3

Sites of Trouble

Apparently operating on the logic that the Bastille was built to keep prisoners in while keeping intruders out, the authorities deemed it a safe place to store 250 barrels of gunpowder. As urban unrest in Paris grew uglier by the week in 1789, that assumption was sorely tested. On the 14th of July, a crowd swarmed the Bastille, eventually breaking through its supposedly impassable gate. Hours later, nearly 100 citizens lay dead and the gunpowder had been seized. The rest is history. The Bastille had long enjoyed an evil mystique, yet the record indicates that by the time of the revolution it was almost empty. A grand total of seven prisoners—four forgers, two madmen, and an irritant held at the request of his family—were honored for surviving the monarchy's repression. In a picture to mark the occasion, one ex-prisoner, an Irish lunatic known as Major Whyte, is shown leading a procession through the streets of Paris. His long beard, bony body, and dazed demeanor are consistent with the popular imagining that the Bastille was a site of tyranny. Thus its grim legacy has been perpetuated (BnF, 2010: 167; see also Funck-Brentano, 1979, 1898).

In her cultural characterization of Ireland, Jessica Scarlata writes that "imprisonment is a central trope of Irish nationalism, often deployed to portray the injustice of an Ireland occupied by foreign rule. Irish nationalism celebrates people jailed for resistance to British forces" (2014: front flap). The events of 1916, a year of immense trouble, figure prominently in the collective consciousness of the Irish as manifested in local heritage. Heritage is treated as something of value to be cherished and curated, yet the concept has been retheorized to suggest that "there is no such thing as heritage" (Smith, 2011: 69). Rather, heritage is a cultural performance that takes the stage at various sites such as memorial spaces and historical museums. The process of performance attaches meaning to things and places, particularly as they are converted from use-value to signifying-value. Those transformations have a considerable hold among certain people, yet

they are often subject to alternative interpretations and counter-arguments and at times are rejected outright.

"Sites of trouble" play a significant role in the Bastille Effect, through which the power of place facilitates narratives on justice and injustice. In Ireland, profane sites have been transformed into sacred spaces. Such cultural transformations facilitate the emergence of heritage and identity among different groups. To understand these complicated matters, it is important to take into account the importance of boundaries, borders, and walls. The physical lines demarcating space and territory produce another yin-yang duality in that they both separate and unite. To illustrate these historical and contemporary transitions, we focus on Dublin, a city of early Trouble, followed by Belfast, a city of later Trouble. Along the way, we will find that transformed sites contribute to a Bastille Effect, becoming metaphors for nation-building in the aftermath of social and political conflict.

THE DUALITY OF BOUNDARIES, BORDERS, AND WALLS

As we consider the significance of boundaries, borders, and walls as they have shaped Ireland—North and South—the scholarly work of Juri Lotman enables us to comprehend an array of social dynamics. In his *Universe of the Mind* (2000), Lotman interprets culture as information manifesting as collective memory that is acquired, preserved, and transmitted by certain people. Signs, symbols, and language are the vehicles for transmitting that culture, giving unique form to heritage and identity—with all their political, religious, and ethnic complexities. Our social worlds, Lotman recognizes, do not stray from their duality. He emphasizes that we live in realms of culture that are predicated on contradictions. Our social worlds are unequal yet unified, asymmetrical yet uniform. And while those social worlds are holistic and social, they are composed of individuation in ways that give rise to self-description expressed through first-person pronouns.

Enter the boundary, where individuation is heightened—or as Lotman puts it, "the boundary can be defined as the outer limit of a first-person form" (2000: 131). The boundary intensifies culture and territorial space between "our" internal space that is "my own," "safe," and "harmoniously organized" and "their" external space, which is deemed "hostile, dangerous, and chaotic" (131). The edges of a boundary are the "hottest spot" for linguistic and symbolic activity; with an inherent sense of duality, such a boundary "both separates and unites" (136). Unsurprisingly, Lotman's contributions have penetrated urban studies, especially given that cities embody various forms of communication and identity within a confined social space (Remm, 2011; see also Lotman, 2004, 2005).

In previous chapters we saw how cities are animated by social drama (Mumford, 1938). Thus Lotman's account of boundaries helps us refine our approach to both

Dublin and Belfast, where notions of unification and separation are continuously performed through heritage. As intangible as those activities are, they nonetheless occur at specific places, creating forms of sitedness that are either sanctified or condemned, depending on one's political and ethnic orientation. In a word, heritage as it exists in Ireland is *troubled* (Welch, 2016a, 2019). As we shall see, there are often a clashes of performances, which surf the tensions of heritage and identity as expressed through sites and symbols. Those performances amplify both monologues and dialogues about who "we" are, and why, in contrast to who "they" are, and why (see Smith, 2011; Waterton, 2008; Welch, 2016a).

DUBLIN: CITY OF EARLY TROUBLE

In Dublin, Irish heritage is convincingly performed at the former Kilmainham Gaol. Known as the "Bastille of Ireland," that site currently serves as a history museum as well as a storytelling institution (O'Dwyer, 2010). There, imprisonment in Ireland is a topic around which nationalism and identity are carefully organized. Confinement, in Ireland, was a patently political act of colonialism, but beyond it lay another act, of economic exploitation. While the story of how the British seized Irish land and property has long been told, Kilmainham goes to great lengths to connect the dots between incarceration, penal transportation, and famine (see Cook, 2014; Foster, 1988). What is commonly known among the Irish as the "Hunger," the Great Famine was caused by a failed potato crop, which deprived the majority of the people of their staple food. The "Hunger" consumed over a million people between 1845 and 1850; another million and a half emigrated.

With reminders of death in the foreground of the museum, one can sense that in its current form the gaol has passed through a cultural process in which the profane has been replaced with the sacred. Memory of that humanitarian crisis is activated through various curatorial techniques embedded in Kilmainham's exhibition hall. At Kilmainham, the storyboards on display acquire greater authority by introducing the Irish language first, followed by English. "The Government proved inadequate in dealing with the crisis. Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the Vagrant Act of 1847. Intended to clear the streets of unsightly poor, its effect was to swamp the prisons with those found begging in the streets. In prison, they were either saved by the luxury of a meagre but life-saving prison diet, or succumbed to the disease-ridden overcrowded conditions." The collection includes a stark drawing of a mother clutching her dying child. With more technologically powered imagery, a series of video monitors post biographical details of those swept up in the machinery of punishment:

James McDonnell (18)
Plasterer
In possession of stolen peas and apples
Sentence: Fourteen Days

Betty Toole (56)
No Trade
In possession of stolen potatoes
Sentence: Two Days

The curators at Kilmainham deliver a narrative on punishment that aligns major events in Irish history with a wider message on injustice, as an emergent Bastille Effect. A few steps away from the exhibit on "the Hunger" is a panel devoted to "Transportation," which tells us that more than 4,000 Irish were shipped from Kilmainham to Australia to work as penal convicts for the British Empire in the early 19th century. "The nature of the crimes for which sentences of transportation were handed down varied greatly. This was due largely to the judiciary's arbitrary attitude to sentencing." Among those transported were the "Young Irelanders" who "enthused by the spirit of revolution in Europe . . . organised a rebellion in 1848." When the rebellion collapsed, its leaders William Smith O'Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher were held in Kilmainham and then transported to Tasmania. Maintaining his rebellious streak, Meagher escaped to the United States, where he led the Irish Brigade for the Union during the American Civil War (Kilmainham Gaol, n.d.; Touhill, 1981). Yet the vast majority of the Irish convicts consigned to the Antipodes were ordinary poor people caught up in a colonial system that exploited them for their economic value. Forced migration to Australia was especially punitive, considering what is commonly referred to as the *tyranny of distance* (Blainey, 1966).

With its sacred aura, the Kilmainham Gaol reveals its signifying-value in its afterlife so as to provide lessons on Irish history. "From the 1790s onwards, freedom from British rule, as a republic, became the form of political independence favoured by radical Irish nationalists. More moderate nationalists aspired to 'Home Rule', or constitutional independence for Ireland within the British Empire. A remarkable number of leading figures of Irish nationalism were imprisoned at Kilmainham Gaol, and some were executed here" (Visitor's Guide, n.d.; see also Cooke, 2014).

Kilmainham opened as a prison in 1796 and closed in 1910. From 1916 to 1924, it was recommissioned to incarcerate political prisoners, another reminder of its complicated heritage. During the War of Independence (1919–21), political prisoners were held by British forces. During the Civil War (1922–24), the Irish Free State Army took control of Kilmainham to imprison its rivals, who opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921). Adding to those controversies, the Free State Government executed 77 Irish Republicans at the gaol. Those bitter memories would persist, and resentment between political parties would fester, prolonging efforts to transform Kilmainham into a heritage site. In the process of overcoming those hard feelings, the 1916 Rising was assigned central importance as a unifying event. In the 1960s, a heritage committee comprised of disparate political backers "agreed on the notion of preserving the jail as a monument to 'Ireland's heroic dead'" (O'Dwyer, 2010:

FIGURE 5. "The Stonebreakers' Yard." At the Kilmainham Gaol (the "Bastille of Ireland") in Dublin, a cross planted in the ground marks the spot where each Irish rebel was executed. The double doors, to the right, were opened to allow an ambulance to enter. The vehicle was transporting James Connolly, who was injured in the Rising. Unable to stand, he was shot while seated in a chair. © retrowelch 2022.

88). As a cornerstone of Irish heritage, 1916 with all of its symbolic weight would continue to narrate trouble, resistance, and ultimately Independence.

As the story goes, on Easter Monday 1916, units of the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army seized the General Post Office and other landmarks strongly associated with the British Empire. The Rising was intended as a material *and* symbolic challenge to British rule. Greatly outnumbered by British troops, the rebels held out for nearly a week before surrendering. Hundreds of Irish men and women were rounded up and imprisoned at Kilmainham. Between May 3 and May 12, 14 of those men were executed by firing squad. Patrick Pearse, commander-in-chief of the Volunteers, was the first to be shot. The last to be executed was James Connolly of the Irish Citizen Army. In 2016, the Irish government launched an "official commemoration" of the 100-year anniversary of the 1916 Rising. Ireland's president, Michael Higgins, placed a wreath at the spot where the rebels were executed in the Stonebreakers' Yard within the Kilmainham Gaol (see figure 5). Many Irish in the South celebrate the anniversary of the events of 1916; Unionists in the North, however, remain dismissive of the Republican heritage performed in Dublin. As recently as 2016, all the major Unionist parties boycotted the commemoration.

Once again, the boundary has the symbolic capacity to define not only territory but culture as well (see McDonald, 2016).

At the Kilmainham Gaol, heritage is ritualized to memorialize political prisoners as national heroes. Displays of socio-religious objects and images reinforce an aura of transcendence and other themes of ascent. Among an assortment of thoughtfully arranged artifacts, a crucifix sculpted from three bullets looms large, a reminder of the conversion of use-value to signifying-value. It is believed to have been made by Bernard Valentine Britcher, who was imprisoned at Kilmainham in 1916, which was the year that political imprisonment and Kilmainham became nearly synonymous owing to the events of the Easter Rising. Setting the stage for a performance about the fate of the 1916 rebels, visitors are funneled into a dimly lit auditorium and seated on rows of benches. They quietly wait as the guide positions themself for a solemn moment. At that point, the former gaol becomes a theatrical space for dramatizing heritage. A slideshow is projected on a large screen as the speaker introduces some of the key actors in the 1916 Rising. The plot unfolds as the speaker talks about Joseph Plunkett. A photograph of Plunkett shows him with his fiancé, Grace Gifford. The audience is informed that as an act of mercy, Plunkett was granted permission to marry Gifford—then hours later he faced the firing squad. Suddenly, the video screen scrolls up, revealing the altar where the couple exchanged wedding vows. All the time, the group has been sitting inside a Catholic chapel. Such power of place greatly enhances the experience of heritage and memorialization. The sacred space is decorated with ornate candlesticks and other Catholic emblems, which are carefully lit to emphasize their specialness. Through its new place identity, the chapel has been *personed* with the ghosts of Plunkett and Gifford, whose images flood the room with a sense of injustice.

For continued performance of Irish heritage, the Kilmainham Gaol relies on a variety of exhibits. Curators are keen to steer visitors into a gallery titled "Last Words 1916." At the doorway, a poster maintains the narrative on the 14 executions, which "rapidly transformed the popular perception of these men into heroes in the pantheon of rebel martyrs. At a more human level, they left behind wives, children, loved ones, proud of what they had done, but broken-hearted too" (see Mac Lochlainn, 2006). In this shadowed room, heritage is staged through the cultural power of poetics and religious artifacts. Among the more compelling artifacts is a miniature replica of the altar where Plunkett and Gifford were united in the act of holy matrimony only to be torn apart by the lethality of the firing squad. The compact shrine features Gifford's scrapbook, which is opened to a page with a photograph of Plunkett and another of herself with a handwritten caption that reads "the dress worn at my wedding." A copy of the 1916 Proclamation is attached to the facing page, thus casting their loving relationship as a metaphor for national aspirations.

To reiterate, prison museums in their current form are storytelling institutions. At the Kilmainham Gaol, curators add literary elegance to the importance

of 1916. "All changed, changed utterly" is a profound phrase in the poem "Easter 1916" by W. B. Yeats, who writes that in 1916, "A terrible beauty is born." Although the initial response to the Rising was "one of anger at the destruction caused to the heart of Dublin, the executions quickly changed the mood." Memorial masses and enthusiastic fundraising rallied the Irish, who began to reconsider their status in the Second City of the British Empire. Poetry, prose, and various expressions of popular culture were widely circulated, elevating the legacies of Pearse, Plunkett, Connolly, and other rebels. "From these writings emerged the impression not of reckless adventurers, but men who had sacrificed their lives patriotically for an independent Ireland." The 1916 Proclamation that was announced at the onset of the Rising gained even deeper resonance, leading to the War of Independence with all its themes of ascent.

Elsewhere in Dublin, other sacred spaces commemorate the momentous events of 1916. As a cultural pilgrimage, visitors make their way to the "Old Cemetery" (Arbour Hill), where the 14 rebels are laid to rest. Well-manicured grounds and the neighboring church reinforce its solemn purpose. The impressive monument built in 1956 pays tribute to the signatories of the Proclamation who were later executed. A curved wall of Ardbracan limestone features a gilded cross in the center. The 1916 Proclamation of the Republic is inscribed both in Irish and in English. As a reminder that this is a revered space with international reach, a placard shows a 1963 photograph of US President John Fitzgerald Kennedy standing respectfully behind a wreath placed at the memorial. He is joined by other dignitaries and high-ranking soldiers, who stand in formation. Ceremonies at Arbour Hill, however, have not always succeeded in promoting a unified vision of nationhood. In 1924, the first "official 1916 commemoration" (in 1924) was marred by poor attendance due to "objections to the Free State authority" (O'Dwyer, 2010: 15).

Even today, visitors with a keen eye will detect some tension at the Arbour Hill memorial site. Those who arrive expecting to pay their respects to the 1916 rebels from the perspective of Irish Catholics may be distracted by the presence an Anglican Church alongside a graveyard for British military personnel killed in the War of Independence. Also detracting from its sacred aura is a 30-foot containment wall with a guard tower perched on one corner. Oddly, the otherwise solemn memorial sits next to the Arbour Hill Prison—an embodiment of the profane. The fully operating prison is known for housing sex offenders. Thus, the pilgrimage to commemorate the 1916 martyrs is strained not only by the presence of the British military but also by the prison and its despised convicts. That cultural tension seems to undermine the sanctity of death. In sum, the events of the Troubles linger not only in Dublin and the South of Ireland but also and especially in Belfast and the North. As we shall see, the duality of the national border and the peace walls erected around various sections of Belfast add to the complexity of the sites of trouble.

BELFAST: CITY OF LATER TROUBLE

Northern Ireland, much like the scholarly literature describing it, must contend with complicated tensions. Brian Graham writes that "cultural artefacts, including heritage landscapes will be invested with differing and conflicting meanings by various social groups" (1996: 10; see also Crooke, 2005; Graham and McDowell, 2007). Even the expression *North of Ireland*, rather than Northern Ireland, is saturated with the Republican/Nationalist ambition for unification with the South of Ireland (McGlinchey, 2019). Correspondingly, objects, symbols, and sites are imbued with degrees of dissonance that mirror competing ethno-political identities. Flags, murals, and memorial gardens not only *belong* to certain groups but also mark their territory. Those competing social worlds lay bare the legacies of colonial and paramilitary violence. In Belfast, visitors are drawn into a unique social drama orchestrated by political tourism, an industry that relies on notions of boundaries to accentuate difference amid the Troubles (McDowell, 2008). That recognition of boundaries has two facets. First, the border separating the Northern Ireland from the South was imposed in the aftermath of the Irish War of Independence from the British state in the 1920s. During that period, Belfast was marred by sectarian violence that left 500 dead and 10,000 refugees, mostly Catholic (Lynch, 2019). Second, peace walls (or peace lines) were constructed to separate sectarian communities in Belfast in response to sectarian violence that began again in the 1960s. Both boundaries would give rise to political violence coupled with political imprisonment, perpetuating social drama preserved in myth, legend, and martyrdom (Graham and Whelan, 2007; Nisbett and Rapson, 2020).

Again, we find that the boundary as theorized by Lotman (2000, 2005), produces intense symbolic interaction. For instance, along the Loyalist side of a 30-foot peace wall, sectarian graffiti deliver foreboding messages such as "Loyalist Shankhill Rd. Supports Republican Feud" (see McAtackney, 2020; see figure 6). Passing through an imposing metal gate to the Republican side, the cultural landscape changes noticeably. Rather than Union Jacks, the Irish tricolor flies ubiquitously. The territory of heritage is reinforced by street signs written in the Irish language. Neighborhoods invite visitors into their solemn memorial gardens, where heritage is performed. The Greater Clonard Memorial Garden on Bombay Street is especially meaningful since it is located at an actual site where the Troubles were further aggravated. There, in 1969, Protestant rioters attacked and burned down the homes of Catholics. The memorial space demonstrates a transformation from political violence—the profane—to the sacred. Fresh-cut flowers underscore a living history conveyed on a sign that reads:

> This plaque is dedicated to the people of the Greater Clonard who have resisted and still resist the occupation of our country by Britain. We acknowledge with pride and sacrifices they made throughout every decade. Their names would be too numerous to mention, and their deeds of bravery and resistance are un-equalled. We, the Republican Ex-Prisoners of the Greater Clonard, salute you and your reward will only be a United Ireland.

FIGURE 6. "Peace Walls in Belfast." Barriers separating the Loyalist/Unionist communities from their Republican/Nationalist counterparts stretch for miles with restricted access. © retrowelch 2022.

The proclamation is accompanied by the coat of arms of each of the four provinces of Ireland, thus reinforcing the Republican vision of a united nation that would erase the boundary separating North and South. Above the plaque is a list of the names and faces of the Republican volunteers who perished in the struggle against British forces. Chief among them is Tom Williams, whose story is threaded through a lengthy narrative in Belfast. Standing in the memorial garden one experiences the power of place as the guide points to one of the homes on Bombay Street. It is the very house where Volunteer Williams lived in the 1940s. A sign above the front door pronounces (in Irish and English) that Williams was executed at the age of 19 at the Belfast Gaol, later known as the Crumlin Road Prison, located in a Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist section of Belfast (Welch, 2016a).

A long row of murals has become a hugely popular tourist destination in West Belfast. The colorful paintings laud the virtues of justice and equality, deliberately inscribing Irish Republicanism onto other international struggles (e.g., the plight of African Americans, American Indians, Basques, Palestinians, and South Africans). Unsurprisingly, a recurring theme is the commemoration of the hunger strikers. One jarring image superimposes the 10 hunger strikers onto the 1916 Rising, with the Proclamation prominently displayed. The same mural honors hunger strikers of earlier periods, most notably Frank Stagg, who is quoted: "I want my Memorial to be Peace with Justice." Other controversies add some edge to an

otherwise upbeat series of renderings, such as a "wanted poster" of (then) British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher "for murder and torture of Irish Prisoners." As with so many memorial sites, a duality between the profane and the sacred projects a perpetual interplay between injustice and justice (Welch, 2019).

Next to the murals is a billboard with a large photograph of the interior of the Crumlin Road Gaol—"Belfast's Infamous Prison." It serves to draw visitors to an important site where they can observe more contested heritage of Northern Ireland. That former prison offers another example of how place identity has been transformed in the realm of culture. Just as at the Kilmainham Gaol, all tours at the "Crum" are guided in groups. In contrast to the shared sense of Irish solidarity in Dublin, however, visitors seem a bit guarded about where their sympathies lie, whether Loyalist or Republican. Perhaps due to that tension, the tour guide barely mentions that the "Crum" held both Loyalist and Republican political prisoners. Curiously, the Troubles do not dominate the narrative; rather, its history as a Victorian prison is made the prevailing story. Dating back to 1841, Crumlin Road Gaol was designed by esteemed architect Sir Charles Lanyon, who based it on the radial plan of Pentonville Prison in London. Still, its legacy is heavy with hunger strikes, escapes, floggings, and riots, with the result that the "Crumlin Road Gaol is a foreboding place with a dark and disturbing past" (Souvenir Guidebook to Crumlin Road Gaol, n.d., n.p.; Greg, 2013). Of course, high-profile executions have contributed to the gaol's rugged reputation. In all, 17 men were hanged there; according to the Capital Punishment Amendment Act (1868), they were "buried in an unmarked grave, in unconsecrated ground" (Souvenir Guidebook to Crumlin Road Gaol, n.d., n.p.).

The burial site, where the bodies remain, seems more dismissive than serene. The only remnants are some initials etched into the stone wall. Those impersonal burials did not sit well with some of the communities in Belfast. Again, the story of Tom Williams looms large. In 1942, the IRA commander was convicted of murdering a police officer; later, he was executed and buried at the gaol. For decades, Republicans intensely lobbied the government to recognize Irish traditions. Eventually, the Royal Prerogative of Mercy was exercised for the case of Williams, thus remitting the part of his sentence requiring that he be buried within the walls of the prison. At the site of burials at the gaol, a pewter sign lists the name of Williams along with the others buried there. It states that the Royal Prerogative of Mercy was again exercised in 1999, allowing the bodies of Williams (and Michael Pratley) to be exhumed and reinterred elsewhere. Those efforts served to build Republican solidarity as well as aid the healing process in the aftermath of the Troubles.

More complicated narratives about the Troubles are told at the Irish Republican History Museum. The otherwise mundane building, located in an industrial yard known as Conway Mill, has been transformed into a sacred space for contemplating the plight of Irish Republicans and the victims of political violence. The exhibit

is unique among the others discussed so far in that it recognizes the role of women in Irish history. "A significant feature of the commemorative landscapes that have evolved in Northern Ireland since the late 1960s relates to their highly gendered nature and, in particular, to the invisibility of women in the visual iconography of the Troubles" (Graham and Whelan, 2007: 480; see Dowler, 1998; Scarlata, 2014). Upon entering the museum, visitors are greeted by the "Republican Women's Role of Honour." Nearly twenty names of women are listed in chronological order of their death (e.g., Maura Meehan—Shot dead by the British Army on the 23rd Oct 1971. Age 31). The honor roll is decorated with a floral display, reenacting an Irish Catholic wake. "In Remembrance," the sign reads: "We also remember with pride, those women from this and past generations, who died dedicating their lives to the cause of Irish Freedom. Most of these women endured a life of severe hardship, blatant discrimination and personal suffering and in many cases years of imprisonment for their Republican beliefs (Si Eire mo Thir)." Despite the tragedies remembered at the museum, themes of ascent abound, offering visitors uplifting messages about sacrifice.

The prestige of the political prisoners is built up with layers of socio-religious symbolism. At the Irish Republican History Museum, there is no shortage of objects and images that radiate the importance of Catholicism to Irish heritage and the Republican/Nationalist cause. Celtic crosses, joined with the Irish (tricolor) flag, are displayed alongside photographs of the clergy, such as Father Raymond Murray, who served as Chaplain of Armagh Women's Prison (from 1967 until it closed in 1986). A plaque reads: "For your outstanding devotion to God and Country. Your lectures on the inhuman treatment of prisoners in Northern jails has enlightened and inspired many to secure justice and dignity for political prisoners in Ireland." That dedication signifies the reach of Irish heritage and diaspora, for it was issued by the Irish National Caucus in New York City. As is to be expected, given how profoundly the hunger strikers shaped the discourse of political imprisonment during the Troubles, the museum keeps up a steady commentary on those events. Each of the deceased hunger strikers is given considerable exposure and tribute. Photographs of them are noteworthy for their cheerful demeanors, which defy accusations that they were "dangerous terrorists." The political nature of the hunger strike is cast in mythic proportions—they are consistently portrayed as martyrs who sacrificed their lives. Many items on display demonstrate a high degree of solidarity among their supporters.

At the far end of West Belfast sits the somewhat secluded Roddy McCorley's Club. There, too, themes of ascent enhance the performance of Irish Republican heritage. Curiously, Roddy's is a *forbidden space*, since to enter one is supposed be a former political prisoner. However, the pub and the second-floor museums are an open secret, and tourists are given friendly access. Much like the Irish Republican History Museum, Roddy's Club pays tribute to the 1916 Rising, Tom Williams, and Michael Collins, whose death in 1922 is remembered in a poster featuring an

image of Jesus Christ. The caption reads: "Died for Ireland . . . Another Martyr for Old Ireland." Roddy's is a reminder how even mundane places, such as an Irish bar, can serve as sacred spaces for remembrance.

"Political tourism" is how Sara McDowell describes the marketing of the Troubles in post-conflict Belfast. Such cultural commodification relies on the tangible and intangible heritage of division and hurt. Guided tours are endorsed as a form of "conflict transformation" aimed at fostering an understanding of separate communities (see McEvoy and Shirlow, 2009). Tourists willing to engage in such "conflict transformation" act as "mediators in the arena of conflict, helping to externalize the political objectives"; by doing so, they enjoy "a level of access denied to many others from the same place" (McDowell, 2008: 407). A principal reason for restricted access among Belfast residents is that the city is still segregated by boundaries—most visibly by the peace walls. McDowell goes on to describe political tourism as a vehicle for extending localized interpretations of past conflict in which disputant groups not only compete for victimhood status but also seek legitimization and power. It is believed that the experiences of political tourists are often shared with others upon their return home; personal photographs of sites and symbols serve to verify and authenticate the dissonance of heritage. With that realization, cultural stakeholders (e.g., tour guides) in Belfast, be they Republican or Loyalist, are committed to shaping a particular vision of the conflict (McDowell, 2008; Neill, 2017). From a cultural standpoint, such transformation extends beyond artifacts and sites to entire communities and societies on which acts of the profane—sectarian violence—have left deep scars. "Conflict transformation" is a conscious strategy for civic leaders committed to shedding Belfast of its reputation as the "Pariah City" due in large part to the Troubles (Neill, Fitzsimmons, and Murtagh, 1995).

Again, implications of the national border and the peace walls figure prominently in post-conflict tourism. A fleet of popular Black Taxi tours contribute to the commodification of heritage and its sites of Trouble. While crisscrossing the sectarian boundaries fortified by peace walls, drivers provide passengers details of the Troubles, paying special heed to the rival paramilitaries and their unique symbols of political, ethnic, and religious identity. As the Troubles intensified, due in large part to a contentious civil rights movement, two ideologically distinct communities became further polarized (see Dooley, 1998). While the subject requires a good deal of caution, the different groups are commonly referred to as either Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist (who might regard themselves as British), or Catholic, Nationalist, Republican (who might regard themselves as Irish) (McAtackney, 2020). Those sectarian groups—with varying degrees of commitment—continue to hold competing national aspirations. The Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist community—the majority in Northern Ireland—are aligned to maintain their connection to British sovereignty (Green, 1998). By contrast, the minority, Catholic, Nationalist, Republican people support a united Ireland. (Ellison, Pino, and Shirlow, 2013).

As famed journalist Peter Taylor writes: "The conflict is essentially about identity and allegiance. . . . The fact that those identities coincide with religion of those who wish to maintain the union with Great Britain (unionists) and those who aspire to a united Ireland (nationalists) is the legacy of history" (1997: 355).

Northern Ireland is presently governed by a power-sharing deal enshrined in the 1998 Belfast Agreement, also known as the Good Friday Agreement (see Hennessy, 2005; Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). It is a post-conflict society where painful memories of sectarian violence remain. Curiously, as Graham and Whelan contend, the peace process "was fashioned so as to avoid creating mechanisms for addressing the legacy of the past, not least the commemoration of the fatalities of the Troubles" (2007: 476; see also McEvoy and Conway, 2004). Filling that vacuum, actors and stakeholders in the political tourism industry tend to maintain their rigid positions for purposes of performing heritage to an external audience. Because they stick to the script of the past—"exacerbating difference," critics argue—the narrative they offer becomes counterproductive since it prevents some residents from moving forward in the peace process. The dissonance of heritage is thus firmly entrenched in ways that perpetuate a social drama of protagonists and antagonists. Or, as McDowell observes:

> The "imagined" conflict needs sustenance in the construction of symbols, which remind the public that the conflict is not far away. These conflict signifiers represent continuing power struggles which symbolise contested identities and heritages and help keep the conflict ongoing. This form of tourism, particularly resonant in Republican areas, can be read, therefore, as a manifestation of the conflict by other means. (2008: 419; see Nisbett and Rapson, 2020)

Those subtle forms of tension, however, are offset by a performance that promotes harmony, thereby forging a unified front for Irish Catholics in Belfast and elsewhere. The socio-religious components of heritage—and there are many—possess the capacity to unite as well as divide. Belfast visitors gaze at competing Protestant and Catholic symbols that fueled the Troubles. In a Loyalist neighborhood bordering a Republican community, a large two-panel mural features an image of Martin Luther holding pages of his scathing denunciation of the Catholic hierarchy (see Rolston, 2003). By contrast, a tall three-columned sculpture titled "Remember/ Respect/Resolution" stands nearby. Artist Lesley Cherry notes that her artwork was sponsored by the Re-imaging Communities Programme, the Shared Futures Consortium, and the Shankill Community Association. "The sculpture represents the community's willingness to embrace the future of Northern Ireland while remembering the past and respecting others' beliefs and traditions." In a deliberate attempt to alter the streetscape, the sculpture replaces a mural depicting Oliver Cromwell and the expulsion of Catholics from Ireland. While those conciliatory campaigns are genuine, residual undercurrents of cultural conflict persist between the Protestant and Catholic faithful. In Belfast, those tensions are heightened

during the controversial marching season, when the Orange Order takes center stage. In 2017, the Orange Order—a conservative Protestant organization—issued a statement advising its members to stop using the phrase R.I.P. (rest in peace) because it is "un-Protestant, un-biblical and a superstition connected to Catholicism" (Collins, 2017; see also McAtackney, 2015).

In sum, McDowell explains that in Belfast, "political tourism has an obvious if, as yet, unqualified value, but this lies less in the revenue generated through the actual tours as in the externalisation of the Troubles narratives and the consequent sympathy of an external audience" (2008: 417). It is through such "conflict transformation" that the duality of boundaries exposes notions of "our" community vis-à-vis "their" community—both of which are paradoxically separated as well as united by peace walls. Correspondingly, those claims of identity are animated by social drama, spilling over into cultural transformation that converts "sites of trouble" into signifying places worthy of reflection.

CONCLUSION

"Even in the chains of despotism, Paris always preserved its intellectual independence which tyrants were forced to respect." So observed Mirabeau in the period before the French Revolution (Schama, 1990: 370). Against that Parisian backdrop, nevertheless, at rue Saint-Antoine no. 232 stood the Bastille—a fortress, prison, and legend that continues to contour how Paris is remembered. Its reputation as a Gothic dungeon, an ominous site of trouble, where political prisoners disappeared, endures to this day. Accounts of the pains of imprisonment are captured by such luminaries of the Bastille as Linguet ([1884]2015) who depicted his confinement as living in a tomb that stripped prisoners of their identity as well as their whereabouts. The walls of the Bastille—five feet thick—remained "the frontier between being and nonexistence. . . . When the prison barber was brought to him, Linguet made the grim quip that became famous: '*He* Monsieur, you wield a razor? Why don't you raze that Bastille?'" (Godechot, 1970: 95; BnF, 2010; see Bongie, 2004).

Campaigns to memorialize the sacrifice of political imprisonment by transforming profane places into sacred sites create cultural strain in Belfast. Those tensions remind us that claims of heritage evoke profound emotional states, both positive and negative (Smith, 2011, 2006). As discussed in this chapter, heritage is notoriously multivalent since it is not only a path for seeing and feeling but also a way of remembering and forgetting. As a theatre of memory, memorial sites have the capacity to regress into a contested arena of dispute and denial (Graham and Whelan, 2007). Compounded by boundaries and the peace walls, heritage is a double-edged sword that has the power to unite as well as to divide, to include as well as to exclude. In Belfast, like other post-conflict societies, community solidarity can jump the tracks, thereby activating destructive energies that lead to

ostracizing, scapegoating, and "other-ing" (see Erikson, 1966; Smith and Alexander, 2005; Welch, 2006).

To recap, the "sites of trouble" in Ireland serve as places where identity and heritage are ritualized. In Dublin, the Kilmainham Gaol in its afterlife benefits from the Bastille Effect in that that site has been transformed in ways that honor the Irish rebels who were confined and executed there in 1916. Unlike the original Bastille, which was demolished in the wake of the Revolution, Kilmainham has been preserved as the "Bastille of Ireland," symbolizing the memory of Irish resistance to British occupation. By contrast, in Belfast, where heritage is contoured along the lines of the later Troubles, disputes over former political prisoners persist. The H-Blocks of the infamous Maze prison held both Loyalist and Republican prisoners. However, since it was the site of the 1981 hunger strike in which 10 Republicans died, the Maze is memorialized more by Republicans than by their Loyalist counterparts. Indeed, the site was (mostly) demolished in large part to prevent it from being transformed into a shrine to Bobby Sands and his fellow hunger strikers. In that sense, the potential for a Bastille Effect has been bottled up and tossed aside as a result of the sectarian divide. In terms of place identity, the Maze—an empty compound—remains a somewhat mundane rather than sacred space (see Graham and McDowell, 2007; Wylie, 2004).

In closing, a final word about boundaries is in order, especially given the current meaning of the border separating the North and South of Ireland. Even though the border is invisible due to British demilitarization, it continues to resonate in the political consciousness. Since 2016, volatile issues surrounding Brexit have reactivated a sense of anxiety since calls for a "soft" land border (whatever that means) are met with concerns over renewed violence. George Mitchell, the former US senator who brokered the 1998 Good Friday peace deal, has warned there could be "serious trouble ahead" if border checks were reinstated. Mitchell recalls that during the Troubles the "hard" border was steeped in the demonization of *others*. Mitchell contends that peace is often fragile, and changing attitudes between communities in Northern Ireland has taken years. Asked if a new border could prompt a return to violence, Mitchell did not equivocate: "Yes, there could be serious trouble ahead" (O'Carroll, 2018). In 2021, Northern Ireland turned 100 years old. In the days following Good Friday—if that wasn't significant enough—rioting erupted, partly as a protest against a proposed border in the Irish Sea in accordance to Brexit. Unionists fiercely reject that border since they view it as a form of cutting them off from the United Kingdom. Irony is not lost on the fact that the most violent rioting took place at the gate of one of the main peace walls in Belfast (Gladstone and Robins, 2021).