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Keeping the Accent? Voice, Alterity, and Memory in Oral History Interviews with Northern Ireland Migrants in England

Fearghus Roulston, Jack Crangle, Graham Dawson, Liam Harte, and Barry Hazley

History, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Glasgow; history, Maynooth University, Ireland, Kildare, Maynooth; Humanities, University of Brighton, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Brighton; English, American Studies and Creative Writing, The University of Manchester, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Manchester; Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Merseyside, Liverpool

ABSTRACT

This article discusses a series of interviews with migrants from the North of Ireland to Britain during the Troubles (1969–1998) to explore how they narrate their experiences of movement and settlement by talking about voice and accent. Drawing specifically on two interviews —one with someone who felt her accent caused her to be seen as illiberal and uncivilized, and another who felt he could use his accent situationally and actively, sometimes to his advantage—we argue that accent is a site where interviewees can describe aspects of their memories of migration. Additionally, we argue that existing sociological work on voice, accent, and Irishness in Britain provides useful conceptual framing for this kind of research, but that an oral history methodology makes a more nuanced understanding of accent possible, both in terms of its relationship to individual life trajectories and in terms of the specific histories it relates to (in this instance, the history of the war in both Ireland and Britain).

KEYWORDS

Accent; migration; Northern Ireland; the Troubles

The interviews analyzed here were conducted as part of a three-year oral history project undertaken by the authors of this article and funded by the United Kingdom's Arts and Humanities Research Council.[1] The project examined the narratives of Northern Irish migrants to Great Britain during the Troubles, the war that took place in Northern Ireland and Britain between 1969 and 1998. Entitled "Conflict, Memory, and Migration," it captured the distinctive migrant journeys of Northern Irish people who settled, worked, and raised families in three British city regions—London, Manchester, and Glasgow—during a period when the political and discursive contexts surrounding the North and its people and politics underwent complex change. It entailed some ninety interviews conducted by three interviewers. We primarily focus on two specific interviews in our analysis here, both conducted by co-author Fearghus Roulston.

Importantly, the interviews with these two migrants from the North of Ireland to post-1970 England reveal how voice and accent function in their narratives. We argue that conversations about accent aid in discussing both the experience of migration and the experience of living in England during the Troubles, as well as the war that took place in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1998. Furthermore, we assert that these events in turn affected the culture, politics, and society of both Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Indeed, we chose these two narratives because of the distinctive insights they offer and because they are broadly representative of two wider tendencies across the body of interviews, in which the topic of accent was revisited repeatedly by interviewees when discussing their memories of migration and settlement in England and Scotland.

The first of these tendencies interprets accent as something like what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called *habitus*—that is, as an embodied history manifesting itself in speech, pronunciation, word choice, and so on, more or less unconsciously on the part of the speaker.[2] This understanding of accent often coincided with a sense that a person was marked out negatively for having a nonstandard accent when speaking English, and particularly for speaking English with an accent that could be read by an interlocutor as Irish or Northern Irish. The second tendency interprets accent as something more fluid and slippery, as an instrument that the speaker can use to perform different identities in different contexts. What these intersecting tendencies have in common is an awareness of discourses about Irishness or Northern Irishness circulating in British culture—discourses that attach particular meanings to the sound of migrants' voices.

There are at least two critical contexts for these discourses. The first is the long history of colonial representations of the Irish circulating in British public culture, essentially constructing them as primitive, premodern, and temporally and culturally backward; the second is the shorter history of cultural representations of the Troubles. These representations and discourses are not unitary or internally coherent. As Marxist cultural theorist Stuart Hall suggested in his analysis of racial signifiers more broadly, they are reworked and reshaped across different times and places, and mobilized for various contextual, localized purposes.[3] Specifically in the Irish and Northern Irish contexts, both the older and newer sets of representations are persistently polyvalent and have relatively benign components as well as obviously hostile ones. The colonial imaginary of the primitive Irish has elements of a romantic image of Celtic art and culture, for instance, and the Troubles-era stereotype of Irish violence and irrationality is persistently critiqued in Britain by leftist and republican readings of the war.[4] But the incoherence of this racialization does not prevent it from shaping the lives of migrants from the North, as the interviews discussed in this article suggest.

Drawing particularly from the literature on the Troubles and its consequences in Britain, we argue here that voice and accent function in our interviews with migrants as a space where these discourses become visible and where interviewees convey their relationship to them. Beyond this specific context, the article also makes a case for interpretative or post-positivist oral history work as an especially useful method for thinking about questions of identity, subjectivity, and migration.[5]

We begin with a brief account of the causes for and impacts of the Troubles in Ireland and Britain, followed by an analysis of two interviews with Julie Marchmont and Gareth Russell. Finally, we conclude by considering how an oral history method can inform analysis of Irish and Northern Irish identity in Britain.

The Troubles in Ireland and Britain

The Troubles began in Northern Ireland in 1969 and by the 1970s had developed into a conflict between republican forces wishing to reunify the Northern and Southern states and loyalist forces wishing to retain the union between the North and the British state

(which placed the North under direct rule in 1972). The British also sent thousands of soldiers to take part in the war under the aegis of Operation Banner, the longest-running military engagement in British history. A brief introduction to the longer history of the conflict, starting from partition, will be offered here as an important context for the oral histories discussed below.

Northern Ireland was partitioned by the British government in 1921, creating a majority-Protestant state across six newly bordered counties. This new state was governed exclusively by the Ulster Unionist Party from 1921 until the dissolution of the government in 1972.[6] A sectarian state apparatus discriminated against the minority Catholic population in the North. This apparatus entailed gerrymandering of electoral wards, and the direct and indirect exclusion of Catholics from power.

In the 1960s, protests against anti-Catholic discrimination became increasingly visible and powerful through the organization of the Northern Irish civil rights movement. Responding to this, Prime Minister Terence O'Neill of the Ulster Unionist Party made some fitful attempts at reforming the sectarian structures of the state. These policies sought to ameliorate discrimination against the Catholic population with regard to public housing provision and employment practices. For many within the civil rights movement, they did not go far enough; for the right wing of the Unionist bloc, notably organized by the Presbyterian demagogue Ian Paisley, they went too far. O'Neill's position quickly became untenable under these dual pressures.[7]

In 1968 and 1969, riots and protests became increasingly frequent, and paramilitary organizations—loyalist groups such as the Ulster Volunteer Force in favor of retaining the union with Britain, and republican groups such as the Irish Republican Army and Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) aiming for Irish reunification—emerged within this febrile situation.[8] The British army, initially deployed in 1969, took on an increasingly active counterinsurgency role in the early years of the conflict, deepening existing divisions between the Protestant and Catholic communities and drawing international condemnation for the use of internment without trial, "advanced interrogation techniques," and other heavy-handed and violent methods.[9]

Some 3,720 people died during the Troubles in an area with a population of around 1.5 million people, and at least 47,000 people were injured.[10] In addition, "assassinations and assassination attempts, sniper attacks, bombings, bomb scares, street riots, civilian searches, and vehicle checkpoints [became] part and parcel of life in Northern Ireland," as social and political psychologist Orla Muldoon's synoptic account stated.[11] In the early years of the conflict, thousands of people were displaced, intimidated, and sometimes burned out of their homes—mostly Catholics forced to leave majority-Protestant areas in Belfast, but also some Protestants forced to leave majority-Catholic areas, further reinforcing the sectarian geography of the North.[12] While none of our interviewees emigrated as part of that initial wave of displacement, many of them cited the direct or indirect consequences of the war as part of their eventual motivation for leaving the country.

Importantly for this article, the war also had various effects in Britain itself over its thirty-year span. The social scientists Bernadette Hayes and Ian McAllister, citing a succession of opinion polls from the start of the war through the mid-1990s, pointed out in 2007 that the majority of the Great British public had consistently wished for British troops to withdraw from Northern Ireland from the inception of the conflict. They posited that English "apathy" toward the North was the reason for this attitude,

arguing that "for the majority of British citizens, the problem of Northern Ireland is an unwelcome historical anachronism from which a swift political as well as military disengagement is, by far, the most preferred solution."[13] However, it is important to stress that apathy is just as ideologically shaped as antipathy, and successive British governments worked hard to contain the potentially disruptive domestic effects of the war from the late 1960s onwards; the attitudes identified by Hayes and McAllister are in part the products of this containment strategy.[14] This strategy entailed various forms of British propaganda and media management, but also the deployment of a repressive state apparatus against Irish people in Britain suspected of republican or anti-state politics, underpinned by the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974.[15] Protests against and critiques of this approach to policing and national security were another important domestic consequence of the war.[16]

One thousand four hundred and forty-one British soldiers were killed during the Troubles. These deaths often incited public outrage in Great Britain, epitomized by the 1973 "Bring Back the Boys from Ulster" campaign organized by the parents of a soldier working in the North, which gathered 120,000 signatures in around twelve months.[17] Alongside this campaign, which was largely driven by nationalist and pro-militarist sentiment, ran a distinctive current of discourse emerging from left-wing organizations in Britain who were critical of the British army's role in Northern Ireland. This critique generally targeted the army's often brutal counterinsurgency approach, typified by the killing of thirteen unarmed Catholic civilians in Derry in January 1972 by the Parachute Regiment.

PIRA bombing campaigns in England from the 1970s to 1990s were another highly visible effect of the Troubles in Britain, both in terms of those killed and injured in the attacks and in terms of their consequences for Irish communities. For instance, in the wake of the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974 (in which twenty-one people were killed and more than two hundred were injured), "widespread violence and [anti-Irish] discrimination became commonplace . . . . petrol bombs were hurled through windows, and properties with an Irish connection were damaged."[18] The historians Saima Nasar and Gavin Schaffer have suggested that "when bombs ripped through the Tavern in the Town and the Mulberry Bush, they left a legacy for generations, a circle of pain and damage that sprawled from families into communities and leaked into the fabric of the city itself."[19]

Our interviewees, then, are in part expressing their memories of existing at the intersection of these complicated histories of violence and their attendant discourses and representations. Their perception of how their accents sounded in British ears are part of this expression, as our interview with Julie Marchmont discussed in the following section suggests.

Accent as Embodied History

Julie emigrated from Belfast to England in the early 1970s to train as a teacher. When she was interviewed at her home in a quiet suburb of London, she reflected lucidly on her childhood in Northern Ireland, her university experiences and social life at Queen's University Belfast during the start of the Troubles, and the decades she has spent living in England. Midway through the interview, the interviewer paused to adjust the gas fire in her

cozy sitting room; as he altered the dials of the fire, Julie proposed that they turn the heating off entirely if he was feeling too warm, and the following exchange ensued:

Fearghus Roulston: Ah no, it's grand, leave it on just—

Julie Marchmont: Grand, that's an Irish word.

FR: [*Laughs*] It is, I find that when I use that in emails with colleagues they're sometimes like, what do you mean, *grand*?

JM: "Throughother," what do you mean throughother, Julie*?* —yeah that was the first thing, the first challenge in England—oh no, the first challenge was the interview [*laughs*]. I went over to the interview, again Alice in Wonderland hairstyle, big eyes, my Sunday best coat which was actually a mini-coat in mint green, I think, with a scarf and matching gloves, white scarf, matching white gloves—I must've looked like Alice in Wonderland and I was interviewed by the dance tutor, and he said to me, do you think you'll manage in an English college coming from Northern Ireland? Why? Well, your accent, we had a guy last year and he had to have elocution lessons, and he said also we're a much more liberal society, do you think you'll be able to manage living in a liberal atmosphere? And I thought of walking through Belfast at night with guns, you know, sitting up all night playing your guitar, I said no, no, I think I'll be all right, I've probably got more experience of life than, and that was, that was the first thing, you might need to change your accent and you might need to be aware it's very liberal.[20]

The interviewer's (Fearghus') unconscious use of a common piece of Irish dialect—"grand," which roughly means the same as "fine" or "satisfactory" in "standard" English—prompted an intersubjective moment of recognition from Julie, and then a memory of her "first challenge in England," an interview for a teaching job she undertook in the early 1970s. Julie first highlighted this moment of recognition by naming another Northern Irish dialect word, "throughother," meaning untidy, confused, or intermingled, and suggesting the confusion that her use of dialect words produced among English interlocutors in a condensed pair of clauses.[21] Then she shifted from this elliptical mode into a more direct story of her job interview in England, remembering how she was dressed. "I must've looked like Alice in Wonderland," she said, using a simile that evokes the disorienting experience of moving to a new place via reference to Lewis Carroll's famous 1865 novel in which the eponymous character falls through a rabbit hole to enter a strange and confusing world. The repeated literary comparison here perhaps also conveys something of Julie's perception of her own innocence or naivete at the time of her arrival in Britain, alongside the image of her "big eyes" and her mint green mini-coat.

During the job interview, Julie said, the dance tutor asked her two questions in quick succession—first about her accent and its potential to befuddle the delicate ears of English students, and second about her capacity to adapt to the "liberal" norms of English society as compared to those of Northern Ireland. She summed up her thoughts on these questions in her next sentence, recalling, "I thought of walking through Belfast at night with guns, you know, sitting up all night playing your guitar, I said no, no, I think I'll be all right, I've probably got more experience of life than [you]."[22]

The diptych employed here to encapsulate Julie's experience of growing up in Northern Ireland moves quickly between two dissonant images. The Troubles are represented in

outline by her memories of walking through town, nervously conscious of armed soldiers and policemen, and everyday life and sociality are represented by playing music through the night within the nervous space of the city. Julie was involved in the lively folk scene of late 1960s and early 1970s Belfast, so there is a specific biographical referent for that image, but it also functions as a way of representing the strangeness of living in the North at the start of the war.[23] This double image is her way of responding to the similarly doubled question from the man conducting the job interview, who in Julie's account conflates accent and identity, moving from the problems of the Northern Irish accent to the problems of adaptation and settlement in a supposedly more liberal or modern society.

This anecdote about an initial encounter with an English person who associated her with a potential admixture of incomprehensibility and illiberalism set the tone for Julie's frustrated sense that she could not be properly understood or placed in Britain. Her accent and her way of speaking are intimately connected to this absence of understanding. If her voice is presented throughout the interview as a kind of embodied history—as one of the ways in which the relations, events, and moments that make up your life shape who you are, how you do things, how you walk and hold yourself, and how you speak—what is especially frustrating in Julie's account is that the history her accent contains does not fit within publicly available scripts and representations of the North and the Troubles.

In that sense, Julie's frustration that her accent singled her out was accentuated by a sense that her specific social and cultural background was not visible in England. She grew up in Lisburn (a small city not far from Belfast) in a Presbyterian household but stressed throughout the interview that she had both an explicitly nonsectarian upbringing and a mixed group of Protestant and Catholic friends. When talking about her early childhood, she evoked what she called a "blended" world, harmoniously composed of British and Irish components—Protestant Sunday school, the Royal Air Force Cadets, and socials in church halls, but also Irish music, poetry, and singing, and family trips across the border to Dublin. She reflected,

> So we were a blended, a blended family, we were blended, I like that, that's a new term, isn't it? We were blended Irish, we loved Ireland [. . .] we lived with what it was, and we were wary of the extremes on both sides, but we didn't, you know, it's difficult to describe to people today, they don't understand—in fact English people used to think I had grown up from the age of one in the Troubles.[24]

The corollary of her endorsement of such "blendedness" is her dismay at the way the potential for cross-community rapprochement in 1960s Belfast was quashed by the outbreak of civil conflict in 1969. Recalling the vibrant intermixing of her grammar-school-educated Protestant and Catholic friends at Queen's, she commented, "the tragic thing was that I have a very strong belief that the Troubles, if we'd been able to avoid the Troubles, that Northern Ireland would have been well out of this mire by now."[25] Here and elsewhere in her interview, Julie expressed sadness and regret that the forces of tribalism and intolerance stifled opportunities for questioning voices and nonconformist views to gain traction within Protestant and Catholic communities after 1969. At such moments, one can detect an echo of the Protestant dissenting tradition in Ireland, which is largely associated with Ulster Presbyterianism, the faith in which Julie was raised. The sociologist Claire Mitchell described the linkage between Irishness, political radicalism, and Protestantism as a "ghost limb" or a "hidden compartment," something Northern Irish Protestants felt

strongly and often painfully as a haunting or absent presence.[26] The writer Marilyn Hyndman, introducing her 1996 collection of oral history interviews with forty Irish people from Protestant backgrounds, cited "the thread of dissenting Protestant views in Irish history and the discovery of integrity and generosity within the colonizing community" as one of the commonalities among the people she spoke to.[27] Thus, the identity that Julie described here—one she also referred to explicitly as "dissenting" elsewhere in the interview—is marginal in the North itself, not only in Britain.[28] But for her, it was specifically disregarded in England in the period she was speaking of because Northern Ireland could only be associated with the Troubles, as well as with concomitant images of paramilitary violence, Irish irrationality, and intolerant religious demagogues. She described her family as avoiding the "extremes" of Northern Irish politics but living "with what it was." The fact that in England her accent seemed to leave her open to association with those "extremes," and not to the "blended" social and cultural world she experienced in pre-Troubles Belfast, is part of what she expressed in the anecdote about the dance tutor.

This association is obviously related to the emergence of the war in the North. "English people used to think I had grown up from the age of one in the Troubles," Julie explained, highlighting what she perceived as British culture's tendency to reduce the North to a sequence of unidimensional and decontextualized images of violence. As author and interviewer Fearghus and narrator Julie moved from talking about her earlier childhood to discussing her adolescence and young adulthood, she described taking part in the folk scene in Belfast, again relating this form of sociality to a liberal and dissenting tradition. Asked about how this changed in 1968 and 1969 as tensions rose and sectarian violence became more prominent in Belfast and Derry, she said,

> Do you know, it was my twentieth birthday [*pauses*], and I remember thinking I'd escaped school which I had hated, I had left home, my parents, although they were very liberal, were also pretty strict—I was free, and I was sitting there with bombs going off thinking how dare you? You have ruined my life, you have ruined my life, and it had, and to this day, although leaving because I couldn't stand the religious bigotry and all the things associated with it, I still feel that in many ways it, it did, because I came to England thinking I was British and found out very, very quickly, I might be British, but I sure as heck was not English.[29]

This passage is striking for the strength of feeling it expresses, particularly in the repetition of "you have ruined my life"; repeating the phrase for a second time, Julie spoke slightly more slowly and enunciated each word with sharp precision, seeming to emphasize the importance and the difficulty of expressing this affective memory within the interview. In tandem with the melancholic account of the "blended" tradition above, this response exemplifies Julie's use of what Alessandro Portelli called the "uchronic" narrative mode, a mode used to narrate "stories [that] often emphasize not how history went, but how it could, or should have gone, focusing on possibility rather than actuality."[30]

Julie's account is "uchronic" in Portelli's sense "as one possible narrative expression of the refusal of the existing order of reality," one that sees the possibility of different outcomes in the tangle of the past.[31] This has a specific valence in the context of Northern Ireland (as a critique of the political changes brought about by the Good Friday Agreement, for instance—something that Julie expressed at times in the interview), but we are more concerned here with its function in Britain. In the extract above, the connection is made quite explicit in the movement from the start of the Troubles to Julie's migration to

England, where in her words she found out that "I might be British, but I sure as heck was not English."

Her repeated references to how her accent was perceived make sense in this context as a way of expressing her sense of displacement. These references recurred across our discussion, often offered in a similarly elliptical style to the mention of "throughother" as an Irish dialect word. One story was about meeting an American exchange student while traveling in Europe who asked her if the Irish were stupid, another about trying to buy a pair of shoes and struggling to make the shop assistant understand what she wanted. This extract is characteristic:

> Then it was, it was [*pauses*], "Did you, did you row the boat over?"—English accent—"did you row, row the boat over?" "No." "Do you have pigs in the kitchen, do you really have pigs in the kitchen?" "No." On the gentler side, "oh Julie, I don't know what you're saying but I like the sound of it," and then "mm-hmm, ah-ha, mm-hmm, ah-ha" and, and probably the biggest insult amongst a fair few was, "oh you must be really clever to get into an English college; are you going to go back and, and teach the Irish what you've learned here?"[32]

The movement here from a series of crude stereotypes about the Irish, basically centering around them being uncivilized in comparison to the English, to another story about not being understood because of her voice ("I don't know what you're saying but I like the sound of it") is again suggestive of the way in which accent, in Julie's interview, became a mechanism for the expression of dislocation and of being misunderstood. In quickly jumping from example to example, Julie was explicitly performing here and being deliberately funny, but the jumbled accumulation of stories also seems like an attempt to express her sense of the pervasive nature of anti-Irish stereotype in the period as well as the polysemy of that stereotype (meaning in this case that Northern Irish people could be perceived as both charming and incapable of coherent speech in the same sentence).

Near the end of the interview, she was asked explicitly about the recurring theme of accent throughout our discussion, although the question ended up as little more than a half-formed prompt in that direction.

FR: So, accent, always a, always a—

JM: The vowels. My sister, coming to England, coming out with some friends, going to get a drink, I said ah, ah, when you go to the bar it's not half a lager, it's half a "lar-gah", lager, lager, they put r's into everything here or they have an "r" and they leave the "r" out, so these little, I suppose they just come up and in the end you get used to them, you get used to them but in the back of your mind you just wish they'd stop fighting, I wish they'd stop, and then you go home and you meet your family, you know, you wonder how, you meet your cousins and all their children are off somewhere else, I don't know, I don't suppose it ever leaves you really.[33]

We can draw two things out of this final extract from Julie's interview. First, the conversation with her visiting sister makes nicely visible one of the tensions that result from thinking about accent as signifying racialization—that is, being positioned within a racial imaginary. Accent is in one sense an embodied history or a ghostly reminder of a history, or a *habitus*, as it is understood in some of the academic work on accent and social class. In another sense, it is an instrument or a tool which can be used for various purposes, as Julie demonstrated here by ventriloquizing the (southern) English pronunciation of "lager" so

that her sister can order a drink without being embarrassed.[34] Accents are assigned particular meanings, but they can also be changed or hidden by the speaker, making them especially complicated sites for the production of otherness. Second, the vertiginous changes in direction within her response are suggestive of the potency of accent as a lens through which to view the dislocation aspect of Northern Irish migrant experiences. After the story about her sister, she said, "These little, I suppose they just come up and in the end you get used to them, you get used to them but in the back of your mind you just wish they'd stop fighting, I wish they'd stop." The connection between the two halves of this sentence is not completely clear, but it seems that Julie was making a connection between the "little" forms of othering and distancing she experienced as a migrant to Britain and the ongoing presence of war in the North until the ceasefire and the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Then in the final section of the extract, she described return visits to Northern Ireland, and finding that her cousins' children had also migrated, concluded by saying, "I don't suppose it ever leaves you really," although what it is that never leaves you (whether the embodied history represented by accent, the experience of otherness engendered by migration, or something else) is left ambiguous.

Other interviewees expressed an understanding of accent that is in accord with Julie's sense of it as an embodied history that marked them out in various unpleasant ways in an English or Scottish context. One interviewee, Anne Power, suggested that having a Northern Irish accent could create friction with English people. Her family lived in Birmingham for a period in her early childhood. Reflecting on their decision to move back to Belfast where she grew up, she posited that tension and anti-Irish feeling provoked by the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings were instigating factors.

> Our house had been under surveillance, we had police coming to the door because neighbors, people who heard our accents, and when people are frightened, they assume that you're a terrorist, so there was a lot of that sort of bubbling under, a lot of suspicion and my dad just thought "no, I'll go back home."[35]

This intergenerational narrative of accent generating suspicion is tethered to a specific historical moment and place, but later in Anne's account she described a similar incident that happened after she had moved to London in the 1990s. Talking about a feeling of "frustration" engendered in her by British ignorance about the war in Northern Ireland, she illustrated that emotion with a story about visiting the Houses of Parliament as part of her job in public relations.

> I can remember getting to the Houses of Parliament and someone telling me "shhh, don't say anything, if they hear your accent," and I thought gosh, you know, I was saying that before, it's like everyone is tarred with the same brush, you know, she was really concerned for me, she was going, "don't say anything" [*laughs*].[36]

Martin Seeds, who moved to London in the late 1980s to study at university, described similar experiences of feeling surveilled because of the way that he spoke. Talking about his early experiences of trying to navigate the city with "a little paper *A to Z* [map of London]," he said,

> You would ask somebody [where to go] and they would, like, look at you because they, either they didn't understand what you were saying, or they recognized your accent and got a little bit frightened by it. I do remember us asking a policeman for directions one time and immediately

> you could see the body language stiffen up and there was just this, yeah, there was this immediate reaction.[37]

The ambivalence here between misunderstanding and fear is interesting, suggesting the connection between ignorance or apathy and hostility in British perceptions of the North. However, Martin was also at pains to stress that "I never really felt that anybody was like, looking at me in any sort of like, you know, *it's your fault* or any sort of guilt or finger-pointing way," adding that although his accent may have softened somewhat after years of living in England and occasionally the United States, he never consciously attempted to conceal it or change it.[38]

Accent as Instrument

This final comment by Martin takes us back to the point that accent can be seen as a somewhat slippery marker of difference given that it can be hidden or changed. Another interview conducted by Fearghus with an actor named Gareth Russell who grew up in east Belfast and migrated to London in the early 1980s highlighted both the signifying capacity of accent and the way this could be engaged with or shaped by migrants themselves. Gareth, unlike Julie, did not attest to any significant feelings of alienation or discomfort stemming from his life as a new arrival in England, although he did insist upon his continued attachment to the North despite having spent more than half his life in England, saying, "To this day I've always thought of myself as a Belfast boy. I never think of London as home, I always think of Belfast as home."[39] This ongoing attachment to and connection with his childhood home was apparent throughout Gareth's interview, but particularly in the first half of our conversation, when he described his childhood memories of playing on the streets of east Belfast. Gareth's and Julie's accounts both offer a vivid evocation of a social world that would disappear or fundamentally change with the advent of the Troubles. Where Julie described the "blended," culturally-hybrid world of her childhood and of the folk scene in Belfast, Gareth described growing up on a street with both Protestant and Catholic families, and his own family as containing a mixture of Protestants and Catholics. Gareth also evoked a world of childhood adventure and misadventure, saying,

> My earliest memories were all of being in this little gang, 'cause we had a gang leader, and I call it a gang because every now and again they would have fights with other gangs, but me and my friend Billy we, we weren't fighters [*laughs*].[40]

In his account, this period of his youth ended when he was offered a place at Grosvenor Grammar School, making it harder for him to spend time with his local friends, most of whom had gone to other secondary schools in the area. After leaving Grosvenor, Gareth began working in the advertising department of the *Belfast Telegraph* and then traveled around Europe for a year or so. Around this time, he got involved with the Lyric Theatre through the director Sam McCready, who was setting up a drama and acting studio there in the late 1970s. Gareth revealed he had little notion of taking up acting seriously at this point in his life and that he was partly motivated by no longer being able to play football to the same standard after breaking his leg some time earlier. He recalled,

> But I loved it, there was just something about it, people were young and full of ideas, there was Protestants and Catholics, there was noth—, it had nothing to do with the Troubles, everybody had fun and we'd go and have a drink after. We used to meet on Saturday afternoons and he [Sam McCready] would get us to do improvisations, he would get us to read texts, he would get us to, to dance, he would bring in ballet dancers to train us and teach us, not ballet but just, just things to do with movement, your posture, yeah, everything, and I loved it.[41]

Gareth's remembered excitement was palpable here; his voice quickened as he listed the activities organized by the director, and the twice-repeated assertion that he "loved it" emphasizes the importance of this happenstance involvement to his life afterward. His enjoyment in taking part in the studio translated into a major role in a play at the Lyric and then a contract there as a full-time actor; sometime after, he decided to move to England. The following excerpt contains his reflections on this decision:

Gareth Russell: Everybody thinks that's why I went to London, that I wanted to, to work with different people and different directors, and it's true, I did want to do those things and I, I think I would have gone to London anyway, but actually I went to London because I was in love with a girl and it broke up and I just felt awful, and I thought, "I gotta get away from here," so . . . .

Fearghus Roulston: You didn't want to be in Belfast.

GR: Yeah, it had nothing to do with the Troubles, nothing to do with my family, it had a little to do with acting 'cause I knew I was going to do that at some point anyway.[42]

Here, then, is a major difference between Julie's and Gareth's departure stories—stories which tended to have a critical importance in our interviews with migrants as a hinge between possible lives. Gareth's narrative eschews the melancholic, the nostalgic, or an idealized view of the past, notes that were present in Julie's description of her departure. Instead, he emphasized contingency and chance in his decision to leave the North, along with a dash of professional ambition driven by the desire to work outside of the relatively small space of Northern Irish theater. This difference in tone is one way in which Gareth conveys that his experience of migration was fairly painless. But in spite of this, Gareth was not unaware of how representations of the Troubles and the North circulated in English culture, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. Describing this atmosphere, he said, "That was the other thing that happened, people were scared of you because you came from Belfast. . . . So they'd all sorts of things in their head."[43] Asked what sort of things he meant, he responded with the following anecdote:

GR: When in fact, where I live now, when I came there first I'd an acting friend and she said to me at one point, she said, "You know of course, you can do this anywhere in London, but particularly here because this is sort of a rough estate and, you know, there's a lot of knife crime and stuff like that." She said, "If anybody looks dodgy at you or, or you're, you just feel this could escalate badly, she says just do a loud Belfast accent." But the funny thing is I'd worked that out already, I'd worked that out already.

FR: People found it intimidating?

GR: They did, I'm not sure they do anymore . . . . It's a long time since there was bombs and, well, I know there have been a couple actually, but in terms of the level of it and the fact

> that it was on the news every day, that's, that's been a long while since that, so people don't think in those terms anymore, but when I first came over yeah, yeah, you were scary just because you came from there.[44]

As in Julie's story about the music teacher in the school where she wanted to work who worried about her capacity to adapt to English society, accent and identity are conflated here. In contrast to Julie, however, Gareth's anecdote foregrounds the ambiguous benefits his gender confers. His capacity to speak in a "loud Belfast accent" in situations where his personal safety might be compromised affords him the option of exploiting associations of Northern Irish masculinity with disruption or violence.

The association between male Irishness and violent disruption has a long history in English cultural imaginaries. The historian Roger Swift, for instance, suggests that "during the Victorian period the link between Irish immigration, crime, and disorder in England was widely regarded by contemporary observers as axiomatic."[45] On a temporal level, Gareth explicitly pegs his capacity to defend himself by performing the stereotype of the aggressive Ulsterman to the presence of the Troubles in Britain in the 1980s and especially to its representation in the media ("the fact that it was on the news every day").[46] This temporal positioning is emphasized by his sense that "people don't think in those terms anymore," that the discursive position of Northern Ireland has shifted in England following the Good Friday Agreement and the end of formal conflict, perhaps toward invisibility or silence rather than the particular kinds of visibility or loudness that were apparent in the 1980s. Gareth extended his account of this atmosphere as he continued the story, saying,

> Yeah, I remember, like I wasn't in a lot of dodgy situations, but I remember once when I was, and somebody was saying, "You wanna fucking watch yourself," something like that, and I said —God I can't remember—it was something stupid and it, but it sounds more stupid now because we're not in that period where we were supposed to be scary, and he, he said something else, he'd said something about, "You don't know what it's like being in fucking London," and I just went, "Nah you're right mate, I fucking grew up in Belfast, I know what it's like to be there," and just kept the look, and obviously 'cause you're an actor you can, yeah, and in your head you're thinking, "I hope he doesn't fucking swi—, take a swing at me," [*laughs*] but, but, yeah.[47]

In the moment of the interview, Gareth reprised this performance with obvious relish, deepening his voice, sharpening the clipped consonants of his east Belfast accent and fixing the interviewer with a baleful stare before puncturing his air of machismo with the bathetic deflation and the humor of the final sentence, where he hopes his interlocutor will not take the bait and start a physical fight. The character he was acting out in the story seemed to be partly drawn from what the historians Sean O'Connell and Allen Feldman have identified as the "hard man," epitomized by figures such as Buck Alec Robinson, a celebrated Belfast gangster remembered for his fighting prowess, his association with Al Capone, and his (defanged) pet lions.[48] Graham Reid's *Billy* plays—televised by the BBC in the early 1980s with a young Kenneth Branagh in a starring role—also portray this archetypal masculine image, in a way that cultural historian Connall Parr describes as "glamouriz[ing] a certain kind of Belfast working-class life and macho culture where fighting defined male interactions."[49]

Compared to figures like the notorious East End gangsters the Kray twins in 1960s London, the hard man has multiple, sometimes contradictory connotations in popular

memory culture, associated with working-class communities destroyed by deindustrialization, poverty and, in the case of Belfast, the impact of the Troubles.[50] But in the context of emigration, and being told by the hostile Englishman at the bar that he didn't know what it was like "being in fucking London," Gareth is clearly also enacting a performance that is indebted to media representations of the war in Northern Ireland and the association of the Irish or Northern Irish voice with violence, threat, and danger. Where his account differs from Julie's is that he foregrounds his capacity to actively bend this discourse to his own ends, implicitly showing both the power differentials between the sexes and the malleability of accent as a signifier of difference.

Other interviewees offered similar reflections on how accents could change or be changed. For example, Paul Ord, who was born in Northern Ireland to Northern Irish parents in the 1980s but grew up in the south of England, said,

> When you went on holiday back to Northern Ireland to see grandparents your Irishness came out, when you went home, where you spoke to your grandparents on the phone or you heard somebody else with a Northern Irish accent, but that at school surrounded by people with, like, Home Counties accents, it retreated.[51]

His older brother, who retained a more stable Northern Irish accent, having spent more of his childhood in the North, teased him about this tendency "with like, you know, a merciless [*laughs*] psychological astuteness."[52] For Paul, then, fluidity of accent is experienced a little differently than for Gareth, representing something unsettling about his hybrid identity as both Irish and British.[53]

A final story from Gareth offered a different perspective on the meaning of accent for him. Talking about a return visit to Belfast, he recalled,

> I remember once, and I suppose this sums up how I feel about Northern Ireland and Belfast in particular, I arrived in the airport, I got the bus to the city center . . . and started to walk home 'cause it's not a million miles from where I live, and there was these two young girls in front of me and they were walking at a pace, I would have overtaken them after about two, three minutes . . . . But when I heard them talking I just loved the accent, I loved hearing the Belfast accent again, 'cause of course you can't hear your own voice the same way, and I deliberately walked slowly so that I could just listen to that tone . . . and then I started to realize, well, they may think I'm a stalker or somebody scary, so at a certain point I did overtake them, but I just loved listening to the accent, the voice, and then I walked on home. But I felt warm all over just hearing the accent [*laughs*].[54]

In this section of Gareth's narrative, accent becomes something more like a signifier of the affective atmosphere of home as embodied through other people. His earlier comment that he still thinks of Belfast as home despite many years spent living in London is made tangible here, dramatized through his memory of walking slowly behind the two girls "so that I could just listen to that tone," and while his remembered embarrassment at realizing how his presence could be misconstrued works to shift his account away from this affectionately nostalgic mode, it recurs almost immediately as he reiterates the emotive experience of listening to their voices: "I felt warm all over just hearing the accent."

Race, Identity, and the Irish in Britain

Voice, accent, and language are central to the question of Irish difference in Britain as one of the main ways in which Irish migrants are marked out as foreign or different in some way. The feminist theorist and sociologist Bronwen Walter in particular has engaged with this

fact, suggesting that "voices are a particularly important part of the process by which Irish people in Britain are constructed as both 'outsiders' and 'insiders' simultaneously."[55] That is, in her terms, the slipperiness of accent as a site for racializing signifiers makes it possible both to racialize Irishness and to disavow that racialization, creating an ambivalent position for Irishness within the English or British national imaginary. On the one hand, the fact that you could only really be read as Irish when you spoke made it easier to avoid or conceal yourself from racialization, compared to a West Indian migrant, for instance, who might be racialized by their skin color, as well as potentially by their voice. On the other hand, according to Walter, this capacity for avoidance or concealment meant that the discursive and material consequences of being Irish in Britain could be ignored by the state, leading to easier dismissal of discrimination toward Irish migrants.

Indeed, the question of Irish identity in Britain, is, and always has been, complicated, a fact reflected in historians' debates about what Irish identity outside of Ireland even constitutes. This includes debate over whether Irish identity is "racialized"; for example, historian Gary K. Peatling, in a contentious 2005 essay reviewing the literature on Anglo-Irish relations, colonialism, and race, criticized "politically convenient, historically challenged" narratives that emphasized the racialization of Irishness by Victorian Britain.[56] In a response to Peatling's essay, American historian L. Perry Curtis, who specialized in nineteenth-century Irish history, argued that "to deny the ubiquity of race in British attitudes toward the Irish requires a calculated effort to ignore every contemporary allusion to the gulf between Anglo-Saxons and Celts found in Victorian scientific literature, fiction, and the print media."[57] Certainly, as work by another American historian of the nineteenth century Irish, Michael de Nie, has shown, negative images of Irishness were circulated in the British press and British public culture throughout the nineteenth century.[58] Two prominent British historians of twentieth-century migration, Gavin Schaffer and Saima Nasar, also noted that "generations of post-war scholars and activists in Britain . . . have articulated the need to understand British prejudice about the Irish in similar terms to other racisms."[59] Drawing on specific case studies from the history of Irish migration to Birmingham, they suggest that "telling the story of white Irish migrants has the potential to clarify the significance of color in migration history, as well as to improve historical understanding of the multiple processes by which Britain has been shaped by constructions of racial difference."[60]

We have argued that accent functions as a marker of difference for Irish migrants, a fact which is borne out by the interviews considered here. In *Outsiders Inside*, Bronwen Walter also drew from various interviews, in her case with Irish women migrants in Britain, as well as Mary Hickman's surveys for the Council for Racial Equality. In her work, she identified strategies of avoidance and accommodation among these migrants, arguing that "a variety of strategies for limiting the damaging consequences of being identified by their voices is employed by Irish people, including staying silent, remaining within an Irish environment, and modifying pronunciation."[61] Walter argued that, although these strategies rendered Irish migrants even less visible as migrants, they should not be mistaken for assimilation.

The use of oral history as a method allows for a more nuanced understanding of how this plays out than can be gleaned from Walter's work, however. Even though it drew from the voices of migrants, it did so in a fragmentary, sociological way that does not allow for the kind of close reading or life history approach followed throughout this article. This is notable, for instance, in a series of brief analyses of

interviews with migrants from the North in *Outsiders Inside*, where the question of accent mentioned elsewhere in the text is not raised at all with the interviewees or in the subsequent analysis of the interviews.[62] By contrast, this article has shown the presence of discourses of otherness about Irishness in Britain in the post-war period, particularly during the Troubles; it has also shown the spatial and temporal fluidity of those discourses and the various ways in which migrants responded to them—ways that in our interviews seemed to be connected to various aspects of their life courses and personal histories. The distinction offered at the start of the article—between accent as *habitus* and accent as performance—is an analytical one rather than one that exists in a pure form in the interview material itself. Julie's story about teaching her sister how to order a glass of lager in an English accent and Paul's story about his capacity to change between different accents both show that aspects of these tendencies can coexist in narratives of migration. But the usefulness of the distinction is that it shows how personal histories and trajectories, subjectivity, and memory shape the way migrants responded to and made sense of the construction of difference.

Both interviews are performances, in the sense that both interviewees offered dramatic recitations of their narratives, often ventriloquizing other voices to do so. In that sense they fit into the small body of work relating oral history to storytelling and other kinds of performance.[63] But we would specifically characterize the stories Julie Marchmont and Gareth Russell describe about accent here as "anecdotes," in the sense that oral historian Daniel James used. Rather than using the word to denote a narrative account, James said that anecdotes used within oral history interviews "represent the relationship of the individual to dominant social models and attitudes. They express in a synthesized form, on a local scale, the transgression or acceptance of hegemonic values."[64] Gareth's stories are perhaps more recognizably "anecdotal" in this sense in that they contained his semiparodic performance of a specifically masculine Northern Irish identity and a fully formed punchline. Julie's are less direct and more fragmentary, diffused across her interview and often taking the shape of asides or partially integrated interjections. This could reflect various things about the interviews; partly it is just the product of different ways of speaking, but it might also suggest that Gareth's narrative is more successfully "composed."[65]

In critical oral history theory, composure is a way of thinking about how memories are formed and expressed in relation to public discourses about the past, as well as through the needs and desires of the person narrating the memories. The narratives we access as oral historians are composed (or shaped) to be coherent within the logic of those public discourses, but they are also a way to express the messy and potentially disruptive aspects of a personal past as a more livable story, one that achieves "composure" for the narrator. In our examples here, the form of composure achieved by Gareth is also subtly gendered. The hard man archetype that he draws on gives him access to a relatively stable (and importantly active and agentic) performance of self, both in the moment of telling in the interview and in the moment in which the story he's telling takes place (even if he does undercut this hypermasculine imaginary when he turns it into a joke at the end of the performance). But despite the differences in how the anecdotes are expressed, both Julie and Gareth used stories about accent to dramatize their relationship to hegemonic attitudes in England, as well as how those relationships were shaped by their former lives in the North and by their experiences of settlement.

Conclusion

Julie's and Gareth's interviews both offer an insight into the effects of the Troubles in Ireland and Britain. They describe, in different ways, their experiences of being perceived as Irish or Northern Irish, and how they adapted to and responded to that perception and its various implications. Both interviews attest to the persistence (and fluidity or flexibility) of various representations of Irishness in British public culture; they also attest to their own capacity to engage with and make sense of those representations.

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Notes

1. The grant reference for this project is AH/R008426/1.
2. See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990); for two interesting recent Bourdieusian accounts of the relationship between accent and identity, see Saskia Huc-Hepher, "Navigating the London-French Transnational Space: The Losses and Gains of Language as Embodied and Embedded Symbolic Capital," *Languages* 6, no. 1 (2021): 1–28; and Michael Donnelly, Sol Gamsu, and Alex Baratta, "Accent and the Manifestation of Spatialised Class Structure," *Sociological Review* 70, no. 6 (2002): 1100–18.
3. See Stuart Hall, "Race, the Floating Signifier: What More Is There to Say about 'Race'?," in *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, eds. Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Paul Gilroy (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 259–74.
4. On the former, see Murray G. H. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1999); on the latter, see Daniel Finn, "The British Radical Left and Northern Ireland during the 'Troubles,' " in *Waiting for the Revolution: The British Far Left from 1956*, eds. Evan Smith and Matt Worley (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2017), 201–17. On imaginaries as images, ideas, and fantasies that shape our social identities in various complicated ways, see Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London, UK: Routledge, 1994).
5. Alistair Thomson, "Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History," *Oral History Review* 34, no. 1 (2007): 49–70.
6. Simon Prince, *Northern Ireland's '68: Civil Rights, Global Revolt, and the Origins of the Troubles* (Dublin, IE: Irish Academic Press, 2018).
7. Marc Mulholland, *Northern Ireland at the Crossroads: Ulster Unionism in the O'Neill Years, 1960-69* (London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2000).
8. Michael McCann, *Burnt Out: How the Troubles Began* (Dublin, IE: Mercier Press, 2019); Jack Hepworth, *"The Age-Old Struggle": Irish Republicanism from the Battle of the Bogside to the Belfast Agreement, 1969–1998* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2021).
9. Mark McGovern, *Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2019); Aaron Edwards, "Misapplying Lessons Learned? Analysing the Utility of British Counterinsurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland, 1971–76," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 12, no. 2 (2010): 303–30.

10. David McKittrick, Seamus Kelters, Brian Feeney, Chris Thornton, and David McVea, *Lost Lives: The Stories of the Men, Women, and Children Who Died as a Result of the Northern Ireland Troubles* (Edinburgh, UK: Mainstream Publishing, 2007), 1552.
11. Orla T. Muldoon, "Children of the Troubles: The Impact of Political Violence in Northern Ireland," *Journal of Social Issues* 60, no. 3 (2004): 459.
12. McCann, *Burnt Out*; John Darby, *Intimidation and the Control of Conflict in Northern Ireland* (New York: Syracuse Press, 1986).
13. Bernadette C. Hayes and Ian McAllister, "British and Irish Public Opinion towards the Northern Ireland Problem," *Irish Political Studies* 11, no. 1 (2007): 67. Public opinion in Northern Ireland was not included in the surveys analyzed in this article.
14. Liam O'Dowd, Bill Rolston, and Mike Tomlinson, "From Labour to the Tories: The Ideology of Containment in Northern Ireland," *Capital and Class* 6, no. 3 (1982): 72–90.
15. Graham Dawson, Jo Dover, and Stephen Hopkins, eds., *The Northern Ireland Troubles in Britain: Impacts, Engagements, Legacies, and Memories* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2017).
16. Finn, "The British Radical Left," 201–17; Aly Renwick, "Something in the Air: The Rise of the Troops Out Movement," in *The Northern Ireland Troubles in Britain: Impacts, Engagements, Legacies, and Memories*, eds. Graham Dawson, Jo Dover, and Stephen Hopkins (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2017), 111–26.
17. Paul Dixon, "Britain's 'Vietnam Syndrome'? Public Opinion and British Military Intervention from Palestine to Yugoslavia," *Review of International Studies* 26 (2000): 99–121.
18. Saima Nasar and Gavin Schaffer, "The Poetics of Narrativity: Understanding Trauma, Temporality, and Spatiality Forty Years after the Birmingham Pub Bombings," *Journal of Social History* 53, no. 4 (2020): 1014.
19. Nasar and Schaffer, "The Poetics of Narrativity," 1025.
20. Julie Marchmont, interviewed by Fearghus Roulston, London, UK, January 2020. As the analysis of the intersubjective dimension of the interview here suggests, the interviewer is also an Irish migrant and in their early thirties at the time of the interview.
21. For an interesting engagement with "throughotherness" as a feature of *clachan* farming that English political economy and coloniality found intolerable, see David Lloyd, *Irish Times: Temporalities of Modernity* (Dublin, IE: Field Day Publications, 2008), especially chapter 3.
22. Marchmont interview, January 2020.
23. On the Belfast folk scene and its national and international connections, see Ciaran Carson, *Last Night's Fun: A Book about Irish Traditional Music* (Albany, NY: North Point Press, 1998).
24. Marchmont interview, January 2020.
25. Marchmont interview, January 2020.
26. Claire Mitchell, *The Ghost Limb: Alternative Protestants and the Spirit of 1798* (Belfast, UK: Beyond the Pale Books, 2022).
27. Marilyn Hyndman, *Further Afield: Journeys from a Protestant Past* (Belfast, UK: Beyond the Pale Books, 1996), 3.
28. Marchmont interview, January 2020.
29. Marchmont interview, January 2020.
30. Alessandro Portelli, "Uchronic Dreams: Working Class Memory and Possible Worlds," *Oral History* 16, no. 2 (1988): 46.
31. Portelli, "Uchronic Dreams," 50.
32. Marchmont interview, January 2020.
33. Marchmont interview, January 2020.
34. See Lynda Mugglestone, *Talking Proper: The Rise of Accent as Social Symbol* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007).
35. Anne Power, interviewed by Fearghus Roulston, Brighton, UK, November 2019.
36. Power interview, November 2019.
37. Martin Seeds, interviewed by Fearghus Roulston, Brighton, UK, October 2019.
38. Seeds interview, October 2019.

39. Gareth Russell, interviewed by Fearghus Roulston, London, UK, November 2020.
40. Russell interview, November 2020.
41. Russell interview, November 2020.
42. Russell interview, November 2020.
43. Russell interview, November 2020.
44. Russell interview, November 2020.
45. Roger Swift, "Heroes or Villains? The Irish, Crime, and Disorder in Victorian England," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 29, no. 3 (1997): 399.
46. On media representations of the Troubles, see David Miller, *Don't Mention the War: Northern Ireland, Propaganda, and the Media* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 1994); Roseanne Doughty, "Representations of the Northern Ireland 'Troubles' within the British Media, 1973–1997" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2021).
47. Russell interview, November 2020.
48. Sean O'Connell, "Violence and Social Memory in Twentieth-Century Belfast: Stories of Buck Alec Robinson," *Journal of British Studies* 53, no. 3 (2014): 734–56; Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1991), especially chapter 3.
49. Connall Parr, *Inventing the Myth: Political Passions and the Ulster Protestant Imagination* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 160.
50. Chris Jenks and Justin Lorentzen, "The Kray Fascination," *Theory, Culture and Society* 14, no. 3 (1997): 87–105.
51. Paul Ord, interviewed by Fearghus Roulston, Brighton, UK, January 2020. A "Home Counties" accent, in England, is an accent perceived to come from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, and Surrey, the counties bordering the capital of London. Although there are in fact many regional and classed distinctions between how people in these places speak, what is generally meant by this expression is a "posh" accent or an accent that is associated with a wealthy background.
52. Ord interview, January 2020.
53. On this phenomenon in relation to second-generation Irishness more broadly, see Mary J. Hickman, Sarah Morgan, and Joseph Bradley, "The Limitations of Whiteness and the Boundaries of Englishness: Second-Generation Irish Identifications and Positionings in Multiethnic Britain," *Ethnicities* 5, no. 2 (2016): 160–82.
54. Russell interview, November 2020.
55. Bronwen Walter, *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place and Irish Women* (London, UK: Routledge, 2001), 164.
56. G. K. Peatling, "The Whiteness of Ireland under and after the Union," *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 115–33.
57. L. P. Curtis, "The Return of Revisionism," *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 144.
58. Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798–1882* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).
59. Gavin Schaffer and Saima Nasar, "The White Essential Subject: Race, Ethnicity, and the Irish in Post-War Britain," *Contemporary British History* 32, no. 2 (2018): 210.
60. Schaffer and Nasar, "The White Essential Subject," 222.
61. Schaffer and Nasar, "The White Essential Subject," 171.
62. Schaffer and Nasar, "The White Essential Subject," 244–55.
63. Della Pollock, ed., *Remembering: Oral History Performance* (London, UK: Palgrave, 2005); Simon Featherstone, "Jack Hill's Horse: Narrative Performance and Oral History," *Oral History* 19, no. 2 (1991): 59–62.
64. Daniel James, *Doña María's Story: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 178.

65. See Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London, UK: Routledge, 1994); Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994); Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1998).

Fearghus Roulston is Chancellor's Fellow in the History of Activism at Strathclyde University. He is one of the reviews editors of the journal *Oral History*. His first book, *Belfast Punk and the Troubles: An Oral History*, came out with Manchester University Press in 2022.

Jack Crangle is an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at Maynooth University. His first monograph, entitled *Migrants, Immigration and Diversity in Twentieth-Century Northern Ireland: British, Irish or 'Other'?*, was published by Palgrave Studies in Migration History in January 2023.

Graham Dawson is an independent scholar working in Historical Cultural Studies, and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Memory, Narrative and Histories, University of Brighton. He is author of *Making Peace with the Past? Memory, Trauma and the Irish Troubles* (2007) and coeditor of *The Northern Ireland Troubles in Britain: Impacts, Engagements, Legacies and Memories* (2017).

Liam Harte is Professor of Irish Literature at the University of Manchester. His most recent book is *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Fiction* (Oxford University Press, 2020), the paperback edition of which appeared in 2023.

Barry Hazley is Derby Fellow in Transforming Conflict at the Institute for Irish Studies in the University of Liverpool. He is the author of *Life History and the Irish Migrant Experience in Post-War England: Myth, Memory and Emotional Adaption* (Manchester University Press, 2020).