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- 1 The films about the Troubles, shot during this period (1970 - 1990), look mainly at the IRA and its relationship with England, such as *Hennessy* by Don Sharp (1975) and *The Long Good Friday* by John McKenzie (1979). The films made during the peace process (1990 - 2001) reflect the question of identity by representing, for example, some members of the IRA assessing their lives and turning away from political violence. Comedies such as *Divorcing Jack* by David Caffrey (1998) and *An Everlasting Piece* by Barry Levinson (2000) - also made during the peace process - use irony to denounce the political violence of the Troubles and depict the hope that the peace process generates. Films shot during the peace process - which reconsiders the East-West relations and the internal relations in Northern Ireland between the two communities - focus primarily on the Catholic community (nationalists and Republicans) and their relationship with the British.¹ Intercommunal relations rarely appear in films and the Protestant community, already relatively absent from cinema screens, is almost exclusively represented by Loyalist paramilitaries. Indeed, among twenty-three films shot and released between 1975 and 2005, only three of them provide depictions of Protestant: *Nothing Personal* by Irish director Thaddeus O'Sullivan (1995),² *Resurrection Man* by Welsh director Marc Evans (1998)³ and *As the Beast Sleeps* by British director Harry Bradbeer (2001) and Northern-Irish screenwriter Gary Mitchell.
- 2 Given the dominant portrayals of Catholics and Republicans in the cinematographic images of the political conflict, one can wonder about this unbalanced representation. This could have several meanings: Catholics could be seen as the main victims of the political conflict; the Republican cause could appear as easy to understand, therefore it

is visible on screen; last but not least, the Republicans could be the main actors of violence. As Martin McLoone suggests:

the unrelieved concentration on the IRA has given the impression that the violence in the North has been entirely the fault of the Republicans, and the Loyalist community, by dint of its being ignored, has largely escaped scrutiny. (...) There has been a paucity of film material which has dealt with the Unionists in Northern Ireland in any capacity at all.⁴

- 3 Yet, despite the implication of the Protestants in the political conflict, they have been very poorly represented in films therefore their image has become enigmatic and almost invisible on screen. This phenomenon has been observed since 1988, when John Hill defined them as “a group conspicuously absent from most films about Ireland.”⁵ Ten years later, through a “pro-Unionist” point of view, Brian McIlroy railed against the domination of Republican ideology:
- 4 The prevailing visualisation of the ‘Troubles’ in drama and documentary, particularly in the 1980’s and 1990’s, is dominated by Irish nationalist and Republican ideology (...); and the Protestant community is constantly elided by American, British and Irish filmmakers (...) who prefer to accept the anti-imperialist view of Northern Ireland’s existence.⁶
- 5 There have been very few local film productions: *As the Beast Sleeps* - an indigenous film produced by BBC Northern Ireland and featuring Northern Irish actors - could be qualified as the only “self portrayal” of the Protestant community among the films dealing with the Northern Irish political conflict. Hence, one can notice here a deficit of “Protestant” filmic production. The facts that cinematic representations of the conflict focus on the Catholic side go beyond the geographic borders of Northern Ireland and that Protestants remain *off-frame* reinforce the idea that, in a general manner, Unionism-Loyalism⁷ is not as popular as Nationalism-Republicanism.⁸ In fact, the cinematic portrayal of the conflict conforms to the general pattern of representations. The Protestants are seen as “the other” within the conflict. The rarity of films about Protestants shows that the identity and the experience of both communities are not equitably explored in the cinematic representation of the political conflict in Northern Ireland. The explanations for this Protestant cinematic deficit could be, most notably, “the multiple obstacles (ideological, emotional, geographical) that prevent the outside world from identifying with the Unionist position. (...) If the others find it difficult to understand, it is very much due to the deficient way unionism has imagined itself.”⁹
- 6 This image of unionism has contributed to obstruct the understanding of this ideology - deeply rooted in Ulster Protestantism - and given a rather negative image:
For the outside world Ulster Protestantism remains an enigma. The arcane rituals of the Loyal Orders, the negativity of the political leadership, (...) the savagery of the paramilitary, all token for the outsider a people in an abject condition.¹⁰
- 7 Whenever Protestant characters appear on screen, they are usually marginal and they are embodied by Loyalists,¹¹ which is particularly harmful to their representation. The cinematic deficit in terms of quantity and quality has in turn weakened their image and reinforced the fact that their position is impossible to represent. As Martin McLoone says:

In one sense this has had a detrimental effect on the Unionist political position, which has been largely underrepresented, thus confirming the siege mentality of the Unionist community that comes from its sense of isolation.¹²

- 8 Besides, the rare images of the Protestants on screen project portrayals of terrorists and psychopaths murdering Catholics.
- 9 The contemporary filmic representation of Ulster Loyalism has been prefigured by a long history of jaundice[d] [sic] literary portrayal of Ulster Protestantism. Loyalism comes to be read as the original tribal voice of the Ulster Protestant rather than a historically located reactionary political movement (...). Orangeism comes to be portrayed as a tribal response to the Catholic as other and the Loyalist abject comes to stand for the totality of Protestant experience.¹³
- 10 After a presentation of the phenomenon, this article examines the ways in which *Nothing Personal* and *Resurrection Man* explore political change in Northern Ireland and how cinema provides an insight into the world of Loyalist paramilitarism that stands for the Protestant community. Despite the noteworthy interest of the film *As the Beast Sleeps* in terms of new images of the Protestants, this film won't be examined in this article for the historical period treated corresponds to the peace process - precisely the 1994 ceasefires - and not the Troubles.¹⁴ In addition the film depicts UDA paramilitaries whereas *Nothing Personal* and *Resurrection Man* deal with the UVF. The film represents a Loyalist paramilitary group from the UDA (Ulster Defence Association)¹⁵ who come from the urban working-class Protestant community of Belfast, extremely disturbed by the political changes emanating from the peace process. This film also explores questions of identity internal to the group in terms of their loyalty and their interrogations about their social future. As Wesley Hutchinson observes:- 11 It is within the context of this tense political debate that Mitchell has produced some of his best work to date. *As the Beast Sleeps*, written originally in late 1994 as a play (published in 2001) and subsequently adapted for television for a remarkable BBC Northern Ireland production in 2001, is a perfect illustration of the terms in which Mitchell examines the tensions within loyalism as a result of the ongoing peace process. (...) His writing has focused almost exclusively on the urban working-class Protestant community to which he belongs, his theatre providing a unique insight into the closed world of Loyalist paramilitarism. Given the almost impenetrable wall of silence and cliché that surrounds unionism as a whole and loyalism in particular, such an insight would, in itself, be enough to justify an interest in his work.¹⁶
- 12 The two films under scrutiny were shot during the peace process, yet they explore the Troubles. *Nothing Personal* by Thaddeus O'Sullivan and *Resurrection Man* by Marc Evans focus on Loyalists from the UVF (*Ulster Volunteer Force*)¹⁷ during the 70's in Belfast, when sectarian violence reached its peak. While *Nothing Personal* takes into account the political change generated by the peace process to a certain extent, *Resurrection Man* depicts the Troubles and its bloody escalation. These two films display a very specific and particularly abject image of Protestants from Northern Ireland with characters clearly echoing the Shankill Butchers.¹⁸ However, the Shankill Butchers were surprisingly unknown to the public: "Most of those I spoke to had never heard of the Shankill Butchers, even though they killed more people than any other mass murderers in British criminal history."¹⁹ The aim of this article is to explore how the Loyalists - who stand for the Protestants - are portrayed as psychopaths.

Loyalists and Psychopaths

- 13 *Nothing Personal* and *Resurrection Man* focus on Loyalists from the UVF in the seventies when this paramilitary organization became involved in communal violence and sectarian assassination. As Martin Dillon explains:
- The advent of civil rights protests in the sixties, and the fact that Catholics were beginning to agitate for political and social reforms, persuaded influential elements within Ulster Unionism that the UVF should be reactivated. Sectarian assassination became a daily way of life and young and old, male and female, became its victim... the innocent suffered.²⁰
- 14 If *Nothing Personal* and *Resurrection Man* allude explicitly to the *Shankill Butchers*, the main character of *Resurrection Man* focuses on the criminal Lenny Murphy. In both films, the Loyalist thus appears on screen as a Catholic-hating psychopath. He kidnaps his Catholic victims in the middle of the night on the streets of Belfast, tortures, stabs, and mutilates them before finally killing them. These bloody scenes of torture are particularly recurrent in *Resurrection Man*.
- 15 The Shankill Butchers remain unique in the sadistic ferocity of their modus operandi. The Provisional IRA – by far the most important of the various murderous organizations of Northern Ireland – never unleashed on society anyone quite like Lenny Murphy, the chief of the Shankill Butchers.²¹
- 16 No phenomenon comparable to the Shankill Butchers' has been observed in the history of the IRA. This contributes to underline the difference between the Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland. The particularly abject crimes committed by Lenny Murphy mark out the image of the UVF Loyalists amongst the paramilitaries from Northern Ireland. As Connor Cruise O'Brien emphasizes:
- 17 Lack of centralized authority on the Protestant side and the relatively tight hierarchical structure of the Irish Republican Army may partly account for the difference. The rest of the difference may be accounted for by the fact that the IRA is much more interested in its public 'image' than the Protestant paramilitaries have been in theirs.²²
- 18 If the Loyalists have neglected their public image, contrary to the IRA, one can also add the impact of the British media coverage of the beginnings of the Troubles which "tended to focus on the justice of the civil rights case and the obstacles to reform represented by unionism/loyalism. Following the arrival of British troops in the North in 1969 and the resurgence of the IRA in 1970, the dominant mode of reporting the conflict tended to be in terms of the problem of the IRA violence."²³
- 19 *Nothing Personal* and *Resurrection Man* corroborate the abject portrayals of Loyalists in a general manner. These films mainly display political motivations that are impossible to understand and that result in barbarian murder.

Nothing Personal

- 20 Because of the focus on Protestants, *Nothing Personal* (1996) projects, de facto, new images within the cinematic representation of the political conflict. As the Irish director, Thaddeus O'Sullivan, states: "I was interested in telling a story about the

Loyalist paramilitaries and what motivates them because what we usually see is the IRA perspective.”²⁴ Actually, the announcement of the ceasefires of 1994, with the feeling that violence was declining and that it was time for talks and political action engendered new on-screen interpretations of the Troubles. Despite the fact that *Nothing Personal* still shows some Loyalists as psychopaths, the change in the political climate is visible in this film. Indeed, during the peace process, “talk and violence were presented as mutually exclusive. Any party with links to a terrorist organisation actively involved in violence at any given time was to be refused access to or to be excluded from the talks. Talk meant dialogue which in turn implied a willingness to negotiate, a flexibility indicating a willingness to move from traditional positions, a readiness for compromise, an acceptance of change. Indeed, change was the ultimate goal of talks.”²⁵

21 *Nothing Personal* draws a difference between the leadership of the UVF and those who follow orders. By depicting a leader who tries to negotiate a ceasefire with the IRA, the film shows an attempt to break with the past and its sectarian violence, and a willingness to change by getting involved in talks.²⁶ However, the rest of the gang led by Kenny (James Frain) fail to prevent his team, notably Ginger (Ian Hart), from perpetuating sectarian violence, as he stabs and mutilates his Catholic victims.

22 The film shows the city of Belfast confined to a few narrow streets where danger is tangible as characters find themselves walking outside their respective “territory,” a clear mark of sectarianism. The dead-end streets limited by barricades imprison the characters, whether Catholics or Protestants, and the city has become a labyrinth from which no escape is possible. The film opts for a sense of entrapment that adds to the tragic scenario. As the director underlines, the reconstitution of space is part of the narrative and conveys the sectarian divide:

It has a very physical style (...). Stylistically, that’s how it is in terms of narrative; visually, I’ve taken the area in which these people live as an enclosed ghetto where Protestants and Catholics are side by side divided by this line. Usually we don’t go into the outside world, we stay within this very, very enclosed community and that’s reflected in the way the film is shot. We never leave the streets and the streets are very much treated as a stage. Everything is cleared off the streets and they’re lit and presented in a way that is really more theatrical than naturalistic. (...) The landscape doesn’t serve as a backdrop. I try to make the landscape tell us something and to make the streets perform in a dramatic way.²⁷

23 Indeed, the film’s setting and the lighting play an important part in the narrative. The film depicts a lugubrious urban context, shot at night, in which light, in the dark backstreets, comes from the protestant pubs or from criminal fires. Devoid of any realistic detail, the film projects a surreal image of the city through its use of light and colour. The dim light contributes to the menacing atmosphere of the place and characters appear as ghosts in the deserted streets. The city of Belfast looks like a dead city which adds to the tragic dimension of the film. The portrayal of Belfast in *Nothing Personal* shows the characters enclosed in this sectarian geography which has a direct impact on their domestic lives. Besides the presence of the paramilitaries, the city, through its claustrophobic atmosphere, represents a trap in which you inevitably fall. When the Catholic Liam Kelly (John Lynch) is kidnapped by the Loyalists, he is assaulted and nobody comes to help him.

- 24 The first scene of the film opens with the explosion of a Protestant pub, an attack perpetrated by the IRA. The narrative structure of the movie is then based on the reaction and the evolution of the UVF paramilitary organization in the aftermath of the attack. As Martin McLoone notes, the film explores the relationship within the group: "O'Sullivan plays out a complicated set of plots and subplots that look at the effects of violence across three generations of interrelated characters."²⁸ Ginger (Ian Hart) follows Kenny's orders, who himself obeys Leonard (Michael Gambon), the Loyalist Godfather. Motivated by their desire for revenge, Kenny and Ginger watch intently who walks out of a Catholic pub to get some "information" about the IRA men who planted the bomb - in fact, in order to kill them. The film conveys the feeling that the Loyalists kill Catholics at random as Ginger shoots dead the first man that comes out of the pub. Even if he has no evidence of his identity, Ginger is convinced that he is the enemy to kill: "He's here every Friday night. That's him! I'm sure and certain. Hi mucker!" Then Ginger stabs and mutilates the dead body. The character of Ginger, whose crimes allude clearly to those committed by Lenny Murphy, displays his visceral hatred towards the Catholics and projects images of a psychopath taking great pleasure in murdering and mutilating his victims. Despite the fact that he did not find an actual member of the IRA, Ginger satisfies his criminal impulses in assassinating a man, as long as the victim is Catholic: "It smells like a *Taig*!"²⁹ The film shows that the Loyalist paramilitary action as having no political meaning since it is exclusively based on Catholic hatred and sectarian crime. If this kind of murder alludes to the Shankill Butchers', one can add that arbitrary assassination of Catholic victims used to be recurrent within the UVF. As it is clearly expressed by August Spence ('Gusty' Spence),³⁰ the leader of the UVF in 1966: "If you can't get an IRA man, get a *Taig*."³¹ Indeed, "this statement implies that within the Protestant paramilitary mind there was a crudely held belief that Catholicism, Nationalism and Republicanism were in some way inseparable."³² The character of Ginger in *Nothing Personal* demonstrates that the Loyalist paramilitary action is motivated by racism and hatred of the other community. If the violence perpetuated by the UVF reveals sterile, since political motivation does not exist, the nature of paramilitary violence is especially sadistic. Nevertheless, Ginger defends his position as a soldier who obeys his UVF superiors:

If we're playing serious, we have to make life for them so friggin' miserable that they get down on their hands and knees and crawl across the fucking border. In my wee book that makes any Catholic as good as another.

- 25 As Kenny fails to prevent Ginger from perpetuating sectarian murder, he is also torn between the disgust he feels for Ginger's sadistic practice - "You fucking love it, don't you!- I can't trust you to keep you head down and act sensible" - and Leonard's orders. As the leader calls for a ceasefire, Kenny does not understand him and consequently he feels betrayed by Leonard and the UVF:

Leonard: A truce has been agreed.

Kenny: Are they running out of supplies or what?

Leonard: The barricades come down in the morning and the police come back on patrolling in all areas. (...) I think we should support it. (...) Kenny, our people want to get back to live in peaceful lives. That's what they want. (...) It's been decided. There's been no treachery, Kenny. Get that out of your head. (...) Kenny, I know how you feel.

Kenny: Do you indeed?

- 26 Because of Ginger's pathological hatred of Catholics, Kenny knows that his authority is put into question and becomes therefore vulnerable within his own paramilitary group. This drives the film towards its tragic closure. Indeed Leonard condemns the nature of the crimes committed by Ginger as it gives a bad image to the Protestants and which casts the doubt on the UVF's truthfulness in negotiating with the IRA leader, Cecil (Gerard McSorley). The truce the two paramilitary leaders have agreed on turns out to be impossible. Indeed, as the two elder leaders opt for politics, the young ones show hostility towards this political move. In that, *Nothing Personal* depicts the truce as a failure on the part of the UVF paramilitaries. Despite Leonard's orders, Ginger remains out of control; and Kenny has to eliminate Ginger:

You want to go after these bombers and rip their hearts out. That's all very well if you want to get a clean kill but a grubby killing like this evening just gets our people a bad name they don't deserve. (...) That's why we can't afford having raving maniacs like that nauseating shite on our team. I don't want to hear his name mentioned again. I don't want to see his face again. He is to be put asleep Kenny. You can take that as an order.

- 27 Kenny, trapped between his superiors and his men, realizes that the Loyalist hierarchy does not only eliminate the Other - the Catholics - but also its own. Highly disturbed by this inflexible vision of loyalty and by the context of the truce, Kenny comes to wonder about his beliefs, the UVF and the meaning of his life. As he has sacrificed his life for the UVF, he finds himself a lost individual since he has no family life anymore (his wife separated from him and lives on her own with their children). The film shows the destructive consequences of political violence engenders in the private sphere of home and family life on both sides of the sectarian divide. Indeed, following the same pattern on the Catholic side, Liam's daughter dies as she becomes the ultimate victim of political violence in the film. After being assaulted by Ginger and Kenny, Liam - who happens to be Kenny's childhood former friend - is freed. On his way back home, he sees his daughter Kathleen (Jeni Courtney), being shot dead as she tries to prevent young teenager Michael (Gareth O'Hare) from firing at the two Loyalists. The film denounces the meaningless of paramilitary violence by showing its innocent victims, notably children. As the director explains, the film tries to look at the victims of both communities:

I didn't really have a political position to take. The film is about Loyalists and there is a story there about what they're doing and why they're doing it, but the film is very angry about the loss of innocent life and that's why I made it.³³

- 28 The optimism permitted by the peace process is nevertheless tangible in the film on another level. The first time Liam is beaten up by Ginger and Kenny, he is given medical assistance by Ann (Maria Doyle Kennedy), the only Protestant woman of the film, who is in fact Kenny's ex-wife. She invites Liam to her home and they develop a relationship. According to John Hill, "the film does seek to counter the fatalistic momentum of the plot through the tentative suggestion of cross-community romance."³⁴ It suggests reconciliation across the sectarian divide. In the end, Liam and Ann find themselves in the same cemetery (the only non-sectarian place in the film), as they are both attending the funerals of Kathleen and Kenny.

- 29 If *Nothing Personal* presents a new portrayal of the political conflict in Northern Ireland - as it explores the Loyalist paramilitary world it is "partly subverted by the familiar discourses of fatalism and pessimism." The film shows "the difficulties involved in

moving beyond the traditional vocabulary of the 'troubles'." ³⁵ Indeed, it turns out that in the other films about the Troubles, the involvement of members in a paramilitary organization (the IRA) is fatal to the character. ³⁶ Similarly, Kenny after shooting Ginger, will let himself be shot dead by the British soldiers. *Nothing Personal* reflects a multifaceted but still rather negative image of the Loyalists. It reveals the division between the members of the UVF and through the character of Ginger, the Loyalists appear as psychopaths motivated by only sectarian hatred not by any political argument. If the Loyalists see themselves as a legitimate army that defends Ulster and its historic tradition, the nature of their paramilitary organization, shorn of ideology, is that of a criminal organization. The group seems to be lost - in terms of identity and politics - and self-destructive. Indeed, as the director explains, the film explores in a way the deadlock in which the Loyalists find themselves:

I do think that the Loyalist tradition manifests itself in rather defensive acts and there is a sense of being embattled and having their backs to the wall and all of that, and that is certainly an element in our story. I think that some of the ways in which the main characters react are as a consequence of feeling entrapped and in terms of the troubles they are; they're stuck for somewhere to go. ³⁷

Resurrection Man

- 30 If *Nothing Personal* depicts a negative image of the Loyalists in Northern Ireland, the representation of this paramilitary group is totally abject in *Resurrection Man*. It is also rather simplistic, as it does not project any nuances in the evolution of the paramilitary organization. It focuses exclusively on the portrayal of a Shankill Butcher-type psychopath through the character of Victor Kelly (Stuart Townsend) who takes even more pleasure than Ginger in mutilating his Catholic victims. Obsessed with his psychotic impulses of murdering, he plans his crimes with great precision. *Resurrection Man* oscillates between gangster and horror film genres as the character of Victor Kelly embodies a gangster and a vampire at the same time. Victor Kelly becomes more and more powerful and feared in his neighbourhood. He has imposed a reign of terror through his visceral hate for Catholics but also because of the nature of his crimes, as he stabs, mutilates and cuts his victims into pieces. The film came under much criticism, and was called a "nauseating exercise" ³⁸ and "an outpouring of anti-Unionist hatred". ³⁹ Besides,

The film also enjoyed the rare distinction of uniting political opponents when a Sinn Féin spokesperson joined members of the Loyalist parties with paramilitary connections, the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) and Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), in denouncing the film as 'irresponsible'. ⁴⁰

- 31 Contrary to *Nothing Personal* which takes into account the political conflict and notably the position of the IRA, *Resurrection Man* concentrates on the internal life of the paramilitary group, leaving out the outside world. It was the choice of the filmmakers not to present *Resurrection Man* in the perspective of the political conflict. The film tends to explore violence via the psychological evolution of a psychopath, as screenwriter Eoin McNamee defends:

I want people to engage with the character of Victor Kelly, and as James Cagney did, take you on a personal journey into hell. I expect them to be moved and to be able to empathise with the characters. I don't want them to feel they are going to a worthy

movie about a political situation, because that's not what it is. (...) It's about men and violence. There's a bit of Victor in all of us.⁴¹

- 32 Northern Irish Protestant playwright Gary Mitchell, the author of *As the Beast Sleeps*, himself reacted to the film, underlining the poor representation of the Protestant community, its shocking and chilling portrayal:

I have often heard it said that Protestants in Northern Ireland, to their detriment, have never taken any form of artistic expression seriously enough - and if contributions to theatre or local exhibitions have been poor, then cinema has been the equivalent of, well, *Resurrection Man* vs *The Boxer*. (...) Ugly, however, is reserved for depictions of the Protestant/Loyalist community - or so you would think if you were relying on *Resurrection Man* as a guide. I am not suggesting that the Shankill Butchers, depicted here as idiotic, homosexual drug addicts, should have been given better treatment. It wasn't what this film said about those men that I found offensive, but what it said - or did not say - about the Protestant community from which they came.⁴²

- 33 *Resurrection Man*'s Victor Kelly echoes the figure of the vampire. Indeed, Victor's psychopathology - his lust for the blood of his Catholic victims - shows in every crime and reaches its paroxysm in the bathroom sequence when he bathes one of his victims in his own blood. The Loyalists appear as monsters. Since the narrative structure is not linked to any political context, the film's explanation for the main protagonist's criminal and irrational behaviour is psychological. In this regard, the film focuses on the relationship he has with his family and his problems of identity. The beginning of the film opens with a childhood flash-back just as Victor is about to be killed. The following scene shows Victor Kelly as a child in a cinema, watching the film *Public Enemy*,⁴³ fascinated by gangster Tom Powers (James Cagney). This scene suggests that Victor Kelly has built his personality on the model of thirties American gangsters,⁴⁴ and indeed the evolution of this Protestant Loyalist follows the narrative structure of classic gangster films as we are given to observe the rise and the fall of the hero. Victor, attracted by power and wealth has succeeded in becoming the leader of the gang after overthrowing his former boss Darkie (John Hannah) and seducing his girlfriend. Just like any other gangster, he is killed at the end of the film. *Resurrection Man* also explores part of the private life of the character, and notably his family. According to Martin McLoone, the "only explanation offered for his almost vampiric love of Fenian blood is his 'mammy's boy' oedipal problem with his ineffectual Catholic father."⁴⁵ That is what the Protestant mother of Victor, Dorcas Kelly (Brenda Fricker), tells the journalist Ryan (James Nesbitt), as they meet regularly for interviews:

Although I have little tolerance of the Roman persuasion, Victor never learnt bigotry at this knee. It's my firm belief that all he really wanted was to be a mature and responsible member of society, loyal to the Crown and devoted to his mother. He suffered from incomprehension. He was in pain because of life. His father James was no help in this regard. He was backward and shy.

- 34 If most of the films about the political conflict in Northern Ireland represent home as a refuge, where the members of the family - especially the women - try to prevent the men from getting involved in political violence, as in *Titanic Town* (1998) and *Some Mother's Son* (1996), *Resurrection Man* shows the hero's family as "the very source of Victor's pathology in the form of a symbolically 'castrated' Catholic father and overbearing Protestant mother."⁴⁶ Thus the visceral hatred that he feels for the Catholics would be firstly explained by the fact that he hates his father, James Kelly

(George Shane) - a Catholic name and therefore a vector of the Catholic legacy. As his own name conveys a Catholic identity, the hero feels ashamed and lost in between two identities: Catholic and Protestant. His very name gives him the position of the Other in his Protestant community and excludes him from the Loyalist tradition. Accordingly, Victor tells Sammy McClure (Sean McGinley), the godfather of this Loyalist group Victor his existential problem:

People in this town, fuck them! Do you know what they say? My da is a Fenian! Does my da have ten kids! Does my da yap on about the discrimination! Does my da kiss the Pope's arse! Fenian fuckers! You've got to do them slow!

- 35 For Martin McLoone, Victor thus “seems to lack any conviction other than a sexual perversity that mirrors his admiration for the Nazis.”⁴⁷ Because he feels an outcast, Victor wants to prove that he is a Protestant, to display his loyalty to his community. He reinvents himself with each horrific murder and in the process, makes a name for himself within the Loyalist community and an identity within the Loyalist supremacy of the reign of terror. *Resurrection Man* shows several scenes of torture in which he beats his Catholic victims, lacerates them with a knife and puts the dead bodies in a Christ-like pose. Each murder is for him a step in his quest for identity. “However, given that this irrational pleasure for Catholic blood is a response to his own Catholic father, then each atrocity he commits is both an act of symbolic patricide and demonstration of self-loathing.”⁴⁸

- 36 If the Loyalist paramilitary violence is explored through a unilateral vision – the sordid and sadistic elimination of Catholics in Northern Ireland – it is however connected to the rest of the Northern Irish society for it is broadcast by the media through the character of alcoholic journalist Ryan. Here, the voyeuristic quality of the media is put forward. As the journalist enters into the circle of Victor Kelly and his men to better report on the crimes perpetuated by the terrorists, he becomes fascinated by Victor's actions. Before deeming his mission as informative and objective, Ryan lies in wait for the next horrific murder to comment on. The monstrosity of Victor Kelly's crimes arouses the journalist curiosity. In a perverse way, he wants the exclusivity of the news, as he tells his colleague Ivor Coppinger (James Ellis):

Coppinger: Stabs wounds on torso and limbs: not fatal. (...) Root of tongue severed.

Ryan: Here. Give me that! Jesus, the root of the tongue!

Coppinger: Good God! The boy is interested!

Ryan: Listen, can I write this one up?

Coppinger: Be my guest, I wouldn't want to stand in the way of a great journalistic career.

- 37 Ryan's gruesome articles on the gang's crimes are perceived by the criminals as glorious achievements. Victor Kelly and his men read the papers, watch the news on TV and congratulate themselves as they prepare themselves to torture and kill other Catholic victims:

Willie: Did you see the news, Victor! Did you fucking see it!

Ivan: We're fucking famous, so we are.

Willie: “Brutal sectarian killing. Not claimed by any organisation.” But we are an organisation! The fucking Famous Five organisation!

Ivan: They never said “carving,” Victor. They just said “beat to death” and all that but they never said “cut.”

Victor: They'll say it.

- 38 As this dialogue shows, the word UVF is never pronounced by the paramilitaries who call themselves “The Famous Five.” Shorn of realistic detail, political terminology or UVF rhetorics, *Resurrection Man* drives towards a surreal narrative structure that the image of the media consolidates. The line between reality and fiction seems to be blurred by the accounts of the murders in Ryan’s articles. The film also suggests a symbiotic relationship between barbarian Loyalist violence and the public fascination for the media covering the news. As McClure suggests to Ryan, “Everybody has got something to do with it. (...) It’s everybody’s responsibility.” By the same token, the press oversteps its media sphere to enter into the world of Loyalist paramilitarism. The dialogue between Victor and his men underlines the interest that the criminals take in the precise and clinical presentation of their action in the newspaper articles.
- 39 As a consequence, the media become an actor in the political violence since they define publicly the image of the Loyalist paramilitaries and an officious spokesman for the organization. McClure, who in the end manipulates both Victor and Ryan, defines himself as “a sort of technician (...) in communication.” He finds in Ryan his “communication” counterpart. If Ryan falls for McClure’s Machiavellian tricks, he is nevertheless shown to be an accomplice. Hence, the film presents the officious partnership between the press and the Loyalists and to a greater extent, between the media and the criminals, as mutually beneficial. McClure finds in Ryan a great opportunity to cover the Loyalist reign of terror and the crimes of Victor Kelly, building up his reputation and his public image via the media. As McClure tells Victor, “See Victor, it’s business. You’re becoming a big man. Let them ask their questions. Grow in the public mind. (...) Victor Kelly, the man and the myth.” Indeed, through Ryan’s articles, Victor Kelly becomes a mythical character who embodies the Loyalist supremacy.
- 40 Despite Eoin McName’s decision not to depict any political nor any representation of the Troubles on the part of Eoin McName, the film nevertheless reveals the reign of terror that was one of the UVF’s goals in the seventies:
- March 1972 saw the major change that the Nationalists and the Republicans had been demanding: the abolition of the Stormont Parliament. Unionists watched their edifice crumbling without resistance and saw Provisional IRA leaders being flown to London for talks with the British Prime Minister, Edward Heath. In the Protestant community there was not just despondency but a feeling of political impotence and an increasing suspicion that, with Stormont gone, they were about to be driven into a United Ireland. The fall of Stormont created a trauma in the Protestant community which has never been properly evaluated in relation to the subsequent development of Loyalist paramilitary thinking. The Provisionals achieved something which the Loyalists had believed could never happen: the destruction of so-called Protestant supremacy. The Protestants were immersed in feelings of frustration and despair. They could not attack the British Army or the police because they saw them as their security forces; instead they reverted to terror against the other community.⁴⁹
- 41 Through the journalist’s reports, the character of Victor Kelly has created a media identity, based on the fusion of Loyalist terror and gangster role-model: the psychopath/vampire Loyalist. At the end of the film the megalomaniac gangster is shot dead in front of his house and before the eyes of Ryan and McClure. As in *Nothing Personal*, the Loyalist godfather orchestrates Victor’s elimination. The motivations for this execution are however different. Leonard decides to eliminate Kenny because he is

not able to deal with Ginger's psychopathology, which endangers the political strategy of the UVF; McClure feels that Victor has become too famous and gets too much attention from the press. *Resurrection Man* suggests that anybody in Northern Ireland could be an accomplice to barbarian Loyalist violence, publicized by voyeuristic media. The public and the criminals are put on the same level as they are equally excited by reading morbid and sinister stories that the press keep on publishing. Hence, it is hard to draw the line between the Loyalists' violence and the surrounding social environment. The film depicts Northern Ireland as a society deeply immersed in abject and meaningless violence.

- 42 *Nothing Personal* and *Resurrection Man* undeniably renew the vision of the Northern Irish political conflict through their representations of Loyalists. As cinema provides a space for new interpretations of the Troubles, the peace process has enabled to question sectarian violence, as can be seen in *Nothing Personal*. However the absence of ideological motivation on the part of the UVF in both films contributes to pass over the causes of the political conflict and notably the Loyalist strategy and motivations. Intercommunal relations come down to blood-thirsty Protestants who savagely assassinate and torture Catholics such as Ginger in *Nothing Personal* and, particularly, Victor Kelly in *Resurrection Man*. Understanding the Protestants thus remains difficult as their political actions are represented through the angle of a bleak and destructive psychopathology. While the Protestant community is rarely explored in films, the films which do explore it tend to focus on the portrayal of mentally deranged fanatics. If these films have observed the political change and offered a unique medium for addressing Northern Ireland's violent past, they have however anchored the Protestants in a filmic representation of monstrosity.

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NOTES

1. If these films explore the Catholic perspective, some of them concentrate on Catholic victims of specific events of the Troubles - like *Bloody Sunday* (2001) - and offer an alternative to the official version of history endowing cinema with a role as historical source and also as a space for the memory of the victims.
2. Originally entitled *Fanatic Hearts*, Irish director Thaddeus O'Sullivan finally changed the title. The screenplay is written by Daniel Mornin who adapted his own novel *All Our Fault*, 1991. *Nothing Personal* is an Irish/ British coproduction, produced by Channel Four Films / Little Bird / Bord Scannán na hEireann / The Irish Film Board / British Screen / Jonathan Cavendish / Tracey Seaward.
3. If the director is Welsh, the screenplay is from Northern Irishman Eoin McNamee who based *Resurrection Man* on his novel of the same name (1993). The film is British, produced by Revolution Films / Polygram Filmed Entertainment/ Gina Carter / Andrew Eaton / Michael Winterbottom.
4. Martin McLoone, *Irish Film, The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), 79.
5. John Hill, *Cinema and Ireland*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1988, 191.
6. Brian McIlroy, *Shooting to Kill, Filmmaking and the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland* (Richmond: Steveston Press, 2001), 11.
7. Unionist and Loyalist designate Protestants in favour of the British Monarchy and opposed to any form of unification with the Republic of Ireland.

8. Republican designates Catholics, in favour of the integration of Northern Ireland in the Republic, of the re-unification with the South.
9. « Les multiples obstacles (idéologiques, émotionnels, géographiques) qui empêchent le monde extérieur de s'identifier à la position unioniste. (...). [S]i les autres ont du mal à le comprendre, c'est dans une très large mesure à cause de la façon déficiente dont l'unionisme s'est lui-même imaginé. En effet, l'image que projette l'unionisme à l'extérieur est frappée par une double parcellisation, à la fois temporelle et spatiale ». Wesley Hutchinson, *Espaces de l'imaginaire Unioniste nord-irlandais*. Caen : Presses Universitaires de Caen, 1999, 11.
10. Desmond Bell, 'Of Monsters and Men : Protestant Identity and Film Culture in Ireland', in *Dissenting Voices/ Imagined Communities* (Belfast : Belfast Film Festival, 2001), 5.
11. This can be seen in *Angel* (Neil Jordan, 1982), *Cal* (Pat O'Connor, 1984), *High Boot Benny* (Joe Comerford, 1993) and *Divorcing Jack* (David Caffrey, 1998). In *An Everlasting Piece* (Barry Levinson, 2000), George, a Protestant character, is isolated from the rest of his community as he develops a friendly relationship with a Catholic family.
12. Martin McLoone, *Irish Film, The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), 79.
13. Desmond Bell, *op.cit.*, 6.
14. See Jennifer Cornell, 'Walking with Beasts. Gary Mitchell and the representation of Ulster Loyalism', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, Volume 29, n° 2, 2003.
15. The most important Protestant organization, created in 1971 and outlawed in 1992, which is closely connected with two paramilitary groups: the UFF and the RHC.
16. Wesley Hutchinson, Gary Mitchell's "talk process." Klincksieck/*Etudes anglaises*, 2003/2 - Tome 56, 206.
17. Protestant movement founded in 1913 to resist Home Rule, which resurfaced as an illegal paramilitary group in 1966 close to the DUP and Ian Paisley.
18. "The 'Shankill Butchers' gang, (...) was led by a psychopath called Lenny 'the Butcher' Murphy, who had a passionate hatred of Catholics and who clearly took pleasure in the act of killing, be it pulling a trigger or wielding a knife. (...) The infamous 'Shankill Butchers', the UVF gang (...) terrorized the nationalist community from the end of 1975 onwards by abducting their victims and then literally carving them up with butchers' knives." Peter Taylor, *Loyalists*, London: Bloomsbury, 2000, 152-153.
19. Martin Dillon, *The Shankill Butchers* (London: Arrow Books, 1990), XVII.
20. Martin Dillon, *op. cit.*, XVIII-XIX.
21. Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, in Martin Dillon, *op. cit.*, Foreword.
22. *Ibid.*
23. John Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland* (London: British Film Institute, 2006), 197.
24. Thaddeus O'Sullivan, *Film West*, 'Fanatic Heart', 7 July 1995, 18.
25. Wesley Hutchinson, Gary Mitchell's "talk process", Klincksieck/*Etudes anglaises*, 2003/2 - Tome 56, 210.
26. "For while the film is set in 1975, it is clearly informed by, and feeds into the politics of the contemporary 'peace process'. In Daniel Mornin's original novel, *All Our Fault* (1991), on which the film is based, there is no reference to a ceasefire. However, by the time the novel was made into a film the agreement of a 'truce' and the reactions of the paramilitaries to this had become key components of the plot." John Hill, *Ibid.*, 197.
27. Thaddeus O'Sullivan, *Ibid.*, 16.
28. Martin McLoone, *op. cit.*, 79.
29. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the Teague (teg, tig) reaches back to 1661. The dictionary classifies the word as colloquial and defines it as the anglicized spelling of the name *Tadhg*, which is variously pronounced *teg*, *tig*, or *taig*, and is a nickname for an Irishman. (...) In

Northern Ireland it was spelt *Taig* and used pejoratively rather like 'nigger' or 'Commie' in the United States", Martin Dillon, *op.cit.*, XXIV.

30. "The man who helped to reactivate the UVF was 'Gusty' Spence, an associate of Paisley's in the UPA. Spence came of a strongly Unionist family; his brother was the Unionist election agent for West Belfast. He was a shipyard worker who had some military training, having been in the British Army and served as a military policeman in Cyprus. The new UVF was a long way from the force which in Carson's day was supported by earl, general and mill-owner. Its predominantly working-class membership consisted, in Michael Farrell's description, of '...a small group of Paisley's supporters who, alarmed by his denunciations of the Unionist sell-out, had set up an armed organisation'." Tim Pat Coogan. *The Troubles*, London: Arrow Books, 1996, p. 58.

31. Augustus Spence in Martin Dillon, *Ibid.*, 14.

32. Martin Dillon, *Ibid.* (introduction), XXIV.

33. Thaddeus O'Sullivan, *Ibid.*, 17.

34. John Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland* (London: British Film Institute, 2006), 196.

35. John Hill, *Ibid.*

36. *Hennessy* (Don Sharp, 1975), *Cal* (Pat O'Connor, 1983), *A Prayer for the Dying* (Mike Hodges, 1987), *The Crying Game* (Neil Jordan, 1992).

37. Thaddeus O'Sullivan, *Ibid.*, 18.

38. Alexander Walker, *Evening Standard*, 29 January 1998, 29.

39. Christopher Tookey, *Daily Mail*, 30 January 1998, 44.

40. John Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland* (London: British Film Institute, 2006), 206.

41. Eoin McNamee, *Resurrection Man*, Notes de production, 1998, Irish Film Institute Library.

42. Gary Mitchell, *The Irish Times*, 'Red, White and Very Blue', 27 March 1998, 13.

43. *Public Enemy*, William A. Wellman, Warner Pictures, 1931.

44. Apart from *Public Enemy*, the most notable gangster films of the time are *Little Caesar*, Mervyn Le Roy, Warner Pictures, 1931 and *Scarface*, Howard Hawks, Atlantic Pictures (United Artists), 1932.

45. Martin McLoone, *Irish Film, The Emergence of a Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), 82.

46. John Hill, *op. cit.*, 206.

47. Martin McLoone, *op. cit.*, 82.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Martin DILLON. *op. cit.*, p. 14.

ABSTRACTS

Films about the political conflict in Northern Ireland (from 1968 to 1998) have been prevalent over the last three decades and they have reflected changes in Northern Ireland. Through its discursive construction, its independent voice and its popular reach, cinema provides a unique vehicle for the exploration of the Troubles and the peace process. This article attempts to trace the relationship between cinema and this conflict, notably through films dealing with Protestants, as a series of such films were produced at the time of the Good Friday Agreement. Thus, cinema does not only transcribe history in a static way but takes part in the changes going on in Northern Ireland.

INDEX

Keywords: Protestants, Unionism, Loyalists, political conflict, Northern Ireland, film, representation of psychopaths

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