship she joins the Republican cause and actively takes part in the conflict and he never even had a suspicion that she might be up to something. He apparently was a good journalist but he had no clue. This can be seen as a suggestion that the media does not know everything that is happening. What they report on is part of a bigger event or story and they never really have the full truth, and therefore should not be trusted blindly, as Jack trusted Finn.

### 4.3 Comparison

In both *Hidden Symptoms* by Deirdre Madden and “Naming the Names” by Anne Devlin the theme media is clearly present and used.

In *Hidden Symptoms* media is used to show where the loyalties from some of the characters lie through their reactions to the same news item. Throughout the novel Theresa makes multiple points about the reliability of the media and Robert’s description of what the camera shows also provides Robert’s critical view on the media. The multiple effects newspapers can have is also visible in this novel. In one case an article gives hope to Theresa’s mother, but the article about Francis’ death creates a specific interpretation of Francis’ death, even though there is no actual information about it and since it has been immortalized in the newspaper it will never be left behind.

In “Naming the Names” the focus is mostly on newspapers. On how they can directly influence people to, for example, join the Republican cause like Finn did and that they are used and seen as an important source of information, as the dossiers check them early every

morning. However, throughout the story, it is also shown that the media cannot fully be trusted or blindly assumed to be telling the truth or the full story. This is shown through the specific consequences of the firing that are focused on when Jack is told about it and through the fact that he is supposed to be a good journalist but has no idea what his girlfriend is up to. Even though he is in Belfast to report on the conflict, he merely reports and observes and takes no action and shows now empathy. However, he was not able to see the story that was right under his nose.

Both of these texts use media to undermine the credibility the media claims to have. However, besides that the texts use media to tell a drastically different story concerning the effect the media can have on people who live during a conflict, like the Troubles, which is tearing up society. In *Hidden Symptoms* it is used to show how it affects people that have lost someone because of the conflict and the hope it can create. In "Naming the Names" it is used to show how it can convince people, who have lost someone because of the conflict, to take action and have them join the Republican cause to actively contribute. These are two very different outcomes but they are based on a similar situation in a similar context.

## Conclusion

Two contesting memory cultures in situations of conflict are a common occurrence, especially in a conflict like the Troubles. However, often each one represents one side of the conflict, which creates a black and white perspective of the conflict. Within one side of a conflict there are a variety of perspectives that point to a greater diversity within memory cultures and problematize the idea of two contesting traditions. Written text, with all of the variety that can exist within it, is an excellent means of demonstrating contesting memories on one side of a conflict. This is what this thesis has attempted to show: that conflict is not as simple as right and wrong but that within one side of a conflict radically different memories can be invoked based on a similar context.

## Analyses

Two texts with similar contexts and backgrounds were chosen to be the basis of this thesis. These texts were *Hidden Symptoms* by Deirdre Madden and “Naming the Names” by Anne Devlin. The backgrounds of these authors are quite similar. They are both women who were born in Belfast and grew up during the Troubles on the Republican side of the conflict. On top of that they both published their texts during the same period of the Troubles and both of their texts contain a female protagonist; Theresa in *Hidden Symptoms* and Finn in “Naming the Names”. Within the texts there are some similarities as well, even though the path the protagonists eventually follow is drastically different. They both lose someone because of the violence of the Troubles. However, how this affects them and how they respond to it is represented very differently. This has been explored in this thesis through three themes: gender, family and media.

Concerning gender there are a lot of similarities between the texts but also a significant difference. Both texts have a female protagonist and create an image of the gender roles at play in the patriarchal society of the Troubles by creating two different images of women during the Troubles. The significant difference is that Theresa epitomises the traditional passive female who is a victim of the violence through the loss of her twin brother, but Finn defies this gender role and takes on the active role that women were not supposed to play in such a society. It is even visible in her name because her real name is Fionnula but throughout the story she is called Finn, which alludes to the Ulster hero Finn MacCool. These texts also create some inversion of gender roles. Finn actively uses her gender identity and is an active participant in the Republican movement but Jack and Robert actually play inactive roles. Robert consciously chooses to do nothing, whilst Jack merely observes and reports.

This is a depiction of a reversal of the gender roles where a woman is now the active participant and the men are the passive victims to a certain degree.

Family is the most important theme in both of the texts, Theresa loses her twin brother and Finn loses her grandmother, both due to the violence of the Troubles. The effect this has on them after these events is significantly different in both texts. In *Hidden Symptoms* it is shown how the loss affected Theresa and her family, and how she tries to cope with the bereavement and tries to lead a normal life, for as far as that is possible in Belfast during the Troubles. In “Naming the Names” it triggers the process through which Finn eventually becomes an active member of the Republican movement.

Regarding media, both texts try to undermine the media’s credibility by pointing to the fact that it is repetitive and has a certain focus for the purpose of empathy and shock effect. Its credibility is also undermined through Jack, as he is a journalist in Belfast to report and observe the Troubles but fails to discover the story that happens right in front of him, in his own personal environment. However, they create a different image concerning its effects. *Hidden Symptoms* shows how it affects a family in mourning and “Naming the Names” shows how it can convince people to take matters into their own hands, and become actively engaged in a violent conflict.

### **Implications**

The implications of these results are problematic for the view most researchers have concerning the Troubles, namely the view that there are only two conflicting sides and perspectives. However, the results from this thesis imply that such a view of the Troubles, or any conflict for that matter, is too basic. Graham Dawson, for example, views the Troubles as purely consisting of two contesting memory cultures. According to him “the conflicted terrain of the Irish past is occupied by two powerful grand narratives, one loyalist and Protestant, the other nationalist and Catholic” (*Making* 33). Theories, articles, and books based on this basic division will have to be re-evaluated, rewritten or at least reinterpreted with the knowledge that within a conflict, such as the Troubles, many more contesting memories and perspectives are present and have a role to play.

It could change the way we research and evaluate conflict, but it also creates more knowledge and insight in the variety of written text. These results imply that even though texts may use the same themes and even have a similar background and context a drastically different story can emerge. In *Hidden Symptoms* the story is shown from Theresa’s and Robert’s perspective, however, the reader is not in their heads but more an observer. In

“Naming the Names” the reader is in Finn’s head, which means that they are not at a distance but in the story. This emphasizes the active role that Finn plays in the Troubles, which means that there is a nearly endless variety within written text which can be utilized in many different ways. The two texts which were used for this thesis show the reader two different perspectives of one side of the Troubles. Therefore they might provide further insight for the reader and might even increase sympathy and awareness for a perspective they might not have known existed. The implications of these results can have quite an impact because it can change the way conflict is viewed and might even change the tactics which are used within a conflict. However, these results are too specific to be able to do that on their own.

### **Future Research Possibilities**

There are a great number of possibilities for further research. The results from this thesis are enough to confirm the hypothesis mentioned at the start of this thesis. However, more research is necessary to confirm this in a broader sense, over a larger corpus and period of time. This thesis confirms this hypothesis for these two texts within one side of this specific conflict. To turn this hypothesis into a reliable statement more research is necessary within this conflict alone and throughout other conflicts. Within this conflict the same research can be done concerning the Loyalists of the Troubles. Literature from other conflicts has to be compared and analysed before a reliable conclusion can be formed in the broad sense of contesting memories within conflicts. Besides that it would also be useful to look into the literature from after the Good Friday Agreement. What happens to literature after a conflict? Is what this thesis found still visible or is there a visible change? This thesis is a good starting point for breaking the tradition of the image of merely two conflicting perspectives but more evidence and research is needed to lend these results more weight.

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