

‘They Are All Here’: Remembering the Northern Irish Troubles in 2018

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THE ‘TROUBLES’ IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE RECENTLY MADE INTERNATIONAL NEWS again, following the death on 18 April 2019 of the journalist Lyra McKee, who was shot while observing a riot in the Creggan estate in Derry.¹ On Wednesday 24 April, a commemorative service for her was held at St Anne’s Cathedral in Belfast, attended by politicians of all stripes, including the President of the Republic of Ireland, the Prime Ministers of Ireland and the UK, as well as representatives of the major political parties in Northern Ireland, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin. In what was tantamount to a state funeral, an impassioned appeal by Father Martin Magill for politicians to do something in the wake of the journalist’s death was met with a tide of applause that began outside the Cathedral and spread throughout the building, crashing against the backs of figures such as the DUP’s Arlene Foster and Michelle O’Neill of Sinn Féin who eventually got to their feet in acknowledgement. The service at St Anne’s was reminiscent of responses to the death of Diana Princess of Wales in 1997, which had a similar instance of applause from people outside washing over the congregation in Westminster Abbey, an analogy which would probably have amazed (and amused) McKee. The magnitude of the response to the death of a

¹ The riot followed a raid by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) on a house in the Creggan Estate, an area of public housing in Derry and the location of many disturbances during the Troubles.

journalist who, it has to be said, was not widely known outside Ireland, was partly the result of the capacity of digital communication to galvanise and orchestrate both personal responses and communal feeling. (Social media was and, at the time of writing continues to be, a powerful forum for the circulation of personal stories about Lyra McKee, creating a digital archive in her memory.)

This outpouring of feeling has been attributed to the fact that McKee exemplified the possibility of a more progressive, less bigoted, more outward-looking future for Northern Ireland, twenty-one years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Even ten to fifteen years ago, it would have been difficult to imagine the death of an out lesbian and LGBT-rights activist being commemorated in such a way. Nor would it have been conceivable that the old guard of male politicians—Adams, Paisley, McGuinness, Trimble et al.—would be replaced by a cadre of women leaders standing at the front of the Cathedral, though to what extent that change has altered politics for the better is open to debate. Lyra McKee was not only the future, however; the manner of her death was also an arresting reminder of the past, with which her writing was directly engaged. As a self-described ‘ceasefire-baby’, who was only four years old when the IRA ceasefire was announced in 1994, her journalism investigated the long-term effects of the Troubles that her generation did not directly experience and were supposed to be forgetting in all the distractions of social media and other, ‘better’, kinds of identity politics. There is a possibility that in going to the Creggan Estate on the night of 18 April, McKee was curious to visit a well-known Troubles ‘theatre of war’, both she and her killer following a scenario that had been prescribed for them long before they were born.

I am more emphatically a child of the Troubles, belonging to that generation whose childhood was defined by the beginning of the conflict in 1968 and, like other commentators of my age, feel that McKee should never have been caught in the tidal rip of the history that we experienced and which was supposed to be ‘over’. What follows was written in 2018 and is a reflection on the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Troubles in 1968. I expected that this anniversary would be more widely commemorated but it largely slipped under the radar, due to concerns over Brexit and the ongoing political vacuum in Northern Ireland, anxieties that fed into the intense response at all levels to Lyra McKee’s death. The article begins in a more formal academic register before addressing my own personal history. I explore scholarly inquiry and academic work not only as modes of investigating the past but also as ways in which the past manifests itself and configures an academic life, even if those effects are not necessarily desired, understood, or easily expressed.

History Lessons

Commemoration, particularly of anniversaries, is deeply engrained in Irish culture and society. It is a commonplace that one of the problems of Ireland is the burden of history, that its people remember too much and too persistently, and need to forget more. The literary critic Edna Longley, who is well known as a controversialist, once opined, on the occasion of the twenty-sixth anniversary of Bloody Sunday, that the Irish 'should build a monument to Amnesia and forget where we put it' (Longley 230-1).² We are currently progressing through the 'Decade of Centenaries', a programme of commemoration sponsored by the Irish government (in collaboration with cultural institutions in Northern Ireland) designed to reflect on events between the Home Rule crisis of 1912 and the partition of Ireland in 1922.³ The centenary of the Easter Rising in 2016, the highpoint of the programme, was marked by parades and ceremonies, exhibitions, television dramas, film documentaries, the opening of museums, academic conferences and many books, not only in Ireland but worldwide. 2018 is notable in the 'Decade of Centenaries' for the anniversary of the passing on 6 February 1918 of the United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Ireland) Representation of the People Act which gave the vote to women over the age of 30 (subject to a property qualification) for the first time and extended the franchise to all men over 21. That Act has been commemorated in Ireland as significant in the history of Irish women's suffrage.⁴ The effect of this reform was to increase the Irish electorate threefold, which was decisive in the overwhelming victory of Sinn Féin in the general election of December of that year, the consolidation of Unionist power in Ulster, and ultimately the beginning of the War of Independence after the formation of the first Dáil Éireann in January 1919 (see Coakley).

My concern here, however, is with 1968, the year when the Troubles in Northern Ireland began (or we might say resumed). 2018 brought together two significant anniversaries in this respect—50 years since 1968 and 20 years since the signing of the Belfast Agreement, better known as the Good Friday Agreement, which is widely viewed as marking the end of the Troubles. Under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, brokered by the British and Irish governments with the involvement of the Clinton administration, the right of the people of Northern Ireland to 'identify themselves' as either British or Irish '(or both)' was accepted: this 'birthright' would not be altered by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland.⁵ It was also agreed that sovereign power within Northern Ireland would

² 'Bloody Sunday' refers to the killing by the British army of 13 protesters in Derry on 30th January 1972. On forgetting see Beiner.

³ See the Decade of Centenaries website: <<https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/>>, accessed 5 Oct. 2018.

⁴ For official commemorations of the centenary of women's suffrage in Ireland see 'Vótáil 100', <<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/visit-and-learn/votail-100/>>, accessed 5 Oct. 2018.

⁵ For these terms see 'The Agreement', <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/136652/agreement.pdf>, in 'The Belfast

be exercised with impartiality and ‘parity of esteem’ for both traditions. The British government agreed to repeal the Government of Ireland Act 1920, the last legal vestige in British law of sovereignty over Ireland as a whole, which established the entity of Northern Ireland as part of a dual arrangement of home rule for Ireland. (Home rule was never implemented in the south because of the War of Independence that began in 1919). The Government of Ireland Act was replaced by the Northern Ireland Act of 1998 that set up devolved government in the form of an Assembly (that has been suspended since 2017 because the majority parties, the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin failed to come to a power-sharing arrangement). For its part, the Republic of Ireland agreed to the amendment of clauses 2 and 3 of the 1937 constitution that made territorial claims to Northern Ireland. The Democratic Unionist Party, led by Ian Paisley, denounced the Good Friday Agreement, though Paisley later, astonishingly, came to share power with Sinn Féin in the Northern Ireland Assembly, while some elements of the Republican movement—the so-called Real IRA—would not accept that the armed struggle was over. 2018 marked another, tragic, anniversary—20 years since the Real IRA exploded a bomb in Omagh, Co. Tyrone, killing 29 people, the worst atrocity of the Troubles, if you regard the Troubles as not ending on the 10 April 1998, when the Good Friday Agreement was finalised.⁶

These anniversaries of the Good Friday Agreement and the beginning of the Troubles occurred in the context of renewed uncertainty about relations between Britain and Ireland due to the miasma of Brexit that has descended on the two islands since 2016. The link between 1968 and 1998 was reinforced in 2018 by the opening in April of a new Troubles Gallery at the Ulster Museum in Belfast, significantly on Good Friday: it is called ‘The Troubles and Beyond’, the last two words, we might say, having invisible, quizzical, inverted commas (see Meredith; ‘Ulster Museum’). Is ‘beyond’ referring to the period between 1998 and now, or the problematic future looming with Brexit? The Ulster Museum could be said to be avoiding fixing the date of the Troubles by linking the opening of the new gallery with the anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, which highlights some fundamental historiographical questions I wish to reflect on: when did the Troubles begin, are they ‘over’, and what exactly were they? Such questions matter for my generation in particular because we experienced the beginning of the Troubles as part of our childhoods. The prominent Irish journalist Susan McKay, who was born in Derry and is a year older than I am, writes in her 2008 book *Bear in Mind These Dead*, ‘For my generation the end of childhood coincided with the start of the Troubles’. She also notes that when she suggested to a newspaper

Agreement’, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-belfast-agreement>>, accessed 5 Oct. 2018.

⁶ For the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Omagh bombing see ‘Omagh bomb: Bell tolls to mark 20th anniversary’, <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-45144511>>, accessed 5 Oct. 2018.

editor in Dublin that she report on a commemorative event in Derry, the editor responded: 'These bloody Northerners. The Troubles are finished. Will they never just get over it?' (McKay 4, 11).⁷

'Ulster '71'

I was a product of post-war education reforms in the UK that made higher education accessible to those of what is sometimes termed 'low socio-economic status'. I studied English Language and Literature at the Queen's University Belfast between 1977 and 1981, supported by a generous maintenance grant from the UK government, and sat my final exams at the height of the Hunger Strikes of 1981. After doing a PhD at the University of Cambridge in the early, definitive, years of Thatcherism—the Falklands War, the Miners' Strike—I migrated to Australia in 1989. I was employed in what was then the English Department in the Faculty of Arts at the Australian National University for a number of years and in 2014 moved to the University of Melbourne to take up a chair in Irish Studies. I wanted to explore, in hindsight with some risk and naivety, how personal experience influences scholarly work, and also how this can inform pedagogy—in what, perhaps different, ways could I 'teach' the history and literature of the Troubles, for example? I felt, naively as it turned out, that although my disciplinary background was not strictly speaking in Irish studies, I had knowledge, experience, and also credibility as a scholar at that stage of my career to move across disciplinary boundaries.

Academics tend to hide in plain sight, and what we hide, what we do not realise we know or cannot articulate, can shape our work in profound ways. I tried to articulate the connection between what I was struggling to be in the 1990s—an academic—and where and what I had come from in the acknowledgements of my first book, *The Theatres of War: Performance, Politics and Society 1793-1815*. Published in 1995, this book deals with the relationship between military culture and theatricality during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. There are a few references to Ireland in it—specifically how the military disrupted theatre-going in Belfast in the 1790s—but the focus is primarily on theatre in Britain and the empire as a whole: it is not a book about Ireland. But in another way it is. In the acknowledgements I described an encounter I had as a child in 1969 with a group of British soldiers whom my family had invited into our house for a cup of tea. In the initial period after the deployment of British troops in August that year, the

⁷ See also the comments of the 2018 Man Booker Prize winner Anna Burns, as reported in *The Guardian* on the day after winning the prize for her novel *Milkman*: 'She says people ask her: "Are you still writing about Ireland? You have to let go, you have to move on." I think: "How do I move on?" The Troubles is such an enormous, immense occurrence in my life, and in other people's lives, that it demands to be written about' (<<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/oct/17/anna-burns-booker-prize-winner-life-changing-interview>, accessed 22 Oct. 2018>).

army was welcomed by both unionists and nationalists, the latter thinking that British soldiers were to be preferred to the notorious auxiliary police force, the B-specials. The soldiers were rehearsing—there is no other word for it—how to mount a roadblock in the narrow country road where we lived (which was far away from the disturbances in Belfast). Their commanding officer, distinguished from his troops not only by his uniform but by his accent and the general demeanour of his class, stayed outside by himself with the vehicles: he obviously did not envisage the possibility of any threat in the ‘phoney war’ of August 1969. The burly soldiers who squeezed into our tiny living room that day, stacking their guns awkwardly in the middle of the floor, told us that they had come from another post-imperial conflict, in Aden (now the focus of the war in Yemen). They were veterans, children of World War Two, rather than the younger, less experienced men later recruited to serve in Northern Ireland as the British deployment there expanded. As an eleven-year-old, I watched, listened, and absorbed the incongruity of this hospitable scene, this friendly invasion of our domestic space, sensing that it was strangely ominous, of what exactly I could not know then but was of course to know later. In alluding to this event in the acknowledgments to *The Theatres of War* I was trying to indicate that, though detached from the subject of Ireland, it was still a kind of Troubles book. I had buried the Troubles only to revisit it (incongruously) in the form of the ubiquitous presence of the military in late eighteenth-century domestic life, in the theatres, the streets, and the assembly rooms of Jane Austen’s Britain, a fact that histories of the period then tended to ignore. I was and am still curious about what it meant to be ‘at home’ with soldiers, to live with war not at a distance, but as fact of (abnormal) life.

In the acknowledgements to *The Theatres of War* I didn’t use the term ‘the Troubles’—I wrote that it was derived from ‘early experience of a community at war’. Using the term ‘war’ was quite deliberate (as was community, a weasel word that fudged identifying to which side I belonged). In the 1970s I worked during the school holidays for a number of years in Erskine Mayne’s bookshop in central Belfast, in Donegall Square West just across from the City Hall. The bookshop was an important resource for visiting journalists who, in pre-Internet days, needed to get their information from books (which they would buy in armfuls): among the regulars were Peter Taylor, the doyen of English Troubles journalists, and Robert Fisk, before he moved on to the Middle East.⁸ Two books that we sold I remember particularly well: Eamonn McCann’s *War and an Irish Town*, a Penguin Special published in 1974, and Frank Kitson’s *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion Insurgency and Peace-keeping*, first published by Faber and Faber in 1971 (McCann; Kitson). Eamonn McCann (1943-) is a Derry-born journalist, activist and politician and was active in the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Frank Kitson

⁸ For a recent anthology of journalists’ accounts of reporting the Troubles, 50 years on, see Henderson and Little.

was born in 1926: he served in Kenya fighting the Mau Mau and in Malaya during the 'Emergency', the British-led military campaign against a communist insurgency. He came to Northern Ireland in September 1970 as commander of the 39 Airborne Brigade after a fellowship at University College Oxford, where he wrote *Low Intensity Operations*. The book has been described as the British army's 'manual on counterinsurgency and counter-subversion' at that time (Hughes). The fact that it was published by Faber and Faber and sold in bookshops indicates that it wasn't aimed at a specialist readership: in Belfast it was a bestseller, as indeed was McCann's *War and an Irish Town*. I remember being struck by the titles of the books – was what we were living through at the time a 'war' (in Republican terms an anti-colonialist armed struggle or liberation movement) or a 'low intensity operation'? As a student of English literature, who in 1975 was also selling Seamus Heaney's response to the Troubles, the collection *North* (also published by Faber and Faber), I was attracted by the power of language as evidenced by the titles of these two books, particularly *Low Intensity Operations*, which seemed to be conducting semantic warfare in its own right, neutralising the force of claims such as McCann's that this was indeed a war. The title of McCann's book is equally loaded in a performative way: not only in its emphasis on war against British rule in Ireland but also in affirming Derry as an Irish town. But in this respect, the cover photograph of the 1974 edition of the book is strikingly ambivalent. It shows a young mother, reminiscent of the homeless Cathy in Ken Loach's seminal BBC drama of 1966, *Cathy Come Home*, pushing a pram laden with bedding, while a blond-haired child, presumably her daughter, carries a pillow and a teddy bear. Behind them a British soldier, seemingly sucking in air, stares grimly into the camera. Where this event is taking place—Derry or Belfast—is uncertain as the figures are walking out of a black background. Is the soldier threatening or possibly protecting the mother and child, hustling her away from something dangerous; what does his quizzical look at the camera mean, exasperation, or his own anxiety; are women victims or active participants; are the women and child Catholic or Protestant; and finally, what kind of 'war' is this when the battlelines are so intimate and so obscure?

The use of the word 'Troubles' which is long-standing in Irish history to describe times and events of conflict (of various kinds) can be seen as frustratingly vague but it also captures the kind of ambivalence and indeterminacy represented in the cover photo of *War and an Irish Town*. My own sense of the Troubles is inextricably linked with the sudden death of my mother in April 1966, when I was seven. In late 1968 my two younger brothers and I went to live with my maternal grandparents when my father was unable to look after us any more. We only saw him intermittently over the next few years until his death in the mid-1980s. In the early 1970s he married again, to a Catholic, and became a Catholic himself. This made him both a Catholic and an Orangeman—he'd been inducted into the Orange Order sometime in the 1950s probably, though I don't remember him going to

parades or expressing any interest in Orangeism in the 1960s. After 1968 we never lived with my father again: the few weeks that we were supposed to be spending with my grandparents turned into years. It is in this context that I can date the beginning of the Troubles precisely—to 5 October 1968. This day, a Saturday, was the occasion of a march in Derry led by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association to protest against discrimination against Catholics in housing allocation and voting rights. The banning of the march by the Stormont government and heavy-handed tactics by the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the B-Specials, led to riots that continued for a number of days. Though the chronology of the Troubles is complicated—their beginning can legitimately be linked with the murderous activities of the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1966—5 October is widely recognised as representing a decisive turning point.

We had moved to live with my grandparents at that point and I had just started at a new primary school. As news of what was happening was broadcast on television I can remember my grandfather rubbing his hands and saying—with glee or not I wasn't sure—'it's civil war'. My grandfather was born in 1895 and had grown up in a united, that is, a non-partitioned Ireland under the Union (of Great Britain and Ireland). He was 26 when Northern Ireland formally came into being on 3 May 1921 as a result of the Government of Ireland Act of 1920. For kids in the 1960s, however, Northern Ireland was all we'd ever known: we were learning at school to draw the outline of the border that Lloyd George and other British politicians thought would only be temporary. The shape or territory of Northern Ireland was being inculcated as natural, irrevocable, rather than something that in historical terms was recent and artificial. As weather forecasts on British television also taught us, the rest of what is termed 'the island of Ireland' was unknown territory, a blank seemingly without weather. In 1971 as the Troubles were properly underway the Northern Ireland government staged an expo or festival, 'Ulster '71', to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the statelet. There was a logo that was supposed to be based on the hexagonal shape of the columns in the Giant's Causeway but which also approximated the shape of Northern Ireland that we would draw in geography classes in school. In an example of the baffling surrealism that sometimes marked the Troubles—epitomised by the DeLorean saga later in the 1970s and 80s—the expo also included a 'tunnel of hate' (with deliberately inoffensive graffiti) through which attendees were supposed to progress to the light of some kind of understanding.⁹

For my grandparents, the troubles that they knew were those of the early 1920s, the events of the late 60s being a reprise or echo of that time. The event that my grandmother in particular talked about was the murder in August 1920 during the

⁹ See BBC Northern Ireland report on the 40th anniversary of Expo '71, <<https://www.facebook.com/BBCNewsline/videos/10150244134175945/>>, accessed 22 Oct. 2018.

War of Independence of a policeman, Oswald Swanzey, in my birthplace, Lisburn. Swanzey had been involved in the extra-judicial murder of Tomás Mac Curtain, the lord mayor of Cork and commanding officer of the first IRA brigade, and was moved for his safety to the largely protestant town of Lisburn far away in the north. On the morning of Sunday 22 August 1920 an IRA hit squad, dispatched in a taxi from Belfast, shot Swanzey as he was leaving the town's cathedral in the market square. The killing was notable not only for its audacity but also for what happened afterwards: in the days that followed the Protestant population of Lisburn exacted revenge by attacking their Catholic neighbours, driving out them out of the town and leaving it a wasteland—over 400 buildings were burned to the ground, leading some to compare Lisburn with the ruined towns of Flanders.¹⁰ News of these events made it to Australia at the time—the *Hobart Mercury* reported on them, as did the *Tweed Daily*.¹¹

This is what my grandfather meant by 'civil war', not the armed insurrection of northern unionists against Home Rule, threatened in 1914, which would have represented civil war within the United Kingdom, nor indeed the Easter Rising, which in similar terms was also a civil war as the rebels were British subjects, but inter-communal sectarian war, the deeply engrained conflict between colonisers and the colonised, going back to the seventeenth century and events such as the 1641 rebellion. For my grandparents the possibility of such a war was a fact of life, the events of 1968 representing not a shocking disruption of a peaceful, normal order but a resumption of buried but still vital hostilities. Yet, when you are living it for the first time, as I was, it *is* new—it does feel like 4 August 1918 or 1 September 1939. In retrospect, what was shocking about that event, my grandfather declaring 'it's civil war', was not in relation to my sense of the auspiciousness of an event in the making, the beginning of the Troubles, but my induction, as it were, into an awareness of the inevitable return of the past. The historian Guy Beiner would describe this as an example of 'prememory', how the 'recollections of events in the past function as a prememory for the recurrence of relatively similar events' (Beiner 54). As a child I was having a vicarious experience of prememory, as well as learning how to pre-remember.

How many '68ers' of my generation or older are now in Australia? In the period after my mother died, my father contemplated migrating to Australia, a possibility that filled me with fear, as I had experienced enough upheaval and uncertainty. The *Canberra Times* of 3 December 1968 reported that 'civil strife in Northern Ireland' had been 'reflected in a leap from 100 to 268 inquiries at the Belfast office' of the Australian immigration department. The Irish-Australian community in

¹⁰ The Swanzey assassination and its aftermath features in two post-Troubles memoirs: Paterson, and Craig.

¹¹ 'The Lisburn Riots', *Hobart Mercury* 27 August 1920; 'Serious Rioting at Lisburn', *Tweed Daily*, 27 August 1920.

Australia, the one that makes itself visible in clubs and societies, commemorative events, and other cultural activities, is mainly Catholic and nationalist (as is the case in many other Irish diasporic communities), though there is a long-established history of Orangeism in Australia. For northern Protestants like me, who've resisted being marked by what the Good Friday Agreement terms their 'birthright', that is loyalty to the United Kingdom, and who would favour a united Ireland, there is, metaphorically speaking, no obvious Irish club in Australia that we can go to. At a Bloomsday event at the Irish club in Canberra, one of the organisers introduced me as Geraldine rather than Gillian and for a moment, I wished I could claim that name. For many years when I was asked where I came from I would say the 'north of Ireland', to indicate my politics: to say Northern Ireland or Ulster would be waving the flag as a 'proddie'. One effect of my period as professor of Irish Studies at the University of Melbourne was to make me realise that I'm not truly Irish or at least that I'm differently Irish. I'm now more confident in saying that I come from Northern Ireland, by which to say I'm not retreating into my bigoted loyalist heritage or a hybrid 'British-Irish' identity, the parenthetical '(or both)' of the terms of the Good Friday Agreement: rather, I come from Northern Ireland as an inherently fragile historical phenomenon, like the 'Ulster '71' expo in fact, an artificial twentieth-century post-colonial experiment that wasn't meant to last and is now heading into another period of uncertainty with Brexit.

The difficulty of performing Irishness in a way that was required by being a Professor of Irish Studies came home at an annual dinner at Newman College at the University of Melbourne, with which the professorship is affiliated. Newman College is an important institution of Catholic education in Victoria: its links with the history of the Irish in Australia go back to Archbishop Daniel Mannix who was instrumental in its establishment in 1918. At one point during the ceremony of the dinner I realised that I was probably the only person not to cross myself. Later someone sitting at the same table who knew my family history (which I'd told him about in an attempt to prove my credentials) invoked the fact that my father had converted to Catholicism (and wanted to talk about his life as a Catholic about which I knew nothing). Instead of going along with a feeble effort at defining myself as credibly Irish-Australian, I realised afterwards that I should have invoked my father's other identity as the anomaly of the Catholic Orangeman or the Orange Catholic. The Troubles meant that he was lost to us as father but at that moment his history of crossing and evasion could have been, if only momentarily, a way to confound having to identify which side I was on, and the legacies, personal and public, of 1968.

Epilogue

In 1999, when Lyra McKee was nine years old, the monumental *Lost Lives* was published. Subtitled *The Stories of the Men, Women, and Children Who Died as a Result of the Northern Ireland Troubles*, *Lost Lives* is an account of the circumstances of how every victim of the troubles died, including who was responsible, where attributable, and whether or not they were punished (McKittrick et al.). It was begun in 1992 by the journalists David McKittrick, Seamus Kelters, Brian Feeney, Chris Thornton, and David McVea when the Troubles had no clear end in sight. In the introduction to the second edition David McKittrick expressed the hope that 'whatever lies ahead', the experiences narrated within it 'should serve as a lasting reminder of why Northern Ireland should never again return to full-scale conflict' (15). *Lost Lives* was an attempt to enunciate the Troubles as being over and the material form of the book itself was crucial to this performativity. In recounting the deaths of every victim it tries to hold or contain the Troubles within it and is itself a kind of monument: as McKittrick says in the introduction, 'they are all here' (15).

Another victim who is figuratively now 'here' is Lyra McKee and many of the mourners at her funeral and the wider community would have been aware of this. Responding to *Lost Lives*, Edna Longley wrote, 'Why should every victim not have an elegy? a poem so fitted to their death (and life) that the massive memorial diversity would unignorably challenge Northern Irish memory?' (Longley 249). Lyra McKee's death, and the 'massive memorial diversity' of her digital commemoration and enduring ephemeral 'life', suggest that the book has not yet been closed on the Troubles and that the challenge to remember lost lives continues.

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