ARTICLE
SPECIAL ISSUE

Borders in Globalization Review
Volume 6, Issue 1 (Fall & Winter 2024): 27–36
https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr61202421664

Living in the Time of the State: Border Temporalities in the Northern Irish Borderlands

Dorte Jagetic Andersen *

In dialogue with Sarah Green's concepts of "traces" and "tidemarks", as well as a notion of "storytelling", and Michel de Certeau's allusion to "ghosts", I revisit the Irish borderlands more than 20 years after the Good Friday Agreement. I show how everyday life in these borderlands (still) locates in border temporalities articulated as the continual drawing of lines, deeply embedding what I call "the time of the state". The lines of division and belonging narrate in relation to two periods of time: the Troubles and the island's British imperial past, appearing materially in the landscape and cityscapes with an ever-present rearticulation of physical divisions by walls and fences and related symbolism, informing and ordering everyday practice. In these borderlands it is not just the popular storytelling about the conflicts that survives, but also a multiplicity of practices associated with them, dividing the population and turning the landscape ghostlike as supposedly past conflicts continue to haunt the everyday lives of people living there.

Keywords: Northern Ireland; traces of lines; tidemarks; ghostly traces; practice-oriented approach.

One of the hitherto most common ways of understanding border temporalities in border studies is found in what Sharon Macdonald has referred to as "the memory complex" (2013). In literature on memories, bordering processes and practices are often understood as inherently related to heritage-making (Stoklosa 2019; Andersen & Prokkola 2021). This link between geopolitics and heritage-making has been emphasized through the ways that Western state powers have used narratives of heritage to justify and solidify the existence and locations of state borders (Paasi 1999). National heritage in particular plays a significant role in these bordering processes and practices, and the focus has been on states and other geopolitical actors enacting borders in the modern Western heritage-tradition (ibid.; Prokkola & Lois 2016).

What is rarely done, however, is relating the memory-heritage complex to critical border studies and its approach to bordering in the context of everyday life practices. Instead of focusing foremost on official national heritage-making in its relation to bordering processes and practices, the issue here would be to slightly change perspectives away from the focus on what is normally understood as political memory (Assmann 2006), and instead understand how everyday life and "ordinary citizens" are integral to the memory-heritage complex. In comparison to authorized heritage-making, this way of approaching border temporalities would open up understandings of temporalities that are not necessarily progressive and chronological but rather layered so that different temporalities can be lived simultaneously, and sometimes in struggle with one another.

* **Dorte Jagetic Andersen**, Phd, Department of Political Science and Public Management, University of Southern Denmark. Email: doa@sam.sdu.dk

Bordering in Northern Ireland provides an excellent case for illustrating such an understanding of border temporalities. Here, borders are not just visible in the cultural and natural landscape because of state practice and official heritage-making. What is felt in Northern Ireland is how border temporalities matter for almost every actor in society and almost everyone is involved in bordering, constantly (re)enacting a materially present and symbolic landscape that recalls the presence of borders at the core of everyday and societal life. Border temporalities are also materially put on display in the city- and townscapes, where brick walls and murals remind spectators of more troubled times and red, white, and blue line-painting on pavements marks out unionist residential areas (see Figure 1). In other words, people both remind and are reminded of "the time of state borders" in multiple ways in these parts.

In this article, I will use the example of Northern Ireland to illustrate how borders can be part and parcel of everyday life in temporal form. Hence, this article asks how the everyday discourse and practices of people living in the Northern Irish borderlands invoke the border as a line of division, particularly in the present day, 20 years after the Good Friday peace agreement. In other words, it asks how the line keeps (re) appearing, despite the many attempts to move beyond it, involving a vast number of actors since the peace agreement (McCall 2014). Moreover, this article will also take into consideration how Brexit has contributed to the everyday practicing of the "eternal return of the border".

Apart from understanding the temporalities of everyday bordering in the memory complex, the more specific tools used in this analysis are, as inspired by Sarah Green, the notions of "traces" and "tidemarks" (2018). I propose relating these concepts to "storytelling"—a practice which is crucial in the Irish context—as well as understanding lines on maps as "ghosts" (de Certeau 1985), haunting and ordering otherwise messy everyday practices. Obviously, the terms trace, tidemark, and ghost indicate a focus on temporalities, yet the choice of analytical tools came about because these words can help us understand how timely processes can be expressed in the present and as spatial practice. The underlying argument is that only by connecting temporalities with their spatial and practical manifestations may we even begin to understand how precarious borders can be, particularly because of how cemented the idea of "the line" can be among borderland populations and, accordingly, how easy it is to stir up memories of "the line".

The article first introduces key conceptual tools for the reader to understand how the inner Irish border is approached, both as symbolic materializations and as spatial imagination informed by memories of conflict and imperial legacy. Following this conceptual clarification is a dialogue based on empirical findings.

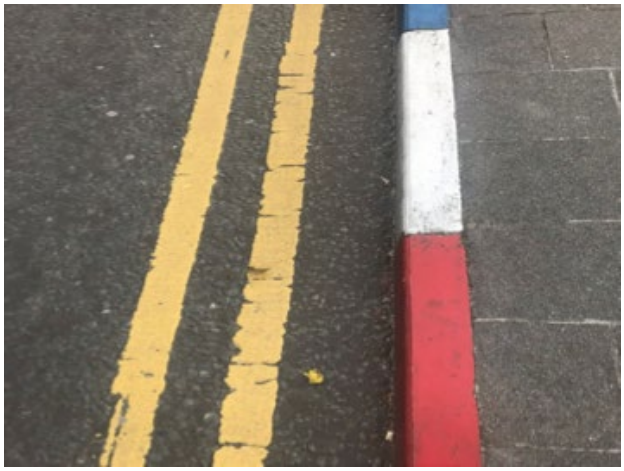

Figure 1: Pavement Edges are Often Painted Red, White, and Blue in Northern Irish Unionist Neighbourhoods. Photo source: the author.

The notions of traces and tidemarks, storytelling, and finally the line-as-ghost concepts help us, step by step, reach a deeper understanding of the importance of lines in everyday lives in the borderlands. This will invite us into a universe of mapping and ordering of everyday movements and interactions where versions of temporal borders are multiple, intersecting, and combatting each other.

The Eternal Return of the Line

Despite this article's focus on temporalities, its more fundamental inspiration comes from work by critical border scholars who approach borders as performance and practice. These scholars have gone to great lengths to convince the border scholar community to move beyond the more traditional Western notion of borders as "lines in the sand" (Parker & Vaughan-Williams 2009). As a result of this, they rarely focus directly on temporal aspects of bordering dynamics, instead asking questions about how borders matter in the here and now for a variety of actors so as to avoid appropriating a purely state-centred perspective as the point of departure for their empirical investigations (van Houtum et al. 2005; Rumford 2008; Andersen & Sandberg 2012; Brambilla 2015). In its immediacy, the practice-oriented approach is not designed to capture more complex temporal processes, and one often finds an emphasis on "new" and "postmodern" forms of bordering among critical border scholars (Balibar 2002; Rumford 2012; Green 2016). The critical gaze entails a moving beyond the perspective of the modern border regime where the hegemonic power of the state in instituting borders is essential, thereby also relativizing the importance of the modern state's chronologically ordered notion of time.

Hence, to (re)connect the practice-oriented field of border research with questions of temporalities

helps to recognize that there remains a necessity of considering borders as lines drawn by states in geographical landscapes. One of the obvious routes to such (re)connecting is the public imaginary, because the idea of borders as lines drawn on maps by states, however outdated it may be in parts of the scholarly community, does resonate with the public imaginary in a very powerful way. This is also to say that even when the state border is, or has to a large extent become, physically absent in the European context, it may remain important in people's lives because of how images, memories, and symbols related to it are evoked in and play a role in everyday life.

One of the few practice-oriented border scholars to capture the complexity of the relationship between temporal and spatial bordering processes in their work is Sarah Green. In the article "Lines, Traces and Tidemarks" (2018), she emphasizes how borders appear in temporal form as traces of lines. As a trace, the line becomes the lack, or that which is no longer, yet it is replaced by something else providing tangible, often material, evidence of the existence of the absent, invisible line (ibid., 77). The trace is thus a material remnant of something which once was, and even when it is clearly reductive to confine the ontological reality of borders to that of geographical and physically visible dividing lines between states, borders do appear in people's minds in the form of such lines, often resembling those drawn on maps by states. Carrying out police checks in airports, or the remaining presence of customs buildings that are no longer in use at geographical borders, can be read by people as lines on the map. This happens exactly because of the absent presence of state borders as enduring marks.

Yet, whereas the geometrical line normally associated with borders on maps is spatial, the term trace adds the dimension of time. As a trace, the line is not just cutting through space: it is referring to a past that is present in the everyday life of the here and now. Appropriating Massey's notion of "a simultaneity of stories-so-far" (2005, 12)—a concept that captures how different times, practices, aspirations, and failures together condition the possibilities of future practices—Green manages to illustrate how multiple lines can take form, either simultaneously or as one replacing the other, indicating how lines are not endowed with uniform meaning but are endlessly (re)defined. As such, "[b] order-ness concerns where things have got to so far, in the multiple, unpredictable, power-inflected, imagined, overlapping, and visceral way in which everyday life tends to occur" (Green 2018, 81). What Green thereby opens up is an understanding of temporalities that is layered and complex, rather than sorted into periods, and where many times live together simultaneously. This understanding of temporalities is practical in the sense that time becomes something people actively do, and thus more than just the Kantian "inner intuition", or a background foil that orders events.

However, to understand the importance of temporalities in the Northern Irish context, we need to return lived time (the mapping/bordering) to the time of maps, the time of borders, and understand how the two are deeply entangled and intertwined. Combining his distinction of space (the map) and place (the mapping) with that of time, de Certeau states that:

> History [with a capital H] begins at ground level, with footsteps. […] Of course, the walking process can be marked out on urban maps in such a way as to translate its traces (*here* heavy, *there* very light) and its trajectories (*this* way, not *that*). However, these curves, ample or meagre, refer, like words, only to the lack of what has gone by. Traces of a journey lose what existed: *the act of going by* itself. The action of going, of wandering, or of 'window shopping'—in other words, the activity of passers-by—is transposed into points that create a totalizing and reversible line on the map. (1985, 129, emphasis in original)

When the human imagination orders time and space into recognizable and stable patterns like that of chronological time or the world of lines on maps, then the acts of connecting events—cutting across time and drawing lines on maps (dis)connecting contained spaces—themselves become absent traces; the mapping of time and space is no longer something we do, and the map is thereby also a trace of the mapping. This double movement implies that traces may remind us, simultaneously, of the map itself and of the actions that made the map. The double movement is, as we shall see, important in the Northern Irish case because it makes for different readings of traces and competing temporalities.

Tracing Lines

Having introduced the analytical approach of this article, it is time to enter the Northern Irish borderlands. To be able to take the reader there, I rely on fieldwork conducted in June and August 2019, mainly in the town of (London) Derry, located 15 kilometers from the state border between the Irish Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The fieldwork was undertaken as part of a broader investigation into the effects of Brexit on borders in the United Kingdom (UK), and it was only by comparison between the four UK countries—Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, and Wales—that those temporalities proved themselves so central to the Northern Irish case. To supplement the limited fieldwork done in Northern Ireland, this article engages with other ethnographically based literature, as well as additional material such as newspaper articles and TV documentaries on the inner Irish border, which provide examples that span the entire region.

In Northern Ireland, it is hard to ignore the traces of lines in the sand. This might seem paradoxical, considering how the physical borderline between the United

Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland is almost invisible: driving by car in these borderlands, it takes a keen eye to recognize when one is in the UK or in the Republic. Unlike in other British colonies, on the island of Ireland the line was drawn with an eye to past lines, thus following administrative divisions between counties from the 16th and 17th centuries where local interests and ownerships played a role in such line-drawing, making for a very long and curved borderline criss-crossing a large number of roads and not making much sense economically or in terms of social relations at the time when it was drawn (Ferriter 2019). The location of the state border has been almost invisible since the Good Friday Agreement, as it was before "the Troubles" (the name often used for the conflict that took place from approximately 1969 until the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, a period when Northern Ireland was influenced by civil war-like conflicts between the British Army and Republican militants operating on both sides of the border). In other words, the only period when the border has been visible, as in controlled and physically present as a borderline in the natural landscape, was when the situation in the entire territory of Northern Ireland was heavily militarized. The memory of borders in these parts is thus inevitably tainted by the memory of violent conflict.

Yet, despite the invisibility and violent connotations of the border, the dividing lines between "the two sides of the house"—an expression commonly used for the Republican and Unionist parts of the population—are certainly not kept hidden in the part of the island belonging to the United Kingdom. In fact, quite the opposite. In Belfast, we find the sites that constitute the most well-known physical markers of the Troubles: walls and gates that literally separate Protestant and Catholic working-class areas (Murtagh 1995; Nagle 2009). Walls and other material signs of division are everywhere in Northern Ireland. When I engaged in a conversation about Brexit and its effects on Northern Ireland, one interlocutor from (London)Derry found it important to mention that there are more than 40 walls dividing neighbourhoods (conversation X). While in (London) Derry, I confronted several such walls and murals, as well as other markers indicating who lives where in the city. There is a gate to get into the area in the centre of town known as "The Fountain", where Unionists live, and the gate closes at night (see Figure 2). It is not easy for outsiders like me to decipher the signs of division, yet their spectral presence is constantly felt. Even the individual person's choice of how to refer to the town—Derry or Londonderry—is indicative of lines of division: "[t]he divided nature of the city is encapsulated in the very act of naming it, where one's subject position is assumed to be articulated in the choice to use either 'Derry' or 'Londonderry'" (Diez & Howard 2008, 62).

These divisions have been important for decades, not only for Northern Irish identity-politics but for the very sense of belonging: "[f]or Catholics, Protestants are an enduring presence, however absent they may be from their immediate physical surroundings, homes and neighbourhoods" (Kelleher 2003, x). It is so hard to avoid the line, because being "who you are" involves "both sides of the house" and, despite 20 years of peace and conflict amelioration programmes (McCall 2014), the colours of murals memorializing the Troubles have not faded (euronews 2019; Armstrong et al. 2019).

Recently, the debate around the inner Irish border has been haunted by "lines". Articulated through the notion of "a hard Brexit" and visions of "a hard border", the line which cannot be crossed is evoked by opponents of Brexit to stir fear and by supporters to reassure themselves that they maintain control over territorial matters. However, Brexit cannot be identified as the sole cause for the return of these lines in the sand in recent years: traces have been there all along. Even the peace programmes themselves have been occasion for "one side of the house" to emphasize the line by celebrating the peace process as a victory for their side of the house. I experienced this in (London)Derry's "Bogside", where a small museum—the Museum of Free Derry—has been erected celebrating Republican acts during the Troubles as having been carried out by heroes of a 30 year fight against oppression. The museum's website explains that it "opened in 2007 in order to tell the story of what happened in the city during the period 1968–1972, popularly known as 'Free Derry', and including the civil rights era, Battle of the Bogside, Internment, Bloody Sunday and Operation Motorman" (The Museum of Free Derry n.d.). The exhibit is focused explicitly on the experiences of "one side of the house", and I experienced it as more of a memorial hall than a museum.

On "the other side of the house", the interpretation of events is slightly different, to say the least, and such celebrations of Republican acts of violence are seen as provocations. To underline its side of the story, this side

Figure 2: Sign at the Entrance Gate to the Area in (London)Derry Called the Fountain. Photo credit: Christilla Roederer-Rynning.

of the house still marks out its residential areas with the colours of the UK flag, the Union Jack (Figure 1), and some areas—like the Fountain in (London)Derry—are even protected by walls. The walls and the paint are more than security measures to protect against violent aggression; they are to a far larger extent reminders of the absent presence of the state border. The state border in question is that between Ireland and the United Kingdom, yet, as traces of lines, it reiterates events during two historical (in the modern sense of history) periods: the time of the Troubles, and the British imperial legacy on the island of Ireland. For some inhabitants, the symbolic universe thus serves as a positive reminder of "an imperial presence", supposedly indicating "the centre of power" as well as the line between those who are powerful and those who are not, or have not been. These traces extend back to the 16th and 17th centuries when the British Empire handed the northern part of the island of Ireland over to Scottish settlers. In (London)Derry, references to both British royalty and the Scottish settlers in street names, such as Queen Street and Glasgow Terrace, remain as tangible traces of such lines drawn in and by time. The city planning, with a centrally located square raised above the rest of the town, is also read by some as an absent presence of British state control, like a panopticon or watchtower.

Unionist parts of the population may exhibit the presence of the British empire to prove their belonging, as well as their affinity with "the centre of power". Yet, in the memories of Irish Republicans in the North, the island was for centuries influenced by a repressive system equivalent to the South African apartheid regime. It is no coincidence that Mandela is portrayed as a friend among combatants on murals in Belfast. In the Catholic parts of (London)Derry, traces include references to the civil rights movements of the late 1960s, mainly the struggle for equal rights among races in the US, a theme which is also strongly represented in the Museum of Free Derry. Traces of empire are thus also found in traces of solidarity with those populations around the world who were colonized and fought (and are fighting) for liberation: Palestinians, Catalans, Black Americans, and so on. Hence, as is the case with borders on maps, these traces of lines are working to order an otherwise messy reality: "[t]he act of cutting in the case of border might even be called an effort at performativity: to declare that the difference between here and not-here is a particular kind of thing (e.g. a nation [...])" (Green 2018, 75). The line, understood as the trace of borders on the map, is called upon to put things in their right place (this side of the house, not the other), performatively carve out distinctions (in or out, us or them, this or the other side of the house), and categorize according to identity and belonging (Republican, not Unionist).

Even when the trace itself can attain material presence through people's imaginations, the absence it recalls is "an irreducible absence within the presence of the trace", as Green puts it (ibid., 77). The notion of the trace thereby helps us understand how lines drawn on maps can appear in material form, despite their lack of physical presence, because of human imagination making them present. Additionally, it helps us understand how lines do not necessarily appear where we most expect them: "the sources of the distinctions that borders mark (the differences that make a difference) are not condensed into an abstract line at the edge of a place but are located elsewhere" (Green 2016, 587). This is the reason why a divide generating hate and fear in the Northern Irish borderlands, thus necessitating walls to keep people separate, can be part of everyday life—even when everyday life is rather peaceful and traces only live on because people imagine them to do so.

Mapping Time

Peace talks and the reconciliation process have certainly made life easier in Northern Ireland, as I was told by one interlocutor, and violent and aggressive conflict is no longer the order of the day in the everyday life of contemporary (London)Derry. Yet, according to the interlocutor, it remains necessary to lock the gate to the physically marked enclave of the Protestant residents because they otherwise risk being attacked by local gangs, those composed of youngsters who take the role of the new dissidents of the community upon themselves, thus carrying on the legacy of their ancestors. In most parts of the world, such gangs and their vandalism would not translate into a geopolitical conflict. In Northern Ireland, they do (conversation XIII). Traces of absent conflict here make local youngsters relive past experiences, performing them into being (The Guardian 2019), each thereby learning to understand the other, their motives, and their intentions. Youngsters who never experienced the Troubles learn to live in "a divided house" and soon begin uttering threats, such as "[s]tay away from me, because if you do not, you risk your life" (conversation XI).

When I tried to discuss Brexit with interlocutors, the stories quickly centred on a possible return of conflict and violence. Most seem to remember militant borders and report being afraid of their return. What people recall may not be actual militarized borders, yet residents almost inevitably recall a range of stories connected to that image. Talking to people, I felt how the fear of "the return of the line" is a fear of what they have heard about conflict and violence, and their narratives recall the Good Friday Agreement as an event splitting their reality into a "before" and an "after". As I was constantly reminded when mentioning Brexit, this was all "not very long ago", and "the word border [therefore] means something very different here than it does anywhere else" (conversation XI). I clearly sensed how the line has become seared into people's memories, reminding them of the time before the Good Friday Agreement as

one of armed British troops in their streets, of militant bombings, of hatred and sectarian sentiments, and not least of how difficult life was here because the conflicts destroyed the communities, socially and financially: "[i]f it gets worse and people becomes more desperate, then radicalism could return" (conversation X).

Green also uses the metaphor "tidemarks" for the marks left by traces. As she explains:

> Tidemark also retains a sense of line—or rather, multiple lines—in the sense of connection and relation, in the sense of movement and trajectory, and in the sense of marking differences that make a difference, at least for a moment. Most of all, tidemark combines space and historical time, and envisages both space and time as being lively and contingent. [...] the word 'tidemark' refers to both the material thing and the epistemology used to measure it, to define it as a mark left by the tide. It is that combination of material and epistemological within a deeply spatial logic, that I am trying to capture here. (Green 2018, 81)

Read as tidemark, the line is not just an absent presence from the past: it turns into a space of subjectivity and movement, of crossing, dwelling, and becoming.

Watchtowers around the border are a good example of traces as tidemarks. During the Troubles, there were well over 200 border crossings, official and unofficial, with the main ones having army-fortified checkpoints. Border control posts in Republican strongholds like Crossmaglen were sitting targets for IRA attacks, death-traps for the police and the British Army. Hence, when a new tidal wave like Brexit hits and the customs posts reappear, suspicion is raised. Some areas previously used by the British military to control borders were cleared around the time of the first Brexit deadline, causing concern to local inhabitants (euronews 2019). The local police have also been explicit about not wanting anything that looks like the physical infra-structure of control at the border, as it could trigger a stronger resistance to authority than they experience today, which could then easily make it the target of Republican groups once again (ibid.).

I felt the presence of tidemarks in the central square in (London)Derry. The square provides a position of overview across the city and its lines of division: from here, one sees both the closer, central parts including the Fountain, traditionally occupied by Protestants, as well as the lowlands including the Bogside, occupied by Catholics. The square is thus constructed as a panopticon, a place from where it is possible to watch and thus objectify the movements of people: "Catholics, like Protestants, were made objects in the town, interpellated not only by the forces of the state but also by the force of their own communities' ideologies. Dependent on the relations of time, space and place, the ground changed under their feet" (Kelleher 2003, 9). Reading this central square as a tidemark, it becomes a physical reminder not only of "the place of the state" but of layer upon layer of stories about the division of houses, as well as the dangers involved in crossing over to the other side. Kelleher describes the power of such spatial representation in relation to the city that he fictitiously named Ballybogoin: "[i]n deciphering the square, they took up local discourses of Irish nationalism, a powerful agency in contemporary Northern Ireland, and these practices, for better or for worse, made historical agents out of them" (ibid., 9).

Tidemarks play a role in how temporalities become mapped. The ever-present line-drawing orders and stabilizes everyday practices in Northern Ireland in accordance with specific readings of past events, preconditioning the survival of the two sides of the house. Temporalities, as in constantly relived lines, thereby become essential for how people move and interact. As Kelleher states with reference to the colonial past: "[i]n contemporary Ballybogoin, this colonizing/decolonizing axis works on a variety of levels and across social and cultural differences. It influences how people locate themselves in their social worlds and how they form relationships with others" (2003, 31). Even today daily life feels confined by temporalities. According to a local inhabitant of (London)Derry, "[e]ven when I have lived here 22 years, there are areas that I have never been to. There are places in Derry I have never been, I have never walked in" (conversation XI). The Troubles may well be in the past, and everyday life may be peaceful, yet, even for an outsider such as myself, memories of another life are felt everywhere and there is no way of avoiding them: neighbourhoods are colour-coded along sectarian lines; walls separate Protestants from Catholics; gates are locked at night; youngsters' relationships are formed by division.

Telling Lines in Time

Tidemarks never come in singular form, they are made by the motion of waves that keep returning, erasing previous tidemarks and leaving new marks in the sand. As Davies (1996, 9) says, history comes in the form of "tidal waves", the ebbs and flows of which have varied according to changing historical contexts. In the case of Northern Ireland, it is not only one side of the house that makes an imprint on the other side; we are talking about the kind of tidal waves where both sides are making continuous imprints on each other because both sides work hard to erase the marks made by the other, thus moving back and forth in continuing (non)dialogue. In this way, tidemarks are layers of multiple marks, and their reappearance depends more on the strength of the wave than on the essential characteristics of the tidemark itself.

The waves producing tidemarks in Northern Ireland are connected to a way of life that is very important there, namely that of telling stories. According to Keller:

> This 'ocular strategy of ghettoization', as Feldman names it, has continued in Northern Ireland during the last thirty years of ongoing political violence, through the practice of telling [...] Telling requires the reading and typifying of bodies through a visual imaginary, and it marks others as strangers or friends, as victims and possible aggressors, or as coreligionists and possible colleagues and defenders. (2003, 34)

Telling is an everyday practice used to justify sectarian violence (ibid., 35) or to ask a job applicant where they went to school (ibid., 34). Telling also includes historical accounts, such as the story of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, a 16th and 17th century Gaelic leader who, like many of his fellow countrymen, lost power under the British throne and fled to Spain. Telling says that O'Neill escaped into tunnels underneath (London) Derry, despite no one ever finding these tunnels. Irish nationalists still believe the tunnels will be revealed when Ireland is finally freed from the British.

As opposed to the significance of telling for the Irish nationalists, the British perception of telling was, throughout the 20th century, that of lying: "[y]et, the Irish lie and lie they do with admirable touches of wit and ingenuity. Add to that the normal defensiveness of the peasant, a folk Catholic moral code that is quite 'soft' on lying, and a lack of tolerance for overt acts of aggression, and you have the very strong propensity to 'cod'" (Scheper-Hughes 1982, 12). In that the Irish story is considered untrue, or at best a distorted version of the truth, it became the job of the British to tell the "real" version of the story. The "true" story is thus the British story told on top of Irish stories, leaving the British story as (yet another) tidemark erasing the Irish story, only for it to be erased by yet another lie, and so truth and lie are in continuous "conversation".

For Northern Irish Republicans, traces of lines thus also involve the efforts of an imperial power to erase, not just the stories of repression, but, more profoundly, the very history of one part of the population—one side of the house—and thus, at least symbolically, lines are meant to erase the very existence of the Irish Catholic population in Northern Ireland. This involves a reiteration of stereotypical representations in known imperial power-relations or, as Hall expresses it, "[p]ower, it seems, has to be understood here, not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural and symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way—within a certain regime of representation" (Hall 1977, 259). As Kelleher says about his Irish Republican interlocutors: "[t]hese local Catholics represented the British state actions as having displaced them in space and time" (2003, 13). When the talk in the light of Brexit is of Westminster forgetting about Northern Ireland, it tells a story of erasure with multiple layers, told in traces of an imperial presence and of the Troubles—for instance, in the cityscape with its street names and the names of localities, with its walls and fences, including the many possibilities of re-telling. Yet, it is also a story about telling itself, a story about the tradition of "lying" and about who "owns the truth". Telling thereby intertwines with the warning to "watch yourself" against those who are not from your "side of the house". The name for the initial stages of this awareness and the practices of "watching yourself" is, tellingly, called "telling" in Northern Ireland: "[t]elling, a practice carried out by both Catholics and Protestants, refers to reading the bodies of strangers to tell whether they are Catholic or Protestant" (Kelleher 2003, 12).

As part of the peace effort in the Irish border region, the invocation of history was made a major issue and many cross-border projects involved attempts to reach mutual understandings of the past (McCall 2014; Armstrong et al. 2019). By adopting a more cosmopolitan outlook focusing on complexities, historical remnants were to appear less one-sided, thus challenging the binary and conflictual identity configurations. However, because of the multiple traces and tidemarks deeply embedded in everyday life here, these efforts to reconcile the populations have created new arenas for struggle and division. The conflict amelioration and cross-border cooperation landscapes have, in other words, given rise to new lines of division (Diez & Howard 2008; McCall 2014, 84). In struggles over resources and who should be favoured, the sentiment among many Unionists and their organizations is that they were largely left out of the picture, because the main aim was to emancipate the Catholic parts of the population. Regarding language, for instance, the focus was on the revival of Gaelic, and little has been said about the Ulster Scots language (ibid.). Here, it is important to remember that the story of repression and erasure is the story of "one side of the house", and that "the other" does not recognize the same need for telling—at least, not until recently, and in the light of Brexit.

Because Brexit has become yet another addition to the multiplicity of stories "telling lines" and recalling the continued forgetting, ignorance, and neglect of people on the island, this has once again brought up reminders of being left out of the picture. On the one side, the story of "the backstop" (an "emergency solution" whereby the EU agreed with the UK that if no other solution to the Northern Ireland problem could be found, then the UK would stay in the EU Customs Union and Northern Ireland in the EU single market) should ensure that life in the borderland continues as before Brexit, preserving life "as it is" and preventing it from becoming "as it was": Troubled. Here, it is the story of "no border" which offers security to people. On the other side, and perhaps paradoxically, the Unionists in Northern Ireland are forgotten when "the line" is drawn in the waters between the two islands of Great Britain and Ireland (European Commission 2019). The "true story", the British story, is being crushed, so to speak, by its own addition of another

tidal wave turning truth into (yet another) lie. Hence, when locals on both sides of the house feel they are not being taken seriously by Westminster politicians, they recall a long series of tidemarks drawn in the sand by the centre of power. Yet, at the same time, even when the uncertainty accompanying Brexit concerns people across the entirety of Northern Irish society, senses of lines are expressed differently on each side of the house because the stories on either side are different, once again emphasizing lines and divisions.

Telling moves in both its inherent and active forms, as tidemarks are dissolved by yet another wave from the ocean retelling the story, producing another trace to be remembered. Only when read in space do the tidemarks stand out as singular stories carrying the message of divisions in themselves; read in time, stories are multiple and exist simultaneously. Kelleher calls the stories told by Irish Catholics "counter stories", whereby "[t]heir storytelling tactics, some may call them lies, transformed this ground and, if we adhere to de Certeau's terms, made these places into their social spaces" (2004, 7). However, when understood in relation to border dynamics, do the tidal waves of storytelling really counter the stability of the map, or do the stories add to its eternal rewriting, as a constant scratching on the palimpsest (Crang & Travlou 2001)? Or, perhaps more precisely, rather than destroying "the imperial aggressor's" mapping practices, are the stories not supplementing or even reproducing these practices by lines, one on top of the other, thus also making aggressions even more forceful as time passes and stories layer on top of each other?

Living in the Time of the State

Taking the discussion of border temporalities one step further, the case of Northern Ireland provides a powerful illustration of how living in conflict-ridden societies is like living in a map that is constantly being (re)drawn. The line, as in the memory of the border, is present here referring to the time when life was troubled by empire, by border checks, by military presence, by conflict and violence. Even when the line is absent, it is still very present. Temporalities are felt and visibly influence how people move in and talk about places, making and limiting space for themselves and others, providing timely traces with spatial meaning. Derry's physical division between the Fountain and the Bogside is still told as a significant part of everyday life, and, according to several interlocutors, divisions have resurfaced (and deepened) since the Brexit vote (conversation X; conversation XI; conversation XII), but now with shifting connotations because of shifting relations to the centre of power: new layers of stories on top of stories. As one interlocutor expressed it, "[t]hey never stood down, violence was just refocused to internal struggles" (conversation XI).

This is the ghostly power of lines in the sand. Despite their absence, there is seemingly a need for lines telling the populations where things are located when in their rightful place. The trace of the line is reminiscent of an absent (yet lived) past, a spectral presence haunting reality, and as de Certeau tells us, "such ghosts—broken like the sculptures —neither speak nor see" because "[m]emories are what keep us here. … It's personal—not interesting to anyone—but still, in the end what creates the spirit of the neighbourhood" (de Certeau 1985, 143). The past thereby does not disturb the present, it haunts it as a reminder of what it really is at the end of the day: nothing but lines on a map.

It is hard to deny that, in the Northern Irish case, "[e]very site is haunted by countless ghosts that lurk there in silence, to be 'evoked' or not. One inhabits only haunted sites—the opposite of what is set forth in the panopticon" (de Certeau 1985, 143). If state borders are understood as lines on maps that only have reality in this exact way—that is, epistemologically—and on the map, then the case of Northern Ireland illustrates in a very powerful way how reality itself can, at least to some extent, be felt as caught in the map in the ghostly traces of conflict, repression, and injustices. While in (London)Derry, I felt how it was clearly not only the traces reminding me of atrocities of the past as part of contemporary practices that carried significance, as pieces in a museum exhibition. In the interpretations of my interlocutors, I was made aware of how traces also remind of how stories are not to be trusted, and ultimately how reality is not to be trusted. For them, these are ghostly traces of how the lines were made, reminding them of what was and is no longer there. Hence, despite their spectral, almost metaphysical appearance, traces of lines on maps can be endowed with more reality than reality itself for a local population. The epistemological line thereby becomes more real than any reality behind the stories, and thus the simultaneity of stories-so-far overdetermines everyday life, forcing people to live in maps made by themselves across generations.

What I hope to have illustrated is how the linking of temporalities with space and practice is needed if we want to understand the power of the line in the sand, and how the time of the state and the eternal return of the border will probably remain with us at least for some time. Problematizing the link between borders and temporalities in this way turns temporalities of History with a capital H into stories of borders, lines, and divisions, which matters in the here and now because maps continue to order the places people live in and the things they do, no matter how hard they try to do things differently. As expressed by Massey, "all borders are multiple, generated from multiple vantage points—though of course, this does not mean that people are free to imagine border in any way they please: the simultaneity of-stories-so-far, and the entanglement of

relationships and 'power geometries of space' regularly constrain whatever vantage point emerges" (2005, 16). In Northern Ireland, the power geometries of space are preventing a more cosmopolitan outlook on borders (Rumford 2017) because the time of the state continues to haunt the present. This is how the temporalities of the state border have the power to return in multiple spaces and practices to (re)order things, perhaps where and when we least want them to return.

Works Cited

Andersen, Dorte J., and Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola. 2021. "Heritage as Bordering: Heritage Making, Ontological Struggles and the Politics of Memory in the Croatian and Finnish Borderlands" *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 36(3): 405–424. https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2018.1555052

Andersen, Dorte, and Marie Sandberg. 2012. "Introduction" in Dorte Andersen, Martin Klatt, and Marie Sandberg (eds.) *The Border Multiple: The Practicing of Borders between Everyday Life and Public Policy*. Aldershot: Ashgate. 1–19.

Armstrong, Charles I., David Herbert, and Jan Erik Mustad (eds.). 2019. *The Legacy of the Good Friday Agreement: Northern Irish Politics, Culture and Art after 1998*. London: Palgrave.

Assmann, Aleida. 2006. "Memory, Individual and Collective" in Robert Goodin and Charles Tilly (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 210–224.

Balibar, Étienne. 2002. "What is a Border?" in *Politics and the Other Scene*. London and New York: Verso. 75–86.

Brambilla, Chiara 2015. "Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept" *Geopolitics* 20(1): 14–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2014.884561

Crang, Mike, and Penny S. Travlou. 2001. "The City and Topologies of Memory" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19(2): 161–77. https://doi.org/10.1068/d201t

Davies, Norman. 1996. *Europe: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

de Certeau, Michel. 1985. *The Practices of Everyday Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Diez, Thomas, and Katy Howard. 2008. "Reconfiguring Spaces of Conflict: Northern Ireland and the Impact of European Integration" *Space and Polity* 12(1): 47–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562570801969432

European Commission. 2019. "TF50 (2019) 64 – Commission to EU 27" *European Commission* (October 17). https://commission.europa.eu/publications/revised-protocol-ireland-and-northern-ireland-included-withdrawal-agreement_en

Ferriter, Diarmaid. 2019. *The Border: The Legacy of a Century of Anglo-Irish Politics*. London: Profile Books.

Green, Sarah. 2016. "A Sense of Border" in Thomas Wilson and Hastings Donnan (eds.) *A Companion to Border Studies*. London: Wiley.

Green, Sarah. 2018. "Lines, Traces and Tidemarks" in Olga Demetriou and Rozita Dimova (eds.) *The Political Materialities of Borders: New Theoretical Directions*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hall, Stuart. 1977. *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage Publications.

Kelleher, William F. 2003. *The Troubles in Ballybogoin: Memory and Identity in Northern Ireland*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Macdonald, Sharon. 2013. *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. New York and London: Routledge.

Massey, Doreen. 2005. *For Space*. London: Sage Publications.

McCall, Cathal. 2014. *The European Union and Peacebuilding: The Cross-Border Dimension*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Murtagh, Brendan. 1995. "Image Making versus Reality: Ethnic division and the Planning Challenge of Belfast's Peace Lines" in William J.V. Neill, Diana S. Fitzsimons, and Brendan Murtagh (eds.) *The Politics of Territory: Policy and Segregation in Northern Ireland*. Houndsmille: Palgrave.

The Museum of Free Derry. "The Museum". Accessed December 12, 2022. https://www.museumoffreederry.org/content/museum [alternate: https://web.archive.org/web/20200808022443/https://www.museumoffreederry.org/content/museum]

Nagle, John. 2009. "Sites of Social Centrality and Segregation: Lefebvre in Belfast, a "Divided City"" *Antipode* 41(2): 326–347. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00675.x

Paasi, Anssi. 1999. "Boundaries as Social practice and Discourse: The Finnish–Russian Border" *Regional Studies* 33 (7): 669–680. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343409950078701

Parker, Noel, and Nick Vaughan-Williams. 2009. "Lines in the Sand? Towards an Agenda for Critical Border Studies" *Geopolitics* 14(3). 582–587. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040903081297

Prokkola, Eeva-Kaisa, and Maria Lois. 2016. "Scalar Politics of Border Heritage" *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 16(1): 14–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2016.1244505

Rumford, Chris. 2007. *Cosmopolitan Borders*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rumford, Chris. 2008. "Introduction: Citizens and Borderwork in Europe" *Space and Polity* 12(1): 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562570801969333

Rumford, Chris. 2012. "Towards a Multiperspectival Study of Borders" *Geopolitics* 17(4): 887–902. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2012.660584

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1982. *Saints, Scholars and Schizophrenics: Mental Illness in Rural Ireland*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stoklosa, Katarzyna (ed.). 2019. *Borders and Memories: Conflicts and Co-operation in European Border Regions*. Berlin: LIT Verlag.

van Houtum, Henk, Olivier Kramsch, and Wolfgang Zierhofer (eds.). 2005. *B/ordering Space*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Fieldwork Conversations

X Derry, August 12, 2019.

XI Derry, August 12, 2019.

XII Derry, August 14, 2019.

XIII Derry Museum, June 25, 2019.

XIV Belfast walk and talk, June 27, 2019.

XV Belfast University, June 27, 2019.

XVI Belfast Town Hall, June 28, 2019.

TV Documentaries

euronews. 2019. "A Return to 'the Troubles?' Potential Irish Border Raises Fears on both sides" *YouTube* (March 5). Video, 3 min., 49 sec. Accessed December 12, 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJOxlBlu0nU

The Guardian. 2019. "Brexit Breakdown: Fear and Anger on the Irish Border | Anywhere but Westminster" *YouTube* (February 13). Video, 20 min., 9 sec. Accessed December 12, 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRMwCz_Q9b4