

**DIACHRONIC TRANSFORMATIONS IN TROUBLES  
FICTION: A STUDY IN MODELS AND METHODS.**

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines relationships between Northern Irish Troubles fiction and its secondary critical literature. Producers of genre are viewed as consumers of the genre to which they contribute and the consumption of genre is seen as a pre-requisite of production. The research method is designed to examine genre systematically through the analysis of a large data set representative of the genre spectrum. It employs analytical concepts drawn from semiotics, specifically, paradigms and syntagms. Results are interpreted using Raymond Williams' "structures of feeling" and a modified version of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model.

The review of the secondary literature of Troubles fiction reveals two interpretative models. The first sees Troubles fiction as a static site of cultural production in which a narrow range of negative or false stereotypes is endlessly reproduced. The second sees Troubles fiction as a site of cultural production that has experienced a form of cultural rupture as a younger generation of writer critiques and re-interprets conventional representations. Analysis reveals that neither interpretative model emerging from the secondary critical literature fully describes Troubles fiction. Conventional critical approaches to Troubles fiction based on intuitive and impressionistic ways of seeking knowledge miss minute shifts in the genre's history. In particular, critical studies miss the return to relatively conservative thriller codes and conventions in novels published in the early 1990s during the peace talks. Critics have most regard for novels written by Irish literary authors and novels containing literary and technical modifications. The modality-orientated content modifications of 1980s thrillers do not attract literary interest.

This study sees genre as historically contingent, taking the view that the relationship between the macro-level perspective of generic system and the micro-level perspective of individual novel is best explored through specific description and comparison of novels both diachronically and at the level of the synchronic moment.

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## **PART A: Analytical Section**

### **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This is a study of models and methods of cultural studies analysis and interpretation. It attempts to construct a method for studying the ways in which codes and conventions within generic texts shift and change through diachronic transformations. It focuses on the primary and secondary literature of Troubles fiction. The study comprises two novel research elements: an examination of the assumptions, methods and interpretative frameworks of existing Troubles fiction critical literature; and a study of primary Troubles fiction texts using interpretative frameworks derived from cultural studies theory. In particular, data derived from the texts are interpreted using Raymond Williams' notion of "structures of feeling", and a modified version of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, which is an original contribution.

The definitional parameters adhered to in this study derive from Magee's *Gangsters or Guerrillas* (2001). Magee uses the term "Troubles fiction" to describe works of prose fiction that "deal either substantially or in part with the contemporary conflict" (3), and argues that the term is useful because it "defines the whole literary output under discussion in terms of a period and a theme, conveniently eliding a variety of genres and sub-categories and implicitly leaving formal questions (as to estimations of literary value) to the side in order to concentrate critical attention on the role and practice of misrepresentation" (3). Magee describes the phrase "Troubles

fiction” as “a generic catch-all or flag of convenience” (3). The phrase is used in a similar fashion in the present study, although the focus of this study is not misrepresentation, but diachronic transformations in the primary fiction and its secondary critical literature.

The study rests on an assumption that the analysis of cultural artefacts as undertaken by humanities and sociological scholarship is always, in the last instance, interpretative. Studies of culture, whether the approach is through traditional humanities scholarship or through cultural studies and sociological scholarship, are generally undertaken within conceptual frameworks constructed by the worldviews and political perspectives of specific traditions of scholarship. These conceptual frameworks can determine methods of analysis, which in turn can determine the interpretations that may be derived from whatever empirical data are being analysed. At one level this study is about the ways in which interpretation, which forms the basis of analytical activities in studies of cultural practice, may already be determined by choices about models and methods.

The objects of study in this project are Troubles novels. The choice of objects of study itself determines methodological activities. In this study various interpretative frameworks are used to read the empirical data, which are mediated through an analytical activity. The research method used to study the primary texts consists of the following steps:

- The individual researcher determines specific semiotic elements that will be identified in a large set of Troubles novels.

- The set of novels is read by the researcher and the chosen elements noted and entered into a database.
- The elements are compared and contrasted, and interpreted through the chosen interpretative frameworks.

This “big picture” survey differs from traditional methodologies of literary studies which tend to reify individual works and subject them to variants of close reading practices. This study rests on an assumption that the practice of close reading is itself an ideologically determined method normally used with writing demanding a relatively high degree of engagement by the reader in the process of constructing meaning. There are different types of such texts, for example, texts in which the high degree of engagement is the result of the gap between the production of the text and the moment of reception, such as the technical work of decoding fourteenth century English in twenty-first century Britain, or texts that are self-consciously opaque, for example, certain types of poetry.

Structuralist approaches to the text, which often involve reference to semiotic traditions and identification of codes and signifying practices, can be used to analyse and interpret a wide range of texts, as demonstrated, albeit journalistically, by Roland Barthes in the *Mythologies* (1973) essays. Close reading practices are normally used to interpret texts that are technically competent, whether those texts are traditionally “high” culture or proficient “popular” culture texts. It is difficult to undertake close reading methods when dealing with a vast number of texts that vary in terms of techniques. Novels can be written for all kinds of purposes, under all kinds of

conditions. Some of the popular culture Troubles novels are pulp novels, written quickly, published in low quality paperback formats, conceived as novels for pastime reading. Others are published in high quality formats. Roland Barthes' distinction between "readerly" and "writerly" texts might be of some help here. Writerly texts are texts that invite the reader's involvement in interpretation, while readerly texts are texts in which the writer keeps tight rein on the range of possible interpretations. The readerly text tends to be representational. The reader is positioned as a relatively passive receiver and the text tends towards "a" meaning. (Barthes, 1974). Texts that are more writerly in orientation invite "close reading" activity. There may be a relationship between texts that form part of the "canon" and the interpretative space within which the critic/reader can construct, through the reading process, specific interpretations. The construction of a research method based on some form of evaluative criteria for use with such a broad range of texts would be a circular argument that would determine its results in advance by its methodological approach.

Close reading is not used in this study to analyse the primary texts because such a method would yield evaluative results, with some novels inviting richer hermeneutic interpretation than others, instead, the method is structuralist in approach because the range of texts which forms the set of Troubles fiction is so broad and varied in its purpose, provenance and production. It is acknowledged nonetheless that any method used to "analyse" cultural texts is in the last instance an interpretative activity. Close reading approaches to this set of texts are not ignored, however: in Chapter Two the critical tradition of close reading analysis of Troubles fiction is reviewed. The products of Chapter Two are the identification of a mini-canon of

Troubles fiction drawn from the critical literature and the identification of two interpretative models which are tested using the study results in Chapter Four.

For critical theorists, culture is a site in and through which ideologies circulate, and within this site there is an ongoing struggle to produce and disseminate ideological messages in various forms and media. Critical Theory grows out of Marxian political and social theory, the critique of the contemporary capitalist superstructure being its foundation. Although Critical Theory most accurately describes the projects of sociologists, critics and philosophers of the Frankfurt School, the term can be broadened to include a range of projects that are concerned with the operation of power and ideology within society. It is within this broad definition of critical theory that this study sits.

Critical theorists who write about cultural production are interested in ideology, hegemony, power and representation. Their world views characterise society as locked in struggle. Unlike affirmative functionalist scholarship, which views cultural and other superstructural forms as essential elements drawing individuals into society, critical theorists see cultural production as always privileging certain people, stories, topics and events at the expense of others. Given that this is the world view of critical theorists, it seems particularly appropriate to focus this study on cultural products that grow out of a concrete, material struggle. Troubles fiction, which grows out of the material conflict in Northern Ireland, offers a compact and relatively neglected generic formation to use in this study.

The most detailed and comprehensive survey of Troubles fiction is to be found in Patrick Magee's PhD *Representations of Irish Republicans in Troubles*

*Fiction* (1998). Magee begins his study by clearly articulating his philosophical and methodological position, stating that his perspective is that of a cultural materialist, by which he means a perspective which takes the view that:

different ways of understanding the world are tied to particular political interests, and contesting discourses are at play for cultural supremacy. The ideas of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) and subsequent poststructural interpretations, techniques developed, and applications of these by cultural studies scholars such as Stuart Hall and Terry Eagleton, are formative in this approach. (27)

Magee does not specifically mention Raymond Williams in this introductory section, but his approach, which situates primary and secondary literature within its historical context, owes much to Williams' use of the term "cultural materialism" (see *Marxism and Literature*, 1977).

Magee's overview of the publishing history of Troubles fiction situates the primary texts within a broader discourse, which extends to journalistic reviews and academic literary criticism. Within this framework, he combines quantitative information relating to bibliographic aspects of the genre (titles, authors, first novels, novels by women and publishing data) with subjective hermeneutic analysis of 150 novels. He is interested in the representation in discourse of the real, and provides data about references in the primary texts to real places and people. In his interpretations of primary texts he is particularly concerned with representation of

Republican activists, and he measures these representations against his view of Republicans drawn from his lived experience as a Republican activist. Magee is interested in examining cultural products as conduits of ideology. His view of the genre is that it is of significance because for many readers it is the main representative discourse concerning the Troubles that they encounter, and as such, representation, or rather misrepresentation, has ideological and political dimensions.

Magee's approach is based on a cultural theory framework within which he chooses to interpret Troubles fiction in cultural materialist terms, so that along with an historical overview of critical writings about Troubles fiction, he offers interpretations that focus on the contrast between fictional characterisations of the IRA and Republicans and their material counterparts. His interest is in how the semiotic plane relates to the material plane: he is interested in gaps between the representational signifier and the material signified, and his interpretation of the material signified is heavily influenced by his politics and philosophy. Magee's project is an important one because he makes space for a broad based discussion of Troubles fiction. In his dissertation, he engages with texts that literary critics have deemed worthy of study, along with plenty of texts that are less likely to be studied within the academic discipline of literary studies.

Magee's dissertation integrates primary and secondary literature within an historical framework and is suggestive of some further theoretical approaches that might be explored. He alludes to generic transformations, in the structuralist sense of "changes within the basic narrative elements within a genre, such as character types, localities, gadgetry" (17), and through his interpretations offers a broad-brush

overview of such transformations. The discursive, hermeneutic, close reading method that Magee uses to analyse the primary texts does not allow him to explore the linkages between the novels.

The problem with any kind of hermeneutic analysis is that it is not always clear how and why certain interpretations are arrived at; it is not replicable as method; and, where value judgements are being made, it is not always clear how dependent the judgements are on the specific interpreter. While any research methodology that is interpretative and qualitative rather than quantitative poses issues in relation to replication and transparency, social science approaches to the problem suggest that detailed explicit recording of both the categorisations to be used for analysis, and the subsequent coding, at least articulates the “interpretative journey” in a way that is explicit and replicable. It is not clear that the kinds of hermeneutic close readings that grow out of literary criticism are always quite so committed to demystification and “auditing”.

Magee refers to the critical discourse of Troubles fiction within his study. His approach is to discuss critical discourse and novels together in chronologically organised chapters. Typically in his study each chapter begins with an historical overview of the period in question; followed by a résumé of the bibliographical and publishing data relating to that historical period; followed by a discussion of the critical literature (journalistic reviews and academic criticism) published during the period; and finally discussion and interpretation of exemplary novels. Magee does not engage in analysis of the methodologies employed in and assumptions underlying the critical literature other than to provide a summary of the general evaluative positions



of critical writers. The critical discourse too has been subject to changes as different literary, linguistic, philosophical and “theoretical” fashions rise to prominence in the academic and media worlds. Magee notes that critical discourse has become more interested in Troubles fiction as Irish studies and Irish Cultural Studies have become institutionalised, not only in Ireland but in other countries also, particularly the UK and USA.

An original contribution that the current study makes to the field of Troubles fiction scholarship is to examine the methodological approaches, and the underlying epistemological assumptions, of the secondary literature of Troubles fiction within a diachronic framework. This activity provides a specific and compact case-study of the changing fashions in critical discourse.

Magee cites the cultural theory of Hall and Eagleton as underpinning his study, and the political and social theory of Antonio Gramsci as the perspective through which he examines Troubles discourse. Following on from his work in linking Troubles discourse with broader theoretical concepts, this study reads the data generated through a structuralist methodology using the theoretical models that emerge from the secondary critical literature of Troubles fiction, Raymond Williams’ cultural circulation model, and, as a novel contribution, a modified version of Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding model originally developed for news production. This analysis uses the empirical, albeit interpreted and coded, data to explore theoretical models and how they determine interpretative possibilities, and also uses the theoretical models to illuminate the empirical data. Magee’s dissertation provides extremely useful data that can be used as a starting point for this work, and is also

suggestive of ways in which theoretical approaches can be developed in relation to this genre, and indeed, to any other genre.

## **1.2 Aims, Objectives and Methods**

This project seeks to explore the relationships between the use of specific analytical and theoretical frameworks and cultural models and methods, and the subsequent interpretations of, and cultural meanings ascribed to, cultural artefacts. It aims to construct a method for studying the mechanics of genre formation within a diachronic framework and underlying the project is the view that intuitive literary criticism based discussion of genre facilitates the discussion of some aspects of genre but can ignore or neglect other aspects. The broad aim is actualised in this study in two ways. The first method is an examination of assumptions, methods and interpretations in existing critical literature of Troubles fiction with a view to establishing whether there is an emerging mini-canon, and if there is, the composition of that canon. The second method is to interpret coded data derived from a generic set of Troubles fiction novels using a number of theoretical, cultural-analytical models.

There are two specific objectives relating to the second activity. The first is to develop a systematic structuralist orientated analytical reading framework for the coding of Troubles novels. This objective is methodologically orientated, and the result is a transparent approach to reading genre texts and recording semiotic elements in a systematic way. The second objective is to interpret data gathered as a result of applying the analytical model to a large data set of Troubles fiction texts using cultural theory models.

More specifically, the research methods will take the form of a secondary literature review, and the analysis and interpretation of the primary literature. In Chapter Two a broad range of critical literature (literary reviews and academic discourse) of Troubles fiction is examined to identify underlying assumptions and methodologies, to survey changing critical fashions adopted by critics of Troubles fiction, and to identify existing characterisations of Troubles fiction which are then compared with the results of the structuralist coding activity.

A reading template facilitates data capture and initial coding. The coded data are interpreted using critical cultural theoretical models. These interpretations use Troubles fiction coded data as a case study to explore the ways in which the interpretation of specific generic formations are related to the analytical framework used, and to explore the ways in which the application (and possibly, the adaptation) of cultural theoretical models might illuminate the operation of the specific generic formations.

### **1.3 Models and Methods**

One of the features that distinguishes traditional literary criticism from methods of analysis of cultural artefacts associated with cultural studies practitioners is that the cultural analysis approaches often construct theoretical and socio-political models and frameworks within which specific cultural products and practices are discussed, for example, Hebdige (1979) uses Gramscian socio-political notions of hegemony and counter-hegemony to frame interpretations of punk rock youth sub-cultures in the 1970s, while Morley uses Hall's encoding/decoding model in his study of the

reception by empirical audiences of the BBC magazine programme, *Nationwide* (1981).

In the tradition of visual semiotics, Goran Sonassen (1993) writes that the construction of models is specifically what distinguishes semiotic studies of cultural artefacts from other types of analyses. The impulse to construct models is a scientific impulse. In communication studies, model-making can be traced back to Shannon and Weaver (1949). Saussure too used diagrams and models to describe the communication process. Levi-Strauss and Propp both made models of generic characteristics of myths. It is a characteristic of interpreting culture as “human sciences”. Models offer a simplified view of problems or issues, and although they are artificial in that they are reified out of the life-world context, the hope is that by simplifying and concretising the problem, it will be made clearer and thus easier to analyse and possibly to resolve.

In this study models are used to interpret the results derived from the empirical coded data set. From the review of the secondary literature, generic models have been constructed against which the coded data set is interpreted. Raymond Williams’ model of cultural production, which relates to cultural circulation, is used as a theoretical perspective through which to examine the range of generic texts circulating at specific synchronic moments. The novel contribution to “model making” in this study is in the modification of Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding model to characterise specific novels as replications, modifications or challenges to the generic Troubles fiction conventions operating at any given specific historical moment. In this study the encoding/decoding model of Stuart Hall, which was

constructed to model the institutional and operational aspects of broadcasting news media, is adapted as a model through which to explore diachronic intertextuality in generic formations. In this novel modification, the author-as-producer is seen as always already the author-as-consumer, who is able to replicate, challenge, or modify pre-existing cultural production stereotypes.

#### **1.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

This study is concerned with seeing culture as human sciences and the focus is on the moment of analytical interpretation. The contribution that this study makes to knowledge is that it is an attempt to construct a self-reflexive cultural study which sits at the intersection of social scientific method and hermeneutic subjective interpretation. It contributes to cultural studies theory in exploring the relationship between author-as-consumer as a pre-requisite for author-as-producer.

There are specific contributions to knowledge, which are the production of a methodologically orientated review of the critical discourse of Troubles fiction (meta-analysis of secondary literature); and the adaptation of, and application of the critical theoretical models of Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams to read the coded Troubles fiction data (contribution to cultural studies methodology).

#### **1.5 Background and Context**

This study sits at the intersection of cultural studies, specifically structuralist-derived human sciences orientated cultural studies, and Irish studies. To contextualise the study, the following section will introduce issues and debates characterising the parent discipline, cultural studies.

### 1.5.1 Cultural Studies Approaches to Reading Culture

The formation of “cultural studies” as an academic discipline has itself become the subject of meta-level discourse as it has become established within the academy. However, the story of that formation differs depending on whether the authors are cultural studies practitioners from humanities backgrounds, or cultural studies practitioners from social science backgrounds. In particular, there are differences in the emphasis placed on various methodological approaches.

Barker’s sociologically orientated introductory textbook *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (2000) is typical of the sociological tradition in its approach, which, while acknowledging the “turn to language” in social sciences, the historical significance of the literary studies origins of Raymond Williams, and the ideology critique of popular culture artefacts, focuses more on audience research than on immanent textual or image analysis, whether contextualised or reified. Philip Smith’s *Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (2001) is a Blackwell publication which is part of a series entitled “21<sup>st</sup> Century Sociology”. Smith characterises cultural theory as social theory. Much of his book is concerned with abstract high-level theory, but there are references to concrete methods of cultural analysis in Chapter Ten (“The production and reception of culture”), and Chapter Eleven (“Culture as text: narrative and hermeneutics”). He makes the point that that cultural analysis can be carried out within a philosophical framework that is positivist, affirmative and functionalist, such as the American communications research tradition, as well as within a critical theory framework which views communications as ideological. Smith argues that research work done within a critical theory tradition tends to be more semiotic and

hermeneutic than the American social-psychological approach (p. 171). Chapter Eleven is divided into two parts, one which is concerned with structuralist poetics (Propp, Norththrop Frye) and the critique of structuralist poetics (Bakhtin, Umberto Eco), while the other focuses on social process as text and anthropological approaches to lived experience as text found in the work of Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz.

The story of the development of cultural studies from the perspective of humanities scholars is a little different. For scholars from literary backgrounds, defining cultural studies often means defining it in opposition to traditional literary studies as an academic discipline. The issues that are of particular interest from this perspective include the status of, and ideologies of, various traditions of hermeneutic interpretation, and questions relating to canon formation, literary value and worth. Moyra Haslett's 1999 overview of Marxist literary traditions positions cultural studies thus:

From a 'marxist' position then, cultural studies is suspiciously complicit with contemporary advanced capitalism. But cultural studies is also a critique of marxism, and originated in the mid-twentieth century as a response to those aspects of post-war society which traditional Marxist accounts could not understand: the enormous influence of the new media of radio, film, television: working class affluence; and consumer capitalism (126).

Haslett's "(traditional) history of cultural studies" (130) begins with a reference to the work of Hoggart and Williams who were trained in the Leavisite "methodology of sensitive, moral reading" (130). Haslett argues that Leavis's methodology offered a reading position that was more contextual than New Criticism, but was at the same time based upon "vague goals in which the 'possibilities of life' and the 'great tradition' seemed to be whatever Leavis himself argued them to be" (130). In this interpretation, the foundation of cultural studies was created out of traditional literary studies. This history of cultural studies emphasises the importance of the Birmingham School, and traces its interest in popular culture and youth sub-cultures, which led the practitioners from research using textual methods of analysis, to methodologies that focus on audiences and media effects.

### **1.5.2 From Literary to Cultural Studies**

Eagleton's *Literary Theory* (1983) examines the discourse of "English Literature", arguing that the formation of English studies has always been political. His overview of different philosophical frameworks refers to the development of English studies in British universities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, phenomenology and hermeneutics, structuralism and semiotics, and psychological approaches to studying culture. He defines the close reading methodology underpinning traditional English studies approaches as being like practical criticism in that it:

meant detailed analytical interpretation, providing a valuable antidote to aestheticist chit-chat; but it also seemed to imply that every previous school of criticism had read only an average of three words per line.



To call for close reading, in fact, is to do more than insist on due attentiveness to the text. It inescapably suggests an attention to *this* rather than to something else: to the words on the page rather than to the contexts which produced and surround them. It implies a limiting as well as a focusing of concern – a limiting badly needed by literary talk which would ramble comfortably from the texture of Tennyson’s language to the length of his beard. But in dispelling such anecdotal irrelevancies, ‘close reading’ also held at bay a good deal else: it encouraged the illusion that any piece of language, ‘literary’ or not, can be adequately studied or even understood in isolation. It was the beginning of a ‘reification’ of the literary work, the treatment of it as an object in itself, which was to be triumphantly consummated in the American New Criticism. (38)

Eagleton’s view of literary analysis emphasises theoretical framework, the politics of canon formation, and the question of what it means to be a “literary object”, rather than questions of methodology. He cites a number of different methods that may be used to analyse texts: close reading, psychoanalytic interpretative techniques, structuralist and semiotic formalism, and even the “glimmers and hunches, intuitions and sudden perceptions” (172), by which some literary critics prefer to work. The point is made that some of these “methods” are not very methodological at all. In the conclusion he calls for a different kind of discourse “whether one calls it ‘culture’, ‘signifying practices’ or whatever is not of first importance – which would include the

objects ('literature') with which these other theories deal, but which would transform them by setting them in a wider context". (178).

This "theory of discourse" would be a return to rhetoric, and the methods it would draw on include an interest in formal devices of language, such as is the focus of formalism, structuralism and semiotics, interest in the reception of discourse, drawing on reception theory, consideration of discourse as a form of power and desire, and a "belief that discourse can be a humanly transformative affair [which] shares a good deal with liberal humanism" (180). In the afterword written for the 1996 second edition, Eagleton offers an update on the 1983 text in which both the limitations of literary theory, and the gains of the heady 1970s days of debate, are discussed. The most significant gains of the Marxist orientated cultural theory debate include: a more general acceptance of the politicised and situated nature of every cultural reading; a "broad kind of historicism" (208); an acknowledgement of the "chancy nature" (208) of literary canons; and a blurring of the distinctions between popular and high cultural forms.

Another contribution to the literature of the institutional and historical formation of cultural studies comes from Francis Mulhern, whose *Culture/Metaculture* (2000) is a Foucault-influenced meta-level discussion about the discourse of "culture" in Europe, and particularly in Britain, during the twentieth century. He identifies two classes of cultural discourse that emerged in Europe, one, which he labelled "Kulturkritik", and the other, "Cultural Studies". Kulturkritik writings, which include the critical works of Thomas Mann, George Orwell, Virginia Woolf, Richard Hoggart and the early Raymond Williams, and which has variant

strands, reactionary and reforming, is evaluative, paternalistic, and mystifying.

Kulturkritik grew out of the traditional hermeneutical approach to English Literature in the academy, based on an opaque methodology consisting of the critic speaking about the research object, the nature and meaning of which he or she, by virtue of class, education, superior taste, or authority, is able to reveal to the reader.

In Mulhern's schema, Cultural Studies is the antithesis of Kulturkritik. The Cultural Studies approach to studying culture expands the field of possible research objects. It is influenced by Raymond Williams' assertion that "culture is ordinary". It makes use of new methodologies, such as semiotics, and it interprets cultural artefacts within socio-political contexts, very often making use of a Gramscian framework, focusing on hegemony and counter-hegemony. Mulhern argues that as the Birmingham School developed the focus moved from an exploration of textual analysis to an interest in the consumption of texts as an active, creative and potentially political activity in itself. Within this interpretation of left-orientated Cultural Studies in Britain, there is a move towards a fragmented political theatre of left orientated post-Marxist intellectual space, sometimes described as "post-modern". It is the story of a move from "English Literature" into "Cultural Studies".

*Culture/Metaculture* is one of a number of texts focusing on the history of the institutionalisation of Cultural Studies (Turner, 1990; Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler, 1992; Stiphas, 1998; Storey, 1998; Hartley, 2003). Some these texts have been written in the late 1990s as Cultural Studies has become established within the academy. The pattern that Mulhern notes, from a focus on production of cultural artefacts to the consumption of cultural artefacts, is one that has been commented on

in a number of texts about Cultural Studies. The eclectic mix of textual analysis, sociological analysis, and political commitment, which is to be found in the early works, has shifted towards a sociological interest in consumption, and an increase in university courses concerned with cultural policy.

The following table represents a model of differences in the research paradigms, worldviews and methodological assumptions of traditional English Literature approaches to texts and cultural studies approaches. In the tradition of model making, it offers a simplified view of the issues, which, it is hoped, makes the differences clear.

<b>English Literature</b>	<b>Cultural Studies</b>
Texts that are discussed are “high culture” texts. Some critics talk about the “canon” of English Literature	“Culture is Ordinary” approach results in much broader range of possible texts.
Methodology is based on hermeneutics	Interest is in aspects of the “science” of signs. Still basically interpretive.
Questions of value are at issue	Questions of ideology, representation are at issue - Culture as politics - Cultural politics
Emphasis is on the analysis of techniques	Emphasis on “superstructural” text/context relationships and meanings.

**Figure 1: Model of differences between English Literature and Cultural Studies**

A key assumption in the present study is that popular literature genres are constructed in and through the writings of individual authors who use the codes and conventions of the genre and thus, in some way, but not necessarily the “received way”, perpetuate the genre. Genre, viewed diachronically, is dialogic, in that there are relationships between texts written at an earlier date and texts written at a later date, and dialectic, in that instantiations of structural codes and conventions in individual texts may over time change generic codes and conventions at, what might be termed, the structural

level. When a genre no longer ideologically fits with a society it may wither away or become substantially transformed.

The current study is situated within the broad remit of cultural studies, but whereas the focus of cultural studies has increasingly been in the areas of cultural consumption, this study is more concerned with the relationship between cultural consumption and cultural production. This study takes the view that, in the area of popular culture, producers of generic cultural products are themselves, at some level, already consumers of the generic cultural products, the production of which they are contributing to. This means that in popular culture consumption is always a prerequisite of popular culture production.

### **1.5.3 Human Science Approaches to Cultural Studies**

Within the broad cultural studies scholarly community there are a number of different approaches to the study of culture, including structuralist orientated studies, post-structuralist orientated studies, hermeneutic studies, ethnomethodological studies, any of which might be undertaken within a range of theoretical, philosophical and political conceptual frameworks. This study sits within the human science approach deriving from structuralist studies, while acknowledging the subjectivity of individual interpretations inherent in any qualitative research project.

A major point of departure for this study is the relationship between structure and agency. In relation to discussing the critical discourse of Troubles fiction, this takes the form of examining the relationships between the appropriation of already existing assumptions and methods on the one hand, and subsequent interpretations by individual critics. In relation to thinking about the primary Troubles fiction texts, it

takes the form of viewing individual texts as specific instantiations of structural codes and conventions through which, over time, structural codes and conventions might be changed. In relation to the original analysis of individual primary texts, it takes the form of acknowledging that, with all the safeguards of auditing and transparent coding, in the last instance the individual researcher interprets the text in and through the reading process, and that specific interpretation cannot be replicated exactly. The dialectic structure-agency dynamic played out in diachronic generic formations might be seen as analogous with Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*. In this context *langue* might be seen to equate to "codes and conventions of genre", while *parole* equates to specific instances of generic conventions in the form of particular novels.

## **1.6 Structure of the Dissertation**

The structure of the dissertation has been designed to facilitate the actualisation of the two objectives relating to the primary data analysis which are to develop a transparent and systematic reading template for coding the primary texts, and to interpret the data derived from that activity using cultural theory models. The dissertation is divided into two major sections, the first of which, Section A, is the analytic part of the dissertation. It is comprised of five chapters, which are: the introductory chapter (Chapter One), the literature review (Chapter Two), the methodology (Chapter Three), the interpretation of the results using cultural theory models (Chapter Four), and the conclusions and reflective remarks (Chapter Five). Chapter Four is based on the data represented in Section B. To replicate the research method order, the reader

should read Chapters One, Two, and Three followed by Section B, then Chapters Four and Five.

Section B is a descriptive section in which the primary texts are discussed in some detail. The data input in the Primary Sources database are recorded and described in Section B, the descriptive section. In a number of instances the plots of the novels are described and summarised to provide the reader with the evidence for categorisation decisions made by the researcher. The descriptions are included in the representation of data to facilitate the first objective relating to the primary data analysis, which is to produce a transparent audit trail to underpin the analysis. In addition to providing transparent auditing, the representation and interpretation of primary data undertaken in this chapter draws out recurring syntagmatic and paradigmatic themes and patterns.

## CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE SECONDARY LITERATURE

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an historical overview of critical writings about the novels of the Troubles, focusing in particular on methodology. Two interpretative models which emerge from the review are tested against the data analysed in Chapter Four. A mini-canon of Troubles novels is identified as a result of the review of the literature and these novels are considered in relation to the overall view of Troubles fiction that emerges in Chapter Four.

### 2.2 Critical Responses of the 1970s

Academic studies about Troubles fiction published during the 1970s tended to be written in an evaluative discourse that distinguishes, not always transparently, between good and bad novels, and sometimes compares novels to other fictional forms such as poetry and drama. The standard work of the 1970s is J.W. Foster's *Forces and Themes in Ulster Fiction* (1974), which is a survey of twentieth century Northern Irish fiction up until the mid-century. This is still an important survey, if only because monographs specifically focused on Northern Irish fiction were, and indeed are, rare. Troubles fiction barely rates a mention in this text. The analysis takes the form of close readings of a range of chosen texts, and although his survey does not extend to novels written after 1969, Foster asserts that a new fiction would emerge, but it was too early to predict its form.



The two methodological approaches characterising critical and review articles of the 1970s are structuralist surveys of specific forms or motifs, and interpretative close readings of specific novels. Both approaches are evaluative, but the criteria of evaluation are rarely explicitly documented. In many cases the critic rates most favourably those novels in which representations of life in Northern Ireland are considered, by the critic, to be faithful to reality.

### **2.2.1 Mapping Stereotypes**

J. Bowyer-Bell's (1978) mapping of sub-categories of IRA stereotypes is one of the most cited secondary sources of the 1970s. Bowyer-Bell examines the representation of the IRA gunman in a range of popular thrillers, published in the USA, which are set in Northern Ireland, or use the Northern Irish Troubles as subject matter for their plots. Bowyer-Bell's discourse is journalistic rather than academic, and his argument is that the motif of the Irish Rebel, which was already well known before 1969, could be inserted into the plots of Troubles thrillers quite easily, but the big difference is that contemporary writers have turned the romantic Irish Rebel into a villainous terrorist. Bowyer-Bell identifies three types of gunmen used in Troubles thrillers: the hard-man, the soft-man, and the "good girl", but argues that "[f]or more effective narrative there must be more depth – the soft man needs hard spots" (22). Most of the article consists of summaries of a number of thrillers illustrating ways in which the three basic types are used. He suggests that the "composite picture of the Irish Troubles" (22), gleaned from these thrillers is "that the present violence apparently arose from legitimate grievances, not too specifically detailed, of the Catholic community – the Protestant complication is largely avoided" (22).

Bowyer-Bell argues that “the Americans” generally agree with the authors that the contemporary IRA is a group of extremists which has taken over and contaminated a just cause. At this point in the article, the argument extends beyond fiction as Bowyer-Bell claims that the IRA has “blotted its copy-book” (22) inside and outside the thriller. The “technological elegance of the communications industry”, including “thriller production”, has made the IRA visible in “living colour” (22), and this is detrimental to the IRA, whose image is being eroded. Thrillers have played their small part in the British campaign to restore law and order “because they are revising and rewriting the myth of the romantic Irish Rebel” (22). For Bowyer-Bell, the thriller is part of the “communication industry” rather than the object of literary or aesthetic interest, and his model of audience reception positions the audience as “common readers”, passively consuming the texts. Thriller writers are active participants in a self-conscious hegemonic project, and he makes no distinctions between novels written by British writers, American writers, writers from the Republic or Northern Irish writers. His structuralist and universalist method of analysis is not sensitive to historical shifts, nor to the ways in which writers from different communities might shape the stereotypes to articulate their culturally specific readings of the conflict and of the north.

### **2.2.2 Evaluative Summarisations: Representing the Real**

Bowyer-Bell’s approach tends towards a structuralist and evaluative method of analysis. Other contemporary critics use more traditional close reading methods to interpret the novels, but these too tend towards evaluation. Richard Deutsch (1976) focuses on novels about the Troubles written by Irish writers, which he classifies

hierarchically according to perceived value, using an analytical method that might be termed “evaluative summarisation”. The critic, having presented a summary of the novel’s plot, comments on those elements considered strengths in the novel, and elements considered weaknesses. The tone that Deutsch adopts is judgemental and evaluative, and the criteria for judgement and evaluation are subjective. A measure of value is how realistic the novel is in relation to what Deutsch perceives to be real life in “Ulster” (134). Deutsch’s aim is to explore whether the term “renaissance”, applied by literary critics to Northern Irish poetry and drama, could be applied to Northern Irish short stories and novels. For Deutsch, Northern Ireland society is divided into two fixed and polarised communities, which have always existed, and are essential aspects of Northern Irish society. He refers to “the two persuasions” (133); “the two communities” (134); and “both sides of the religious and political divide” (142). In his interpretation of Irish history, polarisation and sectarianism are not historical and mutable, but eternal and ontological.

The criteria for evaluation include evidence of “realism”, which is not defined, and sympathy towards the Catholic community and/or the working class community. Deutsch’s interpretation of the term “community” is binding and one-dimensional. There is no sense that individual human beings might live, act and react within a matrix of communities and identities. His analysis of the politics of Northern Ireland extends only to asserting that the conflict is religious in origins, form and function. Deutsch states that realistic details are well depicted in specific novels. Of Ballinger’s *The Green Grassy Slopes* (1969), he writes that “W.A. Ballinger *studies well* the two communities possessed by the same chronic problems: unemployment, poverty,

hunger, lack of comfort, fear and sectarianism” (134) [my italics]. In James Garrick’s *With O’Leary in the Brave* (1971), “the description of the way of life behind the barricades is *very accurate*, listing all the real people who took part in this historic and short lived ‘republic’” (140), while Garrick’s “style, dialogues and descriptions stick to *reality*” (139). Deutsch is also partial to the hyperreality of satire, claiming that in his novel, *A Little Bit British* (1970), Martin Waddell “transcends” a novel on the North and its Troubles to reach “the level of brilliant satire” (136).

The only one of the ten writers discussed in this article with whom Deutsch takes issue is Joan Lingard, because: “one detects a leaning towards the Protestants and some sniping regarding the Catholics” (148). Moreover, for Deutsch “[t]he novel has a pro-British view of the Ulster Question and leaves the adult reader in doubt about the necessity of such works for young readers”(148). Deutsch does not specify which novel he is referring to. In the context of the paragraph, he might well be making a reference to a composite summary of Lingard’s Troubles novels rather than a specific novel. Praise for Troubles novels is qualified towards the end of the article, as Deutsch argues that Northern writers who live within the crisis need to stand at a certain distance to articulate the crisis. He speculates that this might have been the reason that “the more established writers” had not produced any “Ulster Question” novels at that time (148). For Deutsch, the “best novel” on the North remains Michael McLaverty’s *Call my Brother Back* (1939) (151). The question of distance is one to which later critics return, arguing that it is the distance facilitated by mass education and Europeanisation in the late 1980s and 1990s that allows younger novelists to write about Northern Ireland with a post-modern detachment.

McKillop (1976) is more critical of Troubles fiction than Deutsch. His main concern about Troubles fiction is that “the problem in the non-Irish public’s lack of understanding of Ulster stems from the lack of myth-making about the conflict, specifically in the great bourgeois genre, the novel” (133). From his perspective, the function of the novel is moral rather than aesthetic. McKillop surveys sixteen novels and the method he adopts is to provide a potted synopsis followed by authorial evaluation of the novel. McKillop transparently articulates the criterion of value he intends to use to judge each novel, and this is “a journalistic one: which provides the most information?” (136). He also identifies characteristics shared by the survey set, which are:

1. The violence is primarily portrayed in a social-political context rather than a religious one;
2. No major figure is terribly religious;
3. There is no dialogue about theology or church discipline;
4. Not one of the novels is genuinely partisan: “there are no romantic portrayals of heroic forces of good fighting for either side”.
5. All the novels are set in “the present or immediate past” but most seem to “float in time”, although some are specific;
6. Protagonists of a dozen of the novels are divorced or in a crumbling marriage;
7. Many protagonists have experience in the Eastern Mediterranean, most often Cyprus but also Lebanon (135).

For McKillop, David Brewster's *The Heart's Grown Brutal* (1972) "squats head and shoulders above the others" (136). McKillop writes that the "most useful contribution" of this novel is the "explication, in both personality and ideology, of the recent history of the Irish Republican Army" (141). In his view, much of the book reads as though written from afar, and at least two of the chapters appear to be "extrapolations from chapters of the Sunday Times Insight Team's well known series of articles" (142). The novel is full of information, much of it wittily summarised from other sources, but the "better informed reader" might "spend their time better collecting data on the subject elsewhere and forming opinions of their own" (143). In his view, Terence de Vere White's novel *The Distance and the Dark* (1973) is the "best written" (139) of all sixteen, but is not the best in De Vere's "canon" (139). It is likely to be considered a "significant novel" because it is the only one by a writer who "has – or is likely to have a reputation as an artist" (136).

Joseph Browne (1976) draws attention to a number of novels representing the "dreadful suffering of those tormented people" (155-6). He believes that articulating other people's horror and grief is the job of fiction writers and poets, and he takes the view that fiction writers write history, which "must be honestly written and objectively read. Therefore, writers must write and write and write and tell it as it is because the very next page may be the one that will help all of us to learn to live together instead of dying separately" (156). The imperative is a moral one. Browne discusses three novels, *Both Your Houses* by the English novelist, James Barlow (1973), *The Whore Mother* (1973), by Sean Herron (1973), and American Jimmy

Breslin's *World Without End, Amen* (1974). His method is to summarise the novel within a highly judgemental, evaluative framework. *Both Your Houses* (1973) is "sensationalistic, embarrassingly contrived, melodramatic, and reads more like a cheap imitation of an afternoon soap opera than a worthwhile novel, however, it does have worth" (162). The worth lies in the high modal value of the "consummate barbarity this book portrays", and to the "fulminations of the Reverend King Lamont", a fictional representation close to Ian Paisley. *The Whore Mother* (1973) is "more replete with bestiality and wanton violence than any other literary work dealing with Northern Ireland. Again, regrettably, it's all much, much too believable" (163), while *World Without End* (1974), is a novel in which "violence is the ill wind that blows no good" (164).

Rolston's 1978 article, "Escaping from Belfast: Class, Ideology and Literature in Northern Ireland", argues that conventional publishing channels only publish Troubles fiction that encodes and disseminates bourgeois ideologies, even though there are other types of creative writing, produced in the north, written by working-class writers who are closer to the reality of life in the Troubles than the bourgeois novelist could ever get. His thesis is that the bourgeoisie, which escapes the worst of the ravages of class society, is an escaping class, producing escapist literature. In its Northern Irish context escape refers to escape from Belfast and Northern Ireland, and/or working class ideology. Rolston examines the works of three writers of teenage fiction, Joan Lingard, Sam McBratney and Peter Carter, by referring to authorial autobiography, followed by plot summaries of the novels. He then comments on the representation of reality in each novel, evaluating the novels, and

ranking them according to their success in representing reality. Fictional realism for Rolston is a matter of how close a novelist's representation of Belfast is to working class experiences of life in Belfast.

Lingard's books rank low because emergency legislation, which had consequences for Belfast teenagers, is ignored altogether in her books (54). McBratney's *Mark Time* depicts the working class teenage activists as psychopaths as opposed to the respectable working class hero. Peter Carter's *Under Goliath* ranks highest because of Carter's political explanations for the origins of the conflict, but this greater insight goes hand in hand with a greater misanthropy and cynicism towards the working class to justify the eventual escape. Rolston's view of the novels is that the characters within reflect the class and aspirations of the novelists rather than "the real surroundings of their own lives" (55), by which Rolston means the surroundings of working class people in Belfast.

The second part of Rolston's article comprises a discussion of "the literary response of the non-escapers" (55). This includes a discussion of the work of the poet Michael Brophy, whose poem *Where are my people now?* Rolston describes as "magnificent" (55). The remainder of the article consists of lengthy quotes from working class poems, some of which are only published in this article. This survey of working class literature includes reference to popular ballads and folk-songs set to American tunes. The content of the ballads is often sectarian, celebrating killing and death. Rolston pinpoints a counter-culture living and breathing in opposition to the stereotypical representations constructed by bourgeois novelists. His conclusion is that Loyalist and Republican working class authors have no desire to run away from



understanding “their Belfast”(60), where “there is anti-imperialist struggle, loyalism, emergency legislation, assassination, rioting, intimidation, and so on” (62)

Rolston suggests that there is homogeneity of experience and beliefs within specific class formations. His analysis acknowledges the intersections of culture, religion and politics underpinned by economic and class concerns, and rates novels that attempt structural and societal explanations more highly than novels representing the experience of living in Belfast in terms of private and individual interests. Although he expresses concern about the didactic ideological inclinations of the bourgeois novelists, he acknowledges that authorship brings with it both moral responsibility and ideological power: teenage novels are not merely for entertainment, but also for instruction. The battle seems to be about whose ideology and whose knowledge is to be disseminated.

## **2.3 Critical Responses of the 1980s**

During the 1980s, structuralist orientated stereotype classification continued to be popular, while the tradition of evaluative summarisation also continued. There was a shift in the criteria of evaluation to the representation of psychological and philosophical insights through fiction. Evaluative criteria are still related to the representation of reality, and authenticity, but the focus is less on the representation of material realism than psychological realism.

### **2.3.1 Structuralist Classifications**

Alan Titley (1980), in a highly cited article, follows in the tradition of structuralist classification, focusing on ways in which the stereotype of the Irish gunman has been

used in Troubles fiction. He draws parallels between contemporary popular fiction, and folklore, arguing that the plots, themes and motifs of popular fiction can be grouped together and classified as the folktale has been. The methodology used is a structuralist typology. He illustrates specific points about the stereotyping of the Irish gunmen with quotations drawn from a range of thrillers, but he does not historicise the novels. Like Bowyer-Bell, Titley discusses the intersection of politics and literature, arguing that in making no distinction between the gunman and the rest of the population, novelists deliberately consign the Irish to the realms of the alien, the exotic and the inexplicable. These depictions, formed and fostered externally, are taken up, at least in part, by “native” writers. This easy acceptance of negative representations of the Irish is dangerous for Ireland, and the Irish.

Titley’s justification for analysing these novels is that it is important for the critic to expose the stereotypes, because they have ideological power by virtue of their constant repetition and general consumption. The repetitive transmission of negative stereotypes of the Irish in popular novels about the Troubles leads to false consciousness. Titley believes that liberal, humanist confidence in art as redemptive practice has been shown to be false, and that popular literature has more effect (19). The importance of popular novels lies in the fact that they are widely read, and therefore have a “social and political dimension” (18). Indeed the popular novel “may well have a more pervasive and democratic influence than much more serious literature” (18). Earlier in the article Titley half-heartedly argues that there are some good popular novels, but by this stage in his argument, Troubles thrillers are more or

less lumped together. There is no attempt to distinguish, differentiate or historicise: for Titley, these novels are in the main indistinguishable and undistinguished.

Thriller writers often incorporate references to real people, events and places in their quest for authenticity and authority (23), and Titley discusses the “meticulous representation of detail” (19) undertaken by many of the novelists, who focus on surface reality to lend credence to fantasy tales. The political and military details in the novels are usually precise and often accurate. The failure of the thriller lies “not with the empire of fantasy”, but with its “smugness in the democratic republic of the given, in its faithful reflection of the lowlands of a limiting reality, in its conservatism” (23). Thriller writers work within the limitations of reality, rather than developing an imaginative framework that might seek “possibilities and enlargements for the future” (22). Titley asks whether the socio-political situation in Northern Ireland needs to be depicted as eternal, and suggests that it could be imaginative writers who might offer some “glimmer of a hint of a splinter of a solution” (22). He argues that literary fiction has the ability to deepen “our understanding of ourselves” (23), mainly through complex portrayals of character. Cliché leads to staleness, and the portrayal of the IRA gunman in the popular novel is a stock figure, which has been emptied of all character, and reduced to caricature.

A large part of the remainder of the essay examines the mechanisms through which the IRA gunman is reduced to caricature, including derision of speech and appearance. The function of the IRA thriller, he argues, is partly historical, as replacement for the Hun or the communist thriller, and partly it has to do with Britain’s xenophobic “disdain for colonised peoples, among them the Irish” (26). The

issue is complicated, however, as some of the novelists are themselves Northern Irish. Titley distinguishes between “popular sensational literature” (34), and the “serious” novel (24), which needs a different approach. The serious novel is characterised by its “organon of truth”, which is “more complex, private and deeply set” (34). Serious novels are those written by certain Irish authors: Eugene McCabe, Francis Stuart, John Morrow, Walter Hegarty, and Jennifer Johnston. He castigates other Irish authors who embrace new mythological representations of the “native blood thirstiness and innate viciousness of the Irish to replace the older myths and mystifications of Cathlin ni hVallachain” (35). Benedict Kiely’s *Proxopera* (1977) suffers the most sustained attack for its vituperative language of hate, and its hysteria.

Rolston (1989) also uses a structuralist orientated method to identify and classify representations of women and IRA activists in Troubles novels. The critic, having read an unspecified number of the novels, identifies stereotypes circulating in and through the novels, and provides evidence about stereotypical representation in the range of Troubles novels, using quotations from, and references to a sample of the novels. Rolston argues that the novels depicting Northern Ireland “faithfully replicate dominant British explorations of the aetiology of the Northern ‘troubles’” (42). In sidelining references to Loyalists and Loyalism, which is itself an ideological narrative, the meaning is one that perceives the aetiology of the Troubles as emanating from the reaction of the British forces to Republican violence.

Rolston distinguishes between formulaic novels and novels that attempt a more realistic representation of women’s lives in working class areas of Northern Ireland. He identifies two categories of psychologically inadequate men depicted in

the novels, the godfather and the psychopath, arguing that the problem is that “in the absence of other political men with whom they can be compared, the effect is not only that they appear as real, but that their narrowness and psychopathology serve as the total explanation of the Irish conflict” (43). Women in the novels “despise certain violent males more than others” (45). British soldiers are not depicted in the same way as Republican men, and in some love-across-the-barricades novels, women fall in love with British soldiers, even those who have killed their loved ones. The division between men and women in relation to violence comes to have the force of a “Greek myth” in these novels, the division being “not only biological, but almost metaphysical” (45).

The motif of “whore mother”, passing on tales of the wrongs against Ireland to her sons (47), is one that is important in Troubles fiction. Whore mothers are older women, grandmothers, cranks, asexual: “they become clones of old Mother Ireland herself” (48). Such a motif, he argues, places the novel in the field of a specifically Irish thriller, rather than a thriller set in Ireland. He argues that this motif is endlessly repeated in the novels, and is not subject to historical mutation and transformation. The final category in Rolston’s categorisation of women is the woman as villain who “represent[s] raw, unadulterated emotion” (50). The metaphor, argues Rolston, is undoubtedly sexual: men are both attracted to these women and repulsed, fearing “sexual and political emasculation” (50). In Troubles thrillers, women “can never be ‘real’ terrorists like men” (51) but are second class terrorists.

Rolston is interested in ideologically grounded stereotypes and sees the novels as vehicles for circulating ideology. His article does not distinguish between novels

written by Northern Irish writers and others, and does not historicise the representations, but implies that they are constant and immutable. There are, however, some novels singled out for honourable mention: *Troubles* (1976) and *You're Welcome to Ulster* (1970) are praised for capturing the “insularity of the North’s Protestant and Catholic bourgeoisie” (55); *The Price of Chips* (1973) for representation of the working classes and acknowledgement of the importance of class-based issues; *Blood Sisters* (1981) because it “at least captured a debate which has possessed, and divided, the Irish women’s movement, that of feminism versus republicanism” (55); *The Streets of Derry* (1986), for capturing women’s support; and *Give them Stones* (1987) for its “poignant representation” of a woman whose husband turns out to have married her to take the place of his ageing grandmother (56).

Some of these themes are revisited in his 1994 article, which focuses on images of men in the novels of the Troubles, once again using examples drawn from the novels to illustrate the stereotypical categories of godfather and killer, but in this article he adds the category of the “wimp”, which is similar to Bowyer-Bell’s “soft-man”. He argues that there are few prominent Loyalist men in the novels, and where they make an appearance, they are carbon copies of Republican men. There is no political cause in Ireland, according to these novels, but violence occurs for its own sake, “partly racial, and thriving on a culture of bitterness” (28). Many of the examples and illustrations come from novels written in the 1970s and 1980s.

### **2.3.2 Evaluative Summarisations: Authenticity and Psychological Realism**

Most of the critics writing in the 1980s use traditional close reading approaches to interpret the novels. As with the critical literature of the 1970s, both structuralist and

close reading approaches tend to be evaluative. Brian Rainey's approach in "The 'Irish Thing': Cultural Reactions to the Troubles in Ulster" (1981) is to summarise the novel, quoting heavily, and comment on how successful or unsuccessful he believes the novel to be. Much of the article concerns drama and poetry, but there are some references to Troubles novels. Rainey writes that the Troubles "came as a boon" (2) to the thriller writer for whose audience World War Two was passé, and the KGB and SMERSH no longer interesting. The reader of an Alistair McLean or Frederick Forsyth demands documentary realism and "little subtlety of political or social statement" (2), however, this is a dangerous combination, leading the construction of mythology that might, over time, be accepted as fact. Gerald Seymour's *Harry's Game* (1975) is described as "one of the better thrillers", because the "tension is well maintained and the novel's strong point is its recreation of the atmosphere of the miserable backstreets of Belfast where much of the violence takes place" (2). Rainey's approach is very subjective. Johnston's *Shadows on our Skin* (1977) is a "classic" (5), while he writes of John Morrow's *The Confessions of Proinias O'Toole* (1977), that "for me, the humorous vein does not quite succeed, although the approach is refreshing" (7).

Although Rainey is interested in Johnston's authentic representation of materiality, he is also interested in novels that explore the psychology of people, or at least fictional characters, living through the Troubles. Benedict Kiely's *Proxopera* (1977) is rated most highly. Rainey explains that, like Naomi May's *Troubles* and Eugene McCabe's *Victims* (1976), *Proxopera* "may be said to belong to the 'hybrid' classification, combining a situation of tension with almost philosophical reflection"

(7). Sean Herron's *The Whore Mother* (1973) is another "hybrid novel", within which are combined the thriller form, with a psychological exploration of the young IRA volunteer (3). This form of hybridity is also to be found in *The Dancing Floor* (1979) by Michael MacNamara, and Terence de Vere White's *The Distance and the Dark* (1973).

It is no surprise that the philosophical and the metaphysical should form an important focus for Richard Kearney in his 1984 review of Bernard MacLaverty's *Cal* (1983), and John Banville's *The Newton Letter*. It is, however, the representation of the concrete that he most admires in MacLaverty's *Cal*. His interpretation of *Cal* focuses particularly on the use of symbolism within the novel, which he contrasts with MacLaverty's descriptions of visually concrete details. His view is that *Cal* is a "compassionate, if not always convincing, response" (24) to the challenge for the creative imagination of coming to terms with the Northern experience. Kearney's preference is for the MacLaverty of visual detail and short stories, rather than the MacLaverty who tries to "stretch the modest fabric of the short-story formula to cover the broad shoulders of a 'national novel' of almost classical-epic proportions" (24).

History weighs heavily on Cal, both in relation to public life and social circumstances, and in relation to his private life, condemned as he is to "love the one woman whom history has forbidden him to love"(24). Only Marcella, who has Italian parentage, has the possibility of freedom and of stepping outside the specific historical and tribal circumstances of Northern Ireland. Kearney argues that MacLaverty's philosophical position in this novel is that Ulster (Kearney uses this term) is essentially and ontologically divided into two warring tribes, which are



ahistorically pre-determined to play out their parts, with a “pre-conditioned logic that even Conor Cruise O’Brien would have difficulty crediting” (24). The historical inheritance of Ulster is portrayed as “some kind of genetically inherited ‘original’ sin” (24), a “fatal and malignant growth” (24), and Cal is represented as living within an already-determined tribal society.

Margaret Scanlan (1985), sympathises with those British novelists who evade the Troubles altogether. It is always problematic for novelists to portray contemporary events because of the difficulty of discerning outlines or defining perspectives. The difficulties of trying to write serious realist fiction set in Northern Ireland are also discussed by Mark Storey (1985) and Stewart Donovan (1990). Storey argues that while Maurice Leitch and David Martin “tackle” the Troubles genre with “considerable panache” (168), Leitch in particular displays an “unease” with setting his thriller in Belfast, which manifests itself in the construction of a novel in which the reader needn’t take any of the characters too seriously, drawn as they are with nervous edginess and “pernicious” cinema references (168). Stewart Donovan focuses on the challenge that Northern Ireland poses for the Irish artist, who is considered to be a serious writer, rather than a popular novelist. For Donovan, as for Scanlan, there are moral responsibilities and obligations in writing fiction about the Troubles.

The method that Scanlan adopts is to summarise plots of the novels, and evaluate the novels within the framework of realistic fiction, although the characteristics of realist fiction are not explicitly articulated. The strengths of Leitch’s *Silver’s City* (1981) are “immediacy of description, a feeling for what it would be like

to live in the midst of guerrilla war and for its brutalizing effects on young people” (148). Despite these strengths, Scanlan asserts that the “urban proletarian novel does not offer enough scope for the novel’s subject matter” (148). The novel focuses on a narrow slice of Protestant working-class Belfast, and does not extend the focus to the larger social context, with the result that the victimised are represented as unredeemable brutes living in horrible conditions, distanced from the middle-classes. Like Kearney, Scanlan approves of the “almost flatly realistic social context” (15) within which Cal and Marcella’s love affair is set, and the “meticulous detail” through which MacLaverty evokes working class Northern Ireland. MacLaverty’s evocation of mythology in the novel is acknowledged, but for Scanlan, this is a realist novel, depicting good will and hatred, evenly distributed between religious factions within a well-described social context (151). Unemployment is depicted as intractable, and public life intersects with private life to destroy the latter.

Scanlan approves of “historical impressionism” and fictional attempts to represent psychological realism. Tamsin Hargreaves (1988), who focuses on the psychological, the existential and the metaphysical in the novels of Edna O’Brien, Molly Keane, Julia O’Faolain and Jennifer Johnston, is not interested in the historical or the social. She claims that the question that these four writers attempt to address is “the ancient one of ‘how to be’. What is the self? How is it established: what should one do to solidify one’s identity, to give it a viable and meaningful existence?” (290-291)

Hargreaves claims that these writers’ “fictional involvement” with the nature of identity and the nature of being relates to being female, but because they are

writers as well as women, they are interested in how to be a woman, and how to be a human being, and “finally quite simply and metaphysically, about how to be” (291). These writers work from the outline of a fictional argument providing, in microcosm, “quite a comprehensive account of women’s search for identity and meaning” (291). Her existential and phenomenological perspective imagines humans as solitary and ahistoric individuals engaged on quests to learn “how to be” through private, introverted and introspective life journeys, not as individuals born into specific historical moments in specific material societies. There is no suggestion of a “becoming” within society in her philosophical world-view, rather it is a quest for ontological “being”.

The method that Hargreaves uses is to engage in close readings, illustrated by appropriate quotations. In the context of the present study, it is Hargreaves’ interpretation of Jennifer Johnston’s novels that is of interest. According to Hargreaves, Johnston’s novels “postulate the actual birth of self not at biological birth but with the birth of the individual and individuating consciousness” (300), and in her later novels, she works towards “a more subjective, symbolic or even expressionist mode of narration, in which characters become the voices of emerging consciousness” (300). There are often relationships between a young, sensitive, lost person and a much older, lost person, both of whom undergo, with the reader, some kind of revelation about the self and the self’s relationship to others.

Hargreaves’ interpretation of *The Railway Station Man* (1984) focuses entirely on Helen’s decision to become a painter (303). There is no reference to the love affair between Helen and Roger Hawthorne, to the heroine’s son, the politics, the bombing,

and the Troubles, in fact, there is little in the way of specific reference to any of the plot, narrative and characters in Johnston's novel. The article concludes with a paragraph (304-05) in which Hargreaves evaluates the writers, recording which writers she likes, and why. Jennifer Johnston comes out on top because her novels "radically extend the fictional treatment of women's consciousness and quest for identity are also those which are the most exploratory and, in a positive way, subjective in literary terms" (304). For Hargreaves, women appear to have a homogeneous consciousness, and it seems that consciousness and identity are formed and can be explored, apart from history, society or concrete specificity.

### **2.3.3 The Poverty of the Psychological Explanation**

Some of the critical writers writing in the 1980s condemn the novels that focus on individuals and psychological explanations of the Troubles, and urge novelists to write about history, society and cultural realism. Joe McMinn (1980, 1985) explains that the psychological novel ignores the historical and political context, and so ultimately fails to offer any kind of explanation. He argues that it might be that the novels are crude because the Troubles are crude, but "we should ask a bit more of our 'imaginative writers, and critics, than this kind of unquestioning mimesis" (113). McMinn's method is to "detect general patterns rather than to engage in detailed stylistic analysis of any one outstanding novel (even though this does lead to a certain 'levelling'), to see if there is any pattern of consensus within the form" (113). However, the article includes only twelve novels, so the "general pattern" detection is confined to a narrow research set. He argues that narrative form, as well as content, tells us something about the ideological readings of the Troubles. McMinn constructs

a general classification of Troubles novels, according to which the sub-classes within the genre are: novels written by journalists; novels written by writers who have “an Irish connection in the family” (116); serious novels that “insist on the exclusively psychological basis of political violence, with varying degrees of concession to History” (117); and novels employing the Troubles as “a backdrop to a Romance” (119). Methodologically, his approach is to present a very short synopsis of the plot, followed by subjective comments.

McMinn’s general view is that the Troubles have been used in two principal ways in contemporary novels, which are “1) as a basis for documenting realism, 2) as the background for Romance. The first category is the thriller, with its predictable pattern of events in a world of pursuit and confrontation between the IRA and the State. The second category, which often includes elements of the thriller, represents the social and political upheaval as ‘a threat to privacy and individualism’ ” (114). Thrillers written by journalists are often vehicles through which authors attempt to document realism, and they often contain concrete details relating to the topography of Belfast, and scenes of a city at war. Journalists are marketed as knowledgeable and authentic, but the journalist-author can never write out of “a people’s experience of the war, since their occupation demands that they remain outside direct involvement and sympathy” (114).

McMinn, like so many of the critics, evaluates and rates the novels against his own unarticulated criteria of worth. Jimmy Breslin’s *World Without End* is described as a “very fine novel” (115), because of its sympathies with the unemployed working-class of Belfast and Derry (115). Realism in this novel is achieved through the

inclusion of concrete, even domestic, images of a community at war, a realism similar in some ways to “much photographic realism” (116). He is particularly dismissive of the novels of the professional Irishmen, arguing that these thrillers and “other serious novels” (117) insist on a psychological basis of political violence. Kiely’s *Proxopera* (1977) and McCabe’s *Victims* (1976) are used as examples of this type of novel, in which there is a fatalism about Irish fanaticism, and an insinuation that the Troubles are those of the Irish “character” or “temperament” (119). McMinn argues that this assumption, or insinuation, is used so often that it “begins to assume the status of a literary convention” (119).

McMinn concludes by referring to a set of novels using the Troubles as a backdrop to a romance: Jennifer Johnston’s *Shadows on our Skin* (1977), Dave Martin’s *The Task* (1975) and *Ceremony of Innocence* (1977), and Francis Stuart’s *A Hole in the Head* (1977). These novels represent the Troubles “as a separate but proximate world which impinges on the preference for a private order” (119). The pattern in these novels is a search for self-expression and self-fulfilment “with the war as a reminder of the uselessness of most such searches” (120), and these novelists have a “preference for psychological characterisation”, which is “consistent with their indifference to history” (120). They do not attempt to explain Ireland in structural and political terms: the emphasis is on exploring the consciousness of the individual artist. In these novels the recurrent violence is ultimately explained by reference to myth. His conclusion is that all the novels considered in his survey incline towards psychological characterisation and are indifferent towards history. This indifference is to a certain degree a reflection of the writers’ own limited knowledge, but beyond

this, McMinn argues, lies an “imaginative distortion’ ... [which] reveals a basic conservatism of form as well as feeling” (120), and these conservative forms are far from being “disinterested reflections, faithful to reality” (121), but have ideological implications.

The conflict between the private life of the artist and the public violence of the Troubles is a theme to which McMinn returns in 1985, writing about *The Railway Station Man* (1984), *Cal* (1983) and *The Dark-Hole Days* (1984). McMinn takes a dim view of the ways in which Jennifer Johnston writes about the Troubles in her novels, because her representation of “violent men shows her conventionality” (20). Both *The Railway Station Man* and *Cal* are novels in which “images of a violent society are wholly abstract” (20). For these “popular, best-selling authors”, the conventions of the Troubles are there to be picked and easily used. In particular, he comments on the revival of the “godfather” type in modern novels, a type invented by Sean O’Casey over sixty years ago, inspired by Pearse (20). In both novels, heroes are fore-grounded, and clichés are firmly in the backdrop. Una Woods gets even shorter shrift. *The Dark Hole Days* is described as pretentious and boring (22). McMinn argues that the sense of estrangement in these novellas comes not from the Troubles, but from higher education as “[t]he dominant viewpoint, whether of character or narrator, is that of someone who can’t talk to people anymore because, thanks to college, they don’t think like the people they grew up with”(22). This is interesting in the light of later critics who argue that higher education has given a generation of young novelists distance from the events in Northern Ireland, enabling

them to write with the postmodern irony and detachment that is valued by contemporary critics.

#### **2.3.4 Jennifer Johnston: Artist or Artisan**

A number of critics writing in the 1980s focused specifically on the novels of Jennifer Johnston. Connelly and Laners argue that Johnston's detailed use of popular culture and literary allusions create psychological depth in her studies of characters. Imhof takes a radically different view arguing that Johnston's talents are extremely limited, and that her attempts to represent her characters' psychological and artistic depths only serve to show up the limitations of her writing. In the context of the present study, only discussion about *Shadows on our Skin* and *The Railway Station Man* are of direct interest.

Connelly (1986) examines the ways in which Jennifer Johnston uses popular culture and literary allusions, mainly from the "Irish tradition" (119), to define the psychology of her characters, and weaves into her novellas the material of particular lyrics. The lyrics often include "legendary material" appropriate to the "timeless themes and events that constitute a culture" (119). The result of this technique is that Johnston's short novels are centred on character(s) of "greater depth and scope" than novellas usually assume. Johnston's use of cultural mythology in the form of specifically Irish lyrics and cultural allusions enables her to produce deep characterisation in her fictional writing, which consists of an intertwining of individual consciousness with a broader and more public concept of a shared, timeless and ahistoric culture. Culture, as Connelly perceives it in this essay, is not disputed, but functional and unified; it is ahistorical, abstract, and ontological; and within this



concept of culture, myth is meaningful both in relation to general societal culture, and in relation to individuals who exist within the general societal culture.

Jose Laners (1989) is also interested in the allusions to lyrics and mythology in Jennifer Johnston's novels, and argues that the novels should not be read primarily as realistic novels, but should be read through "the suggestive pattern created by the layers of allusions that are to be found in her work" (210). Johnston uses quotes and allusions to Shakespeare and Biblical motifs, and mediates history through myth and legend. The waning of the Anglo Irish is an important theme, illustrated through the Big House motif, but also, more originally in Johnston's work, through railway stations. The closure or breakdown of railway stations indicates a breakdown in communications between "people in general and Ireland in particular" (211). In this context, Hawthorne's attempt to bring the station back to life is virtually impossible. Laners' method is to make assertions about Johnston's use of particular themes, myths and legends, which he then illustrates with examples. He believes that the use of religious and secular myth has the effect of giving the Irish historical experience "a universal human significance outside of its limited naturalistic context, but more especially of turning the Irish problem itself into an extended metaphor which embraces all human relations. As such her novels present a sustained vision of individuals struggling against hope and against all odds in an uncaring world" (222).

Rudiger Imhof (1985) is much more critical of Johnston's novels. His aims are to break the received wisdom regarding Johnston's technical skills, and to demonstrate that her novels are not metafiction. His method is to make negative critical points about the body of work in general, and then illustrate each point using

specific examples. Imhof's view is that Johnston's fiction is too schematic, relying on the use of the same compositional pattern; that her use of metaphor and metonymy are evidence of an unsure hand; and that there are too many coincidences and too much melodrama. Imhof focuses on aesthetic and technical aspects rather than the novel's perceived modality status. He complains about the "sameness" quality of Johnson's work, so that *The Railway Station Man*, like *The Old Gates* and *The Old Jest* uses a "ring-like frame" (133), and argues that some of Johnston's conversational passages have an "imbecile ring" about them, quoting examples from *Shadows on our Skin* and *The Railway Station Man* (135). Far from being the interesting fledgling adolescent writer that James Joyce depicted, Johnston's would-be writers, for example Joe in *Shadows on our Skin*, are simply not very good, while Helen's interior monologues suggest a retarded, or at least arrested development, rather than the consciousness of a blooming writer.

Jurgen Kamm's (1990) review of Jennifer Johnston's work is also judgemental and critical, although Kamm admires the four early novels. Kamm's is a "brief survey of dominant patterns in Johnston's fiction" (139), which illustrates Johnston's tendency in her later works to return to narrative strategies of her earlier works. His method is to assert a broad statement about the fiction in general, and illustrate it with examples taken from the novels. He argues that even through her historical novels, Johnston comments on the present Troubles, which she sees as a consequence of 1916, itself possible only because of the First World War. Her plots cohere around "an isolated representative of the Protestant population group" (127).

The narrative closes with the death of the central figure or the companion, and a return to isolation.

The majority of central characters in Johnston's novels form friendships with Catholics, but violence shatters the fragile links. Kamm argues that all the novels can be seen as "explorations of the national, cultural, political and religious divisions separating Ireland's two nations" (136). The attempts made by the central character to escape "stifling solitude" are rewarded by "moments of transitory happiness and brief fulfilment" (136), however, there is little hope of reconciliation between "Irish and Anglo-Irish" (136). He argues that Johnston's emphasis on individual level imparts a "universal appeal to the fiction" (136). Kamm, like Imhof, comments on the structural confusion in *The Railway Station Man* (137), and suggests that although the early work, particularly *The Captains and Kings* represents a considerable achievement, the particular patch of territory on which she is working will probably not yield any further good work.

## **2.4 Critical Responses of the 1990s**

The critical discourse characterising critical writings of the 1990s differs from earlier critical writing, with greater use made of theories and concepts imported from other disciplines to illuminate specific Troubles texts. The approaches taken by Bill Rolston, Ellen Raissa-Jackson and Jayne Steel, although dissimilar in structure and content, might be described as following broadly in the structuralist tradition.

Rolston's article (1994), discussed earlier in this chapter, is an extension of his work on the representation of men in a range of thrillers. Raissa-Jackson is concerned with the metaphorical symbolism of women in specific contemporary novels, while Jayne

Steel takes an impressionistic approach, discussing the circulation of a specific stereotype in a range of cultural artefacts.

The 1990s saw the emergence of critical interest in contemporary novels written by younger writers, some of whom were more self-consciously literary in their writings. This in turn produced a more self-consciously literary critical response. These critical writers draw on a range of secondary literature that differs from the secondary sources used by earlier critical writers. The method that they use is to interpret a small number of chosen texts using close reading. These critical writings are still judgemental, and the choice of texts is relatively narrow in relation to the large number of published works.

Irish studies has also produced a number of book length studies of contemporary Irish novel writing, either all-island Ireland (Smyth, 1997) or Northern Irish writing (Pelaschiar, 1998, Kennedy-Andrews, 2003, Magee, 2001). The methodology adopted by these writers is close reading, but they use different interpretative frameworks through which to discuss their chosen novels. Magee is particularly concerned about the relationship between politics and representation, Kennedy-Andrews focuses on discursive traditions through a post-modern philosophical framework, Pelaschiar celebrates the work of McLiam-Wilson, Patterson and Bateman, while Smyth situates the Northern Irish writers within a broader survey of Irish writers.

Emerging from the literary critical writings of the 1990s is a model of the literature that celebrates contemporary Northern Irish fictional writing as a form of transformative political discourse in the new post-ceasefire political age. It is an

interesting shift. In the 1970s and 1980s, most Troubles fiction was considered to be deeply conservative and of poor literary quality. Modern Northern Irish writers are hailed by some critics, (Smyth is more cautious), as chroniclers of redemption, who write about a transformed Belfast and a transformed Northern Ireland.

#### **2.4.1 Revising the Structuralist Tradition**

The structuralist tradition in Troubles critical writing takes the form of identifying stereotypes circulating throughout a broad range of fictional texts. The “classic” approaches are those of Bowyer-Bell (1973), Rolston (1978, 1994) and Alan Titley (1980). These writers’ methods are similar in that they trace the use of certain repeated stereotypes in a number of novels, and they tend to organise their material thematically rather than diachronically. Critics, writing in the 1990s, who might be categorised as taking a broadly structuralist approach, use structuralist and semiotic approaches in new ways. Ellen Raissa-Jackson (1999) writes about the symbolic tradition of using woman as metaphor in fictional and non-fictional discourse. She is interested in intersections between metaphorical discourse and material sexual politics, and in her discussion she cites secondary literature that includes African and Asian post-colonial philosophy and literary criticism.

Raissa-Jackson refers to the anti-imperialist discourses operating at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, within which Ireland was figured as female, and in need of rescuing by its men. At the same time, colonial discourse worked to figure the colonised as female, ruled over by the masculine coloniser. A “natural” framework was constructed through which racial and gendered differences were defined. Raissa-Jackson argues that in reality women were not

passive and did play a role in “the rejection of English rule” (221), but these material realities are not represented in the images of nationalist art and literature. She cites the images of the “young and beautiful” Roisin Dubh and “old and suffering” Cathleen ni Houlihan as being extremely influential in creating an iconography of Irishness (221). There is little reference to specific texts or artworks in this introductory framework. Raissa-Jackson writes about the construction and circulation of symbolic female signs as if they circulate, free and unattached, in and through culture, without grounding them in specific texts.

The article is an examination of modern texts written in a cultural climate more favourable to sexual equality, within which gendered representations of national identity are considered much more suspect. Issues about sexual abuse and domestic violence are also discussed in public discourse more openly than at earlier historical moments. Raissa-Jackson explores how issues relating to domestic and sexual abuse intersect with “the ‘traditional’ national narrative” (222), in Colin Bateman’s *Cycle of Violence*, Roddy Doyle’s *The Woman Who Walked through Doors*, and Robert McLiam Wilson’s *Ripley Bogle*, choosing these novels because they are written by men. In Raissa-Jackson’s categorisation, the national narrative appears to cross the border.

The discussion of *Cycle of Violence* focuses on the concept of hybridity. She describes this novel as having “shades of love-across-the-barricades romance” (223) but argues that Bateman’s main point revolves around “the sham basis of political violence and the influence it has on individual lives”, while “pok[ing] fun at the incompetence of the paramilitaries” (223). At the same time, the plot needs to work

within the conventions of the thriller genre. *Cycle of Violence* is characterised as a postcolonial novel because of its “refusal of a comfortable return to order against the conventions of genre” (224), and because of its use of “numerous features”, which exemplify postcolonial writings, of which only the concept of “hybridity” is explained. It is not at all clear from even a cursory examination of the primary texts forming the basis of the present study, that comfortable returns to order are necessarily part of the conventions of Troubles thrillers.

For Raissa-Jackson, *Cycle of Violence* is a novel in which hybridity signifies sterility, and there is no possibility of development or of resistance through hybridity. Although Bateman “dramatically revises the woman-as-nation trope, the symbolic significance of women continues to marginalise individual women’s agency and textual consequence” (225). The politics of heterosexuality is what underpins metaphors of hybridity in this novel. She argues that in constructing an interpretation of Bateman’s novel focusing on the concept of hybridity, “it becomes clear that the underlying heterosexual metaphor is vulnerable to literal translation” (226). It could be argued, however, that in *Father Flynn and his heart transplant*, Bateman offers another approach to the notion of hybridity. Although Father Flynn is resented by both Catholics and Protestants in this novel, his hybrid heart offers the possibility of life.

Raissa-Jackson views McLiam Wilson’s novel *Ripley Bogle* as much more overtly literary than Bateman’s novel, commenting that it engages with “a number of standard Northern Irish fictional patterns” (228). Three types of literary Irishness are staged in the novel: the “love-across-the-barricades” type, the accidental shooting

tragedy, and the “growing-up-in-exile” romance, all revolving around women. McLiam Wilson parodies these narratives, and eventually the narrator reveals that his “swaggering posturing” is a complete lie. For Raissa-Jackson, the “false stories of hybridity and reconciliation are used to explode the consoling figures of national identity which they mimic” (229). But because these “figures” are represented through heterosexual relationships, Raissa-Jackson argues that this novel continues to treat women as symbols in a “metanarrative of identity” rather than agents in their own right (230). Raissa-Jackson ends the article with an imperative paragraph addressed to critics rather than to novelists, exhorting critics to use the terms hybridity and cultural difference in ways that are sensitive to the operation of these concepts in modern texts as well as to the operation of these concepts in texts produced fifty or one hundred years ago. The content of these concepts should be redefined to contain not only hybridity and cultural differences of race and nation, but also “other structures of oppression, in particular the intersection of gender and violence” (230).

Jayne Steel’s (1998) article is an attempt to mirror, both in the content and form, the ubiquity of the unanchored and richly connotative stereotype, *Vampira*, which she claims circulates and permeates British cultural discourse. There is a lack of transparency and concreteness in her analysis, but her impressionistic interpretation of a wide range of cultural artefacts conveys the way in which ideology circulates through repetition. Her interest is in exploring the connotative powers and potential of the sign, and her method of analysis is fairly opaque in that she abstracts the stereotype *Vampira* from specific material contexts. The article is part of a larger



work exploring the way that “the threat posed by the Provisional IRA (PIRA) has been imagined by the British” (273), and the scope of analysis includes film, fiction and the media. She argues that the British reveal their shared cultural guilt about the ways in which they operate in Northern Ireland through the circulation of the stereotype of the unstable, dangerous and highly sexualised woman.

She claims that the threat of PIRA “galvanised” British film, fiction and media to produce a “remarkably diverse” and revealing body of work, which “discloses the shifting self-perceptions of Britain and Britishness (or Englishness) as reflected through the inverted mirror of the PIRA” (273). Her discursive approach de-emphasises authorship and emphasises the mass circulation of repeated images, symbols and stories. Steel argues that the same stereotypical representations of women are to be found in fiction and non-fiction. *Vampira*, claims Steel, are “significant as phantasms of a certain deadly, or deathly, desire on the side of the British themselves. They constitute an interesting point that connects cultural anxieties about the dangers of ‘unstable’ women with anxieties about terrorism” (275). The difficulty is that this claim lacks any direct supporting evidence. At the very least there is an assumption about the unity of “the British themselves”, which begs critique.

The assertive method continues as Steel interprets *Vampira* as “the very stuff that lies at the heart of British desire with regard to the North of Ireland, protecting that desire from the nature of its own destructive reality” (273), through the prism of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Her argument is that *Vampira* do not represent Irish women but are “figures which arise as an effect of the Troubles that function to

shield, through fantasy, the British from the trauma of the violent conflict that has unfolded over the past thirty years” (275). The problem with this approach to discussing representation is that it inclines towards an idealist philosophical position which envisages symbols and images as autonomous, detached from human construction and specific authorship. Her evidence to support the assertion that Vampira are fantastic shields to protect British cultural consumers from the trauma of the Troubles is that in recent films IRA Vampira figures have been played by quintessentially English actresses, Helen Mirren and Miranda Richardson, and this choice of actress “disclose[s] something disturbing about British processes of identification and desire” (276). This might be true; on the other hand, it might be that the choice of specific actresses relates to their perceived box office popularity.

Steel’s argument in this article is that representations do not spring fully formed from the individual psyche of writers, but are selected and constructed from an already existing reservoir of images. This is why it is possible to speak of “cultural obsessions that shape, feed and articulate shared anxieties” (276), through the analysis and history of representations. She is sceptical about the ability of language to reflect or “transparently reveal” reality, taking the view that the construction of certain varieties of realist writing can be one of the most effective vehicles for ideology, constructing persuasive accounts of “how it is”, through recognisable characters, scenes and situations. There is “no access to the trauma of the Troubles in realist fiction, just as there is no access to real Irish women through Vampira” (276), but there is a history of fantastic representation, which can be traced, and should be examined through a psycho-analytical framework. For Steel, writing operates as an

index of psychic anxieties and concerns. Steel's brand of psychoanalysis is feminist, and focuses on assumptions about the masculinity of language, and about the patriarchal framework operating within Western countries.

When women are not represented as Vampira, they are represented as the "domestic auxiliary" (278), who is the bearer of the pain of reality. Steel argues that the representation of pain suffered by these fictional women is often the pain of sexual violence, and links this sexual violence with "unspoken Sadean fantasies" (278). That these fictional doubles who suffer pain to entertain are always women, says something, Steel claims, about the male imagination informing the fiction. Steel's approach depends on generalisations and assertions, which, although persuasive, and supported with reference to secondary literature, are not based on any empirical examination of the evidence. The psychoanalytical approach enables Steel to move from the Irish Vampira as "the Thing" marking the outer limits of jouissance, to the representation of Ruth Ellis in the film "Dance with a Stranger", to a discussion of Margaret Thatcher as Vampira.

Steel refers to Gillian Rose's argument that the identification of Thatcher as executioner and Iron Lady allowed British subjects to take pleasure in violence as force and legitimacy. She also comments on the lawlessness of Thatcher. But in reality, the Thatcher government manipulated and consciously politicised the law to suit the government's ideological needs. The claim that Thatcher led a lawless regime, enabling British subjects to take pleasure in violence as force and legitimacy, is a very broad and misleading generalisation that does not engage with the much more complex debate characterising Britain during the 1980s. Thatcher's ideologies

and political practices were not unanimously approved by people in Britain, and there was considerable protest and resistance throughout the decade. It is overly simplistic to refer to the emotional and psychological reactions of “British subjects” as homogeneous.

Steel uses some specific examples to illustrate her points, but we have no way of knowing how representative these examples are. In this regard, the method lacks transparency and specificity. Much of the article consists of unreferenced psychoanalytical readings of unspecified representations of women, which dehistoricises representation. The references and interpretative readings move from fiction, film and news discourse to a much more abstract reading of the Margaret Thatcher myth, supported by scant primary evidence, namely one political cartoon by Dan Wasserman from *The Boston Globe*. Given that Steel’s article focuses on the British, it is unfortunate that the inclusion of an American representation of the “Thatcher myth” is the only primary evidence.

#### **2.4.2 Representing Psychological Realism**

During the 1990s, critics continued to explore the representation of material reality and psychological reality in Troubles fiction through close reading methodologies. For Jeffrey and O’Halpin (1990), the interest lies in the representation of Irish intelligence and security issues in twentieth century spy fiction, in an article that “reviews” (92) over fifty Troubles thrillers. They take an historical and evaluative approach, referring to the content of a number of novels, from *The Riddle in the Sands* (1912) onwards, with little in the way of detailed discussion of specific novels. They write that the journalists’ novels “all tend to include good technical and

corroborative detail” (104). Seymour’s *Field of Blood* (1985) is “impressively realistic” about the supergrass system, while Sarah Michael’s *Summary Justice* (1988) is “well-informed” and “very authentic about the RUC, especially the Special Branch and its relations with the rest of the force” (107). John Brady’s novels are “admirable” (109), partly because they treat “the Irish police as intelligent and capable players in the drama, rather than “stage Irish” comic relief” (109) and Maurice Leitch’s *Silver’s City* (1987) is excellent. Waddell’s novels and Herron’s *Through the Dark and Hairy Wood* (1972) are unusual because both authors write about Protestant extremists.

Moral judgements in the novels tend to favour the security forces, while Republican and Loyalist violence is frequently portrayed as misguided, mindless and counterproductive, which ignores the fact that “in Ireland this century politically-motivated violence, or the threat of it, has inevitably paid political dividends on a number of occasions” (112). There is a lack of political analysis to explain the commitment to violence, which often stems from the death or torture or rape of a mother/sister/wife, while most of the intelligence described is “run of the mill stuff” (113). Many novels suggest that a simplistic military solution can happen in Ireland, but the best of the novelists, Seymour, Brady, Newman, and Powers, “possess no such certainty” (113).

Carol Morris’ (1991) article focuses on M.S. Powers’ *A Darkness in the Eye* (1987), because of the psychological depth in his treatment of the “terrorist mind” (67). The novelist is seen as psychologist, and the prized modal quality is a modality relating to the representation of psychology. For Morris, “[t]he questions asked in the novel are: What is the terrorist to do, when he feels that, it is all useless? Go on

fighting despite all? Turn informer? Abandon the struggle?" (68). She claims that in analysing Seamus Reilly's entanglement in *A Darkness in the Eye*, Powers offers a "possible answer" (68). Reilly is an astute, experienced and intelligent terrorist who is forced to watch the disappearance of ideals and values he once held fervently. A strong parallel between the loss of faith in a priest, and loss of faith in the top IRA man is stressed in the novel, and "the fact that both are the official 'custodians' of that faith, in theory, makes the fall all the more tragic" (68).

Morris claims knowledge of authorial intention based on personal correspondence with Powers, writing that: "there is no doubt that it was Powers' intention first of all to separate the 'gangster elements' within the IRA from those members who are prepared to accept responsibility for their deeds, not by WORDS, but in ACTIONS, even at the cost of putting their own lives at risk" (71). He is quoted as writing that he was interested in explaining "the terrorist mind" (72) and wanted to show that "these guys do, in the main, think seriously and believe in what they do" (72).

Maurice Harmon (1990) emphasises the existential aspects of Francis Stuart's work, and his interest in the notion of redemption. Harmon explores existential questions about how best to live, and the redemptive value of suffering that he believes preoccupy Stuart, and illustrates these themes with reference to the novels. The primary vehicle for Stuart's later style is the central character whose point of view controls our understanding of events (20), but in these novels the central character is an unreliable witness. The form of the novel is "necessarily disrupted" (20), as a result of the narrator's inability to maintain sane control of the material,

with “the result is that the reader is plunged into uncertainty with the narrative” (20). Stuart is profoundly dissatisfied with society, and could never be the kind of novelist whose “delight it is to reveal the complexities and contradictions of social man. He must pursue his daemons” (22).

### **2.4.3 The Politics of Troubles Fiction**

Another strand of critical analysis in the 1990s takes the form of analysing the novels in terms of their politics. For Linda Leith (1992), the interest is in fiction as transformative political discourse. Her article begins with examples of dead, distant, and emotionally repressed parents, taken from a broad range of Northern Irish novels. These estranged fathers metaphorically relate to Northern Ireland’s sectarian divisions. Her survey approach is not detailed and contains a number of value judgements. The body of the article consists of close readings of David Martin’s *The Road to Ballyshannon* and M.S. Powers’ *The Killing of Yesterday’s Children* (1985), because in both of these novels “the challenge of the sectarian past allows Martin and Powers to offer a glimmer of a utopian horizon, a possibility of an alternative to a fatally divided status quo” (94). *The Killing of Yesterday’s Children* is an “impressively accomplished” novel and the creation of the character Arthur Apple is a “remarkable imaginative creation” (98). She discusses tropes repeated throughout the novel: Mr Apple as the wise fool (100); Apple with stigmata; the novel’s language, which “contributes cleverly to the blending of mysticism and banality” (101). Arthur Apple is an “alternative to a violently sectarian heritage” (101). But an examination of the novels reveals that while Leith interprets Apple as offering some kind of alternative to a violently sectarian heritage, this alternative is not very

successful. Apple dies: Deeley dies; there is no real difference even when Reilly dies. There are only a few hours of unity in Northern Ireland, as Barry McGuigan beats his opponent in the boxing ring, an event that is shown on television, but this unity is not material and does not last.

Watt (1993) discusses the transformative politics of *Cal* with reference to a constellation of emancipatory, post-Marxian political philosophers and literary critics. Even in this article there is some evaluation, for example, he asserts that MacLaverty represents the material Ireland, rather than an idealised myth of Ireland, “with great skill” (135). Watt argues that for MacLaverty, the politics of transformation are centred on the possibility of “self determination” (134). Cal comes to the conclusion that the misery of life in Northern Ireland is caused by mythologies, not facts (136). The mythical Ireland never was, and never could be, but it is responsible for the difficulties in “Ulster” (136). Watt argues that “[i]f this is so, then the ideological apparatuses that help foster this mythology [...] must be equally culpable” (136). Cal escapes temporarily from the “panoptic discipline that regulates life in Northern towns” (134), finding himself alone in the cottage. Watt’s panoptic discipline is related to notions of colonial domination but in the novel the panoptic surveillance that Cal is aware of is surveillance by the Protestant community within which he and his father live, and also surveillance by the local IRA. If surveillance by the Protestant majority and the local IRA supplants state surveillance, the term “colonialism” in relation to this novel is much more difficult to sustain.

Watt quotes Eagleton to argue that reason and choice are both crucial and “problematically apposite” (137) in MacLaverty’s politics. To be successful, Eagleton



writes in *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* (p. 37), transformative politics depends on a centred, self confident, resolute agent, but transformative politics would not be necessary in the first place if such self confidence were possible. MacLaverty's politics does not rest on any transformational scheme, and Cal is far from being a self confident, centred agent, thus "[a]t most MacLaverty's politics are local, temporary – transformative of an individual's and perhaps a reader's consciousness, but not completely so" (138). It is in these "local transformations", Watt argues, that much of the emotional force resides. For Watt, "[t]he politics of MacLaverty's fiction exists precisely within the tension between individual choice and the power of ideological apparatuses to determine such choices well in advance" (138). Cal's excessive feelings of guilt seem to have a longer and more complex aetiology than the events that connect him to the Martins and Marcella (140).

For Watt, MacLaverty's political vision is a decidedly unromantic, localised, fragmented post-modern vision of politics: "[i]nstead, whether aware or not of recent urgings in feminist theory and in various interrogations of post-modernism to 'wage a war on totality' and 'localize' resistance', MacLaverty presents his reader with "brief moments of emancipation and locales supportive of alternative practices" (144). Cal's brief moment of emancipation amounts to the time spent with Marcella in the cottage before the police come to beat him up. This hardly counts as much in the way of localised resistance and alternative practices. If the problem with the political trajectory of post-modern localisation is that it focuses on the atomised and the individual, perhaps what we see in *Cal* is the limitation of such individual resistance.

Watts acknowledges that, “[t]omorrow comes for all of these characters and with it an inexorable, punishing reality” (146), but insists that these moments of emancipation should be applauded because totalizing solutions to complicated socio-historical problems are themselves myths, and so, “any triumph of life or the human spirit, no matter how ephemeral, must count for something” (146). The phrase “the human spirit” is itself mystifying and mythical, and while Watt argues that such triumph “must” count for something, in reality, there is no reason why it does or will count for anything. Such a rhetorical construction is wishful thinking. Watt concludes by arguing that an emancipatory “politics” (the term placed in parenthesis in his article) requires “such varieties of deromanticization” (146) as MacLaverty’s “lest opportunities for resistance get lost in enticing drawings of peasant cottages or in the religious hailings of mythologized historical figures hanging on our walls” (146).

Joe Cleary (1996) writes about the politics of the “border bit” and partition settlement in Northern Irish culture. The border question in Ireland was a post-First World War decision, but unlike other borders drawn up in Europe at the time, Ireland’s border was “implemented under the domestic auspices of the British government” (228), and decided in such a manner as to ensure the perpetuation of Unionist powers. Cleary sees the Troubles as starting when the balance of forces shifted from the earlier part of the century and the “1925 partition settlement began to come apart under the weight of its own insufficiencies” (228).

Ireland’s borders suffer from “discursive invisibility” (228). Borders are treated as if they are immutable constants, and states become units of analysis, but, in reality, states are historically contingent. During the Troubles there have been

“internal partitions” in Northern Ireland, and segregation is organised along geographical and class dimensions (231). He suggests that both the British and Irish governments put the responsibility for the Troubles at the door of the Northern Irish themselves, allowing both states to position themselves as honest brokers, outside the Troubles. The social-scientific literature of Northern Ireland is mainly based on an internal conflict interpretation operating within the context of revisionist writings emanating from a Republic trying to distance itself from its own revolutionary past, and alienated by the atrocities committed by Northern nationalists (232). Revision wants to “displace interpretations of Irish history as one of colonialism and imperialism” (233) in order to strip the revolutionary nationalism and dilute the emotional appeal, constructing a more standardised European version of Ireland’s history to facilitate its future in the EEC.

The border does not reflect some primal division but is a material political construct emanating from a particular territorial conflict, and is a condition by which the conflict is shaped (235) so, for Cleary, the war never ended. In the recent fiction of the Troubles the subject of partition has been absent (237), but for Cleary, it is the very absence of the border that allows these narratives to construct the conflict as they do. The central point of his article is his claim that the border haunts these narratives in “curiously surreptitious phantasmic forms” (237), constituting the political unconscious of these texts.

Cleary begins his analysis with the assertion that in Northern Irish fiction, the most popular and successful narratives are the romances that straddle political divides. He examines the way in which the border haunts Joan Lingard’s fiction, and

the film, *Cal*, at the level of form. These texts are “constituents of a ‘master narrative’ that constructs the Northern Irish conflict” (238). This master narrative is the formal structure of the “romance-across-the-divide”. The narrative drive in these texts is towards reconciliation between “the two conflicting communities of Northern Ireland” (238), Cleary writes, insisting on a binary analysis of Northern Irish culture, but, he continues, close examination shows that these texts represent an “anxious and contradictory literary mode” (238). The right of the state to exist in its present form is disputed, and there cannot be reconciliation, so these romances often fail in the end (tragic closure), or can only be realised in the private sphere. Sex cannot metaphorically represent political union, and lovers have to detach themselves and escape into anti-political privacy “where sexuality becomes the sole domain of authentic existential fulfilment” (240).

In Lingard’s novels, the lovers’ union cannot be realised in Northern Ireland and the young people only find peace in Wales, the “most fully integrated and least separate” of the Celtic nations in Britain (244). Her novels are imbued with a liberal desire to imagine resolution (244). In the later novels, he argues, the only solution is the tragic one whereby one party, nationalist, “must finally learn to accept what he had earlier thought to change” (246). *Cal* is read as an Oedipal tragedy. Cal crosses the border after Mass to see a football game in Monaghan, but although he experiences an initial freedom that he always feels leaving the “weight and darkness” of “Protestant Ulster” (249), the republic can offer no sanctuary to Cal. The relationship between Marcella and Cal, both Catholic, is transgressive, because it “is conducted over the grave of exactly that kind of union, one which it effectively

cancels out by recovering Catholic Marcella from Protestant Robert and restoring her to the embrace of Catholic Cal” (251). The relationship cannot last and Cal is carted off to prison in a “narrative act of nationalist contrition whereby the Catholic nationalist guiltily offers himself up as a sacrifice to the proper authority of the Northern Irish State against which he has offended” (252). Cleary evaluates this novel as an “otherwise unremarkable ‘middlebrow’ novel”, given “formally at least, a complex and contradictory text” (254).

Sealy Lynch’s (2000) paper is also concerned with border crossings, but in this article the focus is on border crossings in Jennifer Johnston’s novels. Lynch’s article consists of close readings of six novels focusing on women crossing a variety of borders, borders from North to South, England to Ireland, silence and speech, youth and maturity, life and death. Sealy Lynch explains that Johnston is interested in the transitional moments in people’s lives. In *The Railway Station Man* (1984), set in the border territory of Donegal, Damien is the boundary crosser (255), while Kathleen is the boundary crosser in *Shadows on My Skin* (1977). Kathleen wants to maintain a hybrid existence where she can connect north and south, and soldier and revolutionary, but these idealistic notions are not possible in Derry, a city in which individuals are defined and judged as public entities “according to jingoistic, stereotyped criteria”, and so the result of Joe’s betrayal is even more devastating (254). Johnston provides a “heterogeneous gallery of individual responses, moving with admirable border-crossing ease across time and space, from Big House to north of the border to the Wicklow village she knows so well” (266). Her fictions emphasise that one cannot take the “Protestant out of the Irishwoman, the Irishwoman

out of the human being, or political and religious cross-currents out of private lives” (266), and her characters are “defined, shaped and fragmented by boundaries and limitations, but it is their humanity and individual responses to events that is Jennifer Johnston’s paramount concern” (266-7).

#### **2.4.4.Children’s Fiction**

Two critical articles written in the 1990s, focus specifically on children’s Troubles novels. Barry Sloan’s (1993) is an awareness-raising article written to promote knowledge, amongst librarians and teachers, of adolescent Troubles fiction. Sloan approves of the novels of Joan Lingard, Peter Carter, Martin Waddell, Julie Mitchell and Tom McCaughren, arguing that their methods, concerns and achievements deserve further consideration because of “the skill with which they seek to make an immensely complex situation intelligible” (16). These novelists confront the difficulty of relationships between young Protestants and young Catholics in a sectarian society, yet there is an absence of religion in these books “other than a series of slogans and attitudes inexorably bound up with historical memories” (16).

His method is to offer a potted synopsis of the books he is reviewing, followed by evaluative comments. The narrative of *The Twelfth Day of July* (1970) is “rather obviously” directed to bringing the children to a point where they have to think about the implications of their actions. Since then neither Lingard nor the others have “presented” violence so simplistically (18). There is a great deal of documentary detail in Carter’s *Under Goliath*, which “rest[s] uneasily in the text, especially those forming part of Billy’s argument in support of socialism” (20). Sloan argues that Julie Mitchell’s *Sunday Afternoons* has a more complex narrative structure than the

other novels considered and is “a splendidly written novel of painful self-discovery” (24), while Tom McCoughran’s purpose in writing *Rainbows of the Moon* (1989) is to present fictionally as many of the “facts, beliefs and myths which deeply influence thought and behaviour in Northern Ireland” as possible (26). The problem with his educational purpose is that it sometimes leads to invasive facts, history, technical information about weapons, but the novel is “not static and never ceases to be exciting” (26). For Sloan, the success of these writers is that they draw out specific grounds of division in Northern Ireland: religious, historical, political and cultural; and they demonstrate consequences of that division through the “convincingly narrated experiences of characters facing recognizable pains of adolescence in circumstances that make growing up more than usually problematic” (27).

According to Celia Catlett Anderson (1997) the aim of children’s Troubles novelists is avowedly educational (389). Focusing on the novels of Martin Waddell and Joan Lingard, she comments on the content of the books, and uses quotations to illustrate her themes, which are, that the authors “strive to point a clear picture of the political situation in Northern Ireland and to integrate the problems of sectarian conflict with the lives of their characters” (391); and that they “use the political slogans, street songs and taunts to create an atmosphere of prevailing prejudice and to allow young readers to examine the harm bred by this street lore that is familiar to them” (391). She argues that while some might label these novels as “merely didactic” (398), both authors craft rich novels: Lingard’s novels have emotional impact and psychologically complex characters, while Waddell’s novels contain vivid characters and believable plots. She asks whether these books can counterbalance the

weight of folk-art on gable-ends and in street songs in changing the perceptions of working class children. The answer is interesting because at this point she seems to be suggesting that the problems of bigotry are determined by social class: “[a] few novels, destined to be read only by a percentage of working-class children, all of whom have grown up with the slogans, the songs, and the political paintings, may seem of slight weight” (398).

#### **2.4.5 The New Northern Writers**

In the late 1990s, there was shift towards writing about young Northern Irish novelists who seemed to be writing about the Troubles in new ways. Eve Patten’s chapter in Ian Bell’s *Peripheral Visions* (1995) signals the trend. Patten’s concerns are whether an authentic fictional response to the Troubles can be demarcated from the sensationalist narratives dominating the field (129), what register the novelist has to use to address questions about the political and social conflict without succumbing to platitude, and whether material alluding to the Troubles endorses or contests received images about Northern Ireland from British, Irish and American sources “without reverting to provincial whimsy” (129). She argues that in recent years Northern Irish fiction has begun to change, a manifestation of the emergence of a new generation of writers, but also a mark of the “overdue exploitation of literary strategies such as perspectivism, ambiguity and displacement which, though categorically post-modern, may also be perceived as attributes of a sustained and psychological identity crisis germane to any representation of an Northern Irish self-image” (129-130). She focuses on three writers whom she identifies as writers seeking to place Northern Ireland within a larger parent environment. Patten explains that while Molloy and



McLiam Wilson use irony to survey the configurations of home from a distance, Patterson, who also uses irony, manages to transcend the ironic “in order to address issues of identity through a restorative fictional anthropology” (130).

In *No Mate for the Magpie*, Frances Molloy has written a “rich black comedy” (134) in regional dialect, refusing the potential romanticism of her subject. Patten argues that, although it is a comic novel, Molloy does not trivialise the issues, and critiques national identity by “contextualising the North’s degeneracy within that of Ireland as a whole” (134). Patterson and McLiam Wilson place the North in relation to the UK. Patten suggests that their positions are those of prodigals who have a “consciously dislocated vantage point” (135) from which to write about Northern Ireland. McLiam Wilson’s *Ripley Bogle* criticises not only Northern Ireland codes and culture, but also the decline of Englishness. McLiam Wilson swipes at romantic nationalism, but Patten argues that his material, which hinges on pastiche, ironic deflation, caricature and subversion, is in the end “flashy but insubstantial” (139). Glenn Patterson’s work is interesting because he reveals the fissures in a Protestant community, depicted by the media as a homogeneous political sign, through his use of detailed realism. He uses the *bildungsroman* form as a way of exposing “redundant or pernicious aspects of his society’s cultural conventions” (142).

Goodby (1999) distinguishes between serious fiction, which is Irish fiction, “confined to a mixture of subjective lyricism and undemanding realism” (220), subject to market-driven demands, and “the Troubles as Trash” fiction, “the sensationalist genres of Troubles romance, thriller, crime and faction” (220). This “division of fictional labour” in the period after the Second World War up until the

Troubles, resulted from the “difficulty involved in visualising the Troubles in new ways: that is, as anything but an abnormal eruption cutting across ‘normal life’ (imagined as love or family)” (220). The situation changed with the emergence of a second wave of Northern Irish poets in the late 1970s, and with the young novelists, Robert McLiam Wilson, Glenn Patterson, Danny Morrison and Frances Molloy, in the mid to late-1980s, with whom “Troubles fiction emerged which began to address the pervasive violence with the non-moralizing subtlety suitable to a complex modern (and in some respects post-modern) society” (221).

Goodby’s method is close reading, and in this article he discusses the poetry of Derek Mahon, and Patterson’s *Burning your Own* (1993). He writes that for Patterson, the city embodies change; his vision is of the city as “process” (234). The novel is about “breakdown, at the level of society, and also at the level of lesser breakdowns” (234). The alternative to these is “embodied in Francy Hagan” (234). An awareness of class, and his urban realism places Patterson in the Protestant urban novel tradition (235), but Patterson, unlike some earlier writers does not attempt to “make the Troubles articulate some universal human condition” (235). In this novel divisions occur within the Protestant community, and indeed, there are associations, sometimes secret, with Roman Catholics. Patterson demythologises origin, and there are traces of magic realism in the novel. Goodby argues that the contesting of sectarian spaces and identities is also pursued in gender terms, so there is an Oedipal subtext, and a “crisis of maleness” (239). Rigid sexual identities are associated with dysfunction and unhappiness (239). Goodby refers to Bakhtin and carnival, but notes

that the purpose of this carnival is not to mock authority. It is not liberatory, but it reinforces hierarchy, and makes scapegoats of society's Others.

For Goodby, this is a post-modern novel. Its post-modernism can be seen in the fragmentation of the subject, and that fragmentation is literalised in Francy's death. Goodby places the development of a post-modern writing in an historical context. The turning point is in the mid-to-late 1970s, when containment and Ulsterization strategies were set in place (243). Then came the "crucial, unspoken role of differences such as those of class and gender in shaping literary responses to the Troubles" (243). The "material fractures these open up make it possible to see how supposedly discrete and fixed entities, like, 'self' and 'poem' are in fact fluid, strategies and interventions rather than achieved forms" (243).

In another article published in 1999, John Goodby critiques Schneider's "Bhabha-informed reading" (65) of *Burning Your Own*, which, Goodby argues, tends to "emphasise the deconstructionist and discursive aspects of Bhabha's marriage of Derrida, Foucault, Fanon and postcolonial theory, to the extent that the novel and its contexts are dematerialised and the burden of critical interest is shifted wholly to the interface between theory and text" (66). He questions Schneider's easy use of the term "postcoloniality" in relation to Ireland (66). Schneider's treatment focuses on the binary complementary of Mal and Francy and ignores the material, the historical and the social. As a result hybridity, which could be read through other relationships in the novel, is limited to the Mal and Francy relationship. According to Goodby, Schneider's reading misses the interplay between realism and magic realism of the dump scenes, intertextually reminiscent of *Stig of the Dump* (68), and oppositional to

the English realist tradition. Class and gender stereotypes are ignored: the echo of Oedipus in Mal's father being knocked out at the bonfire; Francy as Mal's "Fenian lover", and indeed Mal being a "Fenian lover", which signifies a desire for the Other. Schneider refers to Bhabha's argument about the colonialist's desire for the colonial Other, but it is not clear who is the colonist and who is the colonial in a Northern Irish scene played out by two Northern Irish children.

Nuala Johnston's "The Cartographies of Violence: Belfast's Resurrection Man" (1999), which was published in the journal, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, explores the use of geography, time and cinematography in the novel. This article might be seen as an example of the turn to discourse in humanistic social sciences generally. Johnston is interested in semiotics and in map-making, and she is interested in how McNamee's *Resurrection Man* (1994) uses the geographical imagination to explore violence in the city. Johnston sees the strength of the novel as being in "the marrying of the specific and universal through a story concerned with the existential journey of a gang of Loyalist killers" (73-74). Naming is significant in this novel, for example, the naming of the streets, and Vincent's Roman Catholic surname. McNamee is concerned with the attempt to find a fixed identity within the modern city, but Belfast changes, and Victor cannot keep up with it (730). His death is not on the "'liminal' borders of Roman Catholic Belfast but "right in the heart of his own ethical space" (713). McNamee "decentres and undermines the cartographic certainties" (731) that he earlier established. Johnston is sceptical about identity politics and reads the novel as a critique of the fixed notions of identity implicit in identity politics:

In this novel, night-time is a time of clarity of vision, while the cinematic references place Belfast within a larger frame of urban violence and “stilted heroism” (733). Johnston argues that McNamee is trying to “draw the reader’s attention to the modern world of representation where acts of violence, actual and virtual, are blurred. The difference between news violence and cinema violence becomes increasingly blurred” (734). This might be what McNamee is doing, but the reality is that cinematic violence does not kill material human beings, and there is a difference between real violence represented on news programmes and cinematic violence. Even in the contemporary post-modern world, there is a difference between the material and the symbolic. She claims that McNamee tries to “devolve responsibility for violence in Belfast across a wider range of local and extra-local forces” (735). All “reliable categories of explanation for violence in Belfast” (735) prove shaky. Johnston argues that geographers interested in cities, violence and modernity are invited by *Resurrection Man* to “establish a dialogic relationship with the literary text not to advance our own theories, but to take seriously those which in structure, form and content are radically different to our own” (735). MacNamee provides “no final solutions: no points of closure in the text, no definitive account of the city of Belfast, but for all that he does query our taken-for-granted assumptions about the sources and motives for violence in both Northern Ireland and beyond” (735).

## **2.5 Critical responses of the 2000s**

There has been a considerable interest in recent Irish novels in critical writings published since 2000. Critics rarely discuss early Troubles fiction in critical articles.

In the full-length studies, early Troubles fiction is usually mentioned only to contrast it negatively with recent Irish novels.

### **2.5.1 The Critical Establishment of Northern Fiction**

The Spring/Summer issue of *the Irish University Review* (2000), which focuses on contemporary Irish fiction, includes articles on Northern Irish writers by Michael Parker and Dermot McCarthy. Michael Parker's article discusses the novels of Deirdre Madden, whom, he argues, is best understood as following in the tradition of self-consciously literary novelists, interested in language and literary form, rather than in a realist tradition. He suggests that realism is a difficult concept to discuss in relation to Northern Irish writers, because for the Northern Irish writer, reality often means violence. It is in an attempt to find adequate signs for representing this reality that the Northern Irish writer turns to other writers. There are representations and misrepresentations of the north, and for Parker, novelists have a moral imperative to not only represent life in Northern Ireland, but to acknowledge and correct misrepresentations. Madden's novels are writerly texts, in which there are constant shifts in focalisation, perspective and chronology (83). Young women struggle to find their sense of focus or direction, and sometimes "the conviction that crucial data is being withheld persists" (83), with the result that "the reader has to work hard at constructing an interpretation of the text" (83).

Dermot McCarthy asks why Eoin McNamee's *Resurrection Man*, formally and stylistically a "highly mannered" novel (132), is so stylised, given that the world with which it engages is at "a far extreme from the world of 'art'"(132). This is a

highly theoretical article, which focuses on language as a medium through which to represent the world. McCarthy interprets *Resurrection Man* as a post-modern text, which, like Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, "displays its stylishness in ways that illustrate the depthlessness of the postmodern culture of the simulacrum and its artefacts-as-commodities, surfaces without depths, styles whose contents are nothing but themselves as style" (132). Film images, history, and culture are important in the characterisation of Victor and the theme of language is developed in the novel.

The novel has a focalised narrator throughout, and point of view shifts from narrator to narrator, but at the same time, McNamee maintains a "uniform, even monologic, style" (132). It is the disjunction between focalised viewpoint and narrative voice that produces the "high stylistic profile of the novel" (133). While the characters are distinct, they seem to think and speak "as modalities and expressions of some dispersed yet originating mind" (133). The cynic might suggest that the originating mind is ultimately the mind of the single, material author, however McCarthy suggests that this "faux logos may be the city itself, Belfast, which is as much a central figure – if not even more so – as Victor Kelly" (133). McCarthy proposes that the post-structuralist world has stopped making sense because of certain crises in the way that language is being used. McNamee's novel is "remarkable" because it "attempts to 'read' the atavistic worlds of sectarian violence through such postmodern tropes as the decentred self and the crisis of signification" (135).

*Resurrection Man* depicts a Belfast Babel in which "a confusion of tongues gives way to the buzz of sectarian murder" (138). There is an "ironization of the public language of history" (138). Police language is staged, treating the violence as

cinematic (139), journalists' discourse covers reality with the patina of ritual language (139), whilst "violence and the language of violence eventually generate the culture of violence" (140). The ritualistic is another motif picked up in the novel through the ritualistic torturing in the "Romper Room", an allusion McCarthy relates to the kids' TV programme, but unlike Pelaschiar, McCarthy does not link *Resurrection Men* back to the Shankhill Butchers of the material world. The material reality underpinning the novel is not really explored in this article, despite all the references to realism (140-141).

Belfast is a labyrinth, and nineteenth century British Imperialist history haunts its street names. It is a city of death and decay and "Victor is, like the signifier in poststructuralist theories of discourse, a 'formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity'" (148). Rather than being a source of liberating difference, McNamee shows him to be "empty, ephemeral and disposable, divorced from the referents of community, history and historical identity" (148). He is a character "based on history and yet a fiction drawn from imagination, a signifier without significance except as a sign of our times, a simulacrum of a past that's yet to be" (141). It is relatively easy to link Victor to history, particularly if the connection with the Shankhill Butchers is made, and he is also an imaginative and fictive depiction, so he is both a signifier implicitly/connotatively linked with a material signified, and, as fiction always is, a signifier linked to authorial imagination. He is a sign of "our times", if by this is meant the specific, historical and material "times" of Belfast in the late 1970s and 1980s. A "simulacrum" of a "past that's yet to be", is a more difficult concept, because there is a material foundation in the fictional creation of the Resurrection



Men. We know that the Shankhill Butchers operated at a specific historical moment, in a specific material space.

Haslam (2000) also explores *Resurrection Man* in an article which investigates the representation of violence in both *Cal* and *Resurrection Man*. He asks whether the writer does justice or violence to his or her subjects, and his view is that *Cal* ultimately “interrogates rather than celebrates the selfless embrace of suffering, particularly with respect to the imbrications between the symbolism of Irish Catholicism and republicanism” (205). McNamee’s *Resurrection Man*, however, is considered to be different. Haslam, like McCarthy, also suggests that the novel’s pervading voice might be the city’s voice. He writes that “Art has the ability, frequently the responsibility, to relate and elucidate the most abject and abhorrent realms of human experience. The manner in which such explorations are performed is crucial, particularly when a work finds its source material in the torturers and murderers of people whose relatives still grieve” (208), and argues that in *Resurrection Man*, the “unglamorous ethic” is missing (208). Although *Resurrection Man* is an “innovative and technically accomplished work”, it does further violence to the Butchers’ real-life victims (208) because it refracts the killings through the lens of a “dark and thrilling beauty” (*Resurrection Man*, p. 34).

### **2.5.2 Post-Marxist Approaches**

Richard Kirkland and Megan Sullivan both discuss Troubles novels within post-Marxist perspectives. Kirkland (2000) interprets the novels of Glenn Patterson and Robert McLiam Wilson as bourgeois novels. He writes that both novelists have been considered as representing “a new mode of expression in Northern Irish fiction

related to a specific socio-historical change close to that envisaged by Trotsky” (214). Trotsky’s model envisages form as “occupying an intersection of three interrelated elements: the ideological stimuli resulting from a new or developing class; the ‘existent ‘old forms’ available to the writer for transformation or development; and the transformative effect of the form on those ideologies which it simultaneously expresses” (213).

Both *Fat Lad* and *Eureka Street* deal with the juxtaposition of traditional socio-sectarian identity with the modern facades of Belfast. Both novels can be seen as “explorations of the formal representation of community” (216). These novels are concerned with the socialisation of the individual. In these novels, the progression from sectarian separateness to “fully individuated subject” involves “both the recognition of the effects of capital on previously assured anachronistic divisions and the transformations of these divisions in the new order” (218). According to Kirkland, Wilson’s strategy in *Eureka Street* is to isolate the liberal voice, Jake, on the margins, against two rival sectarian groups, and so there is a relationship between the narrative’s voice and the reader, a technique that, Kirkland argues, is reminiscent of Dickens’ technique. In *Eureka Street*, capital is associated with change. It is mystified, fetishised, and unknowable. It is satirized, but preferable to what it supplants. Capital allows Chuckie to reach the status of fully realised individual.

In *Fat Lad*, the bookshop is part of an entire “recasting” of the city, replacing the military with the commercial. Kirkland makes the point that in this novel, the recognition that Belfast can “finally become ‘any city’” (226) is shattered by the gunfire. He stresses the “uneasy balance” between the old and the new, which is also

to be found in Wilson's novel, but there is still the "potentially redemptive mysteries of capital" (226). Ideological structures in *Eureka Street* are seen as false consciousness, and recognising reality is metaphorically spoken of through reference to sight. *Fat Lad's* ending is considered more conclusive, making a greater attempt at transforming the social whole.

Megan Sullivan (2000) uses post-Marxist materialist feminist politics to interpret Mary Beckett's *Give them Stones* (1987). She traces the trajectory of Martha Murtagh's politics, from her early days as a nationalist, uncomfortable with political violence, through to post-Marxist feminism. Sullivan uses Marx's concepts of "use-value", "commodity" and "surplus-value" to discuss the ways in which both the British state, in the form of the British soldiers, and the nationalists, in the form of the Provisional IRA, attempt to use Martha, and by extension, women, for their own purposes. Martha is only considered productive when she produces either nationalism for the Provisionals or produces information for the state. Internment is significant in this novel. When men are interned, the women left behind have to work longer and harder (237).

Sullivan argues that Marx's theories about labour, based on the capitalist mode of production, have to be re-evaluated for post-colonial women, and uses Juliet Mitchell's *Women's Estate* (1971), a feminist theory of class, as a way to interpret Martha's economic, cultural and political position. She writes that for Marx, a useful thing has value by virtue of the labour contained in it. But when Martha starts out on her business, she says "I didn't take any account of my labour" (*Give them Stones*, 101). Through Martha, Sullivan suggests that women's labour might be defined less

in terms of monetary profit gained solely for accumulation of capital, and more in terms of economic and social considerations (243). There is economic and cultural value, in making the product for women and children.

Citing Spivak's description of the transition of the post-colonial woman from the domestic economy to a (post) colonial (mothering) maid servant, a move from "the domestic to 'the domestic'" (244), Sullivan argues that this reformulation is "particularly compelling" for an analysis of Martha, a female wage earner who owns a home bake shop. The name of her occupation suggests "its negotiation with the public and private spheres" (245). Martha is "the worker and business owner [who] provides bread (the 'stones' of the novel's title), for women and encourages them to brandish this 'useful thing' as sustenance against the nationalist, Republican, and state forces that oppress them" (245).

## **2.6 Book-length critical works**

There are three full length studies of Troubles fiction, Pelaschiar (1998), Magee (2001) and Kennedy-Andrews (2003). Gerry Smyth's *The Novel and the Nation* (1997) deals with Irish fiction more generally. This section reviews Pelaschiar, Kennedy-Andrews and Smyth. Magee's book is based on his PhD study which is discussed in Chapter One of this study.

Gerry Smyth's (1997) study of Irish fiction is pedagogic rather than monographic. It is not an exercise in canon-formation, he explains, and the text analysis method he uses is that of broad interpretative overviews, rather than "nuanced close readings" (2). The book consists of two parts, the first part is an introduction to "some of the theoretical, formal and conceptual issues surrounding the

emergence of the Irish novel since the 18<sup>th</sup> century” (1), while the second part “looks at a number of recent Irish novels in the light of these issues, and especially the ways in which the latest generation of writers challenge established notions regarding the limits and possibilities of Irish identity” (1). His underpinning view is that Ireland was England’s first colony (2) and Ireland was also one of the first geographical locations to begin the process of decolonisation (3). Another premise is that Ireland is still decolonising, which means that questions of political and cultural identity remain for both North and South Ireland, and that it would be premature to describe the island as post-colonial. Smyth identifies the three characteristic themes of the Irish novel tradition as: madness, dreams, fantasy and the macabre; family matters; and city and country.

Smyth writes that the subgenre of “Troubles Thriller” tends towards a “sort of voyeuristic violence in which stock characters and images are recycled in more or less disabling ways” (114). Political violence is the opportunity to “wheel” out the stereotypes of the Troubles, including the godfather, the femme fatale and the reluctant agent. Historical explanation in these texts is “eschewed” in favour of “individual intervention and psychological motivation” (114). Smyth believes that while such a tradition is understandable and possibly acceptable when it emanates from the English “journeyman novelist” (114), there is a moral imperative for the Irish writer to engage with the politics and history. Some recent Northern Irish novelists engage with the thriller and/or the love-across-the-barricades traditions, but at the same time defamiliarise these traditions through various strategies, the most important of which is the introduction of distance, physical and discursive, into the

novelistic vision (116). The remainder of the chapter comprises textual analysis of individual works using the theoretical, formal and thematic elements described in the first part of the book as a framework through which to interpret the novels. His analysis is full of value judgements. *Hidden Symptoms* (1986) is “deeply conservative” (117); *Resurrection Man* is “another reactionary response” (117); while *Divorcing Jack* has aspects that can irritate. Patterson, Wilson, Mary Beckett and Kate O’Riordan are accorded qualified praise for introducing disabling, distancing, and defamiliarising techniques.

Laura Pelaschiar’s monograph (1998) is not a “comprehensive survey of Northern Irish writing” (11) but an “interpretative reading of the imaginative perception and fictional representation of Northern Ireland in the Northern Irish novels which have been written in the last thirty years” (11). The focus is on writing by Northern Irish writers because “with very few exceptions they [writers from the North] have been the *only writers* to engage seriously with the Northern Irish situation and to write imaginatively and artistically about it” (12). Pelaschiar’s methodological approach is one in which “primary importance is given to a close reading of the texts themselves”, and this textual analysis is the principal means by which “these texts have been constructed into a definite *corpus*, or translated into a single, coherent narrative made up of different individual multi-voiced narratives” (12). In this book, she attempts to construct a northern collective unconscious from evidence she gathers from her close reading of primary texts. The trouble is that the set of novels about which she writes is quite narrow. For all her reference to “multi-voiced” narratives, she constructs a metanarrative which suggests that she thinks the

social psychology of Northern Irish writers is relatively homogeneous, and her view is narrowed even more because she focuses on the latest generation of writers.

The methodological approach she takes is to discuss theme(s) at the beginning of each chapter, followed by close readings of illustrative novels. Pelaschiar is interested in modern writers whom she believes are able to represent the paradigmatic shifts and changes in Northern Ireland. She discusses the use of satire and parody by Robert McLiam Wilson, Colin Bateman and Glenn Patterson, and the representation of political ideology, political leadership and terrorism in the novels of traditional writers such as Bernard MacLaverty, Maurice Leitch and Maurice Powers, who create fictional characters “clearly metonymic of the limits and failings of politics and Northern Ireland” (30). Killers are represented as psychopaths rather than the “brave warriors of the mythic Irish tradition” (40).

Traditionally in Irish literature, fathers and sons clash and the mother is overpowering, but Patterson’s *Fat Lad* differs from this model, because “reconciliation is possible and the unwanted and accidental return to Belfast turns out to be not yet again another failure but an occasion for healing” (67). Patterson signals that the “repetitive, cyclical and never ending colonial narrative of failure, suffering and loss” (68) can be broken, following Joyce’s tradition of envisaging a new historical paradigm for their “country” (68). In using the term “country”, Pelaschiar seems to be referring to the whole of Ireland, so that Northern Ireland is incorporated into some larger all-embracing concept of Ireland.

For the older generation of “Ulster writers, the countryside also represented a sort of political locus amoenus, that happy elsewhere where, once upon a time, the

two communities could naturally co-exist in a atmosphere of mutual respect, a blessed state of things that cannot be recreated in the city” (71). One might argue with the use of the term “Ulster” without further explanation, and the reference to the essentialist “two communities”. For Pelaschiar, traditional writers use the countryside as an index of peace, calm and tolerance. Briege Duffaud’s *A Wreath upon the Dead* (1992), is interpreted as a critique of Kiely’s “idyllic vision of life in a country town” (94).

Belfast, Pelaschiar writes, is a Protestant town, made by Protestants who reclaimed it from the sea and the bog, building industry and shipyards. It is a testament to their patience, endurance and hard work. But for Catholics the relationship is different because they have been excluded for so long. These different relationships have found their way into Northern Irish writing and have “left their mark” (100) on the fictional representations of the city. Belfast in the 1970s and 1980s became an even darker place, containing all of Northern Ireland’s problems. It became a metonym of failure and a centre of negativity. Fictional representations of Belfast in novels of the 1990s move away from a vision of violence to something resembling modernity, and are even more striking when contrasted with the Belfast of novels of the 1970s and 1980s (114).

New writers choose to represent the city as the place where change can happen. Only recently, the city has undergone a re-evaluation at the hands of the young Northern Irish novelists, who decode and then re-code Belfast’s post-modern identity, and draw attention to its European normality. Patterson takes a positive view of contemporary Belfast but this might have something to do with his Protestantism. More than any other novel, *Eureka Street* offers a new image of Belfast, a striking



image, because it is so different from *Ripley Bogle's* Belfast. But, as Pelaschiar acknowledges, even in this novel McLiam Wilson writes about the aftermath of the city centre bomb. For Pelaschiar “it is undeniable that the latest generation of Northern Irish writers has consciously tried to represent their country not as a fated place of irresolvable violence, but as a location for multiple opportunities” (130). There is a move towards representing the city as redemptive (115). Writers from the North “seem to show symptoms both of topophobia and topophilia. This love-hate relationship until recently (again Patterson, McLiam Wilson and Bateman offer new codes of evolution) remained unresolved and could only lead to a tragic ending (exile, imprisonment, death or madness)” (117).

Pelaschiar's argument might be strengthened if she provided evidence of what she believes counts as the “new codes of evolution”, because there is a question about how different the endings of the Patterson, McLiam Wilson and Bateman novels are. *Burning Your Own* ends in Francy's death; *Fat Lad* ends with Drew leaving for Paris; *Ripley Bogle* is the story of a Northern Irish under-achieving tramp wandering the streets of London; *Cycle of Madness* (1995) ends in the death of the main protagonist; *Divorcing Jack* (1995) ends with partial reconciliation; it is really only *Eureka Street* that ends happily, and even then Jake's monologue about the longevity of love is measured.

Kennedy-Andrews' (2003) full length monographic study of Troubles fiction, *Fiction and the Northern Ireland Troubles since 1969: (De-)constructing the North*, is based on the premise that, “writers and readers understand and make sense of the Northern Troubles through the various prior texts and discourses in which the conflict

has been represented. Each of the many ways of writing and reading the Troubles is, to some degree, ideologically conditioned” (10). He argues that the act of reading is ideologically bound. We are not free interpretative agents, but respond in ways that are controlled by the “codes and strategies of text and our socially constructed subjectivity” (10). In the first chapter, Kennedy-Andrews describes a range of “critical approaches” through which to view the fiction, and later in the book he uses each of these as a framework through which to engage in close reading of a number of primary texts. Although he has constructed a particular mapping, he accepts that any categorisation is quite malleable, and there are other ways of interpreting and categorising novels. His own position ““embraces all these materialist currents which constitute a major critique of the dominant liberal, humanist cultural position, questioning - but not necessarily demolishing – traditional concepts of individual autonomy, the unity and stability of the self, the universality of human values” (40).

The critical approaches he outlines are: liberal humanism and the realist aesthetic, postmodern humanism, political *versus* cultural paradigms, postcolonialism, and women’s writing. Within the tradition of liberal humanism and the realist aesthetic, there is faith in human progress and individual freedom, and the characteristic literary methodology is new criticism, which “not only provides a methodology for a liberal construction of an aesthetic and cultural ideal but in so doing offers an alternative to politics” (14). Liberal humanism typically avoids extreme political commitment, and the liberal humanist view of progress is that it comes through moral education rather than political revolution. The “liberal humanist novel” (15) interpellates the reader to see the Troubles in a “common sense” way

(15). Kennedy-Andrews quotes Deane and Eagleton decrying the liberal humanist novel as a response to the Troubles, because in the face of the Troubles, it withdraws into the private realm, a place of refuge from the public world and a source of truth and authenticity (17).

In Northern Ireland, postmodern humanism offers the possibility of deconstructing categories such as Catholic/Protestant; Unionist/Nationalist, and instead, of exploring “new horizons of identity” (19), and interrogating traditional myths. Postmodern textual strategies of “disruption, perspectivism and distancing” (21), enable post-modern novelists to, “re-imagine self and world, to reformulate identity, history and agency” (21). Kennedy-Andrews considers Longley and Deane to be critics who articulate varieties of a postmodern desire to rewrite everything, but points out that the postmodern ideas articulated by them have not formed the basis for any kind of consensus (22). He refers to Richard Kearney’s notion of the “migrant mind”, which, “having made the journey away from ‘home’ whether physically or mentally, returns to see what might be rediscovered and recreated from indigenous, local or traditional cultural resources to contribute to new constructions of Irishness” (25). The danger with this argument is that it can be interpreted as an idealist and totalising argument which assumes a universal migrant mind, and, perhaps more dangerously, some essentialist category of “Irishness”. Edna Longley is suspicious of Irishness, “with its totalitarian tinge” (26), although Kennedy-Andrews argues that Longley’s suspicions derive from the fact that Longley associates Kearney’s new Irishness with “old nationalist grand narrative” (26). Her solution would be to

abandon Irishness. For Longley, political Irishness should be marked off from culture, and the latter should always resist “unitary assumptions or programmes” (26).

The term post-colonialism is used by Kennedy-Andrews not in the “chronological sense of referring to a post-independence period” but as “a description of the various cultural effects of colonisation” (30). Realist novels, whose purpose is to produce a narrative of reconciliation, face a tough challenge with Northern Ireland. *Ripley Bogle* and *Eureka Street* are praised as “innovative, forceful demonstrations of the potential of the adulterated narratives which is heterogeneous, hybridised, assimilating, disruptive of fixed identities, whether imperialist or nationalist” (33).

The work of novelists such as Jennifer Johnston and Kate O’Riordan “exemplifies the central conflict in women’s writing – the collision between the female protagonist’s evolving self and society’s imposed identity” (36). Women’s writing about the North has tended to focus on “specifically female” areas, such as “family and sexual and marital relations” (36), but Kennedy-Andrews insists that it would be wrong to see this as a simple evasion or rejection of politics. In the novels written by Jennifer Johnston, Mary Beckett, or Kate O’Riordan, personal problems are shown to stem from a “social structure in which women are systematically exploited, dominated, repressed” (36).

Kennedy-Andrews writes that Northern Irish women’s writing is overwhelmingly realist (38), suggesting that this might be because it “is designed to fulfil a reassuring and supportive function in the field of sexual politics and to provide Northern Irish women, anxious to recognise themselves amidst the turmoil, with positive images of female identity and community” (38). He seems to see women’s

writing as a homogeneous mass of writing. This lumps together all women in the north, and all women writing about the north, and indeed, when it comes to close readings of specific novels, he ends up arguing that there are some women writers e.g. Duffaud and Madden, whose post-structuralist concerns about language and subjectivity may be “more readily unlocked through Macherey, Derrida and Baudrillard than through Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva” (225). Some women writers seem to be more womanly than other women writers.

His view is that women writers generally complicate and interrogate traditional rigid, oppositional divisions such as Protestant/Catholic, and Unionist/Nationalist, and contribute to the creation of a heteroglossic reality, “composed of multiple discourses which allow for possibilities of transformation and social change” (227). But in the real world, rather than the text, the women writers of whom he writes do not create possibilities for transformation and social change. They deal in representation, not material politics, and it is likely that their ability to write about a heretoglossic reality is only possible because of political, social and economic shifts at the material level.

Kennedy-Andrews writes that the majority of the fiction “reviewed” in his study is marked by a “concern to challenge old constructions of the Northern Irish Troubles”, and to “(re-)centre or (re-)activate some of the *petits recits* which the master discourses attempted to suppress in order to validate their own hegemonic positions” (269). He claims that the “majority of the fiction on the North and its Troubles since the late ‘60s is written to an identifiably post-modern agenda” (269)’, and insists that the new, post-modern fiction illustrates that “demystification of

outmoded, alienating myths can lead to positive new re-imaginings, the opening up of new horizons of possibility in a project of universal liberation” (275). Such a claim of “universal liberation” might also arguably constitute a revised post-Enlightenment modern agenda. It certainly constitutes a large claim for any kind of fiction, whether post-modern or not.

## **2.7 Identifying an emerging canon**

It is possible to identify trends in the critical writings about Troubles fiction. Early studies of Troubles novels include articles by Irish scholar Alan Titley, sociologist Bill Rolston, and the military historian J. Bowyer-Bell, who all wrote about stereotypical representation. The methods adopted by these writers tended to be structuralist. The other main approach adopted by critical writers in the 1970s and 1980s was evaluative summarisation. In the 1970s, critics evaluated specific novels in relation to their perceptions about the representation of reality in the novels. In the early 1980s, the concern was often with the representation of psychological realism in the novels. More recently, literary critics, some working within the emerging institutional discipline of Irish Studies, have turned their attention to the work of a younger generation of novelists, often arguing that these novels break the traditional forms of Troubles fiction representation.

The secondary literature, in general, characterises Troubles fiction as either a static site of cultural production in which certain negative stereotypes (Titley, Rolston, Bowyer-Bell), or false stereotypes (Magee) are endlessly reproduced, or as a site of cultural production that has experienced a form of cultural rupture, as a younger generation rewrites traditional stereotypes and stories (Patten, Pelschiar).

Analytical methodology is not explicitly discussed, and treatment of the novels is either by means of survey techniques, which sometimes wrench the stereotype from its context, or through the interpretative practices of close reading. The close reading micro-level methodology favoured by literary critics is sometimes built on foundations of critical social theory, but rarely is the question of method dealt with explicitly.

In the critical writings of the 1970s reference is made not only to the domestic novels of Hegarty, Jennifer Johnston and De Vere White but also to the thrillers of Carrick, Barlow and Breslin. During the 1980s the structuralist orientated critics were still providing overviews of the range of Troubles fiction while much of the evaluative criticism focused on the novels of the established literary novelists, Jennifer Johnston and Maurice Leitch. In the 1990s Jeffrey and O'Halpin and Bill Rolston still referenced thrillers of the 1970s and 1980s, and Magee refers to a large number of thrillers, but most of the critics working in the field of Irish Studies began to ignore these novels and concentrated their attention almost entirely on the post-1985 Irish novels. Jennifer Johnston novels and MacLaverty's *Cal* are still regularly referenced but the picture emerging from the critical writings of the 1990s and 2000s is skewed towards the literary novels emerging from Northern Ireland in the latter half of the 1980s onwards. The interest is in a certain type of writing and certain types of authors, but this does not tell the whole story of Troubles fiction, and it elides the relationships between the earlier novels and the later ones.

This review of the critical secondary literature reveals that there are certain novels that are repeatedly included in studies of Troubles fiction, and many novels

that are ignored. It is possible to map an emerging canon of Troubles fiction. For the purposes of this study, the criterion for selection relates to the number of times a novel is cited in the secondary critical literature. Much of the critical literature is evaluative, but for the purposes of mapping a canon, it does not matter whether the critics review the novels favourably or unfavourably: the criterion for selection is to be included at all in the critical literature. The list of novels cited in the secondary literature in ranked order is as follows:

Johnston, Jennifer, *Shadows on our Skin*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1977 (13 citations)

McLavery, Bernard, *Cal*, Belfast, Blackstaff 1984 (11 citations)

Herron, Shaun, *The Whore Mother*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1973 (9 citations)

Seymour, Gerald, *Harry's Game*, London, Fontana, 1977 (8 citations)

Johnston, Jennifer, *The Railway Station Man*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1984 (7 citations)

Leitch, Maurice, *Silver's City*, London, Secker and Warburg 1981 (7 citations)

McNamee, Eoin, *Resurrection Man*, London, Picador, 1994 (7 citations)

Kiely, Benedict, *Proxopera*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1977 (6 citations)

McLiam Wilson, Robert, *Ripley Bogle*, Belfast, Blackstaff 1989 (6 citations)

Beckett, Mary, *Give them Stones*, London, Bloomsbury, 1987 (5 citations)

Driscoll, Peter (1976), *In Connection with Kilshaw*. London: Sphere , 1974 (5 citations)

Higgins, Jack, *Prayer for the Dying*, London, Collins, 1973 (5 citations)



Higgins, Jack, *The Savage Day*, London, HarperCollins 1972 (5 citations)  
Lingard, Joan, *The Twelfth Day of July*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1970 (5 citations)  
Patterson, Glenn, *Burning Your Own*, London, Minerva, 1993 (5 citations)  
Patterson, Glenn, *Fat Lad* London, Chatto and Windus, 1989 (5 citations)  
Powers, M.S., *The Killing of Yesterday's Children*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1985  
(5 citations)

In this list of seventeen novels, eight were published in the 1970s, seven were published in the 1980s and two were published in 1990s. Nine of the novels can be described as belonging to the thriller genre, *Silver's City*, *Harry's Game*, *The Whore Mother*, *Proxopera*, *Resurrection Man*, *In Connection with Kilshaw*, *The Savage Day*, *Prayer for the Dying* and *The Killing of Yesterday's Children*. Two novels are love stories, *Cal* and *The Railway Station Man*. Four novels are best described as *bildungsromans*, *Shadow on our Skin*, *Ripley Bogle*, *Fat Lad* and *Burning your Own*. Lingard's *The Twelfth Day of July* is a children's book, and Mary Beckett's *Give them Stones* is the only domestic drama in the list. There are fourteen novelists cited in this list of seventeen novels, and most of them are Northern Irish. Of the four who are not Irish, Gerald Seymour is English, Peter Driscoll is South African, Joan Lingard is Scottish but lives in Northern Ireland, and Jack Higgins comes from an Irish family. Three of the novelists are women. Two novels by Jennifer Johnston, Jack Higgins and Glenn Patterson are included on the list.

The canon identification exercise can be modified to focus on novelists rather than specific titles, because it is acknowledged that in popular fiction, it is sometimes

the overall work of the novelist rather than specific titles that are important. The criterion for selection for this part of the exercise relates to the number of times a novelist is cited in the secondary literature. It does not matter whether the critics review the novelists favourably or unfavourably. The criterion for selection is to be included at all in the critical literature. The list in ranked order is as follows:

Jennifer Johnston (21 citations)

Joan Lingard (18 citations)

Shaun Herron (13 citations)

Jack Higgins (13 citations)

Bernard MacLaverty (12 citations)

Maurice Leitch (11 citations)

Glenn Patterson (11 citations)

Gerald Seymour (11 citations)

Robert McLiam Wilson (9 citations)

Benedict Kiely (8 citations)

Deirdre Madden (8 citations)

M.S. Powers (8 citations)

Colin Bateman (7 citations)

Eugene McCabe (7 citations)

Eoin McNamee (7 citations)

There are only two novelists whose novels appear on the first list but do not appear on the second list, Peter Driscoll and Mary Beckett. Driscoll's *In Connection with Kilshaw* is cited five times, two of these citations are from articles written by Bill Rolston. None of the critics praise the novel. Mary Beckett's *Give Them Stones* is cited five times. Critics tend to praise the novel. The two ranked lists provide an overview of the emerging Troubles canon. Later in the study, a number of models will be used to analyse the primary texts, and at that point it will be interesting to return to the emerging Troubles canon list and consider those novels and novelists in relation to the analysis of Troubles fiction that emerges from the application of the models.

## **CHAPTER THREE: A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The methodological framework adopted in this study is based on a social semiotic approach to the objects of study, which are fictional texts dealing with Northern Ireland during the Troubles. It rests within a critical research paradigm inasmuch as it views representation in and through cultural texts as being always ideological. The study attempts to construct a method for studying the ways in which codes and conventions within generic texts shift and change through diachronic transformations. The framework allows for investigating what might be called the dialectic of genre. This dialectic relationship might be described a relationship in which generic codes and conventions (plots, characterisations) are challenged by, and interact with, alternative and oppositional models in the form of individual texts, leading over time to the incorporation of the alternative and oppositional within the general model, which might lead to the formation of a new set of conventional texts. However, it is acknowledged that in the last instance, changes in publishing possibilities depend on more general changes in socio-political economic spheres.

#### **3.1.1 The Methodological Framework**

This study is concerned with methods and interpretation. The first part of the study focused on the conceptual and interpretative frameworks and methodologies used in the secondary critical literature, and established the shifting patterns of critical

approaches over time. The second part of the study focuses on the primary sources, which are analysed using conceptual categories derived from semiotic traditions, and interpreted using models variously derived from the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, Raymond Williams' "structures of feeling", and a novel adaptation of Hall's encoding/decoding model.

The methodological framework for this study enables intertextual connections in and through a large data set of Troubles novels in the form of generic codes and conventions to be identified. Specific texts are mapped out in relation to the generic codes and conventions, themselves the product of specific concrete texts. The initial set of generic codes and conventions (plot, theme, characters) have been constructed through reference to the literature of Northern Irish Troubles fiction criticism and an examination of the set of pre-texts identified in Magee's study. This framework has the flexibility to allow cultural artefacts to be considered as the products of human agency, but also recognises that those human agents always work within the possibilities and limitations of existing societal constructs and constraints.

Rather than adopting a more conventional hermeneutic, interpretative approach, which would explore a few texts carefully chosen from the larger body of texts, so that the choice of texts is in itself an analytical and critical activity, the approach adopted in this study is one which explores patterns and relationships between Troubles fiction texts in a large data set. Although the methodology is designed to limit the space for interpretative hermeneutics as much as possible, it is acknowledged that in any qualitative methodology, interpretative hermeneutics is inevitable.

Troubles fiction has been chosen as an appropriate generic formation through which to actualise the methodology as Troubles fiction is rich in ideological content and contested representational signs because it is based on a real historical conflict. It is a relatively narrow field despite there having been over three hundred novels published. Troubles fiction novels are attempts to symbolically encode elements relating to a real and particular historical moment, which is the subject of controversy. Troubles fiction is a set of texts that is particularly rich because it is particularly open to ideological content. Every text is ideologically grounded, but in political-historical texts, the ideological content is central.

The literature review undertaken in the second chapter of this dissertation provides an initial knowledge base from which it is possible to identify generalised interpretative models of Troubles fiction that grow out of critical studies. Two main interpretative models emerge from an analysis of the secondary literature of Troubles fiction. The first model is one in which Troubles fiction is characterised as being a static site of cultural production in which a narrow range of negative (Rolston, 1989; Titley, 1980) or false (Magee, 2001) stereotypes of the Irish are endlessly reproduced and repeated, with notable exceptions, which are better, more realistic, or more truthful representations of the material circumstances of the conflict, the Irish and Northern Ireland. In general, this view of Troubles fiction emanates from critical writers of the 1970s and 1980s, although it is also a view that Magee's 2001 book supports. The second dominant interpretative model is one which sees Troubles fiction as a site of cultural production that has experienced a form of cultural rupture as a younger generation of writers critique existing conventional representations, and

re-interprets and rewrites traditional stereotypes and stories. The causes of cultural rupture are variously ascribed to cultural interaction with Britain (Patten, 1995), post-modern globalisation (Pelschiar, 1998), or a form of post-colonial revisionism (Smyth, 1997). This view is common in the secondary literature of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The view that representation in Troubles fiction is monolithically stereotypical ignores historical changes in the representation of the Troubles in fiction, while the view that representation has been subject to some sort of “cultural rupture” ignores the intertextual relationships between texts that represent the Troubles, and the details of diachronic transformation, focusing instead on a “transformed” set of texts.

This study is based on the assumption that Troubles fiction is, and has been, subject to transformations in representation within a diachronic framework. These transformations can be studied in a systematic way through the analysis of a large data set representative of the full genre spectrum. The systematic study of transformation reveals that the range of transformations possible is itself constituted and constrained by the larger logonomic system within which the producers and receivers of the texts operate.

Post-structuralist theories of cultural production and reception stress the multivalency of the sign and the polysemic nature of audience reception, while literary criticism and cultural studies often emphasise the dialogic and intertextual nature of webs of discourse, but the problem with these approaches is that they tend towards idealist theoretical perspectives about culture. This study begins from a materialist position regarding the production of popular fiction in capitalist societies,

which is always limited and controlled by material publishing houses, operating within the logonomic constraints of capitalism. As a consequence, it is likely that only a limited range of representations circulates within the public domain and only a limited range of representations is legitimated in the sense of being published. Novels in contemporary Western society are published by publishers whose motivation is profit. The range of representations circulating at any given synchronic moment will be the product of decisions made by specific publishers, who will be concerned with publishing and circulating representations that they believe will be marketable. People write novels, and facilitate the publishing, distribution and marketing of those novels, but not in the circumstances of their own choosing.

Within any given society at any specific historical juncture, there may be a number of different ideologies circulating in a range of media, published through a variety of different means. The parameters of what is considered marketable, and thus in terms of economic production, acceptable at any given moment in history is a product of changing logonomic systems, themselves a product of material historical changes. Changes and transformations in the ideologies operating in and through cultural production in current western society are asymmetrical. At any synchronic moment, there will be in circulation cultural products which replicate the dominant cultural and generic codes and conventions of the moment, cultural products which modify the dominant codes and conventions and cultural products which challenge.

Using the framework of diachronic transformation allows us to think about authors as both producers of texts and as receivers or consumers of texts, and it begins to be possible to see Troubles fiction authors as possessing knowledge of the



generic conventions of Troubles fiction in advance of creating Troubles fiction novels. Popular genre is important in Troubles fiction, so important that the conventions overflow specific novels and define the categorical mode, Troubles fiction. It is the overflow of generic convention from specific texts to the level of category that Jayne Steel captures in her study of the female stereotype, *Vampira*. Even in the novels that literary critics are inclined to label as being more “literary”, for example Bernard Mac Laverty’s *Cal*, the forms and plots derive from popular generic categories. In the case of *Cal*, the across-the-barricades love story and the thriller elements are structurally and thematically crucial.

This model of the consuming/productive author allows the possibility of revising encoding/decoding interpretative frames to reconstitute the notion of reading positions as being simultaneously reading/writing positions, because in such a model, the author-as-decoder is the pre-condition for the possibility of author-as-encoder. Such a model of encoding/decoding, which reverses the order of elements, has similarities to Kristeva’s intertextuality in which the text is considered as “a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva, 1986, 37).

## **3.2 Methodological Procedure**

The methodological framework used in this study focused on mapping the decoding/encoding process specifically in relation to Troubles fiction pre-texts.

### **3.2.1 Steps in the Research Process**

The research method consisted of the following steps:

- Texts that might be considered Troubles fiction were identified.
- A representative data set was acquired. Magee suggests that there have been around 300 novels published which fit within the class Troubles fiction. This study includes 153 texts.
- Texts were described and coded using data gathering sheets designed for the study.
- Pre-1969 texts, which could reasonably constitute pre-texts, were identified.
- Syntagms (narrative chains) and paradigms (dominant genre type, characters) were identified within the initial (1969-1970) novels.
- Using an historical framework, each research object was coded as a replication novel, a modification novel or as a challenging novel against an initial set of generic codes and conventions. A picture of small transformations emerges from this analysis which provides a rich diachronic analysis.

Magee argues that “the conflict is characterized by so many antagonistic forces and interest, internal and external, that it readily lends itself as a focus for many generic influences. There have been sub genres and refinements, and texts, which are exceptions to the rules. What is remarkable, however, is that across the genre spectrum comprising Troubles fiction we encounter again and again the same set of tropes and lurid mischaracterizations - a testament to the ubiquitous cultural penetration of Britain’s point of view in regard to the conflict” (Magee, 1998, 7).

Magee's reference to the "sub genres and refinements, and texts which are the exceptions to the rules" assumes that there are rules at some level. For Magee there are "rules", "refinements", and "exceptions". The next question to be asked might legitimately relate to the constitution and relationship of these "rules", "refinements" and "exceptions" over time. The present study takes Magee's assumptions about the genre-spectrum of Troubles fiction and uses social semiotic methodology to reveal the transformations constituted within a diachronic framework.

The research data set consists of 153 Troubles fiction novels randomly chosen. Following Magee, these novels are considered a hybrid genre in that there are generic conventions, particularly relating to thriller and love stories, which generally constitute some element of the structure, plot and characterisations of specific novels within the generic set. It may be that to be considered for publication Troubles fiction novels must contain conventions of the thriller and the "love-across-the-barricades" love story, perhaps to varying degrees in specific novels. This is the conventional conservatism that McLiam Wilson satirises in *Ripley Bogle* (1989), while still adhering to the reproduction of the same generic conventions in his satirical text. It may be that a particular generic form is more accessible to transformation and change.

The novels forming the research set are novels available in the UK through bookshops, public library systems, Amazon and e-Bay. This set of parameters on the research set is pragmatic rather than philosophical or ideological. The Troubles Fiction bibliography compiled by Bill Rolston and Robert Bell and hosted on CAIN was initially used to identify titles. There was no question of including or excluding

specific novels based on aesthetic or ideological evaluation. The base line is that, to be considered a potential research object, the novel should directly deal with the subject of Northern Ireland during the Troubles. One hundred and fifty novels constitutes roughly one quarter of the total output (Magee, 2001, 14) It is believed that the set used in this study offers enough empirical evidence to provide an overview of the development of Troubles fiction. Not all published Troubles novels are analysed within this study but it is expected, although all knowledge must be considered contingent, that the modified encoding/decoding model is flexible enough to contain them.

This study is concerned with the production of genre novels by authors-as-producers in relation to the consumption of genre novels, either specifically (reading concrete texts) or generally (awareness of codes and conventions as a result of general circulation of the genre). To map out material instances of intertextuality, the study employs analytical concepts drawn from semiotics, specifically, paradigms and syntagms, which have their origins in Saussurean linguistics. For the Saussurean linguists, meaning in language is constructed through difference, so that signifiers only have meaning relative to other signifiers, present or absent. The construction of meaning is governed by operations on two planes, the *paradigmatic* and the *syntagmatic*.

Paradigms refer to the choice of specific signifiers in opposition to other possible signifiers. For semioticians working within critical theory frameworks the choice of specific signifiers involves ideological implications. Syntagms are the combinations or chains of elements which form a meaningful whole within a text. In

text or speech, syntagm refers to the syntactical rules and conventions which govern language. In this study, paradigmatic choice relates to the types of characters included in the novel, in particular to choices about characters. Evidence takes the form of logging descriptive words and phrases and constructing a descriptive summary of significant characters. Identifying the syntagmatic axis in this study takes the form of identifying the chains of signifiers which contribute to make meaning within the novels. In relation to popular culture novels, syntagmatic combinations refer to plot and narrative. Following the Russian Formalists, it is possible to suggest that plot and narrative are not necessarily the same. The plot is the story; the narrative is the way in which the story is told. For the purposes of this study, the range and types of plots circulating in novels at any synchronic moment is of interest, as are the transformations in plots over time.

Genre is determined by both paradigmatic selections and syntagmatic combinations. Genre is governed by expected codes and conventions. Popular culture generic conventions which figure in this study of the hybrid Troubles genre include conventions associated with romances, thrillers, crime novels, *bildungsromans*, comedy and fantasy novels. In relation to Peirce's typology of signs, all text is symbolic (Chandler, 2002, 37). If this assertion is accepted, then the question of what constitutes "reality" within popular culture texts is an issue. Cultural products can be, but are not necessarily, representations of the real. In figurative art, representing the real might consist of producing a style of work which resembles, or seems to resemble, the real. In text, which is always symbolic, representing the real refers to codes and conventions of written language which are subject to diachronic

transformations. Discussing the representation of the real in popular culture is not to invoke the literary genre of “realism”. In the context of this study, what is of interest is verisimilitude, which, in relation to textual representation, is a question of using modality markers, where modality refers to a relationship with the material world (Hodge and Kress, 1988, 27).

Verisimilitude, or modality, in this context is a matter of the codes and conventions, which the readers of a particular genre, at a particular given historical moment, learn to read and interpret as “real”. Modality markers might include reference to historical and geographical facts in the material world. However, realism in Troubles fiction is inescapably interlinked with ideology. Eagleton insists on the ideological nature of all fiction, arguing that where history enters the text it does so as ideology, as an amalgam of certain perspectives on any given society at any given time (Eagleton, 1976, 70). According to this reading, popular fiction is only ever ideological in its representation of life. Representations of the Troubles in the novels are the product of the authorial, and general, cultural ideology, and are interpretations of events or characters or situations. That is not to suggest that there is a Thing-in-itself that evades the grasp of the individual consciousness, but that Northern Ireland is a site of struggle, and there are a number of different possible interpretations of events there which are the product of differing ideological positions.

A data gathering instrument which includes bibliographic information and content description was developed for analytical use. The data categories are shown in Figure 2. An example of the information captured in each of the records can be found in Appendix A.

Categories in Data Gathering Sheets	Description and function
Bibliographic information	The information includes recording author, title, publisher, date of publication, place, nationality of author, where known
Dominant affective genre	The dominant genre type that best describes the novel is recorded.
Plot summary label	A plot summary statement is recorded for each novel.
Representations of key characters	Paradigmatic choices about heroes, villains and female characters.
Modality markers	Where possible modality markers are established and identified. These include reference to the material world (places, people, institutions, events).
Ideology stance	Ideological stance is related to positive, neutral or negative attitudes towards the personnel, policies, politics and activities relating to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Evidence of ideological stance might be drawn from the plot, from representations of characters, or from clues in the narrative or style of discourse

**Figure 2: Categories in the Data Gathering Sheets**

Decisions about the inclusion of certain representations of characters are decisions made along the paradigmatic axis. Decisions about plot and genre are syntagmatic decisions. There is a relationship between plot, genre, characters, modality and ideology. Form and content are inter-linked, and form is ideologically bound as is content, for example, early Troubles thrillers tend towards particular ideological positions regarding Republican activists.

Magee categorises all Troubles novels as forming part of a “catch-all” genre, in which specific novels use elements of particular genres, especially thriller and romance generic characteristics, to a greater or lesser degree. The unifying feature in this set of novels is the fact that they are all representations of events and characters relating to the contemporary Troubles in Northern Ireland. In this study, the dominant affect genre type which best describes the form of individual novels is recorded. This inevitably rests on decision-making by the researcher, and is, in the final instance, interpretative and subjective.

In the case of some novels, the dominant genre type is relatively easy to identify, for example, Gerald Seymour’s *Harry’s Game* (1975), a well-known thriller which has been filmed and televised. In other novels, the dominant genre type is more difficult to identify, for example, it might be possible to interpret Robert McLiam Wilson’s *Eureka Street* (1995) as primarily a love story or primarily a *bildungsroman*. In social science methodology, the “solution” to this “problem” would be to base interpretation on a large interpretative research group or to acknowledge that the interpretations are the products of one researcher. As regards replication of methodology, although the particular interpretative activity could not be replicated by another researcher, the method of undertaking the interpretative activity could be replicated. This methodology can thus be replicated, but the results of the application of the method might not be the same. This is the case with any research project based on subjective, interpretative, hermeneutic data analysis.

This study takes as a hypothesis that certain codes and conventions have become generic norms for Troubles fiction novels to such an extent that they are



referred to within all Troubles fiction, although the specific ways in which they are used differ. Eagleton (1976) differentiates between the general mode of literary production, by which he means the generic and plot elements which will be transformed by the author-as-producer into the product, by which he means the specific conjunction of elements within particular concrete novels. Although it is quite old, typical of its time and productive environment in its dependence on Althusserian structuralist Marxism, this theorisation, which follows Marx's model of general production and Althusser's notion of practice as the transformation of raw means of production into product by the work of labour, in the case of fiction by the intellectual work of the author, is nevertheless a useful model for this study because it allows us to differentiate between generic codes and specific instantiations of codes, and to relate specific instantiations of codes to each other within the broader generic framework.

### **3.2.2 The Analytical Categories**

For the purposes of transparently recording the assumptions upon which the methodology rests, the genre categories used in the data gathering instrument are defined. The genre categories used are thrillers, romance, *bildungsromans*, children's fiction, domestic drama, comedy, crime and horror. Thrillers are novels which have fast moving linear plot action, often involving spies, lone soldiers, and terrorists, and the plot often involves a race against time. Thrillers are essentially paranoid fictions whose elements, according to Jerry Palmer, are:

A conspiracy, which is seen as an “unnatural” or pathological disruption of an otherwise ordered world.

A competitive hero, who has to demonstrate his superiority both to his enemies and his friends. His competitiveness isolates him; he is an outsider, like those he hunts.

The process of suspense.

Upon these major dimensions depend some non-essential, but extremely common conventions: the distinction between the amateur, the professional and the bureaucrat; the kerygmatic encounter; the inhumanity of the villain (Palmer, 1978, 100).

Thrillers often set a recognisable hero, sometimes in conflict with his superiors, against a recognisable villain who is often part of a larger conspiratorial group concerned with overthrowing order and stability. The plot builds towards a climactic confrontation followed by the conclusion which might take the form of the positive thriller’s return to order or the negative thriller’s more pessimistic and less certain ending (Palmer, 1978).

Romances are love stories which generally have happy endings. They are usually escapist, constructed to be optimistic and relaxing, and a favourite romance plot is the taming of a wild man by a woman. There tends to be straightforward unambiguous morality in romances: good always defeats evil and the heroine gets her man. In Troubles fiction, however, the plot is often a “love-across-the barricades” or Romeo and Juliet plot, in which individuals from opposite sides of the conflict fall in love but are prevented by public events from enjoying private happiness.

The *bildungsroman* is another generic category that is important in the production of Troubles novels, particularly novels written in the late 1980s and 1990s. The theme of the *bildungsroman* is the development of a character from youth to adulthood. Classic *bildungsromans* trace the development of male characters, but this is not always the case in Troubles fiction, for example Frances Molloy's *No Mate for the Magpie* (1985), which, like Edna O'Brien's novels of the 1960s, traces the journey of a young woman out of Ireland. There are also a number of children's novels in the data set, which to varying degrees, tend towards the didactic.

Comedy forms the basis for some Troubles fiction, but comic Troubles novels tend to be black comic novels, in which naïve, inept or otherwise anti-heroic characters are placed in nightmarish situations, which are simultaneously comic and horrifying. Some of the comic novels use elements of fantasy. Fantasy is based on a departure from reality. This might take the form of exploring parallel worlds, or including characters with magical abilities. Crime fiction also forms the basis of a few Troubles novels. The plot of the crime novel concerns the discovery and piecing together of clues to find the solution to the fictional crime, which normally occurs before the narrative begins, or early on in the narrative. The construction of the formal detective plays an important part in crime fiction. The one horror novel in the set includes fantastic and supernatural elements.

A summary plot synopsis has been coded for each novel. Initial categories were developed from pre-texts and Magee's dissertation. Specific plot types were determined from empirical analysis of the texts, and include hunting the IRA enemy, IRA plots against British government or royal family or other establishment

figures/institutions, specific instantiations of Romeo and Juliet love stories, growing up in Northern Ireland, and escape from Northern Ireland. Paradigmatic choices that authors make regarding the representation of heroes, villains and female characters have been recorded. Wherever possible, modality markers have been established and identified. These include reference to the material world (places, people, institutions, events).

In this study, evidence of the ideological stance taken by the author in and through the book is text that reveals positive, neutral or negative attitudes towards personnel, policies, politics and activities relating to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Evidence of ideological stance might be drawn from the plot, from representations of characters, or from clues in the narrative or style of discourse. It is in relation to ideology that Hall's framework becomes particularly useful. Hall's framework is explicitly designed to map ideological reception positions. This study falls within the tradition of theorising text as intertext. Although structuralist theorists such as Genette and Rifaterre offer interesting ways of exploring intertextuality within literature, they are not concerned with ideology in the same explicit way that Hall is. Moreover, structuralist poetics is generally more interested in identifiably poetic language in literature, which is not necessarily the language of Troubles fiction.

In relation to the semiotic model used in this study, it is useful to recall Eagleton's commentary on Pierre Macherey's claim that the literary text:

far from constituting some unified plenitude of meaning, bears inscribed within it the marks of certain determined absences which

twist its various significations into conflict and contradiction. These absences – the ‘not-said’ of the work – are precisely what bind it to its ideological problematic: ideology is present in the text in the form of its eloquent silences. (Eagleton, 1976, 89)

The reference to absences links this view of ideology in literature to the Saussurean idea of meaning in signs arising from difference. Eagleton critiques Macherey’s concept of the dissonant text for being “curiously Hegelian” (Eagleton, 1976, 94-95) in conceiving the text as that which is not. He also argues that Macherey’s concept of the dissonant text is a negative conception of the text’s relation to history, which is not necessarily always the case in relation to specific individual texts (93). In this sense Macherey tends towards dogmatism. It might be difficult to determine what counts as dissonance and absence within specific texts. Such decisions may be functions of the ideological positioning of the reader. In terms of the specific texts dealt with in this study, the notions of absence, silence, contradiction and conflict might be of some value because these texts deal with the ideological complex of Northern Ireland during the Troubles, but do not always represent all aspects of lived experience in Northern Ireland. Absence of some parts of the ideological complex in this context might well signify conscious constructions of the real which are ideologically motivated. There may well be absent referents: there is a real history, but this can be alluded to, manipulated, or ignored by specific authors writing specific texts. There may be absent reasons or motivations for the plot’s instantiation. This is a convention for the thriller genre in general, which often uses references to pre-

existing fears for the development within the narrative of exciting, fast-paced plots, but in relation to the Troubles, it might point to a deliberate omission.

The coding procedure undertaken in this study was interpretative and iterative, and led to the identification of sub-categories of genre, plot and characterisation. This process produced the information about:

- content transformation (semiotic and coding exercise)
- relationships between author-as-producer and author-as-reader (the coding exercise shows how the genre developed diachronically)
- range in genre-spectrum at any given point (synchronic)

Once the specific data elements were coded in each novel, it was possible to read novels against each other synchronically (what representations are in circulation at any given moment?), and diachronically (do the representations, produced by novelists, and editors, and published by publishers, change over time? In what ways are these representations changed?). At this point the semiotic categories of paradigms and syntagms were used to compare and contrast the set of texts. Reading a large data set allows for the identification of overall conventions, against which particular paradigm choices can be mapped. Particular syntagmatic chains can be mapped against the possible syntagms gleaned from coding the large data set. Semiotic analysis here does not form the basis of an interpretative approach which searches for “hidden messages”, but is used to identify existing codes and conventions within a narrow set of texts.

### 3.2.3 Social Semiotics

A semiotic approach to analysis allows the researcher to discuss paradigms, syntagms, codes and conventions, and enables a large number of generic texts to be compared, contrasted and related without the need to enter into questions of value and aesthetics. Semiotic analysis is concerned with relationships within and between sign vehicles, specifically relations of selection and connection. It differs in kind from quantitative methods of textual analysis such as content analysis, in which key words are identified and counted within a set or sets of texts which have been selected by the researcher. Semiotic analysis is more concerned with meaning and interpretation.

The theoretical foundation of the current study is the social semiotics of Robert Hodge and Günter Kress (1988). Their approach to semiotics originates in a critique of traditional structuralist semiotic practice. Social semiotics stresses the dialogic nature of communication and signifying practices. Hodge and Kress cite the work of Halliday as crucial to their reconstitution of semiotics as social semiotics. Social semiotics asks questions about the nature of meaning within a socialised communication context and is concerned with questions of structure and form within the context of production and reception. Practitioners are concerned with related issues about the function of signifying practices and about power relationships within signifying systems. This approach is not concerned with aesthetic questions relating to the value and nature of “art” and “literariness”. This means that social semiotic analysis can be used to explore questions about the nature of meaning, about the structure and form of texts, about ideology within texts, about intertextual and

dialogic traces across and between texts, even when the texts in question are the products of different genres and different types of discourse.

Hodge and Kress argued that Ferdinand de Saussure managed to place the emphasis on all the wrong features of language in his deliberations on what constitutes the proper object of study for semiotic analysis. For Saussure, the proper concerns of semiotics relate to *langue*, rather than *parole*, to synchrony rather than diachrony, to paradigms rather than syntagms, and signifiers rather than signified. Hodge and Kress suggested that social semiotics should follow Volosinov's lead and turn these elements on their head: social semiotics is interested in *parole*, diachrony, syntagms and the signified. Following Volosinov, language is theorised as dialogue rather than as the "abstract objectivism" of Saussurean structuralists or as the generative monologue issuing from the "individualistic subjectivity" of linguists following phenomenological traditions (Volosinov, 1986).

Social semiotics explores the construction of meaning as a social activity, acknowledging the role of the reader, located in specific material logonomic systems, in "making meaning". Social semiotics, with its focus on diachronic transformation, acknowledges that the meaning of a text, formed from the interplay of polysemic signs and a range of reading positions, at the point of reception does not necessarily equate to the intended meaning of that text at the time of production. Meaning consists of specific interplays of a range of variables and is constituted by actualised, material reading subjects at different diachronic moments. Like Hodge and Kress, Simpkins (2000) acknowledges the charge that traditional semiotics is sometimes stifled by its structuralist focus, which can underplay issues relating to historicity,



human agency and the polysemic nature of signs. But for these writers, acknowledging the potential weaknesses of semiotic method is not cause for the abandonment of semiotic analysis, but the starting point for the development of projects which address the weaknesses.

For the purposes of the current study, elements of social semiotics can be used to reveal diachronic changes - transformations - in the popular culture genre-spectrum of Troubles fiction. The methodology underpinning this study grows from the work done by Hodge and Kress in *Social Semiotics* (1988), and shares their view that:

1. All semiotic activity takes place in time: all semiotic phenomena are diachronic, whether on a small scale (the time to produce or interpret a single syntagm, the flow of syntagms in discourse) or a larger scale, including the history of human semiosis.
  2. Every syntagm is a moment in a process of transformations, leading backwards in time (to earlier syntagms in the same exchange, to earlier discourses or semiotics acts) and forward (to later uses of the syntagm, by decoders or encoders); and this process, in its strict chronological order, is a key to the interpretation of that syntagm.
- (Hodge and Kress, 1988, 35)

Where the semiotically derived theory of diachronic transformation differs from traditionally humanist approaches to “influence” and “tradition” is that the use of the term “diachronic transformation” is a coded indication that in the study which

follows, attitudes towards the question of human agency will differ from the attitudes common in humanist analyses of cultural production and consumption. Cultural products are the products of human agency, but a social semiotics approach would argue that human agency only operates within the parameters of the logonomic system of society at the given moment of production. Hodge and Kress define the logonomic system in the following terms:

A logonomic system is a set of rules which specify who can claim to initiate (produce, communicate) or know (receive, understand) meanings about what topics under what circumstances and with what modalities (how, when, why.) Logonomic systems prescribe social semiotic behaviours at points of production and reception, so that we can distinguish between *production regimes* (rules constraining production) and *reception regimes* (rules constraining reception).  
(1988, 4)

For the traditional humanist, change is the product of human agency: for the social semiotician, change relative to the individual agent, operates within the boundaries of a logonomic system, which itself is driven by, and contained by, human agency. The logonomic system changes over time, and as a result, the available range of cultural responses for the individual agent will change. For the purposes of this study, it is important to acknowledge that the moment of reception may be a different moment than that of production, and the moment of reception, operating within its own

logonomic system, may become the logonomic system within which the production of a new text occurs. Logonomic systems are visible systems policed by concrete social agents and coercing other concrete social agents (Hodge and Kress, 1988, 4). Changes within those systems may be related to material causes, or shifts in opinion, which are themselves the consequence of material causes.

If it is asserted that logonomic systems change, the next question might relate to the ways in which that change occurs. One answer lies in the work of Antonio Gramsci and the characterisation of democratic western societies as hegemonic sites in which dominant ideologies circulate in and through superstructural forms, processes and institutions, to ensure that the codes, conventions and rules that operate in the interest of the dominant group are internalised by subjects within that society, regardless of whether the operation of society's codes, conventions and rules are in their interests (Gramsci, 1975).

At the same time, oppositional ideologies within such a society circulate through a process known as counter-hegemony. The counter-hegemonic process, often licensed counter-hegemony, is considered essential to the maintenance of a hegemonic society. Counter-hegemony can operate as a critique or "feedback" mechanism and as such provides the dominant group with information which can be used for self-regulation, enabling the dominant group (for example politicians, teachers, parents) to modify the rules. Logonomic systems also change as a result of economic and, as a consequence, technological shifts and changes. A consequence of this type of shift might be that the constitution of the dominant group shifts and that logonomic systems become the sites of struggle, because, as Hodge and Kress point

out that “where structures of domination are unchallenged, a logonomic system serves the dominant by ensuring that acts of semiosis ultimately assure their dominance. Where structures of domination are under challenge, logonomic systems are likely areas of contestation” (1988, 4).

Logonomic systems, then, can be sites of conflict and contestation. In a society in which the structures of domination sustaining the distribution of power, economic and political, are not overly contested, counter-hegemony can ensure that the dominant group remains in a dominant position whilst allowing a modicum of licensed “carnival” or transgression through counter-hegemonic cultural production and reception. The licensing of counter-hegemony at a level which the logonomic system will bear provides useful information which can become a method of “self-regulation” for the logonomic system. Logonomic systems negotiate internal pressures emanating from the dominated counter-hegemonic groups. There are questions about what exactly is meant by “counter-hegemonic” groups and about whether these groups have similar or different agendas. There are also issues relating to the notion of the dynamic between the hegemony of the dominant group and the counter-hegemony of the “proletariat” in Gramscian thought because Gramsci, who was writing polemic, believed that the proletariat needed to move themselves into a position of hegemony in order to achieve power. The tradition of Marxian critical theory here is intertwined with political discourse, the function of which relates not only to analysis but also to action.

### **3.3 Interpreting the Data**

The literature review revealed patterns of interpretation of Troubles fiction within the secondary critical literature. In Chapter Four these patterns, or models, are examined with reference to the results of the primary research activity undertaken in the current study. Within this study it is posited that the authors of generic texts are consumers of generic texts prior to authorship. In this model the author is transformed from receiver into producer, and the assumption is that the reception of already existing texts is transformed through the intellectual work of the author, and editors, into the production of new texts. Given that this is the theoretical model within which any empirical work has been undertaken in this project, a novel modification of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model has been used to provide a framework to map the specific texts against each other, although the limitations of the model are acknowledged (Hall, 2001).

#### **3.3.1 Using Stuart Hall's Encoding-Decoding Model**

Hall's communication model was developed to map the production and reception of mass media texts. Hall refers to the mass-communications process as an Althusserian "complex structure in dominance" (2001,167) and characterises the mass-communications process as a structure produced and sustained by the articulation of linked but distinctive "moments", which in Hall's typology are production-circulation – distribution/consumption – reproduction. The objects of these practices are meanings and messages in the form of sign-vehicles, which are organised through the "operation of codes within the syntagmatic chain of a discourse" (2001, 167). Although Hall begins by stating that his intention is to produce a model of

communication which is not as linear as mathematical and positivist models of communication usually are, his conception of the sign-vehicle comprises a linear syntagmatic chain.

At the production end of the mass communication model, the process requires material instruments and social production relations. The circulation of the product takes place through the discursive form of the product. The discourse must then be transformed into social practices if the circuit is to be completed and meaning is to be made. Each moment is, in articulation, necessary to the circuit as a whole, but no one moment can fully guarantee the next moment with which it is articulated. Hall uses the Gramscian term “articulation” to mean the temporary linking together of discursive elements. Articulation is a connection that can make a unity of discursive elements under certain conditions. It suggests expression, representation and conjunction. Hall writes of articulation that,

You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? The so-called ‘unity’ of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be re-articulated in different ways because they have no necessary ‘belongingness’. The ‘unity’ which matters is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily be connected. (Hall, 1996, 141)

In his use of the term “discourse” Hall signals that his approach to discourse and articulation is Foucauldian. In Foucauldian terms discourse signifies not only the textual object but also the operations of power and control through localised institutions and practices. While Foucault himself rejected the label “structuralist” to describe his project, in the use of this vocabulary, Hall adopts a discursive mode which tends towards being structuralist and idealist. It is structuralist and idealist because the emphasis is on linkages and articulations of the sign-vehicles, which have minimal connection with human agents of production, despite the reference in “Encoding/Decoding” to material professional practices. In “Encoding/Decoding”, Hall refuses the idea that the world is made from text, but something of the post-structuralist theories of language and communication, so popular at the time of the writing of “Encoding/Decoding”, is to be found in his essay, particularly in his discussions of the texts which bracket authorship out of the frame.

Hall explicitly cites *Capital* as the analogous model for his encoding/decoding approach, specifically the notion of commodity production and consumption. The institutionalised practices of television become the “labour process” in the discursive mode. Encoding meaning takes place within a set of related processes and practices, both material and ideological. Technical skills, professional ideologies, institutional knowledge, definitions and assumptions frame the constitution of the “programme”. Topics, treatments, agendas, events, personnel and views about the audiences are all drawn from the wider socio-cultural and political structure within which the processes and practices of mass communication operate. Hall was trying to construct a communication model within which reception becomes more active, so that the

consumption of the text is also in itself a “moment”, which is the point of departure for the meaning of the text. It is important to acknowledge that unlike some other cultural theorists of the same historical juncture, Hall was not prepared to suggest that reception and creation of meaning is entirely constructed through the process of reading by individual readers. The encoded message forms parameters, which contain expectations about meaning, and set limits on reading practices, although aberrant reading practices are always possible.

The broadcasting structures must yield encoded messages in the form of meaningful discourses. At this point in the essay Hall uses the Althusserian concept of “structure in dominance” to argue that at this moment in the communication process the formal rules of discourse and language are dominant. The message must then be “appropriated as meaningful discourse” before it can be decoded. It is the set of “decoded meanings which “‘have an effect’, influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences” (2001, 168). The set of encoded meaning structures may not be the same as the set of decoded meaning structures. Encoding and decoding may not be symmetrical. Symmetry and asymmetry, Hall argues, depend on the degree of fit between the codes, which “perfectly or imperfectly transmit, interrupt or systematically distort what has been transmitted” (2001, 168)

Hall argues that television is an iconic sign, and that it seems so natural that it is difficult to remember it is a two dimensional sign, a mediated discourse, not the referent itself. It may be useful at this point to remember Hodge and Kress’s argument that iconic and indexical signs can be a matter of judgement. Hall suggests that the



differences between “denotation” and “connotation” are useful concepts for analysis, but that they do not exist in the real world, where the sign always bears with it its associative aspects. He argues that denotation too, is ideological. Indeed in the iconic sign, it is so much so that the iconic sign appears “natural”. But for Hall, it is at the level of associative signs, of connotations, that we can begin to see in Volosinov’s terms, the struggle over meanings – “the class struggle in language” (2001, 171).

The sign, although bounded at the connotative level, is more open to active transformations because of its polysemic nature. However, Hall argues that any society tends to impose its classifications of the social, cultural and political, which constitute a dominant cultural order. This imposition is neither unequivocal nor is it uncontested: Hall and the Birmingham School’s approach to cultural theory was influenced by their use of Gramsci’s model of hegemony and its always oppositional counter-hegemony. This notion of the “dominant” is related to the notion of “preferred readings”, and “these both have the institutional/political/ideological order imprinted in them and have themselves become institutionalised” (2001, 172).

When television producers “fail” to get their message across, what they mean is that the audience has failed to take the meaning that the broadcasters intended. Moving on from this argument, Hall distinguished between three theoretically possible decoding positions. These are the:

- Dominant-hegemonic position: “When the viewer takes the connoted meaning from, say, a television newscast or current affairs programme full and straight, and decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been

encoded, we might say that the viewer *is operating inside the dominant code*” (2001, 174).

- Negotiated code or position: “decoding within the negotiated version contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule. It accords the privileged position to the dominant definitions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application to local conditions, to its own more *corporate* positions” (2001, 175).
- Oppositional code: “Finally it is possible for a viewer perfectly to understand both the literal and the connotative inflection given by a discourse but to decode the message in a globally contradictory way. He/she detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message within some alternative framework of reference. This is the case of the viewer who listens to a debate on the need to limit wages but ‘reads’ every mention of ‘national interest’ as ‘class interest’” (2001, 175).

In Hall’s model, the real event is mediated through signifying practice, to become the message in the form of a discursive product. Hall cannot dispense with linearity altogether because he has to acknowledge that the message is constructed from syntagmatic chains of signs. The message is material, in the form of the television programme, and is constructed by concrete professional broadcasters working within

discursive and material rules, regulations, codes, conventions and assumptions. At the moment of production, institutional practices and discursive knowledge form the “structure in dominance”; at the moment of the text, discursive forms predominate; at the moment of decoding, reception and interpretation by the viewer dominates.

Hall seems to suggest that messages are transparent and open to a variety of decoding positions, or subject to (consciously determined) aberrant readings. There is no question of indeterminacy within the text. It may be that this is particularly true of media news messages, given their purpose and their institutional and technical production infrastructure. The decoding positions within this model move from consent through to dissent. The producer of the message wants the decoder to interpret the message exactly as intended by the producer. The producer wants to construct an ideal and transparent communicative process. Within the dominant-hegemonic position the reception of the message is full and straight, with the decoder working within the dominant code.

Despite the structuralist language and the potential for a reductive reification of the text, there is implicit in this framework recognition of the materiality of the message in the form of the broadcast text, and recognition that human agents both produce and receive the message. Hall also emphasises the communicative framework through which meaning is made and interpretation occurs.

A communication model through which to map intertextuality was needed for the current study. Hall’s model is more appropriate than either the mathematical models of communication theorists or the positivist needs-gratification models of media theorists because Hall’s model emphasises active reception. While Jakobson’s

communication model is particularly useful for analysing levels of meaning within the message, it does not focus on reception (Jakobson, 1960). The current study takes empirical data, in the form of data relating to Troubles Fiction novels, and reads the products of the “authors-as-producers” against a novel adaptation of Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding model to analyse specific diachronic transformations emerging in and through popular culture genres.

In the adapted model, three categories are used to describe the relationship of specific novels to earlier novels. These categories are:

- **Replication:** this category is used to describe specific novels which adhere closely to the conventions of Troubles genre identified through an examination of the earliest texts. This category includes many of the Troubles thrillers. The heroes tend to be members of the British Security Services, villains are IRA operatives, and women are depicted as girlfriends or victims.
- **Modification:** this category is used to describe specific novels which generally adhere to the conventions of Troubles genre novels identified through an examination of the earliest texts, but which display specific differences. It is possible to discern ideological shifts through the fiction of the Troubles. In particular, post-Hunger Strike novels begin to question the role of the British Security Services.
- **Challenge:** this category is used to describe specific novels that do not adhere to the conventions of the Troubles genre but construct alternative representations. Within this category are also included novels which critique

conventional representations. This category is much smaller than the other two.

Syntagms and paradigms operating as pre-texts were mapped out to form a “base-line” snapshot view of the content of Troubles genre. Subsequent texts were mapped against this base-line using the categories described above.

The pitfalls of trying to decide which interpretation is the dominant interpretation of a text are acknowledged, as is Hall’s counter-argument that texts are structured in such a way that leads to a preferred reading or the meaning intended by the producers. This issue is of concern to cultural and critical theorists interested in meaning and interpretation of cultural products who debate how far the construction of meaning is dependent on interpretation by the reader.

The question of how determined a set of reading positions underpins Roland Barthes’ distinction between readerly texts and writerly texts (Barthes, 1973) and is echoed in Eco’s distinction between open and closed texts (Eco, 1981). The issue of freedom for interpretation on the part of the reader partly relates to issues about human agency and ideological determination, both in relation to the author and in relation to the reader. For Umberto Eco, although there is a range of reading positions open to any material reader, the text itself frames a reading position, or range of reading positions, accessible through reading the text (Eco, 1981). Arguably the issue of tight coding of signifying practices is driven at some level by the function of the text, with some texts being more ideologically motivated than others (politicians’ speeches, preachers’ sermons). These types of texts are monologic in character and

are often the product of concrete subjects who police the logonomic system, yet even these texts are related to previous works, and contemporary works, and are constructed for the consumption and interpretation by specific audiences.

For Volosinov, “*any utterance*, no matter how weighty and complete in and of itself, *is only a moment in the continuous process of verbal communication*. But that continuous verbal communication is, in turn, itself only a moment in the continuous, all-inclusive, generative process of a given social collective” (Volosinov, 1986, 95) (original emphases). Dialogic codes, amongst which Bahktin includes the novel form, possess the potential for dissension, opposition, and negotiation within the group to be recognised through specific signifying practices (Hodge and Kress, 1988, 83). The degree to which a specific text encodes dialogic signifying practices is determined by its relationship to the ideologies of the dominant group.

The modification of Hall’s model facilitates a relational analysis of specific novels in the data set. The assumption underpinning the study is that the data set would demonstrate that genre formation operates diachronically through small shifts and changes in the codes and conventions, instantiated through individual novels. It was also anticipated that at any given historical moment, there will be sense of the codes and conventions appropriate to that given moment that will be shared by a number of novelists operating at that given moment, within the same logonomic framework. It is perhaps this sense of syntagmatically appropriate codes and conventions that Raymond Williams points to through his formulation of the concept of “structures of feeling”. Williams shares with Stuart Hall a commitment to emancipatory critical cultural studies, and an interest in the operation of cultural

change. Although his emergent-dominant-residual model, which was designed to work at the level of epochal change, is not an appropriate theoretical tool to utilise in this study, which is concerned with change operating at a micro-level, the concept of structures of feeling can be used to interpret the data set.

### **3.3.2 Using Raymond Williams' "Structure of Feeling" as an Analytical Tool**

In *Marxism and Literature*, Williams' review of Marxist cultural theory includes discussion of homology, Benjamin's correspondences, and the Frankfurt School's notion of dialectical images. His analysis of alternative Marxist cultural theory is not entirely critical. In particular, Williams approves of Gramsci's notion of hegemony because hegemony supposes the existence of "something which is truly total" ("Base and Superstructure", 167) in a deep sense, not merely ideological, or superstructural. It is lived; it saturates society in that "it constitutes the substance and limit of common sense for most people under its sway" ("Base and Superstructure", 167-8), and it corresponds to social experience. But he worries about versions of hegemony which do not account for "real and constant change" ("Base and Superstructure", 168), referring instead to "the hegemony" or "a hegemony".

Williams argues that "the best Marxist" (*Marxism and Literature*, 121) approaches to cultural analysis tend towards the epochal rather than the historical, but the problem with this is that epochal cultural analysis can produce a selected and abstracted view of culture as a system. The notion of hegemony counteracts the tendency towards the epochal, and his famous contribution to Marxian cultural theory, the emergent-dominant-residual model of cultural practices within "a contingent hegemony" (Jones, 2004. 73), is an attempt to find a way of showing the

“internal dynamic relations of any actual process” (*Marxism and Literature*, 121), allowing for challenge or modification, for alternatives, and the process of change (“Base and Superstructure”, 168). At the heart of the model is the notion that in any society at any given moment in time there is a “central system of practices, meanings and values, which we can properly call dominant and effective” (“Base and Superstructure”, 168). He emphasises that it is a central or a “corporate” (168) system, “a central, effective and dominant system of meanings and values, which are not merely abstract but which are organised and lived” (168). It is a whole body of practices and expectations, and it constitutes a sense of reality for most people (169). We are incorporated into these practices through educational institutions, the “selective tradition”, the processes of history, “the tradition”, “the significant past”, and history of various practices (169). Other areas of practices are neglected or excluded, or some of the meanings and practices are “re-interpreted, and diluted or refashioned to fit the effective dominant culture” (169).

But there are alternatives meanings and values, opinions and attitudes, which can be accommodated and tolerated. Williams’ sense of alternative refers to practices that do not go beyond the limits of the central effective and dominant tradition (“Base and Superstructure”, 170). There are also other forms, which go beyond alternative, and these Williams calls oppositional (170). He distinguishes between residual and emergent forms, both of alternative and oppositional culture.

By residual, he means “some experiences, meanings and values, which cannot be verified or cannot be expressed in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practised on the basis of the residue – cultural as well as social – of some



previous social formation” (170). The residual “has been effectively formed in the past, but is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present” (*Marxism and Literature*, 122). This is distinguished from the active manifestation of the residual, which has been wholly or largely incorporated into the dominant culture (*Marxism and Literature*, 122).

In *Marxism and Literature* Williams writes that the emergent elements in any culture “are those that point to new meaning and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships [that] are continually being created” (*Marxism and Literature*, 123), while in the essay “Base and Superstructure” he explains that the emergent refers to “new meanings and values, new practices, new significances and experiences, which are continually being created” (“Base and Superstructure”, 171). Williams explains that it is difficult to distinguish between those that are really elements of “some new phase of the dominant culture (and in this sense ‘species-specific’) and those which are substantially alternative or oppositional to it” (*Marxism and Literature*, 123).

For Williams, what matters in understanding emergent culture is that is “is never only a matter of immediate practice; indeed it depends crucially on finding new forms or adaptations of form” (126). The emergent culture is ushered in through a means of pre-emergent “structures of feeling” (127). He uses the history of language to illustrate the process of change from “structure of feeling” through to the more formal concept of emergent culture. He argues that in spite of continuities in grammar and vocabulary, no generation speaks quite the same language as its predecessors.

The shift can be found in small changes, in deletions, additions, modifications, but more generally, the differences are “over a wide range” (131), and can be best described as changes in style. Similar kinds of changes can be seen in “manners, dress, building, and other similar forms of social life” (131). They are lived and experienced, emergent or pre-emergent, and before they are necessarily classified, defined, and rationalised, they “exert palpable pressures or set effective limits on experience and on action” (132). These changes are Williams’ “changes in structures of feeling” (132). He uses the term “feeling” to distinguish the idea from the more formal terms such as “ideologies” or “world-view”. He emphasises that these meanings and values are lived and felt, and seems to believe that the more formal terms abstract and distance the concept from the immediacy of lived experience. Structures of feeling are social in origin, specifically described by Williams as “social experiences in solution” (133), as distinct from “other social semantic formations which have been precipitated and are more evidently and more immediately available” (134).

Paul Jones (2003) provides a useful table that outlines the key features of Williams’ account of hegemony. This table includes examples of socio-cultural practices or forms pertaining to dominant, residual, emergent and pre-emergent/ “structure of feeling elements”.

Position of socio-cultural practice/form	Definition/role in hegemony	Example
Dominant	Central system of meanings and values which is dependent for renewal on process of incorporation of elements of residual and emergent forms. Agencies of incorporation are primarily socialising institutions, selective traditions and formations (informal artistic/intellectual groupings)	British hegemony in a given period
Residual	Formerly dominant forms which have survived to play a reduced but active role at present (unlike the fully incorporated archaic). May assume incorporated, alternative or oppositional role towards the dominant.	Ideas of rural community: organised (Christian) religion.
Emergent	New forms whose most likely sources are a rising class, new formations or new social movements. May assume incorporated, alternative or oppositional role towards the dominant.	Nineteenth-century British radical popular press (which moved from oppositional to incorporated).
Pre-emergent/"structure of feeling"	Pre-articulated "social experiences in solution" at a stage prior to their achieving an objectivated form.	That which is (later) rendered in historical semantic shifts in <i>Keywords</i> .

**Figure 3: The key features of Williams' account of hegemony (Jones, 2003, p. 73)**

The table helps to make some of the terms more concrete, and suggests, in the choice of examples illustrating the emergent and the residual, that Williams favoured the emergent as the conduit through which emancipatory change could emerge.

Williams' emergent-dominant-residual model, even when it is helpfully rendered in

diagrammatic form by Jones, operates at a fairly abstract level and cannot be used helpfully in the micro-analysis that is the focus of the present study.

The micro level analysis of the novels using the modified version of Hall's encoding-decoding model goes some way towards identifying the alternative and oppositional in the set of primary data. An overview of the patterns emerging from that analysis shows the codes and conventions, the "structures of feeling", that operate within the specific logonomic framework, shared across a number of novels. The theme of the "love-across-the-barricades" theme operating not only in love stories, but in other generic forms, might be considered one such "structure of feeling". Evidence of pre-emergent, "structure of feeling" changes in representation of paradigmatic elements can be found, for example, in the representation of the sympathetic repentant Republican activist, a representation that emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s. An interesting example of this figure is M.S. Powers' IRA godfather, Seamus Reilly. Reilly is represented as cynical and violent in the 1985 novel, *The Killing of Yesterday's Children*, but by the 1987 novel, *A Darkness in the Eye* (1987), he is represented as an IRA dove negotiating with the RUC and the British Army and betraying the IRA hawks, in a highly modal link with the real politics of the time. It might be possible to suggest that Jack Higgins' Martin Fallon, in *Prayer for the Dying* was one of the first such representations, ushering in a motif that becomes more commonly used.

The "structure of feeling" analytic tool, evidence of which in this study takes the form of an empirical measurement of the metrics that emerge from an analysis of the texts in Part B, is not applied across the whole range of primary texts to interpret

novels published in every year of the time period forming the basis of this study.

Instead, the CAIN Troubles timeline was consulted to identify important sub-periods within Troubles history, and the notion of structures of feeling was deployed to interpret generic shifts and changes within those sub-periods.

### **3.4 Genre Formation**

The methodological framework is based on the assumption that institutions governing production, particularly within the publishing industry, have considerable power in relation to selecting and disseminating cultural artefacts. It assumes the existence of genre as a broad codification of cultural artefacts within a specific, historically constituted society, and assumes that genres are constituted by codes and conventions. It assumes that writers who produce texts within specific genres are aware of the codes and conventions. The relationship between generic codes and conventions and specific authors considered in this way assumes that producers of generic cultural artefacts are already consumers of the codes and conventions of the specific cultural genre. Consumption in this context might relate to reading specific texts, or might relate to a general set of perceptions and assumptions about the content of generic texts made possible through the circulation of stereotypes and narratives pertaining to popular genre.

The production of a generic cultural text might then be based on empirical knowledge, or on general cultural assumptions about the genre, but to some degree, producers of generic texts have cultural knowledge about the genre. Popular literature genres are constructed in and through the writings of individual authors who use the codes and conventions of the genre and thus, in some way, but not necessarily the

“received way”, perpetuate the genre. Genre, viewed diachronically, is dialogic in that there are relationships between texts written at an earlier date, and texts written at a later date, and dialectic in that instantiations of structural codes and conventions in individual texts may over time change generic codes and conventions at what might be termed structural level. When a genre no longer ideologically fits with a society, it may wither away, or become substantially transformed.

One of the issues in this project relates to definitions of what might constitute a cultural genre. For Hodge and Kress “logonomic systems have rules that constrain the general forms of text and discourses. Such systems often operate by specifying genres of texts (typical forms of text which link kinds of producer, consumer, topic, medium, manner and occasion)” (7). In relation to this project, the term “genre” as a label suggests a class or grouping of a particular type of fiction which shares narrative, representational, structural and stylistic codes and conventions.

In its conception of the author-as-producer as prefigured by author-as-consumer, this study falls within the tradition of seeing textuality as intertextuality. Her reading of Bakhtin influenced Kristeva’s approach to intertextuality. In Kristeva’s conception of intertextuality, the text is not a complete and discrete whole but exists within a web of textuality (Kristeva, 1986). Moreover the meaning of any text is fully constituted in reading practice by specific concrete readers, each of which brings his, or her own cultural understandings and meanings to the reading of the text:

The word's status is thus defined horizontally (the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee) as well as vertically (the

word in the text is oriented towards an anterior or synchronic literary corpus) [. . .] each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read [. . .] any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. (Kristeva, 1986, 37)

Barthes, following Kristeva, wrote about “text” in idealist terms, subverting the traditional notion of the individuality of the author through the concept of intertexts and the web of textuality. Barthes argued that:

Any text is a new tissue of past citations. Bits of code, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc., pass into the text and are redistributed within it, for there is always language before and around the text. Intertextuality, the condition of any text whatsoever, cannot, of course, be reduced to a problem of sources or influences; the intertext is a general field of anonymous formulae whose origin can scarcely ever be located; of unconscious or automatic quotations, given without quotation marks. (Barthes, 1981, 39).

This interpretation of intertextuality is very anti-humanist, and in that sense is quite opposed to the humanist interpretations of interrelationships between texts found in Harold Bloom’s thesis about the anxiety of influence (1973), or indeed in the F.R. Leavis’ *Great Tradition* (1948), which interpreted the Great Tradition as a set of

specific works by authors who were able to create new voices from the best of the past. The idea of “influence”, however, has significance for a broad range of critical positions.

Within this study the aim is to analyse intertextuality in and through the set of novels using methods which focus on the materiality of specific individual texts constructed by specific individual authors, avoiding the idealism of post-structuralist intertextuality in which “text” sometimes assumes an identity which is separate from any human author. The author is not dead, but the author is kept within the control of powerful institutions, which make decisions about which texts are published and are therefore in public circulation.

Structuralist approaches to studying intertextuality can take the form of detailed analysis of canonical texts, such as Rifaterre’s approach to explaining theoretical aspects of intertextuality, which is characteristically through hermeneutical close readings of canonical texts (Allen, 2000, 120). This study is quite different. It is not concerned with canonical texts or with assigning value to specific texts. It is concerned with the mapping and historical development of the codes and conventions of a range of novels within a generic set. In some ways individual texts matter less than the overall set of texts, but the materiality of the text, and author, nevertheless, underpins the project. Genre in this project becomes a term which refers to the network of texts which, through the use of the codes and conventions of plot, character representation, structure, narrative style, can be said intertextually to interrelate, and the analysis of intertextuality will take the form of identifying material



elements within specific texts relating to paradigmatic choice and syntagmatic connections.

Authors-as-producers have the opportunity to reproduce the codes and conventions of earlier novels within the genre, to negotiate the dominant codes and conventions, or to oppose the dominant codes and conventions. The analysis undertaken in this study reveals the relationships between specific texts and has proved fruitful in establishing the material basis of theoretical assumptions such as “intertextuality”, and indeed Kress and Hodge’s “diachronic transformations”. Ultimately, “intertextuality” and “diachronic transformations” if they have existence, are specific signifying practices dependent on the actuality of concrete material texts.

### **3.5 Discussion**

This chapter has described the specific research methods used to analyse the primary research objects, Troubles fiction novels, and has situated those specific methods within a broader methodological framework with a view to contextualising this study. The aim is to be transparent and self-reflexive about the methods used, and the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which they rest, because the study as a whole is based on the premise that decisions made about the choice of methods and models in qualitative interpretative research necessarily determines the form and structure of the subsequent analysis.

The methodological framework is one that allows the researcher to examine patterns and differences in paradigmatic choice and syntagmatic connections over a large set of texts. It is not a “close reading” methodology such as is used in traditional English Literature studies and in critical hermeneutics. This is a bird’s eye

view of the intertextual properties of a data set comprising individual works within a text (Barthes, 1981) or genre, or set. The method has been used in this study to explore the intertextual conjunctions within a set generally not considered by academic workers, Troubles fiction, but it is posited that this methodology could be used in relation to any generic group of individual works. It would be interesting to apply the method to other fictional genres as a way of mapping small diachronic transformations within genre. It would also be interesting to apply the method to fictional texts relating to other conflicts in order to discover if the same kinds of diachronic transformations that emerge in Troubles fiction are replicated in fiction that grows out of other conflicts.

Perhaps the model is one that pertains to a particular type of political dynamic. It may be that the Troubles fiction model is a particular instantiation of a more general model that can be constructed to describe the diachronic transformations of fiction which emerge from conflicts arising out the politics of colonialism or of occupation. Perhaps wars that are perceived as emanating from other causes and determinants produce fictions, which although they have their own models of diachronic transformations, differ from the model that emerges from an investigation of the diachronic transformations of Troubles fiction.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS USING CULTURAL THEORY MODELS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, a modification of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model is used to plot the relationships of individual novels to each other within generic categories. The decisions recorded in this chapter are based on the data analysis recorded in Part B. In the modified model, the underlying assumption is that authors of generic novels are always aware of the codes and conventions operating within the generic categories before the production process, and are also shaped by logonomic forces operating at the moment of cultural production. The interpretative models derived from the review of the literature in Chapter Two are tested as descriptions of the primary data set. The emerging canon novels are mapped against the overall generic picture that emerges from the encoding/decoding model. Finally, Raymond Williams' notion of "structures of feeling" is used to interpret the primary texts synchronically.

### **4.2 Diachronic Analysis of Troubles Fiction**

In this chapter, each novel is considered within its dominant generic formation, and assigned a code that records whether the novelist replicates, modifies or challenges the generic codes and conventions operating at the moment of production. Decisions about dominant codes and conventions are determined through quantitative analysis of the primary data. Modification and challenges deviate from the dominant codes and conventions. A novel that alters the dominant codes and conventions operating in

and through the sub-genre to which it has been assigned is categorised as a modification novel. Novels that do not conform to the dominant codes and conventions of the sub-genres to which they have been assigned but offer alternative codes and conventions are categorised as challenging novels. Generic codes and conventions relate to syntagmatic chains and paradigmatic choices made by specific authors.

#### **4.2.1 Using Hall's Model to Interpret Troubles Thrillers Diachronically**

Following Magee's identification of pre-texts, in this study Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer* (1925) and Jack Higgins *The Violent Enemy* (1966) are considered to be pre-texts for the Troubles thriller sub-genre. In both novels, the hero is an IRA activist, ambivalent about his involvement in the IRA; Gypo Nolan, (O'Flaherty, 1925) is the informer in O'Flaherty's novel, and Sean Rogan in *The Violent Enemy* (Higgins, 1966) is an escaped IRA prisoner. In both thrillers women are marginalised and represented as adjuncts to the male characters, to whom they are attracted. There are representations of the IRA godfather and the violent and malign IRA foot-soldier. Both novels concern the pursuit of the IRA, and both novels contain representations of IRA activists who are untrustworthy betrayers of their own people. These two novels represent the baseline for the thrillers genre, and offer two basic scenarios: the first is the IRA man pursued by other IRA activists; the second is the IRA man pursued by the security forces.

In Part B, the descriptive part, the analysis of the thriller data is divided into two sections, 1969-1974 and 1974-1978. This division will also operate in this chapter. In the 1969-1974 group of thrillers, three Troubles thriller types can be

identified, which are the chase thriller, the foiled Republican operation thriller, and the “two brothers” thriller, and in Figure 4 these novels are coded in relation to the pre-texts.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Pre-Text	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
O'Flaherty	The Informer	1925	Thriller (chase)	X			
Higgins, Jack.	The Violent Enemy	1966	Thriller (chase)	X			
Carrick, James	With O'Leary in the Grave	1971	Thriller (two brothers)			X	
Brewster, David	The Heart's Grown Brutal	1972	Thriller (journalist involved, two brothers)			X	
Herron, Shaun,	Through the Dark and Hairy Wood,	1972	Thriller (chase)			X	
Higgins, Jack	A Prayer for the Dying	1973	Thriller (good Republican)			X	
Herron, Shaun	The Whore-mother	1973	Thriller (chase)		X		
Charles, Robert	Hour of the Wolf	1974	Thriller (“terror international”)			X	
Cleary, Jon	Peter’s Pence	1974	Thriller (chase, kidnap)			X	
Seaman, Donald	The Bomb that could Lip-read.	1974	Thriller (foiled Republican operation).		X		
Nicholl, Ned	No More Leprechauns	1974	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)		X		

**Figure 4: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles thrillers: 1969-1974**

Of the nine novels of the baseline set, four contain a plot line concerning the intervention of British security forces in Republican terrorist activities, and these are: *Through the Dark and Hairy Wood* (Herron, 1972), *The Whore-mother* (Herron, 1973), *Hour of the Wolf* (Charles, 1974), and *The Bomb that could Lip-read* (Seaman, 1974). Herron’s *Through the Dark and Hairy Wood* (1972) is categorised as a modification novel because the plot concerns a Loyalist group trying to frame the

IRA rather than the security forces framing the IRA. Robert Charles's *Hour of the Wolf* (1974) is categorised as a modification novel in relation to the pre-texts because of the focus on "terror international", which seems to be an historically contingent theme, and Jon Cleary's *Peter's Pence* (1974), a chase thriller, is categorised as a modification novel, because its characterisations and its place of setting, Rome, are both modifications of conventional elements within Troubles thrillers of this time.

Carrick's *With O'Leary in the Grave* (1971) and Brewster's *The Heart's Grown Brutal* (1972) are both "two brothers" modification novels that are sympathetic to Republican activists. The "two brothers" thriller is one that is characterised by the representation within the text of two brothers, friends, or colleagues, usually both Irish, one of whom is already involved with a paramilitary group, usually the IRA, or becomes involved with such a group. The circumstances within which such decisions are made are of some importance in these novels. "Two brothers" novels are often written by Irish novelists, and the representation of everyday life in Northern Ireland in their novels goes some way towards explaining why their activist characters might join the IRA. In general, although these novelists do not quite condone active engagement, they are, to varying degrees, empathic. Jack Higgins's novel, *A Prayer for the Dying* (1973), is also categorised as a modification novel because of the characterisation of the hero, who is a repentant IRA activist intervening to curtail the murderous activities of a London gangster.

If the 1969-1974 sub-set is examined to identify codes and conventions operating at that historical juncture, it is possible to re-assess the dominant codes and conventions within the Troubles thriller in the mid-1970s. By the mid-1970s authors

were using more plot scenarios than the two identified in the pre-texts. The pursuit of the IRA activist by the IRA, and the pursuit of the IRA activist by the security forces are still dominant scenarios, but added to this is the foiled Republican operation, sometimes linked to “terror international”, and the “two brothers” thriller.

Figure 5 shows the thrillers in the primary data set published between 1975 and 1980, coded using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Martin, David.	The Task	1975	Thriller (revenge)		X	
Seymour, Gerald.	Harry's Game.	1975	Thriller (chase)		X	
Charles, Robert	Flight of the Raven	1975	Thriller (“terror international”)	X		
Hurd, Douglas	Vote To Kill	1975	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)	X		
Foxall, P.A.	Inspector Derben's War	1976	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)	X		
Langley, Bob	War of the Running Fox	1976	Thriller (chase and two brothers)	X		
Pincher, Chapman	Eye of the Tornado	1976	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)	X		
McCabe, Eugene	Victims	1976	Thriller (hostage)		X	
Clifford, Francis.	Drummer in the Dark	1976	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)	X		
Stuart, Francis	A Hole in the Head	1977	Thriller (hostage, writer involved)			X
Foxall, P.A.	Inspector Derben and the Widow Maker	1977	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)	X		
Kiely, Benedict	Proxopera	1977	Thriller (hostage)	X		
Langley, Bob	Deathstalk.	1977	Thriller (chase)	X		
Casey, Kevin	Dreams of revenge	1977	Thriller (journalist involved)	X		
Blair, Ian.	Hooligan's Rant	1979	Thriller (chase)		X	
Dowling, Kevin	Interface: Ireland	1979	Thriller (journalists story)	X		
Hamill, Desmond	Bitter Orange.	1979	Thriller (two brothers)		X	

McNamara, Michael	The Dancing Floor	1979	Thriller (two brothers, journalist involved )	X		
Hayward, David.	The Provo Link	1979	Thriller (revenge, chase)	X		
Atwater, James	Time Bomb.	1979	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)	X		
Binnie, Stewart	Across the Water	1979	Thriller (chase)		X	
Lane, Andrew	The Ulsterman	1979	Thriller (chase)	X		

**Figure 5: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles thrillers: 1975-1979**

Of the twenty-two novels of the sub-set of thrillers published between 1975 and 1979, fifteen have been categorised as novels that replicate the codes and conventions operating within the thriller genre based on a comparison of each novel against the set of codes and conventions operating in the novels published between 1970 and 1974. Most of the novels are straightforward replications, for example, the Inspector Derben novels. Kevin Casey's *Dreams of Revenge* (1977) has been coded as a replication novel because its plot line, in which the IRA murders the wife of a journalist who works for them, is essentially a replication of the Brewster plot line. Benedict Kiely's *Proxopera* (1977) is coded as a replication novel because its plot line is a conventional one dealing with British Army intervention in and prevention of the implementation of an IRA plot.

Six thrillers in the set are coded as modification novels. David Martin's *The Task* (1975) is a chase novel, but whereas the conventional chase thriller plot generally concerns the pursuit of an IRA activist by the British security forces, in this novel a Belfast man, formerly in the British Navy, pursues a Scottish soldier who killed his brother, and kills a black British soldier by mistake. The pursuit plot line is similar, but the content is a modification of the conventional content. Gerald Seymour's *Harry's Game* (1975) has a strongly conventional Troubles thriller plot



line, which concerns the pursuit of an IRA man by a British soldier, but the modification comes in the characterisation of the British soldier as a Northern Irish soldier who is detached from the British Army establishment. As with David Martin's *The Task*, the form is conventional, but the content is modified.

Ian Blair's *Hooligan's Rant* (1979) is categorised as a modification novel because the terrorists in this novel are Loyalist terrorists rather than Republican terrorists, and the pursuer is a Scottish writer. Stuart Binnie's *Across the Water* (1979) is also a pursuit novel, where the pursued is an IRA activist, and the pursuers are Loyalist activists and British Special Branch. The modification in this novel is in the character of Mary Bruce, the widow of the Loyalist gun-runner, who tries to warn the IRA activist. In all of these novels modification comes not in the form of the novel, which is conventional, but in the content.

Eugene McCabe's *Victims* (1976), a hostage novel, is coded as a modification novel. The form of the novel is conventional; the IRA holds innocent people hostage in order to exchange them for the release of some IRA prisoners. The modification comes partly in the content of the plot, in which two of the IRA hostage takers are sacrificed to the Security Forces to obtain the release of more useful prisoners, a compromise between IRA activists and the establishment, in the form of the Security Forces, which can be regarded as unconventional for a 1970s novel, and partly in the focalisation of the plot, which is seen through the character of the female IRA activist. The plot of Hamill's *Bitter Orange* (1979) concerns the murder of a British soldier by two Irish brothers sympathetic to the Republican cause. The modification comes in the content. Neither brother is an IRA activist: one of the brothers is a film-

maker, whose motive is jealousy, and the other brother's motive is revenge. In this novel, the Troubles becomes an excuse for private murders.

Only Francis Stuart's *A Hole in the Head* (1977) has been coded as a challenging novel in this sub-set. The plot of Francis Stuart's novel challenges the conventional terrorist hostage and establishment intervention plotline. The first part of the novel concerns the madness of the hero, H, who imagines that his companion is Emily Bronte. In the second part of the novel, H is brought in as a negotiator for the release of hostages who are held by Belbury, or Belfast, terrorists. The hostages are the children and mother of a powerful Loyalist activist, and some politicians. The hostage takers are Loyalist and Republican activists working together. H negotiates their release, although the children do not want to be released. At the end of the novel both H and the grandmother see Emily Bronte. A number of elements of this novel challenge the conventions of Troubles thrillers: the plot line shifts from the representation of madness to hostage-taking, the narrative voice is that of the mad writer and unreliable narrator, H, and the content includes scenes based on the unlikely conjunction of Loyalist and Republican activists.

By the end of the 1970s, the conventional Troubles thriller would still be likely to have a plot line involving the pursuit of the IRA, or the intervention of security forces in a Republican plot. The hostage negotiation plot line emerges during this time, and three of the novels are journalists' thrillers, in which the journalists become increasingly disillusioned with the IRA. In most of the conventional novels, British security forces are the heroes. Modifications come in the content rather than in the form of the novels. Modifications in the sub-set include modifications in the

representation of the protagonists, for example, the Loyalist activist as the character pursued in *Hooligan's Rant* (1979), or the British soldier as the character pursued in *The Task* (1975), and the Loyalist activist or a civilian as pursuer; *Across the Water* (1979) is an example of the former, and *Hooligan's Rant* an example of the latter. These novels are all relatively antagonistic towards the IRA, even McCabe's *Victims* (1976), which of all the novels in this sub-set is the most sympathetic towards the IRA through the characterisation of the female activist, Bella. This set of plot lines and modified content form the base line for determining the modifications and challenges to the codes and conventions of Troubles thrillers that emerge from the 1980s primary data set.

Figure 6 shows the thrillers in the primary data set published in the 1980s coded using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Grant, David	Emerald Decision	1980	Thriller (chase, dirty tricks)		X	
McNamara, Michael	The Sovereign Solution	1980	Thriller (two brothers)	X		
Leitch, Maurice	Silver's City	1981	Thriller (chase)	X		
Bradford, Roy.	The Last Ditch	1981	Thriller (political)		X	
Holland, Jack.	The Prisoner's Wife,	1981	Thriller (IRA in-fighting)		X	
Judd, Alan.	A Breed of Heroes.	1981	Thriller (army memoirs)	X		
North, Michael	Mission to Ulster	1981	Thriller (revenge)	X		
Higgins, George, V.	The Patriot Game	1982	Thriller (chase)	X		
Holloway, Rupert	The Terrorist Conspiracy	1982	Thriller ("terror international")	X		
Gibson, Tom	A Wild Hope	1983	Thriller (chase)	X		
Harriott, Ted	No Sanctuary.	1983	Thriller (chase)	X		
Seymour, Gerald	Field of Blood	1985	Thriller		X	

			(supergrass)			
Gill, Bartholemew	McGarr and the Method of Descartes	1985	Thriller (foiled Republican plot)	X		
Higgins, Jack	Confessional	1985	Thriller (chase)		X	
Power, M.S.	The Killing of Yesterday's Children.	1985	Thriller (dirty tricks)		X	
Shannon, James	A Game of Soldiers	1985	Thriller (revenge)	X		
Howlett, John	Orange.	1985	Thriller (foiled Loyalist operation)	X		
Powers, Maurice. S	Lonely the Man Without Heroes	1986	Thriller (dirty tricks)		X	
Ould, Chris	A Kind of Sleep,	1986	Thriller (revenge of ex-IRA man)	X		
Power, M.S	A Darkness in the Eye	1987	Thriller (dirty tricks)		X	
Newman, Gordon.F.	The Testing Ground.	1987	Thriller (dirty tricks)		X	
Anthony, Evelyn	No Enemy but Time	1987	Thriller (IRA chase ex-IRA man)	X		
Clancy, Tom	Patriot Games	1987	Thriller ("terror international")	X		
Gilbert, Michael.	Trouble	1987	Thriller ("terror international")	X		
Armstrong, Campbell	Jig	1987	Thriller (chase)	X		
Kelly, James.	The Marrow from the Bone	1987	Thriller (political)		X	
Murphy, James	Juniper	1987	Thriller (dirty tricks,)		X	
Rankin, Ian	Watchman,	1988	Thriller (chase, dirty tricks)		X	
Michaels. Sarah .J.	Justice: One Man's War against the IRA.	1988	Thriller (revenge)	X		
Joyce, Joe	Off the Record	1989	Thriller (political)		X	

**Figure 6: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles thrillers: 1980s**

Of the thirty thrillers in the sub-set of thrillers published between 1980 and 1989, seventeen are novels which have been categorised as replication novels, and thirteen are novels which are categorised as modifications. A number of thrillers are straightforwardly conventional, such as *The Sovereign Solution* (McNamara, 1980), *The Patriot Game* (Higgins, 1982), and *The Terrorist Conspiracy* (Holloway, 1982). Maurice Leitch's *Silver's City* (1981) is categorised as a replication novel because the plot is a conventional chase, although the pursued and pursuers in this novel are both Loyalist activists. There are enough modified thrillers in the late 1970s sub-set that include modifications in the characterisations of pursuer and pursued for this modification to be considered a conventional Troubles thriller by the early 1980s. None of the thrillers in this sub-set is categorised as a challenging novel, however the large percentage of modification novels suggests that there was a considerable amount of low-level change in the codes and conventions of the Troubles thriller throughout the 1980s.

In all thirteen cases of modified novels, the modifications are manifested in content rather than in form and structure of the novel, as might be expected of popular culture genre. British security forces "dirty tricks" and British establishment intrigue figure as important themes in six of the thrillers: *Emerald Decision* (Grant, 1980), *Lonely the Man without Heroes* (Power, 1986), *A Darkness in the Eye* (Power, 1987), *The Testing Ground* (Newman, 1987), *Juniper* (Murphy, 1987), and Ian Rankin's *Watchman* (1988). *The Killing of Yesterday's Children* concerns negotiations and intrigue between the British security forces, the RUC, and certain elements of the IRA. *The Last Ditch* (Bradford, 1981) is categorised as a modification novel because

of its focus on Unionist politics, and *The Marrow on the Bone* (Kelly, 1987) is also categorised as a modification novel because of its focus on political intrigue in the Republic of Ireland. Joe Joyce's *Off the Record* (1989) concerns talks between the British and Irish governments about the reunification of Ireland in return for Ireland's entry into NATO.

Holland's *The Prisoner's Wife* (1981) is the first novel in the set to include references to splits in the Provisional IRA, and the formation of hawks and doves in the Republican movement. The hawks and doves theme is also treated in M. S. Powers's *A Darkness in the Eye* (1987). Supergrass trials are the theme of Gerald Seymour's *The Field of Blood* (1985). Jack Higgins's *Confessional* (1985) concerns the KGB plotting to kill the Pope and pass the blame on to the IRA. Jack Higgins attempts to include all the favourite bogey-men of the historical and cultural moment in this novel, which is remarkable in its insistence on the relative levels of evil operating between terrorist organisations, with the KGB considered more evil than the IRA.

It seems that during the 1980s, the modifications in the thriller genre took the form of content-based changes, which derived from the socio-political issues of that historical moment. Modifications are related to revelations of British military "dirty tricks" techniques, and concerns about political dialogues between, variously, the British government, the Irish government, and elements in the IRA. These modifications relate to modality and to fiction's relationship with the real world. Perhaps the most surprising result of interpreting the data set in this way is the relatively large percentage of Troubles thrillers in the randomly chosen set, 43%,

which can be coded as modification novels. The nationality of ten of the writers of modification thrillers is known, and of these, six are Irish, two are English, one is Scottish and one Welsh. In the Troubles thriller genre, there was a considerable amount of low-level diachronic transformation during the 1980s, which suggests that this was not a static genre.

Figure 7 shows the thrillers in the primary data set published in the 1990s coded using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
White, Stuart	The Shamrock Boy	1990	Thriller (chase)	X		
Hill, Nicki	Death Grows on You	1990	Thriller (foiled Republican operation,)		X	
Joyce, Joe	The Trigger Man	1990	Thriller (chase)	X		
Kebbe, Jonathan	The Armalite Maiden	1990	Thriller (chase)	X		
Moore, Brian	Lies of Silence	1990	Thriller (hostage)	X		
Esler, Gavin.	Loyalties	1990	Thriller (chase)	X		
Powers, M.S.	Come the Executioner	1991	Thriller (dirty tricks)	X		
Bennett, Ronan,	The Second Prison	1991	Thriller (chase, informers)	X		
Royce, Kenneth	A Wild Justice	1992	Thriller (Chase)	X		
Cunningham, Peter	Who Trespass Against Us.	1993	Thriller (chase)	X		
Clarke, Shaun	Soldier E: SAS: Sniper Fire in Belfast.	1993	Thriller (chase)	X		
Coogan, Patrick.	The General	1993	Thriller (foiled Republican operation,)		X	
Stevens, Gordon.	Provo	1993	Thriller (chase)		X	
McMahon, Blair	Nights in Armour.	1993	Thriller (memoirs)	X		
Holland, Jack.	Walking Corpses	1994	Thriller (chase)	X		

McNamee, Eoin,	Resurrection Man,	1994	Thriller (journalists story)	X		
McEldowney, E.	A Kind of Homecoming.	1994	Thriller (crime, intrigue)	X		
Rice, David	Blood Guilt	1994	Thriller (journalist)	X		
Rooney, Sean.	Early Many A Morning	1994	Thriller (love story)		X	
Daniels, James	They told me you were dead.	1994	Thriller (chase)	X		
Strong, Terence	The Tick-Tock Man	1994	Thriller (foiled IRA plot)	X		
Weston, Simon and Patrick Hill	Cause of Death	1995	Thriller (chase, revenge)	X		
Hurd, Douglas,	The Shape of Ice	1999	Thriller (political)	X		

**Figure 7: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles thrillers: 1990s**

Of the twenty three novels in the sub-set of thrillers published between 1990 and 1999, nineteen have been categorised as replication novels, and only four have been categorised as modification novels. The interpretation results derived from this set of novels are quite different from the results of the 1980s novels. The percentage of modification novels in this set has dipped from a high of 43% in the 1980s novels, to 17% in the 1990s novels. Clearly the primary data set on which this study is based is not comprehensive, in that not every Troubles novel published during the period 1970 to 1999 is described and interpreted within the study. Although this study makes use of some statistical information and quantification, there is no claim for scientific specificity in this study. The methodology cannot produce scientific results, but the methodology is able to provide a framework through which to identify patterns and differences in the primary Troubles novels, and in this context it is interesting that the percentage of modification novels dropped in the 1990s.



Some of the 1990s thrillers are replications of codes and conventions operating even in the 1970s, for example, the plot of *They Told Me You Were Dead* (Daniels, 1994), in which the hero, a former British soldier, kills the IRA activist who killed his British soldier son. In *Who Trespass Against Us* (Cunningham, 1993), a British security officer pursues IRA activists after his daughter is killed by an IRA bomb. The motif of the repentant IRA man is used in some novels. This motif dates back to the 1970s, when it was particularly favoured by novelists who wrote the type of thriller described in this study as “two brothers” novels. In the data set comprising the base for the present study, variations on the repentant IRA activist can be found in *The Shamrock Boy* (White, 1990), *The Trigger Man* (Joyce, 1990), *The Second Prison* (Bennett, 1991), *Walking Corpses* (Holland, 1994) and *Blood Guilt* (Rice, 1994). In *The Shamrock Boy*, the repentant IRA activist is pursued by a British Army sergeant, while in *The Second Prison*, a released IRA prisoner pursues an IRA informer, pursued in turn by a British police officer. In *The Trigger Man*, the repentant IRA man is informed on by his ex-wife, an IRA activist who is influential in the Army Council. Jack Holland’s *Walking Corpses* is a “super-grass” novel about a repentant IRA informer whose ex-girlfriend, an IRA activist, kills him after his television interview. The theme of the repentant super-grass informs the plot of *Blood Guilt*, in which an IRA man, living in the USA, writes an article about the IRA for the syndicated press as a result of which the IRA wants him to return to Ireland and write for them.

Two of the thrillers are “dirty tricks” thrillers of the type that first showed up in the 1980s sub-set. M. S. Powers wrote a number of “dirty tricks” thrillers in the

1980s. His 1991 thriller, *Come the Executioner*, is also a “dirty tricks” thriller. In this novel a journalist investigates his soldier brother’s death, and uncovers British Army intrigue. In McEldowney’s *A Kind of Homecoming* (1994) an RUC officer investigates a series of crimes that leads him to uncover British Army intrigue. Jonathan Kebbe’s *The Armalite Maiden* (1990) is related to the British Army “dirty tricks” novels, in that the protagonists in the novel protest against a range of bad practices within the British Army. Bill Rolston mentions this novel in his 1994 article, commenting on its highly sexualised opening paragraphs. Its plot line concerns a British army officer and a female IRA activist who work together to campaign for an end to plastic bullets. They find an ally in a decent Gardai officer, but most of the British and Irish Establishment are against them. The novel begins as a conventional thriller, but becomes increasingly polemical in tone. The novel is categorised as a replication novel because the critique of the British Army had become a fairly regular theme running through Troubles thrillers in the 1980s. The conjunction of fictional characters in the novel: the black British Army officer, the female IRA activist and the alienated Gardai officer, is perhaps a particularly imaginative conjunction, nevertheless the novel basically replicates earlier Troubles thriller codes and conventions.

Brian Moore’s *Lies of Silence* (1990) is a conventional hostage novel, in which a hotel manager is forced to plant a bomb for the IRA which has taken his wife hostage. Another earlier convention, the prevention of an IRA atrocity by the British army, forms the basis of the plot for Gavin Esler’s *Loyalties* (1990), in which a journalist helps the British Army prevent an IRA atrocity, and the basis of *The Tick*

*Tock Man* (Strong, 1994) in which a British army bomb defuser intercepts a planned IRA atrocity, again helped by a journalist. Eoin MacNamee's *Resurrection Man* (1994) is relatively highly cited in the secondary literature. In this study it is categorised as a replication novel because of the conventional plot line and representations of characters. *A Wild Justice* (Royce, 1992), is a conventional chase novel about an RUC undercover officer who shadows an escaped IRA prisoner. The novelty in this novel is that the RUC officer is disguised as a Loyalist prisoner who escapes with the IRA prisoner. The conjunction of Loyalist and IRA factions is fairly unusual in the data set. The only other novel that links the two factions is Francis Stuart's *A Hole in the Head* (1977). The Loyalist and IRA characters are antagonistic towards each other, which suggests that this conjunction is not enough to raise the novel to modification level.

Two novels in this set represent the Troubles from the viewpoint of security forces personnel, but unlike McEldowney's novel, these novels do not allude to any "dirty tricks" or establishment corruption, rather these novels emphasise the dangers involved in policing Northern Ireland. *Soldier E: SAS Sniper Fire in Belfast* (Clarke, 1993) represents the Troubles from the point of view of the British Army, while Blair McMahon's *Nights in Armour* (1993) represents the Troubles from the point of view of the RUC. These novels are coded as replication novels. Two novels refer explicitly to the ongoing peace talks, and both novels focus is on the contested nature of the process: in Simon Weston's *Cause of Death* (1995), a renegade ex-SAS soldier attempts to stop peace talks by faking IRA atrocities, but is intercepted by another SAS man, while in Douglas Hurd's *The Shape of Ice* (1999) the British Prime

Minister attempts to implement peace in Northern Ireland, amongst other initiatives, but dies of a heart attack before the process is complete. Both novels are coded as replication novels in this study.

Four of the novels in this sub-set are categorised as modification novels. The modifications in *The General* (Coogan, 1993) and *Provo* (Stevens, 1993) are relatively minor. The plot line in both novels is the conventional plotline of the prevention of an IRA atrocity by the British Army, and in both novels, the atrocity is the planned kidnapping of the British royal family, specifically the Prince and Princess of Wales. In this respect, both novels follow the conventions of *The Patriot Game* (1987) by American novelist, Tom Clancy, which was made into a feature film. It is in the characterisations of the main protagonists that there is some element of modification, which is that in both novels the main protagonists are women. In Patrick Coogan's *The General*, a female British Army officer wages guerrilla war in Belfast after the IRA plot to capture Prince Charles fails. The Chief of Staff of the IRA in this novel is also a woman. In Gordon Steven's *Provo*, a female British Army officer foils an IRA plot to kidnap Prince and Princess of Wales. The IRA activist in this novel is also a woman.

Of the other three modification novels, Nicki Hill's *Death Grows on You* (1990) follows a conventional plot line, in which an IRA terrorist plot is foiled. Modification comes in the content which sees the Protestant heroine help the IRA activist. Modification can also be seen in the form of the novel which, with its recurring use of the incest motif throughout the novel, is much more of a self-consciously literary novel than the majority of the replication novels, or indeed of the

majority of Troubles thrillers. It might be that through the use of the incest motif, the novelist is pointing to the interrelatedness of the different communities of people who live in Ireland, and she might be using this in a metaphorical sense, much as the thriller writers who use the “two brothers” metaphor. The modification is not in the use of metaphor in itself because using metaphor, specifically the metaphor of the “two brothers”, has been a convention of the Troubles thriller novel since the early 1970s, but in the choice of metaphor.

The modification elements of Sean Rooney’s *Early Many a Morning* (1994) are structural rather than modifications in the content of the novel. This novel concerns the failure of an IRA attack and its aftermath. The modification comes in the narrative voice, which is that of the IRA activist involved in the attack. The structure of the novel takes the form of a memoir, so the activist relates the story of events which happened many years before. The activist is still alive and still active. No other Troubles thriller in the primary data set includes a still active IRA man as narrator.

There are far fewer modification thrillers in the 1990s set than there are in the 1980s set, but this is not the only difference. It appears that in the 1980s modifications conventionally took the form of modifying content in response to socio-political events. The thrillers forming the basis of the evidence about the 1990s thriller suggest that modifications in the 1990s thriller were likely to take structural form rather than content modifications. At a minor modification level, two of the thrillers contain female protagonists rather than the conventional male protagonists. Hill’s novel and, even more strikingly, Rooney’s novel, both have modifications that could be described as structural rather than content based. In Hill’s novel, the modification

takes the shape of the introduction of a novel metaphor. In Rooney's novel, the modification is in the narrative voice. Only Kebbe's novel has been categorised as a novel in which modification relates to content. The major socio-political issues of the 1990s relate to the ongoing peace process. It is interesting that in the primary data set, those thrillers that make reference to the peace process have been coded as replication novels. The political changes seem not to have triggered direct changes in Troubles thrillers at content or structural level.

Of the eighty four thriller novels in the primary set, twenty nine, or 35%, have been categorised as modification novels, fifty four, or 64%, have been categorised as replication novels, and one novel has been categorised as a challenge novel, where the conventional baseline used was the pre-texts identified in Magee's study. Of the thirty one thrillers making up the 1970s sub-set, twelve, or 39%, are categorised as modification novels. Eighteen novels, or 58%, have been characterised as replication novels, and one novel is a challenge novel.

Of the thirty thriller novels published in the 1980s, thirteen, or 43%, are categorised as modification novels, while seventeen or 57%, have been categorised as replication novels. Four of the twenty three thrillers published in the 1990s, or 17%, have been categorised as modification novels, while the remaining nineteen, or 83%, have been categorised as replication novels.

These metrics would suggest that there was some change at a minor level of modification during the 1970s and 1980s, while the 1990s were the most conservative period in the history of the Troubles thriller. The metrics are a little misleading, however, as a number of modification novels in the 1970s set are early 1970s novels

that are modifications relative to the two pre-texts. There are far fewer modification novels relative to preceding thrillers in the late 1970s set and these modifications tend to be in the representation of the protagonist. McCabe's *Victims* is particularly unusual for its time in that its plot involves compromise between the IRA and the British Army security forces. In real terms, the 1980s would seem to have been the most dynamic period of time in the history of the Troubles thriller, and the changes are to be found at the level of modifications in novels rather than in the form of challenging novels. Modifications in these novels are generally modifications of content related to broader socio-political events of the time.

#### 4.2.2 Using Hall's Model to Interpret Troubles Love Stories Diachronically

Unlike the thrillers, there are no clear pre-texts against which to interpret the Troubles love stories, so this section of the results interpretation will begin with the 1970s love stories, and use these as the base line for interpreting the subsequent novels. Figure 8 shows the love stories in the primary data set published in the 1970s coded using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Barlow, James	Both your Houses.	1971	Love Story (love across the barricades)	X		
Stuart, Francis.	Memorial	1973	Love story (across the barricades)	X		
Hale, John	Lovers and Heretics.	1976	Love story		X	
Hilliar, Michael	Come Dance with me	1977	Love story	X		

**Figure 8: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles love stories: 1970s**

There are four love stories in the data set published in the 1970s, of which two are categorised in this study as “love across the barricades” novels. All four novels have

tragic endings. The lovers in *Both your Houses* (Barlow, 1971) are a British soldier and the daughter of an IRA godfather, and in *Memorial* (Stuart, 1973), the lovers are a middle aged writer and a young girl. *Come Dance with Me* (Hilliar, 1977) is not quite a “love across the barricades” novel, but in this novel the love affair between a Catholic woman from the Republic and a Northern Irish Protestant man is disapproved of by the community in which they live. The woman dies of leukaemia rather than as a consequence of the Troubles. John Hale’s 1976 novel *Lovers and Heretics* is more concerned with East and West Germany, and its references to the Troubles relate to the main protagonist, a British soldier who has served in Northern Ireland. The “love across the barricades” love story is, by the end of the 1970s, the conventional Troubles love story. Against the conventional tragic “love across the barricades” plot line, love stories in the primary data set published during the 1980s can be categorised as follows:

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Cheever, Susan	A Handsome Man.	1981	Love story		X	
MacLavery, Bernard	Cal	1983	Love story	X		
Johnston, Jennifer	The Railway Station Man	1984	Love story	X		
Blake, Philippa	Looking Out.	1989	Love story		X	

**Figure 9: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles love stories: 1980s**

Two of the four novels in the set have been categorised as modification novels. *A Handsome Man* (Cheever, 1981) has been categorised as a modification novel because in this novel the divides between the lovers are not a consequence of one or other’s Northern Irish origins. The landscapes of the Northern Irish Troubles are used



to provide a metaphorical context within which to set the story of the troubled love affair. Philippa Blake's *Looking Out* (1989) concerns the love affair between a married father and a young woman, which is set in the man's holiday home in Northern Ireland. The Troubles link is that a local artist has to plant a bomb for the IRA on the train on which the father and children are travelling. The public tragedy of bomb carnage is avoided, but the main protagonist is left with the private tragedy of losing her lover who returns to his wife. As with the Cheever novel, the Troubles is used as a dramatic device in an otherwise conventional love story, though not perhaps a conventional Troubles love story.

*The Railway Station Man* (Johnston, 1984) is categorised as a replication of the conventional Troubles love story. It concerns the love affair of two middle-aged people, one of whom is English, and one Northern Irish, but this affair is shattered when the woman's son becomes involved in the Republican movement. *Cal* (MacLavery, 1983) is also a replication of the conventional Troubles loves story. The protagonist falls in love with the widow of the RUC officer in whose murder he was involved. Both *The Railway Station Man* and *Cal* are relatively highly cited in the secondary literature, while neither one of the modification novels is referenced.

In relation to the 1980s Troubles love stories, the 1990s Troubles loves stories can be categorised as follows:

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Manning, Kitty	The Between People	1990	Love story	X		
Shriver, Lionel	Ordinary Decent Criminals	1993	Love story	X		
O'Riordan, Kate.	Involved	1995	Love story		X	
Healy, Dermot	A Goat's Song.	1995	Love story		X	

Wilson, Robert McLiam	Eureka Street	1995	Love story			X
Weber, Katherine.	The Music Lesson	1999	Love story		X	

**Figure 10: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles love stories: 1990s**

Of the six love stories published in the 1990s, two are categorised as replication novels, three as modification novels and one novel has been categorised as a challenging novel. Kitty Manning's *The Between People* (1990) and Lionel Shriver's *Ordinary Decent Criminals* (1993) are both categorised as replication novels. In Manning's novel, the lovers are divided by age, religion and the fact that the man is a married doctor. The main action takes place in Armagh in the 1950s, and the devastated Armagh of the early 1970s is used by the novelist as a metaphor for the destroyed love affair. Lionel Shriver's novel concerns the love affair between an Irish Catholic man and a Protestant American woman. The IRA kills the woman to make an example of the man. All the relationships in this novel are destroyed by sectarian division.

Kate O'Riordan's *Involved* (1995), Dermot Healy's *A Goat's Song* (1995) and Katherine Weber's *The Music Lesson* (1999), are categorised in this study as modification novels. *Involved* is the story of the love affair between a Northern Irish Catholic man, whose brother is an IRA godfather figure, and a middle-class, Republic of Ireland Catholic woman. The division in the novel is not a sectarian divide, but the gap between working-class Northern Irish Catholic Republicanism and the Republic of Ireland Catholic middle-classes. Katherine Weber's *The Music Lesson* is categorised as a modification novel because the divisions that are represented in this

novel are not between religions or between Northern Irish and British lovers, but rather the division between the romantic and naive idealism of the Irish-American Republican sympathiser, and the amoral ruthlessness of the Northern Irish IRA man. Healy's *A Goat's Song* is categorised as a modification novel, although this is a "love across the barricades" novel concerning the love affair between a Republic of Ireland Catholic playwright and a Northern Irish Protestant actress because a large part of the novel consists of an imagined reconstruction of the life of his girlfriend's RUC officer father by the playwright. The modifications in *Involved* and *The Music Lesson* are modifications of content rather than plots or structure; the structure of *A Goat's Song*, particularly its beginning and ending, is also a modification of conventional Troubles love stories.

McLiam Wilson's *Eureka Street* (1995) has been categorised as a challenging novel in this study because in this novel the love affairs, which cross boundaries and unite differences, and which conventionally would end in disaster or separation, all flourish. Fat Chuckie Lurgan gets his beautiful American, his mother sets up house with her girlfriend, and Jake Jackson, the cynical, anti-Republican, becomes involved with the arch-Republican, Aoirghe. In the secondary literature, critics have suggested that the only endings possible for the Troubles love story are either death or escape from Ireland. In the novels which are classed as predominantly love stories in the primary data set this is true of all the novels except *Eureka Street*.

The structure of the novel takes the form of two halves punctuated by a chapter in the middle of the book describing the consequences of a bomb blast which devastates the centre of Belfast. The emotionally charged description of the bomb

blast is evidence that even in this fairly optimistic novel the realities of a violent Northern Ireland cannot be absent from a novel about the North by a Northern novelist, but the novelty of *Eureka Street* is that some of the differences and separations operating between characters before the middle chapter describing the blast begin to be bridged after the blast. Glenn Patterson's *Fat Lad* (1992) contains a description of a bomb blast but in this novel the blast is a signal for an end to the façade of a stable and modern Belfast, and the ending of this novel sees the hero leave Ireland as the bookshop chain for which he works pulls out of Belfast. The relatively hopeful ending of *Eureka Street* is likely to be a function of its moment of production, which was just post-cease fire. Perhaps if the novel had been produced later, it might have been more qualified in its ending. As it is, the ending could probably be described as a cautious and qualified hopefulness compared with conventional love stories, but it is relatively positive compared with the endings of conventional Troubles love stories.

Of the fourteen love stories in the primary set, seven are replication novels, six are modification novels and one is a challenge novel. Three of the four love stories published in the 1970s have been categorised as replication novels, while one has been categorised as a modification novel. Two of the love stories published in the 1980s have been categorised as replication novels, and two as modification novels. Many of the love stories of the 1970s and 1980s involve the main characters having contact with characters directly involved in the Troubles, for example Cal is involved in the fringes of the IRA, as is Helen Cuffe's son in *The Railway Station Man*, while Herra, in *Memorial*, becomes friendly with a British Army soldier. The only 1980s

novels in the set without this direct association with activists are Phillipa Blake's *Looking Out*, which uses the Troubles as a metaphorical backdrop for a troubled private love affair, and Michael Hillier's *Come Dance with Me*, which has very low modality and connects Hillier's fictional contemporary Ireland back to an Ireland of Anglo-Irish aristocracy and Big Houses. The majority of these love stories contain within them, to differing degrees and in different ways, paradigmatic elements of the conventional Troubles thriller mode in the representation of stereotypical characters. They do not contain the socio-political content modifications associated with contemporary Troubles thrillers. If we were to think in terms of Magee's Troubles hybrid genre, then there are differing dynamics at play within the thriller novels of the 1980s and love stories of the same period which systematically draw on more conventional paradigmatic elements.

Of the six love stories published in the 1990s, two are replication novels, three are modification novels, and one is a challenge novel. This suggests that the most dynamic period of change in the history of the Troubles love story was during the 1990s. The three modification love stories are melancholy, even though they were all published after the 1994 ceasefire. The form of *A Goat's Song* suggests a cyclical repetition of the same old story; in *Involved*, the quarrels and troubles reach out to the next generation, while in *The Music Lesson*, the heroine buries the painting stolen by the IRA with her dead friend. She succeeds in outwitting the IRA but only after losing everything through her involvement with them. It might be significant that of all the novels in this sub-set, the novel in which the main characters have least direct involvement in Troubles activity is *Eureka Street*. The conventional thriller elements

are still present in the form of the bomb blast and Aoirghe’s Republicanism, but the main characters in this novel are extremely detached from personal involvement in the Troubles: Chucky is too busy making love and money, while Jake and the omniscient narrator are both extremely cynical about the Republican movement and the media hype surrounding the poets and leaders of the Republican movement.

#### 4.2.3 Using Hall’s Model to Interpret Troubles Crime and Horror Novels Diachronically

For the purposes of this study, the crime and horror genres can be analysed in relation to the Troubles thriller, because it provides a relatively close generic match, and is very much the largest genre in the primary data set. Figure 11 shows the crime and horror novels in the primary data set using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Gill, Bartholemew	McGarr at the Dublin Horse Show	1979	Crime		X	
Symons, Julian	The Detling Secret	1982	Crime		X	
Bringle, Mary	Death of an Unknown Man	1987	Crime		X	
Brady, John.	A Stone of the Heart	1988	Crime		X	
Hutson, Shaun	Renegades	1991	Horror			X

**Figure 11: Overview of the complete set of crime and horror novels in the data set**

There are only four novels in the primary data set that are classified as crime novels, and all four are categorised in this study as modification novels because the crime plots are not directly related to the Troubles, but aspects of Troubles thriller codes and conventions are included within the novels. *In McGarr at the Dublin Horse Show* (Gill, 1979) the crime investigated is not directly Troubles related: the link with the contemporary Troubles is that an IRA hit-man is hired by the villains to disrupt the Dublin horseshow. The ideological position is that of the conventional crime novel in

that the Gardai restores order and the status quo. It is basically a modification of the Troubles thriller convention.

The same is true of Mary Bringle's *Death of an Unknown Man* (1987), the plot of which concerns the investigation of the murder of an IRA activist who has been killed by an American, in retribution for killing his teacher in a bomb explosion. It is a modification of the Troubles thriller genre, focusing not so much on the terrorist activity, as on the consequential aftermath. The crime in *A Stone of the Heart* (Brady, 1988) is the murder of a student who blackmailed a lecturer, who was being blackmailed by the IRA. The IRA and the Troubles are on the fringes of the plot, but not at the centre, so the novel is categorised in this study as a modification of the Troubles thriller. *The Detling Secret* (Symons, 1982) is set in Victorian England, and the Republicans are Sinn Feiners, who are included in the plot to add colour.

There is only one horror novel in the primary data set, and this is Shaun Hutson's *Renegades* (1991). This novel has been categorised as a challenging novel although it contains many conventional thriller elements, such as representations of British security forces, and Republican activists, because supernatural elements are introduced in the novel, and these challenge the conventions of the Troubles thriller genre, which, although it is not always highly modal, tends to consist of novels in which the main protagonists are human beings.

There are five novels in the crime and horror category. Of these, one novel published in the 1970s and three novels published in the 1980s are categorised as modification novels, where the pre-text is the early 1970s Troubles thriller. One

novel, Shaun Hutson’s *Renegades*, published in 1991, has been categorised as a challenge novel.

#### 4.2.4 Using Hall’s Model to Interpret Troubles Domestic Drama Novels Diachronically

The British domestic drama genre can be characterised as consisting of popular culture novels which are often historical and localised. Perhaps the best known British domestic drama novelist is Catherine Cookson, whose regional novels are generally set in the North East of England in the early twentieth century. Typically, in Cookson’s novels, a working-class girl has to fight to survive the difficulties of her surroundings, and generally triumphs over adversity, the triumph sometimes taking the form of a successful marriage. If the Troubles domestic drama novels replicate the more general British regional drama novels, it would be expected that the plot lines would concern the fulfilled aspirations of a working-class female protagonist, sometimes contextualised within the codes and conventions of the historical novel, sometimes contextualised within fictional representations of British class-based society. The dialogue might include regional variants of English. References to real places, and possibly events, would be likely. Figure 12 shows the Troubles domestic drama novels published in the 1970s coded using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Ballinger, W.A.	The Green Grassy Slopes	1969	Domestic drama (historical)		X	
Gallie, Menna	You’re Welcome to Ulster	1970	Domestic drama		X	
Walter Hegarty	Price of Chips	1973	Domestic drama (generational, two brothers)	X		



White, Terence de Vere	The Distance and the Dark	1973	Domestic drama	X		
Van Greenway, Peter.	Suffer! Little Children.	1976	Domestic drama (across the barricades)		X	
Cowell, John	The Begrudgers	1978	Domestic drama	X		

**Figure 12: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles domestic dramas:**

**1970s**

The early Troubles domestic dramas do not replicate conventional British domestic drama novels. If the domestic dramas of British novelists such as Catherine Cookson are accepted as a starting point, then Northern Irish domestic drama immediately modifies the norm, because in writing about communities and families in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, there are necessarily references to sectarian based war, murders, riots and demonstrations. In its representation of sectarian violence and separation, this sub-set of domestic drama differs even from the British domestic dramas set in British cities during the Second World War. These novels often include representations of violence and destruction, but the base is not sectarian, and the “love across the barricades” theme is rarely found in such fiction.

The earliest novel in the primary set is *The Green Grassy Slopes* (Ballinger, 1969), which is an historical novel set in Belfast in the 1920s. It is the story of a charismatic Protestant preacher who becomes extremely powerful with the working-class Belfast ship-builders, but the novel is also a soft pornographic novel, dominated by sex and sectarianism. Menna Gallie’s *You’re Welcome to Ulster* (1970) does not replicate British domestic drama novels, but perhaps offers a base-line against which to consider the later novels. The ending of Gallie’s novel is relatively down-beat as the heroine’s lover is shot by B-Specials.

In relation to Gallie's novel, Walter Hegarty's *Price of Chips* (1973) can be categorised as a replication novel. The historical perspective of the novel moves from describing a relatively peaceful sectarian community post-Second World War, to describing the violent sectarian community of early 1970s Belfast. This novel is highly regarded by Bill Rolston because it describes a working class community. Terence de Vere White's *The Distance and the Dark* (1973) can also be categorised as a replication novel, which is concerned with the Troubles impinging on the private lives of the middle-classes in the Republic of Ireland, disrupting their security. The novel ends with the shooting of the hero.

There are two novels in the sub-set published in the late 1970s. John Cowell's 1978 novel, *The Begrudgers*, can be categorised as a replication novel, which, like *The Distance and the Dark* is concerned with the ways in which middle class life in the Republic of Ireland is influenced and disturbed by the Troubles. Peter Van Greenway's *Suffer! Little Children* (1976) is a modification novel, which is as much a pedagogical polemic as it is a domestic drama. By the end of the 1970s, the conventional Troubles domestic drama novel tended to focus on sectarian divisions, and on the ways in which the Troubles negatively impact on the lives of people who are not activists in paramilitary organisations. The endings tend to be downbeat or tragic.

Figure 13 shows the Troubles domestic drama novels published in the 1980s coded in relation to the conventions of the Troubles domestic drama novel of the 1970s, using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Miner, Valerie	Blood Sisters	1981	Domestic drama		X	

Healy, Dermot	Fighting with Shadows or Schiamachy	1984	Domestic drama	X		
Anderson, Linda.	To Stay Alive	1984	Domestic drama	X		
Ingoldby, Grace	Across the Water	1985	Domestic drama (two brothers)		X	
Countryman, Albert J.	Streets of Derry	1986	Domestic drama		X	
Beckett, Mary	Give Them Stones	1987	Domestic drama	X		
Leitch, Maurice	Chinese Whispers	1987	Domestic drama (set in an asylum)			X

**Figure 13: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles domestic dramas:**

#### **1980s**

There are three replication novels in the sub-set. *Fighting with Shadows* (Healy, 1984) and *To Stay Alive* (Anderson, 1984) are categorised as conventional novels. *Fighting with Shadows* concerns an Irish family living on the Irish border, whose lives are defined by the Troubles. Many of the codes and conventions of the mid-1970s domestic drama are to be found in *To Stay Alive*, for example, the involvement of the young medical student with Republican groups, and a “love-across-the-barricades” theme. Mary Beckett’s *Give Them Stones* (1987) has been cited in the secondary literature and interpreted using Marxist and feminist critical perspectives. In this study it is categorised as a replication novel because it is the story of the way in which the Troubles and the sectarian society of Northern Ireland come to define the life of a Belfast woman, and the lives of her family and community. The narrative voice is that of the working-class Belfast woman, which although relatively rare in

Troubles fiction, is also to be found in Mary Molloy's *No Mate for the Magpie* (1985).

Three novels in this sub-set are categorised as modification novels. The content modifications of Valerie Miner's *Blood Sisters* (1981), a novel about the interwoven lives of two cousins and their mothers, are in the representation of two major characters as committed members of the IRA, the lesbian sub-plot, the setting, which is London, not Northern Ireland, unlike conventional Troubles domestic dramas, and the relationships between the American and Irish characters. *Across the Water* (Ingoldby, 1985) is categorised as a modification because the main characters are the instigators of violence in this novel, while in the conventional Troubles domestic drama novel the protagonists' lives are disrupted by violence that is external to the main characters. It is also a modification of the "two brothers" theme, which typically involves the rejection of violence and the IRA by the "good" brother, who prevails over the "bad" brother. In this novel, the "bad" brother prevails over the "good" brother.

*The Streets of Derry* (Countryman, 1986) has been categorised as a modification novel in this study although it could easily be categorised as a replication novel in terms of plot line. It concerns the lives of a group of young people in Derry in the 1970s, and there is a downbeat ending, as the hero is imprisoned in the Maze, while his young brother is killed. The narrative voice shifts between the hero, the main female protagonist and the omniscient narrator. The modification comes in the Republican viewpoint through which the story is told, which is unusual for a domestic drama novel.

Maurice Leitch's novel, *Chinese Whispers* (1987) has been categorised as a domestic drama, rather than in any other generic category, because it concerns a community, but even in the make up of the community, this novel challenges the codes and conventions of Troubles domestic drama, and more generally British regional domestic drama. Even the setting, a lunatic asylum in Northern Ireland, is unconventional. The lives of the inmates and the disturbed psychiatric nurse hero are disrupted by evidence of the violence of the Troubles, and to that extent, it uses some of the conventions of Troubles domestic drama, but the similarities with conventional Troubles domestic dramas probably end there. The community in this novel is a disturbed and dysfunctional one, which already includes murderers, and the narrative voice is unreliable, and unstable.

The conventions of the 1970s domestic drama novels can still be seen in the 1980s novels, but there are some modifications. In the primary data set novels modifications take the form of a shift in the political perspective and viewpoint through which the Troubles are explored, and a shift from novels in which public and external violence inflicts private and domestic suffering, to novels in which the protagonists are, to some extent, part of the violence.

Figure 14 shows the Troubles domestic drama novels published in the 1990s coded in relation to the conventions of the Troubles domestic drama novel of the 1980s, using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
James, Evelyn	Taking the Forbidden Road	1991	Domestic drama (love across the barricades)	X		
Duffaud, Briege,	A Wreath upon the Dead	1992	Domestic drama	X		

			(historical)			
Daly, Ita	All Fall Down	1992	Domestic drama		X	
Costello, Mary	Titanic Town: Memoirs of Belfast Girlhood.	1992	Domestic drama	X		
Park, David.	The Rye Man	1994	Domestic drama		X	
Quinn, John.	Generations of the Moon.	1995	Domestic drama	X		

**Figure 14: Overview of the replicate-modify-challenge model for Troubles domestic dramas:**

**1990s**

There are four replication novels in this sub-set and one modification novel. Evelyn James's *Taking the Forbidden Road* (1991) is categorised as a replication novel which adheres to the codes and conventions of the 1970s domestic drama novels. The story concerns a Protestant woman and a Catholic man in Northern Ireland who marry against family wishes in the 1950s. When the Troubles start, the husband is killed. Mary Costello's *Titanic Town* (1992) is also categorised as a replication novel. It uses the modification, introduced in the 1980s novels, which sees the main characters as active participants in, rather than as passive victims of the external violence of the Troubles. In this novel, the protagonist's mother becomes involved in an attempt to stop the IRA killing children on her council estate during the 1970s. Violence dominates the community, and the Troubles still determines private lives, but the main characters are much more active, and in this novel they are looking for solutions. It also uses the 1980s' political perspective modification in its Republican sympathies.

John Quinn's 1995 novel, *Generations of the Moon*, adheres to codes and conventions operating in the 1970s. The novel tells the stories of a young man and his sister, who are the children of a marriage between a Catholic woman and a Protestant

man. They are brought up on the border of Northern Ireland and the Republic after their parents die; one is brought up by the Catholic family, one by the Protestant family. The Troubles cause violence and disruption in their lives, but they manage to retain some sort of relationship, driven by the Catholic brother who becomes a priest.

Briege Duffaud's *A Wreath upon the Dead* (1992) is an historical novel about a group of families who come from the same small town on the Irish border. The novel interweaves the modern Troubles with the recent past, and nineteenth century Irish local history. It adheres to the codes and conventions of Troubles domestic drama of the time of production in the way that it focuses on the impact of the Troubles on ordinary people although its scope is far broader than the majority of Troubles novels. In its focus on the veracity of the written word in the form of letters, journals and fiction, it is more meta-fictional than the majority of Troubles novels. In this novel, as in *Across the Water* (Ingoldby, 1985), the violent action that constitutes the novel's climax is not related to the Troubles, but to private concerns. Rather than the public violence impinging on private lives, the private issues connect out to the public violence. This novel can be coded as a replication novel because this connection between private quarrels and the public Troubles has already been made in the literature.

The shift between private suffering and public violence is modified in Ita Daly's *All Fall Down* (1992). Although it shares with the Duffaud novel the theme of a private tragedy connecting out to the Troubles, this novel concerns violence as accidental rather than violence as pre-meditated and motivated. The relationship between intentionality and consequences is different in this novel. David Park's *The*

*Rye Man* (1994) is another modification novel which is a much more self-consciously literary novel than the conventional Troubles domestic drama. It is a modification novel in that the Troubles references are an adjunct to the main plot. The Troubles are referred to, but are not the main focus of the novel.

The domestic drama sub-set is interpreted in relation to the conventional British domestic drama, and of the eighteen novels in this set, ten, or 55%, have been categorised as replication novels, seven, or 39%, have been categorised as modification novels, and one has been categorised as a challenge novel. Two of the 1970s domestic dramas have been categorised as modification novels, while three are replication novels. Three of the 1980s novels are replication novels, three are modification novels, and one is a challenge novel. In the 1990s set there are six novels, four of which are categorised as replication novels and two as modification novels.

In most of the domestic drama novels of the 1980s the violence associated with the Troubles has direct consequences for the main characters, who are often directly involved with the Republican movement. At the same time, domestic drama novels during this period sometimes contain paradigmatic representations of Republican activists which are relatively sympathetic. Maurice Leitch's *Chinese Whispers*, which has low modality and is a relatively writerly novel, is an exceptional novel because of the absence of conventional Troubles paradigms.

Some of the 1990s domestic drama novels are slightly different in that they do not include direct representations of conventional Troubles paradigms. In Evelyn James's *Taking the Forbidden Road*, Ita Daly's *All Fall Down* and David Park's *The*



*Rye Man*, the direct consequential connection between explicit knowledge and involvement with the Troubles and an ultimate tragic outcome is not so strong. Evelyn James’s novel is in some ways more like an early Troubles love story in that the “love across the barricades” relationship between the Protestant woman and the Catholic man is destroyed by sectarian hatred. The form of this novel is a function of its historical setting which moves from Ireland in the 1950s to the beginning of the Troubles when the now married lovers are middle-aged. In both Daly’s novel and Park’s novel reference to the Troubles runs parallel with representation of a fictional Ireland in which Troubles fiction paradigms are absent for most of the time. In Daly’s novel the public Troubles brings private consequences in a plotline closer to a domestic drama novel of the early 1970s than any of the 1980s domestic dramas, while Park’s novel foregrounds the personal against a backdrop of Troubles sectarianism and mistrust.

#### 4.2.5 Using Hall’s Model to Interpret Troubles Comedies Diachronically

There are not many comedies in the primary data set, but comedies have been written about the Troubles since the early 1970s. Figure 15 shows the Troubles comedies coded using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Waddell, Martin	A Little Bit British	1970	Comedy	X		
Braddon, Russell	The Progress of Private Lilyworth.	1971	Comedy	X		
Morrow, John	The Confessions of Proinsias O’Toole	1977	Comedy	X		
Morrow, John.	The Essex Factor	1982	Comedy	X		

O'Mahony, T.P.	The Lynch Years: A Political Fantasy.	1986	Comedy	X		
Toman, Edward.	Shambles Corner.	1993	Comedy		X	
Bateman, Colin	Cycle of Violence	1995	Comedy		X	
Bateman, Colin	Divorcing Jack	1995	Comedy	X		
Bateman, Colin	Of Wee Sweetie Mice and Men.	1996	Comedy		X	

**Figure 15: Overview of the complete set of comedies in the data set**

There are nine comic novels included in the primary data set. The two early novels, *A Little Bit British* (Waddell, 1970), and *The Progress of Private Lilyworth* (Brandon, 1971) can be used to provide a baseline view of the emerging codes and conventions of Troubles comic fiction. The butt of the satirical humour in *A Little Bit British* is Protestant Orangeism in Northern Ireland, while in *The Progress of Private Lilyworth*, it is the sectarianism of Northern Ireland in general that is represented as absurd. *The Confessions of Proinsias O'Toole* (Morrow, 1977), *The Essex Factor* (Morrow, 1982), *The Lynch Years: A Political Fantasy* (O'Mahony, 1986), and *Divorcing Jack* (Bateman, 1995) replicate the early comedies in their representation of the absurdities of Northern Irish religious sectarianism. While the emphasis on the absurdity of sectarianism is part of the codes and conventions of the Troubles comedy, the comedies also challenge the fictional codes and conventions of Troubles thrillers, love stories and domestic drama, in that the sectarianism is used for comic effect in the comedies, rather than the tragic effect usually found in the other genres. It is perhaps possible to suggest that the comedy genre is the genre within which, even from the earliest days of the Troubles, fiction writers questioned the codes and conventions relating to religious sectarianism operating within Northern Irish society.

Three of the novels in the sub-set are categorised as modification novels. The butt of the humour in *Shambles Corner* (Toman, 1993) is Irish Catholicism in Armagh. Two of Colin Bateman's novels are characterised as modifications. The absurdities of sectarian Northern Ireland are central to *Cycle of Violence* (1995), but in this novel the plot and the deaths are related to rape and suicide, not to the Troubles. Like *Shambles Corner*, the ending of *Cycle of Violence* is very downbeat, as the protagonist is murdered in a mindless attack, unrelated to the Troubles. *Of Wee Sweetie Mice and Men* (1996) is characterised in this study as a modification novel because the novel is set in New York, but the representation of the absurdity of Northern Irish religious sectarianism is still a central element of the novel.

There are nine novels in the comedy sub-set. All three comedies published in the 1970s have been categorised as replication novels, as have the two comedies published in the 1980s. One of the four comedies published in the 1990s has been categorised as a replication novel, while three have been categorised as modification novels. The modification comedies published in the 1990s are dark comedies which have relatively negative endings.

#### **4.2.6 Using Hall's Model to Interpret Troubles *Bildungsromans* Diachronically**

The classic *bildungsroman* is the story of a young man who comes of age by learning the realities of the society in which he finds himself. It concerns the period in time when the protagonist ceases to be a child and learns the socio-political codes and conventions of adulthood that operate within his society. The term *bildungsroman* is used in this study to describe novels which focus on the protagonist at the moment

when he, or she in Troubles fiction, learns about the realities of life in Northern Irish society.

Figure 16 shows the Troubles *bildungsromans* coded using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Johnston, Jennifer	Shadows on our Skin	1977	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		
Woods, Una	The Dark Hole Days	1984	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		
Gibson, Elizabeth	The Water is Wide	1984	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		
Molloy, Mary	No Mate for the Magpie	1985	<i>Bildungsroman</i>		X	
Madden, Deirdre	Hidden Symptoms	1986	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		
Morrison, Danny	West Belfast.	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>		X	
Wilson, Robert McLiam	Ripley Bogle	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>			X
Patterson, Glenn	Fat Lad	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>		X	
Park, David	The Healing	1992	<i>Bildungsroman</i>		X	
Patterson, Glenn	Burning your Own	1993	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		
Paisley, Rhonda.	Lost Fathers	1995	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		
Beattie, Geoffrey	The Corner Boys.	1998	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		

**Figure 16: Overview of the complete set of *bildungsromans* in the data set**

The earliest *bildungsroman* identified in the primary data set making up this study is Jennifer Johnston's *Shadows on our Skin* which was first published in 1977. This novel, which is about a young boy and which is highly cited in the literature, focuses on difficulties of developing cross-cultural relationships in sectarian Derry. Using *Shadows on our Skin* as a starting point, four of the seven *bildungsromans* novels in the primary data set published in the 1980s have been characterised as replications, two have been characterised as a modification novel, and one as a challenging novel.

*The Dark Hole Days* (Woods, 1984) is about a young man who becomes involved on the fringes of a Loyalist paramilitary group which murders the father of a young Catholic girl. In as much as the novel focuses on the young man, it is nearer

the classic *bildungsroman* than *Shadows on our Skin*, which concerns an eleven year old protagonist. In Deirdre Madden's *Hidden Symptoms* (1986), the protagonist is a young woman. There are two other major characters in this novel, another young woman and a young man. The chief character has lost her brother, who has been murdered by Loyalist activists, and she faces the bleak realities of life in Northern Ireland. These novels end with the protagonists continuing to live in a Northern Ireland they know to be sectarian and violent. Elizabeth Gibson's *The Water is Wide* (1984), another replication novel, is about a group of New University of Ulster (NUU) students who learn to overcome their sectarian differences. The main protagonist in this novel is a young woman and the novel ends with some of the characters leaving Ireland and some remaining.

Mary Molloy's *No Mate for the Magpie* (1985) is categorised as a modification novel in this study. This is the story of a young working-class woman's journey, literal and metaphorical, from Derry to England. The most relevant pre-text for this novel might be Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls* (1960). Like Madden's *Hidden Symptoms*, the protagonist and narrator in the novel is a young woman, but this novel differs from the earlier *bildungsroman* novels, and in its use of comic devices, paves the way for the late 1980s *bildungsroman* novels written by Robert McLiam Wilson. Mary Molloy uses Irish stereotypes such as the heroine as novice nun, and Troubles stereotypes, such as internment and the Burntollet Bridge incident, for absurd and comic effect. At the same time, these stereotypes operate as indexes of tragedy and repression. Her heroine is even incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital, and eventually leaves Ireland. Robert McLiam Wilson subverts the Troubles stereotypes

in *Ripley Bogle*, but *No Mate for the Magpie*, with its unusual representation of dialect and its mocking of the Irish stereotypes, is an earlier version of subversion within the Troubles *bildungsroman*. The reason that *No Mate for the Magpie* is ultimately categorised as a modification novel is that despite the comic handling of many of the Irish clichés, these are representations of the fictional experiences of the heroine.

In Robert McLiam Wilson's *Ripley Bogle* (1989), Ripley, a young Northern Irish Catholic man, wanders the streets of London reflecting on his past life. It is a parody of conventional Troubles fiction, which includes scenarios derived from conventional Troubles thrillers and Troubles "love across the barricades" love stories. It is the claim at the end of the novel by Ripley Bogle that he has fabricated his history that places this novel in the challenging category rather than the modification category in this study, which interprets this novel as a highly self-conscious literary meta-narrative unusual amongst Troubles fiction novels. In the construction of a novel about a hero who uses Troubles stereotypes as lies, McLiam Wilson writes a meta-fiction which is a commentary on Troubles fiction as much as a novel about Ripley.

There are other novels which parody Troubles stereotypes, for example the comic novels conventionally mock the sectarian divisions of Northern Ireland, and Briege Duffaud's *A Wreath Upon the Dead* parodies stereotypes of the Irish to be found more generally in cultural artefacts, such as the Irish "mammy", the drunk, violent father, the overpowering, interfering priest, the dilapidated and ruined Big House, Irish emigration and Yankee cousins, the convent, grandmothers who tell

stories, folk songs about legendary heroes, but the difference is that *Ripley Bogle* is a memoir written from the perspective of the anti-hero who informs the reader that the memoir is a lie. Its challenging status lies in its reflexivity.

Danny Morrison's *West Belfast* (1989) concerns the ways in which the Troubles impinge on the private lives of a group of young people in Belfast. Although the plot is fairly conventional, it is characterised as a modification novel in this study because the authorial perspective is Republican and the conflict is represented as deriving from the British presence in Northern Ireland. Glenn Patterson's *Fat Lad* (1992) is also characterised as a modification novel. In this novel, a young man returns from university in England to a Belfast that seems to hold the promise of peace. Although the conventional divisions of Northern Ireland are referred to in the novel, there seem to be ways of healing the divisions. However, the hopefulness is short-lived; the bombing starts again, and the young man leaves Ireland for France.

By the end of the 1980s the conventional *bildungsroman* tended to focus on the violent sectarianism of Northern Ireland which ruins private lives. Escape from Ireland was seen as a solution. *Fat Lad* suggests the possibility of some healing process in Ireland, although at the moment of cultural production it is as yet a healing which might be disrupted by violence. Morrison's *West Belfast* is interesting and relatively unconventional because it offers a representation of Northern Ireland through the viewpoint of a Republican community. *Ripley Bogle* challenges the conventions in its parody of conventions.

Four novels in the primary data set published in the 1990s are categorised as *bildungsroman* novels in this study, of which three are categorised as replication

novels. Glenn Patterson's *Burning your Own* (1993) is cited in the secondary literature. In this study it is categorised as a replication novel because it adheres to the conventional Troubles *bildungsroman* plot concerning a young boy who becomes aware of the realities of life, and death, in sectarian, violent Northern Ireland. The young boy hero in this novel is younger than the classic adolescent *bildungsroman* hero. Rhonda Paisley's *Lost Fathers* (1995) concerns three young women as they leave school to go their separate ways. One of the young women loses her first husband, an RUC man, in the Troubles and is betrayed by her second husband. It is categorised as a replication novel in this study. The third replication novel in this sub-set is Geoffrey Beattie's *The Corner Boys* (1998) about a young man whose friend, a UVF recruit, is killed in a raid that the hero initiated for his Catholic girlfriend. The discovery that he has been used by the girlfriend is a moment of epiphany for the protagonist, who is narrating the story from an English university.

David Park's *The Healing* (1992) is categorised as a modification novel mainly because of the content of its ending. In this novel, a young boy loses the power of speech when his father is killed but recovers his voice through the intervention of an old man who kills his Loyalist terrorist son. The ending in this novel is slightly more hopeful than the more negative endings to be found in earlier novels such as *Shadows on our Skin* (1977) or *The Dark Hole Days* (1984). The novel is also more self consciously literary and symbolic than conventional Troubles *bildungsroman*.

There are twelve novels in the *bildungsroman* sub-section, eight of which are replication novels, three of which are modification novels, and one of which is a



challenge novel. Only one *bildungsroman* in the set was published in the 1970s, and this has been categorised as a replication novel. Four of the seven *bildungsromans* published in the 1980s have been categorised as replication novels, two as modification novels and one as a challenge novel. Three of the four *bildungsromans* published in the 1990s have been categorised as replication novels and one as a modification novel. All the *bildungsromans* include paradigmatic representations of Troubles related violence and its perpetrators, who are generally Republican activists, except in Una Wood's *The Dark Hole Days* and Geoffrey Beattie's *The Corner Boys*, in which the activists are Loyalist activists.

#### 4.2.7 Using Hall's Model to Interpret Troubles Children's Books Diachronically

There are eight children's books in the entire primary data set. Four are published in the 1970s and four are published in the 1980s. Figure 17 shows the Troubles children's books coded using the replicate-modify-challenge model.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Lingard, Joan	The Twelfth of July	1970	Children's fiction	X		
Lingard, Joan	Across the Barricades	1973	Children's fiction	X		
Morrison, Edith	Joy in the Troubles	1975	Children's fiction		X	
Hanley, Clifford	Prissy	1979	Children's fiction		X	
Banks, Lynne Reid.	Maura's Angel	1984	Children's fiction	X		
Sefton, Catherine.	Starry Night	1986	Children's fiction	X		
Sefton, Catherine	Frankie's Story	1988	Children's fiction	X		
McCaughren, Tom	Rainbows of the Moon.	1989	Children's fiction	X		

Figure 17: Overview of the complete set of children's books in the data set

There are no pre-text novels against which the Troubles children's fiction can be discussed. The earliest Troubles children's novel in the primary research set is Joan Lingard's *The Twelfth of July* (1970), which explores religious sectarian divisions in a divided community and represents these divisions as absurd and dangerous. The child heroes manage to overcome their prejudices and become friends. If the novel is used as a base-line, then conventional Troubles children's books might be expected to ridicule or critique sectarian divisions and explore ways in which young people can cross boundaries, sometimes representing these relationships in a favourable light in comparison with the authorial treatment of the entrenched divisions of their elders.

*Across the Barricades* (1973) is the second Joan Lingard novel in the series of three novels and it is categorised as a replication novel because it develops the themes established in Lingard's first novel. The budding love affair between the two main protagonists eventually drives them out of Northern Ireland. Edith Morrison's *Joy in the Troubles* (1975) is a Christian children's book which explores the difficulties of living in the Troubles, and critiques sectarian divides. In this novel, universal Protestantism is offered as the solution. *Prissy* (Hanley, 1978) is a novel about a feisty teenage girl who takes on a gang of "baddies", in this case a group of IRA terrorists, and outwits them all. It is coded as a modification novel in relation to Lingard's novels because it is set in London, not Northern Ireland, it focuses on an English girl and a gang of IRA thugs, and the action is relatively violent. By the end of the 1970s, children's novels include not only the Lingard scenarios, the absurdity of sectarianism and the need for children to cross boundaries, but also the polemic of Edith Morrison, and the fantastic revenge of Cliff Hanley's *Prissy*.

Three of the four children's novels published in the 1980s are categorised as conventional novels. There are two novels by Catherine Sefton, the pen name of Martin Waddell, in the set. *Starry Night* (1986) is a teenage novel about a girl who discovers that the woman she believes to be her sister is really her mother. It is a conventional teenage novel about dealing with difficult social problems set in the Northern Irish countryside. *Frankie's Story* (1988) is about a teenage girl who is suspected of being an informer. It is a conventional Troubles teenage novel, which deals with the absurdity of sectarian divisions, and the violence and danger of life in Northern Ireland, and in the end, the teenager has to leave Ireland. Tom McCaughran's *Rainbows of the Moon* (1989) is also categorised as a conventional novel in this study as it is the story of a Catholic boy and a Protestant boy who learn to play together despite being brought up in a sectarian society. Violence dominates the childhood play. The IRA is represented as stupid and violent, while the British Army is represented as inexperienced and naïve.

Lynne Reid Banks' *Maura's Angel* (1984) is categorised as a replication novel in relation to the Troubles children's novels which critique sectarianism and value boundary crossing, but might well be considered a modification novel if compared with conventional British children's novels. In this novel an angel appears to a child in Belfast and grants her wishes. Some of the wishes, for example, her wish that her brother and father were at home again instead of in prison or on the run, turn out to be bad wishes. The idea of granting wishes and the use of fantasy is relatively conventional in children's books. The novel is categorised in this study as replicating Troubles children's books codes and conventions because the return of the father and

brother to prison at the end of the novel is considered to be good for the family. Male characters, fathers and brothers especially, are often idealised in teenage girls' fiction. One might expect the ending of a conventional teenage novel to involve the re-integration of the male characters into the home and family, but in Troubles fiction, the critique of sectarianism and its associated violence is more significant than establishing the family unit as the status quo.

There are six children's novels in the primary data set. Two of the four published in the 1970s have been categorised as replication novels, and two as modification novels. All four children's novels from the 1980s have been categorised as replication novels. Some of these novels employ paradigmatic elements associated with conventional Troubles thrillers of the 1970s, specifically representations of evil or stupid IRA operatives. Sometime these representations are used explicitly in the development of the plot, such as in *Prissy* and *Rainbows of the Moon*. Catherine Sefton's *Starry Night* contains references to the Troubles rather than representation of elements of the Troubles. Edith Morrison's *Joy in the Troubles* does not contain any conventional paradigmatic Troubles representations, but this is an exceptional novel, a polemic religious tract rather than a mainstream children's novel.

#### 4.2.8 Challenging Novels in the Data Set

In the overall set of one hundred and fifty two novels, only five novels have been categorised as challenging. Figure 18 shows the five challenging novels.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Stuart, Francis	A Hole in the Head	1977	Thriller (hostage, writer involved)			X
Leitch, Maurice	Chinese Whispers	1987	Domestic drama (set in an asylum)			X
Wilson, Robert McLiam	Ripley Bogle	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>			X
Hutson, Shaun	Renegades	1991	Horror			X
Wilson, Robert McLiam	Eureka Street	1995	Love story			X

**Figure 18: Overview of the complete set of challenging novels in the data set**

These five novels come from a range of genres, one is a thriller, one a domestic drama, one a *bildungsroman*, one is a horror novel, the only horror novel in the set, and one is a love story. Two of the novels were published in the 1980s and two in the 1970s. The earliest example of a challenging novel is Francis Stuart's 1977 novel, *A Hole in the Head*. Robert McLiam Wilson features twice in this list, with *Ripley Bogle* (1989) and *Eureka Street* (1995). Three of the authors, Francis Stuart, Maurice Leitch and Robert McLiam Wilson are cited in the secondary literature, and are generally considered to be "literary" authors. The fourth, Shaun Hutson, is a writer of horror fiction, who is not mentioned in the secondary literature.

All five novels that have been coded as challenging novels in this study are novels of low modality which represent the imaginary and the mythic. Francis Stuart's *A Hole in the Head* (1977) was published at a time a time in which the favourite theme for the thrillers seem to have been the foiled Republican operation.

There were three more hostage and kidnap novels published during the same period: Jon Cleary's *Peter's Pence* (1974), Eugene McCabe's *Victims* (1976) and Benedict Kiely's *Proxopera* (1976). Hostage novels were not uncommon during the mid-1970s, but *A Hole in Head*, with its low modal value, even to the extent of renaming Belfast Belbury, is a challenging reinterpretation of the hostage novel. Maurice Leitch's *Chinese Whispers* (1987) and Robert McLiam Wilson's *Ripley Bogle* (1987) were published at a time when some thriller writers were writing novels that questioned the Security Services behaviour and activities in Northern Ireland following revelations of dirty tricks campaigns in the media. *Chinese Whispers* has a low modal value, indeed it is one of the most metaphoric and writerly novels in the complete data set. *Ripley Bogle* could be interpreted as a metalevel commentary on the stereotypes of Troubles fiction which reflexively points to the low modal, high mythological nature of the majority of Troubles fiction. Shaun Hutson's *Renegades* (1991) which is categorised as a challenging work because it is the only horror novel in the set, has a very low modal value. McLiam Wilson's *Eureka Street* (1995) is possibly the most optimistic of all the Troubles novels. *Eureka Street* represents an Ireland in the process of change despite its violent heritage. The book is split in two halves, divided by a chapter in which a bomb is detonated and devastates the city. This Belfast is not yet safe but is nevertheless possibly in the process of becoming more cosmopolitan, more tolerant, and more modern. It is a fairy tale rather than a work of high modality.

### **4.3 Synchronic Analysis of Troubles Fiction**

The diachronic interpretative framework relates specific novels to each other within generic categories, and provides an overview of the dynamics of generic change within the primary data set, but it does not provide an overview of the range of genres relative to each other over time. The comedies have generally been categorised as replication in relation to the baseline novels of the Troubles comedies sub-set, but the codes and conventions operating within the comedies are quite different from the codes and conventions operating within Troubles thrillers published at the same time. Comedies tend to be more critical of sectarianism and explore the absurdities of the Troubles.

In some cases it has been noted that while specific novels might be modifications of their generic conventions, they are not dissimilar to the conventions of other genres within the Troubles fiction spectrum. There are specific themes and characterisations that span the complete set of sub-genres at given historical moments; the “love across the barricades” theme emerges as one which operates across the complete range of sub-genres during the 1970s. In Chapter Three it was suggested that while Williams’s emergent-dominant-residual model, which operates at an epochal level, is inappropriate for the micro-analysis undertaken in this study, his notion of “structures of feeling” might be usefully employed to interpret the data synchronically. It is probably not very useful to carry out this exercise in relation to the complete set of data across the complete diachronic spread. It would be interesting however to identify moments of significance in the timeline of the Troubles, and to undertake a synchronic analysis of the complete generic spectrum at each of the

moments of significance using the Williams notion of structures of feeling. The moments of significance have been identified from the CAIN and History on the Net timelines.

The five moments of significance that will be used to provide snapshot overviews of the complete generic data are: 1976, which has been chosen because internment, which was a significant issue in the early days of the conflict, ended on December 5, 1975. It is hoped that the 1976 date line should incorporate the inevitable publishing time lag; 1982, chosen because the Republican hunger strike ended on October 3, 1981; 1986, because the controversial Anglo-Irish agreement was signed on November 15, 1985; 1994, because the Downing Street Agreement was signed on December 15, 1993; and 1999, chosen because the Good Friday Agreement was signed in April 10 1998.

In the sub-set of novels in the primary data set published in 1975-76 there are nine thrillers. Seven thrillers are written by British authors and two by Irish authors. The British thrillers tend to be replication thrillers, in which the heroes are generally British, although in Bob Langley's *War of the Running Fox* (1976), the hero is a South African ex-SAS soldier. The British are in direct conflict with the IRA in these novels, and the representation of IRA personnel takes the form of the IRA man as godfather, as thug and in *Flight of the Raven* (1975), as reluctant activist. The heroine in Hurd's *Vote to Kill* (1975) is an IRA activist, but in general, where representation of women occurs in these novels, the women tend to be good girls or wives. Overall, thrillers written by British authors tend to be defensive, positioning the IRA as psychologically disturbed thugs. The only novel written by a British author and



categorised as a modification novel in this set is Gerald Seymour's *Harry's Game* (1975). The conventional pursuit plot line concerns the pursuit of an IRA man by a British soldier, a strongly conventional Troubles thriller plot line, but the modification comes in the characterisation of the British soldier as a Northern Irish soldier who is detached from the British Army establishment.

Two of the thrillers are written by Irish writers: David Martin's *The Task* (1975) and Eugene McCabe's *Victims* (1976). The IRA is represented in *The Task* but only in the background. The hero gets a gun from an IRA man who tells him not to mix the personal with the political. The title of McCabe's *Victims* is ambivalent; the hostages are clearly victims of the IRA, but the title might also refer to Bella, the reluctant IRA activist, and Pascal and Pacelli, the IRA activists who are victims of false consciousness derived from the myths and stories of their monstrous mother. The differences and distance between the good British and the bad IRA are much less clearly drawn in the novels of the Irish writers.

There is one love story and one domestic drama in this sub-set. The love story, John Hale's *Lovers and Heretics* (1976), is categorised as a modification novel because it contextualises the Northern Ireland conflict within a wider post-World War Two Europe, but the novel contains elements of the "love-across-the-barricades" theme and also the "two brothers" motif. By the mid-1970s, "love-across-the-barricades" love stories were becoming the conventional Troubles love story, and these novels were often written by Irish novelists. The one domestic drama in this set is *Suffer Little Children!* (1976) by Peter Van Greenway, which is coded as a modification novel because of its unusual content, but which is also very clearly

influenced by the “love-across-the-barricades” theme. Edith Morrison’s *Joy in the Troubles* (1975), is categorised as a modification novel because it is a polemic. The solution to the question of differences and divisions that arise from sectarianism in this novel is universal Protestantism.

It is perhaps possible to conclude from this analysis that there were differences between the ways in which British novelists and Irish novelists wrote about the Troubles at this point in the mid 1970s. The British novelists tended towards a conservative, defensive position and focused plots on Republican-led atrocities which are intercepted by British security forces. There are some representations of decent IRA people, for example in *Flight of the Raven*, but not many. The “love-across-the-barricades” theme perhaps emerges as a structure of feeling for Irish writers, or writers who have close links with Ireland, for example Joan Lingard. The Irish writers also use the “two brothers” theme, which emphasises similarities and links between Republicans, both activist and non-activist. It is possible that the representations of more sympathetic IRA characters in *Victims* (Bella) and *Flight of the Raven* (Roddy) provide evidence of a more general structure of feeling that allows for sympathetic representation of Republican activists by Irish writers.

The sub-set of Troubles fiction published between 1981 and 1982 included in the primary data set is made up of seven thrillers, one love story, one crime novel, one domestic drama and one comedy. Three of the thriller writers are Irish, three are British and one is American. Two of the Irish thrillers are concerned with representation of Loyalist and Unionist activists and politicians, Leitch’s *Silver’s City*

(1981) and Bradford's *The Last Ditch* (1982). Jack Holland's *The Prisoner's Wife* (1981) is concerned with the IRA, but this is the first thriller in the primary data set that explores the divisions within the IRA and the overtures towards talks with the British Government. *Silver's City* explores the gap between the repentant Loyalist activist and his former associates, while in *The Last Ditch*, the "love-across-the-barricades" theme is central to the novel. Alan Judd's *A Breed of Heroes* (1981) is an army memoir which constructs clear differences between representation of Irish and British characters. Michael North's *Mission to Ulster* (1981) and Rupert Holloway's *The Terrorist Conspiracy* (1982) are both critical of British security forces activities during the Troubles. *The Patriot Game* (Higgins, 1982) explores the USA's interest in the romanticised mythologies of the IRA. In this novel, the former IRA activist is demythologised and normalised.

Susan Cheever's *A Handsome Man* (1981) uses Northern Ireland and the Troubles as an index of the rockiness in the relationship between the heroine and her boyfriend, while in Julian Symons' Victorian crime novel, *The Detling Secret* (1982), the IRA are used to add colour to the novel. The Troubles are used at this time in the conventional thrillers and love stories where the conflict is the central focus of attention, but it is clear that by 1981, the Troubles are also being used as a dramatic device which adds contemporary spice to novels in which the central focus of attention is something else. John Morrow's *The Essex Factor* (1982) explores the failure of politics in Northern Ireland specifically, and Britain generally, and emphasises the interrelatedness of Britain and Northern Ireland, while Valerie Miner's *Blood Sisters* (1981), is a domestic drama clearly influenced by the "two

brothers” theme, although in this case the characters are female, one Irish and one American.

It is perhaps possible to suggest that the “love-across-the-barricades” theme is still operating as a structure of feeling within the novels written by Irish novelists, as is the emphasis on the interlinking between different communities of Irish people, and between the Irish, the British, and even the Americans. A theme that emerges around the early 1980s is the critique of British and Northern Irish security forces action in Northern Ireland: the certainty that the security forces represent good and decent values seems no longer to be quite so clear.

In the 1985-86 sub-set there are eight thrillers, two domestic dramas, two *bildungsromans*, one children’s book and one comedy. Four of the thrillers are categorised as conventional and four as modifications. This is a high percentage of modification novels, reflecting the more general trend in 1980s thrillers. The motif of the repentant IRA man becomes a more commonly used motif. In this sub-set of thrillers, it can be found in *Field of Blood* (Seymour, 1985), *Confessional* (Higgins, 1985), *A Kind of Sleep* (Ould, 1986) and M.S. Powers’ *The Killing of Yesterday’s Children* (1985) and *Lonely the Man Without Heroes* (1986). In the early 1970s sub-set, the repentant IRA man was a motif that was peculiar, amongst the primary data set at any rate, to Jack Higgins. By the mid-1980s, this is becoming more popular along with the representation of the IRA super-grass, for example in Gerald Seymour’s *Field of Blood*. Representations of Republican communities have become more common also; Countryman’s *Streets of Derry* (1986) is a very sympathetic portrayal of a Republican community, while Molloy’s *No Mate for the Magpie*

(1985), Madden's *Hidden Symptoms* (1986), and Waddell's *Starry Night* (1986) all explore the lives of young women living within Catholic Republican communities. Significantly, these novels all focus on young people who do not play active roles in the Troubles. The structure of feeling which seems to be emerging in the mid 1980s is one which is still concerned with the barriers between various groups within Northern Ireland and also in the stories of young people who have grown up in and through the Troubles.

In the 1993-94 sub set there are twelve thrillers, one love story, one domestic drama, one comedy and two *bildungsromans*. It is interesting that there is no direct reference to the peace talks or to the divisions within the IRA in the thrillers of this period, indeed six thrillers use conventional plot lines relating to foiled IRA plots and representations of the IRA as psychologically flawed killers. *Provo* (1993) is categorised as a modification novel, but that is because its psychologically flawed IRA activist villain is a woman pursued by a female British Army officer. The peace talks were controversial, and perhaps the Troubles thriller of this period, in its conventional representation of the IRA as unhinged killers, reflects a more general concern about talking with terrorists. At the same time six of the thrillers include representations of decent IRA men, with Rooney's *Early Many a Morning* (1994) even representing a flawed but recognisably human still-active activist, and in two of these novels the "love-across-the-barricades" theme is of central importance to the novel.

The "love-across-the barricades" theme is also significant in Shriver's *Ordinary Decent Criminals* (1993) and Patterson's *Burning Your Own* (1993). Four

of the five novels which are not thrillers are concerned with young people. *Burning your Own* is a *bildungsroman*, as is David Park's *The Healing* (1994) and *The Rye Man* (1992), while Edward Toman's *Shambles Corner* (1993) is a comedy that focuses on a young boy. The interest in stories about young people within the communities of Northern Ireland is still important in the early 1990s novels written by Irish writers, as is the structure of feeling relating to crossing boundaries and barriers, but at the same time there is perhaps a concern about the peace talks, which manifests itself in the production of fairly conventional thrillers by British writers.

There are only two novels in the 1998-99 sub-set, so it is not possible to make any general comments relating to this set. The two novels are interesting, however; one is a political thriller by Douglas Hurd, *The Shape of Ice* (1999), and the other is Geoffrey Beattie's *bildungsroman* novel, *The Corner Boys* (1998). By the late 1990s and early 2000s, the way in which Northern Ireland's problems were being solved was increasingly through political engagement rather than violent engagement, and perhaps it is appropriate that the only thriller in this sub-set should be a political thriller written by an ex-British Government Minister for Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister hero of Hurd's book attempts to reconcile many difficult and divided elements in his political and personal life, including Northern Ireland, but eventually dies of a heart attack before succeeding.

The memoirs of young Northern Irish people had emerged as possibly the significant sub-genre for the Irish writer by the late 1990s. Beattie's novel is in this respect a conventional *bildungsroman*, which focuses on the move away from the violence and sectarianism of Northern Ireland of a young Protestant lad. He becomes

involved with a Republican Catholic girl but she betrays him, which leads to the death of his friend and his own escape to England. The political climate might be moving towards reconciliation and connections, but the two novels in the sub-set suggest that there is still considerable scepticism and caution about any notions about the possibility of a final “love-across-the-barricades” union.

#### **4.4 Interpretation of Results in Relation to Literature Review Models**

A review of the secondary literature of Troubles fiction undertaken in Chapter Two of this study identified two main interpretative models underpinning the critical and analytical literature. The first model is one in which Troubles fiction is characterised as being a static site of cultural production in which a narrow range of negative (Rolston 1989, Titley 1980) or false (Magee 1999) stereotypes of the Irish are endlessly reproduced and repeated, with notable exceptions, which are better, more realistic, or more truthful representations of the material circumstances of the conflict, the Irish and Northern Ireland. The general view of the first model can be seen in McKillop’s archetypal Troubles novel scenario, with which he finishes his chapter on Troubles fiction. Although it is quite long, it is worth quoting in full. McKillop writes that in the Troubles fiction novel:

The central character is an outsider of no distinguishable religious affiliation. He is from some profession in [sic] which allows him wide social experience; journalism is ideal, but the police or even the military will also serve. He’s about thirty-five, too world-weary for idealism, estranged from his wife or divorced, and he has spent time in

another country which has endured large-scale civil strife, either Cyprus or a non-Western tropical country. At first his sympathies may tend slightly toward the Protestants because they appear to be more industrious and law abiding. He understands nothing of the Loyalist concern for British protected individual liberties or British administered social service programs. In time he meets and falls in love with an Irish Catholic girl of moderate rhetoric but unshakable Republican sentiments; characteristically her name should be Gaelic: Deirdre, Maire, Aileen, and Norah Murphy have already been used, and thus we might expect to see Maeve or Grainne. Though [sic] the catalyst of the girl, the central figure is introduced to and probably becomes a part of some faction of the I.R.A., usually a fictionalized version of the provisional wing. The protagonist will find the revolutionaries uncouth and ungrammatical. He will taste the excitement of violence in a small way, will link arms with revolutionaries, but he will not become a leader. By the novel's end he will have consummated his love for the girl of the romantic Gaelic name, and one of them will be killed, or they will both leave the Six Counties of Northern Ireland to escape what appears to be endless killing and vengeance (McKillop, 1976, 151).

The interpretative framework used in this chapter to categorise the novels suggests that the first model and McKillop's archetypal scenario do not describe the dynamics



of Troubles fiction. Even in the 1970s, when the model was first developed, it did not entirely represent the novels. While there certainly are negative and false representations of Irish people in Troubles novels of the period, for example Foxall's Inspector Derben novels of the mid 1970s, this period also saw the deployment of the "two brothers" theme through which thriller writers were able to explore the motivations underlying involvement with the IRA. Although such novels generally conclude with the renouncement of the IRA by the "good" brother, and the death of the "bad" brother, the existence of "good" Irish characters in the first place would suggest that the negative and false representation model is overly generalised and inflexible as a model to describe Troubles fiction, even though it is acknowledged that models are necessarily simplified views of more complex issues.

By the 1980s, there are still negative representations of Irish people in Troubles thrillers, but there are also negative representations of British security forces. One important modification identified in the primary data set thrillers is a content modification relating to the representation of British security forces dirty tricks and intrigues. Other modifications of the time were the introduction of references to hawks and doves within the IRA and Republican communities, and references to talks between the British Government and the IRA. In the 1990s set of thrillers, there are negative representations of the IRA, but there are also modifications in the way in which IRA are treated, so that they might be ultimately wicked but nonetheless attractive figures, for example, Pat Quinn, the IRA activist headmaster in Nicki Hill's *Death Grows on You* (1990), or active but reluctant, for example, the unnamed narrator in Sean Rooney's *Early Many a Morning* (1994).

These representations are more complex and multifaceted than McKillop's scenario would allow. Overall, the evidence gathered together from the interpretation of the primary data using the replicate-modify-challenge model would suggest that the negative and false representation model does not fully describe the full set of Troubles fiction.

The second model sees Troubles fiction as a site of cultural production that has experienced a form of cultural rupture as a younger generation of writer critiques existing conventional representations, and re-interprets and rewrites traditional stereotypes and stories. The causes of cultural rupture are variously ascribed to cultural interaction with Britain (Patten 1995), post-modern globalisation (Pelschiar 1998), or a form of post-colonial revisionism (Smyth 1997). This view is common in the secondary literature of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Using the analysis undertaken in this chapter based on Hall's modified model enables some questioning of these generalisations.

The evidence of the primary data would suggest that the second model does not entirely reflect the dynamic of Troubles fiction. If the 1970s fiction tended towards relatively conventional representations and reflections on the relationships between Irish republican activists and non-activists, and between people from different communities, whether within Northern Ireland or between Northern Ireland and Britain, then the 1980s fiction, specifically the thrillers, produced narratives which critique the activities of British and Northern Irish security forces, leading to a considerable amount of low level modification during this period. There was never a situation of endless repetition followed by sudden cultural rupture in the late 1980s

and 1990s. The fiction, generally, is more nuanced, and while some writers of the late 1980s and 1990s utilise sophisticated literary techniques relating to form and structure, suggesting that their literary production practices might well be influenced by literary theory, the modifications in the fiction of the early and mid 1980s seem to have been influenced by real historical events.

It is an historic inevitability that the memoirs orientated fictions that emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s, for example McLiam Wilson's *Ripley Bogle* (1989), Patterson's *Fat Lad* (1989) and Healy's *A Goat's Song* (1995), could not have emerged before that date given that they were generated from the experience of growing up in the Northern Ireland of the Troubles. These novels seem to have aroused considerable interest amongst literary critics in the 1990s and 2000s. Perhaps it is unsurprising that although a relatively high percentage of the fictions of the early and mid 1980s contain modifications of content, particularly thriller fiction, literary critics seem to have been less interested in the content type of modification than modifications relating to form, structure and literary techniques. Not all the fiction of the late 1980s and 1990s conforms to the model of post-modern, literary, self-conscious, de-mystifying fiction however; one of the interesting patterns to emerge from the primary data evidence is that a number of the thrillers of the 1990s set replicate plots, themes and characterisations of the conventional 1970s thriller, for example Daniel's *They Told Me You Were Dead* (1994) and Cunningham *Who Trespass Against Us* (1993). Eve Patten's view that there are a handful of Northern Irish authors that use self-consciously post-modern literary techniques is probably close to the truth.

Another interesting point to emerge from the primary data is that some of the ironic and distanced content that the critics approve of in the young Northern Irish novelists is not far removed from the critical content of the comedies of the very early 1970s and the critical responses of the 1970s. McLiam Wilson's *Ripley Bogle* is a good example of this. McLiam Wilson's novel critiques the absurdity of sectarianism, as does Martin Waddell's *A Little Bit British* (1970). The unreliable narrator's statement that the conventional scenario of the novel is a lie operates as a critique of conventional Troubles thrillers, a critique not far removed from McKillop's 1976 critique, which was framed as a summary of the conventional scenario. The diachronic interrelationships between novels, and between the primary fiction and the secondary critical literature, are much more interwoven than the cultural rupture model suggests.

#### 4.5 The Emerging Canon

In Chapter Two a list of novels constituting the emerging Troubles canon, based on a quantitative analysis of citations in the secondary literature, was identified.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Johnston, Jennifer	Shadows on our Skin	1977	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		
MacLaverty, Bernard	Cal	1983	Love story	X		
Leitch, Maurice	Silver's City	1981	Thriller (chase)	X		
Seymour, Gerald.	Harry's Game.	1975	Thriller (chase)		X	
Herron, Shaun	The Whore Mother	1973	Thriller (chase)	X		
Johnston, Jennifer	The Railway Station Man	1984	Love story	X		
McNamee, Eoin,	Resurrection Man,	1994	Thriller (journalists)	X		

			story)			
Kiely, Benedict	Proxopera	1977	Thriller (hostage)	X		
Wilson, Robert McLiam	Ripley Bogle	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>			X
Patterson, Glenn	Fat Lad	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>		X	
Beckett, Mary	Give Them Stones	1987	Domestic drama	X		
Higgins, Jack	A Prayer for the Dying	1973	Thriller (good Republican)		X	
Lingard, Joan	The Twelfth of July	1970	Children's fiction	X		
Patterson, Glenn	Burning your Own	1993	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		
Power, M.S.	The Killing of Yesterday's Children.	1985	Thriller (dirty tricks)		X	

**Figure 19: Emerging canon novels included in the study categorised using the replicate-modify-challenge model**

Figure 19 shows the novels on the emerging canon list, included in the primary data for this study, coded using the replication-modification-challenging model.

Thrillers in the emerging canon list which are included in the primary data set are shown in Figure 20.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Leitch, Maurice	Silver's City	1981	Thriller (chase)	X		
Seymour, Gerald.	Harry's Game.	1975	Thriller (chase)		X	
Herron, Shaun	The Whore Mother	1973	Thriller (chase)	X		
McNamee, Eoin	Resurrection Man,	1994	Thriller (journalists story)	X		
Kiely, Benedict	Proxopera	1977	Thriller (hostage)	X		
Higgins, Jack	A Prayer for the Dying	1973	Thriller (good Republican)		X	
Powers, M.S.	The Killing of Yesterday's Children.	1985	Thriller (dirty tricks)		X	

**Figure 20: Thrillers in the emerging canon list included in the data set**

Of the fifteen novels in the emerging canon list included in the primary data set, seven are thrillers, four are *bildungsromans*, two are love stories, one is a domestic drama and one is a children's novel. Overall, ten are replication novels, four are modification novels and one, *Ripley Bogle*, is a challenging novel. Of the seven thrillers in the emerging canon list, four were published in the 1970s: *A Prayer for the Dying* (Higgins, 1973), *The Whore Mother* (Herron, 1973), *Harry's Game* (Seymour, 1975) and *Proxopera* (Kiely, 1977). Maurice Leitch's *Silver's City* was published in 1981, Powers' *The Killing of Yesterday's Children* in 1985 and Eoin MacNamee's *Resurrection Man* in 1994. Four of the novels are replication novels, while *A Prayer for the Dying* and *Harry's Game* have been coded as modification novels.

Of these novels, Herron's *The Whore Mother* is cited most in the secondary literature with nine citations, however of these nine citations, six are negative (McKillop, 1976; Titley, 1980; McMinn, 1980; Rolston, 1989; Rolston, 1994; Pelaschior, 1998), two are neutral (Browne, 1976; Deutsch, 1976) and Brian Rainey's 1981 evaluation is positive. *Harry's Game* is cited eight times in the literature, three of the citations are positive (Bowyer Bell, 1978; Rainey, 1981; Jeffrey and O'Halpin, 1990), two are neutral (Titley, 1981; Kennedy Andrews, 2003) and three are negative (McMinn, 1981; Rolston, 1989; Patten 1995). Both *Resurrection Man* and *Silver's City* are cited seven times. There are four positive citations for *Silver's City* (Donovan, 1990; Jeffrey and O'Halpin, 1990; Pelaschior, 1998; Kennedy-Andrews, 2003), two negative citations (Scanlan, 1985; Rolston, 1994) and one neutral citation (Storey, 1985).

There are five positive citations for *Resurrection Man* (Hutchinson, 1998; McCarthy, 2000; Pelaschior, 1998; Johnston, 1999; Kennedy-Andrews, 2003), and two negative citations (Smyth, 1997; Haslam, 2000). *Proxopera* is cited positively three times (Scanlan, 1985; Rainey, 1981; Kennedy-Andrews, 2003), negatively by Titley (1981), and neutrally by McMinn (1980) and Laura Pelaschior (1998). *Prayer for the Dying* is cited five times; it received negative evaluations from three authors in four articles (Bowyer Bell, 1978; Rolston, 1989; Rolston, 1994; Patten, 1995), and a neutral reference from Titley (1981). *The Killing of Yesterday's Children* is cited five times; three references are positive (Jeffrey and O'Halpin, 1990; Leith, 1992; Pelaschiar, 1998), and two references to the novel, both by Bill Rolston (1989; 1994) are negative.

*Silver's City* and *Resurrection Man* appear to be thrillers which are regarded in the most positive light by the critics. Both are replication novels, set in Belfast, involving a chase, and both are concerned with Loyalist terrorists rather than I.R.A. or Republican terrorists. *The Whore Mother* seems to be used by critics to illustrate the type of Troubles thriller that they dislike or disapprove of. It is a replication novel, involving a chase, set in Northern Ireland and in London, and it concerns Provisional I.R.A. terrorists. The thrillers which are considered in a positive light are written by novelists who are generally regarded as relatively literary.

*Bildungsromans* in the emerging canon list which are included in the primary data set are shown in Figure 21.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Johnston, Jennifer	Shadows on our Skin	1977	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		
Wilson, Robert McLiam	Ripley Bogle	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>			X
Patterson, Glenn	Fat Lad	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>		X	
Patterson, Glenn	Burning your Own	1993	<i>Bildungsroman</i>	X		

**Figure 21: Bildungsromans in the emerging canon list included in the primary data set**

Of the four *bildungsromans* in the emerging canon list one is published in the 1970s, Jennifer Johnston's *Shadows on our Skin* (1977), two in the 1980s, Robert McLiam Wilson's *Ripley Bogle* (1989), and Glenn Patterson's *Fat Lad* (1989), and Glenn Patterson's *Burning your Own* in 1993. *Shadows on our Skin* and *Burning your Own* are categorised as replication novels, *Fat Lad* as a modification novel and *Ripley Bogle* as a challenging novel.

*Shadows on our Skin* is cited thirteen times; positively ten times (McMinn, 1980; Titley, 1980; Rainey, 1981; Connolly, 1985; Lanters, 1989; Donovan, 1990; Kamm, 1990; Pelaschiar, 1998; Patten, 1995; Sealy Lynch, 2000), neutrally by Leith (1992) and negatively by Imhof (1985) and Rolston (1989). *Fat Lad* is cited five times, four are positive citations (Patten, 1995; Smyth, 1997; Pelaschiar, 1998; Kennedy-Andrews, 2003), while Kirkland's (2000) reference to the novel is neutral. *Burning Your Own* is cited five times, four are positive citations (Patten, 1995; Smyth, 1997; Goodby, 1999; Kennedy-Andrews, 2003), while Leith's 1992 reference to the novel is neutral. *Ripley Bogle* is cited six times, four references are positive (Patten, 1995; Smyth, 1997; Pelaschiar, 1998; Jackson, 1999), one is neutral (Leith, 1995) and Kennedy-Andrews (2003) reference to the novel is negative. It would seem



that, in general, *bildungsromans* are evaluated in a more positive way than a number of the thrillers on the emerging canon list. Jennifer Johnston’s *Shadows on our Skin* seems to be particularly positively received.

Love stories in the emerging canon which are included in the primary data set are shown in Figure 22.

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
MacLavery, Bernard	Cal	1983	Love story	X		
Johnston, Jennifer	The Railway Station Man	1984	Love story	X		

**Figure 22: Love stories in the emerging canon list included in the primary data set**

There are two love stories in the emerging canon list, Bernard MacLavery’s *Cal* (1983) and Jennifer Johnston’s *The Railway Station Man* (1984), both of which are replication novels, in which the “love across the barricades” theme is employed. *Cal* is cited eleven times, of which seven are positive citations (Kearney, 1983; Scanlan, 1985; Donovan, 1990; Watt, 1993; Patten, 1995; Cleary, 1996; Haslam, 2000), one is a neutral reference (Leith, 1992), while three are negative references (Rolston, 1989; Rolston, 1994; Kennedy Andrews, 2003). *The Railway Station Man* is cited seven times in the critical literature of the Troubles. Five of the references are positive (Hargreaves, 1988; Lanter, 1989; Leith, 1992; Patten, 1995; Sealy Lynch, 2000), and two references are negative (Imhof, 1985; Kamm, 1990).

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Beckett, Mary	Give Them Stones	1987	Domestic drama	X		

**Figure 23: Domestic drama in the emerging canon list included in the primary data set**

Mary Beckett’s *Give Them Stones* (1987) is the only domestic drama in the emerging canon list (see Table 5.20). This is a replication novel set in Belfast. It is cited five times in the literature; three references are positive (Rolston, 1989; Smyth, 1997; Sullivan, 2000), one is neutral (Leith, 1992) and one is negative (Patten, 1995).

Author	Title	Date	Genre	Replicate	Modify	Challenge
Lingard, Joan	The Twelfth of July	1970	Children's fiction	X		

**Figure 24: Children's fiction in the emerging canon list included in the primary data set**

The only children’s novel in the list is Joan Lingard’s *The Twelfth of July* (1970), a replication novel and the earliest children’s novel in the primary data set (Figure 24). It is cited five times; two of these references are positive (Deutsch, 1976; Anderson, 1997), one reference is neutral (McKillop, 1976) and two are negative (Rolston, 1978; Sloan, 1993).

Overall, the novels which seem to attract the most positive references are *Cal* and *Shadows on our Skin*, followed by *The Railway Station Man*, *Silver’s City* and then *Fat Lad*, *Ripley Bogle*, *Burning your Own* and *Resurrection Man*. This mini-list is notable for its bias towards literary authors, with Jennifer Johnston cited twice, Glenn Patterson cited twice, and Maurice Leitch, Robert McLiam Wilson and Eoin McNamee making up the other three authors on the list. There are two love stories on the list, four *bildungsromans*, and two thrillers, which is interesting given that the primary data set is so heavily skewed towards thrillers. That the only two thrillers on the list are focused on Loyalist terrorists is also worth recording given the small percentage of thrillers focusing on Loyalist terrorists in the primary data set overall. *Cal*, *The Railway Station Man*, *Silver’s City*, *Shadows on our Skin*, *Burning your*

*Own*, and *Resurrection Man* are all replication novels, *Fat Lad* is a modification novel and *Ripley Bogle* is a challenging novel. All the novelists on this list are Irish, and there is only one female novelist.

#### **4.6 Discussion**

The thesis underpinning this study is that popular culture genre is subject to diachronic transformations, and that these transformations, often quite slight, can be identified through the development of a methodology which enables specific cultural artefacts to be analysed in relation to other cultural artefacts circulating within the given society, at the same diachronic moment, while acknowledging that any such analysis is, in the last instance, interpretative and necessarily subjective. In this chapter Troubles fiction texts have been analysed within generic categories and then synchronically across sub-genres. The method of analysis implemented in Chapter Four and Part B has facilitated the identification of codes and conventions within Troubles fiction sub-genres, the identification of specific modifications relative to the conventional texts, and the identification of a few texts which employ alternative codes and conventions in their representation of the Troubles. The mode of analysis in Chapter Four also attempted to identify structures of feeling which circulate in and through the Troubles fiction. The synchronic analysis suggests that the “love-across-the-barricades” theme and the related “two brothers” theme, and the critique of the security forces are structures of feeling which can be identified in the Troubles fiction written by Irish writers or writers who are closely linked with Ireland. It is not so clear that these structures of feeling are so significant for British or American writers. British writers of the 1990s seem to use fairly conservative plots and

characterisations, perhaps as an index of more general concerns about the peace manoeuvres undertaken by the British and Irish governments in conjunction with Loyalist and Republican political groups and terrorist organisations.

The analysis undertaken in Chapter Four and Part B was used to evaluate the two main interpretative models which derived from the review of the secondary literature in Chapter Two, and it was discovered that neither of the models fully describes the range of Troubles fiction which forms the primary data set for this study.

This study began with a view of Troubles fiction, indeed popular fiction in general, which is intertextual and literary. The starting point was similar to Elmer Kennedy-Andrews' (2003) study, which is based on interpreting the world as text. He writes that "writers and readers understand and make sense of the Northern Troubles through the various prior texts and discourses in which the conflict has been represented. Each of the many ways of writing and reading the Troubles is, to some degree, ideologically conditioned" (10), and while this view is still held, one of the interesting results to emerge in the analysis of texts undertaken in this study is that this mode of analysis suggests that understanding and making sense of the Troubles through various prior texts and discourses does not fully account for the diachronic transformations in Troubles fiction. A study of the primary data set suggests that modality and socio-political developments play a significant role in the production of Troubles fiction, particularly in relation to content. This can be seen in relation to perceptions about the Security Forces, perceptions which probably derive from dissemination, through television news and other journalistic media, of the activities

and behaviour of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and early 1980s. Clearly, the material activities are reported in and through discourse, but the material activities are, in the last instance, the source of diachronic transformations in the fictional texts.

Finally in this chapter the emerging canon list which was developed from the review of secondary literature in Chapter Two was discussed in relation to the larger primary data set. It was discovered that the primary texts that were evaluated most positively in the critical literature are texts written by authors generally regarded as literary authors, and these authors tended to be Irish rather than British. It is probably not altogether surprising that the critics appear to be more interested in texts which are either replication texts written by literary authors or texts in which modifications of the codes and conventions are related to literary techniques and forms. The modality-orientated content modifications of the 1980s thrillers do not appear to attract the same kind of interest.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter comprises conclusions drawn from the research activity and reflections on the research in relation to its stated aims and objectives. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is concerned with reflections on the presentation and analysis of the primary data, the second section reflects on the models derived from the secondary literature and the cultural theory models which were used to interpret the primary data, and the final section comprises general reflections about this study in relation to theories about genre.

### **5.2 Reflections on the Data Analysis Activity**

The original broad aim of the project as it was articulated in the introductory chapter was to explore the relationships between the use of analytical and theoretical frameworks and cultural models and methods, and the subsequent interpretations of, and cultural meanings ascribed to, cultural artefacts. The research objects through which the relationships have been examined are primary Troubles fiction texts and the secondary critical literature relating to Troubles fiction. Two research activities were undertaken in this study: the first research activity was an analysis of the secondary literature, and some of the results of this activity fed into the second activity, which was an analysis and interpretation of the primary literature.

The first research activity, which was to examine the assumptions, methods and interpretations in existing critical literature of Troubles fiction, produced a critique of the secondary literature, focused on method, demonstrating that theoretical and methodological choices made by Troubles fiction critics determine subsequent interpretations of the primary fiction. Choosing a specific theoretical framework through which to discuss fiction makes it possible to discuss certain aspects of fiction, and also sets limits on what can be said about the fiction. The original research question hypothesised that choices about theory and method at the level of critical analysis would determine, at some level, interpretations of the primary texts, but beyond this initial hypothesis it became apparent during the process of reviewing the secondary literature that this body of work reveals the significance of contemporary theoretical, methodological and critical fashions in the history of Troubles fiction criticism.

The importance of theoretical fashion in humanities scholarship is already established in the literature. Perhaps the best known example of critiquing the misuse of theory in postmodern humanities scholarship is Sokal and Bricmont's *Intellectual Impostures* (1998), published on the back of Sokal's hoax article, *Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Physics* (1996), which was peer reviewed and accepted for publication in *Social Text*. The object of ridicule in this book is the use of science in the discourse of postmodern humanities scholarship at the level of "theory", and Sokal and Bricmont's examples are drawn from Kristeva and Derrida, amongst others. Critical fashion also plays a part in Troubles fiction criticism but its role has not been considered in previous studies. It

should be stated, however, that nothing in Troubles fiction criticism is as excessive as the examples that Sokal and Bricmont offer, although Troubles critics began to use postmodernism as a theoretical concept through which to interpret the novels during the 1990s. A summary view of the history of Troubles fiction scholarship might characterise it as a body of knowledge without a clear disciplinary niche until the late 1980s and early 1990s, when literary Troubles fiction novels began to be written and studying Troubles fiction became subsumed into Cultural Studies or Irish Studies. It is the history of a body of knowledge in search of an academic home, or alternatively the history of a subject area about which writers from a range of backgrounds, including sociologists, linguists and historians, used to write, bringing with them their own world views, theoretical assumptions and research methods, which has been steadily taken over by a particular discursive formation in the form of Cultural Studies scholarship.

The survey and critique of the secondary literature was not only analytical but was also a productive activity that resulted in the identification of two models of Troubles fiction, which were used to interpret the primary data, and a list of titles comprising a Troubles fiction mini-canon, which was used to establish how typical of Troubles fiction as a whole the mini-canon is. The methodological framework used in this study, which is based on a social semiotic approach to the objects of study, examines the ways in which the codes and conventions operating within the hybrid genre of Troubles fiction shift and change through diachronic transformations. In keeping with the social semiotics framework within which it sits, this study is based on the assumption that meaning consists of specific interplays of a range of variables



and is constituted by actualised, material reading subjects at different diachronic moments. The framework facilitates the investigation of what might be called the dialectic of genre. This dialectic relationship is one in which generic codes and conventions, for example plots and characterisations, are challenged by and interact with alternative and oppositional models in the form of individual texts, leading over time to the incorporation of the alternative and oppositional within the general model, which might lead to the formation of a new set of conventional texts.

The second research activity involved the coding and analysis of a generic set of Troubles fiction novels using theoretical, cultural-analytical models derived from the secondary literature of Troubles fiction, Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding model and Raymond Williams' notion of structures of feeling. This activity also provides a rich picture of the generic set at specific synchronic moments, and facilitated the analysis of diachronic transformations in the genre. Beyond these core aims the study operates as a methodological case study through which to explore relationships between the author-as-receiver of genre and the author-as-producer of genre. This research activity will be discussed in section three of this chapter in relation to genre theory.

Chapter Two of the study records the results of the first research activity in the form of a discursive analysis of a secondary literature of Troubles fiction organised diachronically. Within the broad sections, specific texts are organised by methodology, so that the critical texts which have been designated structuralist approaches to Troubles fiction within the 1980s are discussed as a group, followed by other methodological groupings. Each secondary text is placed in a methodological

category. Earlier in this chapter it was argued that, while undertaking the literature review, it became clear that the secondary literature of Troubles fiction constitutes a micro-level case study demonstrating the importance of literary fashion on literary criticism. The references used in the secondary literature are evidence of this conclusion.

In the 1970s secondary literature scholarly citations tended to be minimal, with only two of the critics citing other theoretical sources (Deutsch, 1976; Rolston, 1978). Deutsch cites critics who are concerned with Northern Irish writing in general rather than Troubles fiction specifically, and his sources are all Irish critics. Rolston cites Eagleton's *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (1976). During the 1980s critics drew on sources from a broader theoretical base. McMinn (1980) cites both Deutsch and Bowyer Bell, acknowledging previous work done in the subject domain. Alan Tittley (1980) cites from the critical literature of crime and popular thriller and from secondary literature concerned with the representation of the Irish in cultural documentation, and the references he uses are all relatively dated. Margaret Scanlan (1985) cites critical studies of the historical novel and historical monographs. Rolston (1989) cites Tittley, Liz Curtis on cultural representation of the Irish, and a sociological study of women in Ireland. Critics at this time were citing from the emerging academic studies of popular literature, historical monographs, and Cultural Studies texts about cultural representation generally and cultural representation of Ireland specifically. By the 1990s the primary research object was itself changing. The publication of novels by more self-consciously literary Irish novelists such as Glenn Patterson and Robert McLiam Wilson drew the attention of critics working in

literary studies and Irish studies. The range of secondary sources cited in academic papers of the 1990s was broader than in the 1980s secondary sources. Kristeva's socio-psychological semiotics was cited in Leith's 1992 article, Jayne Steel (1998) cites from the literature of Irish feminist politics and psychology, and by the mid-1990s it had become conventional to cite from the theoretical literature of nationalism and post-colonialism as mediated through literary theorists.

By the 1990s it was rare for Troubles fiction critics to cite from conventional historians, with the exception of Joe Cleary. The early secondary literature, particularly the structuralist influenced work of Titley and Bowyer Bell, is no longer cited, and the thrillers, romances and teenage fiction which had for two decades formed the bulk of Troubles fiction tended to be referred to only in passing to demonstrate the superiority of contemporary literary Troubles novelists and novels. The turn to literary theory is likely be a result of the institutionalisation of Irish Studies as an academic discipline in its own right within universities in Britain, Ireland, and the U.S.A.

It is possible to identify two major interpretative models of Troubles fiction that emerge from the secondary literature. In the first model, generally most popular in the 1970s and 1980s, but which in part re-emerges in Smyth (1997), Troubles fiction is characterised as being a static site of cultural production in which a narrow range of negative or false stereotypes of the Irish are endlessly reproduced and repeated, with notable exceptions, which are better, more realistic, or more truthful representations of the material circumstances of the conflict, the Irish and Northern Ireland. The second dominant interpretative model sees Troubles fiction as a site of

cultural production which has experienced a form of cultural rupture, as a younger generation of writer critiques existing conventional representations, and re-interprets and rewrites traditional stereotypes and stories. The causes of cultural rupture are variously ascribed to cultural interaction with Britain, post-modern globalisation, or post-colonial revisionism. This view is common in the secondary literature of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Within this interpretative model there are different views about which novels might be considered emancipatory novels, although in general the favoured titles tend to have been written by Northern Irish writers, and about the likelihood that these more literary and highly regarded forms of the novel will blossom into the dominant Northern Irish novel form.

The survey of critical writings undertaken in Chapter Two reveals that most of the secondary literature focuses on examining a small number of novels, and that the criteria used for choosing those novels are not always very transparent. The most common methodological approach is through some form of evaluative close reading. There is generally little in the way of reference to material political events, with some exceptions, for example Magee (2001) and Cleary (1996). There is a view in much of this discourse that the fiction author has a moral duty to represent grief and suffering through the creation of imaginative fiction, and to imagine solutions to the problems of Northern Ireland. For these critics, writing fiction should be driven by moral imperative.

There are two objectives in this study relating to the analysis of the primary data. The first is a methodologically orientated objective, which is to develop a systematic, analytical reading framework for the coding of Troubles novels. It was

hoped that this would facilitate transparency in the recording of data relating to the interpretation of semiotic elements. The methodological approach developed in this dissertation sits at the intersection of social science method and the hermeneutic interpretative paradigm which underpins all analysis of subjective cultural documentation, and the data sheets for recording information about the primary texts have been developed within this framework. The data sheets enable the single researcher to record information at the level of “surface markers” whenever possible, but it is acknowledged that interpretation of fictional texts involves some reader interpretation, even in the case of the most “readerly” texts, for example Chapman Pincher’s *Eye of the Tornado* (1976), or Shaun Clarke’s *Soldier E: SAS: Sniper Fire in Belfast* (1993). If it is accepted that there is space for audience interpretation, and wilful misinterpretation, then the knowledge that forms the data gathered from the reading exercise does not adhere to strictly positivist notions about knowledge, but then the original premise of this study is that critical analysis of cultural artefacts is always, in the last instance, interpretative. However, the method used in the study is replicable, even though the outcomes might be different if it were carried out by another researcher. Within the parameters of the study then, the method is repeatable, the steps leading to categorisation are transparent, the data gathering process is described, and the subsequent analysis of primary data is recorded.

The second objective relating to the primary data was to contextualise individual novels in relation to the broader range of Troubles fiction and, through micro-level analysis of specific individual novels, to identify and map diachronic transformations. In this context generic formations are seen as diachronic formations

subject to change. The analysis undertaken in Chapter Four and the descriptive Part B focuses on pattern matching and identifying changes in specific texts relative to the dominant codes and conventions of Troubles fiction. The study focuses on a very specific and narrow time period, and the transformations in Troubles fiction are identified at a micro-level.

In the introductory chapter it was stated that the contribution that this study makes to knowledge is that it constructs a self-reflexive cultural study which sits at the intersection of social scientific method and hermeneutic subjective interpretation. The reflexive impulse informs Part B of the study, which is based on the primary data captured in the Primary Sources database, and comprises detailed descriptions of texts organised diachronically. Although the level of description of primary texts documented in this chapter is unusual in a study of literary artefacts, it is a necessary part of the methodological process of this study, given the epistemological assumptions on which the study rests, because it constitutes a transparent recording of the interpretative journey, documenting surface level markers of individual texts, general patterns observed by the researcher, and the bases for analytical decisions recorded in Chapter Four. The descriptions in Part B also operate as a check on the teleological impulse to explain the dynamics of genre formation in terms of its current form.

### **5.3 Reflections on the Analytical Models**

The study uses a modified version of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding communication model designed to map the production and reception of cultural texts. This communication model is particularly appropriate because this study is based on a

framework that views authors of generic texts as consumers of generic texts prior to authorship. In this framework the author is transformed from receiver into producer, and the assumption is that the reception of already existing texts is transformed through the intellectual work of the author, and editors, into the production of new texts.

In this study, Hall's categories of possible decoding positions have been modified and the categories used in Chapter Four, based on Hall's originals, are: replication, modification and challenge. The novels were analysed diachronically using the modified Hall model within dominant genre categories. The modified Hall model is a useful framework through which to organise the novels, facilitating the identification of patterns and of changes in patterns at a micro-level. It was hypothesised in Chapter Three that the challenging category of Troubles fiction would be considerably smaller than the other two categories, and this proved to be the case. There were only five out of the original one hundred and fifty novels in the challenging category. Changes in codes and conventions within the Troubles hybrid generic formation more generally emerge through novels categorised as modification novels. It is probable that this is a general trend in popular genre histories given the commercial imperative that underpins the production of these cultural artefacts.

The review of the Troubles fiction secondary literature carried out in Chapter Two of the study revealed that most of the critical studies of Troubles fiction are based on an analysis of a limited number of texts, and one of the conclusions that might be drawn from this review is that the views that critical writers have of Troubles fiction tend to be intuitive rather than evidence-based. In defence of the

critics it is acknowledged that intuitive approaches to genre criticism are not unique to Troubles fiction criticism, indeed most of the essays in the recently published collection of essays, *Genre Matters: Essays in Theory and Criticism* (2006), discuss cultural genre using similar methodological assumptions, so that general comments are made from the analysis of a relatively limited base, at least limited as far as the reader is aware. It is possible that the actual known evidence-base from which the writer forms opinions and makes assertions might be broader, but if this is the case, it is not recorded transparently in the scholarly documentation. The academic convention underpinning *Genre Matters* is to base essays about genre on relatively limited documented samples.

The most empirically orientated essay in *Genre Matters* concerns the gap between the classification used by academics to describe Hollywood film and the generic classification employed by the film industry itself. The research sample comprises a list of films released by Hollywood in 1946. The author, Mike Chopra-Gant, explains that the sample represents the biggest financial successes in the USA in 1946, and that because of differences between sources of information relating to the financial success of films, the final listing is based on a triangulation exercise involving three sources of data (133). This attention to sampling seems to be relatively unusual in discussions of genre. Prior to the current study, the most empirically orientated study in Troubles fiction secondary literature, by some margin, was Magee's *Gangsters or Guerrillas* (2001), which refers to one hundred and fifty novels. Jeffery and O'Halpin's *Ireland in Spy Fiction* (1990) refers to forty-six novels, Rolston's *Mothers, Whores and Villains* (1989) refers to thirty-two novels,



Alan Titley's *Rug-headed Kerns* (1980) and Kennedy-Andrews (*De*)*Constructing the North* (2003) both refer to twenty-seven novels, and Laura Pelaschiar's *Writing the North* (1998) refers to twenty-one novels. The samples in both Pelaschiar's and Kennedy-Andrews's studies are biased towards Northern Irish writers as they are the main focus of both books.

One product of the analysis of secondary literature in this study is the identification of two models of Troubles fiction discussed in the first section of this chapter. The methodological approach most critics take is judgementally framed, even though recent critics claim theoretical foundations for their studies and evaluate novels through theoretical orientated frameworks, and the models that emerge from the secondary literature are historically contingent. The first model, which tended to be employed in the 1970s and 1980s, interprets Troubles fiction as an ontological categorical set. The second model, which emphasises the younger generation of Northern Irish writers who critique, re-interpret and rewrite traditional stereotypes and stories, is a model which privileges a particular sort of self-consciously literary fiction writing. The first model is ahistorical and static: the second model sees the formation of Troubles fiction as in terms of cultural disruption.

The assumption on which this study rests is that far from being ontological or the product of moments of cultural rupture, this generic formation, like all generic formations, is historical: it is subject to diachronic transformations which can take the form of very small shifts in content, in structure, and in style. At the same time, it is acknowledged that the second model in particular can provide an interesting framework through which to interpret Troubles fiction, but there is a question about

whether the construction of the history of Troubles fiction through this model ignores, elides or neglects other parts of the generic history.

Proponents of the second model agree that some of the Irish writers of literary Troubles fiction pick up dominant codes and conventions from the commercial popular literature and critique them. An example of this can be found in Robert McLiam-Wilson's *Ripley Bogle*. The limitation of the second model is that it does not explicitly trace the diachronic transformations in detail. This has some consequences for example, it would be possible to argue, using a detailed investigation of the dominant codes and conventions of Troubles fiction, that *Ripley Bogle* is a critique and a pastiche of Troubles codes and conventions which themselves were being modified by thriller writers of the late 1980s.

A synchronic analysis of novels published around the same period reveals *Ripley Bogle* to be one of a number of novels that critique the dominant codes and conventions of a slightly earlier period in Troubles fiction publishing history. Thrillers that critique the stereotypes of earlier Troubles fiction include a number of British security services "dirty tricks" thrillers, namely, *Lonely the Man without Heroes* (Power, 1986), *A Darkness in the Eye* (Power, 1987), *The Testing Ground* (Newman, 1987), *Juniper* (Murphy, 1987), and Ian Rankin's *Watchman* (1988). These novels have been categorised as modification novels rather than challenging novels in the current study, and perhaps the gap between modification and challenge lies at the heart of the difference between the commercially orientated thriller form and the less inhibited literary fiction *bildungsroman*.

*Ripley Bogle* challenges the codes and conventions, both in terms of content and form, of the bildungsroman in relation to which it was categorised initially in this study, and critiques the codes and conventions of the Troubles thriller, but what the current study suggests is that this novel is not a totally unique object removed from or transcending the genre entirely, rather that it is at the forefront of a broader trend towards critique of earlier Troubles thriller conventions operating at the same historical moment, some of which emanated from thriller writers themselves. Its challenging status largely derives from the representation of its lying eponymous anti-hero, but in its content it shares the cynicism to be found in other texts published at the same time. The contribution that the method used in this study makes to the analysis of generic formations is that it encourages the researcher to consider the individual novel within its broader historical and cultural context instead of reifying it and treating it as an entirely unique cultural artefact.

The analysis undertaken in Chapter Four and Part B of the present study suggests that the models are not accurate even early on in the production of the Troubles fiction, moreover in focusing on Irish writing, on literary writing, and modification and challenge at the level of literary technique, the existing critical studies of Troubles fiction miss some of the dynamics of British Troubles fiction, which are themselves interesting in relation to politics, history and shifting ideological perspectives. Chapter Four includes an analysis of the emerging canonical novels identified in Chapter Two against the broader set of novels, in order to determine whether they were typical or atypical, and the analysis seems to suggest that literary critics are most interested in novels that might be labelled “literary

fiction". These tend to be writerly novels, which include considerable use of self-conscious literary effects such as metaphors, irony, distancing, and novel structures and forms. The conventional approach by Troubles fiction critics to discussing the genre would appear to be based on intuitive and impressionistic ways of seeking knowledge, and these approaches miss minute shifts in the genre's history, in particular, the critical studies miss the turn back to relatively conservative thriller codes and conventions in the novels which emerge in the early 1990s during the peace talks. This study seeks to redress the balance by constructing a method for recording data about primary texts that contextualises specific texts within their broader generic framework, and through so doing facilitates micro-level analysis of genre. Moreover, it is argued in Chapter Three that this method is not specific to the Troubles fiction hybrid generic formation but can be used to map other discursive generic formations.

Finally, Chapter Four includes a synchronic analysis of Troubles fiction which consisted of identifying significant historical moments and using Raymond Williams's notion of structures of feeling as a tool to interpret the primary texts published during each significant moment. The interpretation that grew out of this method would suggest that it is possible to consider the "love-across-the-barricades" theme as emerging as a structure of feeling in the early days of the Troubles, and continuing to be important in the writings of Irish novelists or those novelists who have close links with Northern Ireland, but it is not so clear that this structure of feeling can be said to operate in relation to the novels written by non-Irish writers. The *bildungsroman* emerges in Northern Irish writing in the 1980s as a generation of

writers who had grown up during the Troubles began to write professionally. A critique of British security forces emerges in British novels of the 1980s, but by the 1990s, and the rumours and realities of the peace talks, a number of British thriller writers returned to a conservative set of codes and conventions. The overlaying of the synchronic analysis on to the diachronic analysis allows for the production of a rich picture of Troubles fiction at a highly detailed level that includes description of specific texts, which provides a transparent recording of the interpretative journey, and analysis of the generic formation as a whole.

#### **5.4 Reflections on the Current Study in Relation to Genre Theory**

In *Gangsters or Guerrillas* Magee describes the Troubles genre as a “hybrid genre” (2001, 3), and, following Magee, the current study is based on the assumption that Troubles fiction operates as an identifiable generic formation. In Chapter Three of this study, it is argued that the conventions of the hybrid Troubles genre overflow specific novels and define the categorical mode, which would be expected to include, in various permutations, elements of the thriller and the love story and representations of the IRA. The claim that Troubles fiction constitutes a hybrid genre rests on the shared signifieds relating to the conflict in Northern Ireland since 1969. In this context, the term “genre” operates as a description of a body of primary fiction which is defined in terms of an historical period and a theme (Magee, 3). The specific choices of signs through which to represent the historical period and the theme change, nevertheless the texts constituting this generic formation are related in that they always index the material reality of the specific conflict, even when the texts themselves have low modal value. The research approach adopted in this study

explores the operation of the specific generic formation, Troubles fiction, but the methodological approach is of some interest to the study of generic formation more generally.

In *Genre Matters: Essays in Theory and Criticism* (2006), Paul Cobley writes that “It is commonly noted that there is little genre theory in the period between Aristotle and the twentieth century. [...] The fragmentary observations in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, generally taken to inaugurate genre theory, set a tone for Aristotle’s successors” (43). The tone, Cobley argues, was a prescriptive one, although there have been notable sceptics, including Dr Johnson, who doubted that prescriptive rules for literary works could be sustained over a period of time. Genre theory until the twentieth century concerned the reification of generic features, and also a notion of “expectation” which sustains a reading of generic signs and the connection between them (44). More recently, Cobley continues, the focus of genre theory has shifted to a focus on “a new ‘synchronic’ bearing in the humanities in which theoretical investigation of phenomena displaced the accumulation of knowledge as ‘breeding’”. Synchronic study, as with Saussure, entailed the questioning of the very basis and conditions which allowed phenomena to exist and function” (44). Emphasis on “synchronic study”, and the notion of phenomena as idealist essences tends towards an ahistoric and abstract view of genre, despite claims of the centrality of historicity in studies of genre theory (Fowler, 1982, Frow, 2006, Dowd, Stevenson and Strong, 2006), however examining the basis and conditions facilitating the existence and function of genre leads back to considering genre in relation to society, history and communicative practice, and this research agenda, allowing for the analysis of genre

within a constructivist and inter-subjective framework, is potentially useful as a way of reflecting on the current study, and its contribution to the study of generic formation. The aspects of genre theory that are of most interest to the current study are the notion of the horizon of expectation, the perceived gap between macro-level discussions of genre as abstracted systems and micro-level perspectives on the specific, individual texts which constitute the generic system, and the notion of diachronic transformation.

In *Kinds of Literature* (1982), Alistair Fowler uses the concept of the “horizon of expectation” to discuss the interpretation of generic texts and the concept of “literary context”. He quotes E. D. Hirsch’s use of Husserl’s notion of “bracketing” to assert that the aim of the interpreter of a text is to posit the author’s horizon and carefully exclude his own accidental associations (259), but argues that idea of the “horizon of literary meaning” is too wide to be of much value in the interpretative exercise, preferring instead the “more discriminating guide” of generic horizon. Genre provides a sense of the whole, its conventions “organising most other constituents, in a subtly expressive way” (259). The term “generic horizon” used in Fowler’s work, and in John Frow’s Routledge guide, *Genre* (2006), can be traced back to Husserl’s “horizon of expectations” modified through Jauss’s use of the phrase in a literary historical context to discuss the system of genres considered as an historical process (Frow, 71).

The phrase “generic horizon” as it is used by Fowler brings with it some of the essentialism that one would expect from phenomenological approaches to literary criticism, as we are told that “whenever we approach a work of an unfamiliar genre –

new or old - our difficulties return us to fundamentals. No work, however avant-garde, is intelligible without some content of familiar types” (259). The “familiar types” are seen as essentials. Earlier in the same chapter Fowler discusses the value of generic horizons in the work of interpretation because a grasp of generic horizons allows us to reinterpret what are sometimes “considered faults in composition” (259), as writers exploiting “an assumed familiarity with forgotten genres” (259). This suggests that the historical contingency of genres is of some significance. In this example, the generic horizon is a “horizon of the anterior genres” (259), but this horizon is not precisely documented and considered in its empirical specificity. Despite a nod towards historicity, the horizon of the anterior genres seems to be derived from the interpretations of the well-read critic working from a basis of intuition and canonical knowledge rather than the evidence-base of empirical data about specific texts, including, but not limited to canonical texts.

The phrase “generic horizon” suggests both possibilities and limitations. The individual act of perception is limited at the edges as the objects are perceived as dimmer. Beyond the immediate perception is the promise of what lies beyond the horizon, which may, as a result of the requisite changes in spatial circumstances or temporal circumstances, move into the clear and perceptible part of the horizon. Horizons are linked to indeterminacy, as objects that exist at the limits of perception and knowledge are dimmed, full of possibility, but not yet known. Horizons connote bounded-ness, yet also the possibility of expansion, of “new horizons”. For Husserl, the term “horizon of expectations” was one which signifies the impossibility of scientifically testable knowledge, and he argued instead for the view that human



knowledges are the products of the self-regulating principles of the various scientific schools, denying the possibility of scientific method.

For Gadamer, who also used the notion of “horizons” in his discussions of interpretation of texts, meaning is dynamic not ontological, and is made through the interaction of readers and historical text. The meaning of the text is never complete but always open to future interpretation and meaning. Eagleton argues that the problem with Gadamer’s view of interpretation and meaning-making is that the suggestion that the event of understanding is fixed the moment when our own “horizon” of historical meanings and assumptions “fuses with the ‘horizon’ within which the work itself is placed. At such a moment we enter the alien world of the artefact, but at the same time gather it into our own realm, reaching a more complete understanding of ourselves” (63). But, argues Eagleton, it is unlikely that there can be such a smooth process of assimilation, that elides and ignores the specificities of historical rupture, conflict, and contradiction. This view of meaning-making depends on there being one tradition, one unbroken, shared continuum. In this world view, tradition smoothes over historical differences and conflicts. In Husserl’s “horizon of expectations”, the terms of reference emanating from the authority of various schools of thought operate as the limiters and arbiters of what can be known, although the “horizon” word does allow for the possibility of future possibilities.

One difficulty of the use of “horizon” as a metaphor in interpretation, epistemology, and genre theory is that it abstracts and mystifies. The contribution that the current study makes to the body of knowledge relating to genre formation is that it insists on empirical verification through close examination of a large body of

texts. The argument is that the “horizon” is not already determined by abstract limiters and dim possibilities, nor are the horizons of the modern readers and the horizons of the past easily fused within one unbounded tradition, rather there are many readers, with their own world-views and interpretations, and some of these readers, in the form of producers of new texts, make specific and concrete contributions to the generic formation, some of which are replications, some of which are modifications, and some of which challenge the codes and conventions operating at the moment of production relative to anterior and contemporary generic codes and conventions.

Horizons are knowable when they are recorded and described using deep textual drilling methodologies such as the method used in the current study. By constructing a conceptual model of the production process that begins by seeing the textual producer as already, at some level, a consumer of the genre, the production process becomes a matter of interpretation of existing generic texts with the new text as product of the meaning-making activity in which the specific producer has engaged. The current study concretises the interpretative history of genre by explicitly acknowledging the writer of genre as previous reader of genre, therefore interpreter of genre.

In her discussion of “genre systems”, a phrase that she attributes to Devitt’s 1991 project on tax accountants’ work, Carol Berkenkotter (2001) refers to the perceived gap between macro-level discussions of genre as abstracted systems and micro-level perspectives of situated everyday practices as constitutive of social structure. Berkenkotter’s perspective is based on a social science methodology and

the academic discipline within which she writes is communication studies. There might be some debate about the use of the term “system” in relation to genre, in as much as research would need to be undertaken to establish the extent to which genre is predictable and systematic, given that genre is the product of human construction, but the gap that she alludes to is suggestive in relation to the issue of generic formation. The issue for Troubles fiction and for generic formation more generally is the perceived gap between macro-level discussions of genre as abstracted systems and micro-level perspectives on the specific, individual texts which constitute the generic system. The gap can lead to the kind of genre theory discourse which asserts claims rather than demonstrating the knowledge generating process transparently.

The gap is apparent in some of the essays brought together in *Genre Matters*. The emphasis on genre as classification, with the attendant problems of establishing the constitution of the “class”, and of unit members within the class, permeates this book. The introduction begins with a quotation from Foucault about the human impulse to classify “this history of the order imposed on things [...] of that which for a given culture is both dispersed and related, therefore to be distinguished by kinds and to be collected together into identities” (Foucault, 1970, xxiv). The book of essays sees the question at the heart of genre theory as being the establishment of the relationship between the class and the thing, the individual and the universal, but in discussing these matters, the writers tend to avoid engaging in empirical studies of genre. Brian Caraher’s essay, for example, modifies Northrop Frye’s model of modes by introducing categories derived from a paper written in 1976 by Robert Denton Rossel concerned with constructing a model for explaining social and historical

change based on socio-linguistic modes of expression, which grew from studying small group interactions. Caraher's method is to discuss each of the different categories in his newly modified model with reference to examples drawn from literary history, for example, *The Cattle Raid of Cooley* is used to exemplify the fantasy-irony category. This method does not transparently allow the reader to consider the chosen texts against any other. We have to take Caraher's word for it.

John Frow uses the concept of *schema* to explore generic systems. To speak of schema is to assume that knowledge is organised (84), so that knowledge about a specific domain is not knowledge as unconnected facts but knowledge that coheres in specifiable ways. Genre acts as the cues which enable us to interpret the knowledge in relation to the relevant domain. However, genre is not only an already existing set of concepts and their relationships but an operative function, which, in the right context, activates the relevant conceptual meaning. The comprehension of concepts as coherent wholes can operate at different levels of comprehension. Frow argues that at the level of the generic frame these coherent wholes can be understood as "projected worlds" (85), by which he means "a relatively bounded and schematic domain of meanings, values and affects, accompanied by a set of instructions for handling them. Any world can be described through a coherent set of propositions, and generated reality-effects specific to it: some worlds claim a high reality status, others announce themselves as fictional or hypothetical" (86).

He uses as an example the metaphorical world of the picaresque novel, "a world of sharp-witted servants and dull masters, of confidence tricks, of hunger and the constant threat of poverty, of the road and the unforeseen adventure, of upward

and downward mobility, of a time which is at once episodic and recurrent” (86). Frow explains that his use of the metaphor “world” has affinities with Alfred Schutz’s concept of “finite provinces of meaning” (Schutz 1970: 252) although Schutz defines these provinces as experiential rather than representational. Every genre is defined in part by the bounded province of meaning which is specific to it and which it makes available for use” (87). This view of genre is of the generic structure as a set of ontological boundaries within which any specific generic text might be recognised as such and interpreted as such. But this view does not address the historicity of the bounded, conventional information domain which constitutes genre, although earlier in the same book Frow goes to some lengths to establish the historical contingency of genre (and indeed the example of the picaresque novel that he uses in his list of examples demonstrates the historical contingency of a specific sub-genre). This has consequences. The current study has shown that the model of Troubles fiction, derived from the writings of early critics of Troubles fiction who took an ontological perspective based on an intuitive approach to the genre rather than a knowledge-based and evidential approach, produced an overview of the genre that is not true and accurate.

Fowler devotes a chapter to describing some of the spatial maps that have attempted to represent aspects of genre, but ultimately argues that such representations are necessarily chimeras: “simply from the multitude of potential axes, we can see how impossible it would be to make an adequate map of which all genres, let alone individual works, were assigned places. How would their relations be expressed in spatial terms? Topologically? Hologrammatically?” (248). Genres

cannot be mapped out in this way because the features of literature are too numerous for a map of corresponding dimensions to be useful. Moreover, literary factors do not belong to a real order of nature. Genres are nominal. They are types, not fixed categories with borders, and are therefore unsuitable for factor analysis. Perhaps, in relation to the current study, the most important argument that Fowler makes is that ontological mapping of genres cannot work because genres have a cultural history that “denies them the innocent passivity of mere substance” (249). He argues that “[i]f genres are to be represented in feature space, therefore, a series of synchronic maps will be required, in order to do some justice to their changing relationship. No existing maps, however, make much of an attempt to take the diachronic existence of genres into account” (249). It might be possible to argue that map-making of elements of “mere substance” is ultimately historically contingent as even the solar system is subject to temporal change, but the point about cultural history is one that underpins the current study.

Genre can be seen as a set of conventions and rules about the discursive possibilities within specific information domains, which operate in and through institutionalised means of dissemination, however, the rules and conventions are not static, but are diachronically dynamic, determined in the last instance by the arbiters of authority within the specific domain, in the case of Troubles fiction, traditional publishers. In the current study, the gap between the discussion of genre as an abstracted macro-level system and the contribution of specific texts to the operation of the macro-level system is bridged by the empirical, descriptively based method,

which allows for more general discussion of generic formation after establishing the relationships of individual texts to each other, synchronically and diachronically.

Generic categorisation in the historical context is more complex than the ontological schema or any notion of the novel as a pure, historically determined, but ultimately individual unit can describe. Generic formation is the interplay of elements, chosen, modified, critiqued, engaged with, manipulated by material, generically aware writers in and through a specific historical context. In *Troubles* fiction the significance of the historical dimension is fore-grounded because of the historically and culturally constrained context of production and reception.

This study began with a model of generic transformation that envisaged the writer of generic fiction as always already a consumer, at some level, therefore aware of the existing codes and conventions of the genre. As far as it goes, the model is useful because it focuses on the ongoing relationships between producer-as-receiver and receiver-as-producer. Genre theory and cultural theory more generally tend to distinguish between producer and receiver, and cultural studies projects tend to focus on one of the moments; on the moment of production, on the text as an individual object or small samples of texts, or on the moment of reception (audience studies), rather than focusing on the relationships between production, reception and reproduction. This study seeks to fill this gap, which is unlikely to exist in real life as opposed to the discursive modelling of the academic critic. However, the limitations of this model, even after acknowledging the limitations of any model, have become clear through the course of undertaking the study.

What the initial model neglects, and an examination of the specific novels *en masse* demonstrates, is that the producer of the generic text is not only already aware of the codes and conventions of the genre, while being under no compulsion to reiterate them, but that he or she is also aware of the other generic codes and conventions operating at the contemporary moment as a functioning, literate member of society, and also the codes and conventions of other types of media discourse, and of other types of communicative practice, for example film, plays, music, news coverage. And, of course, the producer of the generic text is necessarily both the central player of his or her own “lived experience” and a spectator within the larger “lived experience” of society at the time of production. The producer is aware of the histories, myths, and version of histories circulating at the contemporary moment and at anterior moments, and to varying degrees within differing sub-groupings, some formalised, some loose and virtual, within the logonomic parameters of the moment, the producer will hold views about the past and the present, and speculations about and, possibly, hopes for the future. The particular extent to which specific texts are informed by the author’s more general cultural knowledge is to some extent perceptible through the text and system based analysis which forms the core of this study, but can never be explicitly “read off” from the fictional texts. There are many deep influences on the text that the researcher cannot ever know.

The specific contributions to Troubles fiction knowledge that the study makes are the production of a methodologically orientated review of the critical discourse of Troubles fiction which produced an emerging canon list of novels and novelists, and a detailed description and interpretation of a large sample of Troubles fiction novels



using interpretative frameworks based on the application of cultural theory models. This latter methodological development is a contribution to cultural studies methodology more generally, and it is argued that the method could be used with other generic formations. The study also contributes to the body of knowledge of genre theory in that, unlike many genre theory studies which view genre as an ideal bounded system that can be analysed using intuitively based speculation, it sees genre as historically contingent, and it takes the view that the relationship between the macro-level perspective of generic system and the micro-level perspective of specific novelist and specific novel in the analysis of generic formation, is best explored through specific concrete description and comparisons of material texts both diachronically and at the level of the synchronic moment.

Finally, beyond its original aims and objectives, this study has produced a practical contribution to knowledge in the form of the Primary Sources database. It is hoped that this database will form the basis for ongoing research and project work, not only in terms of its content, which might be of some interest to other students of Irish Studies and popular culture, but also as a prototype for an information storage and retrieval tool. Fiction information retrieval is still a fairly underdeveloped area of information science. There have been some developments, mainly in the 1980s and 1990s, which focused on user warrant as the basis for developing retrieval systems (e.g. Pjetersen, 1992) but there is still space for a generic approach which can identify and describe novels at a micro-level while situating them within a broader systems view. In the current information retrieval context, any such tool, which would be developed for web use, should incorporate both informational fields and affective

dimension indexing in the form of user derived tagging. The database developed in this study has the potential to provide a base test-bed for the development of a web-based, generically orientated fiction retrieval tool.

## **PART B: DESCRIPTIVE SECTION**

### **REPRESENTATION OF PRIMARY DATA**

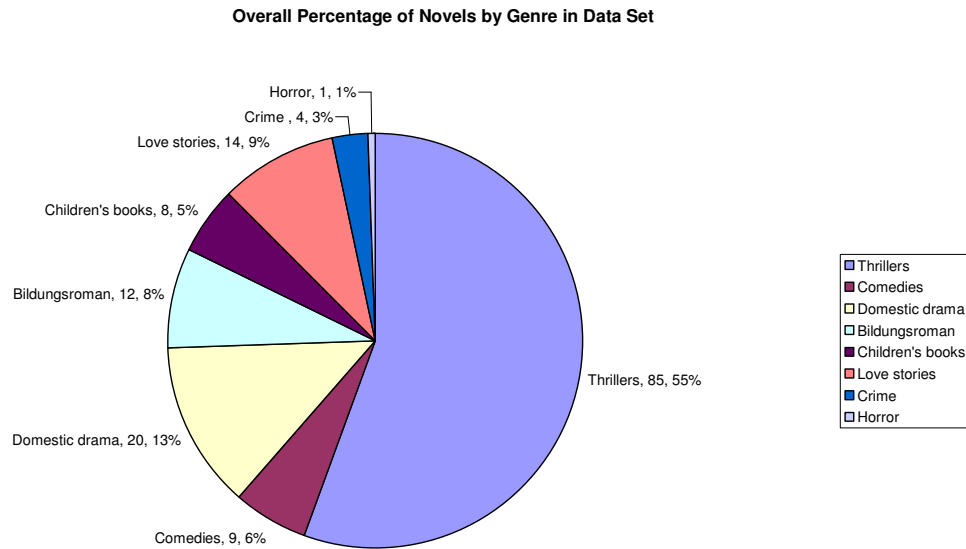
#### **6.1 Introduction**

The representation and interpretation of primary data undertaken in this chapter draws out recurring syntagmatic and paradigmatic themes and patterns. Much of this chapter consists of description of the primary texts. This is considered necessary to ensure that the analytical activity remains as transparent and audited as possible, and thus true to the spirit of the project, as stated in the second objective relating to the primary data analysis. However, this does lead to detailed quantitative data presentation and plot and thematic summaries. The interpretative results recorded and discussed in Chapter Four are based on the initial data analysis recorded in this chapter. In order to replicate the research method order, this section should be read after Chapter Three and before Chapter Four.

The thesis underpinning the analysis of primary texts in this study is that, in the area of popular culture, producers of generic cultural products are themselves, at some level, already consumers of the generic cultural products, the production of which they are contributing to. This means that in popular culture, consumption is always a pre-requisite of popular culture production. To explore these inter-textual relationships, specific texts are interpreted in relation to others of the same genre produced at same historical moment, within a diachronic framework.

The primary data set used in this study is a random sample of one hundred and fifty three novels in total, made up of two novels published before 1969, which function as pre-texts, and one hundred and fifty one Troubles novels. The study is concerned with patterns and transformations of syntagms and paradigms. In order to map these elements diachronically, syntagms (narrative chains) and paradigms (dominant genre type, characters, locations) within the initial (1969-1970) novels are identified, and labelled. Exemplary novels are described in the discursive text. The analysis then focuses on identifying continuities and changes to these initial semiotic elements.

The analysis of primary texts is organised by genre over time, so that the complete set of novels published in the 1970s is discussed, followed by a discussion of the complete set of novels published in the 1980s, which in turn is followed by a discussion of the novels published in the 1990s. The percentages and numbers of novels by genre in the complete random sample of one hundred and fifty three novels are shown in Figure 25.

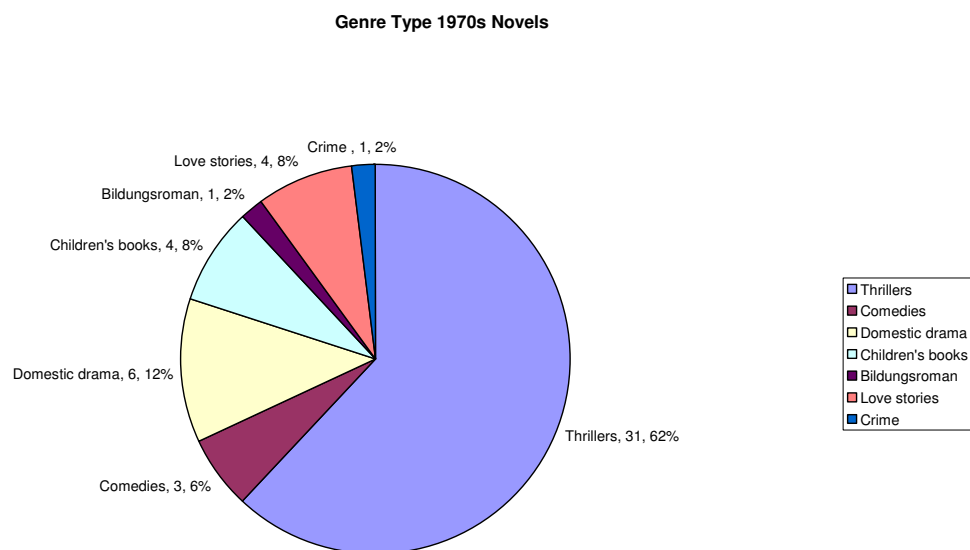


**Figure 25: Overall percentage and number of novels by genre in the data set**

The initial analysis is generic because the focus of the study is generic. To facilitate analysis by genre, the dominant affective genre of each novel has been determined at the point of interpretation and recorded in a data-field included in the Primary Sources database. What is of interest in the generic analysis is whether particular novels change the conventions of genre through their specific contributions. The description of syntagmatic categories and sub-categories pertaining to each publishing decade is followed by a discussion of paradigmatic elements which focuses on representations of fictional characters (for example, heroes, women, and Republicans), used in the complete set of novels organised by decade. This approach facilitates synchronic analysis of paradigmatic elements across genre, and diachronic transformations of paradigmatic elements.

## 6.2 Troubles Fiction Novels of the 1960s and 1970s: Syntagmatic Analysis

The percentages and numbers of novels by genre in the 1960s and 1970s sub-set of the random sample data set on which this study are based are shown in Figure 26.



**Figure 26: 1960s/1970s novels by genre**

It is possible in some, but not all, cases to identify the nationality of the novelists included in the complete research set, and so to establish whether a higher percentage of writers (for example, thriller writers) are British rather than Irish. One of the questions that early Troubles critics asked was whether Irish writers accept and reproduce the negative representations which are products of British novelists. It is possible to identify the nationality of thirty-eight of the forty-seven novelists in the 1970s sub-set of fifty novels. Twenty of these novelists are Irish, either from the Republic or from Northern Ireland, eleven are English, and one novelist, Jack

Higgins, an English novelist, holds dual British-Irish citizenship. Three novelists are Scottish, and one novelist is Welsh. Two novelists are Australian and one is American.

### **6.2.1 1970s Troubles Thrillers**

There are thirty one thrillers in the 1970s sub-set and the nationality of twenty-two of these novelists is known. Ten thriller writers are Irish, nine are English, and the rest of the set is made up of a Scottish novelist, an Australian and an American. The nationalities of three authors of the four love stories in the primary set are known, and these are two Irish novelists and one English novelist. Four of the five domestic drama novelists whose nationality is known are Irish, and one is Welsh. Two comic novelists are Irish and the third is Australian. There are four novelists in the children's books and *bildungsromans* sub-set. Two are Irish, and two, Cliff Hanley and Joan Lingard, are Scottish. The domestic drama genre within Troubles fiction of the 1970s seems to be predominantly the preserve of Irish novelists.

The thriller is the dominant affective genre in this data set by some margin. As it is so dominant in the study, the data relating to this genre will be discussed in two sub-sections, one describing the Troubles thriller from 1969 to 1974, and one describing the thriller from 1975 to 1979. This is done in order to establish specific sub-categories of thriller, the transformations, continuity, or withering of which can then be traced in discussions of later novels.

In the random sample drawn together for this study, there is one thriller published in 1966 and nine thrillers published between 1969 and 1974. Within the broad generic category labelled "thriller" in this study, it is possible to identify four

specific types of thriller. This sample includes two thrillers using a motif labelled in this study the “two brothers” motif. In these novels one of the two brothers either belongs to or becomes involved with a paramilitary group, usually the IRA. In the first, *With O’Leary in the Grave* (Carrick, 1971), the main protagonist is a Detective Inspector in the Liverpool police force, whose brother is an activist in the IRA. The novel is set in working class Londonderry. Catholic Derry is represented as a contested site where the dominant and aggressive RUC and UVF almost drive the good brother to violence. The second “two brothers” novel, *The Heart’s Grown Brutal* (Brewster, 1972), concerns two journalists who can be considered generic “two brothers”, the link between them indexed by the use of similar names, Hugh Randall and Horace Blundell, and their shared profession. Blundell becomes involved with the IRA because of his idealistic Republican sympathies, but becomes disillusioned with the realities of contemporary IRA activities, and is murdered by them.

The second type of thriller represented in this set is the chase thriller. In the early 1970s, Sean Herron published two chase thrillers: *Through the Dark and Hairy Woods* (1972), and *The Whore Mother* (1973). In the earlier novel, the hero, former CIA man, Miro, is kidnapped and chased across Ireland by Loyalist terrorists, while in *The Whore Mother*, Powers, the psychopathic Provisional IRA activist, chases the hero, McManus, characterised as the young idealist in Bowyer-Bell’s typology, across Ireland to England, raping and murdering his family along the way.

The third type of thriller appearing in the early set is one that might be labelled “the foiled Republican plot”. This type of thriller is not overly concerned



with setting political or cultural contexts, but is more concerned with action stories about (normally) British security personnel intercepting dastardly (normally) Republican atrocities. In Seaman's *The Bomb that Could Lip-read* (1974), a British officer activates a bomb, which blows up a hotel in which Republican activists are gathered, killing himself in the process. The revenge plot is straightforward, enabling the writer to establish the main protagonist's motivation early in the novel. The opening chapter explains and justifies the final outcome, and the remainder of the novel is concerned with the process of revenge. The representation of the British officer is relatively complex in that the revenge scenario is based on revenge for the killing of the British officer's unit. The British officer, initially represented as a failure, becomes a loner, wreaking revenge, a paradigmatic representation characteristic of the thriller genre, according to Palmer (1978, 100).

The "terror international" novel is the label used in this study to describe novels in which the Irish terrorist organisations, in practice generally Republican organisations, are represented as operating within larger international terrorist networks. The large terrorist networks are represented as being concerned with destabilising Western political status quo, and the operatives are often represented as mercenaries, or engaged in reciprocal terror activities, so that Israeli terrorists might act on behalf of the IRA in Britain on the understanding that the IRA will undertake a particular terrorist activity in return. These novels are based on a paranoid interpretation of international politics. In *The Hour of the Wolf* (Charles, 1974), a European-wide professional organisation, Counter Terror, is set up to counteract the

international terrorist network which attempts to destabilise a variety of governments: the IRA attacks Tokyo, and Italians terrorists attempt to assassinate the Queen.

There is a final sub-category of Troubles thriller in this initial set, which contains one member, and which is quite different from the other thriller novels. This category could be described as the “Republican redemption novel”, and its only member is *A Prayer for the Dying* (1973) by Jack Higgins. In this novel, Martin Fallon, a former IRA hit-man who is sickened by the violence of the contemporary Troubles, finds redemption in saving the lives of Father Da Costa and his beautiful blind niece, Anna. The motif of the “good Republican” is typical of Jack Higgins.

Figure 27 shows novels in each of the sub-categories of Troubles thrillers in the data set published between 1969 and 1974.

<b>Thrillers</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Dominant Affective Genre</b>
Carrick, J.	With O'Leary in the Grave	1971	Thriller (two brothers)
Brewster, D.	The Heart's grown Brutal	1972	Thriller (two brothers)
Herron, S.	Through the Dark and Hairy Wood,	1972	Thriller (chase)
Herron, S.	The Whore-mother	1973	Thriller (chase)
Higgins, J.	A Prayer for the Dying	1973	Thriller (Republican redemption)
Charles, R.	Hour of the Wolf	1974	Thriller (“terror international”)
Cleary, J.	Peter’s Pence	1974	Thriller (chase)
Nicholl, N.	No More Leprechauns	1974	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)
Seaman, D.	The Bomb that could Lip-read.	1974	Thriller (foiled Republican operation).

**Figure 27: Sub-categories of Troubles thrillers: 1969-1974**

The analysis of this set of novels has generated a base-point that identifies emerging sub-categories within the Troubles thriller genre. These are: the “two brothers” thriller, the chase thriller, the foiled Republican plot, the Republican redemption thriller, and the “terror international” thriller.

There are twenty three thrillers novels in the sub-set of Troubles thrillers published between 1975 and 1979. Of these, six novels can be described as predominantly “foiled Republican plot” thrillers. There are six chase thrillers, four hostage thrillers, two “two brothers” thrillers, in both of which the underlying motivation for action is personal revenge. There are two revenge novels, and one “terror international” thriller. There are also two journalists’ thrillers, both of which are concerned with corruption in Northern Ireland.

Figure 28 shows sub-categories of thrillers published between 1975 and 1979 and included in the data set.

<b>Thrillers</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Dominant Affective Genre</b>
Charles, R.	Flight of the Raven	1975	Thriller (“terror international”)
Hurd, D.	Vote To Kill	1975	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)
Martin, D..	The Task	1975	Thriller (revenge)
Seymour, G.	Harry’s Game.	1975	Thriller (chase)
Clifford, F.	Drummer in the Dark	1976	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)
Foxall, P.A.	Inspector Derben's War	1976	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)
Langley, B.	War of the Running Fox	1976	Thriller (chase and two brothers)
McCabe, E.	Victims	1976	Thriller (hostage novel)
Pincher, C.	Eye of the Tornado	1976	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)
Casey, K.	Dreams of revenge	1977	Thriller (journalist’s story)
Foxall, P.A.	Inspector Derben and the Widow Maker	1977	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)
Kiely, B.	Proxopera	1977	Thriller (hostage)
Langley, B.	Deathstalk.	1977	Thriller (chase)
Stuart, F.	A Hole in the Head	1977	Thriller (hostage and writer involved)
Atwater, J.	Time Bomb.	1979	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)
Binnie, S.	Across the Water	1979	Thriller (chase)
Blair, I.	Hooligan’s Rant	1979	Thriller (chase)
Dowling, K.	Interface: Ireland	1979	Thriller (journalist’s story)
Hamill, D.	Bitter Orange.	1979	Thriller(two brothers)
Hayward, D.	The Provo Link	1979	Thriller (revenge, chase)
McNamara, M	The Dancing Floor	1979	Thriller (two brothers)
Lane, A.	The Ulsterman	1979	Thriller (chase)

**Figure 28: Data set novels in each sub-category of Troubles thrillers: 1975-1979**

The only “terror international” novel in this set is a Robert Charles novel, *The Flight of the Raven* (1975), in which international terrorists steal plutonium and kidnap an eminent scientist and his wife in an attempt to force him to build a bomb with which they can attack London. The terrorists skyjack a plane but are thwarted by Sir Alexander Gwynne-Vaughan, head of Counter Terror.

Chapman Pincher’s *The Eye of the Tornado* (1976) combines elements of the foiled Republican plot and “terror international”. In this study it is categorised as a foiled Republican plot novel in which Republican activists insist on pursuing an operation which their Soviet partners want to abandon. Even fate is on the side of the British in Pincher’s novel; as the IRA head towards the British coast to bomb it, the wind changes with the result that, should they detonate the bomb, Ireland, not England, would feel the effects.

P.A. Foxall’s novels are extreme examples of failed Republican plot novels, in which the English Inspector Derben, a hard-boiled, tough-talking detective, confronts and defeats not only the detested Irish, who are always represented as evil and uncivilised terrorists, but homosexuals and feminists, who are also represented as dangerous and depraved. In *Inspector Derben’s War* (1976), Derben raids an IRA safe house where he arrests various decadent IRA activists, while in *Inspector Derben and the Widow Maker* (1977) Derben trails an IRA cell operating in London. The plot of Francis Clifford’s *Drummer in the Dark* (1976) concerns British security forces’ containment of an unstable splinter Republican group which possesses highly sophisticated and dangerous weapon technology. James Atwater’s *Time Bomb* (1979)

contains a more sympathetic representation of the IRA activist in the character of Patrick Reilly who becomes an IRA bomb-maker after his father loses both legs in a pub bomb.

Gerald Seymour's *Harry's Game* (1975) is possibly the best known of all Troubles thrillers, having been made into a film. In this novel Harry Brown, a British army officer born in Portadown, pursues Billy Downs, an IRA hit man who has killed a British politician. Harry has to contend with the bureaucracy of the British Army, from which he becomes increasingly detached. On one level it could be argued that Harry's detachment is necessary to maintain the balance in the plot, so that lone IRA man is set against lone British soldier, but the distancing of Harry from the Army also has the effect of turning this novel into one in which Irishman is set against Irishman. In the end, it is another soldier who shoots Harry, mistaking him for just another terrorist. This novel is included in the emerging canon list recorded in Chapter Two of this study.

In Bob Langley's chase thriller *The War of the Running Fox* (1976), Coogan, the ex-SAS IRA man, is represented as a good husband, brave soldier and loyal friend. *Across the Water* (Binnie, 1979) is a chase thriller featuring not only IRA terrorists, but also Loyalist terrorists. In this novel, the Special Branch man, Milton, is investigating Loyalist gun-running. When it comes to the chase, however, both the Special Branch man and the Loyalist terrorist chase the IRA terrorist who plans to blow up the Houses of Parliament. In Andrew Lane's *The Ulsterman* (1979) an RUC man, Christian Boggs, falls in love with a kidnapped Dutch heiress. He chases her kidnappers but is eventually killed in a shoot-out with the ringleader.

There are three hostage novels in this research set, all of which are written by Irish writers. Eugene McCabe's *Victims* (1976) concerns a group of Provisional IRA members who kidnap Anglo-Irish gentry in County Monaghan in a bid to exchange them for three IRA prisoners. The hero of *Proxopera* (Kiely, 1977), an elderly retired teacher, outwits the local IRA cell, but they destroy his house and injure his son. Barnaby Shane, or "H", the hero of Francis Stuart's *A Hole in the Head* (1977), negotiates for the release of the kidnapped children of Arnold Grundy, leader of Belbury's Association of Militia, held hostage by disillusioned activists, one Protestant and one Catholic, who have also kidnapped a politician. The politician is represented as the most corrupt of all the characters in the novel. Belbury, or Belfast, is represented as a surreal cityscape by a narrator who believes he is accompanied by Emily Brontë.

Both "two brothers" thrillers in this sub-set are written by Irish writers, and were published in 1979. In Desmond Hammill's thriller, *Bitter Orange* (1979), the good brother, Bryan Malone, abandons the IRA but his brother, Vince, becomes a lone bomber, while in Michael McNamara's *The Dancing Floor* (1979) both brothers, Brendan and Colum Donnelly, are initially drawn into the IRA by Taig Riordan. The IRA, and Riordan in particular, prove to be untrustworthy and disloyal, and Colum eventually saves Brendan's life by shooting Riordan. In both novels both brothers become involved in the IRA at some point. It is not a question of constructing the novel around the binary oppositions, IRA/non-IRA; it is rather that the "good" brother eventually sees the weakness and limitations of the IRA.

There are two revenge thrillers in this set. David Martin's *The Task* (1975) is a sequel to *The Ceremony of Innocence* (1977), although the latter was published later. In *The Task* an Irish ex-sailor seeks revenge for the shooting of his brother by British soldiers. He attempts to kill his brother's killer, a Scottish soldier, but aims badly and kills a black English soldier by mistake. McWilliams, the hero of David Hayward's *The Provo Link* (1979), is a former British soldier who is falsely informed by Special Branch officers that his wife has been killed by the IRA. McWilliams is fed the misinformation because Special Branch knows that he will seek out and kill the IRA activists. In the course of seeking revenge, McWilliams becomes involved with a Protestant group called Network, whose function is to transport Protestants from Northern Ireland to the safety of England.

Two thrillers in the sub-set can be categorised as journalists' stories. Both Kevin Casey's *Dreams of Revenge* (1977), and Kevin Dowling's *Interface: Ireland* (1979), focus on corruption within the IRA. In *Dreams of Revenge* a Belfast journalist becomes involved in gun-running for the IRA. The IRA later bomb his car, killing his wife in a bomb meant for the journalist. In Dowling's *Interface: Ireland* the main protagonist is a Liverpool-Irish journalist from a Republican family who is working in Northern Ireland. He becomes increasingly disillusioned with the Army press machine, his own newspaper editors, and the in-fighting of the IRA. Eventually he and his wife move to France.

### **6.2.2 1970s Love Stories**

There are four love stories in the 1970s sub-set of the primary research set. All four can be described as "love across the barricades", novels, a category identified in the

secondary literature as one that is repeated through the 1970s. “Love across the barricades” is used in this study to describe a specific category operating within the love story sub-genre of Troubles fiction, but the “love across the barricades” theme crosses sub-genres, and is to be found in thrillers, *bildungsromans*, domestic dramas and children’s fiction.

Figure 29 shows the love stories in the 1970s sub-set of the primary data set.

Love stories			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Barlow, J.	Both your Houses.	1971	Love Story (love across the barricades)
Stuart, F.	Memorial	1973	Love story (across the barricades)
Hale, J	Lovers and Heretics.	1976	Love story (across the barricades)
Hilliar, M.	Come Dance With Me	1977	Love story (across the barricades)

**Figure 29: Love stories in the 1970s primary data set**

In the “love across the barricades” novels two characters, generally a man and a woman in Troubles fiction, fall in love, but find that their love affair is impeded because of their cultural and/or national backgrounds. In Francis Stuart’s *Memorial* (1973) two sets of relationships cross expected social and cultural divides. The middle aged writer, Fintan F. Sugrue, lives with schoolgirl, Herra Friedlander, while British Army Sergeant Hide forms a friendship with Herra. In James Barlow’s *Both your Houses* (1973) a British soldier falls in love with a Northern Irish Catholic Republican girl, whilst the love affair in Michael Hillier’s *Come Dance With Me* (1977) is between a Protestant Northern Irish man and a Southern Irish Catholic woman. John Hale’s *Lovers and Heretics* (1976) contextualises the conflict in Northern Ireland in a broader European theatre of war.



### 6.2.3 1970s Domestic Dramas

There are seven domestic dramas within this element of the sample. Domestic drama is a descriptive term used in this study to describe novels that are concerned with the lives of ordinary people, often working class characters, the plots of which generally cover some considerable length of time. Domestic dramas can be historical domestic dramas in which the stories and relationships of a group of people connected in some way, for example by geographical space or familial ties, are traced over several generations. Another approach is to write the story of one person, or a group of people, over a lifetime. Many of these novels might be described as family sagas because it is the family unit that provides the group for the story. Another type of domestic drama is the novel structured around a specific community which undergoes some kind of change as a result of external forces and catalysts.

Figure 30 shows the domestic dramas in the 1970s sub-set of the primary data set.

<b>Domestic drama</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Dominant Affective Genre</b>
Ballinger, WA.	The Green Grassy Slopes	1969	Domestic drama (historical)
Gallie, M.	You're welcome to Ulster	1970	Domestic drama
Hegarty W.	Price of Chips	1973	Domestic drama (generational, "two brothers").
White, T. de V	The Distance and the Dark	1973	Domestic drama
Van Greenway, P.	Suffer! Little Children.	1976	Domestic drama ( across the barricades)
Martin, D.	Ceremony of Innocence	1977	Domestic drama(generational, "two brothers")
Cowell, J.	The Begrudgers	1978	Domestic drama ( journalist involved)

**Figure 30: Domestic dramas in the 1970s primary data set**

Themes that emerged in discussions of both thrillers and love stories also appear in the domestic dramas. The "two brothers" theme, with its plot line involving the

demise of the Republican brother, and relative success of the non-Republican brother, informs two of the domestic drama novels, both of which are generational novels.

Walter Hegarty's *The Price of Chips* (1973) is the story of two childhood friends from Derry, from World War Two to the beginning of the Troubles. Colm O'Kane, the middle-class Catholic, becomes an architect while Bosco McDermott, the working class Catholic, becomes a grocer. Colm's son is injured in the Burntollet march, and his daughter, who has affair with a British soldier, is beaten up for protecting her brother from the British army. Bosco's son becomes active in a paramilitary group and this leads to Bosco's death. In Hegarty's novel, all Catholics, and especially young Catholics, suffer, but working class Catholics suffer more than middle class Catholics. David Martin's *Ceremony of Innocence* (1978) is a family saga chronicling the fortunes of the McCart family within its Belfast community from the Second World War until the beginning of the Troubles. May McCart's complicated extended family includes both Catholics and Protestants. In this novel the cross-sectarian relationships possible earlier in the twentieth century have become well nigh impossible to create and maintain at the start of the Troubles.

Terence de Vere White's *The Distance and the Dark* (1973) is a novel of manners about the middle class Anglo-Irish in County Meath, with a contemporary plot concerning the opposition of Everard Harvey, the landowner, to the Republican group, Gallowglass, which killed Harvey's baby son. Eventually Everard is killed by the Gallowglass group. In Cowell's *The Begrudgers*, published in 1978, but set at the start of the Troubles, Bartlett, an idealistic and naïve American journalist, travels to Ireland and becomes involved with northern Republican paramilitaries. He takes part

in an attempt to persuade the Republican government to arm the Republicans, and eventually he is shot, but survives. On the same plane as Bartlett is Peter Leyden, an Irish doctor and Vietnam veteran, who returns to Dublin but avoids involvement with Republican activists. In both these novels, the public Troubles impact on the once-neutral private lives of middle-class professionals.

W. A. Ballinger's *Green Grassy Slopes* (1969) is set in Belfast in the 1920s. It is the story of the charismatic and powerful Reverend Mungo McMaster, an Antrim preacher, who travels to Belfast and preaches anti-Catholic sectarian apartheid. Eventually McMaster's power begins to wane. When a rumour spreads that Catholics are working on a new ship, McMaster preaches on the ship which catches fire, and he is burnt to death. There is a strong element of gothic melodrama in this novel, which also contains some grotesque humour. There is also considerable humour in Menna Gallie's *You're Welcome to Ulster* (1970) in which a Welshwoman, Sarah, visits her middle-class Irish friends. Sarah rescues Mab, the young Welsh nationalist would-be paramilitary, and sends him home. Her lover, the journalist James, is shot by the B-Specials.

Van Greenway's *Suffer! Little Children* (1976) is an unusual novel in which a Catholic primary school teacher and a Protestant primary school teacher take their classes to a castle in the North West of Ireland where they attempt to educate them together. Activists on both sides decide that they cannot afford to allow this experiment to succeed, storm the castle, and kill the teachers in front of the pupils. Parts of the novel read like a traditional "school story" in that the reader is presented

with extraordinarily detailed descriptions of ideal lessons, but this pedagogical domesticity is juxtaposed with descriptions of violent activities.

#### 6.2.4 1970s Comedies

Three novels published in the 1970s and included in the random sample drawn together for this study can be categorised as predominantly comic novels. The two early novels, *A Little Bit British* (Waddell, 1970) and Russell Braddon’s *The Progress of Private Lilyworth* (1971), find absurdity in the sectarianism of Northern Ireland. Martin Waddell’s *A Little Bit British* (1970) takes the form of a diary recording the life and thoughts of Augustus Harland, a Protestant bigot and snob, whose daughter’s Republican boyfriend uses Harland’s house as a Republican radio station. Braddon’s *Private Lilyworth* attempts to bring peace to Ireland but is prevented by paramilitaries from both sides of the sectarian divide. Menna Gallie’s *You’re Welcome to Ulster* (1970), categorised as a domestic drama novel, is another absurdist novel published in the early days of the Troubles when it seems to have been possible to publish comic representations. In John Morrow’s *The Confessions of Proinsias O’Toole* (1978), the humour derives from the corruption of British and Irish politicians and Irish paramilitaries. All these novels represent the sectarian divisions operating in Northern Ireland as absurd.

Figure 31 shows the comedies in the 1970s sub-set of the primary data set.

<b>.Comedy</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Dominant Affective Genre</b>
Waddell, M.	<i>A Little Bit British</i>	1970	Comedy
Braddon, R.	<i>The Progress of Private Lilyworth.</i>	1971	Comedy
Morrow, J.	<i>The Confessions of Proinsias O’Toole</i>	1977	Comedy (political)

**Figure 31: Comedies in the 1970s primary data set**

### **6.2.5 1970s Children's Novels and *Bildungsromans***

Two children's novels in the random sample are written by Joan Lingard. There are two other children's books in the set. *The Twelfth of July* (1970) is the first of three novels by Joan Lingard which follow the friendships between a Protestant girl and a Catholic boy through to their eventual marriage and parenthood. This novel is set in Belfast in 1969. Most of the adults in this novel are represented as sectarian. Only the young people and the middle class teacher are able to transcend the sectarian divide. *Across the Barricades* (1973) is the second in the series. Cliff Hanley's *Prissy* (1979) is the story of the intrepid fourteen years old Prissy Enders, daughter of the Prime Minister, who is kidnapped by Republican activists, but escapes from them and takes revenge.

Jennifer Johnson's *Shadows on our Skin* (1977) is perhaps better described as a *bildungsroman* than a children's book although the protagonist is a young boy rather than a young adult. It is not marketed as a children's book and the plot involves young adults as well as the child. The hero of the novel, Joe Logan, is a young Catholic boy from Derry, who makes friends with a school teacher, Kathleen Docherty, originally from Wicklow, the daughter of a Protestant mother and Catholic father. Joe's unemployed father romanticises the IRA and his brother, Brendan, newly returned from England, is a member of the Provisional IRA. Joe becomes jealous of the growing friendship between Brendan and Kathleen and tells Brendan that Kathleen is engaged to a British soldier. As a result, Kathleen is tarred and feathered and leaves Derry.

Figure 32 shows the children's books and *bildungsromans* in the 1970s subset of the primary data set.

Children's books			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Lingard, J.	The Twelfth of July	1970	Children's fiction (teenage fiction)
Lingard, J.	Across the Barricades	1973	Children's book (teenage, <i>bildungsroman</i> )
Morrison, E.	Joy in the Troubles	1975	Children's fiction (Christian values)
Johnston, J.	Shadows on our Skin	1977	Love story/teenage book
Hanley, C.	Prissy	1979	Children's book (thriller)

Figure 32: Children's books and *bildungsromans* in the 1970s primary data set

### 6.3 Troubles Fiction Novels of the 1970s: Paradigmatic Analysis

In this study paradigmatic analysis focuses on the inclusion within novels of specific fictional characters and the geographic setting of the novels.

#### 6.3.1 Representation of Heroes in 1970s Novels

Of the fifty novels in this set, forty nine have clear individual heroes. For the purposes of this study, a number of categories of heroes have been identified, using the novels themselves as the source for categorisation. Inevitably, any categorisation exercise of this sort is likely to lead to cross-categorisation or simplification. This study is no exception. It is relatively unproblematic to assert that ten novels in the data set feature writers and film makers as heroes. The British army soldiers are the heroes of six novels and policemen are the heroes of six novels. There are six novels in total in which IRA activists or former IRA activists are heroes, and in Eugene McCabe's *Victims* (1976) the heroine is a female IRA activist.

British security personnel are the heroes of three of the nine thrillers published between 1970 and 1974. In one of these novels, *With O'Leary in the Grave*, the British policeman is a Belfast man whose family still lives in Belfast. The heroes in four of the early thrillers are creative workers: two are journalists, Hugh Randall in David Brewster's *The Heart's Grown Brutal* (1972), and Fergus McBride in Jon Cleary's *Peter's Pence* (1974), and two are film-makers, one an ex-CIA agent, Miro, in Shaun Herron's *Through the Dark and Hairy Wood* (1972), and one, Danny Mason (*No More Leprechauns*, Nicholl, 1974) a Belfast born pornographer. Fergus McBride, the hero of Cleary's *Peter's Pence* (1974), is an American working as press officer in the Vatican who repents of his involvement in a failed IRA plot to kidnap the Pope. There are two other thrillers in which the heroes are IRA activists, but in both novels the IRA men are reluctant members of the IRA.

In the twenty-three thrillers making up the sub-set of thrillers published between 1975 and 1979, the heroes of five novels are British army personnel, or ex-army personnel. One of these heroes, Harry Brown, is a British soldier born in Portadown (Seymour, *Harry's Game*, 1975). The hero of Foxall's two Inspector Derben novels in the set is a British policeman, and in Andrew Lane's *The Ulsterman* (1979) the hero is an RUC policeman. A British government private secretary is the hero of Hurd's *Vote to Kill* (1975). IRA personnel are the heroes of five thrillers in this sub-set.

### **6.3.2 Representation of Women in 1970s Novels**

Not all the novels contain female characters and some of the novels contain more than one female character. As a result, it is difficult to present the data in the same way as

the data relating to heroes is presented. The data relating to women are represented in a more impressionistic way, in that trends in representation over time are identified.

Women are often represented as wives and girlfriends of the protagonist. From the earliest Troubles novels, wives and girlfriends could be either loyal “good wives” or untrustworthy and disloyal “bad wives”. Of the forty seven novels in this set containing female characters, twenty four contain representations of good wives or girlfriends. Seven of the forty seven novels have representations of bad wives and girlfriends. Some of the representations are ambivalent. Dulcie McMaster in *The Green Grassy Slopes* (Ballinger, 1969) is a “good wife” but her wifely duties include procuring for her husband. Kate Burke, in *The Whore Mother* (Herron, 1973), seduces and cares for the young Republican hero, but she is the widow of a dangerously idealist Republican poet. While Mrs Strong in *Through the Dark and Hairy Wood* (Herron, 1972) is not exactly a bad wife, she is attracted to the hero, Miro. Anna, in Langley’s *The War of the Running Fox* (1976) is the wife of the “bad brother” and the mistress of the “good brother”, while another Anna, in *Dreams of Revenge* (Casey, 1977), has an affair with Waldron while married to Lawlor, a writer and IRA gunrunner. Mary Bruce, in *Across the Water* (Binnie, 1977), is an English woman who does not realise that the Irish man she married is a Loyalist gunrunner.

Mothers are represented in thirteen of the novels. A number of these mothers are represented as suffering emotional distress as a result of the Troubles. As early as 1971, Carrick’s *With O’Leary in the Grave* represents the Belfast mother, Mother Kate, as the victim of British security forces’ violence. The stereotype of the long-suffering mother reappears in May McCart in *Ceremony of Innocence* (Martin, 1977)



and Mary Malone in *Bitter Orange* (Hamill, 1979). Mrs Logan, in *Shadows on our Skin* (Johnston, 1977), resents the idealistic stories about the IRA told by her unemployed and drunken husband. Rolston argues that Troubles novelists often assume that the “natural” behaviour of women is maternal, concerned with caring for other human beings, particularly children, and that the representations of bad wives and mothers emphasise their “unnaturalness” (Rolston, 1989). Bad mothers in the random sample set include Augustus Harland’s drunken mother in *A Little Bit British* (Waddell, 1970), and Pascal and Pacelli’s monstrous mother in McCabe’s *Victims* (1976). Although not a mother, Auntie Bridie, in Foxall’s *Inspector Derben and the Widow Maker* (1977), who is an IRA activist, is close to the “bad mother” character.

Daughters appear in fifteen of the Troubles novels in this set. Many of the daughters rebel against the codes and conventions by which their families live. Sometimes this manifests itself in the representation of daughters who reject sectarian divisions to form relationships “across the barricades”, for example, Sadie Jackson in Joan Lingard’s series of books, Angelica Harland in Waddell’s *A Little Bit British* (1971), whose boyfriend is an English Republican, Aileen O’Meara, in *Both Your Houses* (Barlow, 1971), who marries a British soldier, and Herra, the teenage lover of the middle aged writer “H” in Stuart’s *Memorial* (1973). Clarissa, the female character in Hurd’s *Vote to Kill* (1975), comes from a British establishment family, but betrays her family and her country when she becomes an IRA activist. In Atwater’s *Time Bomb* (1979) the daughter of the USA ambassador to Britain becomes involved with an IRA bomber. In these novels, daughters seem to betray their families

for other causes, some of these are good causes, but sometimes the daughters betray their decent families.

Thirteen of the novels contain representations of women as Republican activists. In Gallie's *You're Welcome to Ulster* and Waddell's *A Little Bit British*, both published in 1971, the women are Republican sympathisers rather than IRA activists. Amina Hourani, in Charles's *Hour of the Wolf* (1974), is a Palestinian fighting on behalf of the IRA. In this novel binary oppositions are constructed around Hourani, the paramilitary female activist, and Dominique Clemenceau, a senior operative in Counter Terror, who is killed. The motif of the exotic "terror international" female activist can be seen in the representation of Aki, in Ian Blair's *Hooligan's Rant* (1979), a Japanese paramilitary, leader of "terror international", who seduces the hero before revealing herself as his deadly enemy. Luciana Pericoli, in Cleary's *Peter's Pence* (1974), becomes involved with IRA activity because her boyfriend is involved. Cathleen, the "good girl" character in Charles's *Flight of the Raven* (1975), cited in Bowyer-Bell's article, is represented as a reluctant activist, as is Bella, in McCabe's *Victims* (1976), but some novels represent women as willing activists, for example, Mrs McCabe in Seaman's *The Bomb that could Lip-read* (1971), Clarissa Strong in *Vote to Kill* (Hurd, 1975), and Theresa in Foxall's *Inspector Derben's War* (1976). The IRA activists in Ned Nicholl's *No More Leprechauns* (1974) are represented as sexual objects. Lorna, the IRA activist in *The Begrudgers* (Cowell, 1979) is more ruthless than the men.

Ten of the thirty one thrillers include representations of women as good wives and girlfriends, while eight thrillers include representations of women as IRA

activists. Of the six domestic drama novels, three represent women as good wives or girlfriends, three represent women as “bad” wives, while in *Suffer, Little Children!* (Van Greenway, 1976), the primary female character is an idealistic schoolteacher. In all four love stories women are represented as good girlfriends. Women characters are represented in two comedies: in *A Little Bit British* (Waddell, 1970), women are represented variously as monstrous mother, good, if ignorant, wife, and rebel daughter, while in *The Confessions of Pronsias O’Toole* (Morrow, 1978), the female character is represented as a sex object.

### **6.3.3 Representations of Activists in 1970s Novels**

Both Republican and Loyalist activists are represented in Troubles novels but Republican activists are represented more often than Loyalist activists. Bowyer-Bell refers to the use of the “terrorist as godfather” motif (Bowyer-Bell, 1978). Of the forty five novels in the set which include representations of IRA activists, five include representations of “godfather” characters. The godfather character is usually slightly older and more experienced than the foot-soldiers. He is likely to be more articulate and better educated, and often recruits younger volunteers. He is ruthless and totally committed to the cause. Sometimes the metaphor of the priest or the ascetic is used to describe the godfather. In the 1970s, the godfather motif appears in thrillers. Related to the godfather/foot-soldier distinction in the early novels is the distinction between the traditional IRA volunteer, represented as essentially honourable, and the modern Provisional IRA volunteer who is cold and ruthless. The distinction appears in four novels, and is most clearly illustrated in Brewster’s *The Heart’s Grown Brutal* (1972) in which these two fictional faces of Republicanism are represented in two fictional

characters, one of whom is an “old” school IRA terrorist, and the other of whom is efficient, computerised and modern. In Brewster’s hierarchy, the modern face of the IRA is the real source of evil.

The IRA psychopath character appears in twenty-two of the novels in the 1970s sub-set. Representations of IRA psychopaths who lack any political or personal motivation for engaging with violence appear in eight of the thrillers. This representation of Republican as psychopath is also found in Terence de Vere White’s *The Distance and the Dark* (1973), in the character of Seamus Gallagher of the Gallowglass Republican paramilitary group. Bowyer-Bell (1978) also identifies the stereotype of the young idealist, which is used in 1970s thrillers. In the data set used in this study, there are variations on this stereotype in seven thrillers and two domestic dramas. Bowyer-Bell cites McManus in Shaun Herron’s *The Whore Mother* (1973), and Roddy in Robert Charles’ *Flight of the Raven* (1975). The stereotype is used in Menna Gallie’s *You’re Welcome to Ireland* (1970), but the twist in this novel is that the young idealist is a Welsh nationalist would-be paramilitary. The young idealist is also used in David Martin’s *Ceremony of Innocence* (1977) in the character of Gerry; in the character of Colum in Michael McNamara’s *The Dancing Floor* (1979); and in Bryan Malone in Desmond Hamill’s *Bitter Orange* (1979).

There are variations on the theme, where the disillusioned Republican activist is not so young and not so naïve. In Jack Higgins’ *Prayer for the Dying* (1973), Martin Fallon leaves the IRA because he does not like the killing of women and children. The representation of the honourable and disillusioned Republican activist becomes a repeated motif in Higgins’ novels. Des Ryan in Jon Cleary’s *Peter’s Pence*

(1974) rejects violence after being in the Pope's company. Horace Blundell, in David Brewster's *The Heart's Grown Brutal* (1972), is a more mature idealistic recruit to the IRA, but he is soon disillusioned by the realities of the contemporary IRA.

Loyalist activists are represented in ten of the 1970s novels in the research set, of which eight are thrillers and two are domestic dramas. Loyalist activists are represented in Shaun Herron's *Through the Dark and Hairy Woods* (1972), the plot of which revolves around Captain Strong, the Loyalist paramilitary, who orchestrates murders, laying the blame on the IRA. There are Loyalist paramilitary characters in David Brewster's *The Heart's Grown Brutal* (1972), Ned Nicholls' *No More Leprechauns* (1974), Peter Van Greenway's *Suffer! Little Children* (1976), and David Martin's *Ceremony of Innocence* (1976), but they are mentioned in passing. When Rodney McWilliams, the hero of David Hayward's *The Provo Link* (1979), escapes after he believes the IRA has killed his wife, he joins Bob Hunter and Network, a group with Protestant Loyalist paramilitary connections. The hero in Ian Blair's *Hooligan's Rant* (1979) is trailing the gang of Protestant Loyalist paramilitaries, P.U.P., which murdered his children, whilst the heroine in Stewart Binnie's *Across the Water* (1979), is the widow of a Loyalist gun-runner.

Another stereotype used in novels of the 1970s is that of the charismatic Protestant preacher, presumably based on Dr Ian Paisley. The preacher is found in five 1970s novels in the research set. Two novels are domestic dramas, one is a comedy, one a love story, and one is a thriller. McMaster is the charismatic preacher in W.A. Ballinger's *The Green Grassy Slopes* (1969), Reverend King Lamont in James Barlow's *Both Your Houses* (1971), and The Duncher is the preacher rousing

people to violence in John Morrow's *The Confessions of Proinsias O'Toole* (1977).

James Carrick represents a more explicit relationship between the preaching of sectarianism and the practice of sectarian violence in his novel *With O'Leary in the Grave* (1971), in which Reverend Ross Simmons is not only a preacher, but also a former British Army soldier, and leader of the UVF. Similarly in Greenway's novel *Suffer! Little Children*, (1976), Brother Frisby is both a preacher and the leader of the I.O.U.

#### **6.3.4 Representations of British Security Forces in 1970s Novels**

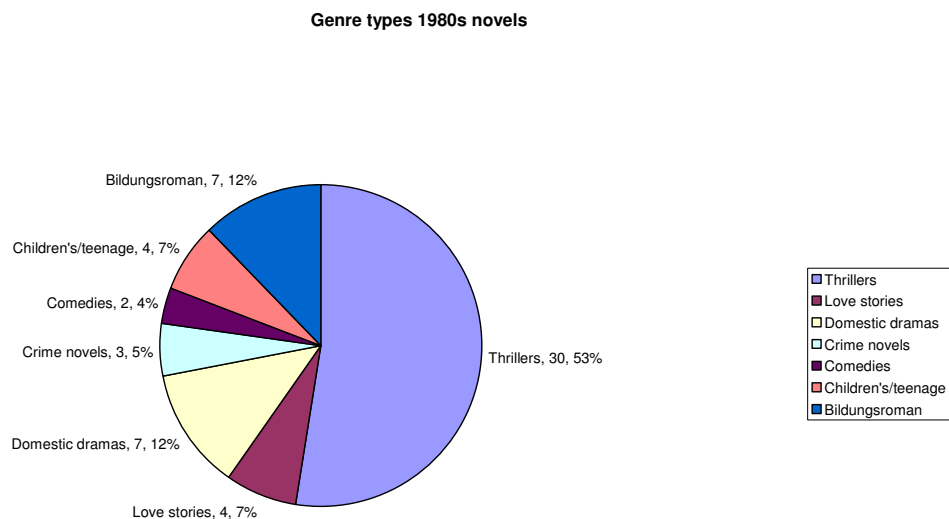
In seventeen of the fifty novels there are positive representations of British Army soldiers. In some novels, such as *Both your Houses* (Barlow, 1971) and *The Progress of Private Lilyworth* (Braddon, 1971), the soldiers are young and idealistic. In other novels, such as Gerald Seymour's *Harry's Game* (1975) and *Timebomb* (Atwater, 1979), the British Army soldier is older and more experienced. In three novels, there are negative representations of the British Army, but two of these novels, *The War of the Running Fox* (1976), and *Deathstalk* (1977), both by Bob Langley, contain representations of renegade SAS men chased by good SAS men. The RUC is represented in three novels. In *With O'Leary in the Grave* (Carrick, 1971), the RUC is represented as being violently sectarian. In both *Harry's Game* (Seymour, 1975) and *The Ulsterman* (Lane, 1979), the RUC is represented as a force for good. Seymour's character, Inspector Howard Rennie, appears in a number of his other novels. The British Army personnel operating in Northern Ireland might change in Seymour's fictional world, but Rennie remains. The B-Specials appear in Menna Gallie's *You're Welcome to Ireland* (1970), and play a violent part in the plot, killing the heroine's

lover. British police appear in three novels. Inspector Derben is the tough, racist and misogynist anti-hero of P.A. Foxall's novels *Inspector Derben's War* (1976) and *Inspector Derben and the Widow Maker* (1977), and George Milton is the Special Branch officer on the trail of the Loyalist arms dealers in Stuart Binnie's *Across the Water* (1979).

Of the fifty novels making up the 1970s sub-set, twenty one are set in Belfast. Eight novels are set in London, three in Dublin, and three in Londonderry. There are four novels set in rural Northern Ireland, and three novels which are set in rural Republic of Ireland.

#### 6.4 Troubles Fiction Novels of the 1980s: Syntagmatic Analysis

The research data set includes fifty seven novels published during the 1980s. Figure 33 shows the breakdown of novels included in the research data set by genre.



**Figure 33: 1980s novels by genre type**

Of the fifty three novelists in the 1980s sub-set of fifty seven novels, it is possible to identify the nationality of forty six novelists. Of these, twenty eight novelists are Irish, either from the Republic or from Northern Ireland. Nine novelists are English, two are Scottish, and one novelist is Welsh. Five novelists are American and one is Australian.

Of the thirty thriller writers in the set, the nationality of twenty three is known. Ten thriller writers are Irish, seven are English, and the rest of the set is made up of two Scottish novelists, two American novelists, a Welsh novelist, and an Australian. Of the four love stories, the nationalities of three novelists are known, and these are two Irish novelists and one American. Four domestic drama novelists are Irish, and two are American. The two comic novelists are Irish. There are three novelists in the children’s books sub-set, of which two are Irish and one is English. There are seven novelists in the *bildungsroman* sub-set, of which six are known to be Irish. It is probable that Elizabeth Gibson, the author of *The Water is Wide* (1984), is Irish. Of the three crime novelists, two are Irish and one is English.

#### 6.4.1 1980s Thrillers

The thrillers published in the 1980s are shown in Figure 34.

Thrillers			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Grant, D.	Emerald Decision	1980	Thriller (British Army dirty tricks; chase)
McNamara, M.	The Sovereign Solution	1980	Thriller (“two brothers”)
Bradford, R.	The Last Ditch	1981	Thriller (political; love across the barricades)
North, M.	Mission to Ulster	1981	Thriller (revenge for personal tragedy)
Higgins, G. V.	The Patriot Game	1982	Thriller (chase)
Holloway, R.	The Terrorist Conspiracy	1982	Thriller (“terror international”)



Thrillers			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Gibson, T.	A Wild Hope	1983	Thriller (love across the barricades)
Harriott, T.	No Sanctuary.	1983	Thriller (chase)
Leitch, M.	Silver's City	1983	Thriller (chase)
Higgins, J.	Confessional	1985	Thriller (chase)
Howlett, J.	Orange.	1985	Thriller (foiled Loyalist operation)
Gill, B.	McGarr and the Method of Descartes	1985	Thriller (foiled Republican operation)
Powers, M.S.	The Killing of Yesterday's Children.	1985	Thriller (intrigue and dirty tricks)
Seymour, G.	Field of Blood	1985	Thriller (supergrass)
Shannon, J.	A Game of Soldiers	1985	Thriller (revenge for personal tragedy)
Ould, C.	A Kind of Sleep	1986	Thriller (maverick ex-IRA man out to destroy IRA)
Powers, M. S	Lonely the Man Without Heroes	1986	Thriller (Dirty Tricks/Intrigue)
Anthony, E.	No Enemy but Time	1987	Thriller (IRA chase disillusioned ex-IRA man)
Gilbert, M.	Trouble	1987	Thriller ("terror international")
Kelly, J.	The Marrow from the Bone	1987	Thriller (political thriller)
Newman, G. F.	The Testing Ground.	1987	Thriller (Dirty Tricks/Intrigue)
Murphy, J.	Juniper	1987	Thriller (corrupt secret service personnel)
Powers, M.S	A Darkness in the Eye	1987	Thriller (Dirty Tricks/Intrigue)
Armstrong, C.	Jig	1988	Thriller (chase)
Clancy, T.	Patriot Games	1988	Thriller ("terror international")
Michaels, S. J.	Justice	1988	Thriller (revenge)
Rankin, Ian	Watchman	1988	Thriller (chase, establishment corruption)
Joyce, J.	Off the Record	1989	Thriller (political)

**Figure 34: Sub-categories of the Thriller genre: 1980s**

Nine of the thrillers in the 1980s research set can be categorised as chase novels. In three of the novels, security service personnel chase IRA men. Michael Sullivan, the "Black Irishman" in Ted Harriott's *No Sanctuary* (1983), is pursued by British Army Sergeant Burns; in Tom Gibson's *A Wild Hope* (1983), an undercover SAS-man chases an IRA man and falls for a Republican girl; while in George Higgins' *The Patriot Game* (1982), Peter Riordan is a USA Federal Agent chasing an IRA man

who is in the USA to procure guns. Walter Armstrong's *Jig* (1988) is about British anti-terrorist agent, Frank Pagan, who pursues Jig, a member of a Republican group, The Association of the Wolf, across America. They call so that together they can pursue the Free Ulster Volunteers, who are committing atrocities in the USA and blaming Jig. In Jack Higgins' *Confessional* (1985) Brigadier Charles Ferguson and Harry Fox of D15 enlist the help of Liam Devlin, ex-IRA man and Professor of English Literature at Trinity College, to find Mikhail Kelly, a KGB sleeper planted in Ireland.

Gill's *McGarr and the Method of Descartes* (1985) is a thriller written by an author more usually regarded as a crime novelist. The plot is a foiled Republican plot concerning an attempt to assassinate Ian Paisley. The author presents the motives of the chief IRA protagonist in a relatively sympathetic manner, and in this respect the content of the novel could be described as being closer in viewpoint to the "two brothers" novel than conventional foiled Republican plot novels which generally represent Republicans as inexplicably evil and corrupt.

The plots of two novels in this set concern the pursuit of paramilitaries by members of their own organisations. Silver Steele, a Loyalist prisoner suffering from a brain disease, is chased across Northern Ireland by Galloway, a maverick Scottish Loyalist terrorist, in Maurice Leitch's *Silver's City* (1981), while in Evelyn Anthony's *No Enemy but Time* (1987), Frank Arbuthnot, a rich IRA money-lauderer, whose sister is married to a British MP, is chased by the IRA. The British secret service is pursued in two novels. In David Grant's *Emerald Decision* (1980), an Irish-American historian chases the story of a British secret service "dirty tricks" campaign which

resulted in the death of his father. In turn, he is chased by the IRA and MI5. Ian Rankin's *Watchman* (1988) is the story of Miles Flint, of MI5, who pursues corrupt MI5 officials with the enforced help of IRA man, Will Collins.

British security services "dirty tricks" is the dominant theme of five other thrillers, three of which are written by M. S. Powers. The three novels, *The Killing of Yesterday's Children* (1985), *Lonely the Man without Heroes* (1986) and *A Darkness in the Eye* (1987) form a trilogy published as *Children of the North*. The first novel of the trilogy concerns Arthur Apple, an eccentric mystic, who money-laundered for the IRA and becomes friendly with Martin Deeley, a young IRA hit-man. Seamus Reilly, IRA godfather, proposes to sacrifice Deeley to Colonel Maddox of the British Army but Apple and Deeley kidnap RUC officer, John Asher, and attempt to negotiate with Maddox. The IRA kills Deeley and Apple dies of a heart-attack. The second novel concerns the "dirty tricks" campaign initiated by Colonel Guy Sharmann, while in the third novel, Seamus Reilly, now a "dove-like" apologist for the peace process, becomes disillusioned with the hawks in the IRA, and betrays the names of the IRA bombers of the Tory convention in Brighton in a BBC interview.

British security services "dirty tricks" is also the theme of James Murphy's *Juniper* (1987). The plot of this novel is based on the theory that MI5 murdered Lord Louis Mountbatten. In this version, MI5 kills the IRA operative that they engaged to kill Mountbatten. Oliver Maitland of MI5 discovers the information and passes it on to his uncle, also in MI5, who is a KGB agent. Gordon F. Newman's *The Testing Ground* (1987) concerns corruption in the SAS, the British Civil Service and the

British police force. There are a number of allusions to contemporary events in this novel, specifically the investigations of Jack Stalker.

There are three novels in the research set that can be categorised as political thrillers, and two of these are written by people directly involved in the politics of the Troubles. *The Last Ditch* (1982), which is concerned with the suspension of the Stormont Parliament, the B Specials, and the difficulties involved in love-across-the-barricades relationships, is written by Unionist MP, Roy Bradford. James Kelly's *The Marrow from the Bone* (1987) is based on Kelly's own experiences of the 1970s' Arms Trial in the Republic of Ireland. In the novel, Kelly's characters take the view that the Republic should have provided arms and an army to the northern Nationalists in 1969, and that this would have resulted in a quick cessation of the Troubles. Kelly uses the novel form to put his case about his own autobiographical experiences at the hands of the Irish government. He was still fighting for his name to be cleared as recently as April 2003. The Irish government offered an apology for their treatment just before he died in July 2003. These novels are written by political actors and have a high modality value. Although it has much less modality value, Gerald Seymour's *Field of Blood* (1985) makes implicit reference to contemporary Troubles politics in its plot construction, which is concerned with the 1980s "supergrass" trials.

There are three "terror international" novels in the set. In Rupert Holloway's *The Terrorist Conspiracy* (1982), the title operating as a clear description of the content of the novel, the terrorist group is based in Paris, and is chased by Britain's Department 7. Tom Clancy's *Patriot Games* (1987) could be characterised as a foiled Republican plot or as a "terror international" novel within the criteria for

classification operating in this study. It has been characterised as a “terror international” novel because it is made clear in the novel that the activists who plan to kidnap the British royal family includes terrorists from other organisations, such as Alex, who is a black American terrorist working for the Ulster Liberation Army, Clancy’s strangely named fictitious Republican group, to raise his profile and garner support for his own terrorist group. Clancy seems to be interested in constructing a plot in which groups that threaten the status quo in the West are linked together.

Michael Gilbert’s *Trouble* (1987) is another novel which is categorised as a “terror international” novel in this study, but which is not a “classic” “terror international” novel, such as those that were identified in the 1970s sub-set. Rather than being about groups of terrorists working with and for each other, this novel is about the activities of Liam, a freelance mercenary working for the IRA, who manipulates local gang warfare for his larger-scale terrorist purposes. It is another novel that could be characterised as a failed Republican plot novel, but is here categorised as a “terror international” novel because there is no committed IRA activist at the centre of the novel. This novel suggests that terrorism has its own logic and power detached from specific political agendas.

There are three revenge novels in the 1980s sub-set of the research set, Michael North’s *Mission to Ulster* (1981), James Shannon’s *A Game of Soldiers* (1985) and Sarah J. Michael’s *Justice: One Man’s War against the IRA* (1988). *Mission to Ulster’s* hero is a journalist in Belfast to investigate the suspicious death of his brother, a British Army officer. In *A Game of Soldiers*, Michael Tain, a British Army officer, kills the IRA men who tortured and hanged his brother, also a British

army captain. When Barney Somerville, a RUC sergeant, discovers links between the IRA and prominent Northern Irish business men, the IRA attempts to kill Somerville, but murders his wife and children by mistake in *Justice: One Man's War against the IRA's* classic revenge scenario. Somerville hunts, and kills IRA men throughout Ireland, sometimes with the support of the local civilian population.

There is only one “two brothers” thriller in this sub-set, which is Michael McNamara’s *The Sovereign Solution*, published in 1980. This novel is really a “buddy” novel, in which Dennis Hegarty, an FBI man, goes to Ireland and becomes involved with Finn Healy, the IRA quartermaster, and his sister. When Finn attempts to shoot the Queen, Dennis has to shoot Finn. Jack Holland’s *The Prisoner’s Wife* (1981) is categorised in this study as a thriller concerned with IRA in-fighting, and is the only member of this sub-set in the 1980s novels, however, there is a clear link between this novel, *Field of Blood* (Seymour, 1985) and Powers’ *A Darkness in the Eye* (1987), in that they all explore the fragmentations opening up within the ranks of the Republican movement which were becoming an element of British and Irish media discourse in the late 1980s. *The Prisoner’s Wife* explicitly refers to talks between the IRA and the British government concerning British troop withdrawal and freeing interned prisoners. It was republished by Poolbeg in 1995.

#### **6.4.2 1980s Crime Novels**

There are three crime novels in the research set. Figure 35 shows the crime novels in the 1980s sub-set of the primary data set.

Crime novels			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Symons, J.	The Detling Secret	1982	Crime novel
Bringle, M.	Death of an Unknown Man	1987	Crime novel
Brady, J.	A Stone of the Heart	1988	Crime novel

**Figure 35: Crime novels in the 1980s primary data set**

*Death of an Unknown Man* (Bringle, 1987) is set in Dublin and involves the discovery of the corpse of an ex-SAS man who blew up a pub in Nottingham killing eleven civilians. He has been murdered as an act of revenge by an American man whose teacher was killed in the bombing. The authorial voice is sympathetic to the American even though he necessarily ends up in prison. *A Stone of the Heart* (Brady, 1988) combines a Troubles thriller chase plot with a murder investigation. The murder victim is a Trinity college student and the murderer a university lecturer. The Troubles are incidental to the solution of the murder plot. *The Detling Secret* (Symons, 1982) is set in London in 1890s and is primarily included in the research set because it is cited in Magee's book. There are references to Irish independence and to the Irish Republican Brotherhood, but the function of the references seems to be to add colour rather than to add to the plot. As with *A Stone of the Heart*, the solution of the murder has nothing to do with Ireland or Irish Republicanism.

#### **6.4.3 1980s Love Stories**

The 1980s research sub-set includes four love stories, Susan Cheever's *A Handsome Man* (1981), Bernard MacLaverty's *Cal* (1983), Jennifer Johnston's *The Railway Station Man* (1984), and Phillipa Blake's *Looking Out* (1989). In both *A Handsome Man* and *Looking Out*, the Troubles are an adjunct to the love story.

Figure 36 shows the love stories in the 1980s sub-set of the primary data set.

Love stories			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Cheever, S.	A Handsome Man.	1981	Love story
MacLaverty, B.	Cal	1983	Love story (love across the barricades)
Blake, P.	Looking Out.	1989	Love story (across the barricades)
Johnston, J.	The Railway Station Man	1989	Love story (two sons)

**Figure 36: Love stories in the 1980s primary data set**

*Cal* and *The Railway Station Man* are both highly cited in the secondary literature, and are both examples of the “love across the barricades” novel. *Cal* is the story of Cal McCrystal, an unemployed Catholic teenager who falls in love with Marcella, the Catholic widow of an RUC policeman, in whose murder Cal was involved, as the driver of a getaway car. He works on the farm for Marcella’s parents-in-law, and when he and his father are burnt out of their home, he moves into a run down cottage on the farm. He is pressured into joining the local IRA cell which plans to bomb the library in which Marcella works, but Cal informs the police. When the police pick up his IRA associates, inevitably they are led to Cal. In *The Railway Station Man*, Helen Cuffe, a painter, lives in a village on the Donegal coast after her husband’s murder. The railway station is taken over by a one-eyed, one-armed former English soldier, Roger Hawthorne. Damian Sweeney, who has links with the IRA, works for Roger. Helen’s son, Jack, is involved with the IRA through Manus Dempsey, who wants Damian to arrange storage in the goods shed at Roger’s station. Manus and Jack drive from Dublin to Donegal escorting an IRA lorry. Jack is shocked to find Helen and Roger half-dressed on the sofa and Roger leaves the house. Jack tries to stop him because the lorry is in the road. Roger drives into the lorry and Jack drives into Roger; both are killed. Helen faces life alone in a studio built for her by Damian.



#### 6.4.4 1980s Domestic Dramas

There are seven domestic dramas in the 1980s sub-set. Five of the novels are written by Irish novelists, and two are written by Americans. Figure 37 shows the domestic dramas in the 1980s sub-set of the primary data set.

Domestic dramas			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Anderson, L.	To Stay Alive	1984	Domestic drama (across the barricades)
Healy, D.	Fighting with Shadows	1984	Domestic drama
Ingoldby, G.	Across the Water	1985	Domestic drama. (Two Brothers)
Countryman, AJ	Streets of Derry	1986	Domestic drama
Beckett, M.	Give them Stones	1987	Domestic drama
Leitch, M.	Chinese Whispers	1987	Domestic drama (set in an asylum)
Miner, V.	Blood Sisters	1988	Domestic drama (two sisters)

Figure 37: Domestic dramas in the 1980s primary data set

The “two brothers” theme is used in three of the novels, although in one of them *Blood Sisters* (1981), set in 1974, is really about two cousins. American feminist, Liz, stays with her Aunt Gerry and cousin, Beth, in London en route to Ireland. Gerry works in Whitehall, and Beth is a member of the Provisional IRA. Beth tries to talk the IRA out of planting a bomb in Whitehall, but fails, and her mother is killed. Dermot Healy’s *Fighting with Shadows* (1984) is about two brothers, Frank and George Allen, one of whom, George, is involved in the IRA. His brother Frank is shot by a UDR man, mistaken for George.

In Grace Ingolby’s *Across the Water* (1985), Desmond Hamilton, an Irish playwright, living in England with his English wife, Aimee, returns to Fermanagh to make a television programme about the Fermanagh carved stones in the summer of 1976. Aimee has an affair with a British army captain, Mark Robbins, who was at school with the Hamiltons. Boyle Hamilton, Desmond’s brother persuades Desmond

to lure Mark to the island on which the Boa stone stands, and when they get there, Boyle knocks Mark out, and tells Desmond to shoot him in the head. They drown him in the lough.

Linda Anderson's *To Stay Alive* (1984) uses the "love across the barricades" theme. Dan Keenan is a medical student who works for the IRA. His wife, Rosaleen, has an affair with a British soldier, Gerry Harris, who wants to leave the army and take Rosaleen with him. Mary Beckett's *Give them Stones* (1988) is a domestic drama novel focalized through the first person narrator, Martha Murtagh, a working class Belfast woman. Martha is married to Dermot and has four sons. Money is tight, so Martha learns to make bread, and sets up a small bakery. Martha supports the IRA for its stance against the British, but despises it for its home-grown law and order. Her shop is demolished by the council, and she is given new housing. Dermot enlists the help of the Sinn Fein advice centre to get compensation money.

Maurice Leitch's novel, *Chinese Whispers* (1987), is difficult to categorise. It is set in an asylum, and tells the story of Kenny, a psychiatric nurse. Dr Beck introduces a murderer, Gavin, the son of an English general, into Kenny's group. Gavin gains control and Kenny is sidelined. The group goes for a nature ramble into the woods without Kenny and stumble over the dead body of a garage hand who talked about a car bomb, and Gavin becomes catatonic. Kenny takes control again. In this study it is categorised as a domestic drama because it concerns a group of individuals operating as a community.

#### 6.4.5 1980s Comedies

Both comic novels in the data set, John Morrow's *The Essex Factor* (1982) and T.P. O'Mahony's *The Lynch Years* (1986) are written by Irish writers. Morrow is Northern Irish, while O'Mahony is from the Republic of Ireland. *The Essex Factor* is set at the beginning of the Troubles, and is about the fact finding mission to Northern Ireland undertaken by Sidney Perkins, a dull British Labour opposition M.P. There are references to civil rights demonstrations and policing issues. *The Lynch Years*, is a comic fantasy which concerns a manifesto, written by Senator Edward Kennedy, proposing that in exchange for siting NATO bases in Ireland, the USA would release economic aid to alleviate the situation in Northern Ireland. Figure 38 shows the comedies in the 1980s sub-set of the primary data set.

Comedy			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Morrow, J.	The Essex Factor	1982	Comedy
O'Mahony, T.P.	The Lynch Years	1986	Comedy fantasy

Figure 38: Comedies in the 1980s primary data set

#### 6.4.6 Children's Novels and *Bildungsromans*

There are four novels in the 1980s children's books category. Catherine Sefton, a pseudonym of Martin Waddell, author of *A Little Bit British* (1970), wrote *Starry Night* (1986), and *Frankie's Story* (1988). *Starry Night* is set in Kiltarragh, on the border, and is the story of Catholic teenager, Kathleen Fay, who discovers that Rose, whom she believes to be her sister, is really her mother. The Troubles play a larger part in *Frankie's Story*, in which Frankie, whose father is suspected of being an informer, is accused of informing and targeted by local activists because she is seen talking to the police after having discovered an injured man. Frankie is injured when a

bomb is thrown into her house, and she leaves Ireland. Lynne Reid Banks's *Maura's Angel* (1984), is the story of Angela, the angel who visits Maura in West Belfast. Maura's father is on the run with the Provisionals, and her brother is in the Maze prison, but Angela gets them back to the house, where they prove to be disruptive. Maura is glad when both men are returned to prison.

A variation of the "two brothers" theme underpins Tom McCaughren's *Rainbows of the Moon* (1989), a children's novel in which a Catholic boy, James Pius, and a Protestant boy, William, find a model boat on a lake in the border country of Northern Ireland, and learn to become friends despite their initial sectarian suspicions of each other. The boat belongs to an IRA man, The Hawk, who has wired it up as a bomb with a new type of plastic explosive. An SAS patrol, led by Striker, tries to ambush The Hawk. The IRA men set a booby trap, blowing up a British soldier. The boys try to get the boat working but it blows up.

Seven of the novels in the 1980s sub-set can be categorised as *bildungsromans*. Four are novels in which the hero is male. In Una Woods, *The Dark Hole Days* (1984), Joe, a naïve Protestant boy, the only son of a widow, becomes involved with a paramilitary group and witnesses the murder of a Catholic man. Joe runs away from the murder and hides under the floorboards in his mother's house to avoid detection. *West Belfast* (1989) is written by Danny Morrison, who was active in the IRA. It tells the stories of John O'Neill and Angela McCann from 1964 until 1971. John joins the merchant navy and smuggles guns for the IRA. John is arrested under the Special Powers Act on 9 August 1971 and released from torture on Tuesday

17th August. He is imprisoned in Long Kesh. Jimmy, John's young brother, is killed by a British army sniper.

Glenn Patterson's *Fat Lad* (1989) includes elements of the "love-across-the-barricades" story and the domestic drama. The plot concerns Drew Patterson, returning from England to Belfast as a bookshop manager, who becomes involved with Anna, whose Catholic boyfriend was killed by a petrol bomb thrown by a teenager protesting about Bobby Sands's death. Drew's bookshop is merged with a European chain and he prepares to leave Belfast. His father, who used to beat Drew and who has suffered a stroke, writes Drew a one word letter: sorry. After his father dies, Drew returns from France to Belfast, where his bookshop has been firebombed by the IRA.

Ripley, in Robert McLiam Wilson's *Ripley Bogle* (1989), is a young Northern Irish Belfast tramp living in London. He was a child prodigy who dropped out of Cambridge University. His story is that that he was one of nine children whose father and best friend were killed in the Troubles. His girlfriend suffered a miscarriage and Bogle has descended into drink and squalor. At the end of the novel, the narrator, Bogle, says that the story he has been telling is a lie.

The *bildungsroman* set also includes three novels in which young women are the heroes. Elizabeth Gibson's *The Water is Wide* (1984), is a campus novel, set in NUU, which tells the story of a group of students, Catholics and Protestants, as they move through undergraduate life. Kate Hamilton, daughter of a Presbyterian minister becomes engaged to Catholic student, Jack Monaghan, who gives up his religious vocation to marry her. Deirdre McAvoy, a Church of Ireland girl with a Catholic

father, is re-united with her fiancé, atheist, socialist student, Liam Donnelly, despite his attendance at a NICRA meeting.

Frances Molloy's *No Mate for the Magpie* (1985) is the story, told in dialect, of Ann Elizabeth McGlone, who spends time in a convent, in a Protestant Belfast factory, as a housekeeper to a priest, and as a seamstress sewing funeral shrouds in Dublin, before she finally escapes from Ireland. Deirdre Madden's novel, *Hidden Symptoms* (1986), is about Theresa Cassidy, an English student at Queen's, whose twin brother, Francis, was tortured and killed in a sectarian killing two years previously.

Figure 39 shows the children's books and *bildungsromans* in the 1980s sub-set of the primary data set.

<b>Children's books/<i>Bildungsromans</i></b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Dominant Affective Genre</b>
Gibson, E.	The Water is Wide	1984	<i>Bildungsroman</i>
Woods, U.	The Dark Hole Days	1984	<i>Bildungsroman</i>
Banks, L.R.	Maura's Angel	1985	Children's book
Molloy, F	No Mate for the Magpie	1985	<i>Bildungsroman</i>
Madden, D.	Hidden Symptoms	1986	<i>Bildungsroman</i>
Sefton, C.	Starry Night	1986	Children's fiction ( <i>bildungsroman</i> )
Sefton, C.	Frankie's Story	1988	Children's book (teenage, <i>bildungsroman</i> )
McCaughren, T	Rainbows of the Moon.	1989	Children's fiction
Morrison, D.	West Belfast.	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>
Patterson, G.	Fat Lad	1989	<i>Bildungsroman</i>

**Figure 39: *Bildungsromans* in the 1980s primary data set**

## **6.5 Troubles Fiction Novels of the 1980s: Paradigmatic Analysis**

### **6.5.1 Representation of Heroes in 1980s Novels**

All fifty-seven novels in the sub-set have identifiable heroes or dominant protagonists. Tom McCaughran's *Rainbows of the Moon* (1989) has two heroes,

James Pius, the Catholic boy, and William, the Protestant boy. In ten thrillers, the heroes are either British army or other agents of British security forces. IRA activists are the heroes of four novels. Two of these novels are M. S. Powers' novels in which the IRA "godfather" character, Seamus Reilly is the hero. Ted Harriott's *No Sanctuary* (1983) is about Michael Sullivan, a Republican activist known as the Black Irishman, and the hero in Danny Morrison's *West Belfast* (1989) is an IRA activist. In four novels the hero is an ex-IRA man or repentant IRA man. Three of these are thrillers, Seymour's *Field of Blood* (1985), Chris Ould's *A Kind of Sleep* (1986) and Jack Higgins' *Confessional* (1985). The hero in *Cal* (1983), a love story, is involved on the fringes of the IRA.

There are eleven novels in this sub-set in which women characters are dominant protagonists. Of these eleven novels, four have been categorised as domestic dramas, Valerie Miner's *Blood Sisters* (1981), Linda Anderson's *To Stay Alive* (1984), Albert J. Countryman's *Streets of Derry* (1986), and Mary Beckett's *Give them Stones* (1989). Two of these novelists, Miner and Countryman, are American. Three of the novels featuring women as dominant protagonists are love stories, Susan Cheever's *A Handsome Man* (1981), Jennifer Johnston's *The Railway Station Man* (1984), and Philippa Blake's *Looking Out* (1989). There are three novels categorised as *bildungsromans*; Elizabeth Gibson's *The Water is Wide* (1984) and Deirdre Madden's *Hidden Symptoms* (1986) are both concerned with university students, while Frances Molloy's *No Mate for the Magpie* (1986) is the story of a young working class woman. In the thriller category, only Jack Holland's *A*

*Prisoner's Wife* (1981) has a woman, Nora Costello, unfaithful wife of an imprisoned IRA leader, as dominant protagonist.

Some of the heroes in this set of novels cannot be categorised easily in conventional categories. These include the hero of M. S. Powers' *The Killing of Yesterday's Children* (1985), Arthur Apple, a British ex-diplomat suffering hallucinations after having been tortured in South America, who talks to his spirits, Sepher and Mr Divine, and runs a betting shop for the IRA. This character might be described as working on the fringes of the IRA, but cannot be described as an IRA activist. Kenny, the protagonist of Maurice Leitch's *Chinese Whispers* (1987) is an unstable psychiatric nurse. Maurice Leitch produced another one-off character in the Loyalist prisoner, Silver Steele, who, suffering from a terminal brain disease, goes on the run from Loyalist activists in *Silver's City* (1981), a novel that is highly cited in the secondary literature.

### **6.5.2 Representation of Women in 1980s Novels**

Women are represented in fifty two of the fifty-seven novels in the set. Some of the novels contain more than one female character. In the 1970s data set, it was possible to identify four main stereotypical representations of women: women represented primarily as girlfriend or wife, sometimes the good girlfriend/wife, sometimes the bad girlfriend/wife; women represented primarily as the mother, sometimes the good mother, sometimes the bad mother; women represented as rebel daughter; and women represented as IRA activists. These stereotypical representations are also to be found in novels of the 1980s.



Of the fifty-two novels in which there are representations of women, thirty one novels include representations of women as wives or girlfriends. In two love stories, *A Handsome Man* (1981) and *Looking Out* (1989), these women are also the main protagonists. In some novels, the women are one half of a “love-across-the-barricades” theme, for example in *The Last Ditch* (1981), where the hero, Desmond Carson, a Unionist MP, is involved in an affair with a Catholic civil servant, Jo Scanlan. In Tom Gibson’s *A Wild Hope* (1983), Mairead Carey, who works for a Republican lawyer, falls in love with the hero, Tim Madden, an undercover SAS lieutenant. Nuala Healey in *The Sovereign Solution* (1980) disapproves of her brother’s involvement in the IRA, and falls in love with the hero, FBI man Denis Hegarty, even though he eventually kills her brother. Marcella, in MacLaverty’s *Cal* (1983), is the widow of an RUC officer murdered by the IRA who has an affair with the driver of the IRA getaway car. Elizabeth Gibson’s *The Water is Wide* (1984) uses the university undergraduate experience to explore sectarian rigidity and tolerance, and her women characters learn to become more tolerant through their love affairs.

In some novels, wives or girlfriends are mentioned in passing and have little to do with plot development. In George V. Higgins’ *The Patriot Game* (1982), Freddie is the girlfriend of the protagonist, Peter Riordan, the Federal Agent. Rupert Holloway refers to Robin Hallam’s girlfriend, who has left him because of his job in *The Terrorist Conspiracy* (1982). Additionally in this novel, the female doctor who looks after the hero after he has been tortured, falls in love with him. In Dermot Healy’s *Fighting with Shadows* (1985), Geraldine Allen, the peace-making wife of George, a Republican activist, is run over by a British army van. Two of the young

women in Countryman's *The Streets of Derry* (1985) are represented primarily as wives and mothers. The hero of this novel is a female character, Marion Gallagher, a Magee undergraduate, who is writing articles about INLA for American audiences.

The characters in John Howlett's *Orange* (1985) include a film starlet, but she plays no significant part in the plot development. The inclusion of this character seems to be primarily to enable the author to write about sex. It is a technique also used by James Shannon in *A Game of Soldiers* (1985). Sarah J. Michaels uses the motif of the murdered wife and children as the initial motivating force for the plot development of her novel *Justice: One Man's War against the IRA* (1988). In Maurice Leitch's *Silver's City* (1981), Silver becomes involved with Nan, who works in a brothel as a receptionist, but who looks after Silver when he is on the run. Angela, the hero's girlfriend in Danny Morrison's *West Belfast* (1989), moves to London where she takes drugs and has an affair with a married man.

Wives and girlfriends are often also mothers, sometimes mothers of the hero. This type of mother is represented in eleven of the 1980s novels. Valerie Miner's *Blood Sisters* (1981) includes two mothers, who are sisters. Helen Allen, in *Fighting with Shadows* (Healy, 1984), becomes depressed after her husband is shot after being mistaken for his IRA brother. Mrs Cuddy, in Lynne Reid Banks's *Maura's Angel* (1984) is dealing with a husband who is on the run, a son who is in the Maze, and four children at home, one of whom has learning difficulties. The narrator, Martha Murtagh, in Mary Beckett's *Give them Stones* (1987), opens a small bakery and takes pride in helping the women and children in her local community. Bartholemew Gill's *McGarr and the Method of Descartes* (1985) uses the motif of the mother abused by

British soldiers to explain Geer's involvement with the IRA. Evelyn Anthony uses the female IRA activist Marie's relationship with her mother in *No Enemy but Time* (1987) as an index of Marie's lack of sympathy and emotion.

All the women in Tom Clancy's *Patriot Games* (1987) are good wives and mothers, including Princess Diana, however, there are a number of bad mothers in the data set novels. Helen Cuffe, the heroine in *The Railway Station Man* (1984), has a son, Jack, at University in Dublin, but their relationship is distant. Helen's loves are her art, and Roger Hawthorne. She is closer to Damian, who has renounced the IRA, than to Jack, who becomes involved in the IRA. The Mammy in Catherine Sefton's *Starry Nights* (1987) has ruined the lives of her children through her selfishness, and looks set to do the same to her grand-daughter. The other mother in this novel is Rose, Kathleen's secret mother. The mother in Newman's *The Testing Ground* (1987) has an affair with the policeman who is investigating the murder of her son, and this leads to her death. Roisin McAnally, in Gerald Seymour's *Field of Blood* (1985), puts her loyalty to the community before her husband, Gingy, whom she abandons after he becomes an informer.

The rebel daughter motif appears in one of the 1980s set of novels, Michael North's *Mission to Ulster* (1981), and the IRA female activist appears in seven novels, while there is one novel in this set, Campbell Armstrong's *Jig* (1982), which features a female Loyalist activist. In Valerie Miner's *Blood Sisters* (1981), one of the cousins, Beth, is a member of the IRA. Theresa Bonkowski is the US based IRA financier in *A Wild Hope* (1983). Ted Harriott's *No Sanctuary* (1984) includes two female activists, one of whom, Tina, is drawn into the IRA by her love for the Black

Irishman, while the other one, Maire, is daring and dangerous. Marie Dempsey in *No Enemy but Time* (1987) and Pussy Galore in M. S. Powers' *A Darkness in the Eye* (1987) are both extremely dangerous female activists. Roisin Johnston, the bank manager, in *McGarr and the Method of Descartes* (1985) rejects the IRA and her IRA lover when McGarr shows her photographs of children injured by IRA atrocities. Christine Remer, in Ould's *A Kind of Sleep* (1986), is not exactly an IRA activist, but a German woman who joins the ex-IRA man, Larne, in his mission to detonate bombs in London in the IRA's name to discredit them. Olga Kennedy, in Kelly's *The Marrow from the Bone* (1987) is used by the author as a mouthpiece for pro-IRA sentiments, and might be categorised as an IRA ideologue

### **6.5.3 Representations of Activists in 1980s Novels**

Republican activists are represented in forty of the fifty five novels, and Loyalist activists are represented in only five of the novels. The IRA "godfather" motif is still popular in the novels of the 1980s, particularly in the thrillers. Variations on the IRA "godfather" motif can be found in fourteen novels in the set. The motif of IRA foot-soldier as cold, ruthless and efficient can be found in ten of the novels. Sometimes the foot-soldier is represented as unintelligent and manipulated by the "godfather" type.

David Grant's Sean Moynihan is a modification of this stock character. Sean Moynihan, a minor IRA character in *Emerald Decision* (1980), is in love with Claire Drummond, the female IRA terrorist, and jealous of McBride. He is described as a heavy drinker, and is represented as a very excitable and unstable character, but the authorial narrator writes that "Sean Moynihan was considered an outstanding strategic mind in Belfast and Dublin, and she (Claire) considered him a fool. There

was a plain sheen to his thinking, no Byzantine chiaroscuro the like of her own” (233). *Jig* (1987), by Campbell Armstrong, illustrates another variation on the “godfather”/foot-soldier motif. In this novel Padraig Finn is the “godfather” type leader of the Association of the Wolfe, while Patrick Cairney, known as Jig, is the son of an American senator, and Finn’s protégé operative. Unlike many of the foot soldiers in the novels, Jig is handsome, intelligent, successful and wealthy.

The stereotype of the IRA informer appears in novels in the 1980s data set, as does representation of in-fighting between Republican hawks and doves. The plot of Gerald Seymour’s *Field of Blood* (1985) concerns IRA informers and “supergrass” trials, and the representations of IRA activists include Pius “Gingy” McAnally, the sniper who turns supergrass, the “godfather” type, Kevin Muldoon, known as the Chief, and the ferrety foot-soldier, Frankie Conroy. Jack Holland’s *The Prisoner’s Wife* (1981) is an early example of reference to Republican in-fighting. Ian Rankin’s *Watchman* (1988) is an unusual novel in its depiction of a Protestant IRA activist, Will Collins.

Four of the novels in this sub-set contain relatively sympathetic representations of Republican activists. In Albert J. Countryman’s *The Streets of Derry* (1986) the two significant Republican activists represented are INLA activists rather than IRA activists, and they have typically Irish names, Peter Gallagher and Kevin Coyle. The relationship between Peter Gallagher and his sister Marion, the heroine of the novel, is emphasised, and Countryman devotes most of a chapter to Peter telling his sister about the ways in which the RUC tortured him on suspicion of murder. Kevin Coyle is depicted as a family man who is very much in love with his

wife, but who turns to violence because of idealistic causes. Marion, a budding journalist, meets with an INLA unit in the Republic and their leader tells her about their vision for a socialist republic spanning the thirty-two counties. While his eyes are described as “cold and unflinching”, his face was “weatherbeaten yet still somewhat handsome” (26). In this novel the INLA is represented as tough and uncompromising, but idealistic and politically motivated.

In James Kelly’s *The Marrow from the Bone* (1987), all the characters are either sympathetic to, or involved with the IRA. Their involvement dates back to the 1950s, and in the community represented in the novel, to be killed in action as a member of the IRA is an honourable death. Danny Morrison was involved in the IRA and Sinn Fein as activist and public relations officer, and his novel *West Belfast* (1989) tells the story of John O’Neill, a young IRA man who ends up jailed in Long Kesh.

Jack Higgins’ sympathetic portrayals of IRA activists pre-date the recent Troubles. *The Violent Enemy* (1966) includes the “godfather” character Colum O’More, and Sean Rogan, a good IRA activist who escapes from prison to undertake a bank-raid for the organisation. Rogan is so decent that the policeman, Dick Vanburgh, allows him to escape at the end of the novel. The most famous of Higgins’ sympathetic IRA activists is Liam Devlin, who turns up in a number of Higgins’ novels. The character, Devlin, is probably best known as the IRA man in *The Eagle has Landed* (1975). He is described in this novel as having been born in Lismore, Co. Down in 1908, the son of a tenant farmer executed in 1921 for serving in a Flying Column. Devlin is “no more than five feet five or six. He had dark, wavy hair, pale

face, eyes of the most vivid blue that Radl had ever seen and a slight, ironic smile that seemed to permanently lift the corner of his mouth. The look of a man who had found life a bad joke and had decided that the only thing to do was to laugh at it” (89). The description is repeated almost exactly in *Touch the Devil* (1980) and *Confessional* (1986), the only difference being that Devlin’s hair is described as becoming increasingly silver. Devlin is represented as an activist in both novels, even though he would be fairly old in the mid-1980s, and by the time that *Confessional* is published, Jack Higgins’s Liam Devlin, an IRA activist of the old school, is represented as working with the British security services. The distinction between the honourable IRA of the old school and the ruthless Provisional IRA permeates all Jack Higgins post-1969 novels.

The IRA activist in *Confessional* is Mikhail Kelly, the son of a Russian mother and an Irish father, Sean Kelly, who fought alongside Liam Devlin in the Spanish Civil war, and who was hanged by the British in 1940 for his part in an IRA bombing campaign. Mikhail is a KGB sleeper, who is discrediting the IRA in the role of the terrorist, Cuchulain, whose cover is the role of Father Harry Cussane, Devlin’s neighbour and chess opponent. Cussane/Cuchulain is engaged in a plot to kill Pope John Paul II on his visit to Britain, but he is thwarted, and finds a form of redemption in this novel, a typical Higgins’ motif. *Confessional* also includes a representation of Martin McGuinness who wants to work with the British to eliminate Cuchulain. In this novel, Higgins’ McGuinness could have shot Captain Fox in Derry in 1972, when Captain Fox saved a woman and child. In Higgins’ novel, McGuinness is written as saying:

‘I was on the flat roof opposite with a man with an Armalite rifle who wanted to put a hole in your head. I wouldn't let him. It didn't seem right in the circumstances.’

For a moment Fox felt rather cold. ‘You were in command in Derry for the IRA at that time.’

McGuinness grinned, ‘A funny old life, isn't it? You shouldn't really be here.’

(*Confessional*, p.56)

Loyalist activists appear in only five of the 1980s novels in the data set. In three of the novels, Loyalist activists are represented as Protestant preachers. Wylie Mullins, in Roy Bradford's *The Last Ditch* (1981), is a revivalist preacher who is very strong on anti-Catholic rhetoric, and heavily involved in politics and rabble-rousing. He organises a strike with Harry Harrmon, the leader of the Ulster Defence Force, and a powerful trade unionist in Belfast. Campbell McCrum, in Michael North's *Mission to Ulster* (1981), is part of the Black Preceptory, and a highly religious Orangeman, whose son refuses to take part in the Orange walk, and whose daughter is an IRA supporter. Ivor McInnes, in Campbell Armstrong's *Jig* (1987), is a hellfire style preacher from Northern Ireland, who is a leader in the Free Ulster Volunteers. He is prepared to betray his own FUV men to protect himself.

Loyalist activists are also represented as thugs. O'Hanlon, in Howlett's *Orange* (1985), is a cold, violent, homosexual executioner, homosexuality being an index of depravity in this novel. This novel was published at the time that the



Thatcher government was negotiating the Anglo-Irish treaty. The hero is an ex-Captain in the British Army, Robin Glanda, who is described as coming from a Unionist background in the Shankhill. He is portrayed as sympathetic to the Orange Third Force, but grows sickened with the violence in the Liverpool siege, and works with Major Cull to stop it. The Free Ulster Volunteers in *Jig* (1987), led by the arrogant Seamus Houlihan, carry out a series of atrocities, which include blowing up a school bus and a Protestant church.

In Maurice Leitch's *Silver's City* (1983), the hero, Loyalist prisoner, Silver, is represented as being an iconic figure for Loyalist paramilitaries in Belfast, but is really physically and mentally sick, and tired of the violence. Silver is pursued by a Scottish Loyalist thug called Ned Galloway, a former British Army soldier who works for the Loyalist group because he is paid to do so. He is represented as having no political commitments at all. Joe, the protagonist in Una Woods's *The Dark Hole Days* (1984) is drawn into a Loyalist group by Sam, an older corrupt lad. Sam plays a role in the book that is similar to the role of IRA "godfather".

#### **6.5.4 Representations of British Security Forces in 1980s Novels**

Representations of the British Army appear in nineteen of the fifty seven Troubles novels of the 1980s. There are positive representations in fourteen of the novels, and negative representations in three novels. In the children's book, *Maura's Angel* (Reid Banks, 1984), British soldiers capture Maura's father and brother and take them back to prison, but this is represented as a positive outcome for the mother and the children. Sergeant Burns in *No Sanctuary* (Harriott, 1984) rapes Tina, who is then

tarred and feathered. He collects her from the hospital and brings her to his hotel. She hangs herself, and Burns pursues Sullivan.

The RUC appear in four novels. Seymour's *Field of Blood* (1985) reprises the character of Howard Rennie. Sarah Michael's *Justice* (1988) is about an RUC man who avenges the death of his wife and children. Although he is extremely violent, the characters he meets along the way approve of his behaviour. In *The Prisoner's Wife*, the RUC is represented in a positive way in the character of Mackel, and in a negative way in the character of Superintendent Black. In Molloy's *No Mate for the Magpie*, Annie's father is taken to prison by the B-Specials, who are also represented as baton-wielding thugs in the Burntollet march episode.

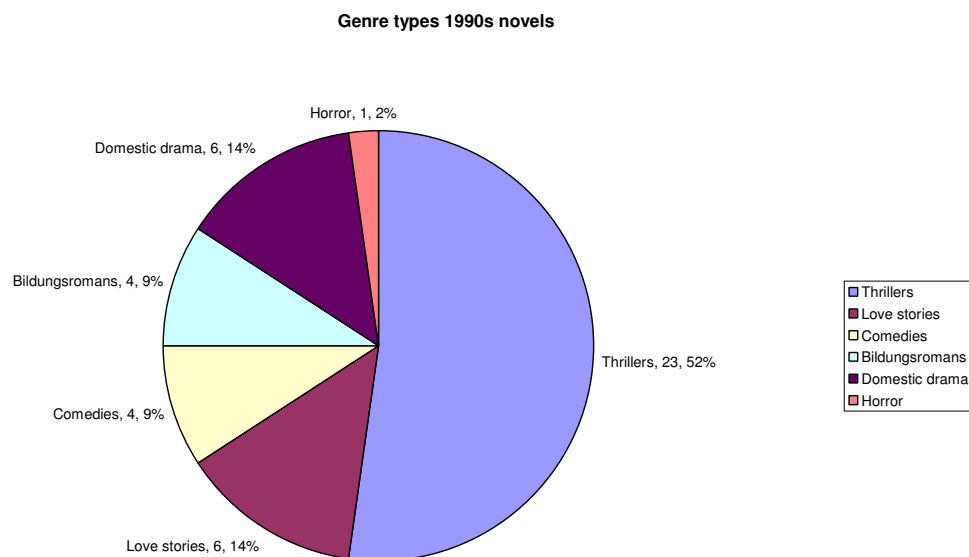
The British secret service is represented in four novels, *The Terrorist Conspiracy* (Holloway, 1982), *Confessional* (Higgins, 1985), *Juniper* (Murphy, 1987) and Ian Rankin's early novel, *Watchman* (1988). The secret service is represented in a positive light in all four novels. There are positive Garda characters in Mary Bringle's *Death of an Unknown Man* (1987) and John Brady's *A Stone of the Heart* (1988), both crime novels. The British police is represented in two novels. In Newman's *The Testing Ground* (1987), the policeman, Jack Bentham, starts off as a decent, idealistic policeman, but under pressure from the SAS, he capitulates and covers up British Army "dirty tricks" in Northern Ireland. Frank Pagan, the British policeman in Campbell Armstrong's *Jig* (1987) is a more positive representation. The FBI is represented in two novels, Michael MacNamara's *The Sovereign Solution* (1980) and George V. Higgins' *The Patriot Game* (1982), and the CIA is represented in Tom Clancy's *Patriot Games* (1987). All representations of American secret service

personnel are positive. James Kelly's *The Marrow from the Bone* (1987) is the only novel in the research set to contain a character who is ex-Irish army.

Eighteen of the fifty seven novels in the 1980s sub-set are based primarily in Belfast. Fourteen novels are based in other parts of Northern Ireland, categorised in this study as the "rural North". Seven novels are set in London, four in Dublin, four in Derry and two in New York. There are seven novels which are set in rural areas in the Republic of Ireland.

## 6.6 Troubles Fiction Novels of the 1990s: Syntagmatic Analysis

The percentages and number of novels by genre in the 1990s sub-set is in given in Figure 40.



**Figure 40: 1990s novels by genre**

Of the forty-two novelists in the 1990s sub-set of forty four novels, it is possible to identify the nationality of forty novelists. Twenty nine novelists are Irish, twenty of

whom are from Northern Ireland, and nine are from the Republic. Six novelists are English, one is Scottish and one novelist is Welsh. Three novelists are American. Of the twenty three thrillers in the set, the nationality of twenty-one novelists is known. Fourteen thriller writers are Irish, four are English, and the rest of the set is made up of a Scottish novelist, an American, and a Welsh novelist. Of the six love stories novelists, three are Irish, two of whom are from the Republic and one is Northern Irish, two novelists are American, and one is English. Four of the six domestic drama novelists are from Northern Ireland, while the other two domestic drama novelists are from the Republic of Ireland. There are two comic novelists in this sub-set, Edward Toman and Colin Bateman, and both are Northern Irish. Three of Bateman's novels are included in the sub-set. Three novels have been categorised as *bildungsroman*, and they are written by Irish novelists. There is one horror novel in the sub-set written by Sean Hutson, an English novelist.

### 6.6.1 1990s Thrillers

Figure 41 shows the novels in each of the sub-categories of Troubles thrillers in the data set, published during the 1990s.

Thrillers			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Moore, B.	Lies of Silence	1990	Thriller (hostage)
White, S.	The Shamrock Boy	1990	Thriller (chase)
Esler, G.	Loyalties	1990	Thriller (chase, journalist's story)
Hill, N.	Death Grows on You	1990	Thriller (foiled Republican operation, brother and sister)
Joyce, J.	The Trigger Man	1990	Thriller (chase)
Bennett, R.	The Second Prison	1991	Thriller (chase)
Kebbe, J.	The Armalite Maiden	1991	Thriller (chase)
Powers, M.S.	Come the Executioner	1991	Thriller (British army dirty tricks)
Royce, K.	A Wild Justice	1992	Thriller (chase)

Thrillers			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Clarke, S.	Soldier E: SAS: Sniper Fire in Belfast.	1993	Thriller (chase, memoirs)
Coogan, P.	The General	1993	Thriller (love story)
Cunningham, P.	Who Trespass Against Us.	1993	Thriller (chase)
McMahon, B.	Nights in Armour.	1993	Thriller (memoirs of security forces)
Stevens, G.	Provo	1993	Thriller (chase)
Strong, T.	The Tick-Tock Man	1994	Thriller (journalists story)
Daniels, J.	They told me you were dead.	1994	Thriller (chasing an IRA activist)
Holland, J.	Walking Corpses	1994	Thriller (chase, supergrass)
McEldowney, E.	A Kind of Homecoming.	1994	Thriller (crime, establishment intrigue)
McNamee, E.	Resurrection Man,	1994	Thriller (journalists story)
Rooney, S.	Early Many A Morning	1994	Thriller (foiled Republican operation, chase, love story)
Rice, D.	Blood Guilt	1994	Thriller (journalist)
Holland, J.	The Prisoner's Wife,	1995	Thriller (IRA in-fighting, peace process)
Weston, S. & P. Hill	Cause of Death	1995	Thriller (chase, revenge)
Hurd, D.	The Shape of Ice	1998	Thriller (political, peace process)

**Figure 41: Sub-categories of the thriller genre: 1990s**

Eleven of the thrillers in the 1990s research set can be categorised as chase novels. In four of these thrillers there are representations of repentant IRA activists who either want to leave the IRA, or who have left the IRA. In Joe Joyce's *The Trigger Man* (1990), both the IRA and the Gardai chase Fergus Callan, a former IRA hitman, while Dermot McGarvey, in *The Shamrock Boy* (White, 1990), is a repentant IRA man trying to escape to the USA, pursued by Sergeant Biddle, whose son McGarvey killed by mistake. Jack Holland's *Walking Corpses* (1994) is another chase novel about a former IRA activist, but in this novel the IRA activist is an informer, Christopher Curry, who wants to retract his confessions, and is chased by his handlers and by the IRA. The fourth thriller in this group is Ronan Bennett's *The Second Prison* (1991),

in which the hero, former IRA commander, Augustus Kane, chases his ex-colleague, Dec, an informer, while the British detective, Tempest chases Kane and his former IRA cell.

In Kenneth Royce's *A Wild Justice* (1992), the hero is an undercover RUC intelligence agent, Jamie Patterson, who masquerades as a Loyalist prisoner to shadow Con Daley, an IRA man. They are chased by the Provisional IRA and the RUC. Gavin Esler's *Loyalties* (1990) is a relatively conventional novel in which an escaped IRA prisoner, P.J. O'Neill, who plans to blow up the royal yacht Britannia, kidnaps a professor to teach the IRA about explosives. *They Told Me You Were Dead* (Daniels, 1994) is another conventional chase novel in which a British soldier, Richard Norris, pursues an IRA man who killed his brother. Gordon Stevens *Provo* (1993) is comparatively unconventional in relation to the other novels in the chase thriller sub-group in that both the hero, British security forces representative Cathy Nolan, and the villain, IRA agent Philippa Walker, known as Sleeper, are women. In this novel, the IRA plans to kidnap Prince Charles and Princess Diana, but the plot is foiled by the intervention of Cathy Nolan.

British characters are chased in three novels. In Jonathan Kebbe's *The Armalite Maiden* (1990), Sergeant Marcus King, who is disillusioned with British Army methods and wants to expose them, is chased by SAS men. In *Who Trespass Against Us* (Cunningham, 1993) the IRA and the Security Forces chase Adam Coleraine, British anti-terrorist agent, who is out to avenge the murder of his daughter by the IRA. In *Cause of Death* (Weston and Hill, 1995), maverick SAS man, Naylor,

who is trying to prevent peace settlement talks, is chased by another ex-SAS man, Jim Scala, in a novel co-written by Simon Weston.

Two novels in this sub-set, both published in 1994, are categorised as journalists' novels. McNamee's *Resurrection Man* is relatively highly cited in the secondary literature, but David Rice's *Blood Guilt* is not cited at all. *Blood Guilt* concerns Con Emmett, an IRA man who had to escape to the USA in 1957. He works as a journalist in Carbondale, Illinois. After the Troubles have started, Con visits Ireland, and writes a syndicated article explaining the Irish situation. The IRA threatens to shoot him if he does not return and write for the IRA, but he refuses.

Eoin MacNamee's *Resurrection Man* set in the 1970s, concerns two Belfast journalists, Ryan and Coppinger, who are tracking a gang called the Resurrection Men. This fictional gang is based on a real Loyalist gang which operated in Belfast in the 1970s, known as the Shankill Butchers. The main villain in the novel is Victor Kelly, a Protestant UVF thug. Victor is manipulated by McClure, who is the Loyalist equivalent of the IRA "godfather" type. McClure finally sets up Victor's murder. In many ways the novel is conventional in its portrayal of a violent Belfast, but is unusual in focusing on the UVF, specifically on the Shankill Butchers, rather than on the IRA.

Three of the 1990s thrillers take the form of memoirs about different types of activists involved in the Troubles. Blair McMahon's *Nights in Armour* (1993) is about the RUC, Shaun Clarke's *Soldier E: SAS: Sniper Fire in Belfast* (1993), is one of a series of novels published by 22 Books, each of which focuses on a different campaign in which the SAS has been involved, while Sean Rooney's *Early Many a*

*Morning* (1994) is the memoirs of a still active IRA man who reflects on his early involvement in the IRA in 1972.

Three thrillers are concerned with foiled Republican plots. In two novels, the protagonist is female. Nicki Hill's *Death Grows on You* (1990) is about a Protestant woman, Belle Johnston, who returns to Armagh from Belfast with her sons because she identified a girl who planted a bomb and reported it. Belle left her husband, UDR man, Sam Johnston, after her brother, John Neill, was blown up by a bomb planted in Sam's car. Belle takes a job as Pat Quinn's secretary at Covey school, but discovers that Pat is an IRA bomber instructed to kill her. Belle does not inform on Pat, and in return he goes south without killing her. In *The General* (Coogan, 1993), the General leaves his fortune to the heroine, his grand-daughter, Charlie, if she is made a general by the time she reaches forty years of age. Belfast Catholic, Jamie Lappin joins the British Army and falls in love with Charlie, while his friend, Gerry Madden, becomes PIRA Chief of Staff. By 1993, PIRA is involved in a "terror international" campaign to kill the Prince of Wales. Charlie is given an SAS team to conduct a guerrilla war. Jamie shoots Madden and marries Charlie, now a major-general.

Terence Strong's *The Tick Tock Man* (1994) is a foiled Republican plot novel. In this novel, an IRA unit codenamed AIDAN, run by Clodagh Dougan and her bomb-maker father Hughie, terrorises Britain to disrupt peace talks between Britain and the Republic. Tom Harrison, the Security Service bomb disposal expert, influences copy written by American journalist, Casey Mullins, to goad AIDAN into making such complicated bombs that Hughie Dougan blows himself up.



Two thrillers are concerned with “dirty tricks” campaigns within the British establishment. In M. S. Powers’ *Come the Executioner* (1992) Robert Larski, a journalist, goes to Belfast to investigate the death of his brother, an army captain, and uncovers army irregularities. At the same time, Chief Inspector Harwood from the London Metropolitan police is in Belfast investigating RUC irregularities, in a novel which historically is close to, and post-dates John Stalker’s Northern Ireland investigations. Eugene McEldowney’s *A Kind of Homecoming* (1994) concerns “dirty tricks” campaigns within the RUC and the British Army.

Brian Moore’s *Lies of Silence* (1990) is a hostage novel in which Michael Dillon, manager of the Clarence hotel, Belfast, and his wife, Moira, are held hostage by four IRA men. Dillon can identify one of the hostage takers, and the dilemma underpinning the novel is whether he should inform or keep silent. Douglas Hurd’s *The Shape of Ice* (1999) is a political thriller about Simon Russell, the Conservative PM, who is recovering from a mild heart attack. The Breakaways, a maverick offshoot of the IRA, has bombed Newry. Simon launches the League of Action for Peace, inviting Northern Irish people who are members of legitimate political parties to join. The Breakaways call a halt to action planned for “the mainland” (194). After a series of crises, the PM dies of a heart attack.

### 6.6.2 1990s Love Stories

Three of the six love stories are written by women, and three by men. Figure 42 shows the love stories published during the 1990s.

Love stories			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Manning, K.	The Between People	1990	Love story (across the barricades)

Love stories			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Shriver, L.	Ordinary Decent Criminals	1993	Love story (across the barricades)
Healy, D.	A Goat's Song.	1995	Love story
O'Riordan, K.	Involved	1995	Love story (informing on the IRA)
McLiam Wilson, R.	Eureka Street	1996	Love story
Weber, K.	The Music Lesson	1999	Love story

**Figure 42: Love stories in the 1990s primary data set**

Three of the love stories by women are “love-across-the-barricades” novels, but the stories are not conventional ones about Catholic girls falling for British army soldiers; in these novels, the barriers are a little more complicated. Kitty Manning’s *The Between-People* (1990), set in Armagh, tells the story of Kate, the daughter of a Protestant mother and a Catholic father from the Republic of Ireland, who moved back to Armagh with her mother after her father and brother were killed in London in the Second World War. Kate had tuberculosis when she was sixteen and was cared for by Dr Robert Steele. They fall in love, but Steele is married. Twenty years later, during the Troubles, Kate, a divorced journalist with a partner in London, takes her mother back to Armagh, and is devastated to discover that Steele is dead.

In Lionel Shriver’s *Ordinary Decent Criminals* (1993), American woman Estrin Lancaster becomes involved with Farrell O’Phelan, a freelance bomb disposal man. Farrell also has an affair with Roisin St Clair, a poet, and Catholic mistress of Angus McBride, an important Unionist MP, organising a border poll. The power-sharing initiative is voted for, and Farrell tells Angus and Estrin about his affair with Roisin, claiming that the affair was to keep Roisin quiet about McBride. Angus tells the RIPS, a fictitious Catholic Republican terrorist organisation, that Farrell is having an affair with a Protestant and they kill Estrin. The power sharing fizzles out.

In Kate O’Riordan *Involved* (1995), Kitty Fitzgerald from West Cork falls in love with Danny O’Neill, whose brother, Eamon, is an IRA “godfather”. Kitty informs on Eamon and Danny leaves her. Three years later she is living in Saskatchewan, known as Cathleen, with Danny’s son, Kevin. Eamon discovers where she is. The protagonists in this novel are both Catholic, but the gap between the Northern Irish Catholic family involved in the IRA, and the middle-class Irish Republic Catholic family is enormous. Both *Ordinary Decent Criminals* and *Involved* could also be categorised as novels about betrayal and the consequences of betrayal.

The fourth love story in the sub-set written by a woman is also about betrayal. In Katherine Weber’s *The Music Lesson* (1999) Patricia Dolan is a research librarian in the Frick Art Reference Library in New York who has an affair with her young Irish cousin, Michael O’Driscoll. He involves her in a plot to steal a Vermeer painting, “The Music Lesson”, and she keeps the painting in a cottage in Ballyroe, in West Cork. The Irish Republican Liberation Organisation has substituted a fake Vermeer for the real one, but the authorities will not pay the ransom because they say it is the original. Patricia threatens to tell the authorities after IRLO kills her friend. Eventually, she buries the real Vermeer with her friend, Mary.

Dermot Healy’s *A Goat’s Song* (1995), is a love story about a drunken playwright, Jack Ferris, who is waiting in Donegal for the return of his Northern Irish Protestant, actress girlfriend, Catherine Adams. Jack Ferris imagines Catherine and her past, beginning with the story of Jonathan Adams, Catherine’s father, a RUC officer, who married Maisie, a Protestant from the Republic of Ireland. Robert McLiam Wilson’s *Eureka Street* (1996) is probably most optimistic of all the

Troubles novels in the research set. Set in Belfast in 1994, this novel tells the story of Chuckie Lurgan, a fat unemployed Belfast Protestant, who lives with his mother, Peggy, in Eureka Street, and who discovers that he can make a fortune from his absurd fantasies. His educated Catholic friend, Jake Jackson, works as a repossession man. Chuckie becomes involved with the American girl Max, and he follows her to the States where he learns that she is pregnant. The cease-fire is announced, Chuckie and Max return to Belfast, Chuckie's mother has a lesbian relationship with her best friend from childhood, and Jake falls in love with Aoirghe.

### 6.6.3 1990s Domestic Dramas

There are six domestic dramas in the 1990s sub-set. Figure 43 shows the love stories published during the 1990s.

Domestic drama			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
James, E.	Taking the Forbidden Road	1991	Domestic drama (love across the barricades)
Costello, M.	Titanic Town	1992	Domestic drama
Daly, I.	All Fall Down	1992	Domestic drama
Duffaud, B.	A Wreath upon the Dead	1992	Domestic drama (historical, love across the barricades)
Park, D.	The Rye Man	1994	Domestic drama
Quinn, J.	Generations of the Moon.	1995	Domestic drama

**Figure 43: Domestic dramas in the 1990s primary data set**

Four domestic dramas situate the Troubles in an historical context, reflecting on the problems that sectarianism, at the structural level of society, can have on private relationships. Evelyn James's *Taking the Forbidden Road* (1991) is the story of Leah, a Protestant girl from Belfast, who marries a Catholic farmer, Ray Anderson, from Muldare in County Fermanagh, in the late 1950s. Despite pressures from family and

community, the marriage is happy, and they raise their boys as Catholics and their daughter as Protestant. When the Troubles start, Ray is shot. Deirdre Duffaud's *A Wreath Upon the Dead* (1992) takes a longer view of history. Maureen Murphy's friend Kathleen O'Flaherty has an affair with Eric McLeod, and has a daughter Sarah. In the late 1970s, the Troubles hit Claghan badly. Sarah, having discovered that Eric is her father, kidnaps him. Police and army surround the house looking for IRA activist Nuala McCormack. The house collapses and Sarah is killed, having already killed Eric. The novel explores the gap between history and myth. Maureen wants to write a novel about the Scottish heiress, Marianne McLeod, and Cormac O'Flaherty, who married against her family's wishes, and died of cholera en route to USA in 1847. When she reads Marianne's journal and letters, she discovers that Marianne was not a heroine, but a plain, silly girl, while Cormac was a cynical opportunist.

In John Quinn's *Generations of the Moon* (1995), Brian and Hannah Johnston are children of a "mixed" marriage between Catholic Sarah McKeivitt, and Protestant Gordon Johnston. Gordon is shot dead by the IRA and Sarah commits suicide. When their parents die, Brian is brought up by Sarah's sister in South Armagh, and Hannah is brought up by Gordon's sister in Sloe Hill farm on the Northern side of Monaghan-Armagh border. Brian becomes a priest and Hannah marries William Barden, a clergyman. In 1971, IRA gunmen break into William and Hannah's house in Sloe Hill and shoot William. In 1975, Brian goes to Cullybroe and speaks at a peace and reconciliation rally. David Park's *The Rye Man* (1994), deals with children and institutions. John Cameron returns to County Down as a primary headmaster and tries to help an educationally subnormal child against her parents' wishes. There are

problems when he tries to organise trips with the local Catholic school because the Catholic headmaster's brother was in the IRA. The child goes missing and is found dead by John.

Ita Daly's *All Fall Down* (1992) is set in Dublin. The Troubles feature in the novel when Aubrey McGuickan, the son of builder, P.J. McGuickan, becomes involved in a reconciliation event on a field between the north and south of Ireland. In a re-enactment of the symbolic exchange of the brown bull, Bo Cuailgne, P.J.'s daughter Annabel plays Queen Maeve, but the bull runs amok and kills her. Mary Costello's *Titanic Town* (1992) is set in Belfast in the early 1970s. Annie Phelimy's mother, Bernie, becomes involved in a campaign to persuade the IRA to stop shooting. Finbarr, who is a "godfather" character in the IRA, and known to Annie's parents, persuades her to present their demands to the British Government, which does not accept them. Bernie and her friend try to get people to sign a peace petition and hand it over to the Government in Stormont. The local people attack Annie and her siblings, and the family is moved away. Years later Annie writes her memoirs in the middle of the hunger strikes.

#### **6.6.4 1990s *Bildungsromans***

Four novels in the research set that have been categorised as *bildungsromans*, and in all four novels the protagonist is a young Protestant. In two of the novels, the protagonist is a young teenager, on the brink of adolescence. David Park's *The Healing* (1992) is about twelve years old Samuel Anderson, who saw his father, a part-time UDR man, killed in a sectarian attack, and who subsequently loses the power of speech. Samuel is befriended by the uncanny Mr Ellison when they move to

Belfast. Mr Ellison, whose son Billy is a Loyalist terrorist, believes that he and Samuel are chosen to cleanse the city of evil. Mr Ellison stabs Billy and is picked up by the police. Samuel finds the scrap book Mr Ellison keeps of newspaper cuttings about every murder carried during the Troubles. He tears the scrap book up and is able to speak again.

Glenn Patterson's *Burning Your Own* (1993) is set in July 1969. It is the story of eleven years old Mal Martin over the course of one summer school holiday. Mal makes friends with Francy Hagan, a Catholic lad, who has a den in the dump. Trouble breaks out on the twelfth of July, and the local people form a mob that heads for Francy's house, driving out the Hagan family. Mal, who has been locked in his room for publicly siding with Francy, escapes in time to see Francy dowsing braziers with petrol. Francy cuts up a Tricolour, blows a kiss to Mal, and kicks over the brazier, setting fire to himself and the rats.

In the other two novels, the protagonists are young people near the end of their school days. *Lost Fathers*, a novel by Rhonda Paisley, the daughter of Ian Paisley, was published in 1995. In this novel, set in East Belfast, Diane marries Brian, a policeman, while Genevieve goes to Queen's University, and Janet, the heroine, studies art in an American college. After college, there is a rumour that Genevieve terminated the Reverend Walker's baby. Brian is shot on duty and dies after being in a coma for over three years. Genevieve, now married to Rev. Walker, comes home from Australia for Christmas, and tells the girls that her aborted baby was Jack's, but they do not believe her. Jack and Diane marry, but Jack is blown up by a bomb.

Before he dies, he tells Janet that Genevieve’s baby was his, and she advises him to say nothing.

Geoffrey Beattie’s *The Corner Boys* (1998) is about James, a working class scholarship boy, who lives in East Belfast. He becomes involved with Shannon, a Catholic girl, who tells him that a Provisional IRA taxi driver raped her. James manipulates Tucker, his UDA friend, into an attack in which Tucker’s UDA brigade shoots the IRA taxi driver, but Tucker is killed in the action. Billy, James’s friend and Shannon’s ex-husband, tells James that Shannon’s brother was involved in drugs and the IRA double kneecapped him. Shannon told Billy that one of them raped her hoping Billy would get him shot, but Billy refused. James goes back to school and his memoirs are written during the ceasefire while he prepares for university in England.

Figure 44 shows the *bildungsroman* novels published during the 1990s.

<b><i>Bildungsromans</i></b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Dominant Affective Genre</b>
Park, D.	The Healing	1992	<i>Bildungsroman</i>
Patterson, G.	Burning your Own	1993	<i>Bildungsroman</i>
Paisley, R.	Lost Fathers	1995	<i>Bildungsroman</i>
Beattie, G.	The Corner Boys.	1999	<i>Bildungsroman</i> (reference to peace process)

**Figure 44: *Bildungsromans* in the 1990s primary data set**

### 6.6.5 1990s Comedies

There are four comic novels in the research sub-set. Three of them are comic thrillers, written by Colin Bateman, while the fourth, *Shambles Corner* (1993), is written by Edward Toman. In this novel, the butt of the joke is the Roman Catholic church, specifically, the Catholic church as a moral force in Ireland. Toman’s targets include the Christian Brothers schools, contraception, charismatic cults, and pilgrimages. Joe



Feely, who is taking his speechless son on a pilgrimage to regain his speech, knocked out of him by the Christian Brothers, retrieves the statue of the Silent Madonna and takes it to the Patriot's bar in the Shambles, Armagh, where Magee and the Portadown boys, in pursuit of the statue, slit his throat. They lose interest in the Madonna, and The Patriot hides it in his loft, awaiting the unification of Ireland.

In Colin Bateman's *Cycle of Violence* (1995), Miller, a Belfast journalist, works in Crossmaheart replacing missing journalist, Jamie Milburn, and becomes involved with Jamie's manic depressive girlfriend, Marie Young, who tells him she was sexually assaulted as a teenager. Miller kills all the attackers through a series of accidents. Martin O'Hagan, his editor, was an attacker, and he tells Miller that it was Marie's sister who was attacked and hanged herself. O'Hagan killed Jamie Milburn because he found out. Marie slits her wrists. After the funeral, Miller is sold a mouldy loaf by the Happy Neighbours shop. He complains, and Mr Happy Neighbour shoots him dead.

*Divorcing Jack* (1995) and *Of Wee Sweetie Mice and Men* (1996) are both about Dan Starkey, a Belfast journalist. In *Divorcing Jack*, he is involved in a chase for a tape that contains a confession by the Alliance party leader, Mark Brinn, that in 1974 he planted a bomb in a restaurant which killed a number of people attending a dog club social night. The novel includes Loyalist paramilitaries called Cow Pat Coogan and Mad Dog. In *Of Wee Sweetie Mice and Men* (1996) Dan Starkey covers Bobby McMaster's fight against Mike Tyson in New York on St Patrick's Day. McMaster's wife, Mary, is kidnapped by a Republican splinter group, which wants McMaster to knock out Tyson, and call for a return to Republican violence. There is a

shoot-out and Mary is rescued. McMaster is knocked out in the fourth round by Tyson. Figure 45 shows the comedies published during the 1990s.

Comedy			
Author	Title	Date	Dominant Affective Genre
Toman, E.	Shambles Corner.	1993	Comedy
Bateman, C.	Cycle of Violence	1995	Comedy (thriller)
Bateman, C.	Divorcing Jack	1995	Comedy (thriller)
Bateman, C.	Of Wee Sweetie Mice and Men.	1996	Comedy

**Figure 45: Comedies in the 1990s primary data set**

### 6.6.6 1990s Horror Novel

The 1990s research sub-set also contains the only horror novel in the overall research set. Shaun Hutson is an English horror novelist, whose novel, *Renegades*, was published in 1991. In this novel, a stained glass window, bearing the depiction of a huge monster, which belonged to French, twelfth-century, child-murdering nobleman, Gilles de Rais, comes into the possession of arms dealer, David Callahan, who is paying renegade IRA men to stop any peace initiative in Ireland. Callahan is shot by the Gardai, and the monster enters his body, giving him immortality. Callaghan awakens in a coffin in a grave; his eyes and mouth are sewn up, embalming fluid has been pumped into his body, and he realises that he will live in eternal agony.

## 6.7 Troubles Fiction Novels of the 1990s: Paradigmatic Analysis

### 6.7.1 Representation of Heroes in 1990s Novels

All forty four novels in this sub-set have identifiable heroes. In eleven novels, the heroes are women. Of these, four are love stories: *The Between People* (Manning, 1990), *Ordinary Decent Criminals* (Shriver, 1993), *Involved* (O’Riordan, 1995), and

*The Music Lesson* (Weber, 1999). Three are thrillers: *Death Grows on You* (Hill, 1990), *The General* (Coogan, 1993), and *Provo* (Stevens, 1993). Three are domestic dramas: *Taking the Forbidden Road* (James, 1991), *A Wreath Upon the Dead* (Duffaud, 1992), and *Titanic Town* (Costello, 1993); and one, *Lost Fathers* (Paisley, 1995), is a *bildungsroman*. In three of these novels, *The Between People*, *Involved* and *A Wreath Upon the Dead*, the women heroes are writers. These heroes are categorised primarily by sex rather than by profession or calling because the interesting trend in the 1990s novels in the research set is the trend towards a greater percentage of women heroes. Nine of the novels are written by women. Two novels, *The General* and *Provo*, both thrillers, are written by men, and in both the leading characters, Charlie Aitken, in *The General*, and Cathy Nolan, in *Provo* are British army officers.

In seven of the novels, journalists or writers are heroes. Three of these novels are thrillers, *Loyalties* (Esler, 1990), *Come the Executioner* (Powers, 1991) and *Resurrection Man* (McNamee, 1994), and three are Colin Bateman's comic thrillers, *Cycle of Violence* (1995), *Divorcing Jack* (1995) and *Of Wee Sweetie Mice and Men* (1996). Dermot Healey's *A Goat's Song* (1995), is a love story in which the main protagonist is drunken playwright, Jack Ferris, although the novel is as much about his girlfriend's father, Jonathan Adams, whose life story Jack imagines. In six novels, the heroes are characters involved with the IRA, but interestingly, in four of them, the character is ex-IRA, *The Shamrock Boy* (White, 1990), *The Trigger Man* (Joyce, 1990), *The Second Prison* (Bennett, 1990) and *Blood Guilt* (Rice, 1994). In Jack Holland's *Walking Corpses* (1994), the main protagonist is an IRA informer, Tofer.

Holland introduces a more sympathetic foil in the character of Mickey, Tofer's, cousin, a petty crook, and former boxer. The hero of David Rice's *Blood Guilt* (1994) is a former IRA activist turned journalist, whom the IRA wants to write for them.

Five of the novels, all thrillers, have British army or ex-British army soldiers as heroes, and these are *The Armalite Maiden* (Kebbe, 1990), *Soldier E: SAS: Sniper Fire in Belfast* (Clarke, 1993), *They Told Me You Were Dead* (Daniels, 1994), *The Tick Tock Man* (Strong, 1994) and *Cause of Death* (Weston and Hill, 1995). The hero of Shaun Hutson's *Renegades* (1992) is a British counter terror agent. There are two novels in which RUC policemen are heroes, *A Wild Justice* (Royce, 1992) and *Nights in Armour* (McMahon, 1993) and two which feature Gardai officers, *Who Trespass Against Us* (Cunningham, 1993) and *A Kind of Homecoming* (McEldowney, 1994)

The heroes of three of the novels have been categorised as "Irish Catholics". These are Michael Dillon, the Belfast hotel manager taken hostage by the IRA in Brian Moore's *Lies of Silence* (1992), P.J. McGuickan, the rich builder in Ita Daly's *All Fall Down* (1992), and Joe Feely in Edward Toman's absurdist comedy *Shambles Corner* (1993). The heroes of three of the novels have been categorised as "Irish Protestants" in this study. They are John Cameron, the headmaster in David Park's *The Rye Man* (1994), Chuckie Lurgan in Robert McLiam Wilson's comedy *Eureka Street* (1995), and James, the working-class scholarship boy in Geoffrey Beattie's *The Corner Boys* (1998). Brian Johnston, the hero in John Quinn's *Generations of the Moon* (1995), is a Catholic priest. Samuel Anderson, the hero of David Park's novel *The Healing* (1992), is twelve years old, and Mal, the hero of Glenn Patterson's *Burning your Own* (1993) is an eleven year old schoolboy.

### 6.7.2 Representations of Women in 1990s Novels

There are representations of women in forty three of the forty four novels. Good wives or girlfriends appear in twenty of the forty three novels, and bad wives and girlfriends appear in thirteen novels. The good wife in Kebbe's *The Armalite Maiden* (1990) is Marcia, the pregnant wife of the British officer hero Marcus King, and she is contrasted with the bad wife of Dixie, the IRA terrorist, who takes valium and kills herself and her disabled child. The twist in Colin Bateman's black comedy *Cycle of Violence* (1995) is that the good girlfriend, Marie Young, is mentally unstable, and eventually kills herself. Dermot Healy's *A Goat's Song* (1995) contains representations of the good wife in Maisie Adams, wife of Jonathan and mother of Catherine, who is categorised in this study as a bad girlfriend. Robert McLiam Wilson's *Eureka Street* (1995) includes Max, Chuckie's American girlfriend, categorised as a good girlfriend, and Aoirghe, categorised as a bad girlfriend because for most of the novel she is represented as a narrow minded Republican. In Lionel Shriver's *Ordinary Decent Criminals* (1993), Estrin is the good girlfriend, and Roisin, the poet and mistress of Angus McBride and Farrell O'Phelan, is categorised as a bad girlfriend.

Mothers, or motherly characters, appear in twenty three of the novels. The mother in Kitty Manning's *The Between People* (1992) is very cold and distant. In Kate O'Riordan's *Involved* (1995), the mother, Ma O'Neill, supports her son, Eamon, who is an IRA "godfather". Patricia, the narrator of *The Music Lesson* (1999), has lost her child. Birth mothers appear in twenty of the novels, but there are also representations of other motherly women in some of the novels, and for the purposes

of this study they will also be included in the mothers' category. In *The Music Lesson*, Mary, who is a childless widow, befriends Patricia when she moves to Ireland, and eventually is killed by the IRLO. Aunt Kathy Minihan, in White's *The Armalite Maiden* (1990), is a strong Republican, but is disillusioned with the IRA, and tries to warn her American niece, Kathleen, against it. Brian and Hannah Johnston, in Quinn's *Generations of the Moon*, are brought up by aunts.

Daughters remain an important category of representation of women, and there are thirteen novels in the set that include representations of daughters. In two novels, *Provo* (1993) and *The Tick-Tock Man* (1994), the daughters are daughters of IRA activists and continue the family tradition. Difficult daughters are sometimes an index of more general problems. The daughter in McEldowney's *A Kind of Homecoming* (1994) is anorexic, while Jacqueline, the educationally challenged child in Park's *The Rye Man* (1994) is neglected and beaten by her parents. There are some rebel daughters. The rebel daughter, Sarah, in *A Wreath upon the Dead* (1992), kills her father, after her grandmother reveals his identity. The rebel daughter in *Shambles Corner*, Chastity McCoy, daughter of the Protestant preacher, Oliver Cromwell McCoy, converts to Catholicism. Jennifer Macauley in *They Told Me You Were Dead* (1994) is the daughter of an RUC man killed by the IRA, who now works as an undercover policewoman, seducing IRA men to obtain information.

Sisters feature in seven of the novels in this sub-set. Hill's novel *Death Grows on You* (1990) includes a particularly unusual representation of siblings. In this novel, there are two sets of siblings, brother and sister, and both sets of siblings are, or have been, involved in incestuous relationships. Clare O'Brien, the love-interest in

Rooney's *Early Many A Morning* (1994), is the sister of a former Official IRA man, who is killed because of his sister's relationship with the unnamed Provisional IRA man. Erin, the sister of Marie, the love-interest in Bateman's *Cycle of Violence* (1995), committed suicide after being raped by the four men later killed by Miller. Although she does not appear in the novel, but is only mentioned by Marie, she provides the motivation for the plot. IRA women appear in eight novels. These representations will be discussed in the section on representations of Republican activists.

### **6.7.3 Representations of Activists in 1990s Novels**

Representations of Republican activists appear in twenty-nine of the forty four novels in the sub-set. Representations of Loyalist activists appear in nine of the novels. In ten novels there are representations of the IRA activist as the cold, ruthless, often morally warped killer. Eight of these are thrillers, and two are love stories. In Weber's *The Music Lesson* (1998), the American heroine falls in love with her young Irish cousin, an IRLO activist, and this love affair warps her moral judgement. In three novels, the IRA activist is represented as an unprepossessing foot-soldier. In Blair McMahon's *Nights in Armour* (1993), the IRA activists are represented as less competent than the RUC, and in Simon Weston's *Cause of Death* (1995), the IRA activists are represented as less competent than the SAS, while in Moore's *Lies of Silence* (1990), the hostage-taker that Dillon catches a glimpse of is a spotty-faced teenager.

The stereotype of the IRA "godfather" makes an appearance in six novels, but in this sub-set, another related stereotype of the IRA "intellectual" has been identified. The IRA activist headmaster, Pat Quinn, in Hill's *Death Grows on You*

(1990), is an example of the type. Hill's treatment of Quinn is not sympathetic, but in the other examples of the IRA "intellectual" in the research group, the use of this stereotype tends to be related to a more sympathetic representation.

In Gavin Esler's *Loyalties* (1990), IRA man P.J O'Neill had a vocation as a young man, and considered joining the priesthood, but the vocation eventually took him to the IRA. He is charming, clever, and Jesuitical in his interview with the television journalist. He has a political vision of Ireland as a socialist republic and is embarrassed by the old style PIRA who can only criticise the British and have no views about the future. He is also completely involved in violence. The Commander-in-Chief in M. S. Powers' *Come the Executioner* (1991) runs a neat and tidy house, and provides tea and cakes when his henchmen come to meetings, but at the same time he orders the elimination of his enemies without any emotion. The heroes of Bennett's *The Second Prison* (1992) and Rooney's *Early Many A Morning* (1994) are both IRA men, but whereas Kane, in *The Second Prison*, is a released IRA prisoner and former activist, the nameless hero in Rooney's novel is still active. The stereotype of the repentant IRA man appears in three novels, all thrillers, and the informer appears in three thrillers.

The stereotype of the IRA female terrorist appears in eight novels, seven of which are thrillers, and one, *A Wreath upon the Dead*, which is a domestic drama. Some of the women are deflected from their commitment to the IRA by love. In Joe Joyce's *The Trigger Man* (1990), Fergus Callan, the hero, is a repentant IRA man whose wife, Maire, is on the army council, but she is also an informer, and explains that she is betraying the IRA for the sake of her son. Nona Lane, in *Who Trespass*



*Against Us* (Cunningham, 1993) planted the bomb that killed Adam Coleraine's daughter, but regrets her action. She becomes pregnant by Coleraine, and eventually sacrifices her own life to save him. Coogan reverses the relationship between love and commitment in his representation of Siobhann McCaillim, in *The General* (1993). Siobhann takes over as PIRA Chief of Staff, after she betrays her lover, Gerry, former Chief of Staff.

In Jack Holland's *Walking Corpses* (1994), Deirdre Duggan is bitter about Christopher Curry, the informer, on a personal as well as a political level, as he was both her IRA boss and former lover. She brings him back to Ireland to take part in a television interview on IRA orders, but shoots him after the interview. The implication is that the private emotion is stronger than the political discipline in the female activist. In *The Tick-Tock Man* (1994), Clodagh Dougan, the daughter of an IRA man, takes over as leader of AIDAN. She had an affair with a fellow student who turned out to be a British soldier. There are two female activists in Jonathan Kebbe's *The Armalite Maiden* (1990), one of whom, Feeley, is cold and ruthless, while the other one, Annie, is an idealistic, red-haired, Irish-American sniper, who hates bombs and the killing of innocent people, while the binary oppositions in Gordon Stevens's *Provo* (1993), are the female IRA activist, Philippa Walker, and female British Army officer, Cathy Nolan.

Loyalist activists appear in nine novels. In four of the novels, *The Healing* (1992), *Shambles Corner* (1993), *Resurrection Man* (1994) and *Cause of Death* (1995), Loyalist activists are represented as ruthless terrorists. The stereotype of the fiery preacher linked with outlawed Loyalist terrorists appears in *Lies of Silence*

(1990), *Cycle of Violence* (1995) and *Generations of the Moon* (1995). In Colin Bateman's *Of Wee Sweetie Mice and Men* (1996), Stanley Matchitt, a former Loyalist terrorist joins Starkey as part of Bobby McMaster's entourage. In this comic novel, Matchitt falls for Sissy Smith, the large Afro-American private detective. The narrator in Geoffrey Beattie's *The Corner Boys* (1998) socialises with Loyalist activists, and his friend, Tucker, is initiated into the UDA. He is then considered to be the most important man in the family home because his father was not recruited. He becomes a protection racketeer, but is killed on his assignment. This novel also includes a character that is the UDA equivalent of the IRA "godfather".

#### **6.7.4 Representation of British Security Forces in 1990s Novels**

The British army appears in thirteen of the forty four novels. The British soldier is the hero of six of the novels: Sean Doyle, in Shaun Hutson's *Renegades* (1991), Lieutenant Cranfield in Shaun Clarke's *Soldier E: SAS Sniperfire* (1993), Charlie Aitken in Coogan's *The General* (1993), Cathy Nolan in Gordon Stevens's *Provo* (1993), Tom Harrison in Terence Strong's *The Tick-Tock Man* (1994), Jim Scala in Simon Weston's *Cause of Death* (1995). Richard Norris in James Daniels' 1994 novel, *They Told Me You Were Dead*, is an ex-British army officer out to avenge the murder of his British Army officer son. The theme of the British Army soldier who avenges the murder of his son is also found in Stuart White's *The Shamrock Boy* (1990), while in Cunningham's *Who Trespass Against Us* (1993), vengeance takes the form of Adam Coleraine avenging the death of his daughter blown up by an IRA bomb.

There are representations of corrupt or evil British soldiers in four novels. In Jonathan Kebbe's *The Armalite Maiden* (1990), the SAS soldiers are represented as violent, corrupt, and sexually voracious. The plot of M. S. Powers' *Come the Executioner* (1991) concerns a journalist's search for the truth about the British Army's cover-up of his soldier brother's death. Prescott, in McEldowney's *A Kind of Homecoming* (1994) is an amoral, upper class English officer, who believes that the solution to the Northern Irish situation is to send in the troops to kill all IRA activists and "fellow travellers". The SAS man Michael Naylor, in Simon Weston's *Cause of Death*, is a mad, violent character, intent on preventing a cease-fire in Northern Ireland. The cause of this madness is the torture and murder of his girlfriend in Columbia while he and the hero, Scala, a good SAS man, were serving there.

There are representations of the RUC in ten novels. The RUC is represented in a positive way in eight novels, Mulraine in *The Armalite Maiden* (Kebbe, 1990), Detective Inspector Randall in Brian Moore's *Lies of Silence* (1990), undercover intelligence agent, Jamie Patterson in *A Wild Justice* (Royce, 1992), Peter Ewart in *The General* (Coogan, 1993), the RUC men in *Nights in Armour* (McMahon, 1993), Megarry in *A Kind of Homecoming* (McEldowney, 1994), Brian, the murdered RUC man in *Lost Fathers* (Paisley, 1995), and Jonathan Adams in *A Goat's Song* (Healy, 1995). The RUC is represented as corrupt in M. S. Powers' *Come the Executioner* (1991), and Simon Weston's *Cause of Death* (1995). Sam Johnston, the heroine's estranged husband, in Nicki Hill's *Death Grows on You* (1990), is a UDR man who is represented as reliable and stable.

There are positive representations of Republic of Ireland detectives in George Keerins in Joe Joyce's *The Trigger Man* (1990), and in Brian Kilkenny in Cunningham's *Who Trespass Against Us* (1993). Kilkenny is represented as a decent man who is used by the Republic establishment for its own political ends, and who is finally imprisoned. In Ronan Bennett's chase thriller *The Second Prison* (1992) Tempest, the British police detective, chases Augustus Kane and his IRA cell, but in this representation, the detective is himself a psychopathic, power-seeking, gothic creation.

Eighteen of the forty three novels in the 1990s sub-set are set in Belfast. Seven novels are set in Armagh, or the towns surrounding it. Two of McCabe's novels are set in the fictional town of Crossmaheart, which is likely to be a fictional representation of Crossmaglen. Six novels are set in London, two novels are set in New York, and one is set in Dublin. Five novels are set in rural Northern Ireland. Dermot Healy's novel, *A Goat's Song*, is set mainly in County Mayo, but also in Belfast.

## **6.8 Discussion**

This chapter, which has described syntagmatic and paradigmatic representations in the novels of the primary research set, constitutes the representation of results. There are some general trends that emerge from this data set. Distribution of genre over time is fairly static in that the majority of novels in each of the historical sub-sets are thrillers. In the 1970s set 62% of the novels are thrillers, in the 1980s set, 53% are thrillers and in the 1990s set, 52% are thrillers.

The next largest category in percentage terms in the 1970s and the 1980s sub-sets is the domestic drama, and in each sub-set, 12% of the novels are domestic dramas. The second largest category in the 1990s sub-set is love stories, with 14% of the novels in the set being categorised as love stories. Love stories account for 9% of the 1970s set of novels, and 7% of the 1980s set of novels. Comedies account for three, or 6%, of the 1970s set of novels, and two of these were published in the early 1970s, four, or 9%, of the 1990s novels, and two, or 4%, of the 1980s novels.

This study is based on a random data set, not the complete set of Troubles novels, so it is not possible to make generalisations based on complete knowledge, but it might be possible to suggest that the random data set indicates trends in Troubles publishing, and it might be that publishing Troubles comedies was considered more appropriate during the early days of the Troubles and in the period leading up to and after the 1994 cease-fire. Another trend that is suggested by the data set is the increase in the publication of *bildungsromans* in the 1980s and 1990s. This is likely to be because the young Northern Irish writers who use the *bildungsroman* form were teenagers during the 1970s. They necessarily had to experience life in the Troubles to write about it retrospectively.

There are some paradigmatic categories that reappear across genres, across time, and these include the representation of IRA godfathers and psychopaths, the representation of Loyalist preachers, the representation of women as good wives and girlfriends, rebel daughters and IRA activists. The distribution of heroes across the whole set is of some interest. In the 1970s sub-set, of the forty-nine novels with identifiable heroes, ten are writers or film-makers, eight are British army personnel

and six are policemen. In the 1980s sub-set, of the fifty-seven novels, eleven of the heroes are women, six are IRA activists, six are young people, five are journalist or writers, and five are British security forces personnel. In the 1990s sub-set, eleven of the heroes are women, ten are journalists and writers, four are British army personnel and four are ex-IRA. There is only enough data here to suggest possible trends, but it would seem that journalists and writers are relatively popular as heroes in Troubles novels across the three decade time-span, unsurprisingly given that the creators of these novels are themselves writers, and sometimes journalists. In the 1970s, conventional British and Northern Irish establishment figures seem to have been relatively popular as heroes, but in the 1980s, there is a shift, and more novels have women as their main protagonists. The 1980s also see a slight trend towards the IRA activist as hero, a category previously almost entirely confined to Jack Higgins' novels. In the 1990s, novels based on the memoirs of army personnel became a publishing trend, probably following the publication of SAS memoirs such as Andy McNab's *Bravo Two Zero* (1992) and Chris Ryan's *The One that Got Away* (1995), and this more general trend in British publishing seems to have had some impact in Troubles fiction publishing.

The analysis undertaken in this study is iterative and inductive. The initial analysis recorded in this chapter has categorised novels by sub-genre, noting plots, and identified trends in representation. This information forms the base for the interpretative decisions regarding repetition, modification and challenge novels which are recorded in Chapter Four.

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**Appendix A: Example of the information recorded for each novel in Primary Sources database**

Bibliographic	Dominant Affective Genre	Plot Summary Label	Representation of key characters (heroes, women, activists, security personnel)	Modality Marker	Ideology Marker
<p>Harry's Game, Gerald Seymour, London, Collins, 1975</p>	<p>Thriller (chase)</p>	<p>IRA hitman, Billy Downs, shoots dead a Government Minister outside his London home and is smuggled back to Belfast. Captain Harry Brown is sent to chase the unknown IRA killer. He gets involved with Josephine Laverty whose friend Theresa knows who Downs is. On Harry's information, Theresa is arrested and interrogated by Howard Rennie, RUC officer, but she is so frightened that she hangs herself. Riots break out in the Republican areas of Belfast. Harry is watched by the IRA. Josephine guesses who Harry is and tells the IRA. They beat her up. Downs ambushes Rennie's house but Rennie shoots and injures him. Harry shoots Downs dead in front of his wife. Harry is shot by a soldier on patrol. He tries to pull himself out of danger but Downs's wife kills him.</p>	<p>Hero: Harry Brown: the British soldier. He is supposed to stay in a safe house in Belfast in a "nice Proddy bit" (65) but he breaks away and becomes involved with Josephine. He is a risk taker and totally focused on killing Billy Morrow.</p> <p>Women: Josephine Laverty: Catholic girl who is the cleaner at Harry's lodgings and gets involved with Harry. She learns who Harry is and tells the IRA but still gets badly beaten up.</p> <p>Theresa: daughter in the safe house in which Downs stays on his way back to Belfast. She guesses that he is the IRA killer and tells Josephine. Theresa is arrested and hangs herself.</p> <p>Downs wife: who does not like him involved in the action, but still loves him, and stands by her man. She shoots Harry at the end of the novel.</p> <p>Republican: Billy Downs: IRA killer who loses the taste for killing. He joins the IRA in the early days: "He started like most others as a teenager throwing rocks and abuse in the early days at those wonderful, heaven sent targets ... the British army, with their yellow cards forbidding them to shoot in almost every situation, their heavy Macron shields, which ruled out effective pursuit, and their lack of knowledge of the geography of the side streets" (88-89).</p> <p>RUC: Howard Rennie: RUC man. He is hard and tough. He is the consummate professional.</p>	<p>Reference to the Four Square laundry van operation.</p> <p>"During the early 1970s the unit [Mobile Reconnaissance Force] set up the Four Square Laundry in Belfast which offered a cheap cleaning service but was intended to collect information about Irish Republican Army (IRA) activities in west Belfast. Clothes sent for cleaning were routinely checked for traces of explosives or lead residues from bullets. The IRA subsequently found out about the MRF operation and on 2 October 1972 attacked a laundry van being used to collect and deliver clothes. An undercover British Army soldier was shot dead in the attack"(Cain website, visited 31/05/07).</p> <p>Set in Belfast.</p>	<p>There is little sense of the politics of the conflict in the novel. Downs seems to have joined the IRA not for any political reasons but because it was the thing to do in the ghettos of Belfast. Howard Rennie's wife thinks that Catholics breed like rats (182) and the sense of difference that somehow exists between Catholics and Protestant sects seems to be what passes for politics. The violence of the IRA is supported within the community and all Catholics are both complicit with, and fearful of the IRA. The British Army is brave and straight but the Secret Services are incompetent.</p>

## Appendix B: A Troubles Timeline

There are many different ways in which a timeline of significant events can be compiled for the Northern Ireland Troubles.

This timeline focuses on significant political events and is compiled from data gathered from the CAIN website (A Chronology of the Conflict - 1968 to the Present <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/pdmarch/chron.htm> ) and the History on the Net website ( <http://www.historyonthenet.com/Chronology/timelinenorthernireland.htm> ).

1967: January, Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) formed.  
1968: Civil Rights Protests  
1969: January 4, People's Democracy (PD) ambushed at Burntollet Bridge.  
1969: August 12-15, Battle of Bogside  
1969: December 28, IRA Split  
1971: August 9, Internment introduced  
1971: Protests against Internment  
1972: 30th January, Bloody Sunday  
1972: Direct Rule imposed  
1972: July 31, Operation Motorman  
1974: Ulster Workers' Council Strike (1974)  
1974: 29th November, Prevention of Terrorism Act  
1975: December 5, End of Internment  
1976: March 1, End of Special Category Status Prisoners for paramilitaries sentenced after this date.  
1976: Republican prisoners' blanket protest start  
1977: United Unionist Action council (led by Ian Paisley) strikes  
1980: Announcement of End of Special Category Status Prisoners for paramilitaries regardless of when the crimes were committed.  
1980: October 27, Hunger Strike began and was called off on December 18.  
1981: March 1, Republican prisoners' hunger strike began  
1981: April 9, Bobby Sands elected to Westminster  
1981: May 5, Bobby Sands died  
1981: October 3, Hunger strike ended  
1985: November 15, Anglo-Irish Agreement signed  
1985: November 23, Unionist rally against the AIA  
1986: March 3, Unionist "Day of Action"  
1986: June 23, Northern Irish Assembly dissolved  
1986: November 15, Unionist rally against the AIA  
1988: January to August, talks between John Hume, leader of the SDLP, and Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Fein  
1991: April 29, Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) ceasefire  
1991: April 30, Brooke/Mayhew talks between British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI)  
1991: July 3, political talks end



1991: July 4, end of CLMC ceasefire  
 1991: September 16, talks resume  
 1992: April 11, Patrick Mayhew appointed Secretary of State after British elections  
 1992: April 23, talks resume  
 1992: November 10, end of talks  
 1993: April 11, secret talks between Gerry Adams and John Hume becomes public knowledge when *Sunday Tribune* runs the story  
 1993: December 15, Downing Street Declaration: that the people of Northern Ireland should be free to decide their own future and that representatives of various groups should meet to discuss solutions, including Sinn Fein, providing IRA ended violence.  
 1994: August 31, IRA announce cease fire  
 1994: October 13, the Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) announce cease fire  
 1996: February 9, IRA bomb London's Docklands  
 1996: June 15, IRA bomb Manchester  
 1997: May 1, Labour party wins British General Election and Mo Mowlam appointed Secretary of State for Northern Ireland  
 1997: July 20, IRA announce cease fire  
 1998: January 26, multiparty talks take place in Lancaster house  
 1998: April 10, Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement signed. Terms in brief:  
     Ireland shall not be one united country without the consent of a majority in Northern Ireland  
     The people of Northern Ireland have the right to call themselves either Irish or British  
     A multi party assembly will be elected to govern the community.  
     A north/south council be set up to consider areas of mutual interest  
     An Anglo-Irish council be set up to consider areas of mutual interest  
     All people shall have basic human rights, civil rights and equality  
     Linguistic diversity to be recognised - Irish to be taught in all schools  
     Paramilitary groups to be decommissioned within two years  
     A gradual reduction in the number of security forces deployed in Northern Ireland  
     To work towards having an unarmed police force  
     Political prisoners to be released providing the ceasefire is maintained  
 1998: May 7, emergence of the "real" IRA  
 1998: May 23, referendum on the agreement.  
 1998: June 25, Northern Ireland Assembly Elections  
 1998: July 5, Drumcree parade  
 1998: August 15, The Omagh bomb planted by the "real" IRA  
 1998: August 18, "real" IRA suspends action  
 1998: August 22, INLA suspends action  
 1998: September 10, meeting between David Trimble, First Minister designate and leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), and Gerry Adams  
 1998: September 11, first paramilitary prisoners freed under the Good Friday Agreement  
 1998: December 10, John Hume and David Trimble win Nobel Peace prize  
 1999: September 6, George Mitchell opens the review of the Good Friday agreement  
 1999: November 18, End of the Good Friday Agreement review  
 1999: December 2, New Devolved Government