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Ulstermen and Loyalist Ladies on Parade

GENDERING UNIONISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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Abstract

This article explores parades as central institutions in the construction and maintenance of unionist ethno-gender identities and a crucial part of politics in Northern Ireland. It presents a brief historical review of the origins of Protestant marches and the organizations which are key to sustaining this tradition. It then analyses the contemporary marches, including the highly contested Portadown parade and the tranquil all-Ireland demonstration, held in Rossnowlagh in the Republic. These overwhelmingly male events are important to the maintenance of the gender order of unionism. The parades reveal the subordinated femininity within unionism: women participate in small numbers by invitation only. At the same time, they reveal competing masculinities: traditional, 'respectable' unionist masculinity is challenged by the more virile loyalism of 'Billy boy' and 'kick the pope' bands and marchers. This analysis explains why these competing masculinities are central, not only to the maintenance of male hegemony, but also to the ethno-national politics of parading, helping to set the boundaries of accommodation with nationalists and the state.

Keywords

ethnic conflict, gender, nationalism, Northern Ireland, parades, women

The Twelfth conjures up powerful images for me – there are the crowds, the bands, the brethren – a great family day out. There are the visions of colour, the sounds of music and the beat of the Lambeg drums . . . For me it is a glorious spectacle, not a display of triumphalism, but an occasion which adequately expresses my culture and that of my community.

(Danny Kennedy, UUP Councillor for Newry and Mourne)

On the 'Twelfth' I do not walk with my lodge to display any sense of superiority



or triumph, that a Protestant prince defeated a Roman Catholic king at a river crossing in Ireland, but to thank God and to remember, along with thousands of others, that that day was one of the turning points in the history of man, and that civil and religious liberty for all was a human right. This was enshrined in the Bill of Rights, and as the years and centuries passed has been written into constitutions and laws around the world.

(Bill Logan, Grand Registrar, Imperial Grand Black Chapter)

The marches are unmistakably triumphant. Participants see them as a continuing and vigorous manifestation of their Protestantism, Unionism, and loyalty to the British Crown. They consciously underline division and assert ascendancy. Consider the way that local lodges parade the limits of their parishes, like tomcats marking out territory, signalling the unyielding belief that they are a powerful majority who will resist any process of change.

(Chris Ryder, freelance journalist)

My first direct experience of the Twelfth was standing in Shaftesbury Square in Belfast in the mid-Seventies. I found the whole thing quite colourful and quaint, if somewhat threatening. I was bemused at the sight of so many men, in what was to me, City of London business dress, looking so intent and serious. I admired the skill and the colour of the bands but I found their swagger and the wording of their songs intimidating and offensive. I was also surprised at the lack of women in the 'celebrations'. From what I could see, women stood on the sidelines and cheered the men. I wondered why loyalist women were not more central in their important annual celebration.

(Marietta Farrell, Vice-Chair of the Social Democratic Labour Party¹)

The paramilitary cease-fires, the 1998 Good Friday agreement and the November 1999 establishment of a power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland have raised hopes not only for a resolution to centuries of ethnic conflict but also for the creation of a new gender politics. The prominence of women such as former Secretary of State Marjorie (Mo) Mowlam, Sinn Fein's Bairbre deBruin, and the Social Democratic and Labour Party's Brid Rodgers may signal some erosion of Northern Ireland politics as an exclusively male preserve. And the establishment and electoral success of the explicitly cross-communal Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) have suggested the possibility of political inclusiveness for women and non-sectarian cooperation. But despite the potential for a new politics in Northern Ireland, 'public' life in Ulster continues to be dominated by men.² One of the most controversial political arenas has been, and will continue to be, communal parades. An analysis of parading helps reveal important dimensions of the politics of ethno-gender identity in Northern Ireland – parades serve as a mechanism to mark and contest the territorial and cultural boundaries between Protestant unionists and Catholic nationalists;³ they regularly provoke sectarian violence; they are an important domain for state intervention, requiring negotiation, regulation, and management; and they

are a way of displaying communal identity, expressing forms of masculinity and femininity, and reinforcing male solidarity. While both nationalists and unionists engage in parading, the vast majority are unionist and the most contentious of those are held during the summer loyalist marching season.

Each year on the Twelfth of July, Protestants of Northern Ireland commemorate the victory of William of Orange over the forces of King James at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 with a holiday of parades, religious services, and picnics. Men have marched to celebrate 'the Twelfth' since the eighteenth century, reminding Catholics and Protestants alike of the British – and Protestant – ascendancy over Ireland and providing Protestants with an occasion for an expression of communal identity. The month of July is the peak of the unionist marching season which has always provided a setting for defining, sustaining, and reconstructing a loyalist Protestant Ulster identity against Irish nationalism. On the Twelfth, Orangemen hold parades throughout Northern Ireland, with participation by thousands of lodges and bands at centralized venues, some urban, some rural. Since the peace process began in the 1980s, the number of marches has increased exponentially, with more than 3,000 now taking place annually and often precipitating overt street battles and interventions by the police forces and British army (see North 1997). Parades have become a central part of the politics of Northern Ireland, as some Protestants have asserted their right to walk 'traditional routes' from Orange lodges to Protestant places of worship, and some Catholics have resisted the symbolic territorial claims of the 'triumphalist demonstrations' through their neighborhoods. Through a series of rituals and symbols that link Protestantism to the British state, the parades enact contemporary understandings of what it means to be Protestant, what it means to be unionist, and as we will argue, what it means to be an Ulsterman or woman.

Parades reflect the conservatism of unionist ideology: they are about Protestant unity and historical continuity, about what is traditional and what is to be conserved. In this article, we argue that the marches conserve the traditional expression of male and female identities within unionism: *men* march, preach at religious services, play in bands; women watch and cheer, provide food, care for children, and pray. At the same time, we argue that men who march with Orange lodges and some of the bands reveal alternative masculine expressions of loyalism (especially along class lines) that complement and compete with each other. Such gendered displays in this key political ritual in Northern Ireland attest to the feminist insight that nationalism is not gender-neutral, but a political project which constructs forms of masculinity and femininity as it forges the idea of the nation (Mosse 1985; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989; Enloe 1990; Peterson 1995; Racioppi and See 1995, 2000; Aretxaga 1997; Nagel 1998).

We examine loyalist parading in Northern Ireland as constituent of ethno-national identities, of the political border between unionists and republicans, and of the gendering of both identity and politics. Unionism has traditionally made a sharp distinction between the public/male domain of politics and

the private/female domain of the household and local community (Urquhart 1994; Cochrane 1997). Although women are active in voluntary associations and community organizing, formal unionist politics remain a largely male domain (Wilford 1996, 1999; Sales 1997a, 1997b; Bell 1998). Loyalist parades, sanctioned and managed by the state and organized exclusively by men, are an extension and crucial part of public politics in Northern Ireland. As such, they demonstrate the conservative nature of unionist ethno-gender politics (Sales 1997b; Bell 1998).

Drawing on the insights of feminist scholarship on gender and nationalism and particularly on the framework developed by R. W. Connell, this article examines parades as instances of the gendering of ethno-nationalism. We present a brief historical review of the origins of Protestant marches, including the institutions which are key to organizing and sustaining this tradition and the government policies concerning parades. We then examine the contemporary marches, including the highly contested Portadown parade, and the tranquil all-Ireland demonstration, held in Rosstown in the Republic. Although we emphasize the ways the parades are virtually all-male preserves, we underscore the competing masculinities (especially along class lines) and the subordinated femininities that are evident in them and in unionist politics more broadly.

ETHNO-NATIONALISM AND GENDER

The burgeoning feminist scholarship on gender and nationalism includes both case studies and analytic works about the relationship of women to the construction of ethno-national identity. It has documented the involvement of women in politics and community associations that are key to building or resisting national identities; the range of women's participation in nationalist movements, including national liberation struggles; the ways in which motherhood is constructed to serve the national interest; the use of women as icons of the nation; the constraints which nationalist ideologies impose upon women; and the use of women's bodies as spaces for ethno-national conflict and dominance.⁴ This scholarship reveals there is no uniform, universal pattern of women's participation in ethno-national processes: women's roles and practices are constructed in social relationships and shaped by the power structures within a particular historical context. While accepting that women's relationship to nationalist projects and the nation is complex, some feminist scholars have concluded that nationalism is largely, in Joane Nagel's words, a 'masculinist enterprise',⁵ suggesting the need to look systematically at the practices of men in relation to one another as well as in relation to women in the development of nationalist politics.⁶

Although his work does not focus on ethno-nationalism, three aspects of R. W. Connell's theory of gender are particularly useful for the analysis of ethno-nationalist projects: 1. his emphasis on social practices as constitutive of gender

identities and politics; 2. his appreciation that these practices take place in overlapping but distinct institutional domains; and 3. his insistence that competing forms of masculinity (and femininity) engender power.

Connell's original research has focused on the social practices by which hegemonic (or dominant) masculinity is forged and maintained (Connell 1995). In his influential work, *Gender and Power*, he argues that 'hegemonic masculinity is very public . . . constructed in relation to women and to subordinated masculinities' (Connell 1987: 185–6). He further claims that, in western society, the construction of masculinities and femininities differs in a fundamental way:

All forms of femininity in this society are constructed in the context of the overall subordination of women to men. For this reason there is no femininity that holds among women the position held by hegemonic masculinity among men . . . Power, authority, aggression, technology are not thematized in femininity at large as they are in masculinity. Equally important, no pressure is set up to negate or subordinate other forms of femininity in the ways hegemonic masculinity must negate other masculinities. It is likely therefore that actual femininities in our society are more diverse than actual masculinities.

(1987: 186–7)

At the same time that he emphasizes the centrality of processes by which hegemonic masculinity is constructed, Connell argues that gender/power dynamics cannot be comprehended holistically – insisting that we examine the practices by which certain forms of masculinity (in relation to femininities) become dominant or hegemonic and others are repressed or subordinated in particular institutional domains. Connell refers to the political dynamic among these competing forms and practices as 'the state of play.' For Connell, the modern state is one of the most important institutional domains, and therefore, power struggles and conflicts over who controls the state illuminate the 'state of play' in any gender order.

Following from Connell, we would argue that gendered power conflicts are particularly evident in nationalist struggles where groups contest the legitimacy of the state itself. In such cases, gender becomes a powerful 'vehicle . . . {in defining} the boundaries of the group to which one feels loyal' (Connell 1996: 167). However, ethno-nationalism is not necessarily a singular or coherent project among men, but rather the effort of subsets of men and women to make their version of an ethno-gender order the authoritative one. Our examination of unionism in Northern Ireland therefore provides insight into the forms of masculinity and femininity invoked by loyalists and explicates how gendered ethno-nationalism defines and redefines group boundaries and loyalties and their relationship to the state. Moreover, the controversies over the parades, as well as the parades themselves, reveal the ways in which gender dynamics infuse the politics of ethno-nationalism. In the case of Northern Ireland, parades are an important 'arena of social practice,' as Connell might say, for the political articulation of both ethnicity and gender. Although parades, festivals of floats

and banners, bands and marchers, may appear to be banal exhibitions of nationalism, they can also command central significance as powerful cultural and political statements about communal identity (see Billig 1995). In Northern Ireland, parades are more than celebratory rituals: they have offered an important vehicle for articulating unionist political identity and solidarity and Irish nationalist resistance to Protestant and British domination, especially since opportunities for participation in 'normal' politics and for protest and resistance were sharply curtailed after 1972 when London imposed direct rule on the province.⁷ Parades have become crucial sites for negotiating how the state recognizes the rights and respects the standing of unionists and Nationalists. The annual unionist parades have provided a statement of the traditionally advantaged political position of Protestant men – loyalists are legitimated and protected by the state (or delegitimated and prevented by the state) in their right to claim public space as unionist space. Parades are also a venue in which the occupation of public space is fought over and defined by men and the contours of gendered loyalist culture are reinforced.

Neil Jarman states that 'the locations of the Twelfth parades . . . are shared out across the province, to include as many towns and villages as possible within the celebrations' (1997: 125). Although they engage the other major political forces of unionism such as representatives of the Protestant churches, unionist parties, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and the British state, the parades are organized by a subset of Protestant *men*. The marches are intended to assert a communal unionist identity that transcends religious sect, social class, geographic location, and party affiliation, but the structure, organization, and practices of the parades reveal competing forms of unionist masculinity while reinforcing normative femininity among Protestants. They demonstrate that in this, as in other important political arenas, loyalist women are marginal participants and hence, that the politics of unionism are highly masculinized.

PARADES IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Parades have played a central part in the drawing of ethnic boundaries in Ireland since the eighteenth century when the Orange Society and the Royal Black Preceptory emerged in the north-eastern part of Ireland, the site of England's successful colonial plantations, to defend the interests of Protestant settlers.⁸ Both institutions were established after the 'Battle of the Diamond' in 1795, a sectarian conflict which developed after a not atypical local agrarian confrontation between Catholic and Protestant tenant farmers – each group of which had already established associations to protect their perceived land rights. In this instance, Dan Winter, a Protestant innkeeper and member of the Protestant Peep O'Day Boys and some local Catholic Defenders got involved in a dispute over, ironically, a cockfight; the fray escalated, leading to the burning of Winter's cottage and the arrival of the British militia; soon after, the Orange Society was organized to provide protection to Protestant farmers. In the

ensuing century of conflict over Ireland's constitutional status, the Orange Society became the official Orange Order and its annual parades became a way of expressing Protestant unity and asserting territorial control.⁹

Orange lodges developed in the early nineteenth century, some growing out of craft associations and later out of associations of workers in particular industries; some emerged as associations of Protestant men in a particular village; and some out of the efforts of Protestant politicians, landholders and industrialists to promote Protestant solidarity and a sense of a common economic and political interest across class lines. Lodges also developed in association with particular churches and temperance groups (Jarman and Bryan 1996: 7–8). Some lodges functioned as hiring halls (especially in the Belfast shipbuilding and engineering industries). Most engaged in charity work in the Protestant community, and today many serve as bases for credit unions. In general, the lodges became spaces for men to gather for sociability, prayer, secret rituals, and for the promotion and sustenance of a collective identity as loyal Protestant Ulster *men* (see Gibbon 1975; Miller 1978). In addition to the Orange Order and the Royal Blacks, other entirely male loyalist organizations emerged to become critical participants in the politics of ethnic group rights and in the annual marches.¹⁰ An Association of Loyal Orangewomen of Ireland was founded in the mid-nineteenth century as an arena for women to provide support to their loyalist menfolk.

From its inception, the exclusively male Orange Order was simultaneously devoted to religious and political purposes.¹¹ With the Home Rule struggle in the 1870s, Orangemen played a leading role in advocating that maintenance of the Union with Britain was necessary for the preservation of Protestantism in Ireland. The Order sought to assert the dangers of papism, Irish nationalism, and an Irish Catholic government. During the Home Rule debates, the Ulster Unionist Party forged a link with the Orange Order to activate popular support for maintaining Ireland's link to Britain, and by the turn of the century, the Order had developed into a major political organization with guaranteed seats on the Ulster Unionist Party Council. Mobilization by Orangemen was key to resistance to Home Rule and ultimately to the partition of Ireland. After partition, Orange unionists organized to preserve Protestant dominance of, and loyalty to, the state at Stormont and to the Union with Britain through gerrymandering of electoral boundaries, preferential treatment in employment and housing, manipulation of the legal system, and derogation of civil rights (Bew et al. 1979; O'Leary and McGarry 1996). During the Stormont years (1921–72), there was little distinction between Orangeism and unionism: each of the Prime Ministers, almost all Unionist cabinet members, every Stormont senator and all but two of fifty-six Unionists elected to Westminster were Orangemen. In nearly every case, the exceptions to Orange membership were women who could not join the patriarchal Order (See 1986: 110).

Today, the Orange Order continues to foster Protestant unionist identities and solidarity. Virtually every town and village in Northern Ireland has a local lodge; there are 1,400 lodges in all of Ireland, but the vast majority are located

in the North (Jarman and Bryan 1996: 7). One source puts the number of Orangemen at between 40,000 and 50,000.¹² Lodges can serve a wider community as well as their own members. As the Orange Order points out:

Orange halls provide a focus for many and varied activities from dances and socials to religious meetings, aerobics classes, etc., etc. Halls also act as a kind of local museum by collecting and displaying old photographs of local people and events important to the folk-memory of the community.

(Montgomery and Whitten 1995: 9)

Local Orange lodges and the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland remain a crucial base for forging a unitary Protestant men's identity across denominational lines and for mobilizing Protestant support for unionism. The most obvious manifestation of that support has been through the Orange Order's sponsorship of parades that commemorate key events in Protestant and Ulster history, especially the annual remembrance of the Battle of the Boyne and the Siege of Derry. Not only do lodges organize the actual marches, they also prepare the town for the annual celebrations by putting up decorations and arches. By defining and defending the 'traditional' routes of the marches, by organizing these ritualized expressions of Protestant British identity, Orange lodges serve as authoritative custodians and inventors of loyalist tradition and as influential political actors. It is not surprising then that in the 1990s Orangemen have become important participants in negotiations with the Government and Catholic residents groups over the 'right to march.'

The parades themselves have consistently been instigators of inter-ethnic conflict and state intervention.¹³ Prior to the Home Rule struggle, restrictions on both Catholic and Protestant parading were frequent, with the British government even banning partisan parades for several years (e.g. from 1832 to 1845 and again from 1850 to 1867). With the Home Rule struggle in the late nineteenth century, parading became central to mobilization for and against the Union. However, British officials responded differently to unionist and nationalist marches and counter-demonstrations – often repressing nationalist and Catholic parades but tolerating or condoning marches by Orangemen (Jarman and Bryan 1996: 4–5).¹⁴ After partition, the Stormont regime designated 12 July a bank holiday and sanctioned Orange parades. These rituals of Protestant unity, control over territory, and identification with Britain thrived during the Stormont years, as Protestants could easily assert their prerogative to march, even in predominantly Catholic areas. During the period of direct rule and throughout the 'Troubles' these annual rituals continued under the gaze of the British state; but from the mid-1980s, as London engaged in negotiations and agreements with Dublin, the number of loyalist parades and contention about the parades steadily increased.¹⁵ Anglo-Irish cooperation signaled for many unionists that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland was in jeopardy, and as they had during the Home Rule struggle, Protestants used the parades as a venue for political action against change in the Union.

In the 1990s, as IRA and loyalist paramilitary cease-fires defused overt violence, parading became a central point of contention and symbolic repository for the tensions between the Protestant and Catholic communities and the British state.¹⁶ Rancorous debates arise about the right to march, especially the 'traditional routes' of Orange loyalists through predominantly Catholic neighborhoods: Catholics arguing that the parades constitute an expression of ethnic triumphalism on the part of Protestants, and Protestants maintaining that this is a civil right, an expression of religious freedom and cultural identity. The British government responded initially by promulgating a parades act, later by engaging in high-level negotiations (some even involving the Taoiseach and Foreign Minister of Ireland, the British Secretary for Northern Ireland, and the British Prime Minister), and more recently by establishing a Parades Commission with the authority to regulate march permits, re-route marches, and restrict the forms of music and types of instruments. Loyalists have seen each of these measures as one more step by their own Government to curtail their liberties, devalue their traditions, allow Dublin interference, and undermine the Union (Montgomery and Whitten 1995: 15–16).

From this brief survey of the history of the Orange Order and parading, it should be clear that both the Order and its annual marches serve intertwined purposes: they construct Protestant communal identity across class and denominational lines; and they reinforce the sensibility that men are responsible for the defense of the Union. Historically, they were a mechanism for bringing together male workers, farmers – landowners as well as tenants, and shop-keepers dispersed in rural Ulster. With urbanization, city marches also developed, bringing together men from across the class spectrum to assert the primacy of their Protestant and unionist solidarity.¹⁷ Critical to political mobilization, the marches have always been occasions for social solidarity and articulation of communal ideals across class lines; and they have become one of the most public arenas for articulating the meaning of 'loyalty' to the Crown. Under the auspices of the all-male Orange Order, regulated by a male-dominated state, parades have also been crucial assertions of *male* ethnic identity. In short, they have reinforced cultural ideals and a political order in which men constitute the ethno-gender regime.

PARADING GENDER AND UNIONISM

What are the social practices of parading that help constitute the ethno-gender regime? The Twelfth parades are preceded by a night of festivities in Protestant neighborhoods and communities. Ulster men and boys take charge of the preparation and organization of these festivities. While the Orange Order is responsible for the parades, there is much broader participation in preparation for the Eleventh. For days, neighborhood men and boys gather wooden pallets, old tires, furniture, and burnable refuse into huge piles to construct bonfires. The bonfire lots are constantly guarded, often by young boys assigned to insure



Figure 1. Boys guarding the bonfire preparations, Sandy Row, Belfast, July 1998.



Figure 2. Blacks in the Belfast parade, Lisburn Road, 12 July 1997.

that no interloper destroys or steals the stash (Jarman 1997: 99–100). On the night of the Eleventh, neighborhood residents gather to carouse, sing loyalist songs (some of which are egregiously anti-Catholic), and light the bonfire; the night culminates in the burning of an effigy of Lundy, the general who had prepared to surrender Londonderry during the siege in 1689.¹⁸

In contrast to the revelry of the Eleventh, the marches the following day are intended, first and foremost, to demonstrate the face of 'respectable Orange Protestantism.' The parades themselves are centered around a ceremony of prayers, hymns, and religious sermons. Orangemen march to and from a site where a service will be held. While all are centered on the religious service, urban parades tend to be more secular and working class than rural parades which also include a larger number of mature and middle-class marchers (Jarman 1997: 117). The parades are quite carefully structured, following a general pattern across the province. They begin with a color guard carrying the Union Jack, the Orange standard, and the Ulster flag.¹⁹ These are followed by the banner of the host lodge, behind which walk the men of the lodge in rows. The lodges are sometimes preceded by a car, carrying brethren too infirm to walk, as well as supplies for the lodges and the associated bands. These cars are usually decorated with orange lilies, signs indicating the lodge number, or political posters signaling support for a contentious parade (such as Drumcree) or opposition to 'Dublin interference.' Each demonstrating lodge in turn carries its own banner. These are large, often made of silk, and quite expensive. They feature embroidered or painted pictures of biblical or political events or persons, such as the victory of William at the Boyne, the Apprentice Boys at Derry, soldiers at the Battle of the Somme, Edward Carson, or Jesus at Gethsemane. They may also include a political slogan such as 'No Surrender,' or 'This We Will Maintain.'²⁰ Sometimes the banners will have long streamers attached, which are usually carried by boys (though occasionally by girls). The men in the procession dress in their 'Sunday best' and wear collarettes which are decorated with medals signifying lodge affiliation and position. In general, the men are well groomed and sober in mien. Occasionally, an Orangeman is accompanied by his young son. The Blacks, wearing bowler hats and white gloves, and many carry a walking stick or umbrella, walk together with their Orange lodge. Their demeanor is not militaristic but restrained and business-like; however, they may chat among themselves as they walk, occasionally waving to friends or even leaving the procession for short periods of time to talk with spectators they know or grab a soft drink.

Many lodges are followed by a band hired for the occasion. The bands range from the clearly professional to small-town groups relying on neighborhood talent to urban, mostly working-class 'blood and thunder' bands. Some are all flute ('silver') bands; most include accordion, bagpipes, or flutes with drums. Flute bands are of two types: 'melody' and 'blood and thunder' (Jarman and Bryan 1996: 32). Although melody flute and accordion bands may include girls, most bands are dominated by men; bagpipe and blood and thunder bands are exclusively male; and in all cases, only men are drummers. Moreover, the drum

majors who precede some of the bands, dazzling the crowd with their display of strenuous power-twirling, are men. Traditionally in Ulster, bands have included a Lambeg, a drum of enormous size and sound. Some of the bands play traditional British anthems and Protestant hymns; others, especially the blood and thunder bands, are more explicitly triumphalist, playing more popular and 'kick the pope,' tunes. All bands play 'The Sash,' a song which refers to the collarette worn by all Orangemen. While there is no singing in the parades, the words of popular tunes like 'The Sash' will be familiar to most spectators and evoke the central themes of the Twelfth:

For those brave men who crossed the Boyne have not fought or died in vain,
Our Unity, Religion, Laws, and Freedom to maintain,
If the call should come we'll follow the drum, and cross that river once more,
That tomorrow's Ulsterman may wear the sash my father wore!

It is old but it is beautiful, and its colours they are fine,
It was worn at Derry, Aghrim, Enniskillen and the Boyne.
My father wore it as a youth in bygone days of yore,
And on the Twelfth I love to wear the sash my father wore.

The relation between the Orange Order and the bands is problematic. The bands attract an audience, enhance the festive spirit, and generate enthusiasm. But the blood and thunder bands are especially boisterous. Moreover, these bands are often egregiously sectarian and provocative, carrying banners that reflect their support of loyalist prisoner groups or paramilitary organizations, or naming themselves after men who died in paramilitary activities, or playing explicitly anti-Catholic music. The appearance of blood and thunder band members generally contrasts starkly with that of the Orangemen, particularly the Blacks in the parade. It is not unusual for band members to be heavily tattooed, to wear gold-hoop earrings, to have close-cropped, even shaven heads, and to present muscular physiques. And it is not unusual for the blood and thunder bands to be followed by rowdy groups of inebriated spectators who chant paramilitary slogans. Since 1986, the Orange Order has required bands who are hired to play in marches to sign a contract agreeing to good behavior and to regulations on what can be worn and played, and restrictions on the use of alcohol, but these contracts are difficult to enforce and perhaps more honored in the breach (Montgomery and Whitten 1995: 15). While the Orange Order may want bands to attend the religious ceremony connected with the march, some band members prefer to take a break for a drink and smoke. It is quite clear that band members do not necessarily march out of religious conviction. For example, in Belfast, this can be starkly evident when marchers return from the religious service. The return march down the Lisburn Road in 1997, for example, had a more carnivalesque atmosphere than the generally sober march *to* the service. Despite a steady rain that year, many band members (and some Orangemen) danced through the streets, costumed as coolies, cavemen, and clowns.²¹ In contested

marches, however, the atmosphere is not playful and bands have often played a confrontational role. For example, one year in Portadown, bands gathered and marched toward the police who were blocking the entrance to the tunnel end of Obins Street; they turned away just before reaching them, in a symbolic thrust and parry (Bryan et al. 1995: 28–9).

Where are the women on the Twelfth? Organized by the exclusively male orders, generally dominated by male bands, the marches constitute expressions of *masculine* loyalism. Within the Orange Order, women are subsidiary participants in these marches: a ladies' lodge must be invited by a men's lodge in order to walk and only a few women's lodges join these demonstrations. For example, at the Twelfth in Belfast in 1999, of the 250 lodges that marched in the parade, only three were women's lodges. Like the men, the women marchers dress alike wearing suits or dark skirts, white blouses, and orange collarettes. Some wear white gloves and hats as well. Although most of the bands are exclusively male, women and girls may be included in accordion and melody flute bands and occasionally march with a band's color party and carry the flags or streamers attached to banners (Jarman and Bryan 1996: 32). And in Belfast in 1999, one of the 150 bands in the Twelfth parades was an all-female band. The small number of women and girls marching in lodges and bands are avid participants in demonstrations; most others participate as spectators, standing on the sidelines and watching their Orangemen walk. As Olive Whitten, County Grand Mistress of Armagh, and Grand Treasurer and Deputy Grand Mistress of the Association of Loyal Orange Women of Ireland, says:

Although I have attended the Twelfth demonstrations for many years and have been a member of the Association of Loyal Orange Women of Ireland for over thirty years, I have no regrets at our members not being invited to take part in the parade {in Portadown}. I enjoy standing on the sideline, watching the parade from beginning to end although my one desire always was to have been a playing member of a band.

(quoted in Lucy and McClure 1997: 150)

Most women participate by bringing children to the march, by providing lunches, and by cheering on their menfolk. Some teenage girls attend with their families, but others, especially in urban areas, attach themselves to particular bands and follow them along the march route. Some girls wear shirts with band logos on them; others wear team sport shirts that identify them as supporters of Ulster or British teams or of neighborhood bands associated with particular teams. For all these women – mothers, wives, daughters, band supporters – the dominant femininity is to be supportive of their men's political and cultural leadership and their expressions of Ulster Protestantism: women are there to cheer on the brethren and/or the bands.²²

The ritual formula to these long-practiced marches reinforces a gendered ethnic order that appears highly dichotomous; simultaneously, this formula reinforces a sense of the continuity of traditions and of the historical

significance of the parades. From the perspective of Protestant unionists, these marches are celebrations of faith and freedom that are key to their ethnic identity. From the perspective of many Catholics, however, demonstrations, especially those that pass through Catholic neighborhoods, are often seen as triumphalist symbols of Protestant privilege. Because the parades – especially those through Catholic areas where the ‘right to march’ is not recognized by the residents – have precipitated violence on so many occasions, the Government has sought to regulate some of the marches and the behaviors of the men who participate. For example, some marches have been banned by the RUC entirely and marching bands in Belfast are no longer allowed to carry Lambegs. Similarly, in recent years, at some controversial parades, no blood and thunder bands have been allowed, and Orangemen literally have received marching orders from the police or the Parades Commission: the number of men who can march has been limited and men have been required to walk in ranks of particular size. The regulations have had the effect of managing men’s behaviors and, by extension, legitimating certain forms of masculinity. Examination of the case of Portadown – one of the most controversial march sites and a flashpoint for conflict – reveals the ways in which the ethnic conflict is managed at the same time that masculinities (and femininities) are (perhaps inadvertently) regulated.

Portadown

A predominantly Protestant (70 per cent) town in a rural area near Belfast, Portadown has long been a center of loyalist politics, the kind of politics most opposed to the premises underlying the peace process: that Sinn Fein should be included in negotiations and that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland could change. The annual parade from Portadown to the Drumcree Church of Ireland is of powerful significance to Orangemen. ‘This service occupies a special place in the Orange calendar because the Drumcree annual service is almost as long established as the Order itself’ (Lucy 1996: 1). Since 1809, country lodges would march and assemble in Portadown and then march a route down Obins Street to the parish church. In 1972, despite opposition from Catholic residents, the British Army permitted an Orange parade through the Catholic Obins neighborhood; again in 1981, the RUC batoned Catholic protesters who sought to re-route the Drumcree parade. By the mid-1980s, however, the controversy over parading shifted as the Government sought partial accommodation with nationalists. In July of 1985 and 1986, the Government re-routed the Orange parades away from the Catholic Obins and Tunnel neighborhoods to Garvaghy Road (where there was not yet a mobilized association among the Catholic residents), and later banned the annual march on Apprentice Boys day. Loyalists clashed with the RUC, protesting these government repressions of their ‘Protestant liberties.’ It is not surprising then, that Portadown in the traditional heartland of Orangeism would become a major site for Protestant mobilization and ethnic conflict a decade later.

During the summer of 1995, the Catholic Garvaghy Road Residents Group mobilized unsuccessfully to re-route the annual Twelfth march away from their neighborhood. As marchers assembled at the Drumcree parish field on Sunday 9 July, residents of the Garvaghy Road staged a sit-in protest to block the loyalist return. The RUC warned the Orangemen that they could not guarantee their safe return down the Garvaghy Road and a 'stand-off' between the marchers and the RUC ensued. As word of the stand-off spread, a mass rally was planned and thousands of loyalist men and women traveled to the streets of Portadown and the fields around the Drumcree parish church to support the marchers. David Trimble, at that time a local MP and leader in the Ulster Unionist Party, spoke to the crowd: 'I am here supporting the right of Portadown District to march their traditional route, the route they have taken for the last 188 years' (quoted in Jarman and Bryan 1996: 62). The Reverend Ian Paisley, MP, MEP and leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, addressed the rally wearing his Apprentice Boys garb²³:

There can be no turning back on this issue – we will die if necessary rather than surrender. If we don't win this battle, all is lost, it is a matter of life or death. It is a matter of Ulster or Irish republic, it is a matter of freedom or slavery.

(quoted in Lucy 1996: 29–30)

With Orangemen refusing to disband, after a day of extensive negotiations, the RUC finally permitted them to walk down the Garvaghy Road, restricting the march to local members of the Portadown lodges and forbidding any music. Catholic residents observed the return in silent protest. At the end of the Garvaghy Road, as the marchers re-entered Protestant territory, they were met by Trimble and Paisley who expressed their jubilation over the Orange victory by dancing a jig.²⁴

But despite this appearance of loyalist solidarity, Portadown revealed the potential fractures among the men of the Orange Order and in unionism more broadly. Within the Orange Order, one of the executives, Joel Patton, who believed that the Orange leadership had been far too accommodating on the parade issue, mobilized a group of disgruntled members, known as the Spirit of Drumcree, which adopted the motto 'Walk, Don't Talk.'²⁵ Unionists outside the Order as well questioned whether the Protestant 'right to march' would be adequately protected and whether negotiating over routes, forms of participation, and other measures designed to reduce tensions simply had the effect of suppressing all expressions of Protestant loyalist identity. The debate about the 'right to march traditional routes' was hardly resolved, therefore, by this end to the stand-off in 1995. Indeed, according to Orange officials, Graham Montgomery and J. Richard Whitten, the Drumcree stand-off had 'great symbolic significance . . . It helped restore confidence to the wider Protestant community at a time of suspicion and uncertainty over the political situation' (quoted in *Belfast Telegraph* 25 June 1996: 9).

In 1996, despite requests for negotiations from Brendan MacCionnaith, the

chairman of a coalition of Catholic residents, David Trimble and the officers of the Orange Order refused to meet with the group. MacCionnaith, now a local community organizer, had been jailed for six years for his part in a bombing of the Royal British Legion Hall in Portadown in the early 1980s, a history unlikely to make him an acceptable negotiator to loyalists. Trimble stated that it was his policy to refuse to respond to a 'letter from a convicted IRA terrorist' (*Sunday Tribune* 12 May 1996).²⁶ For other loyalist leaders, the concerns of Catholics were not considered legitimate. For example, at a 'Right to March' rally held in Drumcree later in July, Peter Robinson, DUP MP and leading Orangeman, articulated this view:

Let no one think that the attempts to stop Orangemen and Apprentice Boys from marching the Roads of Ulster is because their music or their demeanor is an offence to residents in the areas in which they walk. In some of those areas, good for nothings, who would normally lie in their beds until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, set their alarm clocks for six in the morning in case they miss the opportunity to be offended. Other Republicans have been known to travel miles across the Province in order that they too can be offended . . . Everything green and Irish is to be promoted; everything orange, crimson and British is to be demonised.²⁷

Not surprisingly given these attitudes then, mediators were unsuccessful in brokering settlements in subsequent years.²⁸

The 1998 stand-off revealed the tensions within unionism about the politics of parading. The Parades Commission decided to re-route the marchers away from the Garvaghy Road, and barricades were erected by the RUC to prevent the Orangemen walking their 'traditional route.' Recalcitrant Orangemen camped out at Drumcree, waiting for the Government to again rescind the decision. As tensions mounted and sporadic rioting occurred around the province, loyalists firebombed a house in the predominantly Protestant town of Ballymoney, killing three young Catholic boys. The horror at this event was widespread and compounded by the discovery of ammunition, explosives, and a sub-machine-gun at Drumcree (*Belfast Telegraph* 16 July 1998: 3). Protestant churchmen and political leaders, including high-ranking members of the Orange Order, denounced the murders, and some stated that the Orangemen had to take responsibility for their part in fostering sectarianism. A number of prominent chaplains resigned from the Orange Order; others issued a statement that they were 'bitterly ashamed' of the events that had been carried out in the name of Protestantism, and one Grand Chaplain cited the more than 600 gun and bomb attacks on the security forces at Drumcree as evidence that the Orange Institution had 'failed miserably' in its dedication 'to uphold the Christian faith' (*News Letter* 20 July 1998: 7). The institution and the parades that are supposed to symbolize Protestant unity had become a point of division. This was underscored in 1998 by the conspicuous absence of the new First Minister David Trimble – the UUP leader who had danced in jubilation with Ian Paisley when the Orangemen were allowed down the Garvaghy Road in 1995. The stand-off

has continued with District Master Harold Gracey camping out at the site in protest of the Government's refusal to allow Orangemen to march down Garvagh Road, and with the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland supporting the right of the Portadown brethren.

The debates over the right to march in Northern Ireland have been just as crucial for loyalist women as they have been for men; and women, too, have mobilized against marches being halted or re-routed. During the 1995 and 1996 crises in Portadown, one group, calling themselves Loyal Women of Ulster, circulated a petition to oppose re-routing. A spokeswoman for the group asserted: 'Re-routing is offensive to the Protestant people of Ulster. Even our own MPs are de-Protestantising our country which is still part of the U.K.' (*Ballymena Times* 23 October 1996). In Portadown, local unionist women were dismissive of the Catholic resident group's complaints – as the *Irish Times* pointed out: 'A group of women had no sympathy for the nationalists on the Garvagh Road: "Why should we? I used to live on the Garvagh Road before they took it over and we had to get out," said one' (*Irish Times* 11 July 1996: 3). At the sieges at Drumcree, women participated as they have traditionally during the marching season: assembling on the parish fields and in the church as loyalist wives and mothers. During the 1995 stand-off, women worked around the clock in the church hall to prepare meals for the men. As the Ulster historian, Gordon Lucy, records:

The women continued their valiant work of keeping everybody 'fed and watered ' A Portadown Orangewoman explained what she was doing in the following simple and unadorned terms: 'We are doing this for the cause. We are 100 per cent behind our menfolk in their stand.'

(1996: 22)

At the 1996 stand-off, women also attended as supporters. The *Irish Times* reported that 'the women brought sandwiches in biscuit tins and made tea in the church hall. At lunchtime, those standing confronting the RUC were brought bowls of stew' (*Irish Times* 11 July 1996: 3). Again in 1998, groups of women banded together to support their Orangemen. A member of the newly formed Women's Orangemen's Support Group said: 'They're there for as long as it takes – and we're behind them 110%!'²⁹ (*Belfast Telegraph* 6 July 1998: 3). In short, the pre-eminent expression of loyalist femininity at Portadown has been a femininity of compliance: supportive of 'our boys.'²⁹

The gendered boundaries are stark in the case of Portadown. These have been marches of Orangemen: they have been organized by the all-male order; with the exception of the all-girl Star of David Accordion Band in 1996, only males have marched in the processions; among loyalists, only men have participated in the negotiations with the RUC and the British government or opponents. The women who have figured prominently in media coverage of Portadown have been Dr Marjorie (Mo) Mowlam, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brid Rodgers, a prominent nationalist SDLP politician,

and Rosemary Nelson, a lawyer who represented republican activists and who was murdered in March of 1999. It would, therefore, be easy to reduce marches in places like Portadown to a simple assertion of male boundary marking by Protestant men. And this is certainly one key dimension of the marches. But these are also normative expressions of what it should mean to be a *loyalist* man – and by extension, what it means to be a loyalist woman.

Rosstownlough

On the same weekend that men of the Orange Order march in Portadown, large numbers of men and women converge on the small town of Rosstownlough in County Donegal, Republic of Ireland. Rosstownlough is a particularly attractive site for the only all-Ireland march.³⁰ Not only is this location beautiful, it has a high concentration of Protestants. The demonstration is held on a large field adjacent to an expansive beach with a panoramic view of the Atlantic. This setting has provided the kind of festive, family day out that many members of the Orange institution claim the Twelfth is about. Concession stands provide brethren and spectators with food and Orange paraphernalia (including egregiously sectarian books and memorabilia). Thousands of participants attend: flute and bagpipe bands accompany Orangemen and women from all over the island.

Ruth Dudley Edwards claims that 'Northern Irish Orangemen love the Rosstownlough parade because there is no trouble and nothing to prove' (1999: 34). Despite the presence of Irish security forces, Rosstownlough has never been plagued by the violence or controversy associated with marches in Northern Ireland. The site is located in a rural area, remote from any large population centers. It is reached by a narrow, winding road, awkward for large vans or buses. Not surprisingly then, the demonstration does not draw a large crowd of spectators. It is not only Rosstownlough's geographic isolation that explains the peaceable tenor of the day but the very different dynamic of religious identity politics in the Republic. Given the close alignment of the Republic and Roman Catholicism and the small numbers of Protestants remaining there, Protestantism is not seen as a viable basis for ethno-national identity in the Republic. Indeed, the number of Protestants in the Republic has declined from nearly 10 per cent in 1911 to just 3 per cent in the most recent census in 1991 (*Irish Census* 1991: 14).

It would not be inaccurate to assert that the march at Rosstownlough is so uncontentious because the national question has been 'solved' in the Republic and Ireland can easily tolerate the gathering of thousands of Protestants on a remote beach. Unlike in Northern Ireland, no territorial claims are made or signified by the march. On the other hand, Orangemen at Rosstownlough are not unmindful that the 'solution' to the national question in the South resulted in a substantial decrease in the number and influence of Protestants. And for many Orangemen, this decline foreshadows the fate of Protestants in Ulster if there

is any change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, the participants at this celebration of Protestantism in Ireland are scrupulous in emphasizing the *religious* purposes of their gathering and their intention not to offend their Irish Catholic host.

Intentionally considerate of the sensibilities of the Irish State, the marchers at Rosstown display the respectable face of Orange Protestantism. The demonstration appears apolitical and non-militarized: the men are generally dressed in staid attire; no blood and thunder bands take part; no political posters or slogans are carried by the marchers. In this context, it is telling that there are larger numbers of women on parade. However, women's lodges still must receive written invitation from their menfolk in order to participate, and the number of women is still much smaller than that of men – less than one-fifth of those marching. Here, too, the marchers and participants display a compliant femininity: they are conservatively dressed; many provide tea and sandwiches for this family outing; and few teenage girls follow the bands. Moreover, no women appear on the prayer platform which represents the central purpose of the gathering. Not surprising given that this is a Christian, largely evangelical and conservative experience, women's roles remain secondary to those of the men.

PARADING THE BORDERS OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY

Both the marches and the Protestant loyalist identity which they proclaim mark the ethno-national boundaries between Northern Ireland and the Republic, and within Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants, between nationalists and unionists, between 'their' neighborhoods and 'ours,' between 'their' history and culture and 'ours' and between 'their' power and status and 'ours.' The parades also reveal important boundaries between men and women and among men, both within the loyalist populace and across the political divide.

Our analysis of the marching season in Northern Ireland and sieges of Drumcree shows how parades reinforce three dominant and interrelated borders of critical importance to Protestant unionists: 1. those between unionists and nationalists; 2. those between Protestant men and women; and 3. those between respectable, middle-class Orange loyalism and a more confrontational, working-class unionist masculinity. While the first boundary has received the most attention in the scholarly and popular literatures, a parade, as Bryan et al. point out, is:

more than just a marking of territory, it is a central cultural icon. It is not taking place simply to give an aggressive message to the nationalist community but is, for many, symbolic of the identity of the Protestant community. It plays a specific political role within that community and is therefore a political resource within the politics of unionism . . . The Orange parades are also occasions for the playing out, and resolution, of conflicts within the Protestant community.

(1995: 60)

The parades are also occasions for the expression of what it means to be loyalist men and women. In the parades, as in the politics of the ethnic conflict of Northern Ireland, men have done and continue to do the posturing, fighting, negotiating, and representing for the Protestant unionist community. The ethnic boundary has historically been patrolled by men, and the tradition of 'walking the boundary,' as the Orange Order calls it, continues to be practiced largely by *Orangemen* and their male allies. As we have seen, the stereotype of unionist women as 'tea-makers' has not been problematized in the parades. In contrast, competing and, to some extent, interdependent masculinities are evident in the marches and in the conflict over them.

This analysis of parading in Northern Ireland both confirms and complicates some aspects of R. W. Connell's conceptualization of the gender order. Connell appreciates the multiple forms that gender identities can take and the potential flexibility of gender boundaries, at the same time that he theorizes a gender order in which a single form of masculinity is hegemonic and is legitimated in the patriarchal state. For Connell, multiple femininities are possible within patriarchy, precisely because they are subordinate to, and less powerful than, normative masculinity, and hence, less of a challenge to the gender order. Our examination of the social practices of parading illustrates how the marches are part of the wider gender order that infuses Northern Irish politics. The marches demonstrate a gender regime dominated by men and explicitly heterosexual. As central social institutions in Northern Ireland, they provide a public display both of the construction of hegemonic masculinity and competition for that hegemonic position among masculinities. They reveal the 'state of play,' as Connell would put it, among competing loyalist masculinities. This 'state of play' is not only one of competition but also of complementarity. That disputed marches take place at all has depended in no small part on the threat, not only from paramilitaries but also from other potentially unruly loyalists that represent a competing subordinate masculinity. On the one hand, the sober Orange Order clearly strives to project an image of normative masculinity that is law-abiding, respectable, responsible, self-disciplined, self-restrained, pious yet tolerant, confident and proud. These are the men who are prominent in negotiations; these are the men who represent the Protestant community in the British and European Parliaments and, to a significant extent, in local councils. There is no dramatic display; there is no need for it; this is civilized masculinity.

On the other hand, decent and upright Orangeism now competes with a more virile form of loyalism. As we have indicated, during the 'Troubles,' the dominance of 'civilized' unionist masculinity has been challenged throughout Northern Ireland and particularly in urban areas. Since direct rule, paramilitary organizations like the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Volunteer Force have flourished and have attracted support from an increasingly disaffected Protestant urban and rural working class. The paramilitaries represent a greater readiness to confront Irish nationalism and to challenge British state authority. In the parades, alienation from respectable unionism and assertion of a more

aggressive masculinity have been manifest in the blood and thunder bands. They suggest a cocky masculinity: exuberant, tough, working class, impatient, and slightly unruly. These are the 'Billy boys.' In Portadown, this raucous masculinity was suppressed through regulations about who could march down the Garvaghy Road. Not surprisingly, the 'Billy boys' have been completely absent from Rosstown. Although the Orange Order has sought to contain and direct the energies of this expressive masculinity through the contracts that govern band participation in a parade, it has also depended on the blood and thunder boys in a number of ways: as a contrast to the Order's own reasonableness, as a warning of what else is out there, as a way of mobilizing an audience, and as a means of attracting youth who have not been joining the Orange Order or unionist political parties. In fact, there is an infusion of the Billy boy image into the Orange Order. In urban marches, some Orangemen are heavily tattooed, wear earrings and despite their collarettes look more like bandmen than the bowler-hatted Blacks.

The Orange Order and Official Unionists are dependent on these alternatives to 'traditional' masculinity both to attract spectators and to mark the limits of accommodation on the parades issue. But this dependence also signals vulnerability in the authoritative position of the Order and the Unionist Party within unionism. Indeed, overt challenges to the restrained practices and mien of the Orange leadership have also come from within the institution itself. For example, the Spirit of Drumcree group in Portadown, while maintaining the outward appearances of Orangeism, has adopted a virulent and unyielding posture toward the marches and eschewed negotiations with Catholics. Support for its hard-line and confrontational position on the 'right to march' can be found in the wider loyalist community, challenging the Order's accommodation to the state, and subverting the authority of traditional Orange masculinity.³¹ Thus the 'state of play' among Protestant men in the parades demonstrates the importance of Connell's emphasis on masculinity as a contested political project among men; and in the case of Northern Ireland, this is not simply a contest between nationalists and unionists.

This competition among Protestant men also underscores Connell's argument about how the state is pivotal in regulating the 'state of play' among competing masculinities: in this case, trying to contain any more aggressive, unconciliatory politics and to promote ethnic accommodation. At contentious parades, respectable and religious Orangemen have often been protected by the state, and in this sense, the traditional Orangeman has appeared to remain hegemonic. The state has also repressed certain expressions of masculinity, excluding blood and thunder bands from some parades, prohibiting Lambeg drums in Belfast, restricting the kinds of music that can be played. However, the British state's eagerness to resolve the conflict has resulted in policies that have regulated whether and where Orangemen could march, thus restricting the freedom of Orangemen to 'walk the Queen's highway' and, perhaps inadvertently, calling into question the ability of respectable Orange masculinity to effectively defend unionism.

If the parades call our attention to state management of contested masculinities in Northern Ireland, they also reveal a compliant unionist femininity (what Connell refers to as 'emphasized femininity') which the state has been able to ignore. Neither in Rosstown nor in the more contentious parades do we see a diversity of femininities or challenges by Protestant women to the hegemonic ethno-gender order. Indeed, there appears to be one pre-eminent expression of the feminine: women as supporters of, and dependent on, their *Ulstermen*. Orangemen expect women to provide sustenance during parades, they permit Orange ladies to walk during some demonstrations, and Orangewomen adhere to these expectations. Women march only in melody bands, and they are neither drum majors nor drummers. There may be a range of femininities on display at the parades, but it is a very narrow range. In no case, do we see alternative femininities in Connell's sense – that is, femininities that can subvert hegemonic masculinity.

Within Protestant unionist culture, traditional forms of femininity prevail. It may be that the generally conservative political ideology of unionism leaves little space for feminist reconstructions of unionist identity and politics.³² It is certainly the case that within the parades neither the Orange Order nor the blood and thunder bands have understood women as central actors in the politics of the conflict. Instead, the parades are a symbolic battlefield for men to defend the nation and to contend with one another over what it means to be a loyalist man. Orangemen and loyalist men safeguard the boundaries of the Protestant community and, with the bands and their supporters, mark the limits and gender order of Protestant unionist culture.

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Notes

- 1 These quotations are drawn from Gordon Lucy and Elaine McClure's *The Twelfth: What it Means to Me*. Published by the Ulster Society, an association established by Unionist politicians to promote Ulster-British heritage and culture, the volume is a collection of essays by Protestants and Catholics describing their experiences and views on the rites surrounding 12 July.
- 2 In the 1998 elections for the new Northern Ireland Assembly, just fifteen of the 108 seats went to women (13.8 per cent). Two of these went to women of the NIWC and one to a woman in the cross-communal Alliance Party. Among the nationalist parties, women took eight of the forty-two seats (19 per cent) and among unionists women secured only three of the fifty-five seats (5 per cent) (*Sunday Times* 28 June 1998: 16–20, *News Letter* 29 June 1998: 7–11).
- 3 For the most part, it is not inaccurate to conflate religious and political identities. Although minorities in both communities reject the correspondence between confessional and political identities and we concur with those scholars who argue that the conflict is not fundamentally religious in nature, the overwhelming majority of unionists are Protestant and Irish nationalists are almost exclusively Catholic (Loughlin 1995; McGarry and O'Leary 1995; Bell 1996).
- 4 Among these are several seminal works and comprehensive case studies of gender and nationalism, such as Mosse (1985); Jayewardene (1986); Koonz (1987); Rowbotham (1992); McClintock (1995); Yuval-Davis (1997). There are also a growing number of edited volumes, including Davies (1986); Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989); Mohanty et al. (1991); Parker et al. (1992); Moghadam (1994); Basu (1995); Gallin et al. (1995); West (1997); Charles and Hintjens (1998).
- 5 Nagel (1998: 244).
- 6 Connell (1996: 157–76) and Enloe (1990: 42–64).
- 7 Parades are but one of the multiple sites in which an ethno-gender order is constituted among both Protestant unionists and Catholic nationalists. More publicized borders are evident in neighborhoods, schools, sports, newspapers, social clubs, many voluntary associations, and, of course, political parties, all of which embody and reproduce ethnic boundaries in Ulster. Because this is an ethnically polarized society, gender is constructed in all of these arenas in relation to an imagined other.
- 8 For discussions of settler colonialism, its history and impact on contemporary politics, see Clayton (1996).
- 9 The Orange Order and the Royal Blacks developed in tandem during the early nineteenth century. The Black was an honorific degree within the Orange Order. In the 1850s, the Blacks became a separate organization. See Jarman and Bryan (1996: 11). For a historical discussion of parades, see Jarman (1997: 25–79).
- 10 These include the Apprentice Boys of Derry, an association founded in 1814 out of loyalist clubs that had existed for about a century; the Independent Orange Order, formed in 1903; and the Junior Loyal Orange Lodges, which associated with the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland in 1925.
- 11 Its original oath attests to these intertwined commitments:

I do declare that I am not, nor ever was, a Roman-Catholic or Papist; that I was not, am not, or ever will be, a member of the society called 'United Irishmen', nor any other society or body of men, who are enemies to his Majesty, or the glorious constitution of these realms; and that I never took the oath to that or any other treasonable society.

I declare that I will, as far as in my power lies; assist the magistrates and civil authorities of these kingdoms in the lawful execution of their official duties, when called upon. That I will be true and faithful to every brother Orangeman in all just actions; that I will not wrong, or know him to be wronged or injured, without giving due notice thereof, if in my power. And I solemnly declare that I will always conceal, and never will reveal either part or parts of what is now privately communicated to me, unless to a brother Orangeman, knowing him to be so by strict trial and due examination; or from the word of a brother Orangeman, or until I shall be authorized so to do by the proper authorities of the Orange Institution. That I will not write it, indite it, cut, carve, stain, stamp, or engrave it, or cause it to be done, lest any part thereof might be known. And lastly, I do declare that I have not, to my knowledge or belief, been proposed or rejected in, or expelled from any other Orange Lodge.

(Orange Oath and Rules, 1834. From Parliamentary Papers {1835}, XV.

440-I, Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange lodges, Appendix 3, in Norman 1968: 140–3. Cited from

http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/hypertext/landow/victorian/religion/Orange_Lodge_Rules.html)

- 12 The estimate of the number of lodges today is taken from the *Belfast Telegraph* (9 July 1997: 3). The estimate of the number of members across all of Ireland is taken from the *Irish News* (6 July 1998: 4).
- 13 See Jarman (1997: 47). For an interesting discussion of the formation of the Order and the first marches from an Orange perspective, see the edited papers of Colonels Blacker and Wallace (1994).
- 14 For an authoritative discussion of the pivotal role of parades in precipitating ethnic conflict, see Budge and O'Leary (1973).
- 15 The Anglo-Irish Agreement recognized Ireland's legitimate interest in the North and indicated that the boundaries set up by partition were not necessarily inviolable. The Downing Street Declaration stated that the status of Northern Ireland was an open-ended question (i.e. that it would not necessarily remain within the Union), although it reasserted the British position that there would be no change in Northern Ireland's status without the consent of the majority of its population. In August 1994, the IRA unilaterally announced a cease-fire, which was followed by cease-fire declarations by Protestant paramilitary groups. While unionists welcomed the cease-fires, they were overtly suspicious about the intentions of the IRA and its political arm, Sinn Fein, and about the creeping influence of Dublin over Northern Irish affairs. Such creeping influence was evident to loyalists in 1995, when the British and Irish governments issued a Joint Framework Document, targeted at addressing relations between Ireland and

- Northern Ireland, and Britain and Ireland. Opposition to British initiatives was manifested in electoral politics, by the growing popularity of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and by the increase in Protestant marches.
- 16 For discussions of the crucial role of marches in the inter-ethnic conflict see Budge and O'Leary (1973); Bryson and McCartney (1994); Bryan et al. (1995); Jarman and Bryan (1996); Hadden and Donnelly (1997).
 - 17 For works discussing social class in Orangeism, see Gibbon (1975); Farrell (1976); Miller (1978).
 - 18 See Edwards for an enthusiast's account of the bonfires and the parades (1999: 2–50).
 - 19 See Bryson and McCartney (1994) and Jarman (1997), for a discussion of the use of flags in parades.
 - 20 Neil Jarman examined banners at parades from 1990 to 1996 and found that 69 per cent had Williamite imagery, 20 per cent religious imagery, 21 per cent had portraits of deceased Orangemen, and a small number had depictions of Britannia (Jarman 1997: 172–84). Hence, there are few images of women. (See also Loftus 1996.)
 - 21 Not all loyalists embrace the religious aspect or even sectarian aspects of the parades. This was evidenced by the proposal by leaders in the Progressive Unionist Party (a party associated with loyalist paramilitaries) in July 1998 that the Twelfth parades be transformed into a cross-community carnival (*News Letter* 27 July 1998: 7). This proposal has not been taken seriously by either the Orange Order or mainstream unionists.
 - 22 It is possible that the female band followers may challenge traditional notions of feminine behavior, but such gender rebellion is not evident during the parades themselves (although some overtly sexual play can occur at the fields). Unfortunately, there is no published research examining this issue.
 - 23 Paisley, a long-standing member of the Apprentice Boys, had been a member of the Orange Order, but left it to join the Independent Orange Order.
 - 24 Interestingly, David Trimble, who became First Minister in the new assembly did not attend the 1998 march, which was prohibited by the Parades Commission.
 - 25 Although Patton himself remains a member, some members of the Spirit of Drumcree group have been expelled from the Orange Order. Dissatisfaction with the more accommodationist policies of the 'respectable,' old-line Orange leadership eventually brought an end to the long reign of Rev. Martin Smyth and the election of a new head to the Order, Robert Saulters (*Sunday Times* 11 May 1997). In 1997, when the Order decided to waive its right to march through a Catholic neighborhood in Belfast (as well as in Armagh and Newry, two other contested locations), the leader of the Spirit of Drumcree group, Joel Patton, said that the decision demonstrated:

the complete incompetence and cowardice of the leadership we have in the Orange Order . . . I believe that either these men are removed and replaced or the Orange Order itself will be destroyed . . . We always believed that we had weak leadership but certainly the scale of the capitulation and surrender last night was quite astounding.

(*Belfast Telegraph* 11 July 1997: 1)

That the Orange Order itself was torn by the dissension in its ranks was evident in Grand Master Robert Saulters' plea for unity:

We must speak with one voice when what we say has its effect on the Institution, the Province, and the Union. Ours is a Brotherhood, a Fraternal Society. May Brotherliness be more obvious than ever in the days ahead of us. Remember, 'United We Stand, Divided We Fall.'

(*Belfast Telegraph* 12 July 1997: 14)

- 26 Again in 1997, Trimble commented on MacCionnaith's selection to explain the resistance of Orangemen to negotiating:

I am sure that when that selection was made it was thought that his record in bombing the British Legion was appropriate because, by tradition, the Portadown Orange district processions are always led by the ex servicemen's lodge. It was felt appropriate, no doubt, to have someone whose record was bombing a British Legion hall to cause the maximum offence to an organisation that gives former servicemen pride of place in its activities.

(*Portadown Times* 4 July 1997: 6)

- 27 Robinson (1996).

- 28 In 1996, Unionist leaders and Orangemen blamed the decision to re-route the march on RUC capitulation to Dublin and Sinn Fein. In the words of Harold Gracey, District Master for the Portadown lodge: 'Dublin has given orders for this . . . We are aware Dick Spring is behind the whole thing. We will not be giving in to Dick Spring, John Bruton, Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness or any other spokesman for Jesuit priests' (*News Letter* 8 July 1996: 5). In both 1996 and 1997, Portadown precipitated outbreaks of violence throughout the province. However, in 1997, the Orange Order 'saved the day' by waiving its 'right to march' in other hotly contested sites.

- 29 Interestingly, in the face of these rising tensions, local Catholic women set up a Greenham Common-type 'peace camp.' They claimed of the 24-hour vigil prior to the government decision, that 'not only will it highlight the injustices of the Orange march, but it will also show our children the value of non-violent protest' (*Portadown Times* 4 July 1997: 8).

- 30 Edwards asserts that the march at Rosstown is the only remaining Orange parade in the Republic (1999: 35).

- 31 Support for the Spirit of Drumcree came not only from the paramilitary organizations but also from some non-violent community groups that mobilized, including the Women's Orangemen's Support Group (see *Belfast Telegraph* 6 July 1998: 3, 29 July 1998: 6).

- 32 See Miller et al. (1996: 166) for a discussion of political attitudes of gender equality, including the image of unionist women as primarily homemakers.

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