UiA University of Agder

‘Raised by Wolves’

U2, Trauma & The Troubles

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Introduction

IRELAND

The Volkswagen parked in the gap,
But gently ticking over.
You wonder if it's lovers
And not men hurrying back
Across two fields and a river.
Paul Muldoon

Preamble

This thesis will focus on U2 and the Troubles. I will explore relevant U2 lyrics in dialogue with political events related to this period. In doing so, I will be drawing upon themes of victimhood, trauma, religion, love and unity. As we shall see, it is not only the band's music that inspires; the lyrics are also important, spanning, in their subject matter, from everyday experiences to political traumas. This thesis will address lyrics from the entire career of the band, both from earlier and more recent albums.

In this thesis, I will show that U2 has approached the Troubles as a traumatic series of events. More specifically, I will display U2's attempt to assume a mediating position in the conflict, examining how trauma has impacted their lyrics. My analysis will unveil both aspects of victimhood and unity, in addition to love and religion. I will also show that love and religion are part both of the problem and of the solution.

In undertaking this project, I will address the political situation in Northern Ireland at the time of the writing of the songs. I will also bring into focus atrocities described or alluded to in the lyrics, in addition to providing my own lyrical analyses. I also aim at exploring different concert framings of some of the songs, examining how U2 have responded to the Troubles by advocating for peace. The perspective of trauma is important in the whole thesis, and in my analyses, I will address collective as well as individual trauma, proving that both adolescent and adult experiences of trauma and victimhood are shown to be hard to rid oneself of. My analyses build on

various theoretical frameworks, as will be commented upon in the methodology and theory part of the introduction, but first I will introduce the band.

U2 is an Irish rock band hailing from Dublin. The band members are: Bono (Paul Hewson), vocals, guitar, harmonica; The Edge (David/Dave Howell Evans), guitar, keyboards, vocals; Adam Clayton, bass guitar and Larry Mullen Jr, drums. In their teens, all of them attended the Protestant-run Mount Temple Comprehensive School in Dublin, a school which welcomed both boys and girls as well as pupils from different religious backgrounds. This was controversial in Ireland at the time, and it still is (cf. Educate Together). Mount Temple was labelled Dublin's first "co-educational, multi-denominational school" (Jobling 4), aiming at encouraging creativity among their pupils. Larry might have been inspired by this creativity when he, in September 1976, put up a notice on the Mount Temple bulletin board, asking for guitarists to form a band with him. Those interested were asked to meet up at his kitchen in Rosemount Avenue, and to cut the matter short: both Dave, Adam and Bono showed up in the Mullen's kitchen on the north side of Dublin, and they formed a band the same fall (cf. Dunphy 47).

In accordance with the multi-dimensional philosophy of Mount Temple and above all, with regard to the themes addressed in this thesis, it might be of interest to examine the various backgrounds of the four band members. It is only Larry and Bono who are Irish born. While The Edge is of Welsh origin, Adam is of English descent (Jobling 6), meaning that they are both of Protestant backgrounds. The Edge and Adam moved to Ireland as children together with their families. Larry, on his part, is Catholic and born and bred by Irish-Catholic parents, whereas Bono, on the other hand, has his feet in both camps, since his mother was Anglican Protestant and his father was Catholic (cf. Rothman). But even though Bono's parents decided to raise him along Protestant lines, Bono felt "estranged" in both camps, causing him to suffer from the consequences of "Irish apartheid"[1] from an early age on (Dunphy 19-20). As we shall see, this estrangement might have paved the path for Bono's future

[1] "Apartheid, (Afrikaans: "apartness") policy that governed relations between South Africa's s white minority and nonwhite majority and sanctioned racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against nonwhites. The implementation of apartheid, often called "separate development" since the 1960s, was made possible through the Population Registration Act of 1950, which classified all South Africans as either Bantu (all black Africans), Coloured (those of mixed race), or white. A fourth category—Asian (Indian and Pakistani)—was later added" (Augustyn et al.).

understanding of sectarianism, as well as his focus on unity between opposing groupings.

The different backgrounds of the band members, however, do not seem to have affected them negatively as a unit. Only four years after the forming of the band, the *Boy* album was released, alongside their first single (“I Will Follow”) in October 1980 (cf. Stokes 14-16). In addition to being well-known for their music, U2 and especially Bono is also known for advocating for peace and for fighting for causes related to the African continent, like debt relief and vaccination (cf. Stokes 50). In the course of time, U2 has released numerous albums, from *Boy* (1980) to *Songs of Experience* (2017), also including albums like *War*, *The Joshua Tree*, *Achtung Baby, Pop, All That You Can’t Leave Behind* and *Songs of Innocence* (u2.com/discography). This music has left its mark on people of all ages worldwide for more than four decades, up to their most recent concert in Mumbai, India on December 15, 2019 (U2.com/tour).

Historical Backdrop

The Troubles that intensified in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s were not entirely new; on the contrary, these problems were deeply rooted in the past, dating back many centuries (cf. McKittrick & McVea 1). To fully understand what caused this situation, we need to go back to the beginnings, to the Norman Invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century and the planting of English and Scottish settlers four hundred years later (cf. McKittrick & McVea 2). Accordingly, the Protestant communities in Northern Ireland are of English and Scottish extraction (cf. McCullough 81).

Over the course of time, the Irish people have battled against British rule. One of the most well-known rebellions in this respect is the Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916, in which a few Irish Republicans staged an uprising against British rule. This rebellion, however, was put down quickly, and many of its leaders were executed (cf. McCullough 188). After the end of WWI, however, the Irish demanded independence from British rule. One of the most brutal acts of violence in this respect, unfolded on

Sunday November 21, 1920, in which Michael Collins (an influential member of the IRA) ordered the killing of thirteen “suspected British intelligence agents”. In retaliation, the RIC (Royal Irish Constabulary) went to a match of Gaelic football [i.e., hurling], in Croke Park, Dublin, to look for suspects. In undertaking this, the RIC shot twelve people, including a player, and around sixty other people were injured (cf. McCullough 200). This massacre is known as the First Bloody Sunday and both this event and the Easter Rising will be referred to in my analysis of the song “Sunday Bloody Sunday”.

However, it was not until 1921, after the War of Independence and the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, that Ireland split into two states: into the twenty-six-county “Irish Free State as a dominion of the British Empire” on the one hand, and Northern Ireland on the other (McCullough 205, 214). Formally, it was not until the endorsement of the Republic of Ireland Act in 1949 that Ireland obtained its independence, ending its status of being a British dominion in the Commonwealth. Northern Ireland, on the other hand, remained part of the United Kingdom (cf. Coulter et al.).

The Catholic population of Northern Ireland, however, felt trapped within the boundaries of the Protestant-run Northern Ireland, and after some decades, this feeling of alienation and frustration led to the founding of NICRA, “the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association”, in 1967 (McKittrick & McVea 44). This association, however, did not only include Catholics; on the contrary, it included people from every side, ranging from Communists to republicans, “both Catholic and Protestant” (O’Brien 16-17). NICRA “had a shopping list of demands which included one man-one vote, the redrawing of electoral boundaries [and other] anti-discrimination legislation” (McKittrick & McVea 44).

NICRA staged its first civil rights march in August 1968, inspired by the African Americans and Martin Luther King Jr. in the USA. The first march was legal, whereas the second march on October 5, 1968 was illegal, but the members of NICRA did not stop marching for that reason. About three years after the first march, on January 30, 1972, NICRA staged what turned out to be a fatal civil rights march in Derry/Londonderry, known as Bloody Sunday (cf. Mulholland 79), which I will

examine further in my analysis of “Sunday Bloody Sunday”. The march in 1972 was also illegal, and along other marches in the late 1960s they marked the beginning of the Troubles.

The parties involved in the Troubles were the Nationalists or the Republicans on the one hand and the Unionists or Loyalists on the other hand. Most Catholics supported the former, whereas most Protestants supported the latter. As McKittrick & McVea point out, the core of the conflict consisted of “two competing national aspirations” (2). For the Catholics, this aspiration included the future hope of a unified Ireland, whereas the Protestants wished to remain part of the United Kingdom. Both the British and the Irish governments were, and still are, part of the Northern Irish equation. This clash regarding national aspiration caused severe atrocities and the nature of the conflict included severe violence and terrorism. More than 16,000 bombs were detonated, causing carnage and horror among its victims. In my analyses, I will be addressing the Dublin and Monaghan bombings in 1974, in addition to bringing into focus the Enniskillen bombing in 1987 and the Omagh bombing eleven years after. The latter took place in August 1998, about four months after the endorsement of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (cf. McKittrick & McVea 120, 200, 256). In total, more than 3,700 died during the Troubles and more than 47,500 were injured (cf. CAIN Web Service).

In addition to highlighting the human toll of the conflict and some of the massacres, I also wish to mention some of the security measures undertaken by the authorities. A lot of the actions taken by the authorities and the British forces were prejudiced in favor of the Protestants, but the official line was (and still is) that the main security measures were for everyone’s benefit (cf. RTE Archives). Another means of downing Nationalist and Republican resistance involved the arrival of British troops as “peacekeepers” in Northern Ireland on August 14, 1969. This arrangement was only supposed to last for a few days, but the troops ended up staying for more than three decades, not leaving until 2007, in what is labelled “the British Army’s longest ever deployment” (National Army Museum). To begin with, the Catholic population welcomed the troops, and hoped that they would protect them, but the curfew of the predominantly ‘Catholic’ street Falls Road, alongside deaths caused by the Army and the bringing of Unionist ministers in armored cars when

visiting Catholic areas, quickly poisoned the initially good relationship between the Catholic community and the British Army (cf. McKittrick & McVea 71). As McKittric & McVea point out, Northern Ireland "was not Nazi Germany or anything like it", but the Catholic community was discriminated against through "institutionalized partiality" (McKittrick & McVea 19), meaning that the Catholics neither were never given political power nor political influence. The Catholics were also offered both the worst housings and the lowest status work (cf. McKittrick & McVea 13).

Besides discrimination with regard to housing and occupation, the introduction of internment in August 1971, in which people could be imprisoned without trial, also added to Catholic subjugation and Protestant supremacy (cf. McKittrick & McVea 77). Last but not least, the erecting of "peace lines" or peace walls, as physical barriers between the Catholic and Protestant communities at the beginning of the Troubles, concretely demonstrated the division of Northern Irish people along sectarian lines (cf. McKittrick & McVea 383). The Northern Irish peace lines were erected to keep people *out*, as opposed to the Berlin Wall which was designated in 1961 to keep people *in* (i.e. inside the East German borders). Some of these peace lines even exist today, like the peace line dividing the Protestant area, Shankhill Road, from the Catholic area, Falls Road in Belfast (cf. O'Neill, unpaginated). Over the course of time, the negotiations between the opposing parties led to the peace process in Ireland, which dominated the 1990s and culminated in the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement on April 10, 1998. But, as we shall see in the following chapters, violence unfortunately still did not come to an end. In the subsequent chapters, I will highlight events related to the Troubles in dialogue with lyrical analyses of relevant U2 songs.

Methodology & Theory

In this thesis, I analyze relevant U2 lyrics in dialogue with political events during the Troubles. In doing so, I concentrate on the words of the lyrics, and only to a small degree will I refer to the music of the songs. Ideally one might grasp the songs in all their dimensions but as I see it, focusing on the words nevertheless has some value,

especially when examining the lyrics in a historic contextualization. However, there already exist many academic studies of popular music lyrics, the most famous perhaps being Christopher Ricks' *Dylan's Visions of Sin* (2004).

In this thesis, I combine three interpretive strategies. In the first place, I apply historical contextualization, in which I scrutinize the lyrics line by line, presenting allusions or direct references to political events in relation to the Troubles. In doing so, I use an approach in many ways similar to that of New Historicism. The latter theoretical and critical movement suggests one should look at how different events have been interpreted, as opposed to traditional historians, who would just ask about what happened (cf. Tyson 281). New Historicism is heavily influenced by the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984), and at the core of this literary theory lies the belief that "on the whole, human beings are never merely victims of an oppressive society", because despite the subjugation, people might find coping strategies of empowerment, both in their personal as well as in their public lives (Tyson 284-85). As we shall see in relation to the history of the Troubles, this statement seems applicable to the Catholics in Northern Ireland. New Historicism also emphasizes the narratives of "marginalized peoples" (Tyson 287). Hence, I find this theory relevant to my subject matter and my addressing of victimhood and trauma in the wake of atrocities related to the Troubles.

When dealing with the narratives of marginalized people, however, it is also important that interpreters are honest about their own bias and apply what is called "self-positioning". On that score, it is also important that new historicists view historical events as "texts to be read", rather than looking upon these events as pure facts. As I see it, this is important to keep in mind while analyzing the U2 lyrics. According to New Historicism, it is difficult to find reliable interpretations, because we are all marked both by the culture we live in, and by our own experiences in life (cf. Tyson 283). Thus, all interpretations tend to be biased. This perspective is highly relevant to the situation in Northern Ireland, where the different communities have starkly opposed interpretations of historical events, creating, as Dawson discusses in his book *Making Peace with the Past?* "the contest between competing narratives" (97).

Secondly, I will be performing close readings of the lyrics, scrutinizing textual details to endeavor to grasp the meaning of the lyrics. In doing so, I draw upon the literary theory of New Criticism, since it was this theoretical movement which founded the practice of close reading, i.e., "the scrupulous examination of the complex relationship between a text's formal elements and its theme" (Tyson 135). The New Critics claimed that a work always had a holistic meaning, where content and form combined. The New Critics were however unlike the critic E. D. Hirsch Jr., in that they claimed that authorial intention had no importance for interpretation (cf. Tyson 130). However, both the New Critics and Hirsch shared the belief that the meaning of a text is stable, even "fixed" (Hirsch 202) and that it is" a timeless, autonomous (self-sufficient) verbal object" (Tyson 130).

When analyzing the lyrics, I draw upon the theory of the mentioned E.D. Hirsch Jr. In *Validity in Interpretation*, Hirsch states that the *meaning* of a text correlates with the author's meaning, and that further interpretations always must be able to refer to the stable meaning of the author (Hirsch 25). According to Hirsch Jr., this meaning "cannot change"; hence, the author's meaning acts as a reference for further interpretations (Hirsch 9). I will follow Hirsch Jr. rather than the New Critics on this issue. Thus, in my analysis, I endeavor to examine biographical context and explore the intention of the author whenever relevant.

Hirsch, however, is well aware of the fact there might be a change in meaning depending on the context and depending on who reads the text, but he does not refer to this as a change in meaning. Rather, he writes of "*changes in significance"* (Hirsch 9). Consequently, significance, in contrast to meaning, is malleable, and might therefore alter in parallel with varying circumstances, as we shall see when discussing the different concert framings of some of U2's songs.

In the third and last place, after having placed the lyrics within a historical context and after having closely read the songs, I will be examining the lyrics

throughout from the perspective of trauma, addressing punctual[2] as well as insidious[3] trauma. In undertaking this, I study evidence of these traumas within the lyrics, showing the recurrence of themes such as victimhood, unity, love and religion. I will also address some of the PTSD symptoms addressed in Roger Luckhurst's *The Trauma Question*, such as the re-experience of trauma, often referred to as flashbacks. I will also accentuate hyper-vigilance, the feeling of being constantly alert, fearing what will happen next (cf. Luckhurst 1). When analyzing lyrics from the perspective of trauma, it is important to keep in mind that the experience of trauma tends to be *Nachträglich*, meaning that the effects of trauma might come on belatedly, years after the atrocity took place (cf. Luckhurst 81). As I see it, this is evident in the U2 lyrics, and as we shall see in the subsequent chapters, U2 has written most of their 'Troubles' songs belatedly.

In addition to addressing trauma caused by sudden attacks, I also found traces of chronic trauma within the lyrics, addressing domestic abuse and belittlement (cf. Brown, unpaginated), alongside the chronic condition of living in "increased arousal" (Luckhurst 1). As we shall see, it is hard to rid oneself of traumatic experiences, as "trauma is never fully in the past, but lives on in the present" (Dawson 85). But even though "trauma persists", the hope for the future is that the victims of traumatic experiences manage to mobilize both hope and reparation, as suggested by Dawson and also alluded to in the U2 lyrics (Dawson 85).

The frameworks given above – historic contextualization, close reading, the distinction between original and performance, and trauma – are used persistently through this thesis. In addition, but more sporadically, I also apply confessionalism as a framing device whenever it is relevant. The term confessionalism was first applied in connection with poems written by "mid-century American poets" (Collins 197), such as for instance Sylvia Plath. At the heart of confessionalism there is "an undisguised exposure of painful personal event" (Collins 197), and this displaying of honesty of

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[2] "…what I call 'punctual' trauma: historical events of such singularity, magnitude, and horror that they can be read as shocks that disable the psychic system" (Forter 259).

[3] "Traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit" (Root qtd. in VAWnet, unpaginated).

life as it is, might help people acknowledge their own feelings of hurt (cf. Collins 199). As we shall see, this revelation of traumatic experiences is highly relevant when examining U2 and their own experiences regarding the Troubles, as brought into focus in the third and last chapter of this thesis.

Another significant feature of several analyses in this thesis, is that I aim at exploring the lyrics in terms of layers. In doing so, I scrutinize the lyrics both on surface and depth levels. In doing so, I draw upon Tambling's theory on allegory, investigating what might be hidden under the "veil", and whether the text might be applicable both as love lyrics and political allegory (cf. Tambling 28). As we shall see, I will present this more fully in my later chapters, especially in the second chapter.

Chapter Overview

This thesis consists of an introduction part and three chapters, followed by a conclusion. I have included all the lyrics of the songs directly addressed in this thesis in an appendix, in which the songs appear in chronological order with line numbers. The chapters are built on the theoretical frameworks laid out in this introduction, and the proceeding chapters will address U2 lyrics in dialogue with political events during the Troubles. In undertaking this, I will address themes such as victimhood, trauma, religion, love and unity.

In chapter one, I scrutinize "Sunday Bloody Sunday" in a historical perspective, addressing the punctual trauma that took place in Derry/Londonderry on January 30, 1972. This massacre caused severe ramifications and the lyrics depict both individual as well as collective trauma, addressing victimhood from the perspective of loss and bereavement. To begin with, I provide information about the writing of the song. I also include a historical context to the song, going more into detail discussing why NICRA staged that civil rights march on Sunday 30, 1972 in the first place. Furthermore, I include my own analysis of the lyrics, interpreting line by line, and conducting (where relevant) a dialogue with the views of other critics. Last but not least, I look at different concert framings of the song, spanning over more

than three decades, exploring how the song has been presented at different times. The interpretation of the concert versions is mainly based on E.D. Hirsch Jr.'s distinction between *meaning* and *significance*.

In chapter two, I am moving from the early 80s to the 1990s and I focus on love and peace lyrics and how they apply as political allegory. In doing so, I explore the following songs: "One", "North and South of the River" and "Please". To begin with, I examine the layer of these lyrics which seems the most obvious, in this case the layer addressing love, peace and unity. After analyzing the surface layer, I set out to examine what might be found on the depth level. In undertaking this, I apply Tambling's theory on allegory, and when analyzing the depth level, I find that under the "veil" (28), one might analyze the lyrics as political allegory, meaning that all three of these lyrics might also be interpreted along the lines of the Troubles. This chapter also addresses the psychological trauma from the angle of belittlement and domestic abuse.

In the third and last chapter we are transported to Dublin, to U2's childhood streets which gave life to the band. Here I focus on U2's own experiences of the Troubles, and in doing so, I apply confessionalism as a framing device whenever it is relevant. In this chapter I examine some lyrics from *Songs of Innocence* (2014), one of their most recent albums. The songs which I explore in this context, are "The Troubles", "Raised by Wolves", and "Cedarwood Road". In various ways, these songs display both punctual and insidious trauma, depicting some of the repercussions that might occur in the wake of traumatic experiences. The lyrics furthermore show that we are all marked by our experiences in life, and that both adolescent and adult experiences related to traumas are hard to shake off. Nonetheless, U2 continues responding to the Troubles through their advocacy for peace, as demonstrated in "Peace on Earth", the first song addressed in this chapter, and the song which, in a way, encapsulates U2's vision for the future: Peace on earth.

Chapter 1: "How Long Must We Sing This Song?" - Meanings of "Sunday Bloody Sunday"

1.1 The Writing of the Song

This chapter centers around "Sunday Bloody Sunday", addressing this (second) Bloody Sunday massacre as well as depicting U2's belated response. It was U2's guitarist, the Edge, who first decided to explore this conflict, and in doing so, he implicitly uncovered general themes such as victimhood, trauma, religion, unity and love. The love and unity addressed in this chapter, however, seem to concern the Catholic and Protestant communities rather than the love described in romantic relationships, encouraging political unity despite diversity and opposition. In this chapter I will scrutinize the lyrics, line by line, both with an eye to the themes, and to the Northern Irish as well as the Irish history. In addition to analyzing the lyrics, I will also analyze a few performances of "Sunday Bloody Sunday" which I find relevant, drawing upon E.D. Hirsch Jr.'s theory regarding the levels of meaning and significance (cf. Hirsch 9).

The song "Sunday Bloody Sunday" arrived "as a single precisely 11 years, 1 month, 21 days" after Bloody Sunday in Derry/Londonderry on January 30, 1972 (cf. *The Legends of Music*) and it addresses this (second) Bloody Sunday massacre as well as depicting U2's belated response. As mentioned in the above paragraph, "Sunday Bloody Sunday", amongst other things, draws on the themes of unity and love, and as I see it, there are quite a few songs within the U2 catalogue, that apply 'unity' and 'love' as themes, for example "New Year's Day", in which the line "though torn in two we can be one" (U2.com/Lyrics) addresses this topic. The latter song was also released on the *War* album, alongside "Sunday Bloody Sunday". "New Year's Day", however, was especially successful in Poland, and it played an important role within the Solidarity movement and its fight against the communist regime, fronted among others by one of its well-known leaders, Lech Walesa (cf. Stokes 40).

Even though the lyrics of "Sunday Bloody Sunday" deal with the sufferings of the Catholics in Northern Ireland, it seems that the lyrics are adaptable and open, and here I am in agreement with U2 who argues that the lyrics are "not a partisan statement" (Stokes 38). On the contrary, the lyrics seem to be a general reaction to

the sectarian violence on both sides. In Stokes' view, the song is a protest "against a cycle of violence into which all of the protagonists in the Northern conflict seemed to be locked" (Stokes 38). To begin with, however, during the writing process, "Sunday Bloody Sunday" was quite partisan, and as Adam remembers it, "much more vitriolic" (Stokes 38). At that stage the opening line went like this: "Don't talk to me about the rights of the IRA". If U2 had kept that line, it would, as I see it, have been hard to proclaim their being neutral and supportive of both sides. By changing the lyrics, it is possible that U2 reached a younger audience who would not be aware of the Northern-Irish conflict. The adaptation of the lyrics would also facilitate resonance from both communities, both from the Catholics and the Protestants. The first opening line, which originally included direct references to the IRA, was replaced by the now well-known line "I can't believe the news today". According to Stokes, this non-partisan vantage point "became very humane and non-sectarian" (38), and it is possible that this position helped the band to reach out to a larger audience. But how far could they reach?

They might reach far, but there could be some difficulties getting their message across to people living in completely different cultures; but most people might relate to their lyrics and experience them as an unbiased relief to their everyday struggles. But is it possible to be unbiased, to embrace mankind and to front neutrality; especially since the song patently describes the atrocities committed against innocent Catholics in Derry/Londonderry? Some might say 'yes', as thousands of fans do worldwide, whereas others, such as U2's critics, would disagree. Such skeptical criticism has for instance been forwarded among others by Fachtna O'Ceallaigh, an Irish music manager and one of U2's "early champions" (@u2), who introduced them to their long-standing manager, Paul McGuinness, (cf." Paul McGuinness"). O'Ceallaigh has accused Bono of being "totally ignorant" of the conflict (Flanagan 383). In the documentary *U2 – World in Action 1987*, Bono admits that he has no right to comment on the Troubles in Northern Ireland, since he comes from "the safety of the South". Nonetheless, Bono confides that he is "an Irishman and [that he] believes in the country, North *and* South" (KillianM2 33:58-34:21).

At the time of the writing of the song, The Edge was feeling insecure and questioning his own ability as a songwriter. In addition, he was frustrated because of

a quarrel with his girlfriend, and consequently, he poured all these personal feelings into the music of the song (cf. "Sunday Bloody Sunday"). Simultaneously, the singer Bono and his wife Ali were away on their honeymoon in Jamaica (cf. Dunphy 204), but upon their return home, however, Bono was presented with The Edge's idea, and seemed positive about the song, but he did not entirely catch fire until he was presented with "one piece of paper" (Stokes 38) by a fan in San Francisco, as people were queuing up to meet and greet the band and get their signatures after a gig. This piece of paper was a plea for support to an unknown Irish Republican. "…I got worried at that stage", Bono confides, and this fueled his engagement with the song (Stokes 38). Bono claims that "it was only when I realized that the troubles hadn't affected me that they began to affect me" (Stokes 37), and as I see it, his acknowledgement is mirrored in these lyrics.

In Stokes' view, the song is a protest "against a cycle of violence into which all of the protagonists in the Northern conflict seemed to be locked" (Stokes 38). To begin with, however, during the writing process, "Sunday Bloody Sunday" was quite partisan, and as Adam remembers it, "much more vitriolic" (Stokes 38). At that stage the opening line went like this: "Don't talk to me about the rights of the IRA". If U2 had kept that line, it would, as I see it, have been hard to proclaim their being neutral and supportive of both sides. By changing the lyrics, it is possible that U2 reached a younger audience who would not be aware of the Northern-Irish conflict. The adaptation of the lyrics would also facilitate resonance from both communities, both from the Catholics and the Protestants. The first opening line, which originally included direct references to the IRA, was replaced by the now well-known line "I can't believe the news today". According to Stokes, this non-partisan vantage point "became very humane and non-sectarian" (38), and it is possible that this position helped the band to reach out to a larger audience. But how far could they reach?

1.2 Historical Context

Above all, U2's iconic song "Sunday Bloody Sunday" draws on the horrific atrocity that took place in Derry/Londonderry in Northern Ireland on January 30, 1972, when British troops, known as "The 1st Battalion, Parachute Regiment" (On Demand News

00:01-03:22) gunned down thirteen Catholics who were attending “a large illegal civil rights march in Londonderry city” (McKittrick & McVea 88). Another victim died some months later due to his injuries (cf. Mulholland 79). In total, then, fourteen people died in this massacre, and another fourteen were badly maimed (cf. McKittrick & McVea 88). This act of cruelty is considered “one of the key events of the troubles” and forever associated with Father Daly, the Catholic priest, who was photographed waving a white handkerchief while helping a young boy who had been fatally wounded (cf. McKittrick & McVea 88-9). For hundreds of years, the Catholics in Ireland had been discriminated against by the Protestants, and on this Sunday, the long-lasting frustration and anger manifested itself in their marching for civil rights. This rage had also motivated earlier marches, as explained in the introduction.

These marches were staged by NICRA, but what did the they actually want to achieve by marching for their rights on this winter’s day? As mentioned in the introduction, the marches were rooted in the general demand for civil rights. On this very day, however, NICRA, above all, protested “peacefully against Operation Demetrius” (*The Legends of Music*). This operation implied the introduction of internment (cf. *History Ireland*), a policy which allowed “imprisonment without trial” (Mullholland 26). This operation was launched on August 9, 1971 by Brian Faulkner, the Northern Irish Prime Minister at Stormont, and it was conducted by the British army. Faulkner himself signed each internment order in his effort to round up the IRA (cf. McKittrick & McVea 80). There was, however, an imbalance at the core of this practice, since most internees were Nationalist Catholics.

The number of members of the Provisional IRA, the largest of the nationalist paramilitary groups, was expanding rapidly, and consequently, the RUC Special Branch had lost track of the IRA members. Accordingly, RUC’s list of IRA members was both outdated and inaccurate; hence, many innocent people were detained (cf. McKittrick & McVea 78). The prisoners went through a hard time, and they were marked by their experiences and were “often[both] traumatized [and]radicalized” (McKittrick & McVea 78). Despite the opposition, internment continued until December 5, 1975 (cf. Mulholland 79).

The Bloody Sunday massacre caused severe ramifications not only in Northern Ireland, but also in the South. Firstly, Dublin urged its ambassador in London to leave England. Secondly, Ireland decided to declare “a day of national mourning”. Also, the British embassy in Dublin was burnt down by a huge mob. Bloody Sunday is regarded as “a formative moment” in Irish history and in its aftermath, the sectarian violence increased, and consequently, many people wanted to join the IRA. The IRA, however, did not have enough capacity to handle all these people (cf. Feeney 36).

Eventually, after many violent manifestations in Northern Ireland, ‘Home Rule’ was abolished.[4] In replacement of ‘Home Rule’, the British Prime Minister, Ted Heath, announced ‘Direct Rule’, meaning that the government in UK took “over direct responsibility for government decisions in Northern Ireland, with ministers in the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) directing the Northern Ireland civil service” (Sargeant, unpaginated).[5]

Bloody Sunday not only altered in the political landscape; there also emerged a severe battle in its wake over truth and memory, embodied in the “battle between the army’s narrative and the memories of the wounded” (Dawson 98) and everybody else who was affected by the event. These narratives severely contradicted one another. One of the first eyewitnesses to be interviewed for the BBC was the Catholic priest Father Daly, who, in accordance with other civilians, claimed that that victims had been unarmed and exposed to a massacre conducted by the British Army (cf. Dawson 97). The narrative told by the British Army, forwarded by General Tuzo, on the other hand, maintained that they had shot in self-defense after having come under fire and been attacked by nail bombers in the vicinity of the Rossville flats, in “the Catholic ghetto of the Bogside” (Dawson 92); hence the reference to the Battle of the Bogside.

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[4] The abolition of Stormont, “the Unionist government” (McKittrick & McVea 385), however, increased the Protestant fear “of a sellout”, and they were afraid that this might lead to the dissolution of Northern Ireland and the breaking of the bonds with the UK.” (Mullholland 91),

[5] The policy of direct rule was to last for twenty-six years, until the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement on April 10, 1998, which enforced power-sharing between the Protestant Unionists and the Catholic Nationalists in Northern Ireland.

In response to these contradictory narratives, and as a response to international criticism, the British and Northern Ireland Parliaments launched the Widgery Tribunal (cf. Dawson 102), whose objective was to investigate what exactly happened on Bloody Sunday. The Nationalists in Derry/Londonderry, however, were suspicious of the Widgery Report and doubted its impartiality. Firstly, the Nationalists did not trust investigations supported by the British Government. Secondly, the report lacked credibility from the very beginning, since Lord Widgery, the person in charge of this report, was a former British Army officer (cf. Dawson 103). Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery, "largely exonerated the army" only two months after the atrocity, although the report admitted that some of the shooting conducted by the paratroopers "bordered on the reckless" (McKittrick & McVea 314, 90). If one were a survivor of this attack, how would one be affected by such a conclusion? There is, of course, no doubt that this conclusion would be problematic for those affected, and consequently, the report encountered massive criticism. Arguably, the conclusion of the report might be viewed as a betrayal of the truth. It increased the suffering of those affected, because if people do not believe in eyewitness accounts, it must hurt. At the same time, Widgery's statement could also be very provocative, because if the eyewitnesses cannot represent the truth; *who can*?

This report is one of "the key memory-texts of the Troubles", but critics claim that it is biased and that it is mainly based on the army's narrative (Dawson 115). The "denial of justice" conducted by State institutions caused severe consequences among the traumatized victims (Dawson 119). The report was considered a "whitewash" and the traumatic strain intensified by the acquittal of the soldiers of the British Army (Dawson 119). Furthermore, such denial of responsibility might have worked to "silence and marginalize" (Dawson 90) the ones affected, and it also had a considerable impact on the public memory and how one should commemorate the victims. Although the report was rejected by the Catholic Nationalists, it was widely embraced by public opinion in Britain (cf. Dawson 103).

However, there was, and still is, no 'quick fix' of the healing of the traumatic wounds caused by the Bloody Sunday massacre and similar acts of cruelty. In the early summer of 1997, no less than twenty-five years after the horrendous incident,

“truth, human rights and the effects of trauma” were finally crucial elements on the political agenda (cf. Dawson 82). The following year, a new inquiry of what really took place on Bloody Sunday was initiated by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair under Lord Saville (cf. GOV.UK), an initiative motivated by the people who had been affected. In stark contrast to the hurried Widgery Report, this inquiry, known as the Saville Inquiry or the Saville Report, was very thorough and went on for twelve years and cost £195 million (cf. McKittrick & McVea 285). This report, which was published in June 2015, basically exonerated the people who had been marching, stating that the soldiers had fired first and that those who had been killed had not represented a threat (McKittrick & McVea 287). On the day of release, Prime Minister David Cameron apologized to MPs in the House of Commons; saying that what happened on Bloody Sunday never should have happened. This, presumably, helped pave the path for further reconciliation and coexistence.

1.3 An Interpretation of the Lyrics

“Sunday Bloody Sunday” is the opening track on U2’s third album *War*, which was released in March 1983. As already mentioned, the song addresses the massacre which took place on Bloody Sunday in 1972. On one hand, the song might, implicitly, be interpreted as an angry response to the British government and their handling of the Bloody Sunday situation. On the other hand, however, is it also possible to read the song as a prayer for peace, in which the speaker raises the question “How long must we sing this song?” (l.3), a question which is being repeated throughout the song. It is as if U2, both through this song and through the entire *War* album, declares war against sectarianism and violence.

The opening line of the song, “I can’t believe the news today” (l.1), mirrors the constant reports on violent incidents that took place in Northern Ireland during the Troubles and the reactions they caused among both youth and the common run of men. The cruelties were so extreme that it was hard to recognize them as real, a notion embodied in the first line, which addresses the fact that at this point people in the South could no longer ignore what was happening in the North. It was impossible, both for the people of the Republic of Ireland, and for the Northern Irish people “to

close my eyes and make it go away" (l. 2). This tallies with Stokes' observation, that the song displays the "crystallizing of the prevailing response", to the atrocities that took place in Northern Ireland during the first decades of the Troubles, from the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s (37).

The despairing question, "How long / How long must we sing this song?"(ll.3-4), is a direct quotation from Psalm 13, in which King David cries out the same question, asking God how long he will forget about him and his sufferings; "How long, O Lord?" (KJB Psa:13)[6]. This plea is also echoed in U2's song "40", in which the same question, "How long to sing this song?", is repeated ("40"). The fifth line of "Sunday Bloody Sunday" maintains that "tonight, we can be as one", an assertion which might not be as neutral as the preceding question. This line might, though, widen the gap between the opponents, rather than unite the opposing groupings, depending on which community you address. Therefore, it might be a difficult question to answer, for what exactly does U2/Bono mean by being 'one' here? Do they visualize a united Ireland, referring to the Catholic Nationalists, turning their backs on the Protestant Unionists? Do these groups really want to "be as one", or is it more of a romantic dream, a dream which is not rooted in reality? If the answer to this question is 'yes, we want to be as one', the urgent question is, who are 'they' and with whom do they want 'to be as one'? Is it the people of Northern Ireland who want to see a united Ireland?

But what about the people of the south, of the Republic, did they feel the same? According to McKittrick and McVea, they did not; on the contrary, the relationship between the Irish in the South and the Irish in the North, was far from mutual. Subsequently, "while Catholic northerners looked fondly to Dublin, Dublin tended to regard them as an unwelcome nuisance" (22). Could the notion of being 'one', also include the Protestant Unionists in Northern Ireland? And could it even be conceivable that the song is primarily about the Unionists achieving greater unification with the rest of the UK? With whom would they want to "be as one"? One possible answer might be to "be as one" with London; because they preferred "to

[6] In this thesis I quote the online version of King James Bible. In the following in-text citations I will apply the acronym KJB.

remain more closely integrated with Britain", and, as a result, they did not even embrace Stormont, 'their own' parliament in Belfast (cf. McKittrick & McVea 6).

During the *World in Action* interview, Bono reveals his own attitude to the conflict, confiding that he would "love to see a united Ireland, but [that he] never ever could support any man who put a gun to somebody else's head to see that dream come true", admitting that they "wrote 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' in a rage" (KillianM2 01:31-01:46). So, could it just be, that U2 appeals to the audience, "tonight", on this specific night, to "be as one" despite different backgrounds and opposing point of views? That on this very night U2 embark on taking on a messianic position, possibly trying to save and heal what is wounded, and to unite what seems impossible to unite from the point of view of the man on the street? The fifth and sixth lines, "'Cause tonight / We can be as one, tonight", might also signify hope; a hope that it is still possible for people to unite despite conflicting opinions and experiences.

The song addresses the aspect of trauma, both physical as well as psychological, depicting "Broken bottles under children's feet / Bodies strewn across the dead-end street" (ll.7-8). These lines address physical trauma and allude to the physical evidence of war. Bodily injuries are medically referred to as traumas, and the denotation of 'trauma' actually "derives from the Greek word meaning wound" (Luckhurst 2), as pointed to in the introduction. One interpretation of these lines, as I see it, is to read them literally, because the images of broken items, children and dead bodies could serve as a specific description of the scene of crime at Bloody Sunday in Derry/Londonderry itself. The "dead-end street" referred to in the second line might hint at the army barricades that blocked the marchers from entering Guildhall in the city center of Derry/Londonderry. When entering a dead-end street, you are, in a way, trapped, because further entry is blocked. In addition, this imagery could also have been influenced by news stories about some other of the many terror attacks that took place in Northern Ireland during the time of the Troubles, such as the massacre in Donegall Street in Belfast, only weeks after Bloody Sunday, in which seven people lost their lives because of an IRA car bomb. The street "looked like a battlefield …[and] injured people were seen lying in pools of blood…in agony with glass splinters embedded in their wounds" (McKittrick & McVea 90-91).

Furthermore, the images of broken bottles and children might also be given a figurative interpretation. The fact that there is a reference to children's feet as opposed to adults' feet in this line might symbolize that innocence is gone and that there might be no future to look forward to. The image of something that is 'broken', possibly alludes to the division of Ireland itself into Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It might also draw on the separation between the Catholic and Protestant inhabitants in the North. Besides, it might allude to broken dreams; dreams regarding a united Ireland, and possibly also dreams that are broken due to loss and bereavement. The lyrical I, however, chooses to take a step back on facing these atrocities, realizing in the ninth line that he "won't heed the battle call": he will not obey the battle cry, but rather stay on the sideline. As Dunphy points out, "the battle constantly referred to in this song is personal" (205), leaving everyone to take a stand and not hide behind the collective opinion. Everyone is responsible for their own actions and for their own attitudes. Also, all the people who are affected by loss and bereavement must process both the mourning and the trauma on an individual level.

In the subsequent lines, the writer confides that this battle does no good; on the contrary "It puts my back up / Puts my back up against the wall" (ll. 12-13). This leaves no doubt that the speaker feels caught up in the middle of a crisis, causing him to feel hopelessly disconsolate and pressed. The image of the back being pushed "up against the wall" tallies with the image of the dead-end street, since both images seem to describe a rather wedged and hopeless situation, in which there seems to be little anticipation of change and of making progress. And there is, in fact, little you can do when you are put in a corner and your back is "put up against the wall". The "back" referred to, might not be any back of distant people 'out there', it might refer to anybody's back; the back of any Irish person who was suffering from sectarianism.

In line sixteen, it is suggested that the battle referred to is new, that "the battle's just begun", but what kind of battle is the writer referring to? As was acknowledged in the introduction to this thesis, the difficulties in Northern Ireland date back many centuries, and when interpreting this situation from a pessimist's point of view, it might feel like "the battle's just begun". However, the line might also allude to another battle, a battle in which the band members were caught up

themselves on a very personal level. The battle referred to here, might have to do with U2's struggle between Christianity and rock 'n' roll and the difficulties reconciling "their spiritual beliefs with their worldly endeavors" (Dunphy 206).

Shalom, the Christian group that they were a part of at this time, seemed to add to this struggle. Most importantly, Shalom claimed that being in a rock band did not tally with being Christian, with being a believer. Shalom even tended to dictate "how they should dress, what they should look like, [and] the way they should sound" (Stokes 36). As Bono and Ali were frolicking in their Jamaican paradise after their wedding on August 21, 1982 (cf. "Sunday Bloody Sunday"), The Edge, back home, was undergoing a battle between faith and music on a very personal level. However, after having ruminated about this for a while, The Edge realized that that there did not have to be a collision between the two. He acknowledged "that Christianity without life was as empty as life without Christianity" (Dunphy 205). This feeling of collision between religion on the one side and personal endeavors on the other, however had almost led to the dissolution of the band.

In addition to mediating Christianity and rock 'n' roll, the lyrics also draws upon the notion of separateness, of 'the trench…dug within our hearts" (l. 19). Within the band, Bono might be the member who has experienced this 'trench' the most, as he is the only member who is born and raised within a mixed marriage, as mentioned in the introduction. Bono's experiences are, as I see it, echoed in the lyrics, in which the line "Trenches dug within our hearts" summarizes his childhood experiences, and not only his, but also those of children in Ireland and Northern Ireland in general. As I see it, the notion of the trench, at the same time alludes to the psychological, ongoing trauma of growing up along sectarian lines; of being exposed to long-lasting tensions; to "an anxiety-producing condition of possibility", (Rodi-Risberg 10), known as insidious trauma. Such trauma causes the people affected to live in "increased arousal" (Luckhurst 1) and this hyper-vigilance strains the people affected by it. This type of trauma was naturally more severe in the North, but even people in the South noticed the division, and at some point, also suffered from it. This "trench" of separateness, alongside the trauma of loss are, as Caruth points out, "somehow seared directly into the psyche … almost like a shrapnel "(Caruth qtd. in Luckhurst 4).

Such traumas tend to echo into the future (cf. Sutton 23), and in this line, that echo seems to be alluded to through bereavement and loss.

The trauma of the “trench” in this line is worth pursuing further. As mentioned in the introduction, trauma is more than a purely medical term. The tense of the verb is also central in this aspect, and it is worth noticing that it is “dug”; the passive form of the verb, which is applied here. This tense emphasizes the fact that sectarianism is forced upon the people living there; it is like “shrapnel” which is embedded within the culture; meaning, that as a child, for instance, you do not necessarily have to actively dig a “trench” yourself, or divide people according to sectarian lines. On the contrary, this division is forced upon you from the outside. This form of the verb stands in stark contrast to its active counterpart “dig”, in which you conduct the digging (of ‘the trench’) yourself. As I see it, the image of the “trench” might also allude to the Northern Irish border, in addition to serving as a metaphor for sectarianism. Furthermore, the notion of “trenches” also arguably includes a faint allusion to WW1 and its fighting in trenches. Being in a trench during WWI meant being trapped; an image which might symbolize the longevity of the Northern Irish Troubles. Besides, the exposure to shellshock might be likened to the exposure to bombs going off in Northern Ireland, leaving both the soldiers and the population traumatized. The Northern Irish poet, Michael Longley (b.1939) has consistently addressed this topic and linked WWI and the Troubles in his poetry, attempting “to define the real truth of our lives and our societies” (Armstrong 349).

In addition to alluding to images from WWI, this verse also draws on a biblical verse from Matthew 10:35, in which, as *The Legends of Music* points out; “mother’s children; brothers, sisters [are] torn apart” (l.20). Such bereavements might depict punctual trauma (cf. Rodi-Risberg 111); atrocities that take place on a specific day, like Bloody Sunday. This verse describes the consequences of these atrocities, providing images of loss: families that are split up, and people who have lost their beloved ones in cataclysmic events which, in this context, have “an impact on the collective psyche of the Irish people” (Stokes 37). Accordingly, this line alludes to individual as well as collective trauma (cf. Luckhurst 10); traumas which must be processed both on an individual, as well as on a national level. It furthermore relates to insidious trauma; meaning trauma which impacts people over a longer course of

time, as explained in the introduction (cf. Rodi-Risberg 111). The alarming, but highly relevant question “who has won?” at the end, remains unanswered. It seems like there can be no winner, as people on either side suffer in the aftermath of these devastating massacres.

From the twenty-ninth to the thirty-third line, there is a bridge part of the lyrics. Here U2 draws on biblical references to heaven, a place in which there shall be no tears and where “He [God]will wipe every tear from their eyes” (KJB Rev 21:4). At this point in the lyrics, the lyrics seek to actively engage with an implied addressee (i.e., an implied audience). In these lines, one might argue that U2 take God’s promise of wiping the tears away into their own hands, suggesting that “I’ll wipe the tears away”, as they simultaneously provide images of comfort and belonging. One might also maintain that people are encouraged to stop mourning out loud, and to “wipe the tears from your eyes”; eyes that are” bloodshot” and marked by long-lasting warfare and conflict. Subsequently, U2 might provide empathy and comfort, and help heal the wounds from the past. The image of the wiping away of the tears might also initiate hope of a better future. As I see it, this image also evokes hope for comfort, empathy and understanding.

The aggrieved can feel relieved because another person, the speaker, in this case, acknowledges the atrocities committed. But could ordinary people embrace this message of comfort or is this requesting a bit too much? Or could this messianic dimension be provocative rather than comforting for some of the people traumatized by these experiences? Some people might feel that there is no way that a band from the South could understand how the situation affects those living in the North. To some people, it might even be provocative that they *try* to understand; for how can U2 attempt the impossible? Whenever they wanted, U2 might return to the safety of the South, whereas the people of the North remained stuck in an apparently deadlocked situation. Some people might also feel that the lyrics are too naïve; because, how can one wipe away the tears caused by devastating traumas?

Soon after, with the lines “And it’s true we are immune / When fact is fiction and TV reality” (ll. 36-37), the lyric addresses the media. The word “immune” might allude to feeling careless, and one might speculate if people have seen too much

violence to care? Or is it too hard to grasp the reality of these atrocities? Do we confuse them with for instance, another crime series on TV, "when fact is fiction and TV reality", not acknowledging the fact that these cruelties affect real people, causing real traumas, and that in real life, there is no quick fix? The speaker insinuates that the media is to blame for its turning upside down of reality, as was the case within hours of the shooting of the Catholic marchers (cf. Dawson 97). Here the "competing narratives" between the Army's testimony and the testimony of eyewitnesses were openly displayed. These lines might allude to cruelties that are ignored and "swept under the carpet or glossed over by mass media in such a way that the facts appear to be 'fiction' and what we see and read in the papers and on television are the doctored reality" (*Music Banter*). Line thirty-eight, "And today the millions cry", seems to bring us further, from the news stories regarding the devastations in Northern Ireland to suffering on a global scale. The line points to the fact that right now, "today", many people suffer worldwide. Here, it is as if the writer questions the concept of war. He follows up the message in the succeeding line, stating that "we eat and drink while tomorrow they die" (l.40).

But how many people need to die and for how long do we need to fight before we realize what life is really worth? (cf. Music Banter). Here there is an implicit juxtaposition of rich and poor drawing upon the biblical verse from 1 Corinthians 15:32 saying "let us eat and drink; for tomorrow *we* die" (KJB 1 Cor 15:32). In U2's lyrics it is 'they' who die, whereas the Bible addresses us and the fact that 'we' are going to die.

At an underlying level, the message of the song, however, is not specifically about the Bloody Sunday event per se, as I see it, it might also allude to other remarkable incidents, both in Irish history and within Christianity. One the one hand, the lyric includes biblical references to Easter, "to the original Christian blood sacrifice" (Stokes 38) on Good Friday and to the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday, claiming "the victory Jesus won" (l.42). The wish "to claim the victory Jesus won" (l.42) provides the potential of transcendence; a rising above from the surrounding challenges. The audience is encouraged to let go of the conflict and focus on Jesus, "declaring to the Irish that they need to stop fighting each other and just claim the victory 'Jesus won…on [a] Sunday bloody Sunday'" (*The Legends of*

Music). The victory which Jesus won, however, does not proclaim winners and losers or alienate either side; on the contrary, this victory has the potential of uniting people rather than tearing them apart. This is yet another proof that “Sunday Bloody Sunday” might legitimately have wide appeal. These lines correlate with U2’s non-partisan position, enabling the listener to transcend and to rise above the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland, urging the people to seek unity through Christ. After all, as Bono acknowledges, Christianity lies at the bottom of both the Catholic and the Protestant communities (cf. Bailie 244). On the other hand, the lyric also alludes to the Easter Rising in 1916 and the First Bloody Sunday in 1920, events which are accounted for in the introduction. As I see it, the motif of the song is to invite reflection on violence and encourage people to live in peace with each other.

The repetitive phrase “Sunday Bloody Sunday”, however, refers directly to the Bloody Sunday event of 1972, and in my view, it leaves no doubt that in this song, U2 is not dealing with a faraway crisis, but on the contrary, they are addressing “the violence and political turmoil in Northern Ireland” (Stokes 37). The word ‘bloody’ is repeated in the chorus, and it is an ambiguous word symbolizing both death and renewal, alongside implying a restored hope for the future. But is it possible to unite the fighting factions, or is it just an unrealistic, romantic dream? Here I am in agreement with *The Legends of Music,* which points out, that the question “how long, how long must we sing this song?” reveals how U2 themselves “reacted to the governmental response”, displaying their rage with the government because of how they were handling the situation but that through it all, U2 takes “a nonviolent, peace-making stance” (*Song Meanings + Facts*). Hence, I think the motif of the song is to invite reflection on violence and encourage people to live in peace with each other.

1.4 Meaning, Significance and Applicability – The Different Ways U2 Frame the Song

“Fuck the revolution!” The words rang out in the McNichols Sports Arena in Denver, Colorado, on the day of the horrific Enniskillen bombing in Northern Ireland (November 8, 1987), and Bono is raging on stage, screaming out his rejection of it, as well as addressing the pain in its aftermath. This massacre, however, was not initiated by the

British army, as was the case with Bloody Sunday in 1972. On the contrary, it was an atrocity committed by the IRA, gunning down “eleven Protestant civilians as they gathered on Remembrance Day” and hurting a dozen others (McKittrick & McVea 201), while the Protestants were commemorating the soldiers who had given their lives during both world wars. During his cathartic, poignant performance in Denver, Bono asked in despair: “*Where’s the glory in bombing a Remembrance Day parade of old age pensioners, their medals taken out and polished up for the day. Where’s the glory in that*?” (*The Legends of Music*). During this outburst, Bono even claimed that this so-called revolution was unwanted among most Irish people.

But one might wonder, how could U2 apply this song when reacting *against* the IRA, as the song originally describes atrocities committed *to* the IRA and the Catholic community? As I see it, the answer lies in the fact that, as explained above, the lyrics seem to be non-partisan and malleable. Consequently, the lyrics might be applicable to different situations and support both communities. When addressing the Bloody Sunday event specifically, one might argue that it was the Catholic Nationalists who were supported. U2’s response to the Enniskillen bombing in 1987 and their empathy with the victims, however, involved adapting the lyrics into providing support to the victimized Protestant Unionists and their community. And within the field of history, these adaptations continue endlessly. For New Historicists, historical events are viewed as “texts to be read”, not just facts to be documented (cf. Tyson 294). Thus, from a New Historicist’s point of view, these new adaptations and interpretations might also be regarded as new ‘texts’ to read.

As we shall see, U2 has written ‘new texts’ (i.e. adaptations, interpretations and significances) to “Sunday Blood Sunday”. At U2 gigs, the song is almost always part of the set list. In the following, I will be highlighting five different framings of the song, predominantly concert introductions, in addition to one video (ONE 00:01-0r4:41). I have carefully chosen a cluster of different, and at the same time, highly relevant framings of “Sunday Bloody Sunday”, to illustrate how the song has been introduced and applied from the early beginning in 1983 until the present. Subsequently, I aim at demonstrating how “Sunday Bloody Sunday” might alter its significance over the course of time, at the same time as maintaining its meaning.

The live performances and the videos, or the live histories, if you like, that I will discuss in the following, span over more than three decades and serve, as I view it, as various applications of the song as they address different conflicts which were both predominant and relevant at the time of the different U2 concerts. As mentioned earlier, the song has been misinterpreted and opposing groupings have taken the song unto themselves as their battle cry. Because of these misinterpretations, Bono, in an early introduction of the song, tried to explain the meaning of the lyrics, stating that "this is *not* a rebel song, this is "Sunday Bloody Sunday" (*The Legends of Music*). These words are probably most known from U2's iconic concert at Red Rocks in Denver, Colorado on June 5, 1983, the same year as the song had been released. This was also the band's first video production and it has retained an iconic status ever after among U2 fans. At this concert, Bono planted a white flag "of truce" (Baca, unpaginated) on stage, alluding to peace and unification.

The advocacy for peace, however, was not limited to the performance at Red Rocks in 1983. One finds the theme of peace also being crucial for a version at a gigantic concert at the McNichols Arena in Denver in 1987. At this gig, Bono addressed the romanticizing of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, embodied in the iconic words quoted at the beginning of this subchapter. After having reacted vigorously on stage, and after having sung "Sunday Bloody Sunday", Bono knelt at the microphone stand, paying his respect to the Enniskillen victims. After this performance, U2 removed the song from their set list because of emotional fatigue. The band claimed that it would be hard to replicate the same level of intensity and sensitivity at future performances of the song, and that the song might rest for a while (cf. *The Legends of Music*).

Some years later, however, "Sunday Bloody Sunday" reemerged on the set list and was one of the songs performed in Madison Square Garden, New York City, only weeks after the 9/11 massacre in 2001. Over the subsequent years, U2 has widened the applicability of the song, underscoring Larry's statement that it is still necessary "to combat violence and hatred all over the world" (*ONE*). On a general basis, U2 has celebrated both difference and pluralism and adopted these concepts into their performances (cf. Morley & Somdahl-Sands 63). One of their most dramatic and acclaimed performances regarding the promotion of these values took place on the Vertigo Tour 2005-6, in which "Sunday Bloody Sunday" played an important part

(Morley & Somdahl-Sands 65). At this concert Bono wore a bandana saying 'coexist', inspired by a grafitti created by Piotr Mlodozeniec, encouraging both Muslims, Jews and Christians to live peacefully side by side. This religious aspect is also addressed in the video produced by ONE (03:27-03:55). But could it also be, that the encouragement to co-exist might disunite rather than unite? Are monotheistic religions even interested in co-existence? Bono, on his part, seems to focus on co-existence rather than doing missionary work, and given that this concert took place post 9/11 and terror was still a relevant issue, one might claim, that after all, peace is the most important; even more important than religion.

From addressing religious tensions on the Vertigo Tour in 2005-6, U2 has highlighted different issues in the process of time. During their *iNNOCENCE and eXPERIENCE* tour in 2015, the band again brought their native country into focus, in their addressing of their own experiences of this long-lasting conflict in Northern Ireland, and in doing so, U2 in a way closed the circle from the War tour in 1982-83. But would, or rather could all people who were affected by the Northern Irish conflict pin U2 to their breasts? Even though U2 proclaim that they are non-partisan, *could* or even *would* everyone agree to them being neutral? And is it even possible for a band from the Catholic dominated South to reach out to both communities in Northern Ireland, both to Catholic Nationalists as well as Protestant Unionists?

As I see it, this song has come to signify support to other groupings and to have a more general appeal over the course of time, despite its alleged partisan origin, tallying with Hirsch Jr.'s concepts of *meaning* and *significance*, alluding to the fact that whereas meanings tend to be stable, and even "fixed and immutable"; significance, on the other hand, tends to be flexible and "open to change" (Hirsch 202).[7] As significance is open to change, and meaning is stable, does that mean that there is a risk that the original meaning is completely abolished and forgotten about with regard to the these new adaptations, *or* could one claim that either way, the song *means* the same thing?

[7] In later years, Hirsch has acknowledged that there is a need to widen the notion of meaning, and to include elements into it and take "a more capacious view of what remains the same" (Hirsch 210). The various applications, or framings might serve as different exemplifications of the original meaning, and, in Hirsch's words rather "instantiate and fulfill" the meaning-intention instead of altering it (Hirsch 210).

Could it possibly be that the meaning remains the same, but that there is something else that might change? If this is the case, *what* might change?

I will endeavor to answer these questions by making use of E. D. Hirsch Jr.'s theories. According to him, there is a distinction between *meaning*, on the one hand, and *significance* on the other. In his book, *Validity in Interpretation*, Hirsch Jr. defines meaning as "the author's meaning" (Hirsch 25), and in his view, this meaning "cannot change" (Hirsch 9). If one were not to define meaning in this way, there would be no stable reference for other, possible interpretations (cf. Hirsch 4). Hirsch Jr. points out that if one does not use the author's meaning as a starting point when referring to the meaning of a text, no interpretation of the text "can possibly correspond to *the* meaning of the text" (Hirsch 5). Thus, when people talk about different meanings and change in meanings, they probably refer to "changes in significance" (Hirsch 9). *Significance* always implies "meaning to [as opposed to] "meaning in, [and] it is by nature limitless" (Hirsch 63). However, when using the author's meaning as a base for further interpretations, it might provide for a more sincere and better understanding of both the text itself and of other possible interpretations inspired by the original text. From my point of view, this is the case with U2, as embodied in the different framings of "Sunday Bloody Sunday", in which the band supports different people experiencing different crises. This support ranges from empathy for both the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland, as well as to compassion with the victims of 9/11.

Even though a lyric seems to have many significances, it is important to know about the meaning of the text. One important precondition when it comes to maintaining the meaning of a text, is to make the text wide enough and not "restrict the scope of meaning" (Hirsch 217). According to Hirsch Jr., significance is more valuable than meaning as it "embraces the present use of the texts, and present use is present value" (Hirsch 203). Here I am in agreement with Hirsch Jr., that what is of present value seems to be the most valuable and relevant; a viewpoint exemplified by the different U2 presentations of "Sunday Bloody Sunday", in which the band highlight both relevant and current issues. As mentioned earlier, the original and fixed meaning of "Sunday Bloody Sunday" has to do with the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and nothing can change that denotation, or as Hirsch Jr. explains it; the concept of meaning is what it is and maintains its reference, and "not even an atom bomb can

change [that]” (Hirsch 203). Hirsch Jr. suggests that meaning, in that sense, might be likened to a physical object, for example a building, which looked exactly like it did at a specific time in history. Irrespective of how one might interpret “Sunday Bloody Sunday”, the song could be said to represent an anthem for people living in conflict zones worldwide. The nature of the conflicts might be different, but as I see it, the people living in conflict zones share some of the same experiences. Some of these experiences might imply hyper-vigilance (Luckhurst 1), in the sense of the constant fear surrounding the everyday lives of the affected ones. Furthermore, the trauma of loss and exposure to violence are also predominant within conflict zones.

I would argue that the framings which I have chosen, exemplify the fact that the song *maintains* its meaning at the same time as *altering* its significance. Accordingly, the different framings reveal that the song is applied in very different settings, to different times, in support of various, and even opposite victims of terror. Its applicability ranges from support to people living close to U2’s doorsteps, including Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists, to victims of the 9/11 terror attack in New York City, USA, to the religious collision between Muslims, Jews and Christians, enabling the band “to communicate effectively in the future” (Hirsch 205), to address future conflicts and not be restricted to Northern Irish Troubles specifically.

What is special about this discussion on meaning and significance, however, is that in this context it is *the band* itself that actively frame the song differently, providing different introductions to it and accordingly, induce a strong impact on its significance. Typically, it is the audience, and not the artists themselves who alter the significance in response to relevant experiences in life. This tallies with Hirsch Jr.’s article and its reference to Hans-Georg Gadamer, who maintains that a text needs to be interpreted in the light of the present, highlighting relevant, current situations (cf. Hirsch 211). As Hirsch Jr. points out, Gadamer also claims that that “it is necessary to have historical knowledge of the original meaning “(Gadamer qtd. in Hirsch 112), a knowledge which I would argue underlies all the framings of this specific song.

In this chapter, I have addressed different aspects of “Sunday Bloody Sunday”, examining both the writing of the song and the historical backdrop of the

song. The bulk of this chapter, however, has been devoted to an analysis of the lyrics, in which I have addressed themes such as victimhood, unity and trauma, in accordance with the thesis statement. In doing so, I have analyzed line by line, verse by verse, engaging with other critics' views in the process. Finally, I have examined the different framings of the song and how the meaning of the song might evoke various significances. At the heart of all the framings and various significances, however, lies, as I see it, the universal cry for peace.

Chapter 2: Love, Peace and Allegory in the 1990s

2.1 "One" – Love Lyrics as Political Allegory

Like the previous chapter, this chapter also draws on the themes of victimhood, trauma, religion, unity and love, but here I will be addressing a cluster of songs as opposed to just one song. Like "Sunday Bloody Sunday", the songs addressed in this chapter might also be categorized as 'Troubles' songs, but in addition to addressing political conflicts, they hold more layers, and might also be read as love lyrics. These love lyrics depict domestic topics like 'oneness' or 'unity', or the lack of it within a family, between for example a father and a son or between spouses, addressing suffering and victimhood.

What U2 songs would fit the bill here? As I see it, "With or Without You", from the *Joshua Tree* album, is an example of a love song that can be related to this. This song draws on 'unity' as its subject matter, as exemplified in the line "I can't live / With or without you" (Stokes 70). As I see it, however, "With or Without You" is – unlike other lyrics that I will address later in this chapter - exclusively applicable on a personal, rather than on a political level. In this chapter I will endeavor to explore songs that seem to consist of several layers. The songs which I have included here are related to the Troubles in one way or another, accordingly, the Troubles serve as the *meaning* of these songs, in Hirsch Jr.'s sense. The songs that I will be examining here are "One", "North and South of the River" and "Please", and they are addressed chronologically. "Please" especially addresses events that took place during the Troubles, whereas the other songs seem to have addressed other meanings, but in the course of time, they have activated different connotations, or associations, which were either latent or absent in the original version of the work. As in the previous chapter, this can be linked with Hirsch Jr.'s level of *significance*, and how the songs have acquired different interpretations when performed or used in new contexts.

I will begin by analyzing "One", a song which was released on the album *Achtung Baby* in November 1991. Whereas "Sunday Bloody Sunday" alludes to a unity that *might* be, claiming "tonight we can be as one" (l.7), "One", on the other hand, emphasizes as a fact that "we're one" (l.9). Quite a few lines in the latter lyric

are characterized by end rhyme, but I find the end rhyme in the first and second lines of the song the most relevant in this context: “Is it getting better, or do you feel the same? / Will it make it easier on you, now you got someone to blame?” (ll.1-2). The rhyme here is linked with the theme of the song through the rhyming words “same” and “blame”, underscoring the fact that in unity, even though one is the “same”, there might also be disunity and “blame”.

Even though one of the themes in “One” is unity, the time leading up to the release of the album had not been easy. For U2, this period was certainly not marked by concord; on the contrary, it had been a rather challenging time, as they struggled with their creativity, and inspiration seemed to have gone “on an extended holiday” (Stokes 98). Accordingly, one of the subject matters of the song seems to be the unity of the band, representing one of the layers, or *significances* of the song. Hence, this specific layer articulates the challenges within the band at the time of the recording, a time referred to by Bono as a time “when things were very difficult for us in the studio” (Vicki Bobotis 00:26-00:36). Some signs of these challenges and the fatigue prior to the recording of *Achtung Baby* manifested themselves at the end of the New Year’s Eve concert in Dublin in 1989. There, Bono confided to the audience that the band had to withdraw “to dream it all up again” (ChillyPhilly 01:14-01:24). In order to do so, U2 went to Berlin to record at the Hansa Ton Studios. The song “One” spontaneously surfaced during a jam session, coming “easily, as a gift” (Flanagan 11). This song marked the start of this reinvented dream and Bono also seemed to share this view, acknowledging that “We wrote a song that we really, really, *really* needed to hear” (U2gigs.com 02:39-.02:50).

The song concerns the challenges of love, and in addition to addressing romantic love, it might also mirror the relationship between a parent and a child, such as between Bono and his father (cf. Bailie 239). In this context, however, the song also partly builds on the marital challenges experienced by The Edge and his wife at the time of writing, displaying their lack of unity (cf. Bailie 239), but the lyric has no clear hints at it that an outside listener can pick up. Nonetheless, other critics, such as Stokes, has asserted that the lyric reveals the underlying pain of “a relationship on the brink of collapse” (Jobling 214).

When scrutinizing “One”, I will firstly attempt to present my own analysis of relevant lines from the perspective of love. Secondly, I will bring into focus the political situation in Ireland and Northern Ireland at the time of the writing of the song, interpreting the song as political allegory. At this stage, I will also highlight U2’s role at the Yes concert in Belfast prior to the referendum regarding The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Accordingly, the analysis of “One” in a way implies three versions; the recorded version of 1991, the performance of “One” at the Yes concert in Belfast, on May 18, 1998 (cf. Bailie 239), and a third period after that. One might wonder if there were political undertones to the song to begin with, as well? Given the fact that the album was recorded in Berlin, at the time of the German reunification, this political event might also underpin the lyrics. By the time of the Yes concert, however, the context was very different from when they recorded the song, and after the Yes campaign, the framing of “One” has continued to be more politically orientated, stretching from 1998 to a good bit later. I will return to the latter period at the end of this subchapter, briefly highlighting some of the framings which are not related to the Troubles.

At first glance, it might seem that “One” is a general love song, stating that “we’re one, but we’re not the same” (l.9). The theme of the song, however, does not idealize love: rather, it draws upon relational challenges and a notion of unity despite division, describing a relationship on the verge of breaking up. Subsequently, the song does not celebrate perfect love and it is probably not quite the song that one would play at weddings (cf. Monroe-Mueller qtd. in Whiteley and Maynard 127), an observation which tallies with Bono’s comments about the song, that it has “a bitter and twisted lyric” (Vicki Bobotis 00:26-00:36).

The love which is depicted in the song stands in stark contrast to the love described by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, in which love is described as a love that “bears all things, believes all things, endures all things…” (KJB 1 Cor:13). “One” rather addresses the challenges which might emerge between partners over the course of time. As I see it, these relational challenges are alluded to in line eighteen,” Love is a temple, love the higher law”, in which “a temple” connotes purity and a sense of awe. The desired ideal, however, is undercut by images of hurt, as depicted in line twenty, in which the speaker addresses his interlocutor: “You ask me

to enter, but then you make me crawl". It is here, in the inside of the "temple" that the dysfunctional relationship is displayed, causing the speaker "to crawl". His feeling of humiliation has severe ramifications, and the speaker declares that he cannot hold on "to what you got, when all you got is hurt" (l.22).

Basically, the first fourteen lines of the lyric consist of questions, posed by the speaker to his interlocutor, indicating that there has been an intimate relationship between the two. Even though the relationship seems to be broken at this point, there is still an element of care, as demonstrated in the opening line of the song: "Is it getting better, or do you feel the same?". The following questions seem to unmask a realistic relationship marked by a deep sense of hurt, asking "Did I disappoint you or leave a bad taste in your mouth?" (l.6). The final lines, however, seem to provide some sense of answers and a degree of realization, stating that "You gave me nothing, now it's all I got" (l.15), in which the speaker shares his experiences from a fragmented reality. This reality seems to be characterized by painful experiences of 'crawling', such as betrayal; and trust has been replaced by distrust and broken promises, seemingly causing deep, traumatic wounds within the betrayed.

The motif of 'crawling' might allude to the act of belittling. According to the *Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association*, the emotional abuse of belittling involves "the intentional act of making another feel worthless, empty and dismissed" (Brown, unpaginated), and after having been belittled and betrayed, you most likely feel like this, especially after you have been asked to enter, "but then you make me crawl"(l.20). This probably makes the speaker feel humiliated because, after all, he had been invited in. And what could he possibly have been invited in to? Was it just an invitation to a regular party or could it be that this was an invitation, figuratively speaking, to enter the other side and look at the division between the communities from a different angle? Could it be that this is an invitation to collaboration between the opposing groupings and that this might aspire a restored hope for the future? If the answer to this is 'yes', the Omagh bombing on August 15, 1998 was a major setback to these future aspirations, and the massacre definitely reactivated the motif of 'crawling'. As already mentioned, the song was written eight years prior to the Omagh bombings, and accordingly, it could of course not address this carnage at the time of writing. Nonetheless, after this massacre struck, it is

possible that the lyric has acquired this significance. This attack was staged by a group calling themselves the real IRA and it is regarded as the worst massacre during the Troubles, in which twenty-nine people were brutally killed (cf. McKittrick & McVea 261). This horrific attack generated “a shock wave which reverberated around the world” (McKittrick & McVea 262). But regardless of who was responsible for it, the devastations were grueling, and many people were bereaved of their beloved ones, being in the position of ‘crawling’.

However, even from the position of ‘crawling’ there seems to be some hints of progression within this relationship throughout the song, and a movement towards the insight that despite various obstacles, the unity between the speaker and his interlocutor is still intact, sharing “One life with each other: Sisters, brothers / One life, but we’re not the same”(ll.23-24). These lines represent a realization that we are all ‘siblings’, and that every one of us is part of a larger, unified whole. Interpreted in this manner, the last lines offer some sort of reconciliation. The theme of unity is also reinforced by the lyric’s literary devices, such as repetition, and above all by the reiteration of the line stating that “we’re one but we’re not the same” (l.9). The repetition of this line brings the main idea of the song into focus: the underpinning conviction that all humanity is one.

As alluded to above, “One” seems to be a very personal song, as many of U2’s early songs. Bruce Springsteen, however, makes an interesting point, referred to in *U2–The Complete Songs,* when he claims that even though these songs are intimate and personal, they are “personal with their arms wide open” (“Introduction”, unpaginated). In the following, I will demonstrate how this song might be interpreted on different layers. Accordingly, the song might not only concern love within a relationship, but rather also take the intimate and personal and apply it as political allegory. When reading “One” as political allegory, I will be interpreting the lyrics in dialogue with political events, demonstrating that in addition to the layer of love, there might also be a political layer to the song. When scrutinizing the lyrics, looking for those tacit hints of political allusions, at the same time as bearing in mind the layer of love, one actually reads the text allegorically. This way of exploring a text, implies reading a text in at least two ways; considering both surface and depth levels,

ranging from the natural and obvious meaning, to exploring what might be hidden underneath the surface (cf. Tambling 20). An allegorical reading might, as observed in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, "help preserve a text by applying it to contemporary circumstances …" (Preminger et al. 32). In his book on allegory, Tambling refers to allegory as a "veil" (cf. 28). This "veil", however, might be included intentionally or unintentionally in a text. As I see it, both the presumably unintentional "veil", or the intentional "veil" might be evoked by textual allusions regarding political issues that have taken place on U2's own doorstep, alluding to actual events.

Eight years after the release of "One", the song was given new significance by the Yes campaign, during the Irish Peace Process. This campaign was staged by the government prior to the referendum on the approval of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement on May 22, 1998. Long-lasting negotiations between the opposing groupings in Northern Ireland had eventually resulted in the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on April 10, 1998. This agreement was realized "against the odds" (McKittrick & McVea 256) and propelled by the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the then American President-elect Bill Clinton (Kennedy et al.). In the wake of the signing, measures were taken to encourage people, both in the North and in the South, to formally approve of the agreement in the upcoming referendum. One of these measures was the staging of the Yes concert in Belfast at Waterfront Hall on May 18, 1998.

On short notice, U2 was asked to play at this concert along with Ash, a well-known band from the North. It was here, at the concert at Waterfront Hall that "One" was played and "morphed into something else" (Bailie 239), and many people were deeply affected on an emotional level. The song was performed immediately after the iconic handshake between the political divide, between David Trimble (UUP)[8] and

[8] "Ulster Unionist Party – The main Unionist party for most of Northern Ireland's history, it provided the government from 1921 until 1972, securing an overall majority in every election. David (later Lord) Trimble served as its leader for ten years from 1995. It was eventually eclipsed as the largest party by the DUP" (McKittrick & McVea 386). "The Democratic Unionist Party was founded in 1971 in succession to the Protestant Unionist Party, its long-time leader was the Reverend Ian Paisley, followed by Peter Robinson" (McKittrick & McVea 380).

John Hume(SDLP)[9], and during this performance an extra verse was added to the lyrics, from “Hear Us Coming” (U2.com/gigs) a verse sometimes added to “One” when sung live, pleading “Do you hear us coming, Lord? / Do you hear us call? / Do you hear us knocking? / We're knocking at your door (ll.1-4) (U2.com/gigs), before slipping “in a coda of “Give Peace A Chance”, referring to John Lennon (cf. Bailie 239). Four days after the concert, the referendums were held, both in the north and in the south, and the results proved that “the afterglow of unity” (AF Archive, unpaginated) remained, and over 90 per cent of the Catholics, north and south, were in approval of the Good Friday Agreement. The Protestant community, on the other hand, was more reluctant to endorse to the GFA, and the referendums showed that “around half of the Unionists” voted Yes, whereas the other half voted No (cf. McKittrick & McVea 258).

At the time of the writing of the song, however, Northern Ireland was still marked by sectarian violence (cf. McKittrick & McVea 206). “One” was written only five years after the endorsement of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, an agreement which above all aimed at strengthening the relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom, “giving the Irish government a consultative role in NI affairs” (McKittrick & McVea 322). In December 1991, however, there was a change within the republican community, and Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein (the political wing of the IRA), initiated talks with the governments in Britain and Ireland respectively, aiming at developing ”a real peace process” (McKittrick & McVea 330). Finally, as was to become publicly known later; this was also the time of the so-called ‘secret talks’, between “the two dominant figures in northern nationalism” (McKittrick & McVea 217), i.e., between John Hume (SDLP) and Gerry Adams, and also between the IRA and the British governments, talks that had been initiated in 1988 and 1991 respectively (cf. Thompson 145). Given that these talks were secret, however, they could of course not have impacted the writing of these lyrics.

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[9] “Social Democratic and Labour Party – The main nationalist party in Northern Ireland for most of the Troubles, it was established in 1970 with the aim of promoting a united Ireland by peaceful means. It was eclipsed by Sinn Fein. Its leader for most of the Troubles was John Hume” (McKittrick & McVea 384). “Sinn Fein -Essentially the political wing of the IRA…[and] an all-Ireland political organization headed by Gerry Adams” (McKittrick & McVea 384).

The political division between the Catholic and Protestant communities might be seen to be mirrored in the lyrics of "One", as demonstrated in the ninth line: "we're one, but we're not the same". But what could possibly suggest that one might interpret "One" as political allegory, apart from the mere fact that it was played at the Yes concert? Here the historical circumstances sketched in the introductory chapter of this thesis are again relevant. After the partition of Ireland in 1921, the Irish people were arguably "one, but not the same». Northern Ireland belonged to the UK, whereas the South became independent. At the core of both countries, however, there is a connection embedded in the notion of being Irish, applying both to the people in the South as well as to the Catholic communities in the North. Yet despite this seeming 'oneness' of Ireland, one could nevertheless argue that the Protestant communities of Northern Ireland are left out, because they are not originally part of this Irish unity, but rather part of the United Kingdom.

The notion of unity might, however, also be applicable solely to Northern Ireland and its divisions between the Loyalists or Unionists (mostly Protestants) and the Nationalists or Republicans (mostly Catholics). Despite religious tensions, Christianity is, after all, at the bottom of each of these communities, and they are all Northern Irish, although they "are not the same". Thus, Christianity emphasizes the fact that both Catholic people and Protestant people are "one". Even though they seem to be "one" in this sense, though, the people of Northern Ireland have never managed to fully identify themselves as such. According to Mulholland, the Catholic and the Protestant communities compete rather than support one another, clinging "tenaciously to that which marks them out" (Mulholland xiiiii). The immediate question is: How could one possibly aspire to unity from such a point of view? Is it even possible, or does it imply a rewriting of the notion of 'unity'? Instead of dreaming about a unified, identical, national Northern Irish 'whole', would it be possible to maintain the vision of 'oneness' despite the contrastive elements?

Here one might draw a parallel to Virginia Woolf's pageant and its mirrored audience in the novel *Between the Acts.* The novel is set in the English countryside at the time of WWII. The plot revolves around an upcoming pageant, set up by a lady called Miss La Trobe. The pageant displays important events from English history, and in doing so, one might argue that the pageant helps strengthen the national

identity. In the final, scene, however, the emphasis is turned from the past to the present, and in doing so, the audience is mirrored through many actual mirrors. This act disturbs the audience members, who "saw themselves not whole by any means" (Woolf 110), as they are offered a broken, incomplete image of themselves. Still, each member of the audience sees himself for the first time as a constituent of the communal, or national whole. Consequently, one might argue that everyone feels part of a unity; that they feel as 'one' (cf. Benziman 61-62, 65-66). This might serve as a parallel to the situation of the Unionists and Republicans in Northern Ireland, or for that matter, also for the people in the South. What if all groupings could realize that they are 'one'; that they are part of a larger 'we', despite both differences and divisions? This is perhaps the sanest way of conceiving of a 'unity' in this context, because this way of interpreting 'unity' secures the individual aspects within the unified whole.

If we return to the lyrics of "One", the unified whole, and the possibly newly established notion of 'we' is also arguably alluded to in line ten, stating that "we get to carry each other", a conclusion reiterated in line twenty-five. But what could possibly be embedded in the image of 'carrying' each other? And how could we possible carry *one another*? The notion of 'carrying each other'' is here a figurative image, which alludes to the fact that people need to help each other in order to make life livable for all parties. This aspect of 'carrying one another' might refer both to the people of Northern Ireland as well as to the people of the Republic of Ireland. One must keep in mind that Ireland was not divided until 1920, as mentioned in the introduction (cf. McKittrick & McVea 4).

When reading these lines as political allegory, a perspective activated by the Yes concert performance, I would argue that some of the elements of helping and carrying each other are embodied through political agreements set out to 'help' people. Accordingly, this line might have been interpreted as alluding to the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 at the time of the writing of the song. Later, as has already been made evident, the song as a whole also played an important role during the peace process leading up to the referendum on the Good Friday Agreement in May, 1998, acknowledging this reading as one of many possible *significances* of the lyrics, in accordance with Hirsch's concepts.

The notion of ‘carrying one another’ also tacitly makes a Biblical reference, alluding to Galatians 6:2 and the request to “bear ye one another’s burdens”, and in doing so, one would “fulfil the law of Christ” (KJB Gal 6:2). The signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement on November 15, 1985 by the British and the Irish Prime ministers, Margaret Thatcher and Garret FitzGerald, might be regarded as an attempt of trying to “carry each other”. Above all, this agreement secured the Irish government a consulting role in Northern Irish affairs. This might have felt like a handshake for the Catholic Nationalists, but the response within the Protestant Unionist communities was far from positive. Furthermore, this agreement most likely also alienated the Protestant communities and the people who were loyal to the British government, who saw it as a threat to their Britishness (cf. McKittrick & McVea 190). Consequently, the Anglo-Irish Agreement did not provide much help or ‘carrying’ for Northern Ireland as a whole. On an everyday level, I would suggest that this agreement contributed to maintaining the sectarian divide, alongside suspicion and traumatization among the split population of Northern Ireland.

It is possible to read line seventeen, “Well we hurt each other, then we do it again” and also line twenty, “You ask me to enter, but then you make me crawl”, as alluding to certain aspects of the Troubles and to atrocities that took place after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. This would include the many Loyalist attacks, as for example the petrol-bombing of Catholic homes in County Antrim, and the planting of bombs in Dublin. However, it was not only the Loyalists who maintained the level of violence, also the Republicans contributed to this by killing a loyalist by a plastic bullet and detonating a bomb at the Lisburn Road RUC station, damaging “hundreds of homes and businesses”(cf. McKittrick & McVea 323-324). More generally, though, the lyrics might also refer back to the entirety of the conflict up to that point.

What about the signing of the Good Friday Agreement thirteen years later, then? How did that affect people, both politically and in terms of ground-level attitudes? And even more importantly, did it help people “to carry each other?” It is important to bear in mind that U2 did not know the effect of the agreement when they were performing at the Yes concert, but they presumably hoped that this kind of

"carrying each other" would be an effect of the agreement. To some extent, it might have helped people on an everyday basis since measures were taken to ensure fair employment alongside encouraging people to stand up against discrimination. The agreement also implied an empowering of the Irish language, a significant symbol regarding national recognition (cf. Mulholland 143).

At that time, one could only hope that such a tragedy would never ever occur again; that this was the last massacre. Bono shared this hope, stating that the Omagh bombing had to be "the moment which marked the end of the Troubles" - (Mariobrus 06:03-06:21). Even though the Troubles' death rate decreased drastically in the years to come, from fifty-four deaths in 1998 to six deaths in 1999, to provide one example, violence had not come to an end (cf. McKittrick & McVea 375). Unfortunately, people in Northern Ireland still suffered in the aftermath of sectarianism, and traumatization has been hailed as one of the main challenges in its wake. These challenges were in a way embedded within the Good Friday Agreement, which acknowledges the importance of addressing the victims and their agony as a "necessary element of reconciliation" (Mulholland 77).

In addition to playing an important role during the Yes campaign, "One" has been of huge significance worldwide ever since. This refers to the third period in which this song has applied new significances. During nearly three decades, spanning from the early ZOOTV Tour in 1992 until the recent Joshua Tree Tour 2019 (U2.com/tours), this song has been included as a matter of course on U2's set list. "One", especially played an important part at the concerts on the Elevation Tour in 2001, at the post 9/11 concerts in Madison Square Garden, New York (U2Start 1:30:24-1:36:45). Over the years, U2 have played this song in support of various people who face divergent challenges, and in this respect, the song has had great significance, from advocating against poverty through the ONE campaign, as highlighted on the Vertigo Tour in 2005-06 to advocating for unity, stating that "all humanity is one"(U2gigs.com 00:42-00:54).

As we have seen in this subchapter, U2 has applied "One" in three periods, spanning over three decades, addressing domestic issues as well as "conveying a

globally relevant geopolitical[10] message" (Morley & Somdahl-Sands 59), messages most people might relate to; thus, "One" has come to mean a lot to many people worldwide.

2.2 "North and South of the River"

Five years after the writing of "One", U2 co-wrote the song "North and South of the River" with folk musician Christy Moore, at a time, in which hope, and frustration went hand in hand with regard to finding a resolution of the Northern Irish conflict. At first glance, this song, as is also the case with "One", seems to describe an intimate relationship. But on a deeper level, as we shall see, the lyric appears to be applicable as political allegory, addressing the Troubles in Northern Ireland and "the difficulties of reconciling Nationalist and Unionist traditions" (Stokes 190). As I see it, the very title of the song also connotes the Troubles.

To begin with, I want to address relevant lines from the song from the perspective of it being a love song. In undertaking this, I will highlight the relationship between the speaker and his interlocutor. Secondly, I will attempt to interpret the song as political allegory and in doing so, I will be drawing upon Tambling's theory on the matter, as well as examining the situation in Northern Ireland at the time. Finally, I will endeavor to apply relevant political events to the lyrics.

The song can be read as a prayer, or a plea on the personal level since the lyric seems to indicate that there is an intimate relationship between the speaker and the person written to. This is, above all, demonstrated through the word "darling", in which the speaker confides "Darling, I don't have the answer" (l.17). The song reveals a longing for meeting the other person despite the distance that exists between the two of them, as exemplified in the opening lines: "I want to reach out over the lough / And feel your hand across the water"(ll.1-2). The song furthermore seems to depict a sincere longing for being 'one' and for learning about each other in order "to understand your fears" (l.6).

[10] "Connected with political activity as influenced by the physical features of a country or area, or with the study of the way a country's size, position, etc. influence its power and its relationships with other countries" (Cambridge Dictionary).

However, the speaker does not only address fear, but also hurt, and here I am in agreement with songmeanings.com, and their claim that this song is “a stellar song about love…basically dealing with life in spite of the hurt” (songmeanings.com). It conveys the pain underpinning people’s lives, realizing that “There’s no feeling / That’s so alone / As when the one you’re hurting is your own / North & south of the river” (ll.21-26). This would be true in intimate relationships; nobody can hurt you as much as the person you are closest to. The pain which is depicted in these lines also seem to be underscored by the fact that that the speaker and his interlocutor are “North & south of the river”, that they live in different places separated by a divide which seems difficult to overcome. The difficulty in the situation is emphasized by the repetition of this phrase throughout the song. The dwelling upon the lines “North & south of the river” (ll.24-26) connotes yearning, and it also conjures up some of the themes addressed in this thesis, such as love and unity. The speaker seems to be dreaming about uniting and of being able to shake hands with and touch the other person’s hand “across the water” (l.2).

The hurting, however, does not necessarily have to take place within a personal relationship. On a deeper level, “North and South of the River” might also be read as political allegory, addressing the Troubles in the North. Subsequently, the hurting might refer to the devastating attacks conducted by both Catholics and Protestants during the Troubles, including the ramifications in the aftermath. In 1995, at the time of the writing of the song, the death rate had decreased in comparison with the preceding two years (cf. McKittrick & McVea 375). Northern Ireland was further marked by the announcement of the ending of “the daytime army patrols in Belfast” (McKittrick & McVea 340). Even more importantly, Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein, stated that “republicans were ready to make ‘critical compromises’ to achieve peace” (McKittrick & McVea 341) and both the British and the Irish governments initiated talks with the parties in Northern Ireland (cf. McKittrick & McVea 341). In the song, the phrase “unapproved road” (l.3), above all hints to the Northern Irish dichotomy in its specific allusion to Irish border traffic and its regulations. Earlier, the notion of the “unapproved road” has been drawn upon by the Irish poet Paul Muldoon in his poem by the same name (cf. Moore, unpaginated). According to official traffic regulations in the South, dating back to 1926, the

expression “unapproved road” indicated whether you were permitted to cross the Northern Irish border or not. If you were permitted to cross the border, the “direction sign” would indicate ‘approved road’, but if crossing the frontier was not permitted, the sign would say “unapproved road” (cf. Moore, unpaginated).

The dream of being able to cross “an unapproved road” might also allude to the speaker’s longing for peace, and his future dream of being able to cross the frontier freely, not having to look “over my shoulder”. The speaker seems to be dreaming about being able to walk on an “unapproved road”, without being hyper-vigilant or on constant alert. This feeling of being in constant arousal (cf. Luckhurst 1) is a condition which is also depicted by Paul Muldoon in his poem “Ireland”, included in the introduction of this thesis. Being surrounded by fear and distrust, the speaker of the poem does not know whose car it is that he spots: “The Volkswagen parked in the gap…/ You wonder if it’s lovers / And not men hurrying back” (Muldoon 82-83). Finally, the phrase “unapproved road” in the U2 lyric might also allude to a possible future reunification of Ireland and to a peaceful coexistence between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland, or it might be a foreshadowing of life in heaven. Arguably, heaven is evoked in the text through the lack of fear, for if you do not have to be “looking over” your shoulder, it implies that you are in a safe place; a place that might be described as a place in which “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”(KJB: Rev 21:4).

Reality, however, could not be likened to this image of heaven. In real life, the Northern Irish people still lived by sectarian lines in 1996, fearing what might happen next. The feeling of loneliness and agony that most people probably felt in the aftermath of such atrocities is depicted as being the loneliest feeling you might experience, “as when the one you’re hurting is your own” (l.23). This line underscores the fact that the casualties are your next of kin. Even though the Catholic and Protestant communities are of different heritage, the people in Northern Ireland *still* are ‘one’, in the sense that they are Northern Irish and in that they belong to the UK, as addressed in the analysis of “One”. Thus, the terrors that have taken place between these opposing communities have in fact been atrocities committed on their “own”. It is possible that the conflict between the Protestants and the Catholics is also

alluded to in that “there’s an old church bell no longer ringing” (l. 29), implying that religion is a major cause for division in Northern Ireland.

This lyric, however, does not only address division, rather, it also holds traces of hope, and of meeting the other person “where you are” (l.19), without any preconditions, in which the speaker confides “I don’t [even] need you to surrender”(l.20). Hope in this song, however, is intertwined with frustration, and a sense that “the wind from the lough just got colder and colder”(l.11), possibly expressing U2’s frustration with the different political setbacks, such as disputes over Orange march routes, in which the RUC permitted a march down Garvaghy Road even though the nationalist people living there objected to it. The decommissioning of IRA weapons was also controversial at the time, and in July 1995, the IRA demanded that Sinn Fein should be included in interparty political talks if they were to dispose of their weapons (cf. McKittrick & McVea 341). This period in time, however, when hope and frustration went hand in hand, was leading up to something of a resolution of the conflict. In December 1995, both the British and the Irish governments invited the parties in Northern Ireland to participate in “talks” (McKittrick & McVea 341), initiating hope for the future. As I see it, U2 also wanted to contribute to evoking peace between the two different groupings, and when they played “North and South of the River” at the Omagh Tribute on Irish television, they shared the hope that this massacre marked the end of the Troubles (Mariobrus 06:16-06:21). As we shall see, this was definitely a step in the right direction, but unfortunately, it did not mark the end of the Troubles.

2.3 “Please”

Only two years after the writing of “North and South of the River”', U2 set out to write another song advocating peace in Northern Ireland. This resulted in “Please”, which was released on the *Pop* album, on March 3, 1997. According to Bailie, this is an album “about being lost in the supermarket, [and] about glowing surfaces and screaming vacancy” (234). The screaming vacancy in the wake of the atrocities and the longing for peace is above all depicted in “Please”. Not only the lyrics, but also the cover of the *Pop* album mirrored the political landscape and its leaders at the

time; consequently, the cover neither included fancy pictures of the band, nor modern art. On the contrary, the cover pictured some of the politicians involved in the peace process: Trimble, Hume, Adams and Paisley (cf. Bailie 234). Despite the stagnation and the setbacks, the song still conveys hope for the future and a belief in love, a love that is bigger than the divisions.

This song advocates an ending of a seemingly hopeless situation, and it seems to insist on peace. In his plea for peace, the speaker implores his interlocutor to do something to help end what seems to be a horrible situation: "Please, please, please / Get up off your knees. / Please, please, please" (ll.11-13). The reiteration of the single word "please" reinforces the plea for peace, and the desperation is furthermore underlined as Bono goes into high-pitched vocals. This falsetto seems to reveal a desperate hope for an ending of a troublesome situation. The speaker begs his interlocutor to refuse being a victim. The speaker himself, however, seems to be unwilling to get involved in the situation, asking his interlocutor to "Leave me out of this, please". This positioning of the speaker, however, is reminiscent of the speaker in "Sunday Bloody Sunday", who also wants to stay out of the conflict, proclaiming that he "won't heed the battle call" (l.11). The interesting question is, *why* does the writer want to be left out of the situation and not take part? Could it be that it might be too dangerous to get involved or could it allude to U2 themselves and the fact that they live in the south? Even more interestingly one might ask *who* is the speaker, and *whom* is he addressing? Is it the people in charge or is it the ones who are being 'oppressed'?

The song can be applied to the circumstances in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. At the time of the writing of the song, the political backdrop in Northern Ireland was far from stable, and there were few signs of peace. The latter is possibly signaled through Larry's military style playing on the drums in this song, echoing the militaristic drumbeats in "Sunday Bloody Sunday", even though the rhythm is perhaps more languid and more melancholy in "Please". The video version of "Please" adds to this picture, in that it features a small marching band (in kneeling position), which of course creates associations in the direction of the Unionists and the Orange marches (U2 02:05-02:11). The song was written at the time of "the collapse of the ceasefire" (Stokes 114), caused by the IRA bomb in County Antrim in Northern

Ireland in October 1996 (cf. McKittrick & McVea 343). These circumstances are most likely alluded to in lines thirty-two to thirty-four: “September, streets capsizing / Spilling over down the drains / Shard of glass, splinters like rain”. These lines above all display a frustration with regard to time, and it is really a song that relates to being in history, as line thirty-two, thirty-six and thirty-seven spell out the months from September to December. The question of the decommissioning of weapons on both sides was also relevant at the time. It seemed hard to agree on this issue, and earlier that year, a spokesman for the IRA conveyed that they would not give in to the demand before they had reached an agreement (cf. McKittrick & McVea 342).

The speaker seems to provide more information about his interlocutor in line twenty: “Your Catholic blues, your convent shoes”. We might assume that the speaker addresses the Catholic community and the word ‘blues’ might allude to the sufferings and possible depressions endured by the Catholics during the Troubles. The word “convent”, on the other hand, seems rather ambiguous. It might allude to the presumed innocence and purity which characterizes life in a monastery. However, the word “convent” might also indicate religious dominance and serve as a symbol of oppression and division. When interpreting the word in this way, it does not seem to connote ‘cleanness’ and ‘purity’; on the contrary, it seems rather dark and secretive, connoting conflict. However, it is not only the Catholics who are being addressed in this lyric, on the contrary, I think there is a tacit hint to the Protestants as well, demonstrated in lines eighteen and nineteen: “So you never knew that the heaven / You keep you stole”. But what might the contrasting images of “heaven” and ‘stealing’ allude to? As I see it, “heaven” in this context connotes Protestant supremacy, whereas the ‘stealing’ alludes to the British invasion and their ‘stealing’ of Ireland, if you like (cf. Mulholland 3).

As I see it, the ‘stealing’ of Ireland is also addressed in the twenty-first line, highlighting the “stick-on tattoos [and how] now they’re making the news”. As I see it, the “stick-on tattoos” might possibly symbolize slogans applied during the civil rights marches, like for instance “one man-one vote” (McKittrick & McVea 44), and it goes without saying, that such slogans were “making the news”. The “stick-on tattoos” might also hint to the murals painted on end walls, above all in Belfast, and their

displaying of images and slogans from both the Catholic and the Protestant communities.

Line twenty-two provides further information about the political backdrop to the song, referring to “Your holy war, your northern star”. This line might give a further hint that this song is addressing a religious conflict. The phrase “holy war”, however, is rather ambiguous, and as I see it, it implies sarcasm and adds an ironic and at times also angry tone to the song, since no war is holy. On the contrary, war is the opposite of everything which is sacred. Even though the war is described as “holy”, it is still a war and people presumably suffer as a result of it., as suggested in line thirty-five, “But you could only feel your own pain”. The Crusades were also (and sometimes are) described as “holy wars” (cf. History.com), but few people would now feel they were justified or particularly uplifting.

What might “your northern star”, in the same line, refer to? The fact that it is a star, could indicate positivity. After all, it was a star that led the way to the stable of Christ, as stated by the wise men from the east saying, “we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him”(KJB Matt 2:2). On the other hand, a star might also indicate distance and coldness, possibly also drawing on the image of war, in which the “northern star” might symbolize the coldness of war and the suffering in its wake. Finally, a star might also allude to star signs, astrology and prophesying of the future. To some, this might evoke fear whereas for others, it will evoke excitement as well as hopefulness. The star is described as “northern», which, as I see it, might indicate that the place described is located somewhere in Northern Europe – more specifically, Northern Ireland. The notion of the “northern star” might also possibly allude to the newspaper of the *United Irishmen*, at least obliquely (cf. Lotha et al.). The *United Irishmen* was an “Irish political organization formed in October 1791”, whose main objective was to advocate complete Irish independence from the British (cf. Lotha et al.). The phrase could possibly also allude to a future hope for peace.

However, the following line takes us back from stellar beauty and sparkling hope for the future to realistic contact in the “boot of your car” (l.23). It seems that most people live their lives ‘here’, in the “boot” of their cars, on an everyday level, and this life also and includes attending “sermon[s]”. As I see it, however, this line

above all draws upon Jesus' Sermon on the Mount[11]. The speaker's sermon, however, is a much less elevated and distinguished thing, as he gives it from the boot of his car. This demonstrates a stark contrast between the hope on the starry sky and the real life in the "boot of a car", and it might serve as a parallel to the Irish poet, Seamus Heaney's description of hope and history in *The Cure at Troy* , in which hope and history only rhyme "once in a lifetime" (Heaney 93). As I see it, this realization is also applicable to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, reinforcing the interpretation of "Please" as political allegory.

In addition to interpreting "Please" along the lines of political allegory, one might also address the theme of love in this lyric. In this context, however, love is depicted through the lens of victimhood, drawing on domestic abuse, possibly demonstrated in the middle of the first verse, "…you never felt wanted / Till you'd someone slap your face". There is also an allusion to subjugation and oppression embedded in this lyric, above all depicted in line twelve, in which the interlocutor is in a kneeling position. Here, it seems that the person addressed has been accustomed to abusive behavior, and that this behavior in one way or another causes the victim to feel loved, or if not loved, at least "wanted", as depicted in the third line. The speaker, however, urges him or her to "Get up off your knees", but this is much to ask of a person who has been used to kneeling. Accordingly, "Please" also draws on the recurrence of the idea of 'crawling', encountered in "One" earlier in this chapter, stating in lines sixteen and seventeen of "Please" that "you never knew what was on the ground / Till they made you crawl". Even though the speaker repeatedly beseeches his interlocutor to get up off his or her knees, it does not seem like the victim has the capacity to fight his or her condition any further.

The feeling of being trapped and of being unable to "get up off your knees" tallies with psychological theories addressing victimhood, exemplified by Michelle Ciurria's claim that there is a connection between low self-efficacy and possible coping strategies (6). This observation further tallies with Nancy J. Hirschmann's

[11] "Sermon on the Mount, a biblical collection of religious teachings and ethical sayings of Jesus of Nazareth, as found in Matthew, chapters 5–7. The sermon was addressed to disciples and a large crowd of listeners to guide them in a life of discipline based on a new law of love, even to enemies, as opposed to the old law of retribution. In the Sermon on the Mount are found many of the most familiar Christian homilies and sayings, including the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer (*qq.v.*)" (Augustyn et al.).

assertion that a victim might feel that he deserves both the violence and the guilt, and that somehow, the victim has been used to living along these lines, (cf. 133). These are concepts which will be further discussed in the following chapter, as victimhood is a recurring theme in U2's Trouble lyrics.

Victims of domestic abuse might be in a situation which could be likened to boiling frogs, either in hot or tepid water. Within the field of psychology, the fable of the boiling frog[12] is labelled 'boiled frog syndrome', describing how one might adapt to an unpleasant situation if one only becomes familiar with the situation, gradually, over time. This condition might allude to insidious trauma, or "chronic traumatization" (cf. Kaysen et. al 248). It must be hard to find love in such circumstances, and the second line of the lyric indicates that love was not found until the interlocutor "crossed the line of grace" (l.2). However, it is not as if the interlocutor is presented as someone who has found religious redemption and peace of mind; on the contrary, the interlocutor is described as a person who is used to violence and who "never felt wanted / Till you'd someone slap your face" (ll.3-4), creating an ironic contrast between grace and abusive behavior.

But what might "grace" connote in this context, and in which situations could one possibly "cross the line of grace"? In this lyric, the notion of "grace" is contrasted with the concept of violence. When interpreting "grace" along evangelical lines, I will assert that "grace" alludes to God and his unconditional love towards the victim. Grace could, however, also refer to an encounter with a magnanimous person or party. Irrespective of which reading one chooses, both divine and human grace might help restoring faith in love, as depicted in the song "Grace" on the *All That You Can't Leave Behind* album (2000). The lyrics of the latter song state that "Grace makes beauty / Out of ugly things" (U2.com/Lyrics). And from a Christian's point of view, God might even create something beautiful out of an abusive relationship or other traumatic experiences, like loss and bereavement.

[12] "The *boiling frog* is a fable describing a *frog* being slowly *boiled* alive. The premise is that if a *frog* is put suddenly into *boiling* water, it will jump out, but if the *frog* is put in tepid water which is then brought to a *boil* slowly, it will not perceive the danger and will be *cooked* to death" ("Boiling Frog").

Grace, as I see it, alludes to God and to the possibility of a new beginning, whereas the concept of violence and trauma is manifested through the ‘slapping’ of “your face”. Both the third and fourth lines, “And you never felt wanted / Till you’d someone slap your face”, underscore the presence of violence and trauma, indicating that violence seems to be both chronic and habitual. After all, the victim does not feel wanted till “someone slap your face”, acting like this ‘slapping’ is normal behavior within the relationship, either be it a romantic relationship or a relationship between opposing communities, such as that of the Northern Irish conflict. The chronic nature of such traumatic experiences relates to insidious trauma, as mentioned previously, referring to a trauma which impacts people over a longer course of time (cf. Rodi-Risberg 111). Even though trauma seems to be chronic within this context, the speaker seems to address his interlocutor, inspiring the victim to empower himself and to “please, please, please / Get up off your knees” (ll. 11-13) and to defeat victimhood, and battle his way to freedom. This might apply to the interpretation of both thematic layers, both the layer of political allegory as well as the layer of love.

In this chapter I have analyzed “One”, “North and South of the River”, and “Please”. These lyrics seem to share a strong wish for unity and peace despite division or distance. These are songs which include several layers, and I have addressed how they combine love lyrics and political allegory. In undertaking this, I have touched upon Hirsch Jr.’s levels of *meaning* and *significance*. I have also briefly explored the field of political allegory and referred to Tambling and the concept of allegory as “veil” (28). It seems to me, that the more malleable a lyric is, the more applicable it is to a variety of circumstances, and this goes for the songs addressed in this chapter. Even though these songs might be labelled ‘Troubles’ songs, the lyrics are applicable to other situations.

Chapter 3: Personal Experiences – Confessions & Conflict in Later Work

3.1 "Peace on Earth" - U2's Battle Cry

Like the preceding chapters, this chapter will also be addressing themes of victimhood, trauma, religion, love and unity, in line with my thesis statement. In the following, I will bring into focus the band's personal experiences regarding the Troubles. In doing so, I will first explore "Peace on Earth", a song which was released on the *All That You Can't Leave Behind* album in 2000, three years after the *Pop* album. The cover of the millennial album displays the band members at the Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, standing in a huge hall with their baggage in front of them (cf. Stokes 120). As I see it, both the title of the album and the front cover might allude (among other things) to the aspect of trauma and to all that one cannot leave behind. This image tallies with Dawson's observation, that "trauma is never fully in the past, but lives on in the present" (85), meaning that there is some baggage which one will have to carry for the rest of one's life, and that this baggage will continue to haunt its victims.

There are a few other songs on the *All That You Can't Leave Behind* album, as well, that might connect to the themes addressed in this thesis, such as "Grace" (mentioned in the previous chapter), in which God "makes beauty out of ugly things". Last but not least, the themes of victimhood, love and trauma are also addressed in "Walk On", in which the speaker acknowledges the pain in life, stating that "…I know it aches / And your heart it breaks" at the same time as encouraging his interlocutor to "walk on", and to leave behind whatever is possible to leave behind.

This pain in life also underpins the lyric of "Peace on Earth". The song was written as a direct response to the Omagh bombing on August 15, 1998, only a few months after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (cf. Feeney 110). The attack was staged by a group calling themselves "the real IRA". This group consisted of former IRA members who objected to the peace process. This incident was a major setback to the peace process in Northern Ireland, and it is described as one of the worst carnages of the Troubles, with twenty-nine casualties (cf. McKittrick & McVea 261). Accordingly, this massacre would be a part of the 'baggage' which is hard to

leave behind. The song was an urgent prayer for peace at a time, when "hope and history won't rhyme", as described in line forty-nine, addressing the gap between hope on one side, and reality on the other. This line displays rich intertextuality, drawing on Seamus Heaney's chorus in *The Cure at Troy*, and the comforting lines, stating that "…once in a lifetime / The longed-for tidal wave / Of justice can rise up, / And hope and history rhyme" (Heaney 93). However, U2 is not the only one to have been inspired by Seamus Heaney. Both Gerry Adams and Bill Clinton drew upon this line in the titles of their autobiographies[13].

"Peace on Earth" depicts a speaker who "is sick of all of this [pain]" (l.3) and who seems to be exhausted from living within what seems to be a conflict zone, imploring that what he needs now is "Heaven on Earth"(l.1). He further displays his own reactions to the difficulties, confiding that he is "sick of sorrow / sick of pain" (ll. 5-6), presumably because of the endless atrocities and the many casualties during the Troubles. U2 is aware of the death toll caused by the Troubles, and in the 2001 Elevation Tour, the band paid homage to the Omagh victims. In doing so, Bono recited all twenty-nine deceased by their real names, as for example at the concert at Slane Castle on the outskirts of Dublin on September 1, 2001 (Isaac BG 31:46-32:30). Five of the victims' names are also included in the lyrics of "Peace on Earth": "Sean and Julia, Gareth, Ann and Breda" (l. 37). The following line concludes that "their lives are bigger than any big idea" (l.38), meaning that human life exceeds any ideology, and that no ideology is worth dying for.

In this song, as is the case with many songs from the U2 catalogue, the speaker addresses Jesus or God. In this song, though, Bono appears to take a different stand than he normally does in such lyrics. Here it seems that he doubts in God, and His ability, or rather His will to help, when asking" Jesus could you take the time / To throw a drowning man a line" (ll.22-23). Here the speaker appears to be implicitly assuming that God has more important things on His mind, than helping him. The same question, however, is repeated in the forty-fifth and forty-sixth lines, underscoring the fact that despite the doubt, the speaker still addresses God and

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[13] Gerry Adam's autobiography *Hope and History – Making Peace in Ireland* was released in 2003 (cf. Good Reads), and Bill Clinton's autobiography *Between Hope and History: Meeting America's Challenges for the 21st Century,* was released in 1996 (cf. Good Reads).

turns to Him for help, even though God's words about peace on earth "are sticking" in the speaker's throat (l. 47). Arguably, this proves that one can consult God in times of crisis; that one can be a Christian and still write dark songs. This brings to mind the important biblical precedent of Job, the wealthy man who had everything, but lost it all. In his hopelessness and suffering he consulted God, asking "Why me?" (Peterson 631). Even though Job lost all of his children, he still clung to God, refusing to let go of his faith, knowing "that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (KJB Job 19:25). A lot of songs within the U2 catalogue engage with a Biblical register, and in the case of "Peace on Earth" the speaker takes a specifically Jobean position.

My observations regarding the speaker's disbelief in God disagrees with what critics have said about this song. According to Stokes, "Peace on Earth" is "Bono's most agnostic song", but as I see it, the speaker holds onto his faith, despite his questioning of God's actions. These lyrics seem related to the lyrics of "Wake Up Dead Man" from the same album. In the latter, the speaker begs for help, asking Jesus to help him because he is "…alone in this world / And a fucked-up world it is too". "Peace on Earth" might be seen as a direct follow up to "Wake Up Dead Man", and the latter also draws on Heaney, as demonstrated through the prayer in line thirty-two, imploring Jesus to "listen as hope and peace try to rhyme". As I see it, the lines quoted from both songs stand in stark contrast to the triumphant ending lines of "Sunday Bloody Sunday", in which Bono rejoices, celebrating "the victory, Jesus won". This victory, however, above all alludes to the biblical, future hope of heaven, a hope that was also evoked in the lyrics of "North and South of the River", alluding to heaven as a place in which suffering is absent (cf. KJB Rev 21:4).

In this song, U2 does not only allude to biblical aspects; as I see it, they also address collective, as well as individual trauma caused by bereavement, as brutally described in lines thirty to thirty-three: "She never got to say goodbye / To see the color in his eyes / Now he's in the dirt". Traumatic experiences are also alluded to in lines fourteen to seventeen, stating "that what you mock / Will surely overtake you / And you become a monster / So the monster will not break you." Here it seems that the difficulties have caused a transformation of the personality. The addressee, who did not use to be "a monster", has now "become a monster" (l.16) in the wake of all

the hardships. But a crucial question arises: *Who are the monsters?* My immediate response is that the answer will be colored by whom you might ask. In terms of the Omagh bombing, one could claim that the monsters were the 'extreme' Republicans, and not the more moderate Nationalists. According to the latter political wing, however, it is the Unionists who are the monsters and accordingly, they are the ones to blame.

Regardless of who might take responsibility, I would argue that there is trauma and suffering that need to be addressed and processed on both sides. In doing so, one might help reconcile the sufferings of the past by acknowledging the agony on both sides and by increasing the status of the victims. In her essay on "Troubling Victims", Stefanie Lehner points to John Brewer's suggestion that victims might serve as guides into the future, providing a new start. This was highly relevant in the wake of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, which emphasized starting afresh. Subsequently, the victims might serve as "a moral beacon[s]" who "rise above the darkness of past pain … to point a light for the rest of us to follow into a brighter future" (Brewer and Hayer qtd. in Lehner, 94). Even though the band members of U2 are not victims of the Troubles in that sense, they seem to be endeavoring to "point a light" and to help coping with a troubled reality as well as advocating for peace. In that respect, "Peace on Earth" seems to encapsulate U2's vision for the future.

3.2 "The Troubles" & *Songs of Innocence* – an Introduction

From the millennial plea for peace in the preceding subchapter, the subsequent subchapters will address one of the most recent albums, *Songs of Innocence*, which was released in September 2014. The songs on this album definitely address "things", or issues that one cannot leave behind. Only three years after the release of this album, U2 released *Songs of Experience*, which is their (up to this moment) most recent album. As I see it, *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* in a way close the circle, linking up with the band's earliest albums and their addressing of domestic issues, regarding both their personal experiences and the Troubles. Even though the band members of U2 were not directly involved in the Troubles, they are, as we shall see, closely related to people who were. *Songs of Innocence* on a whole

seems to address the beginning of life, describing the pain and the agonizing unfolding in the aftermath of both individual and collective trauma. The lyrics on *Songs of Innocence* are above all marked by people in power, such as politicians and parents, addressing Bono's mother Iris in the song "Iris", named after her. In addition to parents, the neighboring family, the Rowen's who lived at Cedarwood Road 5, close to Bono's childhood home have also inspired some of the lyrics (cf. Stockman). Thus, not only "Cedarwood Road", but also "Raised by Wolves", and possibly also "The Troubles" draw on memories involving this family. Even though this family was marked by a strict, religious father, the family was also warm and including, and they took really good care of Bono after his mother died. Two of Bono's best friends, Guggi and Andy Rowen, grew up in this household, and they are reportedly still the best of friends (cf. Stockman). In an interview on this album, Bono confided that songwriting was his way of dealing with his adolescent experiences instead of "lying on a coach talking to a shrink" (Rock Archives 00:52-00:53). Consequently, the lyrics on the *Songs of Innocence* album are rooted in autobiography, and border on being confessional lyrics.

In undertaking these albums, U2 realized an idea, which was originally born two decades earlier (in 1992, to be specific), about writing albums addressing innocence and experience. When writing the lyrics, Bono drew on the poetry of William Blake, and this is especially evident in the titles of these albums, which are inspired by William Blake's poetic masterpiece *Songs of Innocence and of Experience: Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul*, published in 1794 (cf. Augustyn et al.). While U2's albums were never going "to descend into pastiche" (Stokes 155), being copies of Blake's poetry, both Blake and Bono share a deep interest in spirituality and the Scriptures, alongside a critical attitude to some religious issues and social injustices (cf. Stokes 152). There is also common ground in the addressing of various political issues.

In the following, I will be analyzing three songs from the *Songs of Innocence* album, which might be categorized as 'Troubles' songs. The first song that I will discuss is the one simply titled "The Troubles"; the final track on the *Songs of Innocence* album. On this song the Swedish singer and songwriter Lykke Li adds the female voice. There are two different versions of the lyrics of this song, and I have

chosen to base my interpretations on the original version, and not on the alternative one (see Appendix), since I find that the former is the most applicable to my subject matter. It seems to consist of more layers, and when reading it closely, the subject matter clearly has to do with domination and subjugation, manifested already in the first lines, repeating that “Somebody stepped inside your soul”. The repetition of the line reinforces, as I see it, the gravity of the subject matter. At first glance, the song seems to depict a dysfunctional relationship characterized by domestic abuse. When writing these lyrics, it is possible that Bono was inspired by his experiences from growing up on Cedarwood Road, drawing on the childhood home of his friend, Guggi Rowen, who alongside his family suffered under the authority of a strict, religious father (cf. Stokes 160). The possible Rowen inspiration, however, does not explain the song’s content in its final version.

In this song, the speaker varies between first-person statements, like “I have a will for survival”, to addressing his interlocutor by using the second person pronoun ‘you’: “You think it’s easier / To put your finger on the trouble / When the trouble is you” (ll. 5-7). Furthermore, the possessive pronoun ‘your’ is applied throughout the chorus, as opposed to the possessive pronoun ‘my’, applied in line fourteen: “But you’re not my troubles anymore”. Arguably, the first-person speaker is applied in the lines that provide hope for the future, whereas the second-person perspective is applied when describing the painful truth about the relationship and the domestic abuse. Could it be that it is too painful for the victim to tell the story himself and that he needs another voice to help him out? Accordingly, the painful story itself is possibly not told by the first victim, rather by a secondary victim, a bystander or possibly a relative who seems to confirm the harsh conditions of being exposed to domestic abuse (cf. Luckhurst 1). The variation between “I” and “you” also creates uncertainty and a further layering of identity even in the act of uttering the lyric, which reflects the song’s theme of possession and undermining of the integrity of the self.

The person addressed in the song seems to be inhabited by his abuser, a predicament observed in the very first line of the song: “Somebody stepped inside your soul”. In the final line of the chorus, the speaker seems to depict his interlocutor as a victim that is no longer in control of his own life, stating that “someone else was in control”. This line is repeated throughout the song, revealing the gravity of

oppression, and what seems to be severe effects of domestic abuse. The alarming question remains: who is this "somebody" who dominates the other's soul, and who is "someone else"; the person in control? As I see it, "somebody" could either refer to an abusive husband or an abusive wife. The feeling of being invaded and totally dominated by another tally with observations made by *Psych Central* with regard to being subjugated, and their claim that "initially, the abuse usually is an attempt by one partner to exert control "(Psych Central Staff, unpaginated).

The seriousness of subjugation is also underscored in line seventeen: "Little by little they robbed and stole", and this line is reiterated throughout the song, emphasizing the repercussions of subjugation. And what exactly is it that has been robbed and stolen? And who are "they"? The final line of the chorus seems to provide an answer to the first of these questions. The victim seems to have been exposed to insidious trauma[14], probably spanning over years, and as a result, he has lost his autonomy including the "fundamental right to maintain control over their own lives" (Psych Central Staff, unpaginated), realizing that "someone else was in control", which is a key characteristic of domestic abuse. This observation also tallies with Michelle Ciurria's claim that "abused persons suffer from a loss of autonomy" and submit to the will of the perpetrator (Cicurra 1-2).

In addition to suffering from low self-esteem, it also seems like the addressee has been manipulated into believing that he is responsible for whatever difficulties (s)he might endure, and therefore (s)he is to blame. This view is embodied in the eight line, stating that "…the trouble is you". This view tallies with Healthline's information about victimhood, and their statement that "people with a victim mentality may blame themselves" (Raypole), an observation shared by Nancy J. Hirschman in her article "Domestic Violence and the Theoretical Discourse of Freedom" (cf. 133). This feeling of guilt is, as I see it, contrasted with innocence in the final lines of the last verse: "God now you can see me / I'm naked and I'm not afraid / My body's sacred and I'm not ashamed"(ll.42-44). These lines draw upon the biblical story about Adam and Eve and their meeting with God in the Garden of Eden after the Fall.

[14] "Maria Root, who coined the term insidious trauma, described the concepts as follows: 'Traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit" (Root; Brown & Ballock qtd. in VAWnet).

Whereas these lines depict both lack of fear and lack of shame, Adam and Eve did not originally feel that way. On the contrary, they felt guilty for having eaten from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and when God asked Adam where he was, he responded, “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself” (KJB Gen 3:9-10).

Even though the song undoubtedly depicts a dysfunctional relationship on one level, I think there is more to it than just domestic violence. This is suggested by the title, “The Troubles”, which clearly connotates the political conflict in Northern Ireland. If this song had been called *The Problems*, *The Conflicts*, *The Challenges* or *The Issues*, on the other hand, things would have been different. But as the song is called ‘The Troubles’, a political dimension is implied.

When analyzing the song from a political point of view it is possible that the “somebody” referred to, might allude to the Catholic vs. Protestant binary. When reading the lyrics from a Northern Irish Catholic point of view, the “somebody” might be interpreted as hinting at the Unionist Protestants. After all, it was the Unionist Protestants who controlled Northern Irish society before and during the Troubles, and the Catholic Nationalists were discriminated against (cf. McKittrick & McVea 5). In a situation of political subjugation, one might internalize a negative or derogatory image of oneself, coinciding with Fanon’s and Althusser’s theories of interpellation. The concept of “interpellation” was originally introduced by Fanon in the beginning of the 1950s, and he applied this theory to explain how different attitudes might influence our lives (cf. Longwood.edu). Althusser’s notion of interpellation is, as I see it, above all encapsulated in the phrase “Hey, you there!” Fanon, on his part, also draws on the theory of interpellation in his book, *Black Skin, White Masks* and as I see it, his notion of interpellation is embedded in the well-known phrase “Look, a nigger!” (cf. Macherey 14). These utterances call upon immediate response in their singling out of one individual. When the white boy in Fanon’s book pointed at the black man, “he imposed an existential deviation” on him by effectively creating a split between ‘us’ and ‘them’, between the white people and the black people. This split was realized through the white gaze on the black skin and the comment “Look, a nigger!” in its wake. Consequently, the black man is “confronted with his race”, probably for the first

time in his life (Fanon 142). It was the other person's look that made him feel different, and as a result, he probably started to look at himself differently, too.

As I see it, there might be a parallel between 'the nigger' in Fanon and the Catholics in Northern Ireland, and how they have been interpellated within their respective societies. But how could these groupings possibly be compared? After all, both Catholics and Protestants have white skin. Even though the groupings in Northern Ireland have the same colour of skin, though, the Catholics might have felt similarly under the Protestant gaze as 'the nigger' did under the white gaze. After all, the Catholics in Northern Ireland had been discriminated by the Protestants for centuries. The Protestant domination made the Catholics aware that they were different; that they were Catholics and not part of the upper stratum of society. This discrimination affected the Catholics negatively, with regards to both jobs and housing (cf. McKittrick & McVea 5), and I would assume that some of them experienced a diminution of self-esteem as a result. As McKittrick and McVea point out, many Catholics seemed to give up fighting against Protestant domination. Consequently, many of them succumbed "to apathy" (McKittrick & McVea 20) and as a result, many Catholics did not vote. In addition to not voting, I assume that many of them looked upon themselves as inferior to the Protestants, and the outer voice of the Protestants had probably been internalized as the inner voice of the Catholics; the ultimate realization of interpellation.

As already mentioned, lack of belief in themselves possibly derived from political measures taken to their disadvantage. Some of these measures were probably quite subtle, and when the people addressed believed that the ideas and values in question were identical with that of their own, and they even recognized the ideas as their own, they were susceptible of being interpellated. When a person is "fully interpellated", he or she accepts these ideas and values willingly, without resistance (cf. Longwood.edu). The sinister theme of interpellation and oppression is emphasized, not only in the lyric itself, but also in the way it is written. The lyric is characterized by sound effects like alliteration and even more importantly, by end rhymes.

The pre-chorus, “I have a will for survival / So you can hurt me and then hurt me some more / I can live with denial / But you’re not my troubles anymore” (ll.11-14) is also characterized by end rhyme, embodied in the final words of each line: *survival*, *more*, *denial*, *anymore*, patterned in an *abab* rhyme scheme. As I see it, these words are relevant to how the victim is going through a process of empowerment, proclaiming victory despite facing subjugation and interpellation, and it might reflect, as Ciurria observes, the complex nature of a victim’s agency; an agency which is ”neither completely extinguished, nor as robust as it could be” (5), an agency which, as I see it, is also a leading idea running through the lyric.

3.3 “Raised by Wolves” – an Eyewitness Account

Victim agency and victimhood are also brought into focus in “Raised by Wolves”. The lyric displays an eyewitness account of the Dublin bombing on Parnell Street on May 17, 1974, depicting what Andy Rowen, the brother of Bono’s best friend Guggi, witnessed on that street during the bombing. The lyric describes individual as well as collective[15] trauma. The individual trauma, however, is seen through the lens of ‘secondary victimhood’ (cf. Luckhurst 1), whereas the collective trauma affects everyone involved alongside the entire population of Dublin, including Ireland as a whole. As I see it, this lyric might be categorized as bordering on confessional poetry, as it talks about life as it is, revealing “an undisguised exposure of painful personal event” (Collins 197). After all, “the expression of personal pain has been regarded as a hallmark of confessional poetry” (Collins 167), and one must say that the revelation of pain caused by the atrocity addressed in this song is deeply personal.

“Raised by Wolves” pays homage to the victims of the Dublin car bombings, also known as “the Dublin and Monaghan bombing” (McKittrick & McVea 120), addressing the collective trauma in the wake of this carnage. On the iNNOCENCE + eXPERIENCE Tour in 2018, pictures of the victims were shown on a big screen alongside information about these horrendous events. These atrocities, which took place on May 17, 1974, “had the highest one-day death toll of the Troubles”: thirty-

[15] “Collective trauma is a cataclysmic event that shatters the basic fabric of society” (Hirschberger, unpaginated).

three people were killed, and hundreds were maimed (Feeney 47). This act of cruelty took place during the UWC (Ulster Workers Council) strike. The UWC consisted mainly of a Protestant workforce, including “shipbuilding, heavy engineering and, above all, electric power generation” (McKittrick & McVea 119). The workers had been striking in previous years as well, but this time they specifically went on strike to attack the Sunningdale Agreement, an agreement that in many ways anticipated the points agreed upon in the Good Friday Agreement, above all regarding the powersharing between the opposed parties in Northern Ireland (cf. McKittrick & McVea 114).

The Dublin and Monaghan bombings were carried out by the UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force) and involved four coordinated bombings (cf. Feeney 46-7). The UVF, however, first denied that they were involved in this massacre, and “it was to be twenty years before responsibility was admitted by the UVF” (Hennessey 229). Later, “it was also alleged that British intelligence had played a part” and consequently the bereaved claimed that the gruesome episode had to be further investigated (McKittrick & McVea 121). Bombs went off on three different streets in Dublin (Parnell Street, Talbot Street and South Leinster Street), and one went off near Monaghan town in the proximity of the Northern Irish border. All the bombings involved hijacked cars from Belfast.

The band members were not directly involved in these massacre, but on Friday afternoons, Bono usually went to a record shop on Talbot Street after school, and he confided that were it not for the bus strike on this specific day, he might have been injured or killed by this attack himself. As there were no buses, he rode his bike back home, dodging the carnage (cf. Stokes 159). Larry was also affected by this atrocity as he lost a neighbor in the bombing on Talbot Street. The Edge, on his part, admits that this event has impacted the entire band, and that it is embedded within their “personal narrative” (Stokes 159).

Even though the band members did not directly witness the bombings, they were indirectly affected based on the experiences of Guggi’s brother, Andy Rowen, who beheld the cruelties from his father’s van (cf. Soul Surmise). Andy’s witnessing of his father helping to rescue as many victims as possible made him a ‘secondary

victim', a status which primarily includes "witnesses and bystanders", but also people who receive "news of death or injury of a relative" (Luckurst 1). Although Andy was not a relative, he was after all the brother of one of Bono's best friends, and his narrative about the bombing on Parnell Street impacted the adolescent Bono deeply, and as we shall see, it seems like it still impacts him. Even though Andy was not physically injured on the outside, he was traumatized for life on the inside by what he witnessed, stating that "…I take a look, and now I'm sorry I did" (l.5), a sight which caused this "wounding intrusion from outside" (Luckhurst 9).

The song takes Andy's perspective in the first thirteen lines, whereas the rest of the lyric is told by an external speaker, describing the cruelties that Andy witnessed in addition to stating that they, both Andy and themselves, have been growing up in hard conditions and that they have all been "raised by wolves" (as stated in the chorus). The first lines provide trustworthy information about what he observed, including the "red sea [that] covers the ground" (l.3), alongside brutal images of lost limbs and bloodshed, and "a man in the corner in a pool of misery" (l.2). The brutal images witnessed by Andy Rowen tally with McKittrick and McVea's description of the atrocity (cf. McKittrick & McVea 121). We become acquainted with Andy's state at a later stage, in which he seems to be suffering belatedly from what he has been witnessing on Parnell Street (cf. Stockman). Trauma is, after all, "*Nachträglich"*, meaning that it might cause a belated response, "which can retrospectively rewrite life narrative" (Luckhurst 81). Subsequently, the effects of such trauma might come on immediately, but more often, as Erichsen observed as early as in 1875, the effects occur belatedly, as the psychological effects seem "to ramify and worsen over time" (Luckhurst 22). The fact that U2 wrote the song forty years after the carnage, underscores the notion of belatedness.

Unfortunately, this belatedness also tallies with Andy's own experiences and his turning to drug abuse in the aftermath of the massacre, in order to kill the pain inside (cf. Stokes 159), circumstances that are possibly alluded to in line eight, in which we meet the interlocutor "face down, on a pillow of shame". But why does he feel ashamed? And why does the speaker apply the image of a pillow? Normally, the image of a pillow would connote comfort and allude to being relaxed. In this context, however, the image of the pillow might allude to the opposite. In this lyric, the image

of the pillow might allude to the notion of 'lying down', of having succumbed to drugs and of not being able to rise up, to get up off the knees, as depicted in line twelve of "Please", and reiterated throughout the song. This interpretation tallies with the subsequent line, and the image of the needle, and the girls trying to spell his name. There might be ink in the needle, but it is more likely that the needle alludes to drug abuse, and heroin addiction, specifically (cf. Stockman). Consequently, it does seem like Andy's narrative has been altered as a result of what he has witnessed, in that he succumbed to drug abuse. The fact that he chose drugs as a painkiller to cope with his traumatic experience, has severe repercussions.

Above all, the final lines indicate that one of the repercussions the drug addict must deal with, is a diminution of his self-esteem. This is indicated in line eleven through the speaker's description of his body as being "a toilet wall", as opposed to being "a canvas", as described in the preceding line. This is what Kristeva describes as the abject body, characterized by a disturbance of both "identity, system, order" (Kristeva qtd. in Muller 1). There seems to be a link between the abject body lying "face down on a pillow of shame" (l. 8) and the body described as lying "face down on a broken street" (l. 1). In both these lines bodies are described as being "face down", alluding, as I see it, both to physical and psychological trauma. The first line demonstrates physical trauma, describing the carnage in Dublin on May 17, 1974. This image, however, is contrasted with the image in the eight line, in which the face is no longer lying down on a street, but rather on a pillow. The second image arguably alludes to psychological trauma, drawing on drug addiction and the concept of shame. The speaker in line eight describes his body as a "toilet wall", as opposed to being a "canvas", as depicted in the preceding line. The images of "canvas" and "toilet wall", however, are rather contrastive. While the image of the "canvas" represents purity and innocence and open possibilities, the "toilet wall", on the contrary, seems to depict both filth and the harsh reality of drug addiction, alongside the broken dreams in its wake.

This is not the first time, however, that U2 has drawn on Andy Rowen and his experiences as an inspiration for songwriting, as he has also been named as the inspiration for "Bad" on the *Unforgettable Fire* album (1984). "Bad" is a well-known U2 song, for instance memorably performed in their 1985 Band Aid performance (cf.

Edwards). Accordingly, Andy Rowen is a link between these two songs. There is also a link between the two lyrics as they are connected in relation to trauma. Both songs address symptoms of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and drug addiction. The fact that drug addiction can be seen as a response to trauma tallies with Nick E. Goeders' observations on the connection between these conditions. In his analysis, Nick E. Goeders focuses on the psychological effects of trauma, and in doing so, he draws on Khantzian and his explanation of this "dual diagnosis" based on "the self-medication hypothesis" (Goeders). This hypothesis implies that the addict abuses drugs in order to cope with the traumatic effects in the wake of trauma. These effects might involve various "life stressors…like anxiety, irritability, and depression" (Goeders). Both "Raised by Wolves" and "Bad" arguably also draw on the psychological condition of dissociation, in which "the individuals supposedly develop multiple coexisting personalities, known as *alters*", a condition that might feature within PTSD (Lynn 49). When reading the songs from this point of view, one might look upon the different perspectives in the songs, as arguments between Andy Rowen's different 'alters' (cf. Lynn 49), as opposed to viewing the different perspectives as an argument between Andy and his friend.

Lines eight to eleven in "Raised by Wolves", then, draw on the same subject matter as "Bad". In the latter song, the severe consequences of drug abuse are revealed in relation to friendship. The speaker is deeply affected by the abuse of his friend, and he seems to be willing to do anything to support him and contribute to freeing him from his addiction. In the third verse of "Bad", the speaker even states that if he "could through myself / Set your spirit free", he would. After the struggle, the speaker would finally rejoice that his friend had been healed and were able to break away "into the light" (U2.com/Lyrics). About thirty-five years after the writing of "Bad", the dream was actually fulfilled, and the lyric of "Bad" initiated the healing process.

Returning to our analysis of "Raised by Wolves", it is interesting to notice, that there is a shift in perspective from the twenty-second to the twenty-eight line. The shift in perspective involves a switch from Andy's point of view to that of the speaker. The speaker continues addressing what Andy witnessed on this specific day, describing the "boy [who] sees his father crushed under the weight / Of a cross in a passion where the passion is hate"(ll.22-23), alluding to the religious conflict among

the Protestants and the Catholics, in which "the worst things in the world are justified by belief"(l.27). As already mentioned, the Rowen father was strict and religious, a Protestant fundamentalist, to be specific. Accordingly, I assume that he was well aware of the religious tensions in Northern Ireland at the time of the Dublin bombings.

This song, as well as the preceding song, also fits into the category of confessionalism, as it renders "an undisguised exposure of painful personal event" (Collins 197). As Emerson pointed out in his essay 'The Poet', as early as in 1844, the value of personal experiences lies in the fact that the writer will share his own experience, and in doing so, "he will tell us how it was with him, and all men will be richer in his fortune" (Emerson qtd. in Collins 198). This, I would argue, is applicable to Andy's traumatic experiences regarding the Dublin bombing on Parnell Street, because through his story we might understand more of the nature of traumatic events and how they might affect the victims involved. After all, confessionalism focuses "its attention on personal trauma", and the carnage that Andy witnessed is an example of such.

The lines in the chorus, as exemplified here: "Raised by wolves / Stronger than fear / Raised by Wolves / We were raised by wolves" (ll.14-17) are seen from the perspective of the speaker, and the lyric also here alludes to trauma. The traumatic experiences referred to imply that the speaker and his companions have experienced harsh conditions when growing up, demonstrated in line seventeen of the chorus: "we were raised by wolves." The speaker and his equals, however, are not the only ones to have been raised by wolves. According to the Roman legend, the twin brothers Romulus and Remus, who allegedly founded Rome, were actually raised by a she-wolf or a *lupa*[16] (cf. Garcia). The image of the wolf as a caregiver

[16] They were destined to die because their mother, a priestess of Vesta, "the patron goddess of the heart" (Garcia, unpaginated), had broken her vow of chastity by becoming pregnant and giving birth to these twins. Rumors had it that the twins were of divine origin on their father's side and, therefore the King hesitated to kill them by live burial according to custom. Instead, he wanted them to be killed by the elements, and in doing so, he hoped to spare his city from divine vengeance. Romulus and Remus, however, were saved by the King's servant who placed the baby twins in a basket on the River Tiber. This myth draws on the biblical story of Moses, who was placed in "an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. (KJB Exo 2:3). But whereas Moses was found by Pharaoh's daughter, the princess of Egypt, (cf. KJB Exo 2:5-6), the twin brothers Romulus and Remus were found by the already mentioned she-wolf, who suckled them (cf. Garcia).

tallies with *Universe of Symbolism*, which presents the wolf as a “protector” (Love, unpaginated). The wolves, addressed by the speaker in line twelve, and reiterated throughout the song, however, do not seem to be as benevolent as the already mentioned *lupa*, demonstrated by the speaker’s confidence that they have been “raised by wolves stronger than fear”. But who or what could possibly be stronger than fear? Could this imply an allusion to the hyper-vigilant state of being constantly alert, of being marked by “exaggerated startle response” (Luckhurst 1)? And who might the wolves be? What do the wolves symbolize? The simple answer is that it depends on whom you ask. You might ask a person from the south and this person would possibly view the wolves as a symbol of the Troubles in the north, or at least as an image of threat that the conflict might cross the border. If you asked a person in the north the same question, he might provide the same answer, viewing the wolves as a symbol of the conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants, irrelevant of which community he was part of himself. The lyric in this song is characterized by an open-endedness which entails that either side might identify with it. This open-endedness also connects with my readings of lyrics such as “North and South of the River” and “Sunday Bloody Sunday”, both being songs that provide a view with which both communities might identify.

More generally, the wolves serve as a symbol of trauma, rendering a true picture of the painful experiences in the wake of horrific events, a pain that might indeed be “stronger than fear”. This fear, however, seems to vanish “if I open my eyes”, because then “you disappear”. The personal pronoun “you” here probably refers to the ‘fear’ depicted in the previous line, and the fact that when you address your fears and open your eyes to face them, they might disappear. As I see it, it is also possible to read “you” as a personification of the wolves. At the same time as acknowledging the gravity of traumatic experiences, the image of wolves might also allude to the strength that might be acquired by victims in the wake of traumas, after having worked through the painful experiences. This tallies with the claim that “Wolves lead you to your greatest power” (Love, unpaginated). This is referred to as PTG, post-traumatic growth, a theory which was forwarded by psychologists Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun in the mid-1990s. The key characteristics of post-traumatic growth are an increase in personal strength alongside developing a newfound perspective on helping others (cf. Collier 48).

Even though the lyrics might depict post-traumatic growth, there does not seem to be any religious growth. The line “I don’t believe any more” is repeated throughout the lyrics. Is the lyric in this line alluding to Andy Rowen? Did he lose his faith? Or could it allude to Bono, who presumably, at this point, neither believes in humanity nor in God? Is this an agnostic song, doubting even the existence of God, being an echo of “Peace on Earth”, since similar questions were raised in my analysis of that song? This might be the case, but I would argue that the loss of hope has more to do with humanity, and the loss of trust due to all the atrocities that have taken place over the course of time, and all the broken promises and traumas in its wake. The performance of “Raised by Wolves”, however, was usually preceded by “Sunday Bloody Sunday” during the iNNOCENCE + eXPERIENCE Tour in 2015, embodying the notion of coming full circle, in that both songs address the Troubles, alongside addressing victimhood and trauma. This proves, that for more than four decades, the Troubles has impacted U2’s career, seemingly being part of the baggage that one cannot leave behind.

3.4 “Cedarwood Road” – Bono’s Childhood Street

This subchapter brings us from “the valley of the shadow (death)” in central Dublin to Bono’s childhood home on Cedarwood Road no. 10, on the north side of Dublin. Life in this suburban area, however, also implied, at least at times, walking through “the valley of the shadow (death)”. The song named “Cedarwood Road” brings us to the very heart of personal experience and it is a song about friendship more than anything else, as both Gavin Friday and Guggi Rowen, two of Bono’s best friends, grew up in the same neighborhood, and Bono actually dedicated this song to Guggi (cf. Stokes 160). In an interview about this album, Bono confided that, “a part of me still lives there [on Cedarwood Road]” (Rock Archives 01:00-01:04). The song addresses Bono’s personal experiences of growing up in suburban Dublin in the 1960s and 1970s. The song also deals with the adult Bono reminiscing about his teenage years. Central to the adult perspective is the revelation, that these adolescent experiences still affect him. His memories of them, referred to as “dreams” in line sixteen, are “never dead it’s still [in] my head”. In this context, the

“dreams” referred to seem to be nightmarish rather than sweet dreams about his childhood experiences, possibly alluding to trauma and the re-experience of such through “intrusive flashbacks [and] recurring dreams” (Luckhurst 1). The trauma is always persistent, and “never dead”, and one must find a way of dealing with it. As I see it, also this lyric might be characterized as confessional, as it has “its attention on personal trauma” (Colllins 198).

But why would Bono, living on the north side of Dublin, suffer from nightmares? In “Iris”, a song on the same album, in which he pays homage to his mother, Bono also draws on the image of dreams. In the lyric of “Iris”, however, he dreams of his mother providing for him, reminiscing how she used to wake “to my nightmares”, as depicted in line forty-four. At this point, his mother managed to comfort him, telling him that he should not “fear the world / [because] it isn’t there” (ll. 45-46). After the death of his mother (cf. Stokes 157), however, the scary “world” outside suddenly came “there”, to Cedarwood Road. She died only months after the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, and both of these punctual, sudden traumas (cf. Forter 1) seem to have impacted the U2 singer profoundly. This observation tallies with Forter’s claim that such traumas “can be read as shocks that disable the psychic system” (1).

The feeling of psychic disablement and the long-lasting effects of trauma is above all highlighted in line nineteen to twenty-two, in which the speaker confides: “I’m still standing on that street / Still need an enemy / The worst ones I can’t see / You can... you can”(ll.19-22), implying that these traumatic memories are not visible, but they nonetheless haunt the ones affected on the inside, causing a cluster of symptoms. In a way Bono appears to be still standing on his childhood street, in that he is still impacted by the formative events which happened during his adolescence. This tallies with Bono’s own observation, that “we’re all formed by our first experiences, our first fights in the playground” (ProRock 18:19-18:27), be it either a personal or a political playground. This also agrees with what critics have said about the lyric, including Stokes who, in discussing this song, states that formative experiences “are hard to shake off, no matter how hard you try” (162).

In addition to the image of the enemy, this lyric also contains an image of fear. Could it be that “the fear [which]was all I knew”, described in the second line of the song, involves response to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, fearing that the conflict might cross the border, again, or for the first time, depending on the time of reference? Or could the fear have to do with everyday concerns, like the fear of violence in the streets? A lot of people from inner-city Dublin moved to the suburb surrounding Cedarwood Road, and this led to increased tensions between the different clans (cf. Stokes 160), between skinheads and knuckledusters and other gangs (cf. Stokes 161-162). Bono and his friends, however, were into arts and distinguished themselves from these clans. This meant that they might be targeted, and they used to deal with this concern daily (cf. Stokes 160). I would also assert that fear might has to do with the implicit allusion to the Troubles in the lyrics, because of the deep traumatic impact on the speaker caused by this fear. The allusion to “war” and the description of the speaker’s road being “a warzone in my teens” (l.18), also reinforces the impression that this song implicitly alludes to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The fact that the lyric also brings into focus the divisions between north and south, provides, as I see it, a tacit hint to the Northern Ireland vs. Ireland binary. Given that the description of fear occurs after the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, it is no wonder that the speaker refers to “the warzone in my teens”, as depicted in line eighteen. These divisions between north and south, however, might also refer to Dublin and its division between people living north and south of the river Liffey.

Alongside fear and division, trauma is, as already mentioned, also addressed in this lyric. Among other things, trauma also seems to manifest itself through “the hurt you hide”, as depicted in line the first part of line twelve. In this context, “hurt” might draw upon Guggi’s individual trauma and his experiences from growing up in a home marked by an authoritarian, strict, religious father, as discussed in more detail in the analysis of “The Troubles”. Guggi’s home was a household in which “Symbols [were] clashing, [and] Bibles [were] smashing”, as depicted in line thirty-two, and there was a lack of correlation between God, who is grace, and the behaviour of Guggi’s father. As an artist, however, Guggi managed to paint the world and the reality which he “need[ed] to see”, as alluded to in the preceding line. The place he needed to see, was most likely a place that was neither filled with fear, nor with hurt. Nonetheless, the unleashing of his feelings on canvas could not erase the trauma,

and accordingly, “sometimes fear is the only place that we can call our home / Cedarwood Road” (ll.33-34). The aspect of “hurt” might also allude to Bono’s personal trauma regarding the loss of his mother and the subsequent feelings of being both “abandoned and afraid” (Assayas 12). Finally, “hurt” might concern the atrocities which took place during the Troubles, and as I see it, the fear presumably increased in the wake of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, in that the conflict had crossed the border.

The “hurt” alluded to in line twelve, and reiterated in line twenty-six, however, is described as “the hurt you hide”. This “hurt”, or pain which you hide, is contrasted with, “the joy you hold” in the same line. But why would one want to “hide” the hurt, in the first place? Could the difficult experiences of domestic violence be the reason why the person addressed in the lyrics hides the hurt? On a general basis, victims of domestic violence might feel both ashamed and embarrassed, and that might be the reason why one would want to hide the hurt? The victim might feel guilty and that he himself is to blame for the violence. This tallies with Nancy J. Hirschmann’s observations about victims and their conviction that “somehow [they] deserved the violence”, and that the feeling of guilt is legitimate because they themselves “provoked the violence” (133). Lines eleven and twelve, “All the green and all the gold / The hurt you hide, the joy you hold” (ll.11-12) are characterized by end rhyme, embodied through the words “gold” and “hold”. The rhyme scheme in lines 9-14, or in the second stanza, if you like, is patterned *abccde*, and the fact that there are only two words that rhyme, puts extra stress on these words, possibly emphasizing the importance of holding on to the positive, of what is the “gold” in your life.

Friendship might be one of the ‘golds’ in life, and in the midst of his fears and his anguish, Bono nevertheless wanted to find a friend, “looking for a soul that's real [and] then I ran into you[Guggi]” (ll.3-4) , who used to live on the same road. There was a “…cherry blossom tree [in Guggis’ garden] / [And it] Was a gateway to the sun” (ll.5-6). As I see it, the cherry blossom tree mentioned in the fifth line might act as a symbol for this friendship, and the image contrasted with “fear”, as depicted in the second line. Bono and Guggi befriended at the age of three and are still best of friends (Rock Archives 02:21-02:35) because, as confirmed in the seventh and eight lines, a “friendship, once it’s won / It’s won... it’s one”. These three lines are

characterized by the end rhyme “sun”, “won”, “one”. The words “won” and “one” are homonyms, underscoring the importance of having a friend. And at the bottom of a good friendship, lies, as I see it, a sense of unity, addressing one of the main themes in my thesis. All the words included in the end rhyme, “sun”, “won”, “one” also reinforce this sense of unity. Above all, the word ‘” sun” also alludes to the bright and positive sides of friendship, describing the friendship between Bono and Guggi.

The innocence is also partly described in line eleven, and repeated in line twenty-five, describing the beauty of “all the green and all the gold”, possibly alluding to a world that is still innocent and a bringer of hope. The image of “green” and “gold” could also allude to the Irish flag, in which is green alludes to the Catholics and the orange, or the “gold”, alludes to the Protestants, whereas the white in the middle acts as a symbol of peace (cf. Smith). “Spanish Eyes”, a B-side from *The Joshua Tree* album recording sessions (1987), also draws on the colors of “green” and “gold”, in which the speaker states that “I’ll cross the world for green and gold” underscoring the fact that nationality and a sense of belonging are important elements in people’s lives. In addition to nationality and a sense of belonging, joy is also part of the picture, as alluded to in line twelve. But what could possibly be regarded as a joy amidst it all? As I see it, the “joy you hold” (l.12) might allude to the friendship that carries through it all, like the friendship between Bono and Guggi.

The chorus is also characterized by the contrasting of north and south - “Northside just across the river to the Southside / That’s a long way here”(ll.9-10), stressing the difference of living north or south of the River Liffey, which divides Dublin. These lines hint at social and economic differences between the north and south sides of Dublin. There has long been a cultural divide between the two areas, and they are “primarily differentiated according to economics” (Phelan, unpaginated). In general, the north is regarded as less affluent, or “underprivileged”, whereas the south is the most affluent and “overprivileged” area (Phelan, unpaginated). In a wider perspective, one might suggest that the gap between the north and south creates a kind of implicit parallel, or political allegory of the division of Ireland, describing the distance between the two countries as “a long way here”. The way is “long”, because, first of all, Northern Ireland and Ireland are two separate countries. The way even seems “longer”, since Northern Ireland is one country but in many ways acts as if it

were two, embodied through the division between the Protestant and Catholic communities.

However, at the end of the song, during the outro, Bono states that “a heart that is broken / Is a heart that is open, open, open” (ll.36-37). Here, end rhyme is applied through the words “broken” and “open”. At first glance, this seems like a contradiction, for how can a thing that is broken possibly be open? It is possible that these lines draw on the ending of W.B. Yeats’s poem “Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop”: “For nothing can be sole or whole / That has not been rent” (Yeats qtd. in Poetry Foundation). The open heart might also have to do with plasticity; that once something is broken, it is more open to new impulses, which might be beneficent, tallying with Leonard Cohen’s lines in “Anthem”: “There is a crack in everything / That's how the light gets in” (AZLyrics.com). And this light might ensure that in the aftermath of cataclysmic events, life can still go on.

In this chapter I have aimed at bringing into focus lyrics that primarily reflect the band members’ own experiences regarding the Troubles. In the first subchapter I analyzed aspects of “Peace on Earth”, from the *Pop* album, which was written as a direct response to the Omagh bombing in August 1998, pleading for peace. In the following subchapters, I examined ‘Troubles’ songs from the more recent album, *Songs of Innocence*, revealing both individual as well as collective trauma. I have also addressed victimhood, unity, religion and love, which support my thesis. In this chapter I also found that it is hard to get rid of traumatic experiences, and this is definitely in line with my way of presenting the problem. I have also endeavored to show how the earlier albums come full circle with the later albums, and how they address similar themes, concluding that it is hard to rid oneself of the formative experiences of adolescence.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have scrutinized U2 lyrics that relate to the Troubles from a trauma perspective, showing the recurrence of themes such as victimhood, religion, love and unity. In doing this, I have undertaken a historical journey in U2's footsteps, starting from the beginning of the 1980s. I have dwelt upon the time around the Peace Process in the 1990s, before moving to more recent songs that take a confessional look back at the conflict from a more personal perspective. When exploring the lyrics, I have applied historical contextualization as well as close reading. I have furthermore drawn upon confessionalism in some of the analyses in addition to addressing for instance belittlement and interpellation when discussing psychological trauma.

I will now, in conclusion, present some final reflections stemming from my analysis of the U2 lyrics in question. I will center my conclusion around the themes already mentioned, but first I will briefly mention two things that I had not expected when starting this project. First of all, I am struck by the number of U2 songs that explicitly or implicitly address the Troubles, and the fact that "Sunday Bloody Sunday" is far from being their only 'Troubles' song. I am surprised by this, because, as I see it, it is "Sunday Bloody Sunday" which is the most well-known, and it seems that the other songs have not been given as much attention. I am also struck by the fact that in all their lyrics, U2 seems to try to take a mediating, neutral vantage point, since they do not mention any politicians or parties by name. On the contrary, the songs, as I see it, aim at uniting people, applying lyrics that are both malleable and adaptable, making it easier for both communities, (i.e. the Unionist Protestants and the Catholic Nationalists), as well as for people worldwide to relate. U2's claim of being neutral, however, is a controversial issue, and is it possible for the band members to mediate? After all the band hails from Dublin, from the south, from a country which is dominated by Catholics. Some critics, moreover, have expressed serious doubts about the legitimacy of the band's neutrality. The fact, however, that the band members belong to different communities themselves, as explained in the introduction, strengthens the conviction that they manage to maintain such a position.

It is evident that the Troubles impacts older lyrics, as well as more recent lyrics, spanning from the older, well-established “Sunday Bloody Sunday” to the more recent and presumably less well-known “Raised by Wolves”. “Sunday Bloody Sunday” depicts the atrocities that took place on Bloody Sunday in 1972, and even though the lyric depicts punctual trauma, it surprisingly also describes insidious trauma through “the trenches dug within our hearts” (l.19), symbolizing, as I see it, an upbringing along sectarian lines. In this respect victimhood is also relevant. In *The Trauma Question*, Roger Luckhurst distinguishes between first and secondary victims of trauma, in which the first victim status implies being directly affected (i.e., injured or killed), whereas the secondary victim status involves witnesses, bystanders and rescue workers (cf. 1). In the texts addressed in this thesis, most of the victims have secondary victim status, except for the beginning of “Raised by Wolves”, in which the speaker takes Andy Rowen’s perspective when giving a detailed, almost graphic eyewitness account of what he witnessed during the Dublin bombing on Parnell Street on May 17, 1974. Among the songs addressed in this thesis, it is the lyrics of “Please” which most emphatically implore the victim to battle victimhood, with the speaker pleading his interlocutor to “Get up off your knees” (l.12). This pleading is furthermore stressed in the official video version of the song, in which most people depicted, including a marching band alluding to the Orange marches, are also in a kneeling position (U2 00:56-01:00).

The pleading to end the hardships continues in “Peace on Earth”. The latter states that “Heaven on Earth / We need it now” (ll.1-2). “Peace on Earth” is also written as a response to a punctual trauma, namely the Omagh bombing in 1998. This song, however, was released only two years after the carnage, whereas the other songs addressing such atrocities are written decade(s) later. The fact that most of these lyrics are written belatedly, years after the traumatic experiences took place, emphasizes the fact that trauma is mostly *Nachträglich*, meaning that symptoms can “appear belatedly, months or years after the precipitating event” (Luckhurst 1). In this respect, it is noteworthy that when U2 decided to go back to their background, it became evident that the Troubles have affected them on a large scale, as demonstrated on the *Songs of Innocence* album (2014).

The songs addressed in this thesis deal with various symptoms of trauma, such as flashbacks, fear and hyper-vigilance and not only the most obvious trauma regarding loss and bereavement in the wake of the carnage. The experience of trauma is treated in various ways within this cluster of songs, which addresses punctual as well as insidious trauma, and physical as well as psychological trauma. The lyrics also bring into focus both individual and collective trauma, exemplified by how both “Sunday Bloody Sunday” and “Raised by Wolves” address atrocities that affected the entire country as well as people on an individual level. In “Sunday Bloody Sunday” we encounter both physical and psychological trauma manifested through loss and bereavement, and “Bodies strewn across the dead-end street” (l.10), and “mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn apart” (l.20). In this lyric, however, we do not get information about the belated effects of trauma, as we do in “Raised by Wolves”, in which the witnessing of the bombing on Parnell Street causes severe repercussions and drug abuse as a belated response in a secondary victim. This is demonstrated, among other things, through the image of the needle, in which “some girls with a needle trying to spell my name” (l. 9).

The experience of trauma, however, is not only encountered in the depiction of massacres and collective traumas: also, the insidious trauma of living in “increased arousal” (Luckhurst 1), caused either by political trauma or domestic violence, has been addressed. This is exemplified by “The Troubles”, which displays the brutal reality of domestic abuse, in which “somebody [has] stepped inside your soul”. Living in such conditions might lead to chronic trauma and severe long-lasting traumatic effects. Chronic, or insidious trauma is also brought into focus through the concept of hyper-vigilance addressed in “North and South of the River”, in which the speaker dreams about being able to “Not [be] looking over my shoulder” (l.4). Also typical symptoms of PTSD, such as flashbacks and recurring dreams are addressed within the cluster of songs analyzed in this thesis, above all in “Cedarwood Road”, in which Bono/the speaker confides that he is “Not waking from these dreams / ‘cause it’s never dead, it’s still [in] my head” (ll.16-17). The repercussions of trauma cause, as we have seen, “myriad” symptoms, and most of these tally with the symptoms of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), as depicted in the diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 (cf. Luckhurst 1).

In addition to trauma, religion is also an important theme within these songs. Jesus or God or religion is addressed explicitly in most of them. The most hopeful allusion to religion is, as I see it, the depiction of Christ in “Sunday Bloody Sunday”. Here the speaker encourages his listeners to unite in Christ, and to transcend the condition of “increased arousal” (Luckhurst 1) as Christianity lies at the heart of both the Protestant as well as the Catholic communities. Religion is most strongly brought into focus in the line claiming, “the victory Jesus won” (l. 42). Here religion is seen as part of the solution to the problems, but one must not forget that religion was also very much a part of the problem, and this aspect of the conflict is alluded to in “North and South of the River”, when it points to “an old church bell [that is] no longer ringing”(l. 29). Religion is also depicted as rather problematical, or at least conflicting, in “Cedarwood Road” when the speaker describes a home in which “Symbols clashing, Bibles smashing” (l. 32). This is a state of affairs which does not exactly tally with the image of a graceful God. The religious dimension is also brought into focus in “Please”, as demonstrated in its ironic allusion to “Your holy war, your northern star” (l. 22), alongside “Your Catholic blues, your convent shoes” (l. 20). Here the celestial dimension regarding “the sermon on the mount” (l. 23) is contrasted with the sermon in “the boot of your car” (l. 23), implying that here, in the boot, conditions are far from ideal.

Also, love is an important theme running through these lyrics, but not in an idealized way. On the contrary, U2’s conception of love seems realistic and marked by hurt, as depicted in “One”, when “you ask me to enter but then you made me crawl” (l. 20), causing the speaker to feel both humiliated and belittled. Love is also depicted as abusive in “Please”. Here the speaker addresses his interlocutor, maintaining that “you never felt wanted / Till you’d someone slap your face” (ll. 3-4), and stating that “love is hard / And love is tough” (ll. 28-29). As I see it, though, love is not depicted in an exclusively negative way in these lyrics, “One”, for instance, also offers a more positive view upon love in its emphasis on “one love” (l.4).

Love relates to the notion of unity and the conviction that all humans are equals, themes which are addressed in most of the songs. This is above all stated in “One”, in which the speaker claims that “we’re one but, we’re not the same”. This concurs with the lyrics of “Sunday Bloody Sunday” stating that “tonight we can be as

one" (l.7), where unity despite division is what is wished for. It is not only unity that is accentuated, though. On the contrary, lack of unity is often addressed. The disunity between groups of people is above all addressed in "North and South of the River", in which the speaker dreams of "reaching across the lough" to meet his interlocutor, but the division between north and south makes it difficult to fulfill that wish. "Cedarwood Road", on the contrary, highlights unity in friendship, stating that "friendship once it's won, it's won, it's one" (ll. 7-8). Unity in the sharing of joint, harsh conditions is also accentuated in some of the lyrics, above all in "Raised by Wolves", in which the speaker concludes that "We have been raised by wolves" (l.17). But who are "the wolves" and who are "we"?

As I have shown, there might be many answers to these questions, depending, of course, upon whom you ask. Irrespective of the possible answers, however, the people affected by traumatic experiences might never fully recover, as trauma is not just something that affects its victim in the past, "but [it still] lives on in the present", as demonstrated in the U2 lyrics analyzed in this thesis. Nonetheless, one can only hope that both Catholic Nationalists and Protestants Unionists display resilience and that the victims of both political trauma and domestic abuse might mobilize "the resources of hope, so that living can go on in its wake" (Dawson 85). One can also hope that even though both religion and love are part of the problem, they might also be part of the solution and that these concepts might, to borrow a couple of lines from U2, would "Take this soul [the Northern Irish 'soul', both Catholic and Protestant souls] / And make it sing" (U2.com/Lyrics).

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Appendix

All songs are available here:
https://www.u2.com/discography/lyrics, Accessed 30 May, 2020

"Sunday Bloody Sunday"

(Yeah]

I can't believe the news today
Oh, I can't close my eyes
And make it go away
How long?
5 How long must we sing this song?
How long, how long?
'Cause tonight, we can be as one
Tonight

Broken bottles under children's feet
10 Bodies strewn across the dead-end street
But I won't heed the battle call
It puts my back up
Puts my back up against the wall

Sunday, Bloody Sunday
15 Sunday, Bloody Sunday
Sunday, Bloody Sunday, Sunday, Bloody Sunday (alright)

And the battle's just begun
There's many lost, but tell me who has won
The trench is dug within our hearts (Trenches dug within our hearts)
20 And mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn apart
Sunday, Bloody Sunday
Sunday, Bloody Sunday
How long?

How long must we sing this song?
25 How long, how long?
'Cause tonight, we can be as one
Tonight, tonight
Sunday, Bloody Sunday
(Tonight, tonight) Sunday, Bloody Sunday (let's go)

30 Wipe the tears from your eyes
Wipe your tears away
Oh, wipe your tears away
I'll, wipe your tears away (Sunday, Bloody Sunday)
I'll, wipe your blood shot eyes (Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

35 Sunday, Bloody Sunday (Sunday, Bloody Sunday)
Sunday, Bloody Sunday (Sunday, Bloody Sunday)
And it's true we are immune
When fact is fiction and TV reality
And today the millions cry
40 We eat and drink while tomorrow they die

The real battle just begun
To claim the victory Jesus won

On
Sunday Bloody Sunday, yeah
45 Sunday Bloody Sunday

“One”

“Is it getting better, or do you feel the same?
Will it make it easier on you, now you got someone to blame?
You say one love, one life, when it's one need in the night.
One love, we get to share it
5 Leaves you baby if you don't care for it.

Did I disappoint you or leave a bad taste in your mouth?
You act like you never had love and you want me to go without.
Well, it's too late tonight to drag the past out into the light.
We're one, but we're not the same.
10 We get to carry each other, carry each other... one.

Have you come here for forgiveness,
Have you come to raise the dead
Have you come here to play Jesus to the lepers in your head
Did I ask too much, more than a lot
15 You gave me nothing, now it's all I got.
We're one, but we're not the same.
Well, we hurt each other, then we do it again.

You say love is a temple, love a higher law
Love is a temple, love the higher law.
20 You ask me to enter, but then you make me crawl
And I can't be holding on to what you got, when all you got is hurt.

One love, one blood, one life, you got to do what you should.
One life with each other: sisters, brothers.
One life, but we're not the same.
25 We get to carry each other, carry each other.
One, one.

“Hear Us Coming”

Do you hear us coming, Lord?
Do you hear us call?
Do you hear us knocking?
We're knocking at your door

5 Do you hear us coming, Lord?
Do you hear us call?
Do you hear us scratching?
Will you make us crawl?

"North and South of the River"

I want to reach out over the lough
And feel your hand across the water

Walk with you along an unapproved road
Not looking over my shoulder

5 I want to see, and I want to hear
To understand your fears
But we're north & south of the river

I've been doing it wrong all of my life
This holy town has turned me over
10 A young man running from what he didn't understand
But the wind from the lough just got colder and colder

There was a badness that had its way
Love was not lost; love will have its day
North & south of the river
15 North & south of the river

Can we stop playing these old tattoos ?
Darling, I don't have the answer
I want to meet you
Where you are
20 I don't need you to surrender
There's no feeling
That's so alone
As when the one you're hurting is your own
North & south of the river
25 North & south of the river
North & south of the river

Some high ground is not worth taking
Some connections are not worth making
There's an old church bell no longer ringing
30 Some old songs are not worth bringing
North (Some high ground is not worth taking)
North & south of the river

"Please"

So you never knew love
Until you crossed the line of grace.
And you never felt wanted
Till you'd someone slap your face.
5 So you never felt alive
Until you'd almost wasted away.

You had to win, you couldn't just pass
The smartest ass at the top of the class
Your flying colours, your family tree
10 And all your lessons in history.

Please, please, please
Get up off your knees.
Please, please, please, please, oh yeah.

And you never knew how low you'd stoop
15 To make that call
And you never knew what was on the ground
Till they made you crawl.
So you never knew that the heaven
You keep you stole.

20 Your Catholic blues, your convent shoes,
Your stick-on tattoos now they're making the news
Your holy war, your northern star
Your sermon on the mount from the boot of your car.

Please, please, please
25 Get up off your knees.
Please, please, please
Leave me out of this, please.

So love is hard
And love is tough
30 But love is not
What you're thinking of.

September, streets capsizing
Spilling over down the drains
Shard of glass, splinters like rain
35 But you could only feel your own pain.

October, talk getting nowhere.
November, December; remember
We just started again.

Please, please, please
40 Get up off your knees, yeah.
Please, please, please, please, ah.

So love is big
Is bigger than us.
But love is not
45 What you're thinking of.
It's what lovers deal
It's what lovers steal
You know I've found it

Hard to receive
'Cause you, my love
I could never believe

"Peace on Earth"

Heaven on Earth
We need it now
I'm sick of all of this
Hanging around
5 Sick of sorrow
Sick of pain
Sick of hearing again and again
That there's gonna be
Peace on Earth

10 Where I grew up
There weren't many trees
Where there was we'd tear them down
And use them on our enemies
They say that what you mock
15 Will surely overtake you
And you become a monster
So the monster will not break you

It's already gone too far
Who said that if you go in hard
20 You won't get hurt

Jesus could you take the time
To throw a drowning man a line
Peace on Earth
Tell the ones who hear no sound
25 Whose sons are living in the ground
Peace on Earth
No whos or whys
No-one cries like a mother cries
For peace on Earth

30 She never got to say goodbye
To see the colour in his eyes
Now he's in the dirt
Peace on Earth

35 They're reading names out over the radio
All the folks the rest of us won't get to know
Sean and Julia, Gareth, Ann and Breda
Their lives are bigger, than any big idea

Jesus can you take the time
40 To throw a drowning man a line
Peace on Earth
To tell the ones who hear no sound
Whose sons are living in the ground
Peace on Earth

45 Jesus this song you wrote
The words are sticking in my throat
Peace on Earth
Hear it every Christmas time
But hope and history won't rhyme
50 So what's it worth?
This peace on Earth

Peace on Earth
Peace on Earth
Peace on Earth

"The Troubles" (Original Version)

Somebody stepped inside your soul
Somebody stepped inside your soul
Little by little they robbed and stole
Till someone else was in control

5 You think it's easier
To put your finger on the trouble
When the trouble is you
And you think it's easier
To know your own tricks
10 Well it's the hardest thing you'll ever do

I have a will for survival
So you can hurt me and then hurt me some more
I can live with denial
But you're not my troubles anymore

15 Somebody stepped inside your soul
Somebody stepped inside your soul
Little by little they robbed and stole
Till somebody else was in control

Somebody stepped inside your soul
20 Somebody stepped inside your soul
Little by little they robbed and stole
Till someone else was in control

You think it's easier
To give up on the troubles
25 If the trouble is destroying you
You think it's easier
But before you threw me a rope
It was the one thing I could hold on to

I have a will for survival
30 So you can hurt me then hurt me some more
I can live with denial
But you're not my troubles anymore
Somebody stepped inside your soul
Somebody stepped inside your soul
35 Little by little they robbed and stole
Till somebody else was in control

Somebody stepped inside your soul
Somebody stepped inside your soul
Little by little they robbed and stole
Till somebody else was in control

40 God knows it's not easy
Taking on the shape of someone else's pain
God now you can see me
I'm naked and I'm not afraid
My body's sacred and I'm not ashamed

45 Somebody stepped inside your soul
Somebody stepped inside your soul
Little by little they robbed and stole
Till somebody else was in control

Somebody stepped inside your soul
50 Somebody stepped inside your soul
Little by little they robbed and stole
Till someone else was in control

"The Troubles" – (Alternative Version)

You think it's easier
To get your fingers out of trouble
When the trouble is you
You think it's easier
5 To keep your hands out of trouble
When the trouble is you

I have a will for survival
So you can hurt me, then hurt me some more
I can live with denial
10 But you're not my troubles anymore

Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody throw a line to me,
Somebody tell me what to say
15 Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody throw a line to me,
Somebody tell me what to say

You think it's easier
20 To give up on the trouble
If the trouble is destroying you
You think it's easier
To know your own tricks
Well it's the hardest thing you'll ever do

25 I have the will for survival
So you can hurt me then hurt me some more
I can live with denial
But you're not my troubles anymore

Somebody stop the world I'm on
30 Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody throw a line to me,
Somebody tell me what to say
Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody stop the world I'm on
35 Somebody throw a line to me,
Somebody tell me what to say

I stepped outside like I had never seen the night before
Looking at the stars that never looked so bright before
This crooked heart it never felt so light before
40 A brand new man, I'm a brand new man

Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody throw a line to me,
Somebody tell me what to say
45 Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody stop the world I'm on
Somebody throw a line to me,
Somebody tell me what to say

"Raised by Wolves"

Face down on a broken street
There's a man in the corner in a pool of misery
I'm in white van as a red sea covers the ground
Metal crash, I can't tell what it is
5 But I take a look, and now I'm sorry I did
5:30 on a Friday night, 33 good people cut down

I don't believe anymore
I don't believe anymore

Face down on a pillow of shame
There are some girls with a needle trying to spell my name
10 My body's not a canvas
My body's now a toilet wall

I don't believe anymore
I don't believe anymore

Raised by wolves
15 Stronger than fear
Raised by wolves
We were raised by wolves
Raised by wolves
Stronger than fear
20 If I open my eyes
You disappear

Boy sees his father crushed under the weight
Of a cross in a passion where the passion is hate
Blue mink Ford, I'm gonna detonate and you're dead
25 Blood in the house
Blood on the street
The worst things in the world are justified by belief
Registration 1385-WZ

I don't believe anymore
30 I don't believe anymore

Raised by wolves
Stronger than fear

Raised by wolves
We were raised by wolves
35 Raised by wolves
Stronger than fear
If I open my eyes
You disappear

"Cedarwood Road"

I was running down the road
The fear was all I knew
I was looking for a soul that's real
Then I ran into you
5 And that cherry blossom tree
Was a gateway to the sun
And friendship, once it's won
It's won…it's one

Northside just across the river to the Southside
10 That's a long way here
All the green and all the gold
The hurt you hide, the joy you hold
The foolish pride that gets you out the door
Up on Cedarwood, Cedarwood Road

15 Sleepwalking down the road
Not waking from these dreams
'Cause it's never dead it's still [in] my head
It was a warzone in my teens
I'm still standing on that street
20 Still need an enemy
The worst ones I can't see
You can... you can

Northside just across the river from the Southside
That's a long way here
25 All the green and all the gold
The hurt you hide and the joy you hold
The foolish pride that sends you back for more
Up on Cedarwood, Cedarwood Road

If the door is open it isn't theft
30 You can't return to where you've never left
Blossoms falling from a tree they cover you and cover me
Symbols clashing, Bibles smashing
Paint the world you need to see
Sometimes fear is the only place
That we can call our home
35 Cedarwood Road

[Outro]
And a heart that is broken
Is a heart that is open, open, open