# To Live in the Heart (and Mind) of Others. The Construction of Memory in Northern Irish Commemorative Plaques


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LAURA FILARDO LLAMAS

University of Valladolid

lfilardo@fyl.uva.es

***Abstract***

*Contemporary post-Agreement Northern Ireland seems to be characterised by the spectre of commemoration, as seen in a nigh number of murals, graffiti and commemoration plaques. These memorials have a double function. On the one hand, they help construct a collective memory of the past, in as much as they 'represent' given historical events. On the other, they (de)legitimise those historical events, which are not only recalled but also reconstructed. In those (re-)constructions, given facts may be prioritized or hidden, and actors involved in them may be portrayed in very different ways. The relation between both functions can be understood by looking at the language – and images – that are used, in as much as they have a mediating function which entails accessing history from a particular point of view, which is, in turn, related to the legitimising function of those memorials. In this article, we intend to look at the linguistic strategies that are used in two sets of commemoration plaques found in Belfast.*

**Keywords:** memory, Critical Discourse Analysis, cognitive linguistics, identity, legitimisation, Northern Ireland

## 1. Introduction

Post-Agreement Northern Ireland (NI) seems to be characterised by two related features: commemoration and memorialism. The spectre of 'the Troubles' still haunts this place, and it is physically reproduced in the increasing number of memorials that can be found in areas all around Belfast and (London)Derry (McDonald 2004). At first sight, these memorials, which include murals, paintings, and commemorative plaques, seem to be 'dedicated solely to masked men and women, toting big guns or standing solemnly to attention', in such a way that fallen paramilitaries 'have become immortalised in commemorative plaques on the walls near where they were gunned down or captured' (McDonald 2004). Nevertheless, memorials do not only serve to recall and rememorize history, but also to remind the members of each NI community of their uniqueness, and ideological allegiance (Roe et al. 1999: 124).

Some of the war and conflict memorials found in NI stand within the limits set by a fence, hence delimiting 'a particular area which is set aside for the express purpose of commemoration' (Switzer 2005: 125). These 'sacred spaces' which

are physically and symbolically separated from everyday life become a symbol of the sacred nature attributed to memory. This helps in spreading a 'victimhood' feeling which is shared and separately claimed by each of the NI communities. Memory and history thus become another contested issue.

The importance of memory and remembering in socio-political conflicts has been previously researched. These studies focus on the cognitive construction of memory (Schacter 1996) and the relationship between language and remembering (Wodak 2006; Achugar 2008). Both mind and language are significant and can be explained as a (re)construction process whereby present and past are neurologically mixed (Schacter 1996: 71) in a particular way which can be discursively transmitted. The role of language in the construction of memory cannot be neglected, as it is not only a mechanism which society has for recreating the past, but also a tool for accessing it. Through discourse, experiences are objectivised, and therefore those actions, behaviours and historical events that are portrayed become subsequently legitimised (Berger and Luckman 1966: 69).

Taking all this into account, it can be argued that 'the maintenance of memory is a collective task that involves communication and connections' (Achugar 2008: 21). By recreating shared experiences which different people can identify with, the feeling of community is sustained and a shared identity is created. This identity often stems from historical events which lie at the core of present beliefs, and which can be alluded to as a means of justifying future actions. As we will see below, this often results from discursive strategies such as claiming victimhood, a positive construction of the self, and the need to maintain historical knowledge (Wodak 2006: 138-41).

In this article, I will apply these notions about the cognitive and discursive construction of memory to the NI context, where commemorative plaques – selected because they are one of the less studied examples of memorialism in this place – will be analysed in order to see how collective memory is discursively constructed by each of the NI communities, and which linguistic strategies are used to do it. A discursive analysis of these memorials will help us understand both the legitimising (Chilton 2004) and mediating (Achugar 2008) function of language when accessing and objectivising a particular point of view about given past events.

## 2. Context and Data

The most recent wave of violence in NI started in 1969 and finished with the signing of a peace agreement in 1998. This period is euphemistically known as 'the Troubles', and its origins are usually explained as the consequence of the opposition between two broad communities: nationalists, or those who aspire 'towards a single and separate government for the whole of the island'; and unionists, or those wishing to 'retain NI as part of the union with Great Britain' (Dunn and Dawson 2000: 171, 288). Nevertheless, there are subtle distinctions between the different members of those two communities, particularly in relation to whether they approve – or not – the use of violence.

Different events related either to 'the Troubles' or to the history of Ireland and the UK have been depicted in the numerous murals, paintings and commemorative plaques that abound in Northern Ireland. Plaques have been employed by both communities to honour and remember civilians and fallen paramilitaries[1], the latter being the most frequently presented group. It could be argued that these memorials have the same function as political murals, and they do not only 'articulate what republicanism or loyalism stand for in general, but, manifestly or otherwise, they reveal the current status of each of these political beliefs' (Rolston 2010: i).

Besides commemorating the actions done by paramilitaries, the plaques also help in constructing a shared identity, mainly by means of two interrelated issues. On the one hand, these memorials acknowledge death and express loss resulting from it (McDowell 2007). This contributes to creating a victimhood status which is often claimed by both communities and whose emotional impact on society and identity construction cannot be denied. On the other hand, commemorative plaques can be also used to mark territory; something which is particularly important if we take into account how segregated geographical locations in NI are. By placing memorials on strategic locations within and outside a particular space, dichotomous boundaries are marked and memorials subsequently become symbolic, and sometimes also physical, sites of resistance. The importance of this geographical and symbolic value is underlined by the fact that memorials are often attacked (McDowell 2007).

In this article, I will analyse the discursive and linguistic strategies which characterize the construction of memory found in commemorative plaques. Examples from both of the communities will be considered so that comparisons can be made. The analysed commemorative plaques were photographed and transcribed in early 2009 and early 2010. They include a total of sixteen plaques, which are grouped in two fenced spaces known as 'remembrance' or 'memorial' gardens. Eight of the analysed plaques are grouped in the 'Garden of Remembrance', erected in 2001 in Falls Road (Belfast). An overview of this space can be seen in picture 1. Falls Road is found in West Belfast, and it is considered one of the most republican areas in the city. Republicanism is one of the sub-ideologies within nationalism, given their objective of a united Ireland. One of their main distinguishing features is that they are more 'likely to accept the need of violence' (Dunn and Dawson 2000: 233). It is because of this justification of violence that republicanism is often linked to paramilitary groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA). This explains why most of the photographed plaques are dedicated to the memory of those members of the IRA – or other republican paramilitary organisations – that have fallen during the conflict.

**Picture 1:** Overview of the 'Garden of Remembrance', Falls Road, Belfast.

The other eight plaques are located in the 'McCurrie and Neill Memorial Garden', erected in 2003, and to which one plaque was added in 2010. An overview can be seen in picture 2. This place is not as widely known, although it is found in Newtownards Road, one of the most important streets in loyalist East Belfast. The term loyalist is used to refer to those groups which profess loyalty to the crown, not because it is part of the government of the nation but because its role in the Protestant church, and also to those associations which are linked to paramilitary formations. This double use of the noun 'loyalism' together with the less-known status of loyalist groups will result in a different representation in commemorative plaques, where they mainly emphasise the victim trait of certain people in the community.

As we will see below, different legitimising and remembering strategies can be observed in both groups of plaques. However, all the analysed memorials refer to events that took place during the 1970s, i.e. at the peak of the 'Troubles'. Besides, it is interesting to note that both gardens are located in main streets which are easily accessible by tourists.

**Picture 2:** Overview of the 'McCurrie and Neill Memorial Garden', Newtownards Road. Belfast

## *3. Method*

As mentioned above, this article aims to analyse the legitimising function of language in commemorative plaques, and its relationship with the process of remembering. Legitimisation is understood as the promotion of a specific representation of society, which is presented as neutral (Chilton 2004: 23). By combining four discursive strategies – authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, and mythopoesis[2] – a clear argumentative strategy is achieved: stating the authority of the speaker in comparison with the audience's and/or opposed groups' lack of it (Cap 2010: 119). Legitimisation in these plaques works on two levels, which involve not only authorising the present existence of a given community, but also its relation to the positive (or negative) actions done by the self (or the others) in the past.

The objective representation of society can be achieved through the creation of particular discourse worlds, which are the discursive representations of 'who does what to whom, when and where' (Chilton 2004: 154). All these elements, and in particular time and place, are significant in the, at least apparently-objective, reconstruction of the past. Choosing which entities and historical events are going to be discursively presented is significant, inasmuch as this selection already has an impact in the re-construction of those events, mainly because their importance may disappear and re-emerge. Thus, as we will see below, one may become 'less interested in 'what actually happened' than in its perpetual reuse and misuse; its influence on successive presents' (McBride 2001: 41-42). This constant repetition of events and discursive patterns may result in particular events gaining a mythical status and thus becoming key

elements in the construction and perpetuation of identity, as they seep into the set of beliefs and ideas shared by particular community.

Following the postulates of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it can be argued that the analysis of discourse worlds can be linked to Norman Fairclough's proposal for the analysis of ideological meaning in discourse. Both things are related to the identification of three main components in a given instance of discourse: contents, relations, and subjects. Subjects can be defined as the 'subjects positions people can occupy', i.e. those groups which are included in the discourse worlds; relations are the 'social relations people enter into in discourse'; and 'contents' 'what is said or done' (Fairclough 1989: 46).

Three main linguistic elements have been considered when trying to uncover the mental representations evoked in commemorative plaques: deixis, reference, and conceptual metaphors. The first two have a strong indexical value which may help us detect which elements are included in the discourse world and which relationships are established between them. Deixis involves looking at 'the ways in which languages encode or grammaticalise features of the context' (Levinson 1987: 54), that is, any cues that help us uncover how space, participants and time are conceptualised. In order to do so, several linguistic categories have been considered, including pronouns, adverbials and the use of verb tenses. Taking into account that the process of remembering in NI is closely tied to politics, the use of deictics is significant in rendering commemorative language political. The indexical operation of language helps us identify political and historical distinctions (Chilton 2004: 201) which lie at the core of the conceptualisations of the world that permeate commemorative plaques. Besides, the proximizing value of deictics (Cap 2006: 4-7) helps in promoting binary oppositions between the ingroup and the outgroup, and the present and past actions performed by each of them.

Both indexicality and binary oppositions can be stressed by referential expressions and lexical choices, which clearly denote the utterer's point of view about society. One of the main roles of language is to represent a state of affairs (Chilton 2004: 29); discourse producers establish a discourse world by choosing specific lexical items to describe different issues in society, hence legitimising their own perceived truth. Certain noun phrases have been collected in the analysis, where I have mainly focused on those whose relationship to the elements of the NI social practice can be easily identified because they describe social or political activities, participants, performance indicators, times, places and tools and materials (Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999: 94-96).

In political discourse metaphors do not only have an embellishing function, but they can also evoke different types of analogical reasoning (Chilton 2004: 203) which is based on the similarities that are established between a concrete source domain and an abstract target domain. Thus, they can spread a moral view about life (Charteris-Black 2005: 13-20) because they manage to 'establish a set of connections among a source space, a target space and a blended space' (Langacker 2008: 51). By using metaphorical expressions when portraying past events, a new world is constructed where both the past and present times coexist and share certain features. This creates bonds between those participants who are represented in discourse and the audience

remembering them, hence tightening their shared identity and the idea of belonging to a discursively created imagined community (Anderson 1991).

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1. Republican Memories: The Garden of Remembrance.

The use of personal pronouns in republican commemorative plaques contributes to establishing a clear opposition with the outgroup. The republican ingroup is indexed not only by means of the first person plural inclusive pronoun 'our', but also by the adjective 'fenian'[3], as we can see in example 1. The combination of this pronoun with a present perfect (Halliday 2004: 337-338) and with proximizing demonstrative adjectives establishes a connection between those who died in the past and their impact on the present actions, which are subsequently justified. By using personal pronouns together with temporal deictics that index the 1970s-1990s conflict, a connection between the past conflict and the present is established, and the legitimacy of remembering – and of those actions which are recalled – is stressed.

(1)
The fools, the fools, the fools! **They** have left **us our** fenian dead, and while **Ireland** holds **these** graves **Ireland** unfree shall never be at peace.

Through these strategies republicans are portrayed as being the deictic centre which inhabits a clearly presented imagined homeland (Billig 1995): a united Ireland. Nevertheless, republican commemorative plaques are characterized by an interesting use of spatial indexing. Although Ireland is the most frequently mentioned homeland, some references can be found to the Falls Road, i.e. the place where the Garden of Remembrance can be found. The use of the demonstrative adjective 'this' in the phrases 'this area' or 'this community' shall be noted because it places Falls Road and the republican community which inhabits and has inhabited it at the deictic centre.

Spatial metaphors can be also found in relation to the indexed places, as we can see in example 2. The use of the preposition 'in' contributes to conceptualizing memory as a container, which is therefore positively evaluated (Kövecses 2002: 74). In addition, the container metaphor being combined with the word 'etched' contributes to emphasizing the importance of remembering. It shall be noted how the deictic distance and objectivity evoked by the pronoun 'their', used to refer to republicans in the past, is projected onto a spatial, present and republican deictic centre by means of the container metaphor.

(2)
Their bravery and courage will be etched in the annals of Irish republicanism and undelible in the minds of generations to come.

The multiple use of spatial deictics can be further understood by looking at the geographical referential expressions identified in table 1. The analysis shows how the imagined homeland is constructed by means of mutually inclusive

containers which are increasingly wider: the graves are included in the republican area, which is also part of the country – understood as the whole of the island. All these physical spaces are part of the metaphorical space of the individual's mind; an individual who is not only in charge of remembering, but also of making (future) socio-political actions.

In short, three deictic uses are identified in republican commemorative plaques: the combined inclusion of three different spaces; the possibility of these spaces being associated to the past, to the present, and even to the future; and the multiple inclusive and exclusive references to republicans both in the present and the past. Because of this, we obtain a discourse world in which the central space is occupied by the 'dead', who are linked to the present by means of affective strategies. Through all of them, the legitimacy of remembering is substantiated.

The analysis of referential expressions helps us gain further insight into the description of the two indexed participants and the relationship that is established between them. In table 1, we can see a summary of all the noun phrases appearing in the studied commemorative plaques. These expressions have been organized following Van Leeuwen and Wodak's (1996) classification of the elements in a social practice.

Lexical choices made to refer to participants are related to a very common strategy in ideological discourse: polarization through positive self-representation and negative representation of the other (Van Dijk 2000: 161). It is interesting to note that the positive representation of the self is frequently related to the active role that republicans had in fighting against the others, both physically and metaphorically. An analysis of the noun phrases used to refer to the ingroup shows that republicans are characterized by the internal position they occupy in discourse – usually within (Northern) Ireland or the Falls Road community. Besides, they are attributed both political and non-political roles, and the legitimacy of their actions, war in particular, is emphasized.

| Element in social practice | NI elements | Referential expression |
|---|---|---|
| Activities | Historical activities | The conflict<br>The cause of Irish republicanism<br>Their quest for Irish freedom |
| | Contemporary activities | This monument /(in) dedication<br>Roll of honour/ scroll of fame |
| | Relation between activity and participant | (INLA) Volunteer<br>The supreme sacrifice |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participants | Members of NI communities | Self | Cultural | Our fenian<br>The Falls <u>cultural</u> society<br>The residents of the Falls road<br>The men, women and children of this community – <u>united, resolute and in defiance</u><br>Civilians from the Falls area |
| | | | Political/ paramilitary | (INLA) Volunteer/ fian/ Sinn Féin Matt McLarnon (and others)<br>Those <u>brave and gallant</u> vols of D' company 2nd Battalion Irish Republican Army / Belfast Brigade<br>(The deceased) POWs [<u>Prisoners of war</u>] and <u>volunteers</u> |
| | | Other | | The fools, the fools, the *fools* |
| | Participants outside NI | Great Britain | | The British *war machine* |
| | | Ireland | | Ireland |
| Performance indicators | Feelings about present activities | | | The memory<br>(never be at )Peace<br>In honour<br>In letters of purest gold |
| | Feelings about historical activities | | | Their bravery and courage<br>Justice (hungered and died for) |
| | Relations between republican participants | | | Love<br>comrades |
| Time | | | | October 1 1996 (and other dates since 1920) (deaths)<br>Falls Curfew July 1970<br>1970's and 1980's (hungering) |
| Geographical areas | (locations and metaphorical locations) | | | The falls area/ of this <u>community</u><br>These <u>graves</u><br>In the <u>annals</u> of Irish republicanism<br>In the <u>minds</u> of generations to come |

**Table 1:** Referential expressions found in the commemorative plaques in the Garden of Remembrance.

Certain linguistic strategies shall be noted when explaining the positive representation of the self. Firstly, a positive image of the self is evoked by means of positive adjectives, such as 'brave' or 'gallant', used to describe participants who took part in past actions. Besides, only past historical activities are included in the discursive representation. These activities are legitimized mainly by relying on the conceptual metaphor THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT IS A JOURNEY (Charteris-Black 2005: 71), as we can see in example 3. The desired destination of the journey, which acquires a mythical status because of the use of the noun 'quest', is the imagined homeland of the republican community: 'Irish freedom' and a united Ireland. The use of the word 'freedom' presupposes that this did not exist in the past and neither does it in the present. Thus, legitimacy stems from a double source: the positive connotations evoked by 'quest' and by 'freedom'.

(3)
This monument was erected by the Falls cultural society on behalf of the residents of the Falls Road dedicated to those brave and gallants vols of D'company 2nd Batt Irish Republican Army who made the supreme sacrifice in their quest for Irish freedom.

The conceptual metaphor triggered by 'quest' is combined with the physical – and metaphorical – struggle of the republican community, as recalled by the noun 'cause' (cf. Table 1), which is presented as the origin of both the past and the present need for republicanism to exist. The emphasis on the voluntary nature of those who have been involved in the fight against the other, and the use of the religious word 'sacrifice' to refer to these actions contributes to presenting republicans as martyrs whose actions have to be remembered (Alonso 2001: 128-29).

This need to remember motivates the discursive legitimisation of contemporary activities, which include naming and erecting the monument, or inscribing the names of deceased republicans on the 'scroll of fame in letters of purest gold'. Abstract nouns such as 'fame', 'memory', or 'honour' determine a particular type of relationship that is established between past and present republican participants, and the positive connotations evoked by them stress the need to keep memory alive. The affective relationship between members of the republican community can be also seen in example 4, where dying is described as a consequence of love for those who belong to the same group as the self.

(4)
No greater love hath a man than he lay down his life for his comrades.

The choice of historical events to be commemorated is significant in as much as it helps us understand how republican imagery about their struggle is constructed. Three types of events are included. First, the death of republican 'volunteers' since the 1920s conflict is frequently alluded to, hence establishing a link between the 1970s conflict and the origin of the IRA in the 1920s[4]. Second, the 1970 Curfew that took place in the Falls Road is mentioned, and its effect on alienating the republican community from the British Army is thus recalled. Unlike the 1920s conflict, this is not an event which is frequently mentioned, but it being given a prominent role in the

Garden of Remembrance – the plaque dedicated to it occupies the central space – tightens the sense of community between those who inhabit this area. Finally, the 1980s Hunger Strikes are also referred to. This is significant not only because the hunger strikers have often been conferred a mythical martyrdom trait but also because it meant the politicisation of republicanism, with Sinn Fein participating in elections for the first time. Together, these events stress the idea of continuity of the republican movement throughout time, on three different arenas: local actions, the armed struggle, and political actions.

Republicans are discursively opposed to an outgroup which is mainly identified by a Britishness trait. When opposed to them, republicans stand 'united, resolute and in defiance'; a description which stresses the positive active role of this community. In contrast, the others are quite negatively characterised. Negativity is not only seen in the explicitness of the nominalised adjective 'fool', but also in a dehumanizing strategy. The British Army is referred to as 'the British war machine'; a noun phrase that has a double effect. On the one hand, the explicit reference to the word 'war' legitimises republican actions as a consequence of it. On the other hand, the word 'machine' recalls the conceptual metaphor HUMAN IS A MACHINE (Goatly 2007: 103-118), whereby British soldiers are de-personified. The machine metaphor has further consequences in terms of how memory is represented, as the British Army is deprived of free will in opposition to the voluntary nature that is attributed to republicans. Besides, making a machine work implies that someone has power to control that machine. In this case, it points at the British State, whose existence and actions are delegitimized by this linguistic strategy.

## 4.2 Loyalist Memories: McCurrie and Neill Memorial Garden

Deictic uses in the loyalist Memorial Garden are not as complex as in the republican Garden of Remembrance. In terms of person deictics, a double use of third person plural pronouns can be found. On the one hand, the outgroup, and particularly the IRA is referred to through the pronoun 'they', as we can see in example 5. On the other hand, members of the ingroup who lived in the past are also indexed through the same pronoun. However, distance in the second case does not have an ideological and personal value, but a temporal one. The description of unionist and loyalist dead people as 'innocent' further delegitimizes the murdering action of the others, as we can see in example 6.

(5)
That night in a planned and unprovoked attack, the Provisional IRA introduced guns on to the streets of East Belfast, from the sanctuary of St Matthew's Chapel and surrounding area. They murdered James (Jimmy) McCurrie and Robert (Ginger) Neill. [...] Lest we forget.

(6)
[...] about the garden and why it was built, to remember those innocent people who lost their lives on that dreadful night of 27th June 1970. [...] Always remembered.

Temporal deictics – such as the adverbial 'always' – together with the past participle 'remembered' (example 6) establish a connection and an affective tie with those members of the loyalist and unionist community who died in the past. The same idea can be seen in the final sentence of example 5, where the negative conjunction 'lest' stresses the uncertainty and undesirability of forgetting. Implicitly, the function of commemorative plaques is expressed, and the need for the ingroup to remember the negative past actions performed by the others, together with the death of people belonging to the self's community, is stressed in the final sentence of most of the plaques found in the loyalist garden, as we can see in the mentioned examples.

The importance of recalling history is stressed by other temporal deictic uses, whereby a temporal shift is established, as we can see in example 7. The use of the demonstrative 'that' helps in evoking past events which are later placed at the temporal deictic centre through the use of the demonstrative 'this'. The continuity between past and present does not only stress the central role of history in memory and identity construction, but also its temporal endurance.

(7)
As I look back in my mind's eye
I see a night that makes me cry
That Saturday started like any day
people shopping and children at play.
Later that night as darkness fell
PIRA opened up like something from hell.
[…]
When I look back in the light of day
There can be no compromise with the IRA.
This date should be burned in our brain.
East Belfast cannot let this happen again.

The positive value of present remembering can be also seen in the inclusive use of the first person plural pronoun indexing the place where memory should be kept: 'our brain'. The spatial indexing achieved with this preposition recalls the conceptual metaphor THE MIND IS A CONTAINER (Kövecses 2002: 74). The verb 'burn' employed to refer to this location emphasizes the intensity of the remembrance feeling, as it evokes two other conceptual metaphors: EMOTION IS FIRE and INTENSITY IS HEAT (Kövecses 2002: 113-114, 117). These three metaphorical uses legitimise the memories of the unionist and loyalist community, whose shared identity is highlighted by the person deictic 'our' and its past and present opposition to the actions of the IRA.

Space is not only metaphorically recalled; in fact, deictics also index physical locations, in particular the memorial garden where the plaques can be found. If we compare example 7 with example 8, we can see that the use of the preposition 'in' in both cases creates a space for remembering, be it physical or mental.

(8)… to remember those innocent people who lost their lives on that dreadful night of 27th June 1970. It is only right that his memory should live in this garden he loved so well.

Uses of deictics in the memorial garden stress the opposition between the unionist and loyalist community and the republican one, whose negative actions are delegitimised. This conflictual relationship is located in the past, although its continuity in the present is brought to light by deictics, and the use of the negative deontic modal phrase 'can be no compromise' (see example 7). This strategy stresses the undesirability of building a new positive relationship[5] with republican paramilitary groups. The self's current lack of action is justified by relying on memories of a negative past event.

Referential expressions found in the loyalist plaques are tightly related to this depiction, as they also contribute to delegitimizing the actions of the IRA, and to presenting members of the unionist and loyalist community as victims. The portrayal of activities, participants, and past and present circumstances stresses the positive image of the self as opposed to the negative one of the other, as we can see in table 2.

The main objective of commemorative plaques in the loyalist memorial garden is related to the need of remembering the negative actions done by the others. Thus, the representation of social groups in this case is related to an internal view of the conflict (Whyte 1991), which takes place between the nationalist-republican community and the unionist-loyalist one. These two groups are discursively characterized in different ways. Republicans are only portrayed by means of their paramilitary nature – it being mentioned both in relation to the past and the present –, as we can see in the sole reference to the '(Provisional) IRA'. In this way, their actions are presented as illegitimate ones, and are deprived of social or political connections. On the contrary, the cultural and social feature of the loyalist community is continually stressed by means of references to the 'cultural society' or to those 'innocent' persons who have died as a consequence of the IRA's actions. The notion of innocence, together with references to 'man, woman, and child' who are normal members of the community, further delegitimises the other's paramilitary acts. Only a small reference to political or paramilitary members of the loyalist community can be inferred from the noun phrase 'the fallen', where by relying on the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS DOWN (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) the badness of dying is stressed, regardless of the political nature of its cause.

Because of the importance of memory, most of the activities that are reflected in the plaques are connected to the past, and they evoke a negative outgroup image. The use of the derogatory adjectives 'planned and unprovoked' to qualify the IRA attack which is being remembered, and the determiner 'every' before bullets reinforce the innocent image of the loyalist community.

Some conceptual metaphors support this negative evaluation of the others, as we can see in the noun phrases 'murder most foul' or 'something from hell' (see example 7). The adjective 'foul' recalls the smelling sense, and therefore triggers the metaphors GOOD IS CLEAN and UNETHICAL IS DIRTY (Goatly 2007: 45-47). The act of murdering is not explicitly described as immoral, but the bad smell associated to it evokes such evilness. Evil reappears in connection to 'hell' which has a double connotation. On the one hand, religious beliefs help in associating the IRA with the devil committing the murdering sin. On the other, hell can be characterised by two main features, it being down – and hence it being bad (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) –, and it being dark – which prompts associations with death and with evilness (Kövecses 2002: 44-48).

| Element in social practice | NI elements | | | Referential expression |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Activities | Historical activities | | | A planned and unprovoked attack<br>Injuries sustained<br>Murder most Foul<br>Something from hell<br>Blood on the ground<br>Every bullet [was spent] |
| | Contemporary activities | | | [This] memorial garden |
| | Relation between activity and participant | | | The fallen<br>Murderous intent (PIRA) |
| Participants | Members of NI communities | Self | Cultural | East Belfast Historical and Cultural Society<br>James (Jimmy) McCurrie and Robert (Ginger) Neill /other names<br>The fallen<br>Those innocent people<br>Man, woman and child<br>East Belfast |
| | | | Political/ paramilitary | The fallen |
| | | Other | | The Provisional IRA<br>The IRA |
| | Participants outside NI | Great Britain | | |
| | | Ireland | | |
| Performance indicators | Feelings about present activities | | | Right [his memory live in this garden] |
| | Feelings about historical activities | | | Cry<br>A wonder [many escaped alive] |
| | Relations between loyalist & republican Participants | | | No compromise [with the IRA] |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Time | | 27th/28th June 1970 /3rd July 1970<br>That dreadful night of 27th June 1970<br>This date |
| Geographical areas | (locations and metaphorical locations) | The streets of East Belfast<br>The sanctuary of St Matthew's Chapel and surrounding area<br>Central St / Ardalaun St<br>This memorial garden<br>[burned] In our brain |

**Table 2:** Referential expressions found in the commemorative plaques in the McCurrie and Neill Memorial Garden.

Time expressions are not only significant because of the deictics used in them, but also because of the selected date: 1970. On June 27, 1970, a crossfire between loyalist and republicans took place in East Belfast. There are disagreements between both communities about who fired first, and this gun battle eventually resulted in the death of six Protestant civilians and one republican (Melaugh 2007). This event took place only five days before the Falls Curfew that is commemorated in the republican Garden of Remembrance. It could be, therefore, argued that choosing the 1970 attack as the one to be remembered is done on purpose with the aim of making the audience relate both events.

Place referential expressions index a loyalist homeland which is only based on the East Belfast area, and in particular on the memorial garden where the plaques can be found. Loyalist political demands, such as NI remaining part of the UK, are silenced, and the emphasis lies on the physical locations in the area immediately surrounding the memorial garden. As mentioned before, abstract and metaphorical references to the importance of memory – and retaining things 'in [one's] brain' – are also identified in the referential expressions gathered in table 2.

In the analysed loyalist discourse world, the prominence is given to the negative actions of the IRA and the need of the loyalist community to remember them. The importance of memory is stressed by the evaluative nature of the last stanza in the poem written in the commemorative plaque occupying the central space in the memorial garden (see example 7). The act of remembering – 'look[ing] back' – is presented as being made 'in the light of day'. This can be interpreted as not only being made at dawn but also as an abstract conceptualisation involving three nested metaphors: THE MIND IS A CONTAINER, EMOTION IS FIRE/INTENSITY IS HEAT, AND KNOWING IS SEEING (Kövecses 2002). These three metaphors do not only stress the epistemic authority of the loyalist community – both in remembering and rejecting a

present relation with the IRA -, but also the extreme importance of knowing about the negative past actions done by republicans.

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of two groups of commemorative plaques in NI can help us understand the double function these memorials have in the construction of memory. First, each of the discourse worlds uncovered in them legitimises a particular world view which is ideologically loaded and which helps in establishing an emotional involvement with those members of the audience that belong to the uttering imagined community.

The uncovered republican discourse world focuses on the positive representation of paramilitary organisations throughout time, hence endowing them with a continuity trait. This legitimisation of paramilitary actions is presented as a consequence of the actions performed by the outgroup, which is epitomised by the British Government. A double remembering strategy can be therefore identified. On the one hand, a subtle victimising strategy (Wodak 2006: 138) can be seen, as the republican community reacts because it is the victim of Great Britain. On the other, the existence of war is acknowledged, but it is justified as a consequence of the other's acts.

The loyalist discourse world presents a slightly different view, as it is focused on delegitimizing the negative actions done by republican paramilitary organisations, and on stressing the need to remember them. Even if the world-view is different, remembering strategies are somehow similar since the self is also presented as a victim of the others; something which is more clearly portrayed by the continuous references to the self's innocence. Being a victim stresses the existence of crimes that were perpetrated by the others (Wodak 2006: 138). In addition, the negative role of the self is denied by silencing the involvement of loyalist paramilitaries in the gun battle that took place in East Belfast in 1970.

In both cases, we can see that the world view about history depicted in the studied commemorative plaques is justified on the grounds of two main strategies: creating a self-victimhood trait, and emphasising the need to remember the past. Nevertheless, it shall be noted that even if commemorative plaques share remembering strategies, the views of history that are built and spread in them are diametrically opposed. Thus, republicans' actions are either legitimate or illegitimate depending on the community where the plaques are found. Likewise, loyalist (and British) actions are silenced by the loyalist and unionist community, whereas republicans present themselves as victims of the British government. This opposed view of history can be explained by relying on a double social function of commemorative plaques, which are not only aimed at justifying a particular historical view in front of the imagined community. It can be argued that the analysed commemorative plaques are tourist-oriented, as they can be found in two of the most visited streets in Belfast given the political murals located in the immediate vicinity. Presenting and legitimising given views about history, and endowing them with objectivity traits, thus helps in

creating a collective memory with which both the self's community and tourists can feel identified. In this way, commemoration can be understood not only as a record of certain historical events, but also as a justification of them (Achugar 2008).

## Notes

[1] Although outside NI these violent groups are referred to as 'terrorists', I will employ the term 'paramilitary' to describe those groups that are engaged in the use of violence for political ends, following the normal practice of media, politicians and academics in NI.

[2] Authorization involves legitimisation by reference to the authority of tradition, moral evaluation legitimised by relying on moral values, rationalization implies references to the various goals, uses and effects of particular social practices, and mythopoesis means the narrating or storytelling (Van Leeuwen 2007: 105-106).

[3] 'A term sometimes applied to Catholics by extreme loyalists, but strictly referring to members of the Fenian Brotherhood, active in the nineteenth century in Britain and North America in fighting British rule in Ireland' (Eliott and Flackes 1999: 255). In this case, this term has a wider meaning, in as much as it extends to all the members of the republican community who have fought against Britain.

[4] In 1918, two years after the 1916 Easter Rising and the declaration of the Irish Republic, it was stated in *An tOglach* that 'the Irish Volunteers are the Army of the Irish Republic' (Coogan 2002: 24). The Irish Volunteers were an organization formed to defend Home Rule. It is interesting to note how the voluntary nature of those who fight as members of the Republican Movement has been stressed throughout time. Thus, it could be argued that the use of the word 'volunteer' to refer to contemporary members of republican paramilitary organization does not only stress their voluntary nature, but it also connects them to those who fought in the past.

[5] It shall be noted that this garden was built at a time when the role of Sinn Féin and the IRA in the peace process was being contested because of the lack of information given about acts of decommissioning performed by the latter.

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