National College of Art and Design
Fine Art Sculpture

AN CHAOIR ADUAIDH

Northern Lights

An Analysis of Northern Irish Identity
and the Art of Willie Doherty & John Kindness

by
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Culture is always something that was,

Something pedants can measure,

Skull of bard, thigh of cheif,

Depth of dried up River.

Shall we be thus forever?

Shall we be thus forever?

Patrick Kavanagh

CONTENTS

LIST OF PLATES

Figure 17. Night Canvas, John Kindness,1987

Figure 18. Newsprint Project, John Kindness, 1988

Figure 19. Newsprint Project, John Kindness, 1988

Figure 20. Native Disorders,Willie Doherty,1986

Figure 21. Native Disorders,Willie Doherty,1986

Figure 22. Native Disorders,Willie Doherty,1986

Introduction

In this thesis I wish to investigate the dynamics behind much recent northern Irish Art. Poetic land, political territory, are just a couple of the descriptions used when it comes to trying to explain this troubled country of ours. I feel it is a safe assumption to say that we, here in the south are to a great extent ignorant to the everyday realities of living in a divided land. The radical divides of protestant / catholic; unionist / nationalist, affect us very little here in the south. The common expression from the majority of southerners about the crises in the north is either distain, utter rejection, or downright annoyance at having to listen to the daily scourge. People have grown weary of the 'troubles and seem to be of the opinion that it would be better for everyone if the six counties floated off into the Atlantic never to be seen again. This is a result of poor media representation and a tendency to forget or ignore the events of History. This is also a direct reflection of our confused identity, the North supplies us with a mirror image of something we only too well recognise. Rejection, guilt, sympathy, are just a few words which can be used to describe our misplaced feelings.

In chapter one I will give a brief historical backdrop from the 1800s to the present day, to contextualise my investigation into Irish Nationalism. This will provide the facts of our political history and the reasons why the 'troubles' exist . In chapter two, I will explore the question of decolonisation, examining with the help of Gibbons and Said, the ways it can be achieved. Also, I will look at the affects colonisation has had on our sense of self, the necessity of a recovery of the land and the recreation of a national identity. Thirdly I will show that after the initial force has done the job of physically recovering the land, nationalism becomes obsolete. For full cultural recovery to take place an acceptance of the legacies of our colonial history must be reached if it is not to hinder us further in our ultimate aim of decolonisation. Finally, I will state the fact that the North has not in fact reached this stage yet, as it is still trying to recover the actual land.

In chapter three the origins of our 'Modern' Irish culture will be examined starting with the

formation of the New State in 1922. I will look at Arts movement from Nationalistic Isolationism to the art produced in the North recently. I will be concentrating on the Art made about the political unrest and will emphasis the importance of this type of Art.

In chapters four and five I will discuss the work of Willie Doherty and John Kindness, while chapter six will provide a comparative analysis of their individual, personal perceptions of the circumstances within the North of Ireland. In conclusion, I will summerise the points made previously, stressing the importance of Art depicting the troubles; Its potent ability to force us to look at our Identity, highlights the need for us to be aware of our history. History itself, provides us with some of the fundamental answers to the question of Irish Identity.

CHAPTER ONE

The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and territorial seas.
(The Irish Constitution, Article 2)

THE FENIANS

In 1798 the United Irish Men, a secret revolutionary organisation, rose in rebellion, seeking an end to British rule in Ireland and the establishment of an independent republic. The rebellion was brutally suppressed and the then British Prime Minister, William Pitt, introduced a bill to abolish the Irish parliament and effect a union between Ireland and Britain.

The Act of Union was passed on 1st January, 1801. Catholic emancipation had been promised under the union but failed to be recognised. Bitter struggle followed and eventually almost 30 years later, Britain conceded emancipation in 1829. Unfortunately, emancipation was not realised before Britain took measures to disenfranchise small tenants. Daniel O' Connell, who had used peaceful constitutional methods to achieve emancipation, also used this approach to repeal union. He was unsuccessful, urging on those who felt armed rebellion was needed.

'The Famine' of 1845-52 caused human tragedy of unprecedented proportion. The enduring memory of people starving while livestock and grain continued to be exported, often under military guard left a legacy of bitterness and resentment among survivors. Young Irelander's attempts at rebellion in 1848 and 1849 failed, suffering from poor organisation which were easily infiltrated by British intelligence.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) was founded by veteran members of the Young Irelanders in 1858. Their aims being to establish an independent Irish republic by physical force. Meanwhile constitutional nationalists strove to relaunch the movement for Self Rule (Home Rule). During this period a single agenda pressing, brought both groups together. This was the issue of land reform. The Land League was formed in 1879 by Michael Davitt. It was primarily a tenant's defence association to oppose the excesses and unfair demands of landlords. The Land League's goal was to achieve "the land of Ireland for the people of Ireland." (Kenny,1994, p.12)

"The New Departure" of 1879 saw constitutional, agrarian and revolutionary concerns coalesced for the first time under Parnell. The defeat of the 1886 Home Rule Bill and the disastrous split in the party following the Parnell divorce case, brought a temporary end to hopes for parliamentary success. Within the IRB the collapse of the constitutional crusades strengthened the hand of the "old guard" who believed that Britain would never accept self-government, much less a republic, unless forced to do so. The IRB, though, at this time needed rejuvenation, after previous failed attempts at rebellion, a lot of their members were incarcerated and following the successes of land reform, the public were tentative about fighting for something more when they had achieved a certain amount of "comfort."

The formation of Sinn Fein, founded by Arthur Griffith in 1905, provided a useful political outlet for the now rejuvenated IRB. Also the formation of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in 1884 by Douglas Hyde was the beginning of the creation of what has become part of Irish cultural identity. With this also ensued a literary and cultural renaissance. Recognising the singularity of their cause, the creation of a whole Ireland complete with identity, the Gaelic League and the IRB became linked. Their ultimate synonymous aim was de-colonisation. The 1916 Rising was the culmination of 60 years of probing, planning and self sacrifice of the Phoniness. The Phoniness strength lay in its unquenchable idealism.(Kenny,1994,p.22)

The IRB's continued campaign included killing members of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and members of the British Army, also they conducted various bombing campaigns in Britain and frequently looked to America for resources. Unionists had formed their own

paramilitary organisation within Ulster in the late 1800s, as a counteraction against the IRB and the threat of Home Rule. Their campaign involved targeting catholics and republicans.

The unceasing violence led to Britain sending in its infiltrating paramilitaries who scattered all over Ireland and terrorised the country in an attempt to quell nationalist feeling. These were known and the 'Black and Tans' and their arrival resulted in the Anglo-Irish war, which had debilitating effects. The strength of Britain, and Irish ability to fight them if a war was to ensue provoked Anglo-Irish negotiation. The result of these talks was a twenty six county Free State, leaving six counties of Ulster to accommodate the Unionists. Partition became a reality.

The six counties became "a protestant state for protestant people," as its first Prime Minister proudly boasted, and hence the troubles began. In 1933, Sir Joseph Davidson, Grand Master of the Orange Order spelled it out:

> *It is time protestant employers in Northern Ireland realised that whenever a Roman Catholic is brought into their employment it means one protestant vote less ... I suggest the slogan be: Protestants employ Protestants.*

Pogroms and sectarian violence erupted again and again throughout the following decades, becoming a feature of life in cities such as Belfast and Derry.(Doyle, 1997,p.10)

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was set up in 1967. Its demands were tame enough by todays standards but in actual fact they unintentionally challenged the very basis of the state. Their organised marches were primarily to highlight injustices in the six counties but they also caused major concern to the ruling protestant classes. Violence against the marchers resulted in rioting and sectarian unrest. August of 1969 saw a high point of the violence in Derry with the battle of the Bogside and the proclamation of Free Derry. After two days of rioting, British troops were sent into Derry. Violence spread all over the six counties. Troops moved into the Falls, Belfast on 15th August, 1969.

The explosion of violence that month caught a dormant IRA unawares. For one thing the leadership was largely based in Dublin and woefully out of touch with the situation in the six counties. A caricature of Marxism that they had devised held that fighting against the Northern State got in the way of the fight for socialism, and they ignored appeals for

weapons from their members in the North. Catholics had to flee or defend themselves throwing up barricades at the end of their streets. Graffiti declaring "IRA - I Ran Away" was common. Shamed by the inaction of their leaders, their communities under relentless attack, northern republicans were fast moving towards a split with the organisation.

Although viewed with wariness by members of the IRA and some members of the Citizen's Defence Committees, British soldiers were generally welcomed into catholic areas. Many Catholics saw them as their protection against marauding loyalist mobs.
The IRA finally split in December 1969. It split ostensibly over whether or not the movement should recognise the Dail, but it had more to do with the argument over the arms struggle. Around one hundred delegates walked out of the Sinn Fein Art Fheis in January 1970 to form Provisional Sinn Fein, supporting the newly formed Provisional IRA. The Provisionals immediately set about stock piling weapons and explosives in preparation for the inevitable confrontation with the British Army.

They were soon bombing commercial premises across the north with ferocious repetition. The situation was now one of spiralling action and counteraction. The British Government responded with internment in 1971. Initially this completely failed with Catholics being singled out and IRA leadership escaping the round-ups. Internment also swung large sections of the nationalist community decisively behind the Provisional IRA. No-go areas became a reality in Belfast and Derry, with stiff resistance to a security force presence in other areas. The 'Provos' began to recruit rapidly. Republicans who were interned used jails to debate and develop a political strategy, not to mention brushing up on their weaponry knowledge.

The bloody catastrophe that became known as 'Bloody Sunday', brought Stormont crashing down on the 30th January 1972, peaceful anti-internment marchers were charged by the First Parachute Regiment, killing thirteen and injuring twenty-nine marchers. From now on the six counties would be ruled directly from Westminster. The event of "Bloody Sunday" pushed more recruits towards the IRA and they settled down to a long, bitter campaign.

The situation flared up again in 1981. Margaret Thatcher, the then Prime Minister was forcing through the policy of criminalisation, treating political prisoners as criminals. Republican prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and in Armagh had been, for some time, refusing to wear prison clothing, and mounted a hunger strike on March 1st, 1981. Bobby Sands was elected to the House of Commons and two other hunger strikers were elected to the Dail. Thatcher however was unmoved and when Bobby Sands died on May 5th after 66 days on hunger strike, the North erupted. The hunger strike campaigns resulted in the deaths of ten men in all, with intense rioting following each death. As merciless as the episode had been, the hunger strikes jump started the republican movement again and brought Sinn Fein to the fore as a political force.

Sinn Fein were not the only political force to emerge from the conflict. The loyalist paramilitaries were beginning to grow political wings as well. The Peace Process of 1994 brought a cessation of violence for over a year, but the IRA broke its ceasefire when it seemed the talks were achieving nothing and seemed to have ground to a halt. Countless lives have been taken on both sides, and the peace process still lives on and the IRA have agreed to a new ceasefire.(Doyle, 1997, p.9-18)

Recent events in the North have done considerable damage to the current peace process. The killing of the loyalist paramilitary leader Billy Wright, by the IRA while he was in prison, resulted in the arbitrary murders of numerous catholics in retaliation for his death. This resulted in their political party being thrown out of the talks,but not before a questionable delay. The RUC were very slow to react to the brutal killings of innocent catholics. There had been no retaliation by the IRA. Sinn Fein seem determined to make peace work stating often that they feel the arms struggle is over and urging their supporters to accept that constitutional politics is the way forward. Unfortunately, there are suspicions now of IRA involvement in the murders of two loyalists. This is posing series threat to Sinn Fein who feel they should not be held responsible for the activities of the continuity IRA (a splinter group from the provisionals). The British and Irish Governments are currently debating whether or not to throw Sinn Fein out of the negotiations. This move could have series repercussions for the North,but is inevitable.

That there might be many different Irelands was clear in the heady decades at the start of this century, when men and women of different traditions, followed desperate visions, fought in their different ways for an independent Ireland. Ireland was to be socialist; it was to be egalitarian. It was to be Irish in language and culture, yet internationalist in outlook; catholic yet non-sectarian; for some, able to provide the plain necessities of life for all its people, yet committed to higher things than material growth ... The Free State which emerged after 1922 seemed to bear little resemblance to these visions.(Sense of Ireland,1980)

CHAPTER TWO

... I am quite ready to help the saving work of reducing the sham Ireland of romance to a heap of unsightly ruins.
(George Bernard Shaw, 1.2.1896 ,A Sense of Ireland,1980)

A great deal of resistance to imperialism was conducted in the name of nationalism. Nationalism identifies the mobilising force that coalesced into resistance against an alien and occupying empire on the part of peoples possessing a common history, religion and language. Yet for all its successes in ridding many countries and territories of colonial overlords, nationalism remains a deeply problematic ideological, as well as socio-political enterprise. Nationalism is fatally limited by the common history of the coloniser and colonised. It relies on the injustices of colonialism to fuel it's cause. Imperialism is a co-operative venture, both the master and the slave participate in it, albeit unequally.

The great colonial schools taught generations of the native bourgeoisie important truths about history, science and culture, colonial culture of course. Out of this learning process millions grasped the fundamentals of modern life yet remained subordinate dependents of an authority based elsewhere, with the eventual result being a destroyed native culture. (Said, 1988, p.9)

In an analysis of Yeats, Edward Said argues that there are two phases of a nationalist liberation movement. The first is a period of nationalist anti-imperialism in which, "there is a pressing need for the recovery of the land which, because of the presence of the coloniser is at first recoverable only through the imagination."(Said,1988, p.12) For the native (ie.

Irish in this case) the history of their colonial servitude is inaugurated by the loss to an outsider of the local place, whose concrete geographical identity must therefore be searched for and somehow replaced. The second phase, according to Said, is when liberation is more realisable, usually through armed force:

> *With the new territoriality there comes a whole set of further assertions, recoveries and identifications, all of them quite literally grounded on this poetically projected base [ie. the imaginary]. The search for authenticity, for a more congenial national origin than that provided by colonial history for a new pantheon of heroes, myths and religions, these two are enabled by the land (E.W. Said, 1988, p.13)*

The first movement of resistance to imperialism brought forth all the various nationalist and independence movements that culminated in the large-scale dismantling of the great classical empires. The second movement, liberation, however still continues with us and its complexities and turbulence in many instances still defy resolution. In this phase imperialism courses on, where the relation of domination continues.(Said, 1988, p.21) Luke Gibbon's essay, "Ireland and Post-Colonial Identity" refers to the controversial restoration of Queen Victoria's statue from the grounds of University College Cork (originally, Queen's College, Cork) to celebrate the colleges 150th anniversary in 1995. The belief that the restoration of the statue was an inoffensive gesture in the context of an historical arc spanning 1845 to 1995 could only make sense if the Great Famine in Ireland was a thing of the past. But Gibbons rightly poses the question: "Can the wounds inflicted by a social catastrophe be so easily cauterised?" (Gibbons, 1996 , p.175).

What also must be remembered is that the Irish emigrant, escaping the famine, brought with him or herself, from the homeland were not the habits of authority fostered by the coloniser but, a bitter legacy of servitude akin to that experienced by native African-Americans. The widespread equation of the mere Irish with Native-Americans in the The 17th century served as a pretext for wholesale confiscations and plantations, and more ominous expressions of genocidal intent as in Edmund Spencer's advice to Queen Elizabeth that "until Ireland can be famished, it cannot be subdued.(Gibbons, 1996,p.176) Views like this continued throughout subsequent centuries and can be held largely accountable for the afire mentioned 'Great Famine' of the 1840s.

Throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries the penal code, which systematically excluded catholics from citizenship and political life, rendered them foreigners in their own land. Irish people were essentially subsistent during this period, living a life of oppression which resulted in the complete paralysis of their culture by colonial overlords.

> *Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the people, distorts, disfigures and destroys it. (Fannon) (Said, 1988, p.24)*

In recreating a cultural Identity, there is a need to displace ahistorical rubrics such as 'potato eaters,' 'bog-dwellers.' A people must be united with their history. What we need to remember is that history and nation are not separable, anymore than, as Said eloquently puts it: "a dancer from the dance."(Said,1988)

Yeats greatest theme as far as colonisation is concerned refers to the latter phase of Said's theory for de-colonisation, this second phase concerned with the actuality of recovering the land through the inevitable use of violence:

> *... how to reconcile the inevitable violence of the colonial conflict with the everyday politics of an ongoing national struggle. At some point violence cannot be enough and the strategies of politics and reason come into play, the first important announcement, in the context of de-colonisation, is a need to balance violent force with an exigent political and organisational process. (Said,1988, p.21-22)*

Fannon's assertion almost half a century later than Yeats, that liberation cannot be accomplished simply by seizing power (though he says, "even the wisest man grows tense with some sort of violence") underlines the importance of Yeat's insight. That neither Yeats nor Fannon offer a prescription for undertaking the transition from direct force to a period after decolonisation when a new political order achieves moral hegemony is part of the difficulty we live with today in Ireland.(Said,1988, p.22)

If Ireland does not quite conform to the post-colonial condition, it is not for the reasons outlined by some critics that because it is 'white' and situated in Europe, it cannot have been subject to colonisation. Anne McClintock is nearer the mark when she advises that:

> *... the term 'post-colonialism' is, in many cases, prematurely celebratory: Ireland may, at a pinch, be 'post-colonial' but for the inhabitants of British-occupied Northern Ireland, ... there may be nothing 'post' about colonialism at all. (Gibbons, 1997, p.179)*

'Post,' in this context, signifies a form of historical closure, but it is precisely the absence of the sense of an ending which has characterised the national narratives of Irish history. This has less to do with the 'unfinished business' of a united Ireland than with the realisation that there is no possibility of undoing history, of removing all the accretions of conquest - the English language, the inscriptions of the protestant ascendancy on the landscape and material culture, and so on. For this reason, there is no prospect of restoring a pristine, pre-colonial identity: the lack of historical closure, therefore, is bound up with a similar incompleteness in the culture itself, so that instead of being based on narrow ideals of racial purity and exclusivism, identity is open ended and heterogeneous. (Gibbons,1997, p.179)

CHAPTER THREE

'Modern' Irish culture could be said to have originated in the middle of the last century, and specifically in the cultural nationalism associated with the Young Ireland Movement of the 1840's. This social project defined culture and mediation of a sense of national identity - a notion partially realised by the foundation of the Republic in 1921. In the North, after partition, a different concept of identity, in deliberate opposition to the republican ethos, was promulgated.

Today, over 70 years later, that division remains. There are two stereotypical images of Ireland. The first, promoted by the State since the Republic's independence from the United Kingdom, is that of a beautiful, rural, Gaelic and Catholic country that has preserved a strong sense of tradition and history. This image can be much attributed to the work of the Gaelic League and its Celtic Revival. The other, more or less the inverse is the North of Ireland, in which members of a divided community, maim and kill each other because of opposing political loyalties and religious afflictions. Neither picture is accurate but both contain elements of truth. The only unequivocal reality is the continuing search, throughout the island, for social and personal identity; a search that is both a lamentation for what might have been and a longing for what might come to pass. (Hutchinson,1991,p.17-20)

What also seems apparent is that the South, with the formation of the new state, has busied itself with the task of creating a visual culture. Although this is somewhat weaker in comparison to the literary achievements of the time, culminating in Yeats and Joyce. But fragile as the beginnings of an 'Irish' art culture may have been or still is here in the South,

there seems little acknowledgement of an art world in the six counties, prior to the troubles.

In the 1920's, nationalistic isolationalism dominated over all the art produced. In the visual arts at this time, there was emphasis laid on producing national art. This meant art which recalled the traditional life in the West of Ireland, images which reflected the true heroic nature of a pure Irish identity. Artists who arose from this movement were Paul Henry, with his depictions of the rural landscape and the hard-working peasant such as his painting, **Potatoe Diggers**.(Fig. 1) Also paintings like Sean Keating's **Men of the West** and John Lavery's **Love of Ireland-Michael Collins Lying in State** depicted a people intent on finding freedom. (Fig. 2 & 3)

By the 1930s however, many artists became disillusioned with this isolationist point of view and urged the Academy to adopt a more sympathetic understanding towards Modernism. The Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) had been resisting change for some time with many artists travelling abroad to pursue the new, modernist movements. The outbreak of war in September, 1939 forced these artists back home. Also, several foreign artists who sought refuge in Ireland during the war brought with them the latest trends in European Modernism. The first Irish Exhibition of Living Art was held in 1943. "Many artists hoped that the IELA would inject some life into Irish art, and for a time it did,but eventually became indistinguishable from the RHA." (Fowler, Circa 14, p.8). The Living Art filled an obvious need for "the needs of a more comprehensive survey of really vital contemporary Irish art, irrespective of school or manner, than hitherto being made." (Kennedy, Circa 14, p29)

There has been much deliberation and discussion about the Irishness of Irish Art with the general consensus being that the specific trait setting Irish art apart from international art is its indirectness, which is reflective of our collective confusion about our national identity. Others make suggestions towards our celtic art heritage but, inserting a few spirals into a painting or in a sculpture hardly lends itself to Irishness and could be seen to be as disingenuous as putting in leprechauns. I would be more inclined towards the opinion that Irish art is curvilinear, oblique, indirect, showing the Irish 'turn of mind'. Dorothy Walker has written of the use of paradox and of the underlying open-ended linear structures

Fig. 1
The Potatoe Diggers by Paul Henry

Fig. 2
Men of the West by Sean Keating

Fig. 3
For Love of Ireland by John Lavery

present in all forms of Irish Art. She goes on to explain that this 'turn of mind' is firstly paradoxical - we as a people think and act paradoxically all the time, without finding it the least bit strange.

> We also *think along parallel lines and on different levels simultaneously. Most Irish communication and conversation, even of a mundane kind, quite naturally does the same , so that there is simultaneously (and again paradoxically) an economy of avoiding unnecessary elaboration as to the essential meaning and an abundance of associative signifigance from the free use of double-meaning or indeed treble-meaning allusions... This turn of mind seems to me more important than any material cultural evidence in considering contemporary Irish Art. (Walker,* Circa *No.14,p.11)*

The pervasive internationalist agenda of the centralised art world through the sixties and seventies, meant that works which addressed personal or regional subject matter were considered 'provincial,' thus second-rate. There is much evidence to suggest that our lack of confidence within the visual arts was borne from our colonial past. Paddy Graham observes that England has hovered hugely like a dark mantle on our doorsteps and her departing to sit across the hall only highlights our confused philosophy about directing ourselves. He suggests that the English rationalist,imperical thinking is a legacy which hinders and distorts our own imagination.(Graham, Circa No.14,p.32) Born out of the language of high Modernism, adjectives like 'universal' implied better quality art. In an attempt to keep up with the major cultural centres of London, Paris, New York who dictated international trends, certain ideas seemed to be lost or abandoned by those on the peripheries - ideas which developed a personal, ethnic, national or cultural identity. It seems that Irish artists took on identities that were constructed for them and avoided telling their own stories. (Kidd,1991, p8) (Fig. 4&5)

For Declan McGonagle, the status quo of the political situation has rarely gone as unquestioned as it has in Britain and Ireland since the 1940's. In the context of Northern Ireland, to raise political questions in a work of art, was to raise them about the status quo. Since many of the artists functioning within that period owed whatever position (exibiting in the RHA) they had to the status quo, then real questioning was avoided. (McAvara, 1989,p.21) In the North, the Northern Irish Arts Council and the Belfast College of Art were conservative in the sense of their distance from the violent and occasionally horrific events happening just down the street, and their adherence to formal interpretations of art

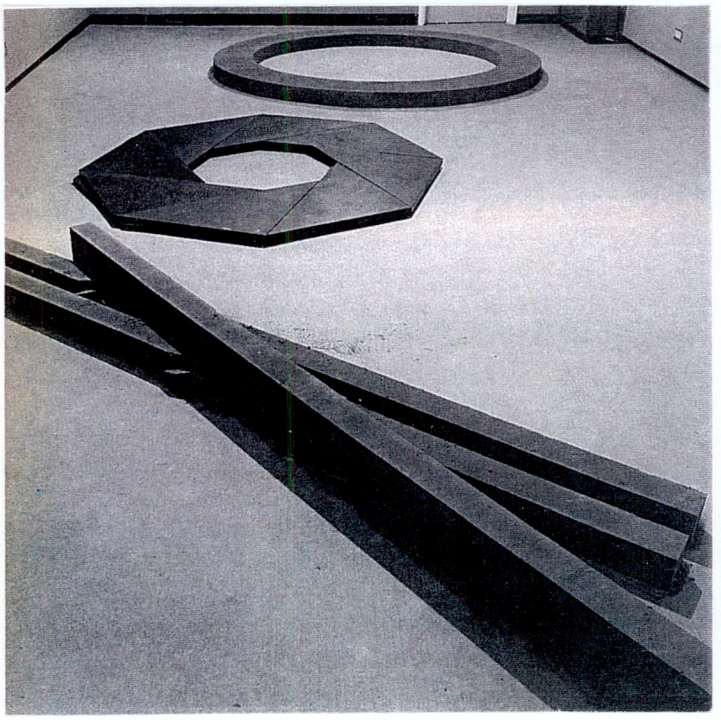

Fig. 4
Installation by John Aiken

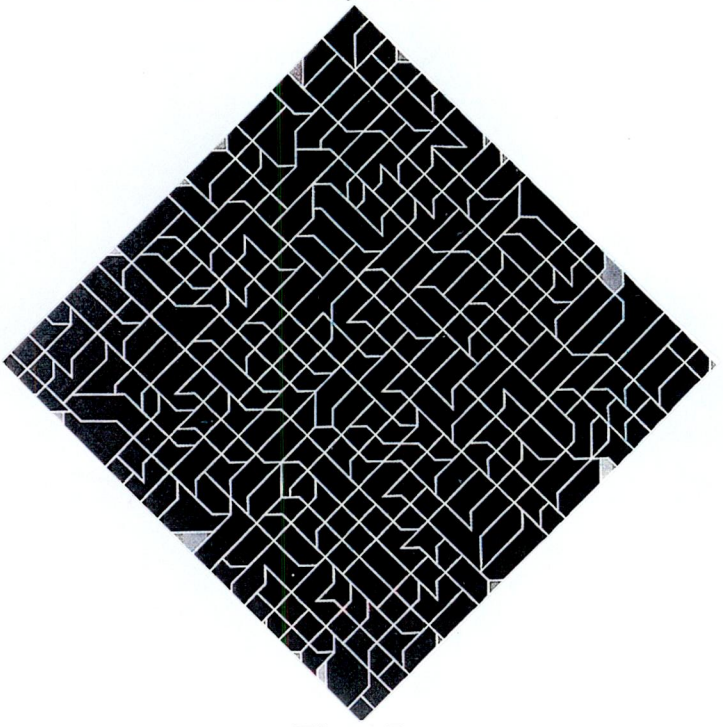

Fig. 5
Intersect Series 2 by Roy Johns

practice. The irony of immersion in a pastoral modernist ideal of formalised landscape and figure painting while the world fell apart around you was not lost on art students, and the strife certainly increased the inevitable pressures for change. (McAvera, 1989,p.22)

Also around this time:

> *There was a fundamental shift in attitude and approach on the part of younger artists, Brian McAvera has argued that the majority of these artists, faced with an overwhelming political reality, responded not through confrontational means of politically explicit, 'activist art' but through a diverse array of indirect strategies.*
> *(Fowler, 1990,p.18)*

There is plenty of evidence of this indirection but certainly, by comparison with their contemporaries in the South, the art made by this generation of Northern Irish artists is, in general terms, harder headed, more analytical and more calculated in terms of its reverential scope and its intended effects. (Fowler,1990,p.118) Here again the result of our colonial past have made it virtually impossible to achieve 'direct' work. The work being made reflects the ambiguous, curvilinear, oblique grasp we have of our national identity.
But thankfully, this has changed, with the majority of Northern Irish artists dealing with the prevalent troubles at one stage or another, if not consistently in their work.

The situation that was created in the North after 1969 politicised the art being made there. This generation of artists make art which is not in an activist , but instead layered and ambiguous, carrying on the tradition of one of the identifiable characteristics of Irish art. John Kindness has observed that it would be impossible for Irish artists to make genuine activist art with regard to the northern situation without aligning themselves to either paramilitary sectarian group. This is the function of propaganda not art. Rita Duffy's work is about Belfast. **Segregation**, (Fig. 6) siege mentality, cultural and religious extreme, together with issues of gender, have preoccupied this artist since leaving college. The action is often played out on the street. the pitch of the humorous but bitter protest echoes up from the vortex of segregation and division. The forces in her composition make for a circular reading, reflecting the circularity of entrenchment and tradition. Duffy explores the Belfast context of working class lives. Maureen Tatlow could see how the city was put to work:

> *The urban environment is decaying.It towers threateningly over the inhabitants. Even the churches lean erratically. There is no security here; A*

Fig. 6
Segregation by Rita Duffy

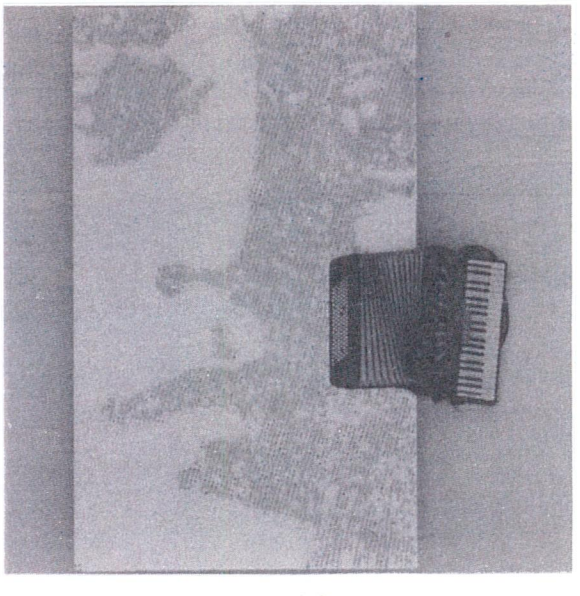

Fig. 7
Ballad No.1 by Philip Napier

"Comfortable Woman"(1989) may live cocooned in illusion, but beyond her plush boudoir there is war.(Kelly,1996,p.78)

Phillip Napier is from Belfast and his **Ballad No. 1** (Fig. 7) features an accordion mounted on a wall whose intake and expelling of air allows it to double up as an artificial lung attached to the barely decipherable image of the Republican hunger striker, Bobby Sands. The blown up photogravure effect of the image is achieved through small nails, a reminder of the aura of martyrdom which surrounded Sand's death. By linking the body with mourning and collective memory, the off-key image, in effect, a living monument for the famine as the dark shadow which it cast on the lung of the Irish body politic. (Gibbons, 1997, p.175)

Paul Seawright, from Derry, made a series of 15 photo works in 1987/88 based on visits to scenes of various sectarian murders, or locations where bodies were dumped from the 70's. He researched original journalist's reports of killings from local newspapers in Belfast, and selected snippets of text to work with the images. The text ties them down irrevocably to a place, a sub-culture and a value system of violence. (Kelly, 1996, p.28) (Fig. 8)

Catherine McWilliams is from Tyrone and in her painting **Victim**, (Fig. 9) a woman stands outside her house the morning after her home has been raided by the army - a frequent occurrence of the period. The impact of this invasion of property and privacy is carried by a single broken window, with net curtains blowing in the breeze. Viewing this stark figure - the viewer is directly implicated in this lament to violation. (Kelly, 1996, p.77)

Within the context of art practice globally, it has been suggested that this kind of art practice which reflects the socio-political problems of a particular place is merely regional and can carry no relative meaning within the wider frame of contemporary art. Diarmuid Delargy has said that "the issue of identity also deals with the question of regionalism and internationalism whereas parochialism may contain universal ideas." (Fowler, 1991, p.12)

Declan McGonagle backs this idea up when he says he would suggest we look beyond

22nd September 1972
'The man left home to go to a bar for a drink and never returned. He was found the following morning dumped on waste ground behind the Glencairn Estate. He had been stabbed in the back and chest, and his body showed signs of torture.'

Fig. 8
Sectarian Murder Series by Paul Seawright

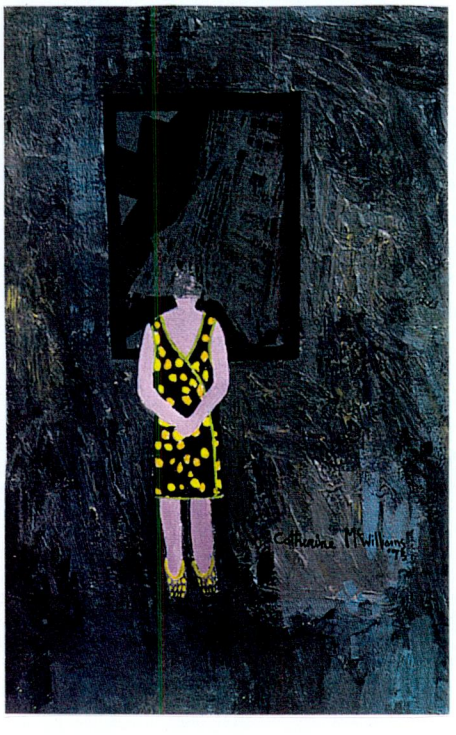

Fig. 9
Victim by Catherine McWilliams

regionalism to locality as a way of challenging the canon.

> *By definition the culture of locality is embedded with its audience. In fact, the idea of a separated audience doesn't apply. Where the process of mediation is connected to the context and can develop a sense of world without invalidating the vernacular or the local, a new vocabulary is possible. Such a vocabulary can be read locally and internationally; breaks the presumption of metropolitan knowledge and local ignorance; engages with those processes already present in the society; empowers and enables the otherwise dispossessed. It is in those places which have been excluded historically - where social structures may be in a state of flux - that cultural intervention is not only possible but necessary and where new models will develop.*
> *(McGonagle, 1990, p.26-27)*

In the following two chapters I will discuss the work of Willie Doherty and John Kindness, two Northern Irish artists who have grown through the troubles, each in their own individual way representing the North.

CHAPTER FOUR

Willie Doherty was born, raised and lives today in the city of Derry, which continues to also be known by its colonial name of London Derry. The site of some of the key events in the 1968-69 disturbances, Derry is where the infamous "Bloody Sunday" killings occurred and a place where the sectarian differences that led to the current, prolonged stalemate have some of their deepest historical roots. As if to underscore this point, the most thorough history of the city to date is titled 'Siege City' (Cameron,1993,cat.) after the 1688-89 engagement in which the protestant followers of William of Orange held out for several months as the troops of catholic James the Second tried to oust them from their stronghold within the famous walled city, built by the English. Today, this event continues to be commemorated by a parade of largely loyalist marchers through the centre of this heavily nationalist city, in honour of the Apprentice Boys, whose act of shutting the city gates was a signal for the siege to begin. Not surprisingly, it was the 1968 move on the part of certain catholic groups to hold a peaceful civil rights march the same day as this parade, which was met with violent reaction from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and sparked off the conflict which continues today. More than any other single subject, this same walled city appears repeatedly in Doherty's work. Derry is a symbol of the continual demarcation of territory. In Derry this is experienced through the identification of streets and neighbourhoods that belong to either one side or the other.(Cameron, 1993,cat.)

Unlike Belfast, which lies a relative distance from the border, the city of Derry is a mere stone's throw from the line separating the counties of Donegal and Derry, one of which is part of the Republic of Ireland, while the other functions as part of the UK. Since the two counties are otherwise intricately linked as part of the ancient province of Ulster, the

artificiality of the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland may be said to have the most direct impact here on the greatest number of human lives.

Doherty was an eye-witness to the events of 'Bloody Sunday', when thirteen civilians were killed by British troops, and was traumatised by what he saw.

> *I witnessed the start of the action ... I always had absolutely no doubt in my mind that the people were murdered. For me along with an awful lot of others in Derry, that was an event that politicised all the people.(Cunningham,1994,Sunday Business Post)*

Although he was much influenced by the tradition of American documentary photography, and refers wryly to the experience of living through the reportage of Northern Ireland, his work is a subversion or critique of that tradition. It may seem to be within that province in the sense that it partakes of "that look" (in his case large scale, cool, unfussy images of specific locations) but is concerned with extra-documentary intentions.
"My work is about living in Derry," he says, but what he chooses to show us eschews 'hotspot' images. There is no quick journalistic response, but a sense of rootedness and tradition. Landscape is deployed as a metaphor for the states of mind which produce both nationalist and loyalist ideologies.

Although one can easily connect him to the previous generation of photo-based conceptual artists in Britain and Ireland, in whose work the relationship of image to place is a primary characteristic, there is a strong element of rebellion in Doherty's insistence that the present state of conflict in Northern Ireland is as much a result of an extended disagreement about the meaning of nature as anything else. Far from comfortable with a tradition in which the romanticised relation between the artist and the landscape became a symbol for hoped integration, he also felt himself to be living in a place where the explicit Irishness of such an endeavour might run the risk of being dismissed as disingenuous. In this way, Doherty has usurped certain characteristics of Hamish Fulton's and Richard Long's art (Fig.10&11) but also he has challenged certain premises of that work by relocating their poetic evocation of nature to the midst of an urban war zone. What makes Doherty's images different from the work of the average war photographer on foreign assignment, is a different intention behind his pictures. (Cameron,1993,cat.)
Doherty's work proposes, the contested terrain of identity has more terms than a celtic

Fig.10
Milestone by Hamish Fulton

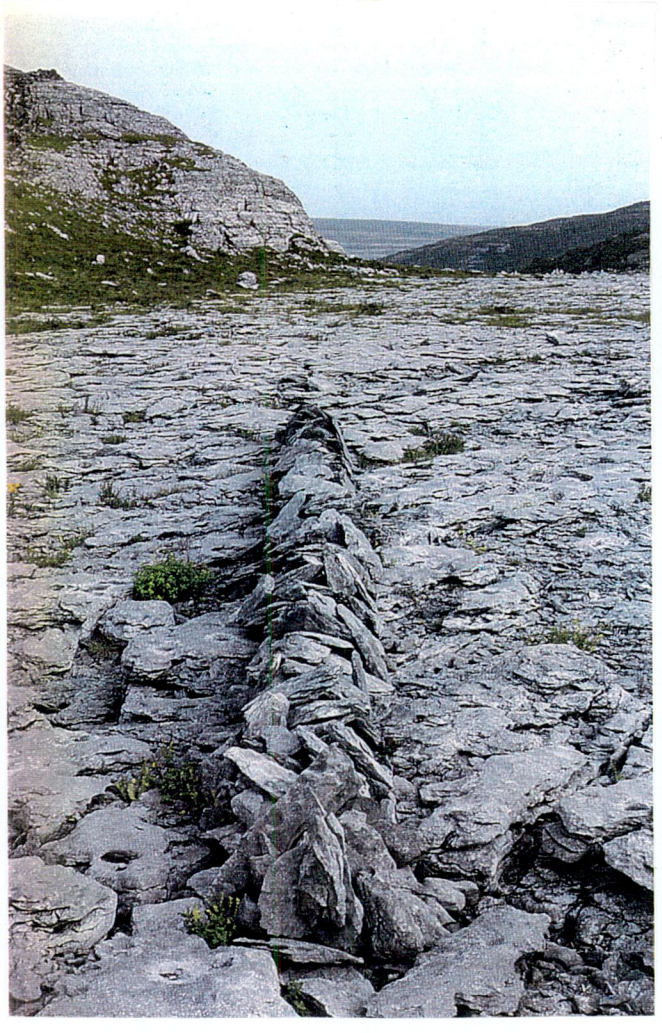

Fig.11
A Line in Ireland by Richard Long

knot; and in this regard we must pay attention to the constant doubling - of the gaze, of the formal structure, of interpretation itself - that characterises the work. Doubling implies ambivalence, and the path of speculation that this draws us towards is that, contrary to the willful demand of the ego for a fixed and ideal self, the nature of identity is essentially provisional. The play on illegibility takes on more specific nuances in Doherty's single black and white landscape photographic work **The Blue Skies of Ulster** (Fig.12) which is inscribed with the legend WE SHALL NEVER FORSAKE THE BLUE SKIES OF ULSTER / FOR THE GREY MISTS OF AN IRISH REPUBLIC. The legend is a familiar loyalist sentiment. The photo work is to be displayed over a mantlepiece which throws the political world into uncomfortable proximity with the domestic domain. The image is of the river Foyle both of whose banks are all but obliterated by a heavy mist. The work has already offered us two clues: firstly, that the fantasy inscribed in mythic speech 'misrecognises' or contradicts reality; and secondly that the two opposing river banks are more or less indistinguishable. In other words, as Terry Eagleton has suggested, "there comes a point ... at which 'pure' difference merely collapses back into pure identity, united as they are in their utter indeterminacy."(Fisher,1990,cat.) There is a humourous irony in the contradiction of the phrase 'Blue Skies' with the image of a typical misty grey day in Derry. Here is a mythic speech that *represents* 'Ulster' as the imaginary site of clarity and order as against the Republic, and all that it signifies historically in terms of Irish identity, as precisely a hinter land of grey and incoherent Otherness.

The duplicity of identity and difference is posed in a two part photo installation, **Stone upon Stone** (Fig.13), Derry 1986. Designed for a narrow corridor-like space, the photographs face each other such that the viewer cannot see both in full view simultaneously. Each photograph is almost, but not quite, a mirror image of the other: near symmetrical views of the west and the east shores of the river Foyle. The west bank is traditionally nationalist and the east bank is traditionally loyalist. Both photographs use a form of poetic text to create an interaction between text and image.

From the bottom left corner an uneven diagonal of stones shifts from foreshore to semi immersion before being end stopped by a large squat rock, arising out of the river bed. The rest of the photograph is river, which because of the downward viewpoint, seems to

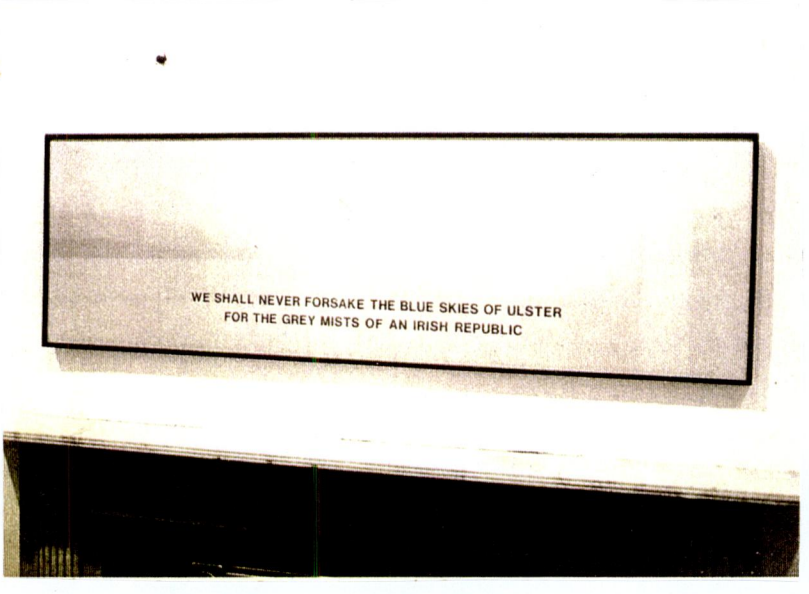

Fig.12
The Blue Skies of Ulster by Willie Doherty

stretch to infinity. This, as the green stencilling along the bottom informs us is 'the west bank of the river Foyle.' Above this, and across is a rhyme of colour: another green statement, this time in Irish 'Tiocfaidh ar lá' - our day will come. Above that again, is the mimetic form of STONE UPON STONE a black stencilling whose dour message is imprinted across the cloudy white river.

This message is common to both images, the other being of the east bank, labelled blue. Here the diagonal, from bottom left to almost top right, separates the image with two triangular sections, the diagonal being composed of a line of large rocky outcrop, fronted by tall sedge which almost blocks our view of the river. In between the geographical label and the 'common ground' (STONE UPON STONE) this time in white is the slogan "we will maintain," needless to say in blue.(Fisher,1990,cat.)

So what have we actually got? The works are about boundaries, both literally and figuratively. They are psychological perception, rather than overt political statement. The conflict is not in terms of violent manifestations (these works lead out both media trouble spot images as well as romantic, picturesque illusions) but rather it is an inner conflict between states of mind, between images of identity, between fixed ideological positions summed up by the historical battle cries ("Our day will come/we will maintain"), between the colour, symbolism with its emblematic flag-waving associations (green/blue). Doherty's works are resonant metaphors for a divided society, which use the emblematic properties of both visual and verbal images in a manner deliberately and coolly calculated as a critique of simplistic attitudes to the North.(McAvera, 1989, cat.)

Fig.13
Stone upon Stone by Willie Doherty

CHAPTER FIVE

Humour draws people in. You nudge them to look at things your way, from your perspective.
(John Kindness,Essay by Carson,1990)

John Kindness was born in Belfast in 1951 and attended art college there. Art college induced a lack of enthusiasm and subsequently, Kindness did not produce any conventional art works during the years from 1974 to 1981. He did not exhibit any works until his Bank of Ireland show in 1983. He worked professionally as a graphic designer, in particular with BBC, Northern Ireland. During this period Kindness also accepted freelance work of varying kinds from etching into brass or painting pub signs. The expeditious requirements of graphic design allowed Kindness to develop a wide visual repertoire and the facility to quickly recycle imagery from our culture. This commercial time also helped him to hone many practical skills.

Because Kindness is from 'the North' he has the confidence to depict the situation with, at times, scathing humour, which an outsider might fear would offend. Kindness is looking at the familiar, where an outsider would be looking at the peculiar. He can be very matter-of-fact about it all in the manner of 'Ulster folk' resigned to the inevitable continuance of violence. Kindness says that he would like to think of himself as a reporter for a non-verbal magazine from outer space. Making as near as possible objective and dispassionate observations of the human condition as apparent in the North of Ireland.

His final year at school was 1969 when political unrest turned to street violence. The ever

running sore of religious/political division in Belfast became a fully open bleeding wound.

> *I began a foundation course at art college and everything started to get very serious. Although I thrived on the foundation work, the next three years at college gradually wore down my enthusiasm for painting and sculpture. Art college nearly knocked the art out of me.*
> *(Kindness, in Carson ,1990)*

Abstraction was considered to be the ultimate in sophistication, representational work was shunned and international art magazines were regarded as a more legitimate reference than what was happening outside the college walls.(Carson,1990, cat.)

Trying to fulfil art college requirements in Belfast in the early 70's was difficult for someone like John Kindness, wanting to describe and comment upon the social and political circumstances around him. He has remarked that most artists biographies jump suddenly from birth to further education. As if the job of art college was to get rid of the dregs and pour knowledge into empty vessels. Fashions have certainly changed since then but there is still an art education system which tends towards restrictive rather than expansive practice, preferring specialisation of discipline to a multi-disciplinary approach.

In 1985, Kindness combined all his skill, experience and references and influences in a watershed show at the Grapevine Art Centre, Dublin, entitled **A Monkey Town Besieged by Dogs**. (Fig. 14) The show consisted of a series of pastel on sandpaper drawings with dogs as Catholics in such stereotypical situations as the chapel, the pub, and the political rally. The monkeys, as protestants appear as pompous Orange leader, Orange men on parade, and a group of TV viewers outraged at the words of a dog being interviewed by a goat on the evening news.

Kindness' graphic and satirical skills were further amplified by a 20 foot by 8 foot wall mural painted on canvas in situ. (Fig. 15) The monkeys and dogs each occupy one half of the long canvas. The two factions are blasted apart by a dramatic central explosion wherein someone's planned breakfast of sausages, fried egg and 'tatey bread' is tragically blown asunder. Being deeply concerned that his work should be accessible, Kindness provided a pin board showing some of the sources he used for the work - 19th century prints, Picasso's "Guernica," celtic decoration, and a fascination with bad circuses and cramped zoos. "Monkey Town" is an accomplished use of the anthropomorphic satirical tradition

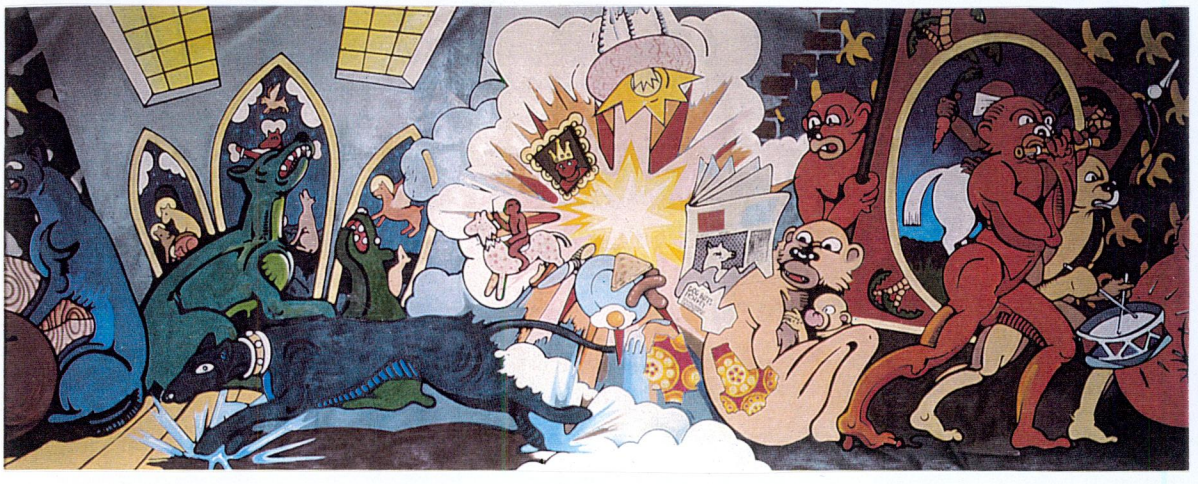

Fig.14
Monkey town besieged by dogs, John Kindness

Fig.15
Monkey town by John Kindness

running all the way from ancient Chinese and Indian legend, through Orwell's "Animal Farm" to contemporary comics and cartoons. (Carlisle, 1985, cat.)

An enduring image from the "Monkey Town" show is the T-shirt motif showing a monkey and dog inextricably entwined and evenly matched in circular motion, Kindness' vision of the two sides eternally locked into conflict. In 1986, he refined this motif into a glass mosaic sculpture entitled **Monkey and Dog Fighting**. (Fig. 16) An immaculate self-contained encapsulation of conflict. A circular stalemate. Are we looking at an eternal struggle or an embrace?

He sees the six counties as a perfect microcosm wherein the cosmic forces continue to act out the eternal see-saw struggle between good and evil, light and dark, extremism and moderation, violence and pacifism. He sees his work as political but not party-political. There is no desire to make mileage out of the work for any faction. He sees the act of making any art within the Northern Irish context as a political act, in that it is part of a refusal to surrender to barbarity.(Carson,1990,cat.)

Like "Monkey Town," **Night Canvas** (Fig.17) was completed in situ for the Douglas Hyde exhibition, "Directions Out" in 1987. This is probably the first work by Kindness involving a violent act that involves people rather than allegorical figures. Anyone who lives in Belfast is fearful of the nightmarish doorbell ring that could, by accident or design, mean yet another hallway killing. It is a working class home with the iconic faces of Gerry Adams (the leader of Sinn fein) and Ian Paisley (leader of the Democratic Unionist Party) on the wallpaper. He depicts the assassins as the terrified people. The driver of the get-away vehicle sees himself in the reflection of an interior mirror: a scarey confrontation with conscience as he looks back on the carnage in which he has just participated. (Kelly, 1996,p.142)

In 1988, Kindness was able to play his political edge with the "Newsprint Project." Over a period of two weeks the artist produced and distributed a daily visual response in print form to news items which appeared in that morning's local newspapers. In response to the story speculating that Unionists might consider taking part in Anglo-Irish talks, Kindness

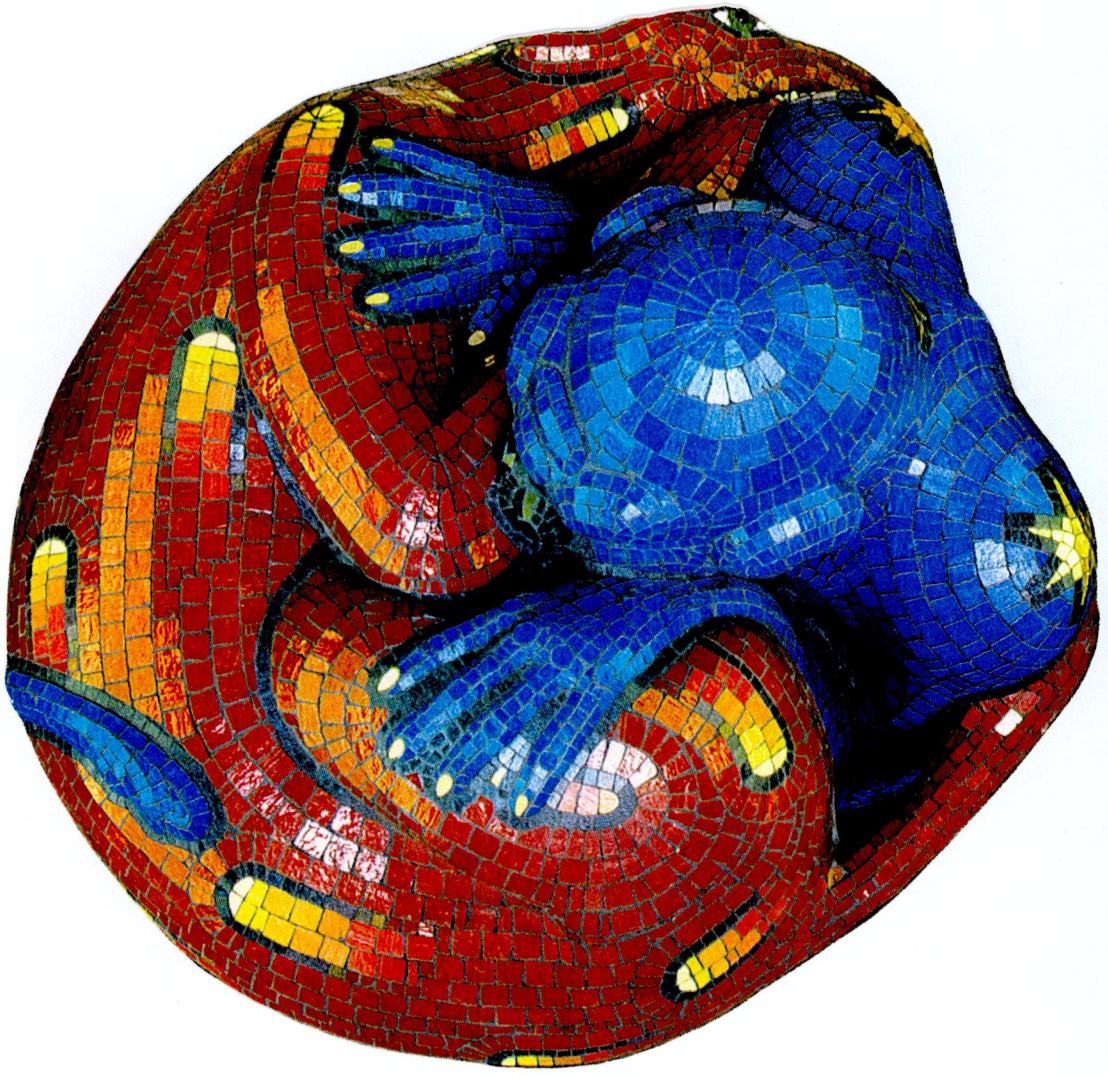

Fig.16
Monkey & Dog Fighting by John Kindness

Fig.17
Night Canvas by John Kindness

produced a collage with Ian Paisley , James Molyneaux (British Home Secretary at the time) and Charles Haughey (Taoiseach at the time) posing as a happy trio with a sky full of winged pigs above. The most popular print proved to be one of Jack Charlton (soccorsquad manager for the republic) sprouting shamrock on his head after the Republic soccer success in the European Cup, and in particular their defeat of the England team. (Fig.18&19) Here the artist encapsulates the mood of the nation in a picture rife with irony - the Englishman as Irish hero. (Carson,1990,cat.)

To produce artwork which catches the imagination and respect of the doormen, the canteen ladies and cleaners of the art college, as well as the critical studies staff is no mean feat. Kindness modestly says that to produce work which will appeal to a wide audience only requires the real will to do so. He regards certain work as wilfully obscure and designed for pretentious, agonised discussion in seminar rooms. Kindness' work may be discussed on buses, in banks and in shops, but can also hold its own in academic halls. (Carson,1990,cat.)

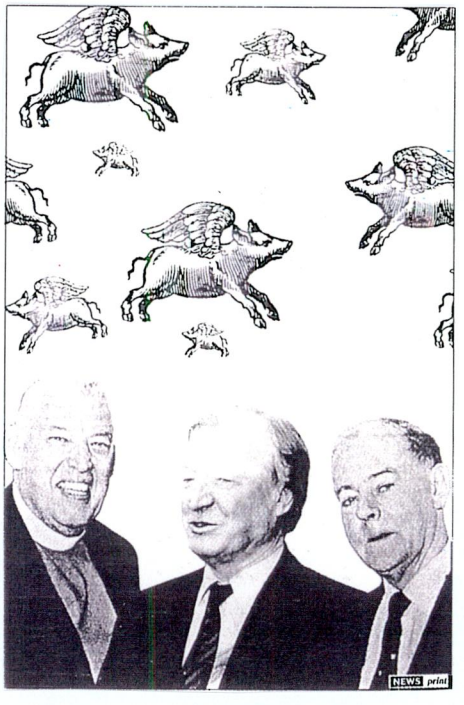

Fig.18
Newsprint Project by John Kindness

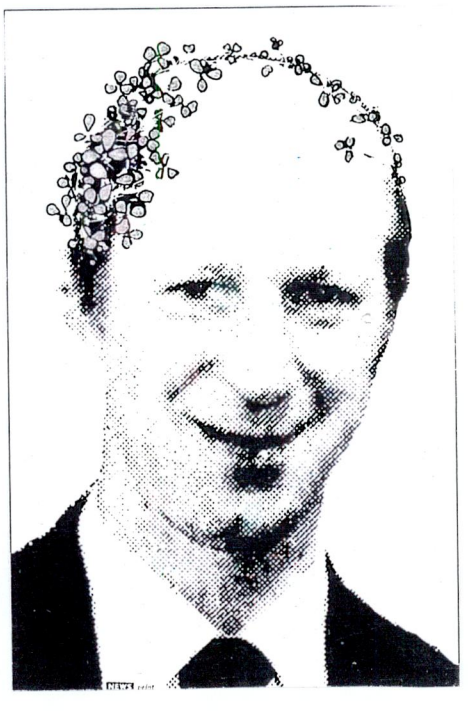

Fig.19
Newsprint Project by John Kindness

CHAPTER SIX

Having spent the previous chapters investigating the artists Willie Doherty and John Kindness, I will now comment on their effectiveness in communicating what the 'troubles' are about, taking into account their individual verbal and visual responses to the situation.

On approaching this thesis, I have to admit to being somewhat ignorant of the history of the political situation that has given rise to the violence of Northern Ireland. Consequently I found it difficult to read Willie Doherty's work, finding his images more a contrived obscurity than anything else. Quite the opposite was my reaction to John Kindness' work, which I found refreshingly accessible. Two identifiable reasons can be found accountable for my readings of the work. Firstly, coming from a TV generation,I am used to quick, direct imagery and secondly, a weariness with the sometimes pretentious obscurity prevalent in the visual arts. These pushed me indisputably into the welcoming art of John Kindness, where I could readily dismiss Willie Doherty. Thankfully, education enlightens and the tables have turned somewhat.

In support of John Kindness, his accessibility, his seeming fair, even handed, humourous depictions of the North do 'draw people in' and touch home base by reflecting a common ground that is often forgotten in the rhetoric of both sides. Both communities share the fear of the dreaded 'night door-bell ring.' He finds enormous visual richness within the opposing traditions in the six counties. In "Monkey Town" both sides are portrayed with equal ferociousness as the monkeys and dogs battle it out in Guernica style fashion. The importance of his work is in his ability to reach a broader audience, having lived through the experience of the North, and to be able to portray his own hands-on interpretation.

The representations of John Kindness with their implicit accessibility is definitely a strong point in his work. But his cynical frivolity humours complacent feelings held here in the South, with regard to the North, to great effect. Belinda Loftus could not resist quoting John Kindness on the free spirit of dogs. John Kindness' observation that:

> *A dog represents a wild spirit in people, a dog has lost all its dignity, it can crap on the pavement and copulate in the middle of the street, its a sort of social timebomb, you know you can be disgraced by a dog, its got nowhere lower to go, it can only express itself positively by attacking, yet its attractive, its an attractive thing.(Kindness,by Loftus,1985)*

Her enthusiasm of his sentiment that these images are celebratory of people who refuse to give up, who cling to their fighting spirit in the face of impossible odds is at best simplistic and at worst patronising.He minimalises the conflict in the North to instinctual tribalism on the part of both factions. Far from adequate - this view is a direct show of ignorance or misrecognition of the events of our colonial History. It becomes attractive to suggest the situation be reduced to two squabbling factions eager to outfight each other. Subsequently, we can pat ourselves on the back for being more civilised, having an innate ability to rise above the barbarity of tribalism. Tribalism is not an intelligent assessment of the situation overall.

Initially looking at the work of Willie Doherty, I felt an uneasy coolness was prevalent in the art. Doherty's work seemed to nothing in the way of educating me of the North's troubles. But again, knowledge does wonders for a person's perception. Having spoken to some friends from the six counties, I found they had little trouble interpreting Doherty's images. Much to my chagrin I realised, my ignorance of the political situation was a reflection on my intellectual ability to read the work. Presently I feel Doherty's photographs achieve a closer truth in representing the North to the images presented by Kindness.

During his photo text work, Doherty surmises:

> *The image was implicated entirely by the text. I took innocent enough situations, but they were speaking about a psychological crisis, if you want, or about an angst about these kind of places - roads around the border, lanes - where it always felt that some incident was going to happen. People responded to this work, certainly here in Ireland because they knew that fear and that anxiety of surveillance.(Lores,1995,p.14)*

Doherty's photo-works embody the intense complexity of the Irish psyche in the North, and make apparent the ambiguous, uncertain nature of nationalist identity.

In his piece, **Native Disorders**, (Fig. 20,21&22) he resolves to tying a description of the landscape to a description of the character. He proposes that we have a disorder and that political tactics such as media bans do nothing but perpetuate the myth of the unreasonable Irish. This completely denies the political and historical nature of the problem.

> *It says the problem can't be resolved because they're a bunch of crazy fuckers, anyway. But that leaves us nowhere, except with the feeling of collective victimhood.*
> *(Lores,1995,p.16)*

Again a reliance on the myths of Irishness being equated with the idyllic landscape on the west coast serves to indulge a fantasy of problems being solved through the unification of Ireland. Many of his pictures are about being on one side, unable to see the other. The idea that what is happening in the North is about the land, and how if we become a united Ireland, all our problems will be solved and we will be able to enjoy this untouched landscape.

> *You are standing on the Aran Islands but you are not able to see the 'vanishing point' or see beyond the horizon because it is always tarnished by the tragedy of the North. It is about the inability to see clearly.*
> *(Lores, 1995, p.13)*

Doherty feels that there has probably been an acknowledgment within the Republican movement that the kind of united Ireland which was part of the original aspiration is no longer a possibility. What a united Ireland means will have to be renegotiated and resolved in a different way.

On the question of both artists work outliving the troubles, in particular Willie Doherty whose work up to now has grown singularly from the situation, I refer firstly to a previous point that within the particular is contained the universal. And secondly, to the fact that by the beginnings of World War One, Europe and America held 85% of the world's surface under colonial subjugation. War and its effects have been felt the world over, internal and external fighting is not exclusive to Ireland in the search for a national identity and I feel this common global history should form a recognised art movement.

Fig.20
Native Disorders by Willie Doherty

Fig.22
Native Disorders by Willie Doherty

Fig.21
Native Disorders by Willie Doherty

Conclusion

A very good book by Fionnuala o'Connor investigates the ambiguous feelings of catholics in the north towards the south and in it Mairead, a community worker observes that

> *"The idea that its only Protestants who have an identity crises on their hands is not true at all - We've lost our sense of exactly where we're rooted, but the necessity of facing up to that is papered over by day to day realities. You can define what your against, you're part of a group that is essentially a victim of injustice. That becomes the core of identity." (O'Connor, 1993,p.54)*

This quote brings up all the fundamental questions that have been asked during the course of this thesis. The issue of a misplaced identity within the protestant community; the loss of our own identity to an anti - colonial culture; Recognising marginalisation and gross injustices as part of our collective Identity.

Another Woman , Margaret did not enjoy discussing the south. She never thought of herself as from Northern Ireland. She feels people in the south have grown hostile and antagonistic towards northern nationalists. She comments on recognising the change in attitude as the troubles went on, and has come to realise that the south were never very concerned with nationalism after partition, also concluding that the south showed no interest in the years of discrimination in the north preceding the current troubles.

Complacency seems to be a word that might sum-up the dismissive veiws we in the south hold about the North. This complacency indulges ignorance of the history which has perpetuated the situation towards the present circumstances. It irritates rather than helps the progress towards cultural amalgamation. The Northern nationalists need recognition of the injustices of the past seventy years, they need it from Britain, they need it from the protestant community , but most of all they need it from the people of the Republic of Ireland, who have happily left them behind to fight something we started, but weren't able to finish.

The general consensus seems to be that environment affects the work made and if this is

true, then we in the south will never be committed, to any great extent, to making political statements about the North of Ireland. Our political art will be taken up with upholding or questioning the delusion that is Irish identity, which was largely formed by the fathers of the Free State. Art in the south has moved onto a more international questioning of the human kind, dealing with issues which are bound up in the personal. The North has not reached this stage of questioning. It is stuck in no-mans land having been marginalised by the situation in the six counties, and rejected by the South.

Our colonial History has proved quite traumatic and we are still living with the results , very much apparent in the daily occurances of the North. The prospect of peace seems very far away, but I feel there is adequate hope for the future . If the Ulster Unionists can stop making stupid assertions as to Sinn Feins intention to disrupt the peace process, there seems substantial commitment towards achieving a peaceful settlement. What is certain is that compromises will have to be made for all parties involved.

> *Cut a chrysalis open and you will find a rotting catterpillar. What you will not find is that mythical creature, half catterpiller, half butterfly, a fit emblem for the human soul, for those whose cast of mind leads them to seek such emblems. No, the process of transformation consists almost entirely of decay."*
> *(Pat Barker, Regeneration. 1993. Walker Institute,1997)*

Art is, at its most elevated, that triumph of the cognitive animal over banal necessity. History is not experience, nor a mirror of experience. History is, at its simplest, what has been remembered, or misremembered, for the record. Art and history are not congenial; they don't lie to each other, but they are incapable of telling the same truths. They can both approach the truth, caress it a bit, but truth is something other, something that is neither expressive nor linear. Art and truth are, however, sympathetically conjugal and dwell in the many-chambered cave of life and history. Art is an exploration of that cave and its inhabitants. What it reveals is a whispering darkness where an occasional pulse of flame illuminates that which we fear the most and that to which we aspire most dearly. It is a darkness inhabited by ghosts and infants, those who have passed over and those who have yet to bear witness or wear the stain of complicity. What light exists is provided by artists who, from the beginning, have transformed caves into civilisations.

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