



Discursive Construction of Irish Identity in the Troubles Literature

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Abstract

Representing ‘The Irish national self’ in Anglo-Irish literature of the Troubles is one of the key topics, which is inseparable from British national identity since these communities are intermingled in Northern Ireland and compete for space and political dominance. Little attention of critics was paid to the analysis of linguistic means of constructing national identity. This paper examines how national identity is formed in literary discourse within the framework of discourse analysis in the Troubles novels. I suggest that in the novels considered national identity manifests itself through a purposeful choice of discourse strategies (construction, destruction and justification) and language means. Conceptualizing both identities is based on conceptualizing space and religious identity but what makes them distinctive is narrating political history. Irish national identity, as represented in the Troubles novels, is based on the idea of victimization and trauma memorization, while British national identity relies heavily on mythologizing historical victory. Both identities are constructed in binary oppositions to a conflicting community and are mostly negative.

Introduction

“The Troubles” literature has a rich source of inspiration in Irish turbulent history which gave rise to plenty of novels in English about life in Ireland in times of communal violence. These disturbing memories are captured in films, songs, plays and, of course, in literature. The Troubles fiction exists in a great variety of genres: romance, thrillers, autobiographies and historical novels but the majority of them tend to bring

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4 into focus national identity issues giving priority to the description of complicated
5 national self-determination and self-identification processes. 'For the Irish novelist, the
6 usual concerns of the English novel – personal morality and relationships – have tended
7 to be subordinated to the more pressing issue of race, religion and nationality'
8 (Kennedy-Andrews, 2006: 238). A political conflict dividing Protestant and Catholic
9 communities in seventies and eighties of the twentieth century is mirrored in fiction to a
10 great degree as making a political and social choice. 'Taking the side' is a prominent
11 feature of the Troubles writing and a starting point in constructing national identity in
12 the novels plotting this period and published throughout it.
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24 Literature which references most traumatic events of political and social history is an
25 integral part of public discourse. It represents collective memory (Huysen, 1995); in
26 these narratives political and social events are conceptualized and have influence on
27 collective identity of the nation. Although Anglo-Irish literature is on the move to a post
28 nationalist perspective (Böss, 2010) to identify this shift in the discourse it is necessary
29 to undertake the examination of the patterns, previously existing in it.
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37 With these ideas in the background, I suggest examining the discursive construction
38 of national identity in the Troubles novels of the second part of the twentieth century.
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42 Irishness as a concept has got significant critical attention in a wide variety of fields
43 of study. A large volume of published studies in sociology, politics, history, gender
44 issues contributed to understanding what is to be Irish (Stapleton & Wilson, 2014). The
45 concept is addressed in the connection with racial issues ('whiteness' and its
46 relationship to 'Europeanness' (McVeigh, 2010). It is also considered in language
47 perspective, as a means of promoting nationalist ideas and as a response to a
48 'community surviving under threat' (Crowley, 2008; McMahon, 2008; McManus,
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4 2016). Comparative research of Northern Irish and The Republic of Ireland identities
5 after partition shows how political situation frames national identity in Northern Ireland
6 and the Republic of Ireland (Todd, 2015).
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11 Dynamics of the concept in relation to social and political change with emphasis on
12 the influence of the most significant political decision (Good Friday Agreement) is also
13 seriously studied (Tonge & Gomez, 2015; Furey at al., 2017). Political identity is
14 investigated in terms of belonging to a political movement (Smithey L. A., 2011) and in
15 correlation with religious identity (Evans J., Tonge J., 2013). Identity issues are
16 addressed in films (Zeidanin& Shehabat, 2013) and literature (Privas, 2010, Magennis,
17 2010; Phillips, 2015). Interestingly, a rise of neither Irish nor British, but Ulster identity
18 is analysed in building war memorials, architectural carving for state institutions and
19 fine art works (McVeigh, 2012).
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31 In literary studies, identity has also been examined, both in theoretical perspective
32 (de Gregorio-Godeo & Martin-Albo, 2013) and in terms of history of literature. The
33 existing research on identity is extensive and focuses on different aspects of the
34 realization of the concept in literary texts, implementing different methodology. It
35 would be impossible to give here a detailed discussion of approaches to applied to the
36 study of identity represented in literature, that is why I will present works most relevant
37 to my research. Discussions on new identities in contemporary literature have revealed
38 the emergence of reshaped cultural identities reflecting mixing of cultures, languages
39 and going beyond the state borders (Zamorano Llena, C.Hansen, J.Nordin, 2013).
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Lynch examines Irish identity within the framework of autobiography writing in the
twentieth century, considering important links between memory and fiction in the works
of most prominent Irish writers (Lynch, 2009). Representation of Irishness through a

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4 work of memory is vital for Anglo-Irish literature, and discussion about the relation
5
6 between national and private identity in literature takes lead in literary criticism
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8 (Pedersen, Nordin, Friberg-Harnesk, 2006). Despite ‘living with the graves’ of Irish
9
10 troubled history, Irish art is in search of a new vision of the nation. Some contemporary
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12 writers and artists question canonical Irishness in their work which some researchers see
13
14 as a general trend in the period after Celtic Tiger (González-Arias, 2017).
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18 However, few studies have investigated discursive construction of Irish identity in
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20 literature examining discursive practices and linguistics means implemented in literary
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22 texts to build it, which gives a broad research perspective.
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24 ***Theoretical Background: To the question of nation and national identity***

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26 Identity has been addressed in numerous research in various academic fields, since it
27
28 is one of the most debatable concepts in political, gender and social sciences.
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30 Construction of Irish national identity in literature has been addressed much especially
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32 when it comes to the works of most prominent Irish writers – Joyce, Yeats, Synge, just
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34 to name a few (ed. Gillespie, 2001). However, discursive construction of the Irish
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36 identity in literary works of the Troubles got less attention, although discourse analysis
37
38 has potential in explaining how the identity is narrated in literature as a powerful part of
39
40 public discourse. The interpretative power of hermeneutic approach backed with
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42 discourse analysis can make a contribution to the much debated issue of Irish identity
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44 seen from Northern Ireland and the Troubles literature perspective.
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49 As implemented to literary discourse national identity is understood as aesthetic
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51 implementation of dynamic interrelation of protagonists’ ego-identity (Erikson 1955)
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53 with their social solidarity, i.e. being a representative of the group, sharing its values,
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55 ideology, views and reaction to the world realized in the texts of the novels.
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4 I would like to specify the concept of nation which is used in my work. According to
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6 Anderson, 'nation is a large community whose image lives in the minds of each member
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8 of this community, which is characterised by elastic but finite boundaries and
9
10 sovereignty. (Anderson, 1983: 15). Conceptual features of national identity crucial for
11
12 understanding the theoretical background of the paper is summarized by R.Wodak:

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15 *'The national identity of individuals who perceive themselves as belonging to a*
16
17 *national collectivity is manifested ... in their social practices, one of which is discursive*
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19 *practice. The respective national identity is shaped by state, political, institutional,*
20
21 *media and everyday social practices, and the material and social conditions which*
22
23 *emerge as their results, to which the individual is subjected. The discursive practice as*
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25 *a special form of social practice plays a central part both in the formation and in the*
26
27 *expression of national identity'* (Wodak, at al., 2009: 29).
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31 Irish identity or, more correctly, Irish collective identity seen from the religious and
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33 political perspectives is being built in conditions of intermingled majority and minority
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35 communities which articulate themselves in public discourse. A stranger, someone who
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37 does not have a profound background in Irish political history might be easily confused
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39 and misled by a variety and scatter of possible interpretations of the conflict represented
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41 in the discourse. Extralinguistic factors affecting the discourse are political and religious
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43 stance and social background of the writer which create the 'vertical context', that is
44
45 critical for hermeneutical analysis of the literary discourse on the Troubles. This context
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47 was historically created by numerous political forces, several confessions and other
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49 influential institutions, such the Army and police, producing a serious impact on
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51 shaping public discourse on the Troubles. Thus without taking into consideration the
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53 primary attitudes of the actors discourse analysis will likely to fail.
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4 Despite admitting a serious shift in the last twenty years from nationalistic and group
5 identities to post-modernist and post-nationalist identity (Anthias&Yuval-Davis 1992;
6 Hall 1992; Bhabha 1994; Gilroy 2000) critics note a possible reinforcement of national-
7 oriented identity even in globalization era; some experts make clear that 'globalization
8 can lead to reinforced interpretations of culture and ethnic identification, which I
9 suggest have significance in the Irish context' (Kirwan, 2012).

10
11 Nations represent themselves in their 'collective writing' that is public discourse of
12 which literature is a prominent part. How the nation is reconstructed in public discourse
13 still remains quite debatable though it is clear that national identity is a dynamic
14 construct 'by means of language and other semiotic systems, produced, reproduced,
15 transformed and destructed' (Wodak, at al., 2009: 153) in public discourse.

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Literary discourse being a specific and an influential part of public discourse
represents the national identity constructed in it and has a serious impact on how the
nation sees itself thus shapes the discursive construction of the nation in a future
perspective. Discourse analysis of identity in literature is challenged by its nature – a
deliberately created fictional reality mediates the author's stance and for the purpose of
the analysis the texts which are the transitional results of the discourse, should be
decomposed into segments of speech belonging to various 'subjects of speech' -
protagonists, narrator and the author - to be further analysed. The readers reconstruct the
national identities represented in the text while reading the novel in their full
complexity. They assign personal characteristics to the narrator or a protagonist and
associate them as 'bearers' of certain identities.

The texts chosen for the analysis (Appendix 1) have similar thematic features,
although they vary in genre, mode and are determined by different pragmatic

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4 assumptions of the writers. The fact that all of them belong to the Troubles literature
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6 makes this data set relatively homogeneous, despite authors' assumptions along with
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8 genre, narration technique and other specific poetic features of these novels. What really
9
10 matters and unites them – is the simplification of the topic and reduction of the
11
12 complexity of political and social situation in Northern Ireland to trivial binary
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14 oppositions Catholic – Protestant, Unionist – Republican, IRA – Orange Order, etc.
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16 regardless of political and religious stance of the writer.
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20 One more feature to be discussed here is twofold identity commonly found in the
21
22 Troubles novels produced by representatives of conflicting communities. As A.
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24 MacCarthy puts it in her 'Identities in Irish Literature': *'In the Irish context ... the writer*
25
26 *in English had to deal with how the colonizer saw him, often fashioning his literary*
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28 *responses to be in line with this, giving the responses he felt were required of him by the*
29
30 *dominant culture. He had to take into account the reading public and the institution of*
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32 *the day and present them with an acceptable identity.'* (MacCarthy, 2004: 203). For this
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34 research the idea is applicable to the degree it explains rather negative self-
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36 representation of Irish protagonists.
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39 **Methodology**

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42 By incorporating critical discourse methodology (Wodak & Michael, 2009; Wodak,
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44 2009, Fairclough, 2003) the research explores major thematic concepts which constitute
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46 the content of the discursive identity construction along with discursive strategies and
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48 linguistic means of their realization. The Troubles period is one of the mostly discussed
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50 topics in Anglo-Irish literature which is a proper type of discourse to examine how
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52 national identity is constructed both in terms of the means and dynamics with the time.
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54 By taking into consideration existing research in construction of national identity in
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4 mass media, public discourse and literature, this paper provides insight into mechanics
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6 of identity construction in literature.
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9 For the research the Troubles novels with a strong ideological aspiration published in
10 a span of fifty years (1970 – 2008) were selected. Continuous sampling gave empirical
11 data: discourse fragments addressing national identity issues of different length were
12 identified in the texts of the novels. To make the sample manageable only direct speech
13 of protagonists as well as the speech of the narrator were taken for the analysis though
14 other approaches to selection of the material for the analysis could be implemented. The
15 fragments of the texts in which the attitude to the belonging of the group/community is
16 directly represented were divided into two categories - 'self-identity' and 'evaluating
17 the confronting community'.
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28 Pilot research showed that social background and political stance of the authors
29 should be considered first, since they totally shape the artistic vision of the writer and
30 form the basis for the content and linguistic construction of the identity in the literary
31 discourse. As it was mentioned political conflict in Northern Ireland is primarily
32 interpreted in public discourse through binary political and religious oppositions. Not
33 surprisingly, literary discourse follows the pattern. According to biography search and
34 prior procedure of close text analysis the data set was be conventionally divided into
35 two subsets – with *Catholic*, i.e. nationalistic/liberal nationalistic and *Protestant*/liberal
36 Protestant aspiration.
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48 The methodology applied to both sets of the novels is the same – identifying speech
49 samples regarding the national identity issues.
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51 In 'Catholic/Republican subset Content categories identified in the data are
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53 *narrating political history (with emphasis on victimization and trauma*
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4 *memorization*), *religious identity* and *conceptualizing space*. The formation of
5
6 ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ in the text of the novel involves choosing discursive
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8 strategies with a different degree of purposefulness. Discursive strategies, i.e.
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10 intentional use of linguistic means to create a persuasive argument aimed at achieving
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12 communicative objectives, distinguished in public discourse, ‘correspond to the main
13
14 social macro-functions’ (Wodak at al., 2009: 33). They are ‘more or less ‘automated ‘
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16 activity plan based on models of more or less comprehensive and stereotyped – in our
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18 case discursive activities which are located on the different levels of mental, cognitive
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20 operation and which are more or less elaborated’ (Wodak at al., 2009: 34). Strategies
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22 (construction, justification, transformation and demontage) mostly refer to ‘planned
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24 social activities, the political or socio-psychological aims or functions of these
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26 activities, and of (linguistic) means designated to help realize these aims’ (Wodak at al.,
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28 2009: 34). In case of fiction the writers ‘speaking’ for their protagonists employ less
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30 spontaneously but more intentionally the way of representing their ideas and beliefs in
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32 accordance to their aesthetic and ideological assumptions. Practically it means that the
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34 writer acts in literary discourse on behalf of protagonists thus totally constructs the
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36 discursive acts which organize and represent the ideas of several actors.
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42 What obviously unites public and literary discourses is their strong ideological
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44 aspiration and account on a broad audience. Both discourses rely heavily on emotional
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46 response from the public what explains degree of intentionality of the linguistic means
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48 of realization. The conscious intention of the author of the text determines the choice of
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50 linguistic means which in perspective allow to manipulate the audience provoking
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52 empathy and thus answering some core meanings of national self-representation in the
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54 text (victimization and trauma memorization).
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Content basis of Irish national identity

In literary discourse genre forms regulate communication and thus determine the 'product' or result of discourse – the text of the novel. The majority of the novels considered are memoirs, diaries, written in the form of 'I-narration', with the rare exceptions for detective stories. Practically in all these novels the communication act is collective trauma memorization, emotionally - a means of empathy and manipulation. Individual identity is constructed in the context of this trauma as coping with traumatic experience through reflection exercise and in this form is reconstructed in the discourse.

The political history of Ireland made people think of themselves as victims which has a serious unification power. As D. Kiberd puts it: 'in Ireland the past is never a different country and scarcely even the past: instead it becomes just one more battleground contested by the forces of the present' (Kiberd, 1995: 644). Antagonistic relationships between Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland are explored and described in massive sociological, political and anthropological studies, with the emphasis on territorial and social suppression of Catholic communities. In accordance to J. Clearly: '*in regions where the peoples concerned are geographically intermingled, the attempt to manufacture ethnically homogeneous state, or states with secure ethnic majorities, cannot be accomplished without extraordinary communal violence. This violence does not end with the act of partition: violence is not incidental to but constitutive of the new state arrangements thus produced*' (Clearly, 2013: 11). Deliberate construction of a common political past has a serious unification power for a nation while mythicized political history allows to create a shared political space characterized by continuity and homogeneity. In this case a history of a long struggling with colonizers becomes an important element of national identity.

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4 Political history of the Northern Ireland conflict is addressed in numerous studies in
5 terms of politics (Bew P. & Gillespie G., 1999; McAllister I. & Hayes B. C., 2015;;
6 White, T. J., 2013), in comparative sociological and political studies (Mitchell, 2000),
7 in perspective of symbolic and spatial dimension typically associated with it
8 (McAtackney, 2014) and its impact on the present and future (Simpson K., 2009). But
9 still, overcoming this collective trauma through narrating it in literary discourse is likely
10 to be a remedy for the Irish for long time to come.
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19 ***Religious identification***

20 Discourse fragments give evidence of a number of multimodal identities built in the
21 Troubles texts: the conflict is conceptualized as ethno-political, but political and
22 religious are interwoven in the Troubles literature to the extent that are practically
23 inseparable even for the purpose of the analysis and are an intrinsic part of Irish national
24 identity as represented in the novels. In the texts analysed Republicans/Nationalists and
25 Unionists/Loyalists are associated with Catholicism and Protestantism respectively.
26 Association of the characters with IRA or Orange Order follows the same pattern – they
27 belong to a respective Catholic or Protestant community. This phenomenon can be
28 easily explained by a serious degree of ideological reduction of the nature of the
29 Troubles conflict, intrinsic to the literary discourse, which makes literary
30 conceptualization schematic but communicatively effective due to its simplicity.
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46 The Catholic cultural context determines the Troubles novels' integrity. Martyrdom,
47 essential of Catholicism, plays a significant role in ideological explanatory schemes of
48 Irish national identity as seen in the Troubles fiction. L. Peach marks that 'religious art,
49 through its depictions of the passion of Christ, the sufferings of the saints and the death
50 of the martyrs might be said to 'beautify' pain and torture. This begs the question as to
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4 whether art has any business to eschew the suffering and degradation involved in some
5 of the most brutal forms of execution' (Peach, 2004: 49). References to the Catholic
6 context are numerous in the Troubles novels; religion determines characters' values,
7 evaluating other people's behaviour (and judging misbehavior). Even the issue of
8 justice is identified according to religious understanding of the world.
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15 **Loci identification**

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17 The habitat has a connotative meaning and produces a serious impact on a person's
18 identity. With respect to Proshansky's place-identity theory (Proshansky, 1978) I
19 assume that loci in the Troubles novels is a meaningful category representing self-
20 identity interconnected with other representations of individual identity in the novels.
21 As C. Nash puts it: "within the imaginative geography of the nation, particular places,
22 regions or landscapes are used to construct and express senses of collective history and
23 shared senses of belonging." (Nash, 1997: 117) In the Trouble novels physical space
24 together with social, religious and national references constructs spatial dimension of
25 national identity. The nature of the social conflict in Northern Ireland determines the
26 way the space is conceptualized as an integral part of national identity represented in the
27 Troubles novels.
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42 Place considered as an identity aspect might be subcategorized according to the scale
43 of the loci mentioned in the novel. The primary level is the house which is never safe in
44 the Troubles fiction. Derry and Belfast are cities in Northern Ireland frequently known
45 as places having long history of civil unrest. The concept of place with references to
46 particular parts of the city, the names of the streets, constitutes a basis for the
47 construction of national space with which characters associate themselves. It is
48 remarkable that even the name of the city may represent the gap between communities:
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4 even though the official name of the city is Londonderry it is Derry which is mostly
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6 preferred by nationalists and Londonderry by unionists. The word 'Derry' or 'Ulster' in
7
8 the speech of the narrator shows his community identity. Thus, living in Bogside (the
9
10 area of Derry) mentioned in the novel where the population is mostly Catholic, marks
11
12 belonging to the Catholic community.
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15 Some districts of Belfast and Derry were inhabited by exclusively Protestants or
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17 Catholics, what reflected a high degree of segregation of the society. In the Troubles
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19 novels space is clearly marked by toponyms associated with 'loci of conflicts' –
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21 Bogside, West Belfast, Shankill Road, Falls Road – places of violence and social unrest,
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23 Portadown – the place where the annual parade of Orange Order used to start in the
24
25 Troubles times to go further to Catholic estates which provoked serious intercommunal
26
27 turmoil. In *Eureka Street* the narrator puts forward the idea that these places are famous
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29 only due to murders, bombing and fights between most radical Protestants and
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31 Catholics.
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34 35 ***Data set Analysis*** 36

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38 Data set analysis shows that the ways national identity is constructed in the novels
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40 are determined mostly by the political stance of the writers, and reflects their
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42 (nationalistic, pro-British, liberal, religion etc.) assumptions. It must be noted that most
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44 poetic images of the Irish Catholics are given in the novels of strong nationalist
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46 (*Reading in the Dark, The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty, A son called Gabriel,*
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48 *Amongst Women, One by One in the Darkness*) or liberal sympathetic aspiration (*Cal,*
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50 *One by One in the Darkness, The Anatomy school, Titanic Town*). The British affiliation
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52 of some authors gave two-party set of data; novels, which are, at the first glance,
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54 objective and emotionally detached but discursively negative at the ideological core
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4 (The Extremists - regardless of Catholic or Protestant, *Both your Houses* – an allusion to
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6 Mercutio's line "a plague on both your houses" in *Romeo and Juliet* emphasising his
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8 position beyond conflict scope of the author, not being tolerant to any conflicting
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10 community). *A Little Bit British* is an interesting case since if it is compared with
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12 *Eureka Street* since both novels destroy the national identity, Protestant (British) and
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14 Catholic (Irish) respectively. The texts represent the characters, who demonstrate
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16 unwillingness to share the group's values, being very sarcastic in tone and highlighting
17
18 low level of loyalty to the reference groups in general. *Troubles, Fat Lad, The*
19
20 *International, The Story of Lucy Gault, Once upon a Hill: Love in Troubled Times, You*
21
22 *are welcome to Ulster!* continue a 'Protestant set' of novels, representing a
23
24 metanarrative of the dominant community of Northern Ireland. Ambivalent identity or
25
26 lost identity is examined in *The Butcher Boy, The Heather Blazing* and *Grace Notes*.
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31 Before passing on to the discussion of strategies implemented in both discourses it
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33 should be noted that tribalization as a part of simplification schemes is an intrinsic
34
35 feature of literary discourse on the Troubles. Practically in any novel on the history of
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37 Northern Ireland protagonists proclaim the necessity to 'take sides': 'In Ireland you
38
39 must choose your tribe. Reason has nothing to do with that (i, 335), 'We have been
40
41 baptized into different faiths. I do not remember us ever mentioning it at all before we
42
43 decided to move to Belfast' (xxi, 6). From this perspective it is clear that with such a
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45 strong social claim political and religious aspiration of the writers will take a lead in the
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47 literary discourse and thus making talks about post-nationalist perspective of Anglo-
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49 Irish fiction a bit too early.
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4 Strategically, discursive practices, which might be distinguished in the data set, mean
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6 to construct Irish identity through exploiting the idea of a victimized and oppressed
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8 nation.
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10 **Construction strategies** realized via examples of positive self-representation are
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12 quite few in the texts (See Appendix 1):
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- 14 • *good decent* Catholic people (xii: 110)
- 15
- 16 • I knew I was an *Irish Catholic and thus one of the new chosen* people (x: 9)
- 17
- 18 • We are. The *educated Catholic class*. (xiii: 60)
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22 Similarly, examples of national solidarity and unification are rare:
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- 24 • I fancied the red more *but politically I was for the green* (xii; 129) (choosing a football
25
26 team)
- 27
- 28 • *I'm a Catholic. ... Catholics here play soccer or Gaelic football* (xix, 290)
- 29
- 30 • (inner monologue of a Catholic protagonist) a convent schoolgirl from a small
31
32 town in the British part of Ireland, *should believe the same thing as everybody*
33
34 *else* (xv, 217)
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37 Religious identification may transform into an individual (See Appendix 1):
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- 39 • (Dialogue) I've always known your Roman Catholicism was very important to
40
41 you. – (The Catholic Protagonist) *It was. At one time. ... I suppose I am thran –*
42
43 *always the awkward customer. There's not too many masses written by women.*
44
45 *... It's a way of getting my own back because they wouldn't let me serve on the*
46
47 *altar* (xv, 111).
48
49

50 Negative construction of identity in the speech of the representative of the Catholic
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52 community might be seen through emphasis put on negative uniqueness (See Appendix
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- since we had a cousins in gaol for being in the IRA, *we were a marked family* and had to be careful (xii; 27)
 - the *Protestants had more than we had* (about holidays) (xii; 33)
 - *I am unemployed son, and likely to stay that way, for I am a Catholic in this Protestant-controlled city* (iii; 21)
 - He (Martin) went in the front hallway – wheeled the bike past the porter’s lodge but didn’t recognized the man on duty, so he didn’t nod. *He rarely talked to any of them- a crowd of Orangemen.* Within a day or two of starting *they knew what he was. So they handed out the departmental mail in silence.* Martin figured the reason he got the job was because the Prof who had interviewed him was from Australia and *didn’t know or, more likely, chose to ignore, the local rules* (xix, 243)
 - I spent most of my life thinking that *I should be arrested* (xiii; 84)
 - *They called us ‘Fenian whores’. They’re always calling us names ... Those Ballynure school pupils hate us only because we’re Catholics. ... Even the girls swear at us, and they egg the boys on, too* (xx, 169)
 - *we’re facing discrimination* (xx, 162)
 - I cannot believe that in this day and age censorship still exists ...*In Ireland people are not allowed to read certain things. ...It’s a way of one people saying to another set of people, we’re better than you. And in the North we get it from both fucking sides. Church and State* (ix, 71).
 - She said she knew *the kind of us* long before she went to England and she might have known not to let her son anywhere near *the likes of me* what else would you expect from a house where the father’s never in, lying about in pubs from morning to night, he’s no better than a pig. ... *Pigs - sure the whole town knows that!* (xi, 4).

- There was a great deal he wanted to know, of which he possessed only snatches now, things which would disappear with her (Mother's) death. At times he felt he had been there ... when his grandfather was evicted, and that he had known his father's Uncle Michael, the old Fenian, who was too sick to be interned in 1916. Or that he had been in the bedroom ... when his grandfather came back to the house on Easter Monday 1916 and had sat watching him as he pulled up the floorboards under which he had hidden a number of rifles. Or that he had witnessed his grandfather being taken from the house at the end of the Easter Rising. *These were things which lived with him*, but he could only imagine them (viii, 61)

Negative attitude to the British/Protestant community is also an important feature of national Irish identity constructed in the Troubles novels. The threat is clearly shown by Protestants who marked their space with visual symbols of their dominance – British national flags and the Ulster Banner (the flag representing six counties of historical Ulster under the rule of British Crown), which are linguistically realized by negative attributes, idioms of rejection, metaphors and similes, repetition aimed to foment threat, contrastive constructions ('We didn't but we were') (See Appendix 1):

- *He (Cal – a Catholic) couldn't bear to look up and see the flutter of Union Jacks, and now the red and white cross of the Ulster flag with its red had. ... It was a dangerous sign that the Loyalists were getting angry* (vi: 9).
- *They spoke to their near neighbours (Protestants) affably enough but beyond that everyone else in the estate seemed threatening* (vi; 9)
- *Now the days are heavy and bare and dangerous to him. Maybe he exaggerates the rejection of the towns-people, maybe everyone now has their troubles, but, his blood withers, his heart shrinks, his step on the rainy granite of the pavement shortens. And he feels afraid just as he used to as a little boy* (xvi, 55)

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4 • It was a bad business. *We didn't shoot at women and children like the Tans but we were*
5 *a bunch of killers* (vii, 5).
6
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8 Negative constructions of national identity are realized through discontinuation
9 (Wodak, 2009) as an intrinsic feature of identity construction in public discourse. In
10 literature the examples of emphasizing the difference between the past and the present
11 social situations shows either the improvement/the hope for the improvement in general
12 or disappointment caused by a negative change (See Appendix 1):
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19 • They (*protestants*) *had liked it the old way*, when *Catholics were glad of an indoor*
20 *bathroom and a couple of raw spuds* (xiii; 10).
21
22
23 • The Republican *Catholics, brought up for forty years to hate the British as a hostile*
24 *occupying power, were now receiving them with open arms* as their only hope against
25 the savagery of their Protestant fellow-countrymen (ii;15)
26
27
28 • From out of the *dark mists of Ireland's past and present a new breed would arise. ...*
29 *The Loyalist Catholic. The liberal Protestant. The honest politician* (xiii; 164)
30
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32 • *People who would have spat in our faces three years before were now clapping our*
33 *backs. ... Many of the men who had actually fought got nothing. An early grave or the*
34 *emigrant ship. Sometimes I get sick when I see what I fought for* (former IRA member)
35 (vii, 15)
36
37
38 • *Not like our boys*, she went on, they were pathetic at the Easter parade, *half of them*
39 *hadn't even bothered to run a comb through their hair, No suits, no ties ... - 'No jobs',*
40 *Father interrupted* (a dialogue between narrator's parents when they are discussing an
41 annual march of Orange Order) (x, 16)
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50 As it was said before spatial dimension lies at the heart of national identity but in
51 case of the Troubles novels spatial references in identity construction are negative (See
52 Appendix 1):
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- That's where I'd been born: West Belfast, *the bold, the true, the extremely rough* (xiii; 13)
- a world of wrong, insult, injury, unemployment, a world where the unjust hold power and the ignorant rule (xii; 26)
- it was only when you lived away from *Northern Ireland that you realized, ... how deeply divided society it was* (xiv; 114)
- There were pictures of his town I every paper in the world, every TV in the world – the fact that it was *pictures of his town being burned or blown to fucking bits was neither here nor there* (xix, 242)

Characters with ambivalent identity, who do not desire to choose either side feel out of place (See Appendix 1):

- I feel it *as a terrible thing to be hiding in my own town, from my own people*, and what remedy will there be for it? ... Maybe *I should be just going away. Going away quietly with myself somewhere.* (a Catholic protagonist being under pressure for serving in RIC (xvi, 68)
- you just don't seem very Catholic. You don't seem very West Belfast (xiii; 95)

Deconstructive (dismantling) strategies (Wodak, 2009) are realized through negative attribution, adverbs-intensifiers (too, enough), negative attribution through negative stereotyping showing rather a grotesque image of a Catholic (See Appendix 1):

- I was afraid to say something *too Catholic* (xiii; 2)
- There was *still enough of the working-class Catholic in me* (xiii; 3)
- I was scared of *not seeming Catholic enough* (xiii; 18)
- *The space between my eyes, the gapless front teeth, the fact I'm wearing no green?* (xiii; 95)

- *Violence alone enlivened my girlhood*, for I was allowed out only to go to school and mass. But from my bedroom window, under a ceiling black with night and creeping mould *I could see the goings-on. The boys and the Brits, and the RUC.*

(x, 3)

Strategies of justification (legitimation) are exploited to justify violence and murders and had a character of a response action in the situation of despair and hopelessness (See Appendix 1):

- Would you tell me one good reason *why an Irishman or an Irish woman should do anything else but hate the British?* (ii; 23)
- Injustice. The police themselves. Dirty politics. It's grand to say let it stop to people who have been the victims of it. *What they were supposed to do?* Say they're sorry they ever protested and go back to being unemployed, gerrymandered, beaten up by every policeman who took the notion, gaoled by magistrates and judges who were so vicious that it was they who should be gaoled, and for life, for all the harm they did and all the lives they ruined? (xii; 203)
- I've heard Protestants saying, 'The one side is as bad as the other'. It's just not true. It's the Protestant side's bigoted. *The Catholics are only reacting to being hated* (xv, 9)

Legitimation might be ambivalent in case the protagonist discursively constructs his ambivalence attitude towards most cruel historical events (See Appendix 1):

- *My feelings toward Seamus in IRA were ambivalent. I didn't agree with their violent methods, yet I was also outraged by the shootings and killings which Protestant paramilitaries were perpetrating on innocent Catholics in Belfast, and wanted protection. Murder in another mortal, mortal sin, and I would have preferred that none of these organizations existed ...* (xx, 209)

Content basis of British national identity

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4 It should be noted that content categories characterizing the construction of the
5 British national identity coincides with those which might be found for the Irish
6 identity: *narrating political history*, *religious identity* and *conceptualizing space*.
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10 What makes discursive practices different is distinctive character of these concepts
11 presenting a Protestant version of Northern Ireland history. In dominant metanarratives
12 of the Protestant community the historical victory of King William in The Battle of
13 Boyne is made a key feature as a history of colonization. It is the Battle of Boyne that
14 British Protestant identity bases its mythology of origin and visualizes in the orange
15 colour of the Order. Similarly with Irish national identity, religious and political
16 identification in British discourse of the Troubles are closely intersected, and even for
17 the analysis might be hardly separated. Belonging to the Protestant Presbyterian Church
18 as it might be seen from the data plays an important role in constructing identity in the
19 novels. The place is conceptualized via demonstrating the dominance of Protestant
20 spatial dimension in the novels over minority Catholic community and shows the power
21 which Protestants had in the conflict.
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37 **Construction strategies** apply positive self-representation (See Appendix 1):

- 38 • *decent* Protestants (v, 15)
- 39
- 40 • The Ulsterman is *a decent chap* (v, 16)
- 41
- 42 • *inoffensive and interdenominational parade* of Junior Orange Lodges (v, 21)
- 43
- 44
- 45

46 Being stoic (masculine) and patriotic is an important part of British Protestantism
47 which is proved by several examples from the texts. Discursively it realized in
48 exclamatory constructions and proclamation of continuity (See Appendix 1):
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4 • *Leave Ireland at a time like this! At the very moment when one must stand firm!*
5
6 only yesterday his property had been abused; .. the guilty party must be found
7
8 and punished! (i, 398)
9
- 10
11 • (while watching on TV signing Good Friday Agreement) Does that mean we are
12 something else now? – *What we are is what we've always been*, wee love.
13
14 Doesn't matter how much they tinker. The ordinary people had nothing before
15
16 Stormont, they'd nothing under Stormont, and they've had no more since (ix,
17
18 165)
19
- 20
21 • These (blowing statues of British soldiers and statesmen) were acts of
22
23 cowardice. *Let the Sinners fight openly if they must, man to man! This sort of*
24
25 *cowardice must not be allowed* to prevail ... skulking in ambush behind hedges,
26
27 blowing up statues ... Had there been one, even one, *honest-to-God battle*
28
29 *during the whole course of the rebellion?* Not a single trench had been dug,
30
31 except perhaps for seed potatoes, in the whole of Ireland! (reference to the
32
33 World War I) *Did the Sinn Feiners deserve the name of men?* (i, 384)
34
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37 Unification and solidarity are constructed in the discourse via myth of origin (See
38
39 Appendix 1):
40

- 41
42 • *Ireland's history ... the history of Presbyterian Church in Ireland, a model of harmony*
43
44 *and decorum in comparison* (ix, 117)
45
- 46 • *Our freedom is founded upon Our Protestant Faith* (v, 16)
47
- 48 • *Our Province ... is based upon the Protestant Faith. That is what our Fathers fought*
49
50 *for. That is what King William fought the Boyne for* (v, 120)
51

52 Negative construction of national identity is realized by means of negative attribution
53
54 and demonstrating negative uniqueness (See Appendix 1):
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- a slightly *mad old English gentleman* who drank too much whisky and *raved about the loss of Ireland* (i, 432)
- the undergraduates were absolutely delighted with Edward's outburst and were thinking: *What a perfectly splendid old Tory! What a rare find!* (i, 410)

Threat imposed by Catholic community due to beginning social turmoil makes protagonists (Protestant community) demonstrate the state of being in dangerous conditions in their discursive practices (See Appendix 1):

- There are no innocent people in Ireland these days, Major. If *you put on a uniform like this you'll find that everyone's our enemy*. ... If any of you are *brave enough to be seen with a man in a uniform of the Crown* perhaps you'd care to come out to the seminary with me. I'm afraid that the Sinners are using your miracle to do some rabble-rousing with. *It's a strange feeling to be in the middle of a crowd of innocent people, Major, any of whom may instantly become a hero by pulling a gun from his pocket and shooting you in the back without fear of being caught'* (i, 268)
- The trouble will go on, truce or not. You can tell it will. You can feel it. *We can't be protected* ... (Protestant protagonist about social unrest at the beginning of the twentieth century (xviii, 9))

Deconstruction strategies in British Protestant discourse are aimed at demonstrating the reduction in the status, or even contempt to a Catholic community, realized through metaphors of dirtiness (See Appendix 1):

- *such vileness is allowed to pollute the streets of our Protestant City* (v, 11)

Conceptualizing of space being a critical content category for both discourses in construction of British identity together with the pride for industrial and economic

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2
3
4 success achieved in some territories (primarily in Victorian Belfast) identify the feeling
5
6 of deaf and being out of space initiated by civil unrest in the beginning of the twentieth
7
8 century (See Appendix 1).
9

- 10
11 • This is *no place for the likes of you ... You must leave Ireland, leave Kilnalough,*
12 *it's no place at all for a British gentlemen like you.* Clear yourself out of here,
13
14 bag and baggage, before it's too late! (I, 239)
15
16
17 • All this happened because I'm here. Because *I'm an English wife at Lahardane*
18 *(xvii, 7)*
19
20 • *The nature of the house, the possession of land* even though it had dwindled, the
21 *family's army connection,* would have been enough to bring the trouble in the
22
23 night (xviii, 7)
24
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27

28 **Strategies of justification (legitimation)** are employed in problematic situation or
29 while narrating about difficult events (See Appendix 1):
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- 32
33 • A man was murdered. *These people have to be taught a lesson. ... they're all the*
34 *same.* They laugh behind their hands when one of our chaps is killed. (i, 245)
35
36
37 • the way they've (Catholics) *ruined life in this country I sometimes feel I'd*
38 *welcome a holocaust. Since they want destruction, give it to them. I'd like to see*
39 *everything smashed and in ruins so that they really taste what destruction means*
40
41 (i; 218)
42
43
44
45

46 **Delegitimation** strategies are applied to discursively construct weakness and
47 defeatism of the protagonist (See Appendix 1)
48
49

- 50
51 • ... the Major was *at his most despondent.* Above all, *he took a gloomy view of*
52 *the reprisals at Balbriggan and elsewhere. The result of this degeneration of*
53 *British justice could only be chaotic. Once an impartial and objective justice*
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4 *was abandoned every faction in Ireland*, every person in Ireland, was free to
5
6 invent his own version of it (i, 243)
7

- 8 • Her father was a weak and frightened man. She had the measure of her father.
9
10 She had read the weakness and fear in his eyes when he was hitting her. His
11 eyes were appalled by what his hands were doing. How have you come to this?
12 they were asking. (That the prisons of Northern Ireland were full of weak and
13 frightened men then was no excuse. No coincidence, perhaps, but no excuse
14 either (ix, 259).
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22 Linguistic construction of identity through a specific choice of vocabulary,
23 reproducing the accent in the novels in a full range needs a more careful examination
24 and is beyond the scope of my study but mentioning some examples will give the
25 general idea of construction of the identity by the selection of collocations, choice of
26 toponyms ('Ulster'/'North', 'Londonderry'/'Derry') and phonetic spelling (See
27 Appendix 1):
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- 34 • It was funny, Cal thought, how Protestants were '*staunch*' and Catholics
35 '*fervent*' (vi, 81).
36
37
38 • a staunch Unionist (i, 289)
39
40
41 • *A Northern Irish voice. ... it's the way I tell them. ... this Belfast accent. A*
42 *stigma turned distinction* (ix , 1)
43
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45

46 Analysis shows that pronoun 'we' is used in several ways, namely to identify
47 primary or family identity: 'But since we (as a family) had cousins in gaol for being in
48 the IRA, we were a marked family had to be careful.'(xii; 27), but at the same time 'we'
49 might refer to a national or religious community: 'We had only the fifteenth of August
50 bonfires; it was a church festival but we made it into a political one as well, to answer
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4 the fires of the twelfth.’ (xii; 33) compare: ‘We must recognize the irrelevance of our
5
6 internal difference in face of the demands of world history’ (xii, 81).
7
8

9 *Discussion*

10
11 In the texts written by the nation national identity is conceptualized on the basis of
12
13 content categories meaningful for this nation. Several categories (historical past of the
14
15 nation, its language, culture and religion) are typical of national identity representation
16
17 in the broad meaning of this word, but may vary in the way they are interpreted in the
18
19 discourse of a particular nation. The Irish political history is represented in the national
20
21 mentality and for decades had been reproduced in different forms of public discourse
22
23 including literature.
24
25

26
27 In the novels considered unionist or nationalist discourses refer to different
28
29 significant historical events, in such a way, the victory of Protestants in Battle of the
30
31 Boyne, is an important landmark for both Protestants and Catholics, but for the
32
33 Protestant community it is a moment of triumph of King Willy, while for Catholics – a
34
35 reminder of a humiliating defeat of Jacob II.
36
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38
39 In the Troubles novels the Irish identification is constructed on the basis of
40
41 suppressive political history, belonging to Catholic community and through a strong
42
43 association with the spatial dimension of a respective community. Colonization and
44
45 later partition victimized the nation which is reconstructed aesthetically in the literary
46
47 discourse in the image of the nation suppressed but fighting for the freedom.
48

49
50 Irish national identity is based on the idea of victimization and unique negative past
51
52 of the nation is reconstructed in public discourse. Examples of positive self-
53
54 representation in the construction of the Irish identity in the Troubles novels are quite
55
56 rare in contrast to numerous references to being victimized. Irish national identity is
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4 built in binary oppositions – Protestant – Catholic, Republican – Unionist, Sinn Fein –
5
6 Orange Order, IRA – UVF etc. Obviously, a real political situation was much more
7
8 complicated, more diverse and nuanced but I suggest that to show adversarial processes
9
10 of the Troubles and to reveal the communal strife writers reduce political background to
11
12 a simplified scheme intentionally.
13

14
15 As Wodak suggests, macro-level strategies, used to form national identity in the
16
17 discourse, are used with different degree of intention and determine the choice of
18
19 linguistic means which take part in the formation of national identity (Wodak, 2009: 32-
20
21 35). Data collected allows to specify strategies implemented in the novels, and the result
22
23 differs in a great degree from what can be found in public discourse, the most
24
25 significant difference being identified with the official speech of politicians. In novels
26
27 radically less number of strategies was detected; constructing, destructing and the
28
29 strategies of justification utterly dominate in the texts of the novels. One of the possible
30
31 explanations of the fact may be found in the nature of the literary discourse per se, since
32
33 the task of the writer is reconstructing natural discourse and natural rhetoric of the
34
35 conflict, nevertheless the preference is given to less formal means reflecting the conflict
36
37 aspiration on the interpersonal ‘neighbourhood’ level, common hostility, prejudice, and
38
39 discrimination. Thus, narrating on behalf of the protagonist in the form of the diary or
40
41 memoir the writer is seriously limited in the means of discursive realization of national
42
43 identity. Destructive strategies focus on disparaging the existing national identity
44
45 construct (Wodak, 2009), these strategies are implemented via ironic or even sarcastic
46
47 tone and these strategies, as a rule, are primarily exploited by novels which proclaim
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49 liberal values over national.
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4 The space in the Troubles novel is insular but vulnerable owing to social violence; it
5 is limited by strict borders fixed by Protestant and Catholic communities themselves,
6 which not only establish these borders physically, but agree to keep to them in their
7 social life. This strong aspiration of belonging to the space makes them protect their
8 space furiously from any external intrusion regardless the status and authority of the
9 intruder - the British Army, police or 'boys' of the other conflicting community.
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17 **Conclusion**

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20 Unique characteristics which define each society in opposition to others are crucial
21 factors of identification of members of this society. The issue of Irish identity is
22 problematic due to Irish difficult political and social history: the nation was colonized
23 and lived in oppressive social conditions for long; it spoke the language of colonizers
24 (typically mentioned when it comes to it as Irish English, Hiberno-English and Anglo-
25 Irish). These historical, political and religious factors of social life in Northern Ireland
26 created ground for appearing of novels aimed at asking difficult identity questions.
27 Many of them express the search for the origins, they are 'detective stories' in a sense
28 protagonists build a coherent history of their life out of Irish history which often comes
29 in bits and pieces of truth, myths and stereotypes.
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42 Colonization of settlement in Northern Ireland had a serious impact on creating
43 identity resulting in the most central idea of Irishness expressed in the Troubles novels –
44 being victimized. This idea organizes all levels of narration and poetic devices. Content
45 analysis shows the hierarchical order of topics discussed with the obvious dominance of
46 the idea being under pressure: the novels give examples of political and social
47 dominance of the Protestant majority of population, even belonging to the Irish Catholic
48 community in opposition to belonging to the Protestant one is not the a religious
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4 question but a political one. The place is conceptualized as very cramped, limited to a
5
6 small Catholic estates and often intervened by the British Army and police represents
7
8 the general idea of the Troubles novels – The Irish Catholics being oppressed.
9

10
11 The identity concept in novels is totally influenced by the author's intention explicit
12
13 and implicit in the text. The author selects most significant topics to be discussed and
14
15 builds the hierarchical structure according to priorities given to different content
16
17 categories. Literary construction of national identity in the Troubles novels is
18
19 complicated, and a broad variety of means portrays the protagonists as representatives
20
21 of the Irish or British.
22

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45 46 47 48 **Appendix 1**

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- 53 iii. J. Barlow *Both Homes* (1970)
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- 55 iv. M. Gallie *You are Welcome to Ulster!* (1970)
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4 v. M. Waddell A Little Bit British (1970)
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6 vi. B. MacLavery Cal (1983)
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8 vii. J. McGahern Amongst Women (1990)
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10 viii. C. Toibin The Heather Blazing (1992)
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12 ix. G.Patterson Fat Lad (1992)
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14 x. M.Costello Titanic Town (1992)
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16 xi. P. McCabe The Butcher Boy (1992)
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18 xii. S.Deane Reading in the Dark (1996)
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20 xiii. R.McLiam Wilson Eureka Street (1996)
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22 xiv. D.Maiden One by One in the Darkness (1996)
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24 xv. B. MacLavery Grace Notes (1997)
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28 xvii. G.Patterson The International (1999)
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30 xviii. W.Trevor The Story of Lucy Gault (2002)
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32 xix. B. MacLavery The Anatomy School (2002)
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34 xx. D. McNicholl A Son Called Gabriel (2004)
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