



Seeing/Being Orange: Perceptions and the Politics of Religion in County Armagh, Northern Ireland

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As individuals, each of us focus on our own perceptions (anthropologists included) and often remain ignorant of the affect inherent in others' perceptions. In Northern Ireland, perceptions are often shaped by shared memories and histories of violence, as well as by shared concepts of ancestry and homeland. These perceptions are shaped on either side of a bicomunal divide between the two majority communities, Catholic-Irish-Nationalists and Protestant-British-Loyalists. In this article, I draw on my early experiences collecting data in County Armagh at the Orange Order's July Twelfth parades to analyze the interplay between such perceptions of politics and religion. Framing my preliminary data through Veena Das's (2007) study of the influences of violence on daily life and Anthony Smith's (2009) arguments on the role of ethno-symbolism in nationalism, I reveal how the continued every-day divide between Northern Ireland's two largest communities shapes not only how members of the Protestant community who support the Orange Order "be" in everyday life and during the rituals of the Twelfth, but also how others "see" them. For while being is ordinary—whether cultural and/or religious—seeing is risky, controversial, and threatening. Through this distinction it can be understood that the political possibilities of violence are still a part of everyday religious life in Northern Ireland

Introduction

Never go late to an Orange Order parade. At least not as a young anthropologist still learning her way around and still struggling over the ethics of working with a Northern Irish group that has been compared to the Klu Klux Klan (Geoghegan, 2009). As I learned during my first site visit in July 2011, going late means marching alongside the parade until you find an open spot in the crowd—and in Northern Ireland, marching is perceived as a political act. While the only people who witnessed me accidentally marching were participants in the day's celebrations, I felt embarrassed, as if I was misrepresenting myself and my purpose for being at the Twelfth.

In Northern Ireland, July twelfth is a bank holiday for everyone. Shops usually close or reduce their

hours, employees often have the day off, and the banks close. But the reason for the holiday is the centrality of the date to many in the Protestant community, who commemorate July twelfth each year with a parade organized by the Orange Order, a fraternal Protestant society. Belfast hosts one of the largest annual Twelfth parades, but each county has its own gathering of local Orange lodges that draws family, friends, and supporters—as well as heavy criticism, protests, and, in certain parts of the British province, riots. While the Orange Order defends the Twelfth parade as a celebration of Protestant culture and religion, many Catholics view it as a celebration of sectarianism and bigotry. It is exactly this differential experience of an event that I propose to analyze in this article.

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In order to conduct this analysis, I will need to focus on political identity as well as religious—no surprise to anyone familiar with Northern Irish history. The on-going debate over Orange Order parades never fails to involve individual politicians, political parties, government regulatory bodies like the Parades Commission or the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and the government at Stormont Castle. This controversy reflects the larger interplay between political, religious, and ethnic identities in Northern Ireland. Here, I want to examine one part of this interplay: the gap between perceptions Protestants have of themselves, and the perceptions of them by those outside their community. While this gap between self and other is not exactly unusual, in Northern Ireland it points to tensions in the ongoing peace process. To illuminate this issue, I focus on an annual July twelfth parade, drawing on my own fieldwork among Protestants and the Orange Order in County Armagh in July 2011, June to August 2012, and July 2013. I also draw on Das's (2007) study of how violence influences daily life and Smith's (2009) arguments on the role of ethno-symbolism in nationalism to frame my analysis of how people in County Armagh see and/or be Orange.

The first section of this article explores the concepts of history, ancestry, and homeland shared by many Protestants and commemorated annually by the Twelfth parades. The second section delves into the symbols involved in the parades and how they are differently perceived due to the continuing bicomunal divide between the majority communities in Northern Ireland. In the third section, I describe the lucky accidents involved in my first field experiences researching the Orange Order, and in the final section, I analyze the connections between my experiences of the bicomunal divide and the work done by Das and Smith. I conclude that the continued divide between Protestant and Catholic citizens creates a distinction between being a welcomed insider, and seeing a ritual like the Twelfth from the outside—a distinction that, because of the possibilities for violence, is an ongoing obstacle to Northern Ireland's peace process.

History/mythtory

As a commemorative date, July twelfth unites several historical events important to the self-described 'heritage' of the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. The most emphasized is the Battle of the Boyne, viewed as a Catholic defeat at Protestant hands that took place on July 12, 1690 according to the contemporary Gregorian calendar (Beiner, 2007). Also significant is July 1, 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme—the big Allied assault on German-occupied France in World War I (Duffy, 2009). On that first day, the British 36th (Ulster) Division—composed largely of Protestant paramilitaries who had protested the creation of an independent Republic of Ireland—succeeded in taking five lines of German trenches (Duffy, 2009), but suffered “devastating fatalities” (Beiner, 2007, p. 379). Two other episodes from the same war as the Battle of the Boyne are also tied into the commemorations: the breaking of the Catholic siege on the walled Protestant city of Derry on July 31, 1689 and the final defeat of the Catholic forces at Aughrim on July 12, 1691, both dated according to the then-in-use Julian calendar (Shepherd, 1990).

As the inclusion of the losses at the Battle of the Somme shows, the commemoration of July twelfth does not focus solely on victories. It encapsulates the “siege mentality” (Beiner, 2007, p. 373) that researchers and diplomats have ascribed to the Protestant community: the perception (by Protestants) of being constantly under threat as a religious and ethnic minority on the island of Ireland. This also fits into the idea of bicomunalism—the perception of Northern Ireland as divided into two monolithic, antagonistic religious/ethnic/political communities: *the* Protestants, who identify as British and want to remain a province of the United Kingdom, and *the* Catholics, who identify as Irish and want all 32 counties on the island to be part of the Republic of Ireland. While the reality is much more ambiguous, as will become

apparent later, these frameworks often shape the perceptions of both the people who live in Northern Ireland and the people who research them. I myself am guilty of it since I find it much more efficient to use terms like ‘Protestants’ or ‘the Protestant community’ without constantly stopping to explain that these terms are misleading because they indicate a unity that is often lacking. Much like Scott (1998) has shown at the level of states, discourse in Northern Ireland often reflects a standardization at odds with the complexities on the ground.

These complexities go as far back as the categories of ‘Protestant’ and ‘Catholic’ in Northern Ireland. This becomes clear in the focused narratives that July Twelfth organizers and the Orange Order use in their commemorations of Protestant heritage. Such narratives heavily emphasize certain battles, such as the Boyne, but largely ignore the wider context of the three-year war the Irish call *Cogadh an Dá Rí*, or the War of Two Kings (Shepherd, 1990). King James II, the leader of the largely Catholic army of Irish and French soldiers, had been king of England until he was overthrown by a coalition of powerful members of parliament who did not want a Catholic on the English throne (even one who had spent most of his life as a Protestant and converted to Catholicism after his second marriage). In his place, these powerful men invited Mary—the daughter of James II and his first, Protestant, wife—and her husband William, the Prince of Orange, to leave the Netherlands and become co-rulers of the British Isles (Shepherd, 1990). William became King William III, and when James II fled to Ireland to rally Catholic support to reclaim his crown, William III followed him there with the largely Protestant forces of England and the Netherlands to solidify his and his wife’s fledgling reign (Shepherd, 1990). The new king wanted to end this war as quickly as possible, so he could turn his attention and his army to fight King Louis XIV in the Nine Years War that was then raging on the continent (Merriman, 1996).

The breaking of the siege of Derry is marked as the start of the *Cogadh an Dá Rí*. The forces of King James II, known as Jacobians, had surrounded the walled city in mid-April and cut off the Protestant citizens of Derry from the other Protestant colonies in the north (Shepherd, 1990). These colonies were the result of what is often called the Plantation of Ulster, a royal policy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries begun by Queen Elizabeth I and continued by her successor, King James I, which encouraged loyal British Protestants to colonize (and civilize) the north of Ireland (Ruane & Todd, 1996). Large portions of these colonists were Scottish rather than English, but their descendants today emphasize their British roots rather than expressing any Scottish nationalist sentiments. During those monarch-encouraged waves of British colonization, the Irish (also called Gaels) already living in the north were dispossessed and turned into serfs to work the new plantations of the Protestant colonists. This created a structural framework that continued well into the 20th century, with Catholics disenfranchised by a Protestant ruling class; a class who perceived themselves as surrounded by an island full of bloodthirsty natives and, at the same time, as frustratingly dependent on the government and nation that had planted the Protestants there—a situation which the Protestant planters used to justify their political and economic monopolies, and their use of force (Ruane & Todd, 1996).

This use of force began with the arrival of King William’s army, known as the Williamites, to break the Jacobian siege of Derry in late July 1689 (Shepherd, 1990). The relief of Derry was timely, since the city’s supplies had dwindled to the point that the garrison commander tried (but was prevented by local apprentices) to surrender to the besieging forces of King James (Ruane & Todd, 1996). This marked not only the start of the war but also of King William’s contemporary image in Northern Ireland as the Protestants’ white knight. An image that was cemented by his army’s victories at the Boyne and then at Aughrim, a rout that caused many of the old Irish Catholic nobility to flee to France (Shepherd, 1990). But it is the

turning point in this war, not its start or finish, that is central to July Twelfth celebrations. While the siege at Derry and King William's final victory at Aughrim are included in Twelfth commemorations, so too are a number of other events, including the deaths of Orangemen during the Troubles. But the majority of Orange Order banners depict William of Orange on a white horse, and it is well understood that he is at the Battle of the Boyne, personally leading his troops to victory, and saving his loyal Protestant subjects from the Catholic threat.

Rituals and symbols of the Twelfth

Since the 1998 Belfast Accord and the more recent creation in 2007 of the devolved power-sharing government in Belfast (Northern Ireland Executive, 2011), the vast majority of citizens of Northern Ireland have expressed a strong desire for peace. Yet certain issues continue to cause controversy and as such are often portrayed as threatening to that hard-earned peace. The Orange Order's annual July Twelfth parade is of particular concern as it often results in riots in areas of Belfast, Derry, and Armagh. Each year, journalists report on the activities leading up to the Twelfth, the parades, protests, and riots on the day, and then later on the exorbitant costs of policing the holiday (LeVon, 2011). My first year in the field for example, the July 12, 2011 riots in the north Belfast neighborhood of Ardoyne—an annual flashpoint due to its interfaith composition—ran up a police bill of £719,733 (Rutherford, 2011). These riots are usually blamed on Catholic protestors by the Northern Irish media, but the participants in the riots are often young boys while the protestors are older and dedicated to portraying themselves as nonviolent (LeVon, 2011).

Part of the controversy focuses on the Orange Order itself. The Loyal Orange Institution, as the website for the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland proclaims, takes its name directly from William III's Dutch title, Prince of Orange, to honor "his victory over despotic power" (Grand Orange Lodge, 2006). They are "a Protestant fraternity"

which "opposes tyranny and despotism in Church and State" (Grand Orange Lodge, 2006), swearing loyalty to the British throne and opposition to "the fatal errors and doctrines of the Church of Rome" (Laws and Ordinances as cited in Roberts, 1971, p. 271). Many of the Order's founders were Freemasons, so its influence is seen not only in the organization of the lodges and their rituals, but also in many of the religious symbols used by the Orange Order in its commemorations (Roberts, 1971).

According to the Order, parades "are a witness for our faith and this is evidenced by parades to and from public worship" (Grand Orange Lodge, 2009). Any criticism of their reasons or routes for parades is "an attack on the legitimate traditions and culture of a people and a denial of basic civil liberties" or "a repression of a legitimate expression of culture" or "an attack on all the parade and its participants represent and believe in" (Grand Orange Lodge, 2009). These descriptions clearly position Orangemen as victims, as do statements like "[t]he republican movement has orchestrated a campaign of attacks on Orange Halls since 1989 which is still ongoing... As an institution we have withstood much and will continue to stand firm for our beliefs" (Grand Orange Lodge, 2008), which position the attackers as members of the Catholic community. In Northern Ireland, 'republican' refers to Irish Catholics who strongly believe in a united Ireland and in supporting this belief through action (depending on the individual, this could be violent or nonviolent action). For example, attacks by the paramilitary group known as the Irish Republican Army during the Troubles are often referred to simply as 'Republican' attacks.

Yet just as political beliefs differ among members of the Catholic community, not all individual members of the Orange Order support its policy of absolute anti-Catholicism. As sociologist Kaufmann (2007) points out, "for most Orangemen, the pageantry of the parade is the reason why they join. For this reason, local Orangemen are often much more willing than the

Grand Lodge to negotiate— via proxies— with Nationalists if they think this will get their parade back” (p. 313). ‘Nationalists’, by the way, are Irish Catholics who support a united Ireland, but not to the same extent that Republicans do. I saw this willingness to negotiate firsthand in 2012, when friends of mine hosted the County Armagh Twelfth parade in Keady. As Keady is largely Catholic today, the hosts changed their traditional parade route to avoid the center of town. For the first time, the Orange lodges and their accompanying bands marched from the Protestants farms on one side of Keady, crossed the main street, and continued down to the Protestant neighborhood on the opposite side.

When they march, Orangemen have a set uniform: suit, collarette, and often a bowler hat. The choice of suit is up to individuals, though traditionally it is black, but the regalia is all carefully dictated by the Order. Members wear black bowler hats, white gloves, shined shoes, and the sash or collarette. Many also carry a black umbrella, but that is symbolic only of Northern Ireland’s weather. Sometimes, Orangemen are joined by female auxiliaries of the Order, but women must be invited to march— though if a woman or girl is in a marching band, as many are these days, this does not apply. Still, all marchers must be Protestant, and to this day the majority are not only men, but white men. Though the Orange Order is now an international organization with halls in many countries that sometimes send representatives to the marches (Friel, 2007).

Each local Orange Hall has a large banner that is brought out for the July Twelfth parade once a year. They are expensive to make and if well-kept last as heirlooms of the Hall for decades. Often these banners depict religious symbols—the Orange Order has ties to Freemasonry so there is a crossover in symbolism here— or portray battles like the Boyne, Derry, Aughrim, and the Somme (Roberts, 1971). There have also been instances of banners honoring individual paramilitary fighters, paramilitary organizations, or of banners celebrating the deaths of individual Catholics (Friel, 2007). A more common and similarly

provocative choice is the singing the marchers often break into during a parade. One song instantly recognizable to many Protestants and Catholics— which triggers very different reactions from them— is *The Sash My Father Wore*, a song whose roots are actually Irish nationalist, drawing heavily on *The Hat My Father Wore* (Cooper, 2001). *The Sash* and others like *The Famine Song* are not usually sung anywhere Northern Irish Catholics might hear (Cooper, 2001). Yet once a year, the marchers gather together specifically to sing songs like these, carry their banners, and parade where Catholics and anyone else who cares to can see and hear them.

Much of Northern Ireland remains religiously segregated, with areas that are majority Catholic and areas that are majority Protestant divided by very visible peace walls or less visible social and cultural boundaries (Jarman, 1997). Crossing such lines can be a very political, even aggressive act. Being prevented from crossing them has also triggered violence, especially when it comes to parades. Many Catholics, and to a lesser degree non-Orange affiliated Protestants, deal with the celebrations by leaving town during the holiday. Some stay to protest along the parade routes or, like in the case of Garvaghy Road in the 1990s, to block the parades from entering their neighborhoods. The reluctance of Catholic residents to have a Twelfth parade march through the center of their town or neighborhood is quite understandable, considering the symbolism involved. In an attempt to address this the Orange Order spearheaded a transformation of the traditional parades in 2006 into a more widely appealing street festival called Orangefest because they “ ‘can’t call it Orangeman’s Day or anything like that, because it sounds too exclusionary’ ” (Geoghegan, 2009, p. 2) as the development officer for Orangefest, William Mawhinny explained it. “ ‘The festival means come and see us, come and see that we are not the quasi-fanatical Protestant organisation that hates everyone outside us’ ” (Geoghegan, 2009, p. 2). While the organizers have added clowns and attempted to reduce public intoxication at the

Twelfth, many Catholics continue to perceive the parades and the accompanying Eleventh Night bonfires as “sectarian” (Friel, 2007, p. 1) or as examples of “Protestant triumphalism and domination” (Ross, 2001, p. 158).

It is no wonder that for those outside the community of Orange supporters, the parades can appear very intimidating. My first Twelfth, I was surprised by the sheer number of bands and the loudness of the traditional Lambeg drums. As an outsider, you can not help noticing the military-style uniforms of the bands, the grim expression of the hundreds of white men walking in unison, and the many historical U.V.F. flags present (Ulster Volunteer Force, the name of a paramilitary group from the early 20th century that was reused by a contemporary paramilitary group during the violence of the late 20th century). I also noted the many loyalist images glorifying Northern Ireland’s links to the British Crown and the British Isles. While many of the bands that march with the Orange lodges are accordion or bagpipe bands, the ones I remember most are the fife and drum bands. Locals call these “*blood and thunder bands*” or “*kick the Pope bands*” because their members have a reputation of causing trouble. In the past, and to a lesser extent today, these types of bands have included members with connections to loyalist paramilitary organizations (Jarman, 1997).

Certain Orange lodges have also been linked to Protestant paramilitaries, though no one I spoke to in Armagh mentioned this. Instead, those attending the Twelfth emphasized the holiday aspect of the parade. While I had first noticed the intimidating aspects of the commemoration, my interviewees saw friends, relatives, and neighbors. In speaking with them, I began to look past the frowning Orangeman to the one behind him waving at friends, or from the military-style uniform of the grown man playing the fife to the adorable miniature version sported by his young daughter, who tottered after him playing a triangle. In my follow up visits, I began to run into friends of my own, waving at an interviewee I recognized playing accordion or shouting hello to Orangemen I had met at dinner parties. As I fit

more into the local Armagh Protestant community, my experiences of the Twelfth changed from seeing the parade as an outsider, to being there as a welcome guest. I also began to realize how huge the gap was between the two differing experiences, and the role that such perceptions play in daily life in Northern Ireland.

Accidental anthropology

After studying scholarly and media reports of Orange sectarianism and Catholic rioting for two years, I went to Northern Ireland to see for myself. Self-funded, my first field visit lasted from July 5 to July 20, 2011. Thanks to friends doing grant-funded research in medieval archaeology, I had a free place to stay for the duration. I had originally planned on doing my preliminary Twelfth research in Belfast, but the free bed in Armagh city was too good to pass up. As was the fact that the archaeologists’ landlord was a former Lord Mayor of Armagh and a member of the Orange Order. In the end I only spoke briefly with him, though—it was by pure chance that I met my gatekeeper.

To orient myself and in hopes that at least some information would pertain to the long history of interfaith conflict in Armagh, I signed up for the city council’s historic walking tour. It turned out to be focused entirely on Georgian-era Armagh—likely to avoid just such controversy as I had hoped to hear— but taking the tour at the same time as me was a young man visiting his parents for the week. We started talking, and at first the conversation followed a path that would become very familiar as I met people: to begin, my American accent would be noted, leading to a question about my Irish ancestry, and, when it emerged that I had none, to the question of why on earth I had come to Northern Ireland if I was not looking for relatives. This turned out to be the perfect opener for informal interviews, because as soon as I admitted to being a grad student who wanted to study conflict, they would tell me “*you’ve come to the right place*” and launch into stories of their own experiences and views.

My gatekeeper was different, though. He also found my research interesting and pertinent, but he was much more reticent than any other Irishman I met to discuss his own ideas on the subject. At first. But as I started explaining about wanting to focus on the Orange Order parade, and that that was why I was in town in July, I innocently asked him if he had ever seen one of the parades. Looking around—we were slightly behind the English father and son, the only other people on the tour apart from our top hat-wearing guide—he paused and then told me he was actually *in* the Orange Order and had come home specifically to march in the parade since his dad, who had been a member for over thirty years, had an injury and could not march. Only later, when my new gatekeeper explained to one of his friends (a fellow Orangeman) how we had met, did I realize the significance of this admission. My assistant's friend, at hearing this, exclaimed, "*she outed you? In public?*". It was then that I began to understand the secrecy necessary to live an ordinary, controversy-free life the other 364 days of the year.

Once this admission had been made, my gatekeeper was much more animated on the topic of July Twelfth. By the end of our walking tour, he had volunteered himself and his father as my guides to all things Orange, though I do not think he knew what he was getting into when he gave an anthropologist an open invitation to ask questions. Over the course of the next four days, he and his family took me under their wing—though not without some initial suspicion by his father that I might be a journalist. This lovely family shared with me their collection of newspaper clippings from the Troubles, took me on a two-hour drive around the county to show me and tell me about sites of IRA (Irish Republican Army) violence against Protestants, and then not only allowed me a glimpse inside their local Orange lodge, but also invited me to join them: first to watch the Twelfth parade while my gatekeeper marched (his mum even fed me chicken sandwiches and tea) and then to accompany them to the special, by invitation only, after-parade BBQ at their Orange lodge. At the BBQ, I helped out as much as I could with setting

up, serving food, and then cleaning up afterwards, but there is no way I can repay their kindness.

Thanks to my gatekeeper and his family, I learned more than I had ever expected on my very first trip to Northern Ireland. To top it off, I made a three-day trip to Belfast and wound up meeting a group of Catholic Republican sympathizers within half an hour of arriving. One sure-fire way I learned to meet people in Northern Ireland was to sit alone at the bar of a pub—this time I was three hours early for check-in at my hostel and wanted the chance to look at my map. Since one of the oldest and most beautiful pubs in Belfast happens to be across the street from the bus station, I stopped in and, since I was alone, was soon adopted by a group of regulars. Once we did the usual conversation opener and I said something about my research, they started talking about the riots in Ardoyne the night before. One of the men, the only one with faded political tattoos decorating his forearms, even joked about not being able to get the smell of petrol out of his hands. Though they all agreed that the riots are mostly hooligans ignorant of what the Troubles of the late 20th century were actually like and what they meant to those who lived them.

Perceptions of politics and religion

In the foreword to her ethnography on violence, gender, and nationalism in India, Das (2007) writes, "one is invited to feel that it is language itself that causes the human being's ignorance of itself and of its role in the world, and not a self-distancing and self-blinding relation to one's words" (p. xii). However, from speaking to individuals on the street and in the pubs—yes, perhaps an irony since it is through language that we communicated and through language that I will be analyzing their perceptions—it was clear to me that my various hosts were not ignorant of the differing language used to describe the Twelfth, but of the parade's very different effect on those outside the community. This ignorance is due in large part to continued self-segregation in the territory and the reinforcement of bicomunalism in media coverage of the Twelfth (LeVon, 2011). The divide is such that Protestants

I spoke to about the Twelfth had no sense of how what they saw as ordinary words and actions were perceived by those on the outside as threatening, even violent.

This matter of sides, of opposed communities inhabiting the same places but perhaps different spaces, raises the question of culture. Traditionally in anthropology, we assumed that people living on the same land, buying food at the same market, and speaking the same language were a unified culture. Theorists like Leach (1954), Gluckman (1955), and Geertz (1957), while arguing for the importance of culture change, still focused on ritually-influenced equilibriums that maintained the cohesiveness of a culture. Barth's edited volume raised the later-to-be termed question of agency, arguing for a focus on ethnicity and the ways in which symbols of ethnicity are manipulated to maintain or cross boundaries between groups living in close contact (1998[1969]). Smith goes a step further, focusing on the ethnic groups themselves rather than their boundaries and arguing that modern nationalism is intimately grounded in ideas of ethnicity based on shared symbols and rituals which are themselves based in shared concepts of ancestry and homeland (2009).

Though Smith's positivist approach does not take many of anthropology's postmodern critiques into account, his conception of the links between shared symbols of ethnicity and the construction of nationalisms is a useful frame for examining the complexities on the ground in Northern Ireland. The ascribed Protestant perception of being under siege, so perfectly expressed by oft-used exclamations like "no surrender" which are named in tales as the battle cry of Derry and the Somme (Beiner, 2007), is akin to what Smith (2009) describes as "a settler ideology, which is often bolstered by a religious and racial exclusiveness allied to some kind of providentialist ideology" (p. 53). He goes on to describe how "vertical or 'demotic' *ethnies* reveal a much more intensive emotional bond between the members, and a correspondingly smaller territorial extent. Barriers to entry (and exit) are

higher, and cultural assimilation, let alone intermarriage, is frowned upon" (Smith, 2009, p. 54).

In Northern Ireland, it is not so much emotional bonds, but shared memories and, to paraphrase Das, a shared ignorance, that connect members of the Protestant community. The continued persecution of interfaith couples (Muldoon, Trew, Todd, Rougier, & McLaughlin, 2007) and the continued maintenance of boundaries clearly reflect the exclusiveness described by Smith. For both Protestants and Catholics I have spoken with during my research in Northern Ireland, their emphasis on shared memories and experiences is grounded in shared perceptions of their own ordinariness and the violence (now usually in the form of structural or symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2004) rather than physical) of the other side.

The importance of everyday life in the study of violence and post-conflict transformations is becoming clear, illustrated not only by Das (2009) in her research on the effects of Pakistan's partitioning from India, but also in work like Kwon's (2006) ethnography of memory in post-war Vietnam. People's ideas of and attempts at normalcy can, in the aftermath of violence, speak louder than their words. Especially, as in many of the cases of recovered abductees in the aftermath of Partitioning, when someone's words actually hide and thus silence the violence experienced (Das, 2009). Thanks to the kindness of my gatekeeper and his family, I was welcomed into their everyday lives (albeit during a holiday) and given the opportunity to see and question just such actions and silences. To illustrate my larger argument about perceptions and the difference of seeing versus being, I now turn to two anecdotes from my first Twelfth: my first visit to the home of my assistant's parents and then the local Orange Order lodge's attempt to sell wristbands. The visit is an example of my hosts' perceptions of normalcy while the wristbands reveal a break in that normalcy.

After meeting my research assistant during the walking tour, he suggested I should talk to his

father, who unlike himself was a long-term member of the Orange Order. Two days later, my assistant picked me up from a local coffee shop and drove me over to the Protestant side of Armagh city, where not only the Union Jacks flying for the holiday, but the street names themselves spoke of the residents' pride in their British heritage. It was quite the change from the Catholic side where my hostel was located, as the Republic's tricolor flag flew everywhere and one of the lampposts on the main street was decorated with huge vertical letters reading "IRA". When we reached my assistant's home, I met not only his parents, but his brother-in-law, who had stopped by and, over the course of the next hour, my assistant's younger sister who still lived at home, and another brother who also stopped by.

Each time someone new showed up, I was introduced and my presence was explained, and I got the chance to ask a few questions. What I learned was that my assistant and his father were the only two Orangemen in the family (the grandfather had been a long-standing member as well but was deceased), the other brothers and their brother-in-law had not joined. My assistant himself, along with his younger sister, had played in their Orange Hall's marching band, and then, only three years ago, my assistant had made the decision to join the Order to "*honor what my father's been through*" despite the fact that this young man disagreed with some of the Order's policies and admitted that at times it was "*hard to hold my tongue*". Yet these differences of opinion within the household did not lead to a difference in how they spoke of the Twelfth celebrations. Everyone referred to it exactly as the Orange Order has been billing its rebranded Orangefest: as a "*holiday*", a "*celebration of our culture*" or of "*our heritage*". One question was repeatedly asked then as well as at the BBQ: "*why don't the Catholics come see what we're about?*". Each of these people had grown up celebrating the Twelfth the way that many Americans celebrate July fourth: by putting up flags and going to a parade where all your family, friends, and neighbors are also enjoying themselves.

It was not that anyone at the Twelfth was unaware of the views of their detractors in general, or Catholics in particular; it was that they saw their celebrations, their symbols, as ordinary. My assistant's father told me that for him personally, July Twelfth and the Orange Order were "*religious, not political*". He stayed out of the politics. Yet at the parade, my assistant pointed to the men leading the entire procession of all the lodges and bands in the county and told me, "*those are the important men; they're all politicians and the like*". This is not anything new, either, since the main Protestant political parties in Northern Ireland, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), have maintained close ties to the Orange Order since before the creation of Northern Ireland (Kaufmann, 2007).

It was only on the drive home from the Twelfth parade that I saw a break in this normalcy. My hosts expressed it through joking over a new thing their Orange Order lodge was trying that summer: orange plastic wristbands (like those that have been used in the United States to campaign for everything from sports teams to the fight against cancer). These wristbands were printed with the Grand Lodge's website and the short sentence "I support the Loyal Orange Order". What my hosts were laughing about was that the lodge had thought it was a good idea to order a huge batch of these bright orange bands, but then, at the parade, had barely sold any of them. I was confused as to why this was funny since the lodge had probably suffered a loss of funds due to the lack of demand, so my gatekeeper's mother explained to me that no one could wear the bracelets any other day of the year. Unless at a July Twelfth celebration among other Orange supporters, no one would risk wearing what my assistant called a "*neon sign saying 'I'm Protestant'*". This echoed the surprise my assistant's friends showed when he admitted to telling me— a person he had just met and in public no less— that he was an Orangemen. During that same conversation, one of the friends related how he and his long-term girlfriend were fighting because she'd just found out that he was

an Orangeman. He ended the story with a shrug, saying “*I thought she knew!*”

What unites these examples of normalcy and its breaking down is the moment my assistant asked me to keep his family anonymous and to not post any pictures of people at the Twelfth parade on Facebook when I returned to the States. This need for secrecy, for silence except when among others in-the-know, reflects what is only partially apparent in the language of my hosts: that as much as this celebration of Protestant religious beliefs and cultural heritage is about family and fun for them, it is also, in the perception of those on the outside, political and controversial. Yet there is a gap of ignorance between understanding that these other perceptions exist and understanding the affect that accompanies them. The reason Catholics do not want to come and see for themselves is because they perceive these celebrations as an “annual orgy of pyromania and bigotry” (Cooper, 2008), to quote from a letter to the editor in the *Irish Examiner*. Besides, some Catholics do see the Twelfth parade every year since it passes through their neighborhoods—they are the ones protesting what they perceive as sectarian parades.

As the very helpful Catholic docent at the Armagh county museum told me during our conversation on the Troubles and the Orange Order, “*people are idiots.*” We focus on our own perceptions (anthropologists included, of course) and often remain ignorant of the affect inherent in others’ perceptions. In Northern Ireland, these perceptions are shaped by shared memories and histories of violence, as well as by shared concepts of ancestry and homeland, but these perceptions are shaped on either side of the bicomunal divide. There are two main forms of ethno-symbolic nationalism in Northern Ireland, the Catholic-Irish-Nationalism and the Protestant-British-Loyalism, and each have their own ways of living everyday lives that, despite often occupying the same physical places, usually exclude them from occupying the same spaces. While physical interfaith violence is much rarer than two decades ago, and ever so much less

acceptable to the majority on both sides of this bicomunal divide, the memories remain and so does the sense of trauma and victimization.

As one of the Orangemen in charge of creating Orangefest, Drew Nelson, pointed out, “[s]ince the ceasefires 10 years ago not one brick has come down in one peace wall. That’s the reality of Northern Ireland” (Moreton, 2007). It is this reality, this continued ignorance of each other, which shapes the definition of political at this time in the province’s history: being a part of an event like the Twelfth commemorations is a very different thing from seeing it from the outside. Being is ordinary, whether religious or political or both, but seeing is risky, controversial, and threatening. Whether one is being Orange, or being a protestor, the divide in perceptions from being to seeing is dangerous. It appears my embarrassment at being seen accidentally marching with the Orange Order’s July Twelfth parade in County Armagh was not a cultural miscommunication, but my own perception of the political possibilities of violence that are still a part of everyday religious life in Northern Ireland.

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